Surviving Utopia?
A Journey to Guatemala

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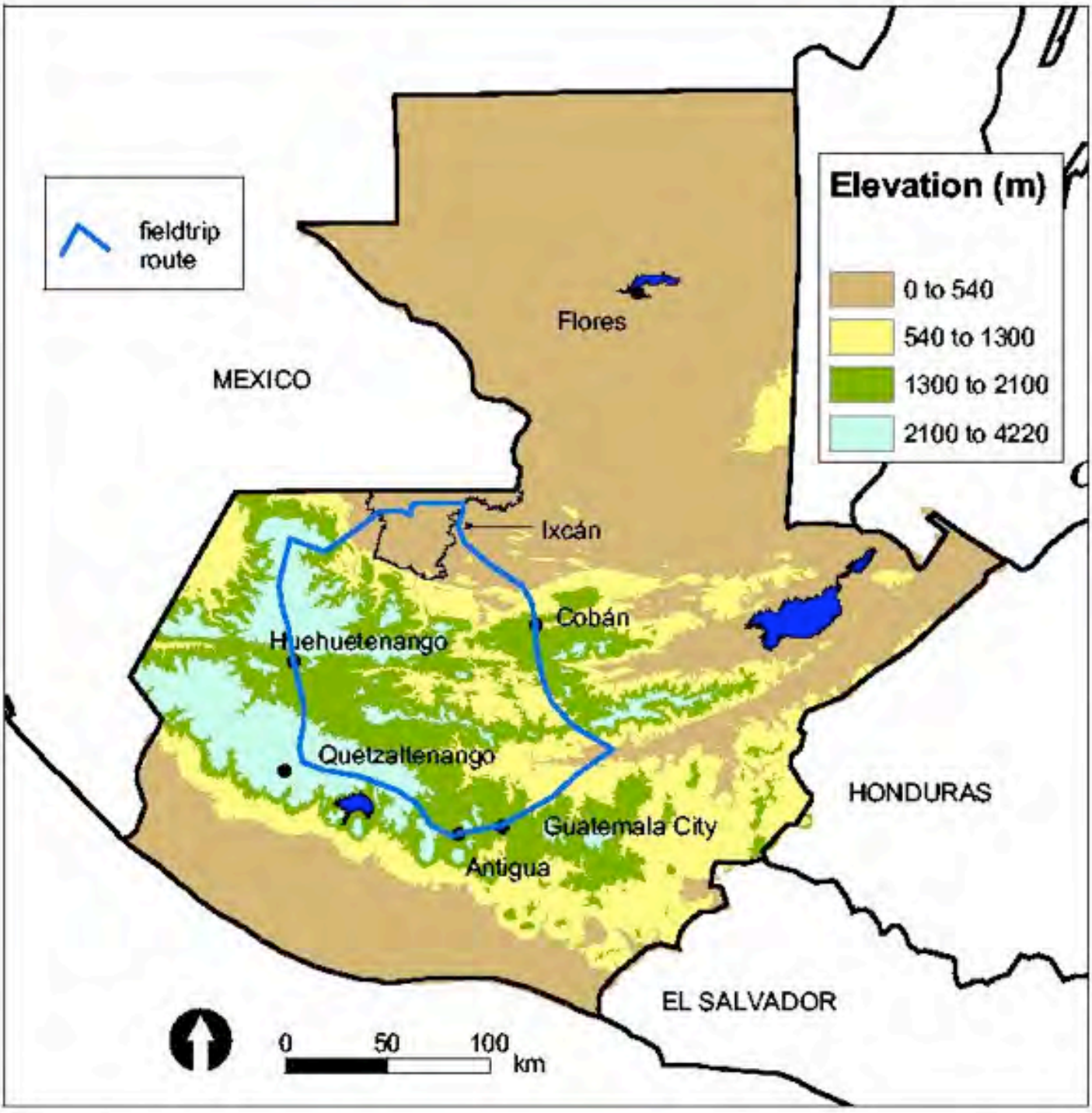
Some notes, ideas, and maps about Guatemala, Ixcán, and the Cuchumatán Mountains to help us along the way

General Maps



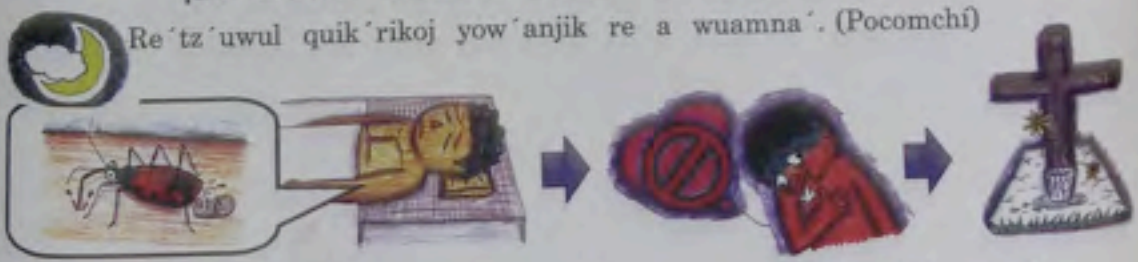
¡CUIDADO!

¡Chaawilaq! (Q'eq'chi) **Chawik'raj awi'm** (Pocomchi)

La Chinche causa enfermedades del corazón. (Español)

¡Li k'ulim naxk'e xyajel li aam! (Q'eq'chi)

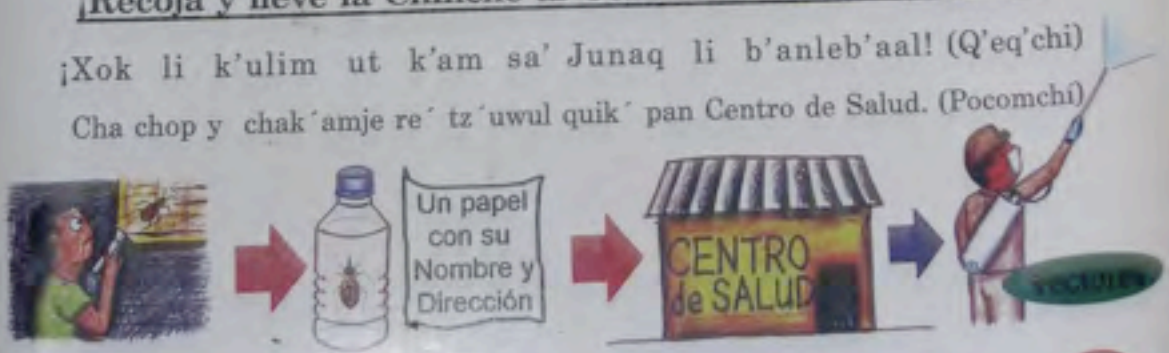
Re´tz´uwul quik´rikoj yow´anjik re a wuamna´. (Pocomchí)



¡Recoja y lleve la Chinche al Centro de Salud! (Español)

¡Xok li k'ulim ut k'am sa' Junaq li b'anleb'aal! (Q'eq'chi)

Cha chop y chak´amje re´ tz´uwul quik´ pan Centro de Salud. (Pocomchí)



PROYECTO CONTROL DE CHAGAS

Area de Salud de Alta Verapaz

JAPÓN

Cordillera de los Cuchumatanes
PARQUE NACIONAL LOS CUCHUMATANES (Proposed)
(Proposed)
BIOTOPO
BAJA VERAPAZ
Sierra de Chuacús
SAN MARCOS
TOTONICAPÁN
QUEZALTENANGO
SOLOLÁ
CHIMALTENANGO
SACATEPÉQUEZ
GUATEMALA
CIUDAD DE GUATEMALA
Lago de Atitlán
P.N. ATITLÁN
Embalse Chixoy
COBÁN
SALAMÁ
HUEHUETENANGO
SAN MARCOS
QUEZALTENANGO (Xela)
TOTONICAPÁN
SOLOLÁ
CHIMALTENANGO
ANTIGUA GUATEMALA
RETALHULEU
MAZATENANGO
STA. CRUZ DEL QUICHÉ
Chichicastenango (Sto. Tomás)
San Cristóbal Verapaz
Rabinal
Cubulco
Nebaj
Chajul
S. Juan Cotzal
Cunén
Uspantán
Sacapulas
Joyabaj
Zacualpa
Momostenango
San Pedro Sacatepéquez
Coatepeque
Colomba
Tecpán Guatemala
Comalapa
Patzún
Patzicía
San Lucas Tolimán
Santiago Atitlán
Mixco
Villa Nueva
Amatitlán
Chinautla
Palencia
San José Pinula
Sta. Catarina Pinula
San Juan Sacatepéquez
San Pedro Sacatepéquez
San Raimundo
Chuarrancho
San Martín Jilotepeque
Sumpango
Ciudad Vieja
Alotenango
Jocotenango
Parramos
Chiantla
Aguacatán
San Miguel Ixtahuacán
Concepción Tutuapa
Tejutla
Comitancillo
Salcajá
Almolonga
Zunil
Cantel
Olintepeque
Nahualá
Cuyotenango
San Sebastián

HUEHUETENANGO
QUICHÉ
BAJA VERAPAZ
SAN MARCOS
TOTONICAPÁN
Cordillera de los Cuchumatanes
PARQUE NACIONAL LOS CUCHUMATANES (Proposed)
RESERVA NATURAL CERRO BISÍS (Proposed)
P.N. DE LAGUNA LACHUÁ
R.F. FRANJA TRANSVERSAL DEL NORTE
BIOTOPO MARIO DARY RIVERA
Sierra de Chamá
Sierra de Chuacús
Embalse Chixoy
Montañas Culuxquén
Montañas Los Ángeles
Montañas Tonzul
Volcán Tajumulco
COBÁN
San Pedro Carchá
San Cristóbal Verapaz
Santa Cruz Verapaz
Tactic
Purulhá
SALAMÁ
Rabinal
Cubulco
Chisec
Nebaj
Chajul
S. Juan Cotzal
Cunén
Uspantán
Sacapulas
STA. CRUZ DEL QUICHÉ
Chichicastenango (Sto. Tomás)
Joyabaj
Zacualpa
Soloma
Barrillas
San Mateo Ixtatán
Jacaltenango
Nentón
Chiantla
Aguacatán
Momostenango
San Marcos
San Pedro Sacatepéquez
Tejutla
Comitancillo
Concepción Tutuapa
Ixchiguán
Tajumulco

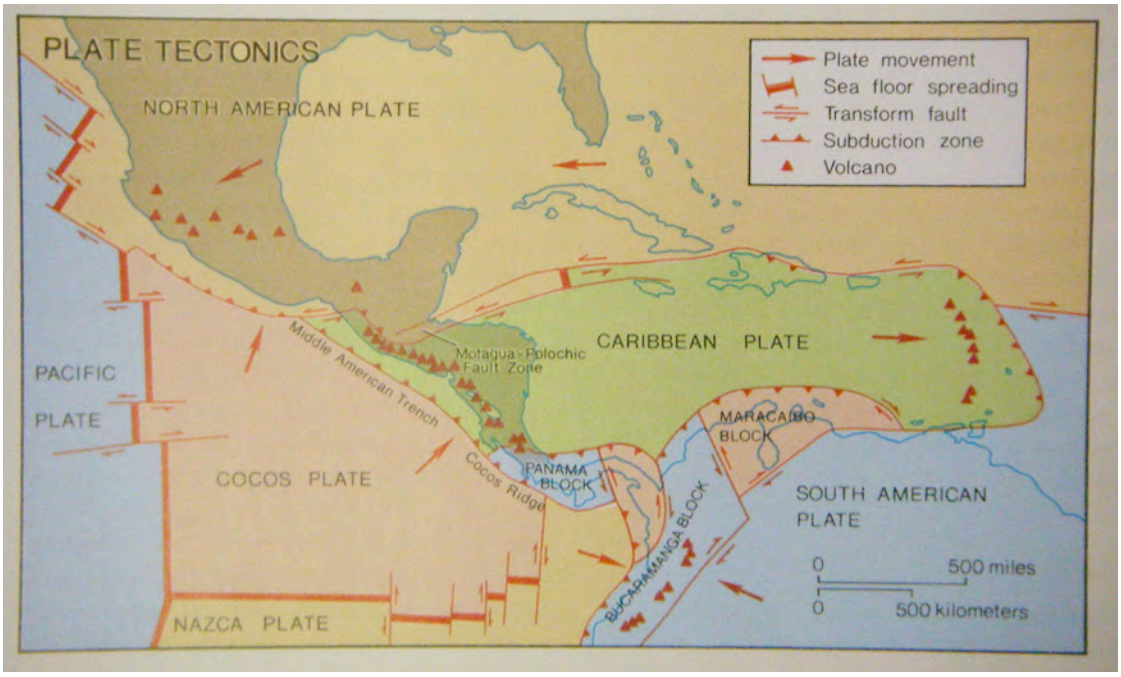
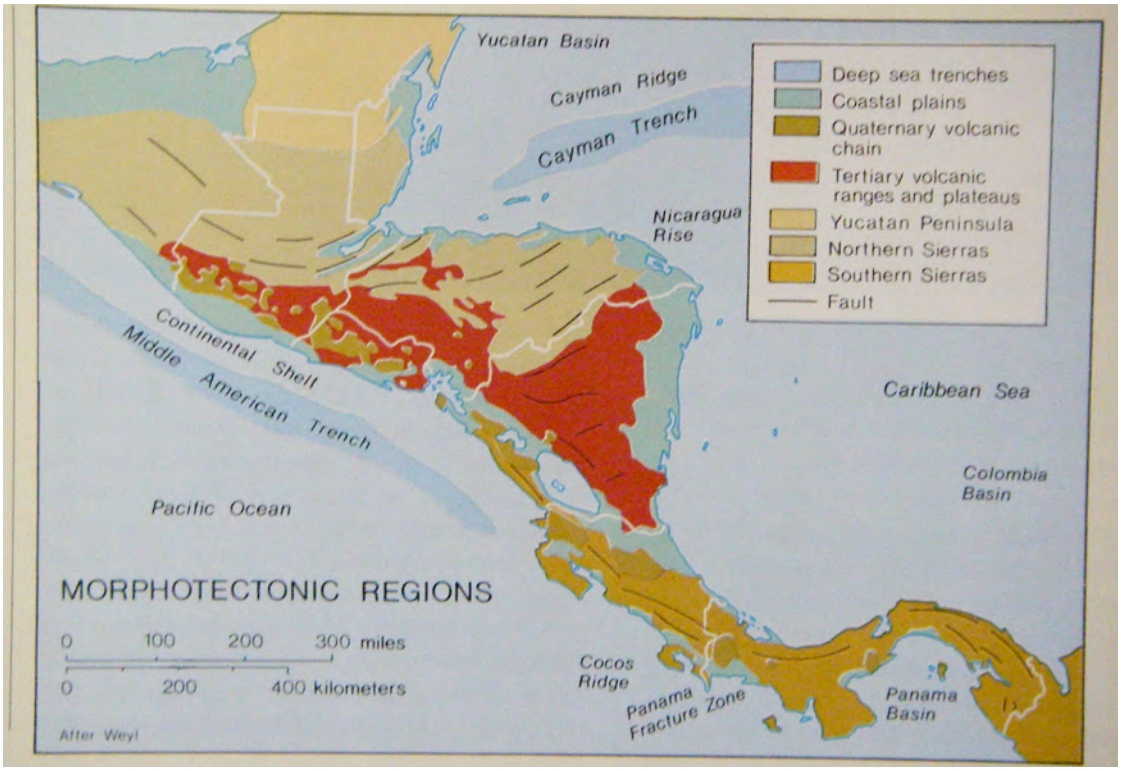
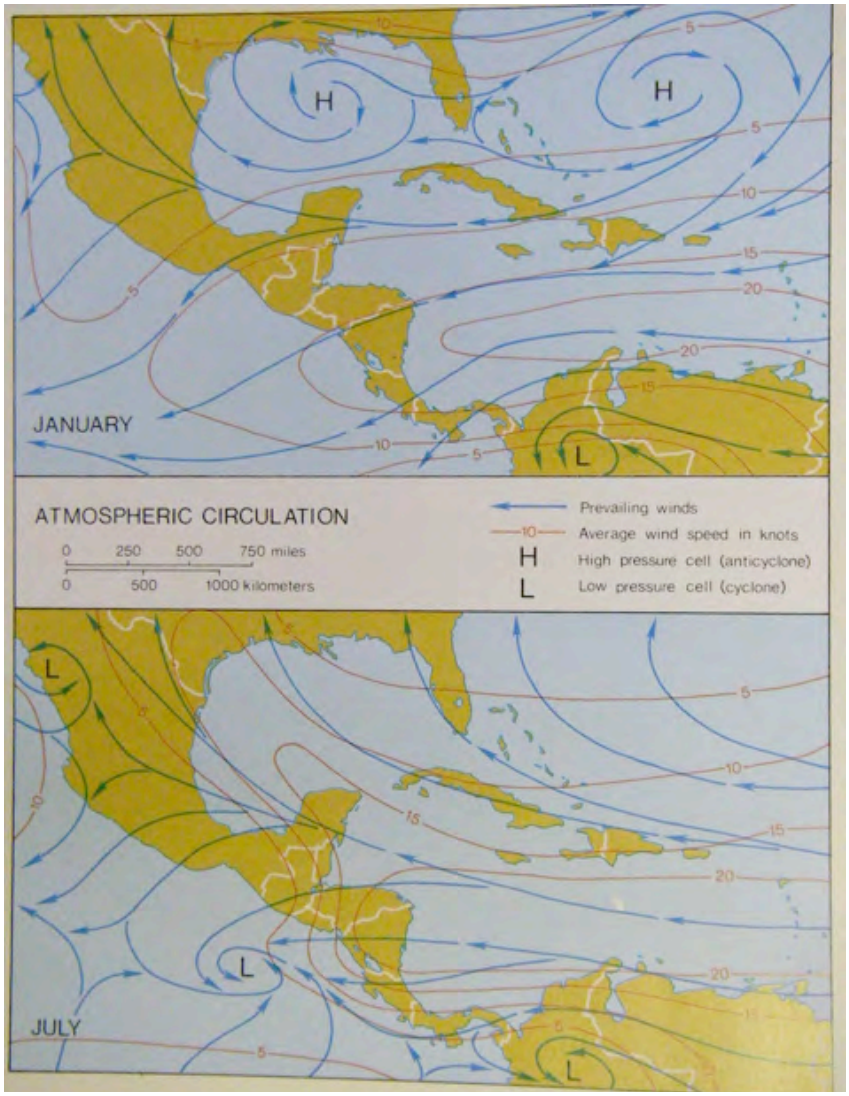


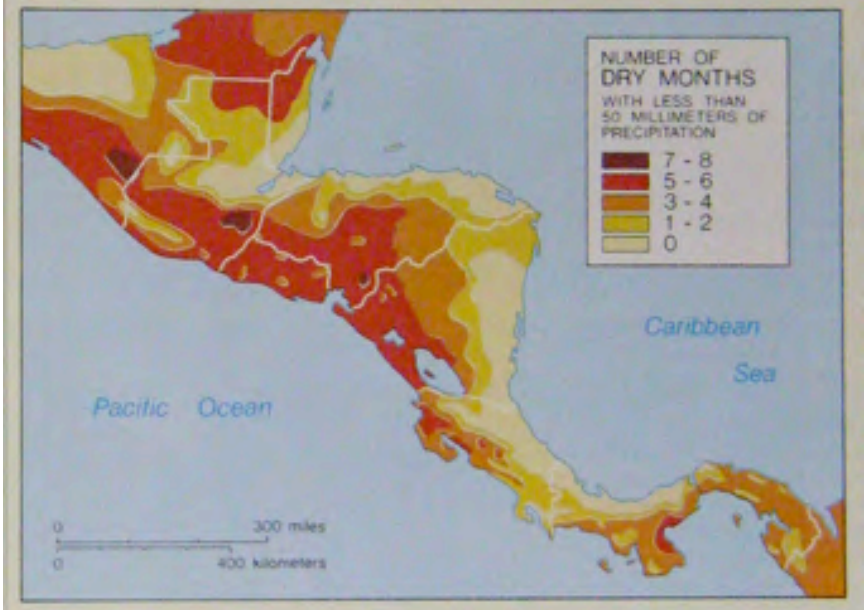
PLATE TECTONICS
Plate movement
Sea floor spreading
Transform fault
Subduction zone
Volcano
NORTH AMERICAN PLATE
CARIBBEAN PLATE
Motagua-Polochic Fault Zone
Middle American Trench
PACIFIC PLATE
COCOS PLATE
Cocos Ridge
PANAMA BLOCK
MARACAIBO BLOCK
BHUCARAMANGA BLOCK
SOUTH AMERICAN PLATE
NAZCA PLATE
0 500 miles
0 500 kilometers

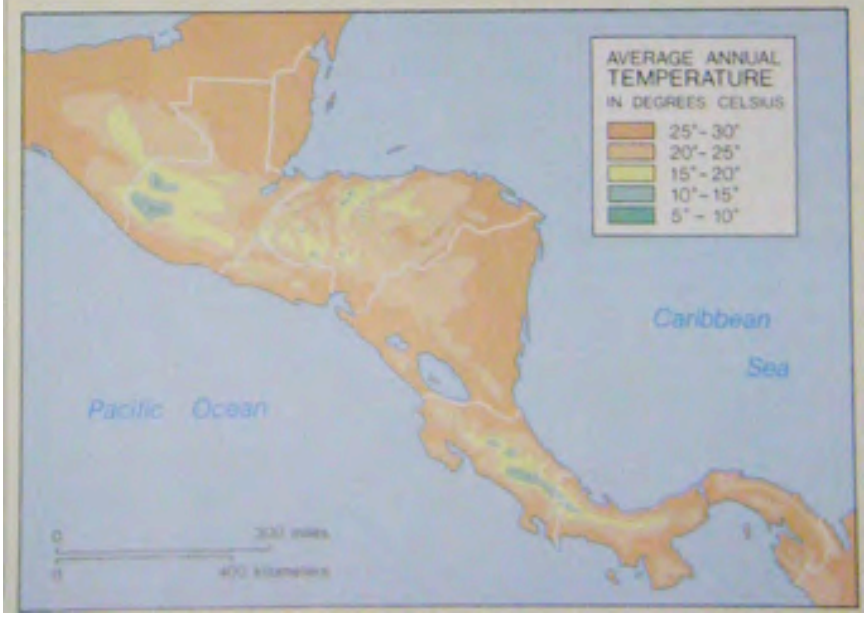

Yucatan Basin
Cayman Ridge
Cayman Trench
Nicaragua Rise
Continental Shelf
Middle American Trench
Pacific Ocean
Caribbean Sea
Colombia Basin
Deep sea trenches
Coastal plains
Quaternary volcanic chain
Tertiary volcanic ranges and plateaus
Yucatan Peninsula
Northern Sierras
Southern Sierras
Fault
MORPHOTECTONIC REGIONS
0 100 200 300 miles
0 200 400 kilometers
Cocos Ridge
Panama Fracture Zone
Panama Basin
After Weyl

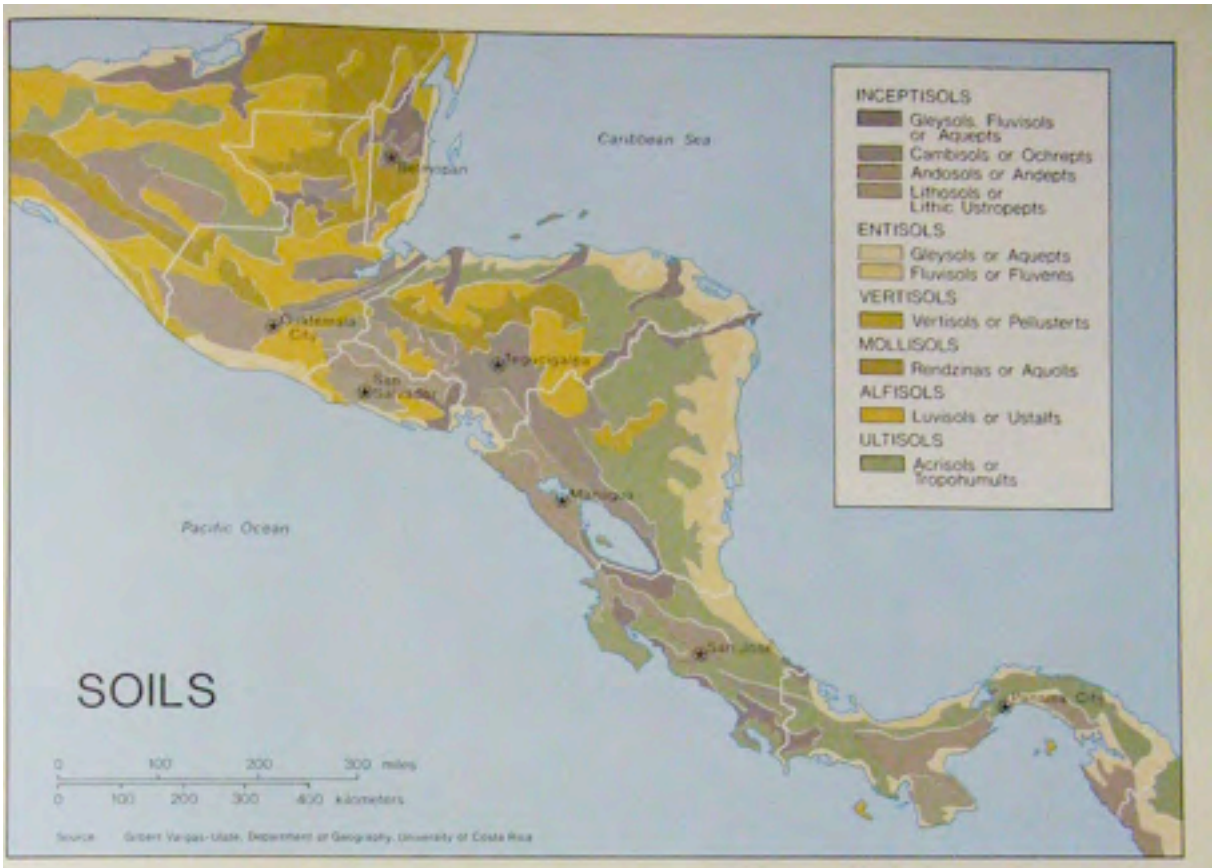

NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA
Tertiary sedimentary rocks
Mesozoic sedimentary rocks
Paleozoic sedimentary rocks
Paleozoic metamorphic rocks
SOUTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA
Mainly Oligocene volcanic rocks
Tertiary sedimentary rocks
Mesozoic sedimentary rocks
Mesozoic volcanic and sedimentary rocks
ROCKS FOUND IN BOTH AREAS
Recent alluvium
Possibly Pleistocene terraces
Quaternary and Recent volcanic rocks
Upper Miocene to Pliocene volcanic rocks
Tertiary intrusive rocks
Cretaceous and/or Tertiary intrusive rocks
Paleozoic and/or Mesozoic intrusive and granitic rocks
Possibly Cretaceous Serpentines
Caribbean Sea
Pacific Ocean
FAULTS
Normal faults
Reverse and thrust faults
Faults (type not specified)
GEOLOGY
0 100 200 300 miles
0 100 200 300 400 kilometers

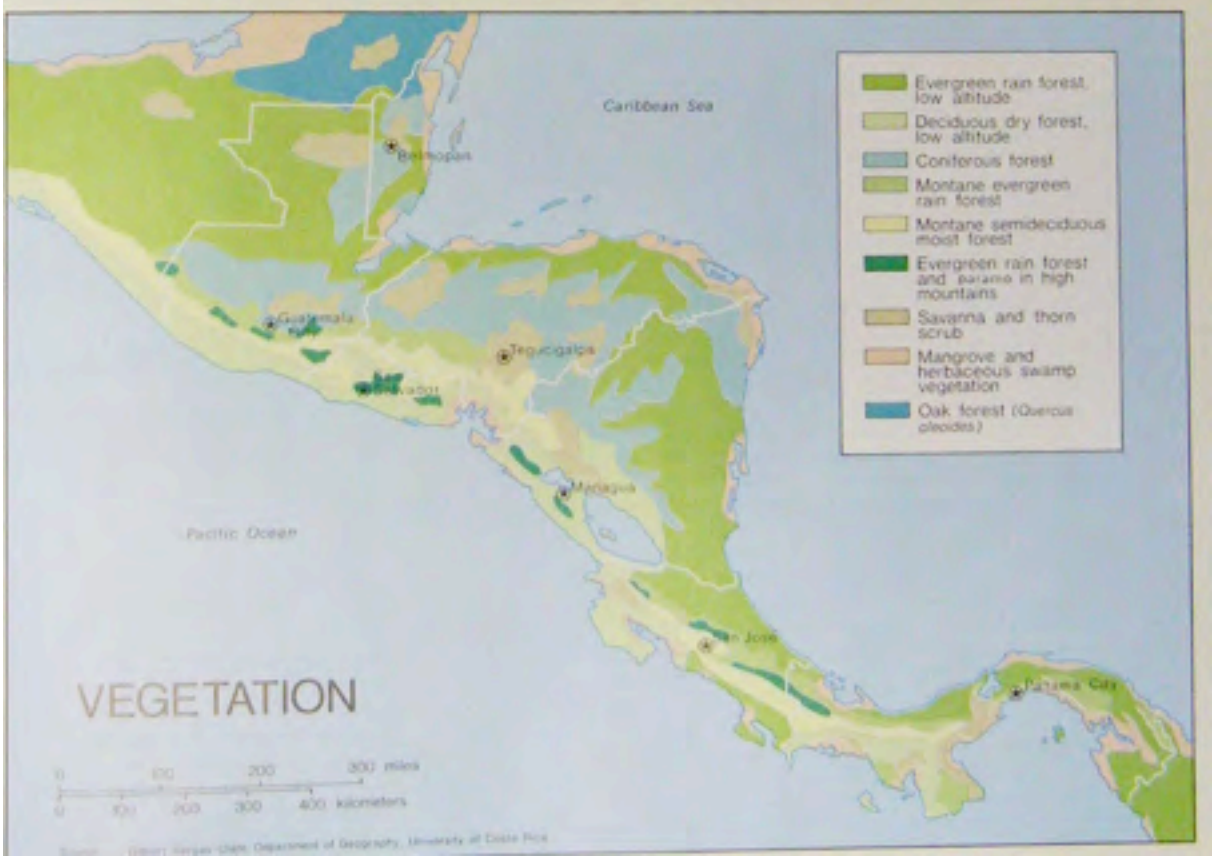

H
H
JANUARY
L
ATMOSPHERIC CIRCULATION
0 250 500 750 miles
0 500 1000 kilometers
Prevailing winds
Average wind speed in knots
H High pressure cell (anticyclone)
L Low pressure cell (cyclone)
L
L
JULY
L

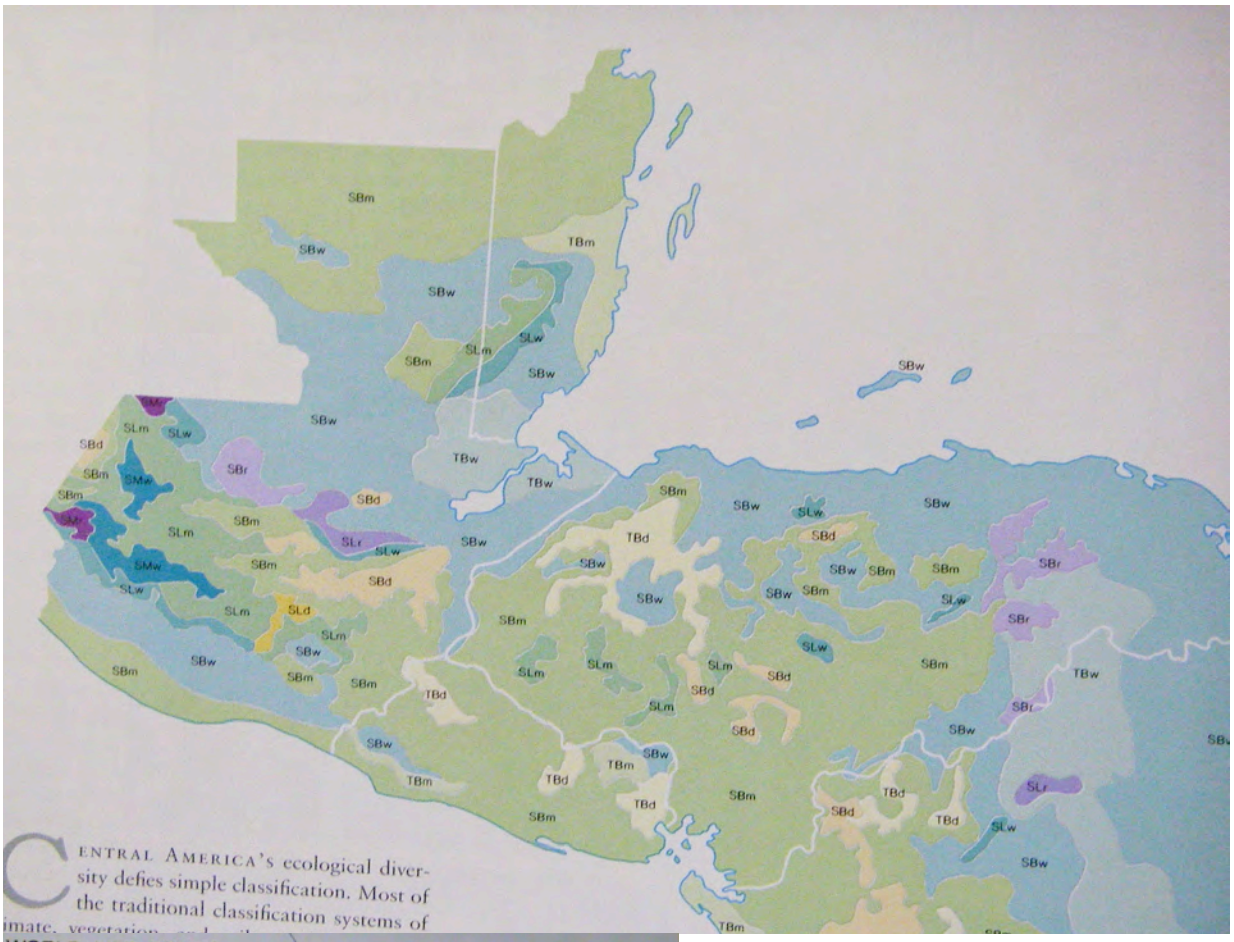

AVERAGE ANNUAL
PRECIPITATION
IN MILLIMETERS
7000 - 9000
3200 - 7000
1600 - 3200
800 - 1600
400 - 800
Caribbean
Sea
Pacific Ocean
0
300 miles
0
400 kilometers


NUMBER OF
DRY MONTHS
WITH LESS THAN
50 MILLIMETERS OF
PRECIPITATION
7 - 8
5 - 6
3 - 4
1 - 2
0
Caribbean
Sea
Pacific Ocean
0
300 miles
0
400 kilometers

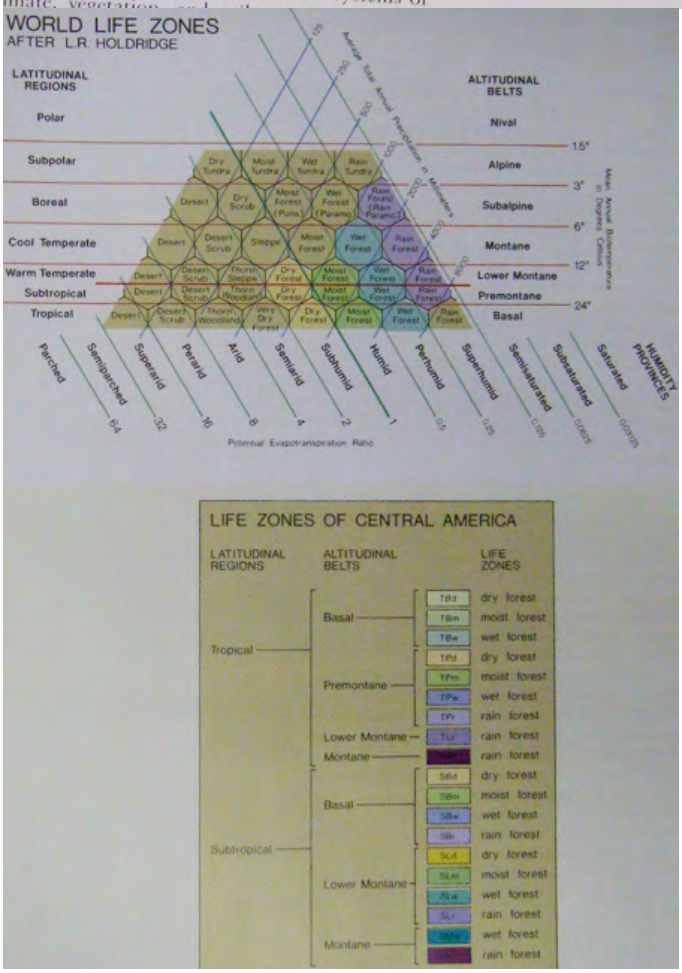

AVERAGE ANNUAL
TEMPERATURE
IN DEGREES CELSIUS
25° - 30°
20° - 25°
15° - 20°
10° - 15°
5° - 10°
Caribbean
Sea
Pacific Ocean

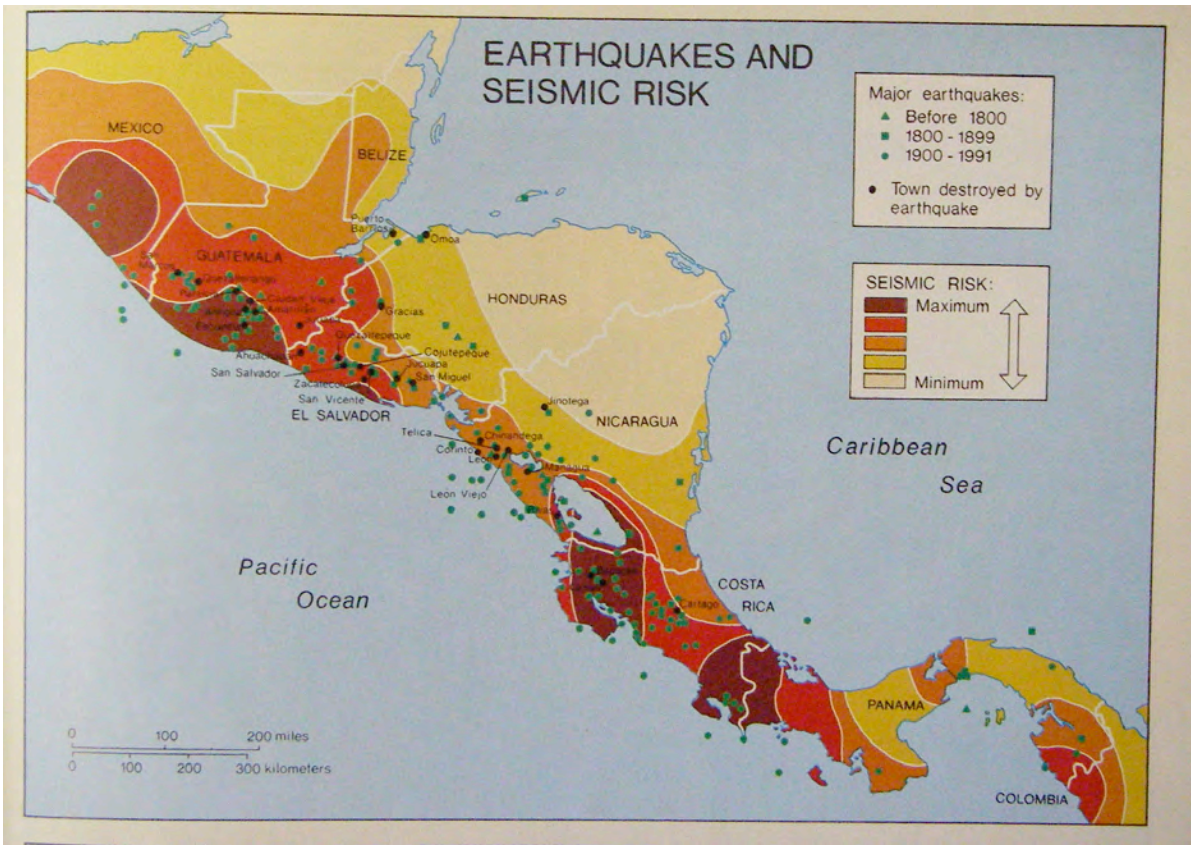

INCEPTISOLS
Gleysols, Fluvisols or Aquepts
Cambisols or Ochrepts
Andosols or Andepts
Lithosols or Lithic Ustropepts
ENTISOLS
Gleysols or Aquepts
Fluvisols or Fluvents
VERTISOLS
Vertisols or Pellusterts
MOLLISOLS
Rendzinas or Aquolls
ALFISOLS
Luvisols or Ustalfs
ULTISOLS
Acrisols or Tropohumults
Caribbean Sea
Pacific Ocean
Guatemala City
Tegucigalpa
San Salvador
Managua
San José
Panama City
SOILS
0 100 200 300 miles
0 100 200 300 400 kilometers


Evergreen rain forest, low altitude
Deciduous dry forest, low altitude
Coniferous forest
Montane evergreen rain forest
Montane semideciduous moist forest
Evergreen rain forest and paramo in high mountains
Savanna and thorn scrub
Mangrove and herbaceous swamp vegetation
Oak forest (Quercus oleoides)
Caribbean Sea
Pacific Ocean
Guatemala
Tegucigalpa
Managua
San José
Panama City
VEGETATION
0 100 200 300 miles
0 100 200 300 400 kilometers



CENTRAL AMERICA's ecological diversity defies simple classification. Most of the traditional classification systems of

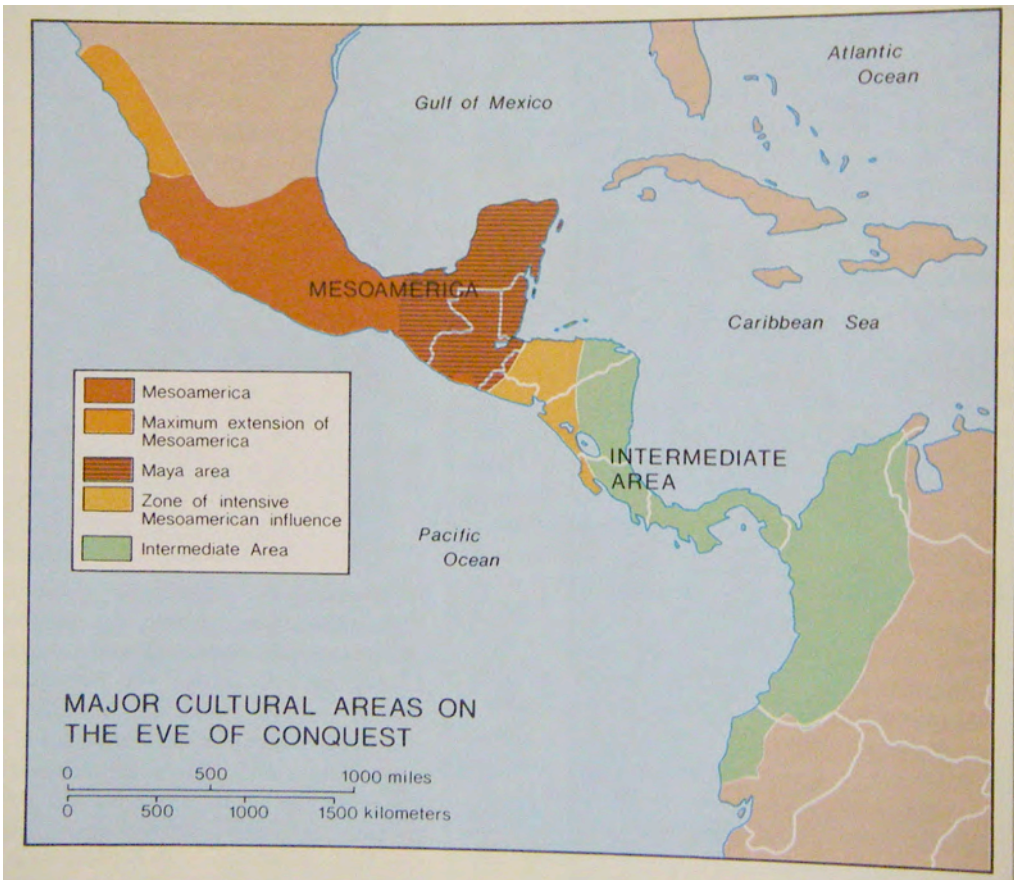


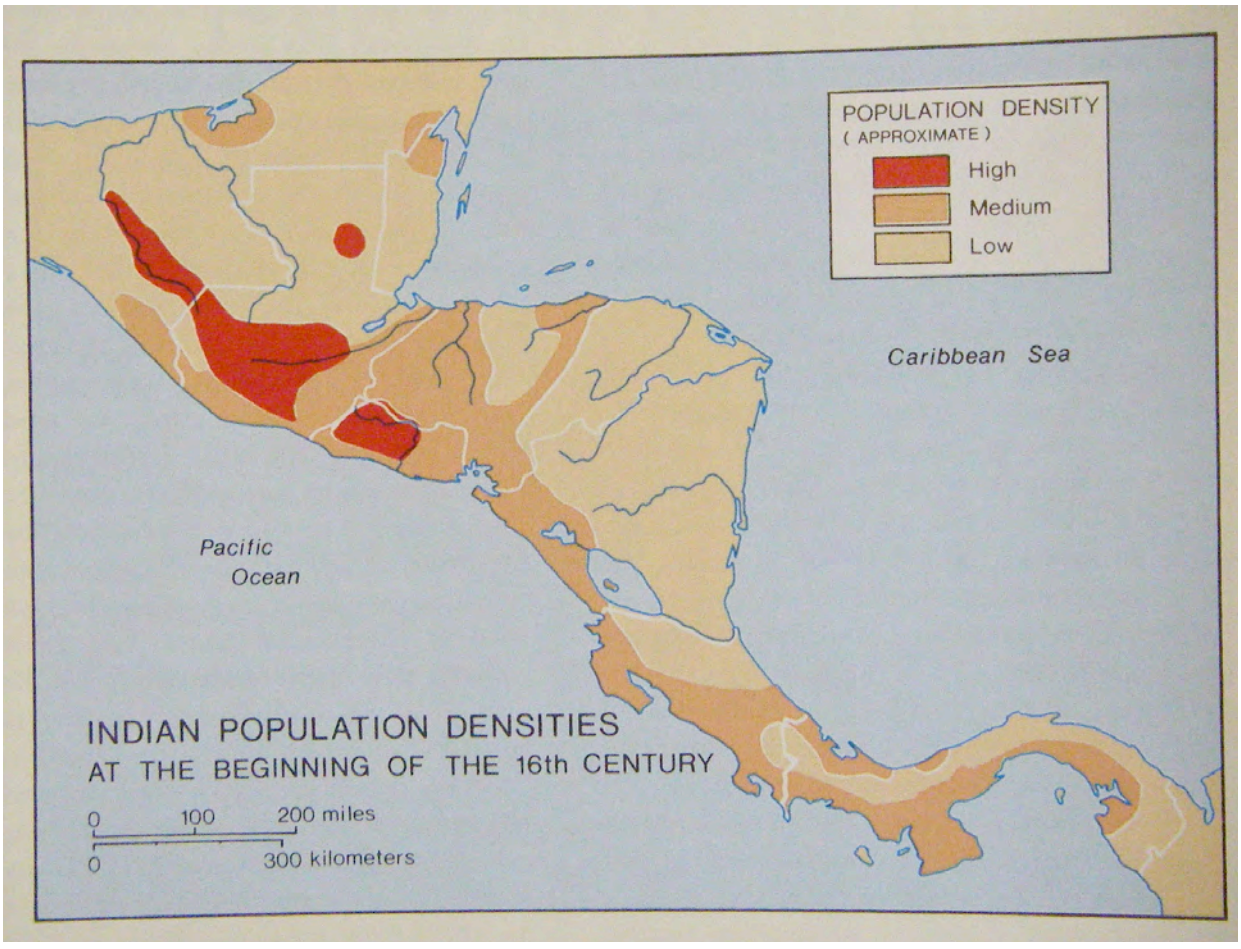


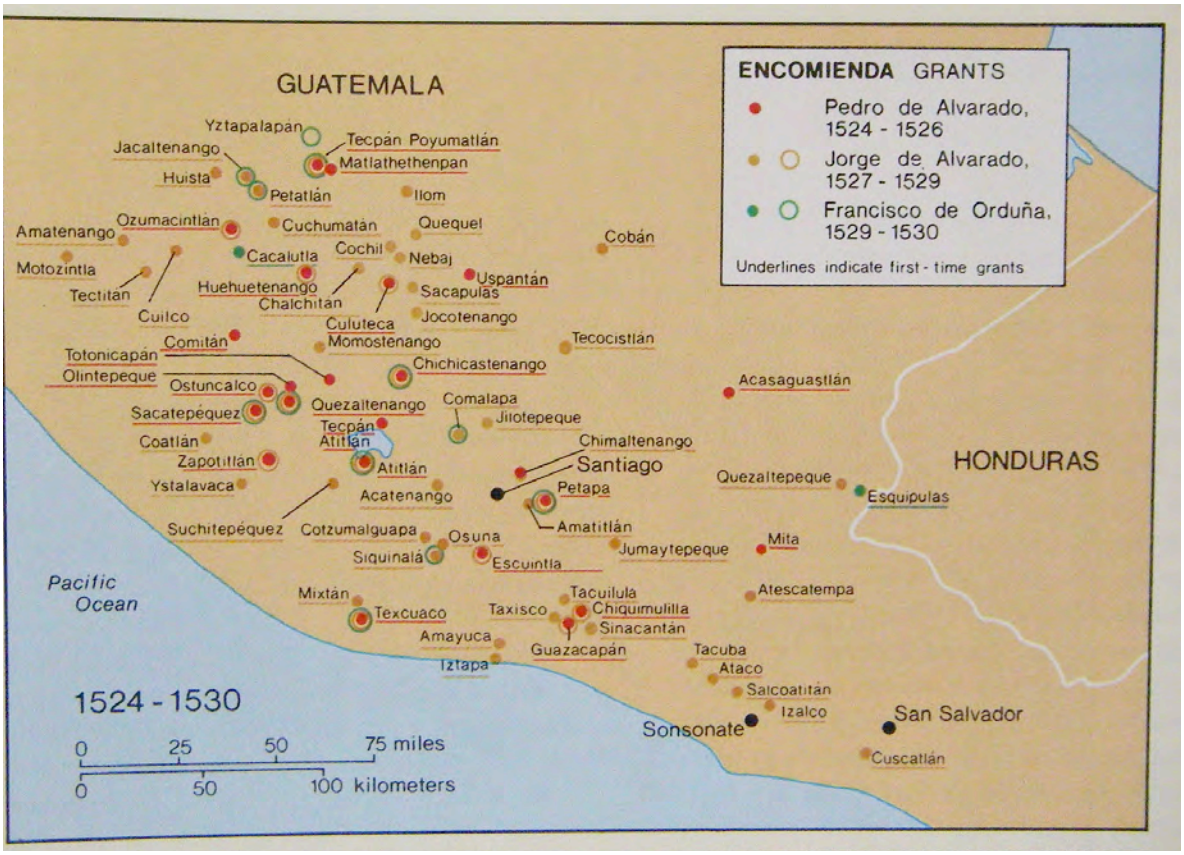
Parish of Quezaltenango, Guatemala, Pedro Cortés y Larraz, 1771. This pictorial map shows the town of Quezaltenango and the surrounding villages. Center right is an exaggerated depiction of Santa María volcano.

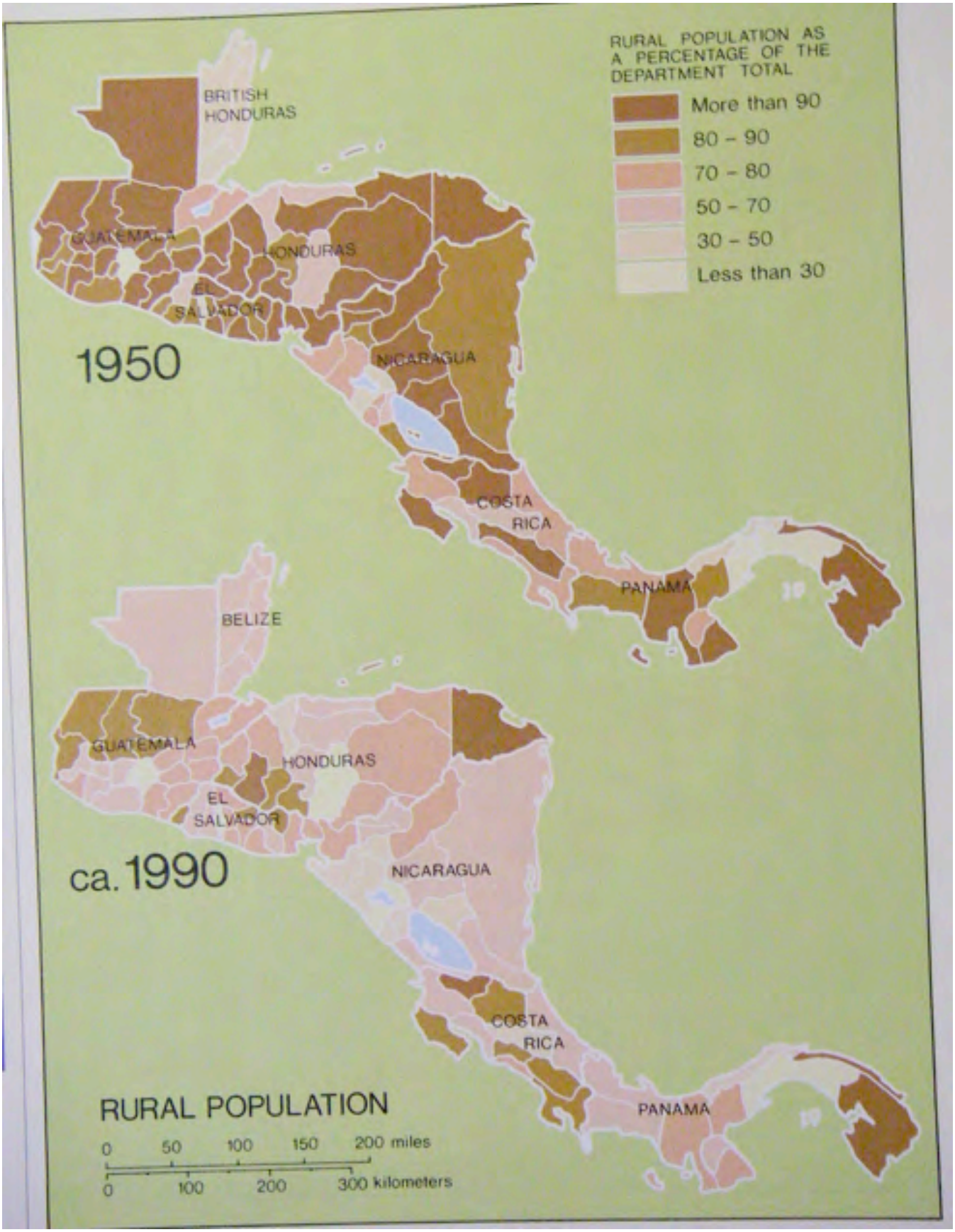
Cosigüina Volcano, Nicaragua, 1860. The crater of Cosigüina, on the southern shore of the Gulf of F collapsed during a violent explosion in 1835.

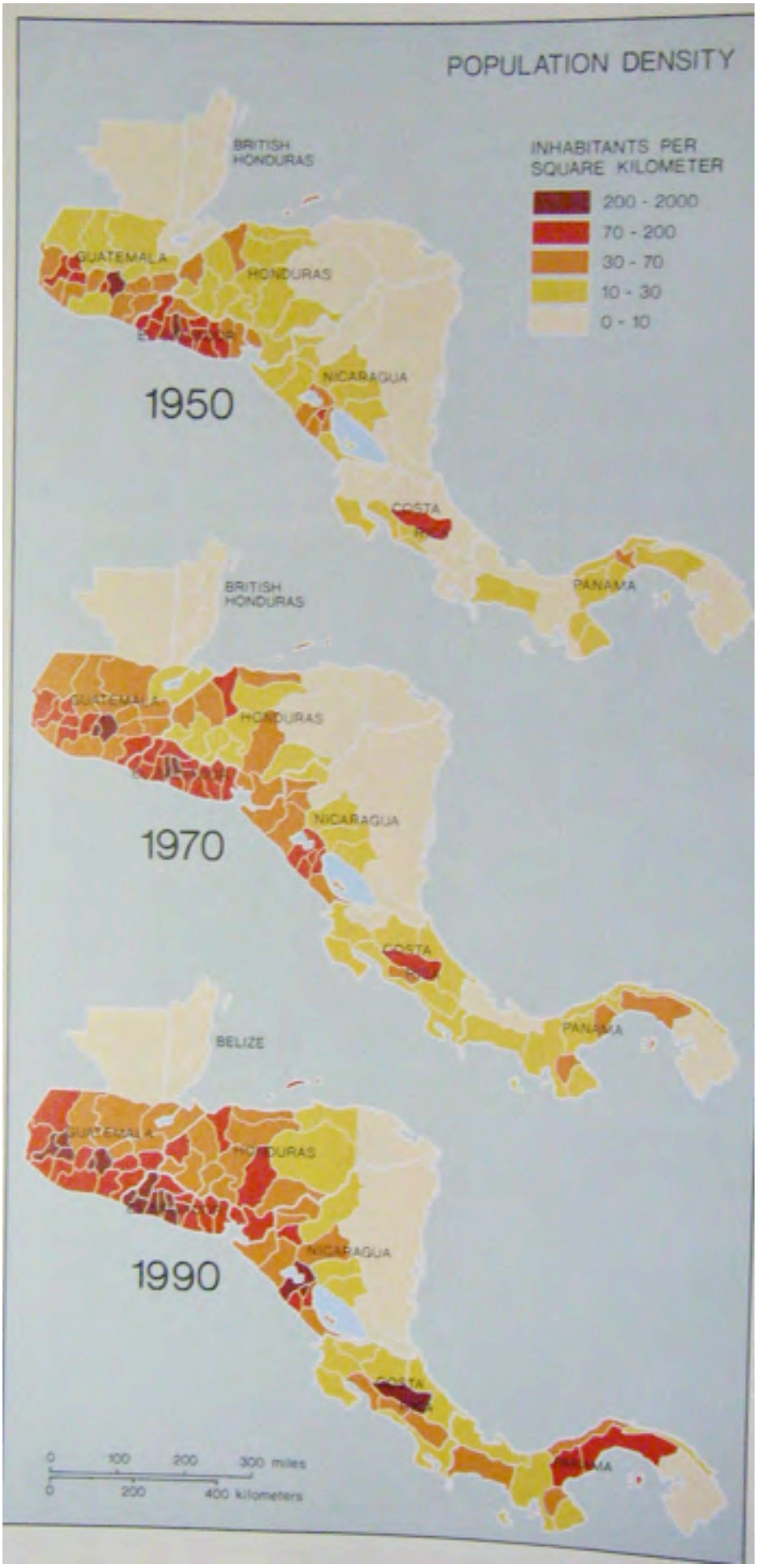
Pacaya Volcano, Guatemala, in eruption. This vivid colonial painting conveys the awe inspired by Central America's numerous active volcanoes. Pacaya, located to the south of Guatemala City, has erupted frequently in historic times.

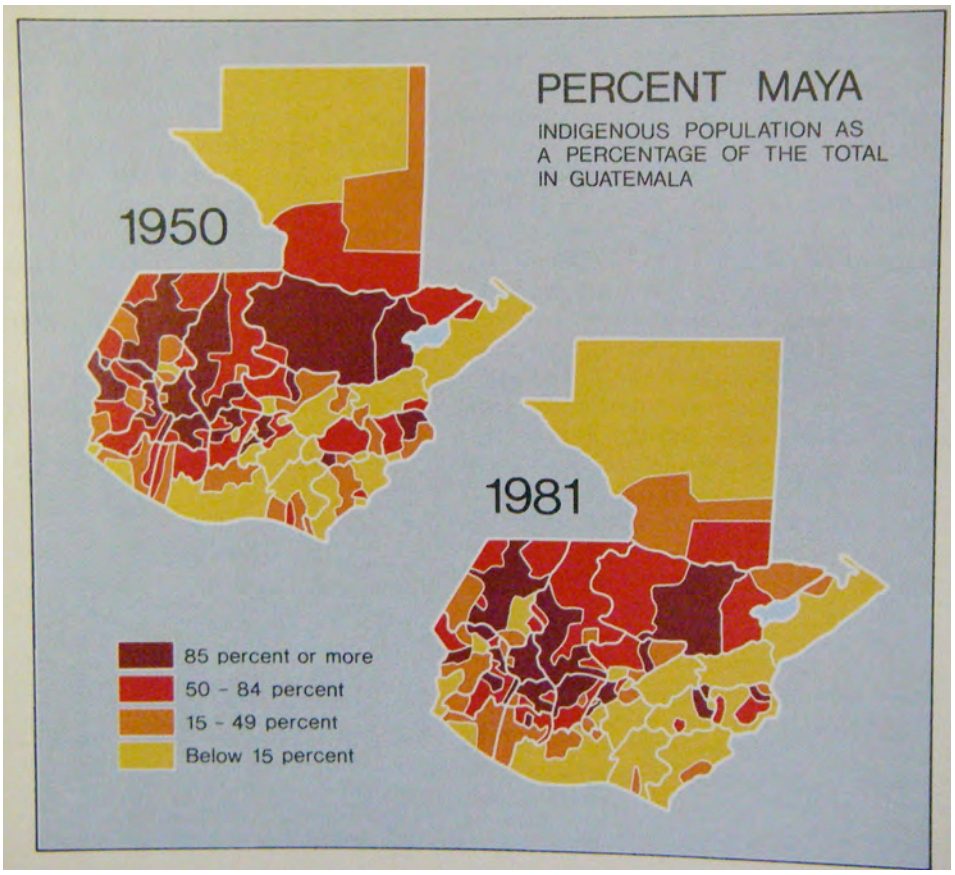

Atlantic Ocean
Gulf of Mexico
MESOAMERICA
Caribbean Sea
Mesoamerica
Maximum extension of Mesoamerica
Maya area
Zone of intensive Mesoamerican influence
Intermediate Area
INTERMEDIATE AREA
Pacific Ocean
MAJOR CULTURAL AREAS ON THE EVE OF CONQUEST
0 500 1000 miles
0 500 1000 1500 kilometers


POPULATION DENSITY
(APPROXIMATE)
High
Medium
Low
Caribbean Sea
Pacific Ocean
INDIAN POPULATION DENSITIES
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 16th CENTURY
0 100 200 miles
0 300 kilometers


GUATEMALA
ENCOMIENDA GRANTS
Pedro de Alvarado, 1524 - 1526
Jorge de Alvarado, 1527 - 1529
Francisco de Orduña, 1529 - 1530
Underlines indicate first - time grants
Yztapalapán
Tecpán Poyumatlán
Jacaltenango
Matlathethenpan
Huista
Petatlán
Ilom
Amatenango
Ozumacintlán
Cuchumatán
Quequel
Cobán
Cacalutla
Cochil
Nebaj
Motozintla
Uspantán
Tectitán
Huehuetenango
Sacapulas
Cuilco
Chalchitán
Culuteca
Jocotenango
Comitán
Momostenango
Tecocistlán
Totonicapán
Chichicastenango
Olintepeque
Acasaguastlán
Ostuncalco
Quezaltenango
Comalapa
Sacatepéquez
Jilotepeque
Tecpán
Atitlán
Chimaltenango
Coatlán
Santiago
HONDURAS
Zapotitlán
Atitlán
Quezaltepeque
Ystalavaca
Petapa
Esquipulas
Acatenango
Amatitlán
Suchitepéquez
Cotzumalguapa
Osuna
Jumaytepeque
Mita
Siquinalá
Escuintla
Pacific Ocean
Mixtán
Tacuilula
Atescatempa
Texcuaco
Taxisco
Chiquimulilla
Sinacantán
Amayuca
Guazacapán
Tacuba
Iztapa
Ataco
Salcoatitán
Izalco
1524 - 1530
Sonsonate
San Salvador
0 25 50 75 miles
0 50 100 kilometers
Cuscatlán


RURAL POPULATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE DEPARTMENT TOTAL
More than 90
80 - 90
70 - 80
50 - 70
30 - 50
Less than 30
BRITISH HONDURAS
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
COSTA RICA
PANAMA
1950
BELIZE
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
COSTA RICA
PANAMA
ca. 1990
RURAL POPULATION
0 50 100 150 200 miles
0 100 200 300 kilometers


POPULATION DENSITY
INHABITANTS PER SQUARE KILOMETER
200 - 2000
70 - 200
30 - 70
10 - 30
0 - 10
BRITISH HONDURAS
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
NICARAGUA
1950
PANAMA
BRITISH HONDURAS
HONDURAS
NICARAGUA
1970
PANAMA
BELIZE
HONDURAS
NICARAGUA
1990
0 100 200 300 miles
0 200 400 kilometers


PERCENT MAYA
INDIGENOUS POPULATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL IN GUATEMALA
1950
1981
85 percent or more
50 - 84 percent
15 - 49 percent
Below 15 percent


YA NO VAMOS A PRODUCIR PARA GANAR DINERO, SINO PARA SUPLIR LO QUE NOS FALTE. AHORA VAMOS A TRABAJAR PARA NOSOTROS, NO PARA HACER RICOS A OTROS. SI FALTA COMIDA QUE FALTE PARA TODOS... SI HAY DE SOBRA, QUE SEA PARA TODOS...
AEDO. 86-87
D.D.S

ELEVEN

Turning Tears into Nothing

MILES RICHARDSON
Louisiana State University

You've been to Mexico before, haven't you? Anthropologists travel. It's part of their work, their work in the field, their work in the field of anthropology. It's their profession. But I wasn't certain, because at times they are so distant from their traveling, as if a part of them never travels, no matter how many miles, how many smells, how many sights, how many sounds, and how many hurts they may have walked, smelled, seen, heard, or bled from. It's the distant part that I am trying to contact. The distant part, you tell me, is that part of you that counts, groups, and orders. Constantly engaged and busy at work, it puts the uniques together, factors out the untidy, and bestows an elegant evenness to all. If it does that, it must be wise. Since it is wise, I want to ask it a question, a question about Mexico, about the people there, and especially about a little girl crying in the streets.

Now, don't be modest. You direct graduate students in their pursuits, you organize symposia at professional meetings, and you present ideas in learned journals. Having accomplished those things, you must know at least a little about a small girl with tears in her eyes.

Before I ask the question, I have to make certain that you are within the circle of my asking. I have to define the universe of discourse, as they say. The universe of discourse, the location of my asking and your responding, is not the country of Mexico, that ribbed land sucked dry by different peoples' struggles to be even before Cortés met Montezuma. The universe where we are to meet is the only one left as soon as you cross the border at Matamoros, Laredo, Juárez, Mexicali, and Tijuana. One step south of the border and the many Mexicos resolve into one, the city.

If you don't think that is true, and as an anthropologist you are prone to doubt—that's part of being wise—ask any driver of *Transportes del Norte*, "*¿En qué dirección está México?*" and he'll point south, where the city is.

Mexico City. How is its is? How would you characterize its being? Would you cite government statistics that more people live within its urbanized area than live in London, Paris, or even Tokyo? Would you point to the debate concerning the push-pull effect of rural to urban migration and then refer to the third-world phenomenon of urbanization

without industrialization? Would you speak not only of unemployment but also quote estimates of underemployment? After presenting data on water quality, air pollution, and vehicular traffic, would you conclude with remarks about the explanatory inadequacies of both modernization and dependency theories? You would, and you would be correct, or as correct as your terms would allow you to be.

Were you to ask me, I would tell you to watch the sun struggle to shine through the filthy air, squint against the grit that comes up from the gray streets with each new swirl of chilling wind, hear the screech, the squeal, and the roar of traffic hurdling endlessly through the streets, smell the heavy sweat of the poor accented by the delicate perfume of the rich, and feel the small hurt of a tiny child fretting in his Pet Milk carton while nearby his mother offers a box of chewing gum to impassive pedestrians hurrying from here to there. If I were to say all of this, I too would be correct, or as correct as my words would let me.

And we both would be wrong. Even if you defined your terms with precision, they would err. Even if I chose the perfect word, it would mislead. This is true because Mexico changes. It doesn't stay constant. What was correct and firm yesterday at noon, the afternoon rains have washed away, and today there is a different city. Like the day I saw the little girl.

That day, the rains had done their job, and it was a new Mexico. The sun had risen with the vigor that it must have had on that first day the Aztec rekindled the world, and its rays came through the cleaned air to caress the city. A drop of moisture, left over from the rain, ran down the leaf of a plant springing up from a crack in a wall and then dangled in ecstasy as the sunlight gently touched it with a sparkle. With nature so transformed, the city was forced to follow. The traffic, which the day before was a snarling monster, became, under nature's spell, an exciting spectacle of courage and derring-do, and you wanted to applaud the skill of the individual drivers as they wove in and out, a gas pedal here, a gear shift there, and horn, a lot of horn everywhere—but with the magic of the morning the deafening honks become taunting calls that dare opponents to meet the challenger at the next red light. You admired the mother on the corner, her strong face, her black hair, her *rebozo* gracefully draped on sturdy shoulders, and you marveled at the way she lent her dignity to hawking gum on the streets. You had to smile at the baby sitting up in his cardboard carton, his enormous brown eyes exploring with trustful curiosity the world beyond the edge of his Pet Milk universe and his face constantly prepared to break into a big grin at the wonderful joy of it all.

I say "you" because the world that I was in had so changed that for a minute I thought that you were there, with me, as I walked down broad Juárez Avenue, passed the greenery of the Alameda, and approached the Hotel Prado. I wanted you there, to share the wonderful adventure of simply being, of being right then, at that point, together, in our lives.

Of course I was mistaken. You were off, somewhere, lost in a book by the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, enchanted by the elegant curvature of his logic as he orchestrated it through a symphony of binary contrasts. Foolish me. How could simply being there, on Juárez, passing the Alameda, and approaching the Prado, compare to such an exotic journey? Well, to each his own trip, and I was on mine, enchanted too, by all I could see, smell, touch, and even taste. Then it happened, the scream, the look, and the tears.

Only a few minutes before, she had been sitting against the wall of the theater next door to the Prado. In front of her, she had neatly unfolded a white square of cloth and on it arranged piles of pecans. She had placed the pecans equidistant from one another and from the edges and corners of the cloth. On top of each pile, she had with careful thumb and finger positioned a partially shelled nut in anticipation that the firm, yellow fruit thus exposed would entice a passerby to make a purchase. Unlike other street vendors, she did not harangue the crowds with calls to come and buy, but knelt quietly, her small body perfectly composed against the building's wall, and her livelihood positioned before her: yellow-topped, brown pyramids ordered into rows and columns on a square, white field. Rather than simply selling pecans, it was as if she had prepared an offering to the busy adult world that towered above her. At that moment, she screamed.

A van pulled up to the curb, and two men, the driver and his companion, got out, and without a glance or moment's hesitation, walked purposefully through the sidewalk crowd, passing just in front of me, and stopped before the little girl. She remained kneeling, her hands folded in her lap, her body pushed against the building, her head thrown back, and her mouth open, and from her mouth poured out a sound that rose above all other sounds in that world of sounds, dominating them, subduing them, and turning them into insignificant squeaks. If God, sitting on his throne in heaven, ever heard utter despair, he surely heard that girl's soul as it broke apart.

One man reached down and scooped up the cloth, made it into a bag, and handed it to his partner. The two turned back into the indifferent crowd, tossed the bag into the back of the van, and drove off.

A young attendant came out of the foyer of the theater and knelt beside the girl, careful to tuck the skirt of her uniform away from the dirt of the sidewalk. She put her hand, not unkindly, on the girl's shoulders.

"*No llores, niña, no llores*," she quietly pleaded and began picking up the few pecans left scattered about. She reached for the brown paper sack the girl had near her, and as she hurriedly threw in the pecans, she whispered again, "*No llores*."

Two well-dressed, older ladies, their fat purses held safely against equally large bosoms, paused on their high heels to look down.

"*¿Qué pasa?*" one asked the attendant.

"*Nada*," came the reply, and to ensure they understood and would go on wherever they were going, the young lady replied again, "*Nada, nada. Nada pasa aquí.*"

The attendant, glancing back into the foyer and in answer to a querulous command coming from its darkness, got up, and pulled the child erect as she did so. She handed the girl the paper sack, and told her once again, this time her voice a hiss as she scurried back to her station, "*No llores.*"

A chauffeur, standing beside a Mercedes awaiting its passengers from the Prado, crossed over to the girl and gave her the change from his pocket. When he came back, I asked, "*¿Qué pasa?*" "*Nada*" was his first word, but he added, "*No tiene licencia.* "*¿Cómo?*" I asked. "*Licencia. Licencia. Los derechos. No paga. Ella*," came the closed-mouth answer, the sounds barely escaping the drawn lips as if the chauffeur were afraid of his own words. "*Nada pasa*" was his final statement, the words punctuated by the firm shut of the Mercedes' door, the driver now finished with both me and the girl.

She was still there, against the building, holding the sack with both hands, the tears flowing, but soundless, not a sob or even a sniffle.

I reached into my pocket, took out my billfold, thumbed it open—the face of my own sixth-grade daughter staring at me in the precious rigidity of a school photograph—and took out several bills. The girl saw me, and her face hardened like the gray concrete behind her. She stuck out her hand, and when I reached out to give her the money, she snatched it away, curling it in her fist, stuffing it in her skirt pocket, and not giving it a glance—her eyes fixed on me, cased in tears which she was bringing, through a stubborn hardening, to a stop. Only little girls cry, and she was now knowledgeable in the ways of adults.

Don't cry, little girl. Don't cry. Nothing has happened. Nothing has happened here. The attendant, not much older than you and already in uniform, says so and has so informed the well-dressed curious. They, who have done so well in their lives, believe her, so shouldn't you?

No, nothing is happening here, little girl. The chauffeur says so, and he drives an expensive Mercedes carrying important people on their important trips from here to there and back again. He says it's nothing. You simply don't have permission to earn a living. To get permission, to have that right, you have to pay a fee. That's all. It is nothing.

Nothing is happening, so don't cry. Adults don't want you to cry. It makes them uneasy. It makes them think that something is not right, that something is happening. That's the reason they gave you the money, to keep anything from happening. They don't like things to happen, like little girls crying in public, on busy Juárez Avenue. That's the reason they always say that nothing is happening and give you money to make sure it doesn't.

Having finished accusing me of every sin I ever committed and some of yours too, the girl's eyes became completely dry except for one small and stubborn tear refusing to fall from its perch on an eyelash. Then it

too dropped, a last rivulet of her childhood, and she brought up her hand to wipe it away in disgust. How could she have ever cried! She turned to join the other adults, busy with their business, and became one of the many figures moving away into their going, and so disappeared.

The sun, having spent itself in the procreation of the morning, now grew pale, and the afternoon promised in its small future to revert back to yesterday's stagnant past. With the sun so weak, the traffic beast rose again and curled its obnoxious body around the remains of the day, squeezing out the last ounce of its freshness. At the street corner, the little boy twisted his small body into a corner of the milk carton where he fought to preserve his tiny self even as a dark ooze spread between his legs. Her dignity burned away by desperation, the mother thrust out her hand at those moving past to become a pitiful demand in a city of such demands.

I too turned away, turned away and left, left Juárez, the Alameda, and the Prado. I turned away and left, and now I'm here, and I turn to you with my question.

You already know the question. You are smart as well as wise. But wait. Wait before you tell me that you don't know the answer because there isn't one, and turn away too. At least let me be certain that you see the question itself and that you recognize the way in which it asks itself, how it circles around us and includes all within its encompassing accusation: the attendant in her uniform, the well-dressed in their easily convinced high heels, the chauffeur back in his Mercedes with the door firmly shut, and the two men in the van, certainly them, in their officialdom of *licencia* and *derechos*, and more; the city in its absorbing enormity, the country in its dull poverty, and the Glorious Revolution in its studied corruption, and more yet; our country and its insatiability that bites off greater and greater chunks of the world's wealth, leaving less and less and eventually nothing at all; and finally, you and me and our profession, the terms you define and the words I choose, responding to the hand offering a package of gum, to the tiny body tossing in a cardboard carton, and to the tears now all dried under the harsh light of adulthood, responding to these happenings by calling them fieldwork and so making them into an everyday, workaday *nada*, a normal nothing; just so that is clear, I'll ask you once more, "Who's to blame?"

Chapter 14

Forty Years of Conflict: State, Church, and Spontaneous Representation of Massacres and Murder in Guatemala

Matthew J. Taylor and Michael K. Steinberg

Images of Guatemala

Guatemala, 1962–present: Two hundred thousand murdered and disappeared Guatemalans, one hundred and fifty thousand Guatemalans seek refuge outside of their patria *(homeland), one and a half million internally displaced Guatemalans escape violence, countless orphans and widows, indelible scars of horror deeply ingrained in the minds of victims and perpetrators alike, and counting . . .*

—CEH 1999

No doubt, Guatemala's hidden war exacted an onerous toll on both indigenous and Ladino (non-indigenous) minds and hearts.[1] The publication of the United Nations sponsored *Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio* (CEH 1999) and the Guatemalan Office of the Archbishop's *Guatemala: Nunca Más* (REMHI 1998) reveal to the outside world, in horrific detail, the acts and impacts of almost 40 years of violence. These grisly tomes

documenting death and destruction in Guatemala's towns and countryside permit, in the words of a witness,

> *Que la historia que pasamos*
> *quede en las escuelas,*
> *para que no se olvide,*
> *para que nuestros hijos la conozcan.*
> (So that the history we experienced
> stays in schools,
> so that it is not forgotten,
> so that our children know what happened).
> (CEH 1999, vol. 5: 9).

The printed page provides a permanent place for the victims of Guatemala's genocide.[2] Most Guatemalans, however, cannot read or write. How then, do these Guatemalans externalize their memory?

Mention of Guatemala conjures up many exotic images. These images include past and present Maya cultures; majestic Maya temples surrounded by tropical forest, smoking volcanoes, military dictators behind dark sunglasses, and grave human rights violations.[3] Guatemala's natural and cultural diversity at first attracts researchers and travelers. Yet these tourists and academic voyeurs often, upon delving deeper into Guatemala's realities, feel compelled to reveal the other side of this small nation's beauty. This contradictory facet of Guatemala is reflected in writings about Guatemala. Recent titles include: George Lovell's *A Beauty that Hurts: Life and Death in Guatemala*, Richard Adams' *Crucifixion by Power*, Jim Handy's *Gift of the Devil: A History of Guatemala, Shattered Hope* by Piero Gleijeses, Robert Carmack's *Harvest of Violence: Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*, Jean-Marie Simon's *Guatemala: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny*, and Jennifer Schirmer's *The Guatemalan Military Project: A Violence Called Democracy*. These titles suggest the conflicting relationship these scholars have with their field locations. Guatemalan landscapes exude beauty, but hidden within that beauty lies pain and a history of extreme inequalities and continued repression. When we read the landscape more closely, the beauty appears tarnished or obliterated, just like many Guatemalan families and villages during the "problematic time." We explore these contradictions by presenting images of contrasting landmarks, memorials, and other landscape features associated with the Guatemalan civil war that ended in 1996 with an internationally brokered peace accord between guerilla groups and the state.

How to Read Guatemalan Landscapes

We examined Guatemala's landscape for the presence of memorials and less intentional landmarks related to the recently concluded armed conflict. We did this while journeying through mountainous rural areas in the Department of Huehuetenango and Ixíl country in the Department of Quiché. We also slogged through tropical lowlands of Ixcán area in the extreme north of Quiché and Huehuetenango. We spoke to locals about how they remember thousands of massacre victims. Upon entering a town or village, for example, we often approached officials in municipal buildings that surround the central plaza of most Guatemalan communities. Enquiries to local police officers and other municipal employees about the existence of memorials (or other ways in which the dead are remembered) that commemorate "the conflict" were received with incredulous stares. Officials often denied the existence of any monuments even if their office sat a mere 50 meters from the Catholic cathedral containing hundreds of crosses that record the name and date of each massacred or disappeared person. We often had to ask long and hard before being pointed to any monuments that commemorate victims because locals still fear talking about the past.

We focused on these rural areas of Guatemala because at the height of conflict in the early 1980s this region bore the brunt of insurgency and counter-insurgency campaigns and thus earned the "red" label from government security forces. Red zones consisted of enemy territories, where "no distinction was made between *guerilleros* (anti-state insurgency forces) and their peasant supporters. Both were to be attacked and obliterated" (Schirmer 1998, 42).[4] These areas received military "attention" during the civil war because, for a short time at least, they were strongholds for the rebel forces, especially the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) (Ball et al. 1999; Falla 1992; Lovell 1990; Manz 1988; Montejo 1992; Moreno 1998; Payeras 1998; Stoll 1993). We also crossed Lake Atitlán to Santiago Atitlán to investigate how this town remembers the recent violence and the murder of a U.S. priest. The search for monuments also led to Guatemala City. Intense violence wracked the city in the early 1980s and formed the point from which generals and government officials planned counter-insurgency campaigns and subsequent peace negotiations (Payeras 1987).

We became intrigued by what we saw and, just as importantly, what we did not see regarding public memory and commemoration of the civil war. Driving through the poorly maintained back roads and living with residents of former conflict zones, we found it hard to believe that this area formed the focus of state orchestrated murder, massacre, disappearances, and refuge

(Green 1999; Zur 1998). Jean-Marie Simon (1987, 16) warns that "many of those who now travel there will be hard pressed to imagine the enormity of its tragedy." An uninformed traveler, tourist, or aid worker not versed in Guatemala's recent violent history and not specifically looking for landmarks, might easily continue unaware of clandestine graves and thousands of wooden crosses, one for each victim, nailed to the walls of village churches. In Ixcán for instance, we stayed in villages "wiped off the map" by military actions in the early 1980s that show no signs of past conflict—in fact the military often built model villages on the ashes of destroyed community centers (CEIDEC 1990; Nelson 1999). It is in these very villages, as González (1998, 13–14) bluntly relates,

> in every corner of Yichkan [Ixcán], every turn of the roads of Yichkan, every corner of the bleeding fatherland, every spot was a silent witness to massacres and tortures. The land, the face of the earth, was splattered with the blood of her children. The rivers became the veins of the community in which the blood of the people flowed . . . it was like cutting down a great forest . . . more than four hundred villages were wiped off the face of the earth.

In fact, little evidence of any type of conflict remained after a few months. Simon (1987, 8) poignantly recalls: "scorched earth was overgrown with corn six months later; refugee camps where helicopters dumped grieving widows and children were renamed and reconstructed over razed huts; and model villages were built on top of these camps, often over the ashes of the dead."[5] It is on this landscape that rural survivors must remember. Often, their remembering is an inconspicuous everyday act; simply by living in a humble house that sits on the foundations of a former house, people are remembering. The site of the massacre becomes the monument. These are, intangibly yet palpably, memories of the mind, memories that leave no obvious permanent mark on the visible landscape.

State versus Spontaneous Memories and Memorials

Although few in number, landmarks in post-conflict Guatemala point to a continuing struggle as to how two opposing sides—the state and victims of the state—represent the years of *problemas*. The paucity of overtly public landmarks in many villages and towns severely affected by the war illustrates how residents continue to negotiate and struggle with the aftermath and realities of postwar life and indicates little closure for victims and survivors

of violence. Alternatively, the absence of monuments may reflect how people choose to internalize their experiences and use their own bodies as sites of resistance and as a way to continue the daily struggle of survival. Internalizing grief may be the only strategy for survival in a country where, in the words of Linda Green (1999), "fear is a way of life." Many rural folk do not see the new government as a significant departure from previous regimes. In fact, under the Portillo government (2000–2004) the tenuous strings of peace are stretched to a maximum as politically motivated murders, land conflicts, and mob lynching continue.[6] Although some Guatemalans feel slightly more inclined to reveal their political leanings and feelings surrounding the war, many remain guarded for fear of future reprisals.

How can villagers build monuments to the dead when many members of civil patrols (government created militias called *Patrulleros de Autodefensa Civil*—PAC), who often participated in military-sanctioned violence directed at other villagers accused of supporting guerillas, continue to live among relatives of the victims?[7] Thus, many survivors of the war receive little or no closure because they must constantly interact with those who abducted, tortured, or killed their loved ones. Given that both perpetrators and victims continue to live side-by-side, and that communal graves are only now being excavated to provide some sort of closure for relatives (e.g., Prensa Libre 2001b), the momentum to construct public memorials is delayed or muted. Eduardo Galeano attributes such apprehension to the fact that,

> *Guatemala sufre de una historia official mutilada . . . como que si recordar fuera peligrosa, porque recordar es repetir el pasado como una pesadilla*
>
> (Guatemala suffers from an official history that is mutilated . . . as though it is dangerous to remember, because to remember is to repeat the past like a nightmare.) (cited in Wilson 1998)

Certainly, much written work document the last 40 years of "unrest" in Guatemala—this in itself is a memory. Detailed accounts of death and destruction (Ball, Kobrack, and Spirer 1999; CEH 1999; REHMI 1998) and personal testimonies (e.g., Diocesis del Quiché 1994; González 1998; Menchú 1984; Montejo 1987 and 1992), rapidly multiply in the "safer to speak" climate of the late 1990s and early years of the twenty-first century.[8] Despite the proliferation of printed memories, the words remain unknown to Guatemala's illiterate population. Moreover, only a small portion of the literate population can access the "published memories" that appear to satisfy an international and academic demand for accountability.[9] For example, the exhaustive details found in *Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio*

(CEH 1999) cover 12 volumes and cost over U.S. $100. The text and figures now also reside on compact disk, making the information even less accessible to most Guatemalans. The REMHI (1998) publication totals four volumes and sells for U.S. $70, and a summary of the four volumes sells for about U.S. $40.

The memory of those most affected by the war—those who will never access the documents produced by national and international truth commissions, which present a very official, impersonal memory—lies in the hands of the church and the state.

The Catholic Church

Most landmarks commemorating the victims of Guatemala's turmoil fall under the auspices of the Catholic Church. Small crosses inside Catholic Churches bearing the names and dates of murder or disappearance form the only tangible memorial in many villages and towns impacted by the violence (figure 14.1). The Catholic Church consistently plays the role of unofficial "moral conscience" because its members and clergy were (and continue to be) persecuted during the conflict. The military targeted members of the Catholic

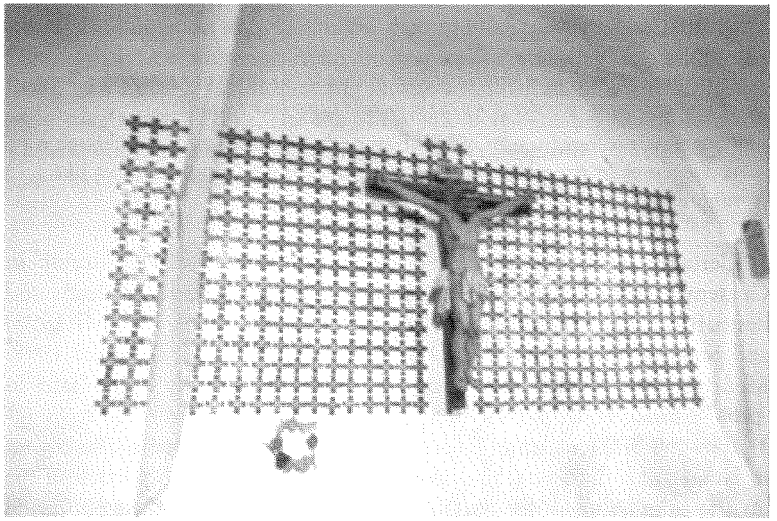


Figure 14.1 Inside the Catholic Church in San Juan Cotzal, Quiché.
Photo by: Michael Steinberg.

clergy who embraced Liberation Theology, labeling them as dissenters and guerilla collaborators—these men and women did not last long in the Guatemalan countryside (Diocesis del Quiché 1994; Falla 1992 and 1993). Harassment and assassinations of Catholic Church members continues even after the signing of the peace treaty in 1996. Most infamously, Bishop Juan Gerardi, chair of the Catholic Church's Recovery of Historical Memory project (REMHI), was murdered two days after presenting REMHI's findings to the public on 26 April 1998. More recently, on May 8, 2001, another member of the Church, Sister Barbara Ford, was murdered, in part (according to some of our sources in Guatemala) for assisting in the development of the REMHI project. The REMHI project recorded over 6,500 testimonials that detailed over 55,000 humans rights violations, including 25,000 deaths. Strangely, although no large public monument in Guatemala City honors the hundreds of thousands of deaths and disappearances, a large monument, uncovered on April 26, 2000, at a ceremony commemorating the second anniversary of his assassination, commemorates Bishop Gerardi (Nunca Más 2000). Does this monument to Gerardi vicariously represent the victims of 440 village massacres with the words "*Guatemala Nunca Más*" (Guatemala Never Again) replacing the names of the dead?

The Church, through landmarks and memorials to the dead and disappeared, reminds parishioners and the military of human suffering caused by military actions. The large mural (figure 14.2) painted on the wall of the Catholic Church grounds in Cantabal, Ixcán, and the placement of hundreds of individual crosses inside the Catholic Churches in Nebaj, San Juan Cotzal, and Santiago Atitlán attempt to formalize the past and educate

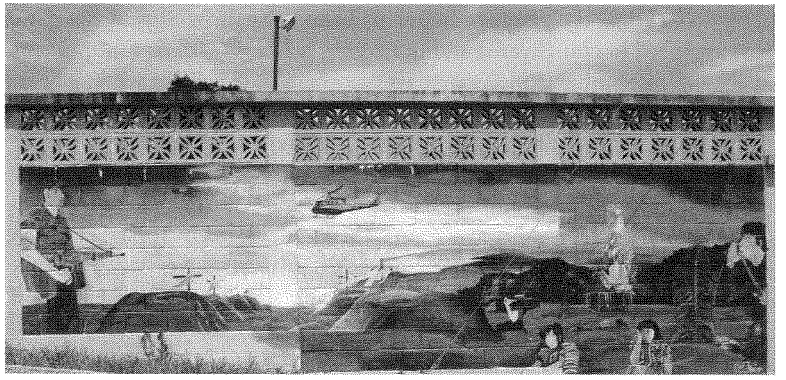


Figure 14.2 This 15-meter-wide mural is painted on the perimeter wall of the Catholic Church in Cantabal, Ixcán. This full-color mural was painted in January 2001, a full four years after signing the peace treaty in December 1996.
Photo by: Matthew Taylor.

new generations about past atrocities.[10] The Catholic Church in Chajul contains a powerful mural that depicts dead community members and a woman bent in mourning over the prostrate bodies. The mural is entitled "In memory of our martyrs" (Diocesis del Quiché 1994, p. 200).

The Catholic Church in Santiago Atitlán also contains a memorial to Father Stanley Rother, and American priest who was killed on church grounds on July 28, 1981 and whose remains are interred there. As one arrives by boat to Santiago Atitlán visitors see no obvious, open memorials to the town's troubled past, or of the public outcry that military occupation and repression sparked—again memories remain deep in the folds of the Church. In Santiago Atitlán no overt landmarks in tourist areas indicate the confrontation between the townsfolk and the military that left 19 people dead and which eventually led to popular resistance and the forced abandonment of the town by the military in 1990—the first successful ousting of the military in Guatemala (Carlsen 1997). If tourists do trek up to the town center, up the steep streets laden with arts and crafts, and make their way into the dimly lit church, they finally reach the memorials. But, is the significance of the tiny brass crosses on a side wall lost on people who come to experience Guatemala's indigenous cultures and natural beauty? Tourists do not make the journey to Santiago to relive a violent past. The crosses on the church wall maybe then, if we think of their intent, serve their purpose—they commemorate the dead for friends and family who frequent the church.

The Catholic Church provides refuge for public commemoration and protest against the actions of the military. The construction of monuments inside churches or on church grounds is the first step toward construction of more public monuments. Foote, Tóth, and Arvay (2000) observed a similar scenario in Hungary, where monuments banned by the communist regimes first appeared in churchyards and cemeteries before the fall of communism.

Not all monuments in Guatemala commemorate civilian victims of the civil war. The military also suffered losses. We now turn to examine how the military represent their soldiers who died on the line of duty.

State Sponsored Monuments

The Military

When interpreting the conflict, the Guatemalan military, plays the role of state "savior," without whom a leftist takeover was imminent. The military's portrayal of the war is vastly different than that of the Catholic Church.

Their landmarks and memorials often stress sacrifice, unity, national service, and power. In contrast to monuments created by the Catholic Church, military and government landmarks figure prominently in public spaces and take on official tones in both form and content.

After announcing our arrival to Ixcán by thundering across the metal sheets of the bridge spanning the turbulent waters of the Chixoy River, we hit the brakes of the pickup truck to ease over speed bumps, which, at the same time, allows the soldier in an elevated guard post to give us the once over. Next, signs on the massive block wall of the military base at Playa Grande (near Cantabal) flood our vision. The signs invite locals and travelers to visit the military museum inside the walls—the only regional military museum in the country. Paradoxically, or maybe intentionally, this museum sits in the heart of the zone that experienced the most intense conflict in the 1980s and 1990s.

The displays in the museum reinforce the portrayal of sacrifice and salvation of the people from insurgents by the military. For example, a display describes the role of the air force in the counter-insurgency campaign as the *guardian del Ixcán* (guardian of Ixcán). Museum displays include photographs of captured weapons, captured rebels, and battleground scenes—features that emphasize military victory and power. Other displays include tributes to military losses such as photographs, examples of field accommodations, and lists of officers killed in the Ixcán, all which emphasize sacrifice to the state. The military depiction of the guerillas is far from objective. Every verbal and written mention of the guerrillas or insurgents presented to visitors to the museum is prefaced by the word "delinquents."[11] An inspection of the visitor's logbook reveals that most visitors to the museum are local. Locals, who once feared the military, can now openly visit the site of their own torture, pain, and imprisonment.[12]

The Guatemalan armed forces in the Ixcán also constructed roadside memorials in honor of their casualties. Two of the monuments sit on the side of the *Transveral del Norte* (the Northern Transversal route), a road network constructed in the late 1960s and early 1970s by the state to gain access to oil deposits, large tracts of land, and nascent guerilla camps (Kading 1999; Le Bot 1995). One of the roads cuts east to west though the *Franja Transversal del Norte* (Northern Transversal Strip), parts of which are known as "the land of the generals" because members of the military elite appropriated large tracts of land for cattle ranches and for the promise of oil wealth.

One roadside monument sits at the entrance to the village of San Lucas in the Ixcán. Guatemalan troops occupied this village and created a temporary outpost here for further forays into the rainforests of the Ixcán. Although the monument is slightly defaced, soldiers from the base in Playa Grande saw fit to give the monument a bright yellow coat of paint early in

2001. This new coat of paint represents the new self-proclaimed relationship of the Guatemalan military with Ixcán residents, a relationship in which the military "defends and protects the communities to maintain a peaceful atmosphere in which integral development can occur" (Girón 2000, 3). Yellow is the color associated with the large road building machines that the military now uses; yellow, then, renders a positive air of prosperity and development. Previously, all monuments and machinery bore military olive green paint. With time, though, the yellow coat chips and fades to reveal true military origins—drab olive green.

The monument serves several purposes. In the rainy season, before construction of a shelter, locals sat on the dry concrete base while they wait for transport to nearby Cantabal, or, now that a bridge crosses the formidable Ixcán River, to Barillas in Huehuetenango. The monument lists the names of army engineers killed by guerrillas while they built the road. In this sense, the monument serves its intended purpose—to commemorate the road builders killed by "delinquent" guerrillas. This monument also served its (un) intended purpose by triggering the memory of an Ixcán resident who told me of his experiences as a PAC member, his relationships with military commanders in Playa Grande, and the orders from above that he and other PAC members received to search and destroy suspected guerrilla sympathizers.

The other bright yellow roadside monument is in the form of a castle found on the Army Corps of Engineers emblem. The bright yellow castle also commemorates the death of army road builders. It was barely noticeable until the recent painting campaign brought attention to the diminutive structure by clearing away encroaching secondary growth and by carving a stairway through the red lateritic rainforest soils from the road to the monument itself.

The Government

On December 26, 1996, PAN (National Party for Advancement) and URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit) signed an internationally negotiated peace agreement that ended almost 40 years of internal conflict. The government erected several monuments that commemorate the peace treaty and victims of the conflict. These monuments always include a dove and the following phrase: "firm and lasting peace." Although these structures represent significant events in Guatemala's history, they are not significant structures themselves. The diminutive nature of the peace monuments is clearly illustrated by the eternal flame and plaque set in the ground in Guatemala City's national plaza. This monument—one-meter high in glory—fades into insignificance against the backdrop of the National Palace, which is still guarded by troops in combat fatigues carrying automatic weapons.

When we visited the peace memorial in mid-2001, the "eternal" flame did not burn, orange peels and trash cluttered the glass case, which sits atop a small stone block. To top off this poor appearance, graffiti adorned the glass casing. When ignited, "the flame is the size of a Bunsen burner" (Smith 2001). Given the length of the civil war (36 years), and associated human suffering, we must question why the state constructed such a small monument. All the same, it is surprising that the state *did* acquiesce to build a monument in Guatemala's most public space. Perhaps answers to our questioning and doubts surface upon examination of the vague and noncommittal words inscribed on the side of the monument, "*A los heroes anónimos de la paz*" (to the anonymous heroes of the peace).

Another diminutive monument to war and peace competes with food vendors and video games in Nebaj, Quiché, the southernmost town in hard-hit Ixíl country. Curiously, the barbed wire bounded memorial stands in a hidden corner of the town square. The unstable appearance of the white dove instills little sense of celebration, or even solemn remembrance. Instead, the monument resembles military-controlled model villages during the 1980s, some of which the military encircled with barbed wire to maintain direct control of residents' movements (CEIDEC 1990; Falla 1992). The paint-spattered plaque below the white dove repeats vague nationalistic apologies for the war. The text informs us that this monument honors

> our brothers who perished in the armed conflict, hoping that this event will never occur again. The people of Nebaj and the municipality offer this monument as a symbol of the new democratic cohabitation and culture of firm and lasting peace.

In Nebaj the real homage to rural Guatemalans resides a mere 20 meters away inside the nearby Catholic Church in the form of hundreds of wooden crosses, which bear the details of each victim of terror (figure 14.3). The crosses come from the people and are personal in regard to their message or content (i.e., someone important to me died). The official memorials, in contrast, are vague and platitudinous, and ignored. On the other hand, the military memorials tout their position, power, and achievements, and are imposed on the landscape.

The lack of investment in public monuments speaks of the current political and cultural climate in Guatemala and how the military and social elite struggle to acknowledge their role in the violence of the past. Despite wide publication and recognition of Guatemala's atrocious human rights record, many upper- and middle-class Guatemalans retort that academics and international agencies side with the Indians and the left. Further, because the elite were physically, as much as geographically, removed from

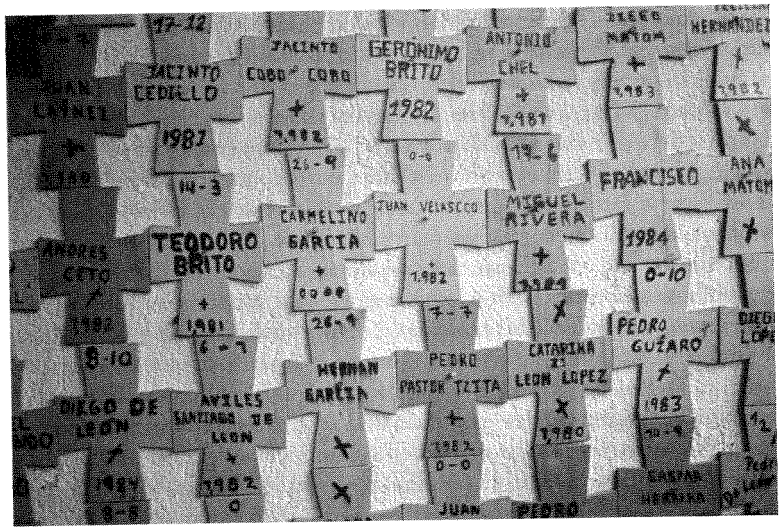


Figure 14.3 Small wooden crosses on the inside wall of the Catholic Church in Nebaj, Quiché record the name and date of death of victims.

Photo by: Michael Steinberg.

the worst violence in the countryside, they refuse to recognize the magnitude of massacres in rural Guatemala. For example, the minister of defense in 2001, Eduardo Arévalo Lacs, when referring to rapes and land seizures by ex-PAC members in Quiché in July 2001, simply stated that "*ex patrulleros civiles ya no hay, porque fueron disueltos hace años*" (there are no longer any ex-civil patrollers because they were dissolved years ago). In this statement he absolves the military of all responsibility in this case (Prensa Libre 2001c).

The static nature of Guatemala's power structure and class relations means that the state will probably not fund more meaningful monuments representing the violence and victims of almost four decades of war. The act of remembering will remain in the hands of the church and communities that fund their own projects. The highly centralized Guatemalan state and life in the capital city bear little relation to the countryside, so in some respect, rural folk (about 60 percent of the population) increasingly follow their own plans for transforming spaces into places of mourning.

Spontaneous Monuments

Some rural communities in Guatemala, in the face of institutional neglect, construct their own monuments to victims and conduct yearly memorial

services on the anniversary dates of village massacres (Noack 2001). For example, a large monument commemorates the massacre in Cuarto Pueblo, Ixcán (figure 14.4). This twenty-foot high, blue and white concrete structure bears brass plaques listing about 470 residents of Cuarto Pueblo, Xalbal, Zunil, Los Angeles, and Ixtahuacan Chiquito murdered in military massacres in March and April, 1982.[13] A small plaque on the front of the memorial commemorates Father Guillermo Woods, a Maryknoll missionary involved in the early stages of Ixcán colonization in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Morrissey 1978). Father Woods died when the plane he piloted from Guatemala City to Ixcán mysteriously crashed. Many Guatemalans believe the military "downed" the plane (Falla 1992). Candle wax stains the concrete steps around the monument, testament to the active—and ritualistic—use of this site.

González (1998) depicts another spontaneous site and relays plans to build a memorial in the shape of a pyramid in Nueva Esparanza, Huehuetenango.[14] And, in Dos Erres, Petén, where 180 members of the community were massacred and thrown into a well in 1982, the community plans to construct a monument at the site of the well and in the center of the village (Rosales 2000). Residents of Nimlaha'kok in Alta Verapaz and

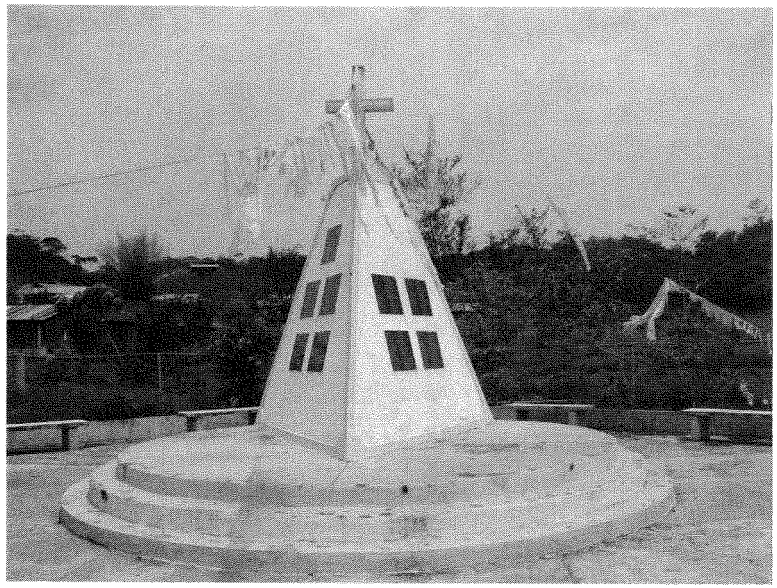


Figure 14.4 The large monument in Cuarto Pueblo, Ixcán. Built by local residents, this white and blue monument records the names of over 470 residents murdered in Cuarto Pueblo, Xalbal, Zunil, Los Angeles, and Ixtahuacan Chiquito by the Guatemalan military in March in April 1982.

Photo by: Matthew Taylor.

Río Negro outside Rabinal remember massacres and victims by inscribing their names in monuments (Wilson 1997).

A statue of an indigenous woman breaking an M-16 rifle over her head is perhaps the most public and overt memorial in Guatemala (figure 14.5).

Figure 14.5 Monument of an indigenous women in the plaza of Chimaltenango. An indigenous woman breaks an M-16 rifle symbolizing the end of 40 years of civil war. This monument occupies a prominent place in the plaza of Chimaltenango.
Photo by: Matthew Taylor.

The three meter-high base and statue stand in the busy town square of Chimaltenango, a majority Indigenous town 80 kilometers west of Guatemala City. This memorial occupies a prominent place in the central plaza, which still forms an integral part of social life in many Latin American towns and cities (Low 2000). The plaque tells us about the

> thousands and thousands of martyrs who fought for peace with social justice of the Maya Kaqchikel people and non-indigenous people who were: kidnapped, disappeared, tortured, massacred, and murdered by the repressive forces of the last thirty-six years. (My translation of a section of the inscription from the statue's base.)

Residents of Chimaltenango meet, eat, polish shoes, chat, read, gossip, flirt, and simply stroll around the plaza. Erected in January 1997, a mere few weeks after the beginning of "official" peace in Guatemala, the statue makes a bold statement in a time of tender peace. We must note, however, the restrained and vague language used in the memorial. Placing the blame for the violence on "repressive forces" perhaps allows the statue to stand—no specifics about "responsible" forces surface in the text. Even if locals far from the capital decide to "finger" the government and openly blame the masterminds and perpetrators of massacres, they remain immune to justice because the June 1994 accord that established the UN-administered Clarification Commission (CEH 1999) stipulates that the information produced "will not individualize responsibility, nor have any legal implications" (Wilson 1997).

Unintended markers of the past

Unplanned markers of past strife riddle Guatemale's countryside. These features provide subtle but important insights into Guatemala's post-conflict environment, and, although unplanned, provide residents with a permanent memory of past events. Driving east from Huehuetenango to Cobán by a back road that hugs the foothills of the rugged Cuchumatán Mountains, we encountered the official road sign that announces the entry into the Ixíl Triangle, Quiché. The sign—a leftover from "those times of the guerillas"—is riddled with bullet holes. It is a constant reminder of Guatemala's worst massacres and remains standing despite the complete inundation of rural Guatemala with new signs advertising banks, money transfer services, fuel stations, development projects, and motels. What is the intent of leaving such a sign in Ixíl country?

Another public sign of the past, sadly common in many postwar countries warns residents of unexploded munitions. These posters dot the sides of wooden houses in both Ixcán and Ixíl country. Adding further insult to injury, farmers who were denied access to their fields during the height of the conflict so that the military could better control them, now cannot farm those same mine-strewn fields and forests.

These signs contrast with the stunning physical and cultural landscape of the Ixíl area, which includes mountainscapes, picturesque wheat and maize fields, and seemingly idyllic villages. Travelers and tourists admire the remote beauty of Nebaj and surrounding villages, but without cues to the violent past, visitors often succumb to the scenery and the beautiful geometric designs unique to the cloth weavings of the area. Visitors seldom realize that they stand in the middle of former "red" zones of death and destruction. The clues to the past lie deep in the recesses of the Catholic Church in the form of thousands of individually carved crosses bearing the name, age, and date of death of each victim. Other clues lie in the military base a few kilometers outside Nebaj (here no signs invite visitors to inspect the military interpretation of recent events), and an abandoned landing strip (formerly known as "Camp New Life") used in the past to launch bombing missions on isolated Ixíl villages and suspected guerilla camps.

Other public landmarks of the conflict include military outposts at certain strategic geographic locations, such as bridges crossing the Chixoy and Xaclbal rivers in the Ixcán. Over the months of living in Ixcán and traversing its muddy roads with residents, we noted that each time we passed a military checkpoint (current or past) the locals we accompanied broke into stories related to that point in the road. Soldiers carrying automatic weapons still occupy some outposts. We were not allowed to photograph any of the outposts or the soldiers. Again, one wonders about the purpose or message of soldiers guarding river crossings in a "peaceful" country? Because these military installations continue to stand ground in Ixcán and Ixíl country, centers of past guerilla and military activity, the message does not lie too deep beneath the surface. Their presence reminds locals of past and present power relations (e.g., Flores 2003). Military displays of power are especially relevant in the Ixcán, where, according to the soldier who led our tour of the military museum, two local villages continue to reject all government regulations and military control of the region. These villages are made up of residents from former Communities of Population in Resistance (CPR), and returning refugees who fled to Mexico in the 1980s.[15] These villages now enjoy protection because of the presence of international accompaniers and United Nation's officials, headquartered in Cantabal, who monitor the postwar activities of the military and verify social reforms promised in the 1996 peace treaty.[16]

Apart from the scars that remain on the minds and bodies of thousands of rural residents in highland towns, the military also left less obvious markers of their years of occupation. In many towns, such as Santa Ana Huista, Huehuetenango, motorists pass guard towers (albeit in ruins) at the entrance to towns where all travelers were stopped, questioned, and checked. These checkpoints stand firm in the memory of residents, who recount hardships endured when revision points functioned.

In the heart of Guatemala City, the military academy (Escuela Politécnica) also conveys a message of continued military power and presence to pedestrians and motorist transiting one of the capitals' busiest boulevards. This imposing building, paradoxically located adjacent to the trendy nightclub and restaurant-infested "Zona Viva," resembles a medieval castle and remains a dominant feature in the City, another reminder of the past to the thousands of buses and cars that pass every day. Memories pop into the minds of motorists when traffic slows to permit passage of armored Jeep Cherokees and Mercedes sedans emerging from the recesses of this formidable building. The armed soldiers who patrol the *La Politécnicas* walls send an intimidating image to pedestrians and motorists. The continued presence of armed, ready-for-combat military personnel in the heart of the capital city indicates Guatemala's incomplete transition to a civilian-controlled democracy.

Certainly, military checkpoints and soldiers patrolling in public spaces appear less commonplace today than in the 1980s and early 1990s. Automatic-weapon toting soldiers riding in the back of unmarked pick-up trucks, however, remain fixtures in Guatemala. Today, like the past, the military forms an integral part of the Guatemalan life. This comes as no surprise. Eduardo Galeano, a celebrated Latin American author who writes extensively about the permanent links between politics and the military in Guatemala, writes,

> The president of Guatemala does not wear a prison uniform, but he is a prisoner. The military, his gaolers, have given him permission to enter the National Palace. He has given them a promise of impunity for their killings and has assured them that he will not commit agrarian reform or any other sin. (Galeano 1967)

Given the recent history and influence of the military in most facets of Guatemalan daily life we cannot expect a radical transition from the past.

In contrast to the imposing presence of the Escuela Politécnica, Jean Marie Simon (1988, 95) points to small plaques and crosses remembering the dead (nonmilitary) scattered throughout Guatemala City. Simon provides examples of these more personal memoirs imprinted in city curbs and traffic islands. These spontaneous shrines constructed by families of

assassinated students and politicians do not receive any form of public funding or sanction.

Back out in the countryside, evangelical churches make up another powerful feature of the postwar landscape. Guatemala boasts the highest percentage of Protestant members for any Latin American country (although recent conversion rates appear slower with the ending of the war) (Green 1993; Stoll 1993). Although various factors explain the massive conversion to Protestantism, one common theory involves Efraín Ríos Montt, the general who governed Guatemala at the height of military-led massacres in the early 1980s. Ríos Montt, a member and vocal proponent of the "new" religion, claimed that Guatemalans represented the new Israelites. He aimed to create the first Evangelical, anticommunist state in Central America. Many Indian villagers joined Evangelical churches in part to prove allegiance to the state and to avoid persecution by the military (Green 1993; Le Bot 1995). Today Evangelical churches of various sects squeeze into even the smallest hamlets in the Guatemalan countryside. Their loud "broadcast style" of preaching and singing besieges the homes of both Catholics and Evangelicals. Stoll (1993, 5) states that, "the Catholic Church, driven underground after the army killed three Spanish priests and hundreds of local leaders, reported that parishioners were turning Protestant to save their lives." Catholicism was considered tantamount to communism and guerrilla insurgency because of its involvement with liberation theology, church supported cooperatives, and literacy programs, especially in the conflict zones (Green 1993).

Unlike their Catholic counterparts, Evangelical churches do not contain memorials to war victims simply because evangelists avoided some of the direct military persecution (Green 1993). Thus, places where evangelicals worship now symbolize the breakdown of the close-knit corporate, Catholic community that characterized many Maya villages before the war. This developed not only because villages split along denominational lines, but also because the civil patrols and the conflict in general allowed some individuals to violently seek retribution for past personal rivalries and vendettas (Green 1993; Falla 1992; Stoll 1993).

A final, unintended, trigger for memories lies in dead and rotting trees along RN9 (National Road 9) as one approaches the town San Mateo Ixtatán from the south. When we traveled through the foggy, cold, and remote reaches of the 3000 meter high Cuchumatán Mountain ranges, we wondered aloud why so many trees where left to rot in an area where wood is the most important source of fuel. We speculated that perhaps the trees succumbed to disease. Later, we discovered that the military forced local people to cut trees on either side of the road (30–40 meters) to guard against rebel ambushes (Castañeda Salguero 1998; Manz 1988).[17] Today, residents

of the area refuse to collect or remove the rotting wood. Residents of the area told Castañeda Salguero, "to leave the trees as they lie is like leaving the skeleton of somebody we did not kill. For that reason we do not collect the wood. And they will be there until they turn to dust" (my translation from the original Spanish, 109). Therefore, locals participate now in a subtle form of protest—they leave the tree trunks in place as testament to past atrocities.

Discussing Unsettled Landscapes in Post-Conflict Regions

Landmarks and memorials in a landscape, overt or discreet, play a powerful role in telling us about a people's values, history, struggles, and successes. Traditionally, landscape studies in the discipline of geography focused on material features expressive of folk, indigenous, and ethnic cultures, such as vernacular architecture, religious icons, settlements forms, and agricultural landforms (Domosh 1989; Hobbs 1995; Jordan 1982, 1985; Kniffen 1990; Mathewson 1984; Sauer 1925). More recently, socially and politically oriented landscape studies have started to examine the messages communicated in buildings, landmarks, and memorials (Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998; Cosgrove 1984; Gillis 1994; Lowenthal 1985; Till 1999, 2003). Most, if not all of these studies focus on landscapes in developed nations and within the context of contestation, but not open insurgency or full-scale warfare. The postcolonial world beyond the North Atlantic realm's of relatively tame symbolic and actual political terrains, offers rich, if horrific, material for interpretation and analysis. For example, post-revolutionary landscapes, including Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, and Guatemala have received little, if any, attention from geographers. A partial exception is the work of Foote, Tóth, and Arvay (2000) in Hungary. Foote and his colleagues analyze the change in political monuments and historical shrines in Hungary after the fall of the Communist government in 1989.

Perhaps the absence of post-conflict landscape analyses is not surprising given the paucity of monuments in areas of recent conflict. Many post-conflict regions still grapple with new regimes and power relations remain unsteady, thus no one side can claim public space in which to construct obvious landmarks. In other words, states and their citizens do not agree on what or how events should be remembered, thereby delaying construction of memorials or other landmarks (Till 1999). Moreover, many people, just like those in Guatemala, inhibit the desire to build spontaneous shrines for fear of reprisal. Also, post-conflict landscapes present problems of access to outsiders asking questions about past violence (see Santino 2001). Indeed,

many of the villages we visited in Guatemala witnessed brutal massacres, making some residents tentative to talk about past violence and how they plan to commemorate past events (Montejo 1987; REMHI 1998). In short, the absence of overt public landmarks and memorials makes the interpretation of post-conflict landscapes more challenging.

However subtle or limited in scale and number, examination of landmarks that do exist in post-conflict landscapes can provide important indicators of past and present political and social relationships. The presence, placement, and prominence of landmarks in post-conflict landscapes can tell the observer about who "won," or, if there are no clear victors, the continuing struggle for power. In the case of Guatemala, although the state successfully destroyed the armed opposition (and anyone remotely associated with it), the government of Alvaro Arzu signed a United Nations' monitored peace agreement in 1996 that mandated a reduction in numbers of armed personnel and the state military budget (Jonas 2000).[18] The state "victory" remains tainted among much of the Guatemalan citizenry because of the egregious human rights violations (especially against rural residents). Many Guatemalans, especially in rural areas, see the conflict solely as a ploy by the elite to protect economic and social interests. This ploy eliminated those individuals and groups who questioned the power structure within Guatemalan society (Diocesis de Quiché 1994; Kading 1999; Le Bot 1995). Power within Guatemala's post-conflict landscape—as reflected and captured in the landmarks—continues to settle along the dualities of rural and urban, rich and poor, Catholic and Protestant, and military and civilian.

In Guatemala power and social relations continue in a fashion similar to the years prior to the civil war. Ladino elites control politics, land, and capital. Unlike the power shift that Foote, Tóth, and Arvay (2000) document in postcommunist Hungary, Guatemala did not experience a major power shift. Therefore, the construction of new monuments and historical shrines that reflect the ideology of a new regime remains limited. Individuals in Guatemala who desire to construct memorials that contrast with the policies of the military and social elites often do so at great personal risk. In other parts of the world (e.g., Hungary) the radical change from one form of government to another distinct form allows the new government and the people it represents to decide which events and martyrs they wish to memorialize (Foote et al. 2000).

Conclusion

Geographer Steven Hoelscher (1998) writes, "what we see on the landscape . . . stems from the social, economic, and political ideologies of their creators and from their creative exigencies" (p. 390). In the case of Guatemala, the "creators" of the landscape continue to struggle and compete with one another regarding what is presented to the public. These presentations (both subtle and obvious landmarks and memorials) by groups of citizens, the Catholic Church, and the military/government offer radically different memories of the recently concluded civil war. The Catholic Church commemorates victims. The Guatemalan military emphasizes victory and power.

Sadly, for the people of Guatemala, a long-standing military desire to control the text of the landscape ensures continued tension and violence (e.g., Flores 2003). The military no longer drops bombs on indigenous villages in Ixíl country, but military forces and their allies continue to target individuals who seek to portray opposing landmarks and memories of the war (e.g., Nash 2002). The military (i.e., the state) eliminates anyone trying to create a different, victim-oriented post-conflict landscape. For example, Sister Barbara Ford was murdered for her role in the REMHI project. In a separate incident, ex-PAC members raped women, burned several houses, and forced villages off their plots of land in a Quiché village (Prensa Libre 2001a). The violence in Quiché was attributed to a long-running land dispute between returned refugees and members of the PAC who occupied the land in the absence of the refugees.

Monuments in contemporary Guatemalan landscapes reflect the torturous and tentative path to political and social reform. Competing markers in the landscape send contradictory messages to the Guatemalan public and the world. Memorials and landscape features commemorating victims slowly spread from books to inside churches, to exterior walls of churches and beyond. What will be the next step? Will monuments that provide details of massacres and murders find their way from isolated villages to Guatemala's most public places for all to see? Will the government and church openly sanctify spontaneous monuments and permit memories unfettered by fear? Or, will powerful segments within Guatemalan society continue to control the past?

Notes

1. The thousands of dead, disappeared, tortured, and displaced, and the hundreds of Mayan communities wiped off the map during the armed conflict all left indelible scars on the minds and hearts of Guatemalans. The impacts of the violence differ according to ethnicity, social class, economic status, gender, age, place of residence, political, and religious affiliation of individuals and social groups. Fear, fright, sadness, depression, sleeping disorders, lack of trust . . . are some of the symptoms frequently shown by people interviewed by CEH" (CEH 1999, Vol. 4, pp. 14–15).

2. The 12 volumes of CEH also reside on compact discs and on a searchable Web site hosted by the American Association for the Advancement of Science: <http://shr.aaas.org/guatemala/ceh/>
3. Many Mayan activists within and outside of Guatemala adopted the term "Maya," however, based on discussions with Guatemala's indigenous folk (i.e., nonacademic or activist) in the rural areas of Guatemala. We elect to use the term "indigenous" and "Indian" because most rural indigenous people self-identify using the terms "natural" or "indigena." They use the term "Maya" when referring to "nuestros antepasados" (our ancestors). We use the term "indigenous" not because we negate the relationship between the splendor of the classical Maya culture with their descendents, but because we prefer to use terms that the people themselves employ (some academics claim that the Guatemalan elite refuse to recognize the term "Maya" in their effort to continually belittle the indigenous segment of the population (see Arias 1997; Secaira 2000).
4. David Stoll (1993) reports that many rural Guatemalans existed in a limbo between two armies. Guatemalans we interviewed expressed similar feeling about their lives "between two fires." We must note, however, that many North American and Guatemalan scholars contest David Stoll's research in Quiché and his reports about how indigenous people coped with the war (e.g., Arias 2003; Hale 1997; Stoll 2003).
5. Nelson (1999, p. 10) also notes how Guatemalans "live among the eloquent ruins left by the war: model villages built on the charred remains of burned houses, clandestine cemeteries, holding cells for the disappeared built into houses, and military and civil patrol institutions throughout the countryside."
6. Lack of trust in the Portillo regime for many Guatemalans lies in the simple fact that Ríos Montt heads up Guatemala's Congress—Montt was President of Guatemala for 18 months in 1982 and 1983 and, some claim, the mastermind of the worst military massacres and maneuvers in Guatemala.
7. See Prensa Libre 2001a, for an example of strained relationships between ex-PAC members and residents of one community.
8. Although foreign nationals can speak with near impunity, Guatemalan social science researchers, academics, and human rights activists work under renewed death threats and intimidations from "unknown" quarters (Nash 2002).
9. We cannot deny, however, the importance of empirical documentation of massacre victims. Indeed, the type of documentation represented by Falla's *Massacres in the Jungle* (1992) and the CEH and REMHI publications where details surrounding death and destruction surface, in Richard Wilson's words, form "the first act of both remembering and rupturing the silence around violations. Faithfully recording the names of the victims is an attempt to tell the 'public secrets' of a community in order to initiate a break with the official regime of denial. The first statement on the past by Guatemalan society must be a credible and a defensible account of what exactly happened when and to whom, without which other discussions (such as what agents were thinking at the time) cannot begin" (1997, 833).
10. The government carved Cantabal out of the rainforest in 1985 to serve as the administrative center for the newly created *municipio* of Ixcán. Cantabal formed part of the "Playa Grande" development pole that consisted of at least 100 villages under army control (CEIDEC 1990). The structure of the villages and towns facilitated military control of rural residents by concentrating residents in geographic areas easily observed by the army in an effort to eradicate the "sea" (rural farmers) from which the "fish" (guerillas) drew sustenance.

11. Visitors to the museum cannot browse the artifacts at their leisure. A civil affairs officer interprets displays for visitors.
12. See the testimonies about imprisonment, torture, and mass graves inside the military base at Playa Grande in Falla (1992, 192–197).
13. Guatemala's national flag is blue and white.
14. "On this day . . . we will be beginning construction of a great monument to the memory of all the men and women, victims of these thirty-six years of violence. As we raise the monument, we will be embedding into it various objects that we have saved as mementos of our dead: crosses with names, personal objects, or other things that remind us of their existence. I will place at the top of this pyramid . . . the 'deer-eye' seed that I have been wearing around my neck ever since that old lady who gave me her blessing in the darkness placed it in my hand" (González 1998, 157, when referring to reconstruction of lives in Nueva Esparanza, Yichkan [Ixcán]).
15. The Communities of Populations in Resistance resisted military rule during the 1980s and 1990s and eked out a livelihood in the forests of the Ixcán, the Petén, and the mountains of northern Quiché (Falla 1993). They only emerged from hiding after promises from the Guatemalan government to recognize these communities as civilian populations (Primavera del Ixcán 1999; REHMI 1998).
16. Much controversy surrounds the MINUGUA (United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala) presence in Guatemala. Because MINUGUA protects human rights in Guatemala, many people believe that criminals call in MINUGUA when their rights are in jeopardy. For example, in highland villages around Totonicapán, villagers often deal with their own criminals by cutting off water or electricity rights to offenders of community norms. However, these criminals now call in MINUGUA to illustrate how their rights are in danger. This leads many to believe that MINUGUA is overstepping its bounds and call for its withdrawal. Despite controversy about its presence, Guatemalans voted to keep MINUGUA in country for another four years after their stay expired in 2001.
17. Castañeda Salguero (1998) relates that in "August 1982 the Guatemalan Army gathered the people from various villages of San Mateo Ixtatán to help them cut the trees on either side of the road. En San Mateo Ixtatán, 30 to 40 meters either side of the road were cleared for a distance of 18 kilometers (this includes the road from Santa Eulalia to San Mateo and the road to the east to Yolcultac). This represents about 126 hectares of cleared forest and about 113,400 trees. The rotten trunks still lie on the side of the road as evidence, and none of the locals use them" (108).
18. Hale (1997) draws on the work of Falla (1992), Stoll (1993), and McCreery (1994) to show how the counterinsurgency campaign of the Guatemalan military mimicked strategies developed during the Vietnam War—security, control, and development. However, Hale goes on to state, that the main difference

between Vietnam and Guatemala is that "the Guatemalan army carried the euphemistically defined objective of the first phase, 'eliminate enemy infrastructure' (read noncombatant population) to its beastly logical extreme" (818).

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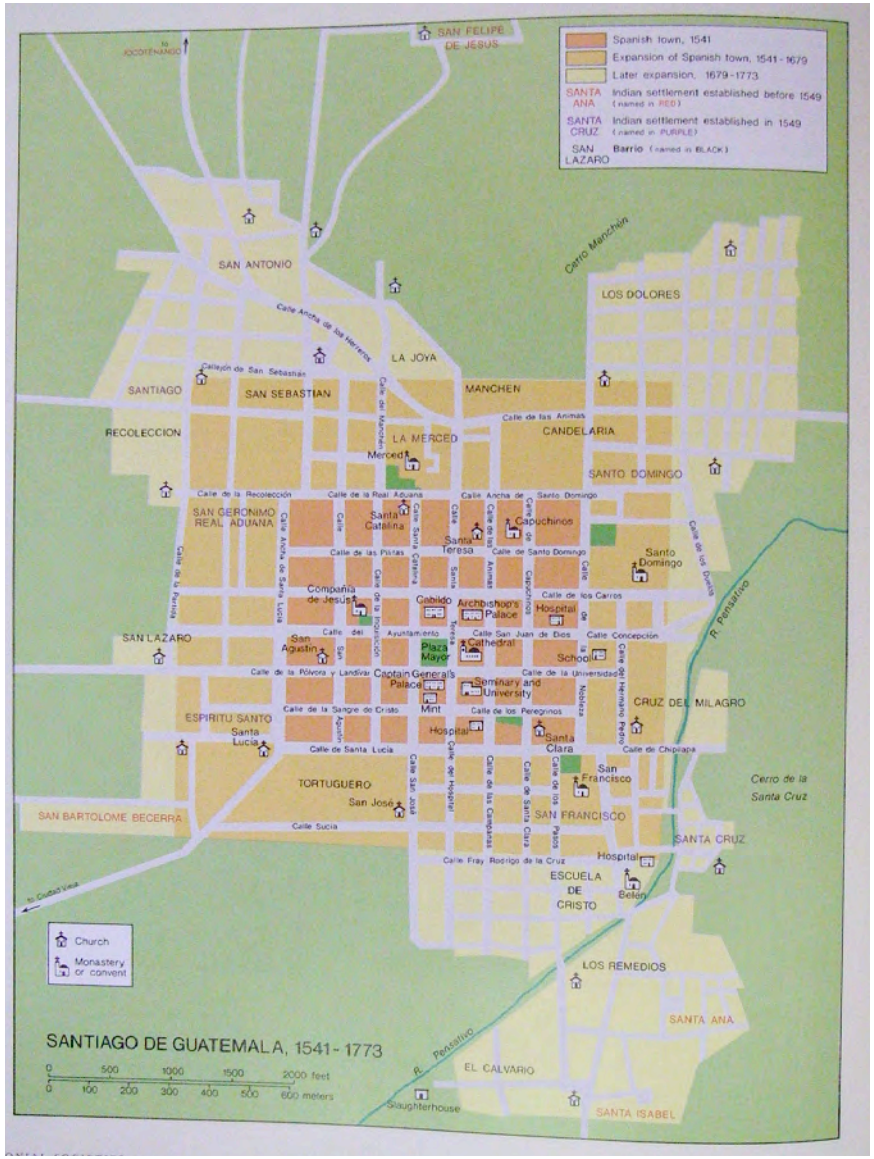
Spontaneous Shrines and the Public Memorialization of Death

EDITED BY
Jack Santino

palgrave
macmillan

Antigua


VALLE DE GUATEMALA, ca. 1680
R. Motagua
R. Motagua
R. Las Vacas
R. Los Platanos
R. Las Cañas
R. Pixcaya
R. Chinautla
R. Teocinte
R. Villalobos
San Martin Jilotepeque
Tecpán Guatemala
Comalapa
Patzún
Chimaltenango
Sumpango
El Tejar
Patzicía
San Andrés Itzapa
Parramos
San Lorenzo
San Lucas Sacatepéquez
Santiago Sacatepéquez
San Juan Sacatepéquez
San Pedro Sacatepéquez
San Raimundo
Chinautla
Mixco
Pinula
Jocotenango
Santa Lucía
Santo Tomás
Santiago de Guatemala
Acatenango
Yepocapa
Ciudad Vieja
Acatenango
Fuego
Alotenango
Agua
Amatitlán
Santa María de Jesus
Petapa
Lake Amatitlán
Pacaya
San Diego
ELEVATION
ABOVE SEA LEVEL
FEET
METERS
9840 3000
8200 2500
6560 2000
4920 1500
3280 1000
1640 500
0 0
Town
Village
Road
Volcano
Flour mill
Cattle
Pigs, lard, ham, chickens
Sugar mill (trapiche)
Corn (maiz)
Beans
Wheat
Sugarcane
Pottery
Tiles, bricks
0 5 10 15 miles
0 5 10 15 20 kilometers


Spanish town, 1541
Expansion of Spanish town, 1541 - 1679
Later expansion, 1679 - 1773
SANTA ANA Indian settlement established before 1549 (named in RED)
SANTA CRUZ Indian settlement established in 1549 (named in PURPLE)
SAN LAZARO Barrio (named in BLACK)
SAN FELIPE DE JESUS
to XOCOTENANGO
Cerro Manchón
SAN ANTONIO
LOS DOLORES
Calle Ancha de los Herreros
LA JOYA
Callejón de San Sebastián
SANTIAGO
SAN SEBASTIAN
MANCHEN
Calle de las Animas
CANDELARIA
RECOLECCION
LA MERCED
Merced
SANTO DOMINGO
Calle de la Recolección
Calle de la Real Aduana
Calle Ancha de Santo Domingo
SAN GERONIMO REAL ADUANA
Santa Catalina
Capuchinos
Santa Teresa
Calle de las Pistas
Calle de Santo Domingo
Santo Domingo
Calle de los Carros
Compañía de Jesús
Gabildo
Archbishop's Palace
Hospital de
Calle del Ayuntamiento
Calle San Juan de Dios
Calle Concepción
SAN LAZARO
San Agustín
Plaza Mayor
Cathedral
School
Calle de la Pólvora y Landivar
Captain General's Palace
Seminary and University
Calle de la Universidad
CRUZ DEL MILAGRO
Calle de la Sangre de Cristo
Mint
Calle de los Peregrinos
ESPIRITU SANTO
Santa Lucía
Hospital
Santa Clara
Calle de Santa Lucía
Calle de Chipilapa
San Francisco
TORTUGUERO
San José
Cerro de la Santa Cruz
SAN BARTOLOME BECERRA
Calle Sucia
SAN FRANCISCO
SANTA CRUZ
Calle Fray Rodrigo de la Cruz
Hospital
ESCUELA DE CRISTO
Belén
to Ciudad Vieja
Church
Monastery or convent
LOS REMEDIOS
SANTA ANA
SANTIAGO DE GUATEMALA, 1541-1773
0 500 1000 1500 2000 feet
0 100 200 300 400 500 600 meters
R. Pensativo
EL CALVARIO
Slaughterhouse
SANTA ISABEL

1. Parque Central, 1986

The Parks

In the parks I added
the pines' height
and filled my senses with books.

Student of Josefino parks,
I promoted the trees
to keep them always with me.

In the parks I rhyme
the rose with the book,
human suffering
with children's smiles
while my friends
learned the legal code
and constructed syllogisms.

Los Parques

En los parques sumé
la altura de los pinos
y me llené de libros los sentidos.

Bachiller de los parques josefinos,
promoví a los árboles
para llevarlos siempre conmigo.

En los parques rimé
la rosa con el libro,
el dolor de los hombres
y la sonrisa del niño,
mientras mis amigos
se aprendían los Códigos
y construían los silogismos.

—ARTURO MONTERO VEGA

CHAPTER ONE

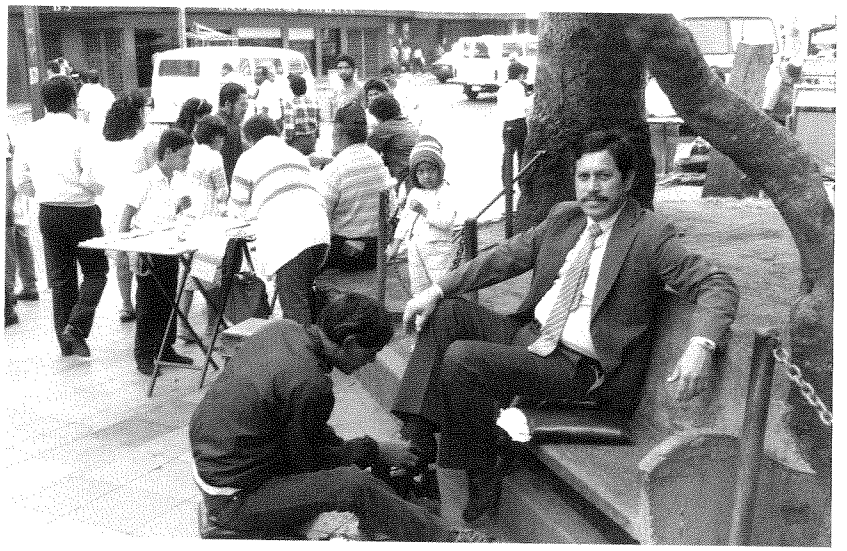
Notes from the Field
A Personal Account

Field Notes from Parque Central

Parque Central, weekday morning, February 20, 1985—
First impressions on field trip #1.

The bus stopped at Parque Central. I am struck immediately with how ugly and strange the *kiosco* [bandstand] is; it is like a Precolumbian Maya incense burner created in a giant form, or a Postclassic temple with cut-out sides. The stairs are so steep and it is so tall that it reminds me of a temple at Tikal [a Maya site in Guatemala]. I start taking photographs as soon as I step out, shooting in a continuous circle and also along the pathways and edges.

The park is full of people. Almost every bench is taken, mostly by men, who stand or sit in groups around a bench or wall ledge; a few are even stretched out full length on a bench. At each entry path there are two to three shoeshine men, a few with customers (see Photograph 2). They look quite established and part of the scene. Most of the men sitting are older, while the younger ones stand. One man is eating an ice cream cone. I look for women and find only two on a bench, and one *campesino* [country] couple sit silently with straight backs and severe faces. Two women have a flower stall, and one man is selling ice cream. The men's behavior is a public display, full of symbolic posturing, verbal play, and social exchange.



2. Shoeshine men and client in Parque Central

Parque Central, 8:00–10:00 A.M., weekday, May 19, 1986—
First day of section observations on field trip #2.

The day starts with waiting for the bus. The traffic is stop and go, and the wait seems forever. The bus creeps along letting everyone get on even if it means that people have to hang out of the doors. A man gets up to give me a seat, which is a stroke of luck, since I am having a hard time standing in the crowd. I arrive at Parque Central on the dot of 8:00 with the cathedral bells ringing. Mobs of people descend from the bus hurrying on their way as I try to find a place to start.

I circle the park once feeling uncomfortable in this male-dominated space. At this time in the morning there are hardly any women here, and those who are, walk through quickly. The park is littered with leaves and paper, ill-kempt and cluttered, looking rather worn and run-down. The benches are full even though there are eighty or more in the area of a square city block; and half of the area is taken up with the monumental kiosk. I circle the park again and notice that in the kiosk basement is a children's library.

I decide that it is impossible to describe the plaza all at once, so I start on the northeastern corner where there is the most action. The northeast corner is what I call the shoeshine men's corner. Each bench

has one or two men who are either cleaning a customer's shoes or waiting, talking and joking nearby. The shoeshine men use the benches as props for all of their activities, work as well as recreation, and they circulate from one bench to another to exchange information, jokes, money, and stolen goods or drugs. If one bench becomes too full, they move again.

There is an "in-crowd" of five or six men with long hair, beards, and short-sleeved dirty tee shirts. They appear to be in their late thirties or early forties, and they move as a group. Other shoeshine men are more conservatively dressed and do not look very different from the people who are having their shoes cleaned. A couple of men carry plastic "suitcases" and unpack there in the park. The in-group men, however, carry their equipment in plastic coffee bags, which they hang on the backs of the benches. Some shoeshine men hang around a lot, talking and relaxing, while others aggressively try to get customers by inviting them to sit down so they can clean their dirty shoes. One common technique is for the shoeshine man to point to your shoes and tell you that he can make them look much better—even if you are wearing tennis shoes!

After about half an hour I move counterclockwise to the northwest corner, which is much sunnier and less crowded, with the majority of people walking through. The benches here are full of men reading newspapers or sitting and staring at the passersby (see Photograph 3). I see a street sweeper and his friends, who follow him as he works, talking and smoking cigarettes.

I move to the southwest corner, where everyone is meeting someone, with someone, or holding someone, and a lot of people are walking through on the diagonal. At this corner there are two couples and a woman—the largest number of women anywhere in the park except for the women who sell flowers. I notice the vendors, small boys walking through selling ice cream, candy, or bread. The pace of the walking is quickening as the day moves on.

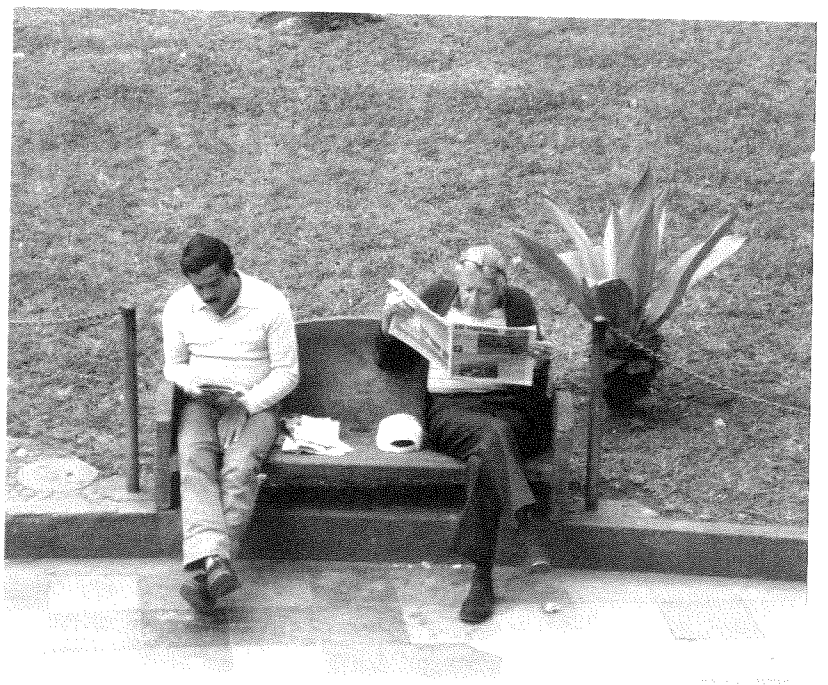
The last half hour is spent at the southeast corner, back facing the cathedral. I am getting tired, but there is nowhere to sit because all the benches are taken. Everyone there seems to be waiting and looking at their watches before going back to reading their newspapers. The most frequent activity is reading the newspaper, staring into space, or talking to the person who is next to you. I see a family—father, mother,

and four children—sit down on a bench, squeezing in next to a man they do not know. A young man comes over, offers me his seat, and then sits down next to me. He asks the time and then returns to reading his newspaper. He looks at me over his paper from time to time and notices if I glance back at him.

Parque Central, 10:30–11:30 A.M., Sunday, June 15, 1986—Sunday in the park during field trip #2.

The band sets up slowly: first a truck pulls up and unloads the chairs, then the conductor's stand is arranged in the center, surrounded by a wider semicircle of the players' chairs. It looks like a full orchestra, and the sound is lovely. They play five different pieces of music on this sunny morning. Interestingly, most of the spectators stand on the platform of the kiosk in a circle surrounding the musicians (see Photograph 4).

I descended from the kiosk to take pictures of the people watching from the lower levels. The park is full of children running and playing, women talking, and older men looking on. There are many older



3. Man reading newspaper in Parque Central

4. Band playing on Sunday in Parque Central

Ticos [local slang for Costa Rican men] dressed up in their Sunday best, but I assume that this is because it is Father's Day!

I start to take a picture of three older men (over seventy years of age) who are talking (see Photograph 5); they smile and invite me to sit down. They also have come to hear the music, having gone to mass very early that morning. They ask me where I am from, if I am married, and whether I have children. I answer, "No, I do not have any children, but want to." They reply, "Then take your husband to Puntarenas. It is hotter there, and it will stick." They go on to talk about hot Ticas [Costa Rican women] and sex, chuckling that it is hard to get it up any more. They watch the girls walking by and add: "We watch more now than we did." I thank them for the seat and leave as another very old and quite feeble man with a cane comes up to join them.

As I walk around to the other side of the plaza an older woman, eighty-three years of age she says, hails me by waving her hand. She is

5. Costa Rican pensioners in Parque Central

putting everything that is in her purse on the bench beside her. She complains, "A woman robbed me of a 1,000 colón bill [Costa Rican money, about $7.38 if calculated at the exchange rate of 135.65 colones per U.S. dollar in January 1992] that was in my purse while she was helping to clean off. . . . A drunk had come up and thrown up on me, and the woman had been nice enough to help, but now you can not trust even someone who helps you." I tell her that it would be better to put the things back in her purse. She replies not to worry, that I was a big, strong girl who would protect her while she checked everything. I smile and wait for her to finish.

I go to see some children chasing pigeons and sit on the shoeshine corner with a tired-looking shoeshine man. The "gambler" comes over and says that he will show me the "cap game" [the "shell game" in the United States]. I had tried to watch the other day, but he had told me that I could not watch without playing. He spits on a tiny bit of paper, rolls it into a ball, and puts it under a Coca-Cola bottle cap. He then moves the bottle cap with the spit ball under it around, changing places with two other similar bottle caps. He moves the bottle caps slowly so that it is very clear where the spit ball is located. I choose the

right one. Then he asks if I would bet 1,000 colones. I say that I do not have any cash on me. He tells me that I can bet my watch. Horrified, I react: "No, it was a gift from my boyfriend!" He smiles, says "OK," and walks off.

The tired-looking shoeshine man next to me asks me to bring him shoe wax from the United States when I return on my next trip. He has asked me out to dance or have a drink a couple of times, and wants to know if I do those kinds of things. I reply that I am "promised" [engaged to be married], and thank him for his invitation.

Parque Central, 6:00–9:00 P.M., Saturday, June 28, 1986—Saturday night in the park during field trip #2.

It is very difficult to do fieldwork in Parque Central at night. It is cold and damp on the benches, and I feel quite uncomfortable as a woman alone. The same observations that I have made before seem confirmed: couples meet and fill the benches at 6:00 P.M. and slowly drift off between 7:00 P.M. and 7:30 P.M. Some go into the movie theaters that surround the park, and others finally catch a bus home. By 7:30 P.M. the park is occupied mainly by single adult men, some in pairs, but mostly alone.

The only new activity that I can now clearly pick out is a group of young women who are hanging around under the arbor, giggling and talking. They seem young, about fifteen to eighteen years of age, and most are wearing tight-fitting jeans. The older women who walk by wear even tighter, more provocative clothing; their style is tough and playful.

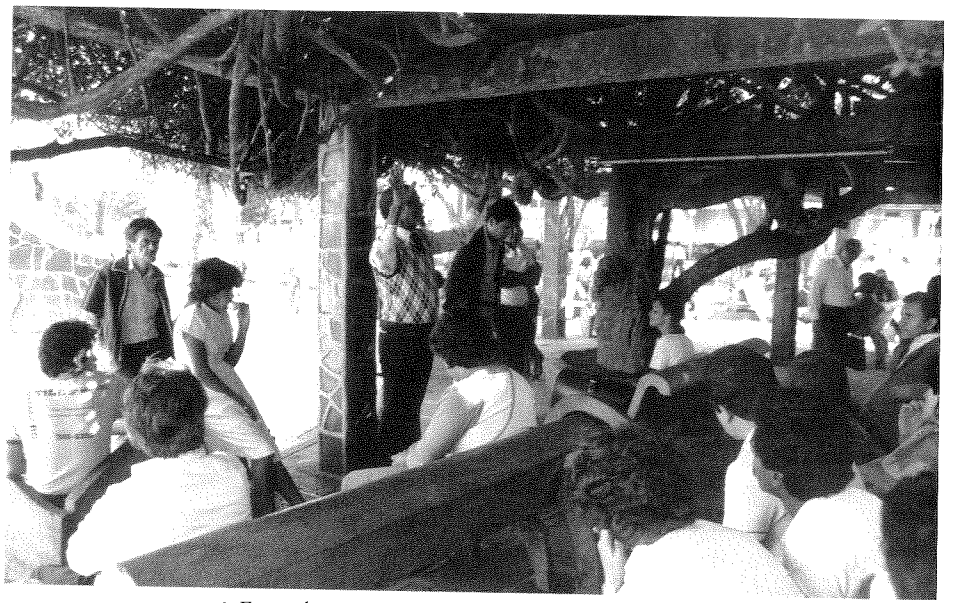
The young women get a man's attention by bumming a cigarette, teasing him, or planting a kiss on his cheek. The clearest pick-up is by a brunette woman in a floral dress and a sweatshirt. She goes over to a thin man, shakes his hand, and sits down. At first I wonder if he is her pimp. [I have since learned that in 1986 there were very few prostitutes with pimps, but that by 1997 prostitution had become more organized and dangerous, both to the sex worker and the client—see the short story in Chapter 3.] She bums a cigarette and smokes it dramatically, taking long, slow puffs. Two other men start to walk by, do a double-take, stop, and join them. She talks and flirts, commenting on the pleated pants of the well-dressed man of the pair, and the next time I look up they are walking off together. She swaggers and rotates her hips, and he smiles as they wave good-bye.

The most popular pick-up spot is the arbor. Everything is done pretty cautiously, as the Guardia Civil [local police] are everywhere, walking around and around the kiosk, so contacts are often in the form of shaking hands. Some women, however, are more direct: I see one jump on a man's lap and start kissing him before they walk off together.

Parque Central, 2:30 P.M., Tuesday, January 6, 1987—
First impressions on field trip #3.

The evangelical preachers who hold a prayer meeting every day under the arbor are just finishing as I arrive; I can hear their clapping all the way across the park (see Photograph 6). There is more business for the shoeshine men, and more women than during the last visit in the rainy season. One woman seems drugged, yet no one seems concerned. A policeman stops me and asks me if I am with the newspaper. I say no, and hurry on. All of the policemen are standing with girls; some were talking to prostitutes as they passed the time while on duty.

The same group of older pensioners are sitting on their bench. They salute me and invite me to sit down. I do not have time, so I smile and



6. Evangelist preacher clapping in Parque Central arbor

wave. Tourists wander by and sit on the steps of the kiosk. Policemen and groups of older men perch on the kiosk walls. The air is warm, not hot, and there is a breeze. It feels dry and very pleasant. Lots of children are playing on the kiosk, trying to slide down the curved, descending cement supports.

Parque Central, 1:30–4:30 P.M., Saturday, January 10, 1987—
Saturday afternoon during field trip #3.

Many more families, women, and couples are here; even the shoeshine men have their wives and children with them. Most people are sitting in the shade because the sunlight is so intense, except for one gringo [derogatory nickname for male North American] who is reading in the sun. The southwest-corner pensioners are still on their bench, but there are fewer on Saturday than during the week or on Sunday. And there are fewer shoeshine men. The one business that increases on Saturday is prostitution, and I notice one of my gringo friends wander off with a girl.

Young people lounge on the kiosk, girls and boys separately watching each other. Couples with children wrapped up as sleepy bundles walk by. The police also wander across the kiosk surveying the passersby.

The evangelists are preaching in the arbor, the sermon and the time of day are the same as during the week. Saturday just draws a larger crowd. I think the weather slows the movement and increases the sense of well-being for both me and other park users. More people are out enjoying the dry weather of January than during the rainy days of May, June, July, and August.

I sit with an eighty-eight-year-old man with whom I have become friendly. He comes every day and stays until late afternoon. I am greeted by another of my old friends, a pensioner, who is unshaven and dirty, wearing worn clothes, although he is smiling. I ask him what is wrong, as he is usually more well dressed; he points out that it is Saturday. During the week he comes every morning and afternoon before he goes to work at a hotel on 4th Avenue. He is proud that he still works, and he lives downtown so that he can go home for lunch, see his wife, and then return.

I map the slightly different sitting positions of groups on a Saturday. Families, couples, and singles all sit in different areas. People from out of town come here to rest before catching the bus home. The

tempo of the traffic has increased on the edges of the park, but inside the pace has slowed to a standstill. The shoeshine men with their families are now having a picnic. One shoeshine man tells me that he is hopelessly in love with me. Another comes by to ask me how I am and where I have been for the past few months. They are funny and welcoming, and though I had felt some apprehension about talking with them last July, now they are part of my social world.

The strollers are languid in their movements, and girls smile on the arms of their boyfriends. People talk, look around, and then go back to reading. Children play everywhere, and only mothers and children walk through; everyone else is staying. There is a warm breeze that cools the hot sun. As the shadows deepen, the shoeshine men pack their bags and people stroll to the buses to go home. As it becomes too dark to photograph, couples begin to arrive, vendors set up for the evening crowd, and the tempo again picks up.

As I leave the park, I recognize two North American pensioners sitting on the inner circle of benches near the northwest corner. I walk over and say that I am surprised to see them here, as they usually go to the other plaza. Across the grass, in front of the Boruca Bar, are four more North Americans on their way to have a beer. I join them as they are getting ready to leave.

Both men are retired: the first, wearing a cap over his silver hair, worked for Standard Oil, and the second, for the Ford Motor Company. They love sport fishing and come here for four months each year to fish in Puntarenas [a city on the Pacific coast] or Río Colorado [an area on the Atlantic coast famous for game fishing]. They learned about Costa Rica from sport-fishing magazines and from friends. I walk on and then return to ask them a question: "Is it true that the gringos used to spend time over by the telephones in the park?" The man in the cap replied, "Yes, but then they moved to the Plaza de la Cultura." They get up to leave, saying that they want to go home for a nap before dinner.

Parque Central, 2:00 P.M., weekday, December 16, 1993—
Interview with Rudolfo Sancho, the engineer in charge of the redesign of the park, during field trip #4.
[Parque Central was closed and under construction.]

I begin by explaining that I am interested in the remodeling and reconstruction of Parque Central. Rudolfo Sancho responds by saying that he got the original plans of the park from someone who came forth during the initial uproar about tearing down or preserving the kiosk:

> It was very interesting. It was quite a fight about the kiosk. If it were mine, I would get rid of it, but we should not throw it out, as it is part of our patrimony. And since they moved the fountain to the University [Universidad de Costa Rica, located in an eastern suburb of the city], and the University will not give it back, we will make a small copy of the original fountain to put in the park.

He continues:

> In 1889 we were the first city with lights in Central America. We were the first to have water. But by the 1940s the city decided that it was complete. There was no maintenance of the parks, and many beautiful details were lost.

I ask about the new design for the park, to which he replies:

> The idea is to raise the level of the plaza and just keep the lower part green where the pensioners and shoeshine men are located. Because of the monumentality of the kiosk, we are going to raise the entire level of the park, that way the kiosk will not look so out of scale. Since we see the park not as a place for sitting but [as] a ceremonial center, we made it "harder," covering more of the surface with cement to create a kind of *paseo* [walkway]. It should be a celebration of the city.

Parque Central, 11:30 A.M.–1:30 P.M., Wednesday, January 22, 1997—
A visit during field trip #5.
[The park has been redesigned since my last visit.]

I enter the park about 11:30 A.M. It is a bright, sunny day; the benches and ledges of the planters are full (see Photograph 7). The groups are more dispersed because of the new pattern of small benches. Benches now hold only two people, so there are often two seated with a third standing. The corners still provide a way to describe the park, even though the new design is more circular in orientation.

On the northeast corner there is only one shoeshine man left; he is

7. New sitting area in Parque Central

using a stand instead of a bench. Across the street there are four to five more on a sliver of sidewalk in front of the construction fence that is around the cathedral. The corner is only lightly populated, and it is quite warm there. I ask "What happened?" to the remaining shoeshine man, and he replies that they are no longer allowed in the park, that they have been banned by the municipality since the remodeling. I ask, "Where is everyone, then?" and he responds, "In front of the Post Office and on the 'Boulevard.'"

Moving clockwise, there is a large group of older men along the planter wall and on the small benches. The men are deep in conversation. I ask them about the changes in the park. One man comments that it is remodeled and prettier now. Overall, they have a mixed reaction to the design changes; they say that it is softer and more open, but less comfortable and green. The southern edge is also full of people waiting for buses. Even though buses no longer stop here, people still wait, and when they see buses arrive, then walk to nearby bus stops. There are more women now. The sense of "places" such as the arbor or the shoeshine corner has been lost and replaced with a series of self-contained locations and isolated spaces. The southwest corner, however, still has quite a few elderly men talking, and on the western edge there are forty people waiting to use the twenty-four newly installed telephone booths.

On the northwest corner, instead of praying and healing, there is a man called "Tango" doing acrobatic tricks with a soccer ball in front of a large crowd. I ask about the shoeshine men and vendors who used to be there, and everyone I ask confirms that they are now gone. A new security force is also very visible on the kiosk and on the park perimeter in their black uniforms. My photographer had counted four different uniforms yesterday when he was working, but I have seen only three: all black, all green, and the blue or khaki of the Guardia Civil. The men in the all-black uniforms must be the new municipal police placed throughout the center city to protect residents and tourists from the increased crime.

Parque Central, 10:00–11:00 A.M., Thursday, January 23, 1997—
The last visit on field trip #5.

I move clockwise around the kiosk to talk to some of the Costa Rican pensioners. I feel hesitant, but everyone is very friendly. I join a group of three men: the two older men are sitting and the younger one is

8. Photographer and the renovated kiosk in Parque Central

standing. One seated man has a camera and a briefcase, the second has some kind of photograph viewer or Polaroid camera (see Photograph 8). I ask the man with the camera if he is a photographer, and he answers, "Yes, I take pictures of people in the park—particularly the Nicaraguans." As he speaks, he takes out a set of his pictures to show me. I ask what he thinks of the changes in the park. He replies that it is fine, but that he likes it greener. The two other men agree that there is too much cement and not enough grass and flowers. They comment that there are no longer any vendors, but it keeps it cleaner, and without the shoeshine men, there are fewer illegal activities.

"Do you feel safer?" I ask.

"But you must be careful still because of the *chapulines* [members of young gangs]," he replies.

"Where are they?" I respond.

"Everywhere, there is one over there," he says, pointing to a young man in baggy pants sitting by himself, looking around. "They congregate here at 5:00 each evening."

I ask where the other pensioners are. The standing man replies that they are at the beach for the holiday. "Are they still there?" I ask, pointing to the southwest corner. "Yes," he replies, "they still come. One has died, but the rest come as before."

I move on and ask another older man why he comes here each day. He smiles and responds:

> Because it is agreeable, I can see and greet my friends every day. I see people I know to talk to. I used to come when there was a *ramada* [the arbor] and when there were dances in the kiosk on New Year's Eve, where those who could not afford to go somewhere expensive could go. The most important part, however, is to see your friends and family who you otherwise would not see. It is very agreeable.

Field Notes from the Plaza de la Cultura

Plaza de la Cultura, weekday, February 20, 1985—
First impressions on field trip #1.

At first I am shocked that the new plaza is so modern. It has a sunken fountain and is an expansive open space paved with cement tiles, lined with benches made of large metal pipes, and punctuated with small cement seats under a double row of fig trees. The space appears quite barren, denuded of greenery, and instead of plants, yellow and silver pipes stick up like periscopes from an underground submarine.

The plaza is multilayered, with offices below ground level where the Institute of Tourism's central office and a large marble exhibition space are located. The downstairs is closed, but the guard goes to get me a brochure that describes the plaza and its construction. The Gold Museum will eventually go into this subterranean space when there is adequate funding for guards. [In 1987 it was opened as Los Museos del Banco Central de Costa Rica (Museums of the Costa Rican Central Bank) and included the Precolumbian gold collection, stamp collection, and painting and sculpture collection.]

There are two distinct parts to the plaza: (1) the section between the National Theater (see Photograph 9; the edge of this turn-of-the-century building is visible on the right) and the Gran Hotel Costa

9. Plaza de la Cultura, 1986

Rica, which is for tourists and is full of vendors selling hammocks and other souvenirs (see Photograph 10), and (2) the plaza proper, which is a large, multilevel open space that extends along the side of the National Theater all the way to Avenida Central (see Photograph 9).

Plaza de la Cultura, weekday, May 26, 1986—
First impressions on field trip #2.

The first day at the Plaza de la Cultura is so slow that I decide to observe it by sections: the tourist plaza in front of the Gran Hotel Costa Rica, the shopping arcade and shaded tree-lined walkway of the upper plaza, the sunny open section of the upper plaza, the lower plaza areas, the section below the fountain, and the entrance to the tourist office.

The plaza is full of young people—even the shoeshine men are boys; it seems to be the domain of the adolescent and the tourist. There is an equal distribution of males and females here, lots of couples, and couples with children (see Photograph 11).

10. Vendors selling tourist crafts in Plaza de la Cultura

11. Couples and young people in Plaza de la Cultura

Children love this plaza, especially the fountain and the open areas where they can run and chase the pigeons (see Photograph 12). Furthermore, the low benches seem quite comfortable for them, and there is the attraction of the juggler/clown who entertains during midday. The children adore his jokes and tricks and clowning with his assistant/wife. Children of all social classes, from little boys who sell crafts or shine shoes to children in private school uniforms, come to see and listen to the juggler/clown. They all crowd forward to see while the adults line up behind them.

Another major activity is that of older gringos and other foreigners as well as some Ticos, who pick up young women, even girls, on Saturday and Sunday afternoon (see Photograph 13). A friend's brother-in-law said that Plaza de la Cultura is actually more dangerous than Parque Central because there are more drugs being sold and more male prostitution. So far I have only seen one clandestine activity on the plaza and at least three or four in Parque Central; however, it could be I have not been here at the right time.

12. Children and pigeons in Plaza de la Cultura

13. Gringos in Plaza de la Cultura

Plaza de la Cultura, 12:00 NOON–3:00 P.M., Thursday, June 12, 1986—Sex in the afternoon during field trip #2.

I need to change a roll of film so I sit down on the shady pipe bench next to three gringos who are looking at and talking about girls (see Photograph 14). Finally I say something, and the smaller guy says, "I wondered when you were going to admit that you speak English." I then met "Jim," "the Canadian," and "the small man." Most of the conversation focuses on their interest in the young Ticas.

> We like them younger—the older ones are not as nice. We come to the plaza because that is where the girls are—before we met them in the street. Now the plaza is the place—in the afternoon. . . . If you do not have one by evening, it is too late.

The men I interviewed think that there are about 1,000–2,000 older North American men in Costa Rica looking for girls during the dry season, and that most of them have been living here for years. They get bored, leave, and then come back because of the beautiful young women. They say [to me] that North American women are awful in bed, and Ticas [Costa Rican females] know how to love. The conversation moves from sexual activity to "peckers," penis implants, and

14. Young women in Plaza de la Cultura

trouble with girlfriends. There is some joking and embarrassment that I would be shocked, but the conversation continues. It seems that young women and sex, or talking about it, are their main diversions.

Plaza de la Cultura, 5:00–7:30 P.M., Friday, June 13, 1986—
The great chain robbery during field trip #2.

Beautiful late afternoon, clear and cool. Tomás offers me a coffee, but by 5:00 P.M. I want to be back on my metal pipe bench. As I return, there is a lot of confusion and looking around. When I got off the bus I had seen three young men running down the street, and people shouting. I asked as many people as possible, "¿Qué pasó?" [What happened?]. The answers range from "a robbery" to a more precise description of "a girl's gold chain was torn off her neck." I have heard many stories about chain stealing, but this is the first case at which I am present. It happened under the trees of the shopping arcade. One man said that the robbers look for chains that they like, and then one stands in front and the other behind, working together to distract the unfortunate victim.

The plaza is filling up with high school students wearing uniforms and carrying musical instruments and banners. It seems that there is going to be a parade of high school marching bands along Avenida Central to celebrate the centennial of a private boys' school.

There are two groups of teenagers, both leaning along the fountain rail. Usually just one group is there and the other is on the planter seat with a portable radio. One group is predominantly male and Black—the leader wears a "do-rag" with tails. He speaks Spanish and English and something that I can not understand [probably a form of street slang]. The other group is mixed male and female with a rotating leader. The young male who looks like the rock star Prince, from Purple Rain [a rock music album by Prince], often takes the lead, but so does a kid in khaki pants or a small, dark-haired girl. It is hard to tell; they move around a lot, and the group composition constantly changes.

There are, by the way, a lot of police around everywhere, either because of the parade or because it is Friday night. The khaki-pants kid, with a bottle in a brown paper bag, signals the main group of six guys to "move over." They quickly go to the lower plaza in front of the entrance to the tourist office. It is darker and quieter there, and I follow. I am just wondering if they realize how many police are around when two Guardia Civil come up, take the bag, frisk two of the teenagers, take their identity cards, and line all six up along the National Theater wall. I go up to ask what was wrong, and the police curtly tell me to "move along." I move back and watch with a growing crowd.

Plaza de la Cultura, 8:00–9:00 A.M., Monday, June 16, 1986—
Morning during field trip #2.

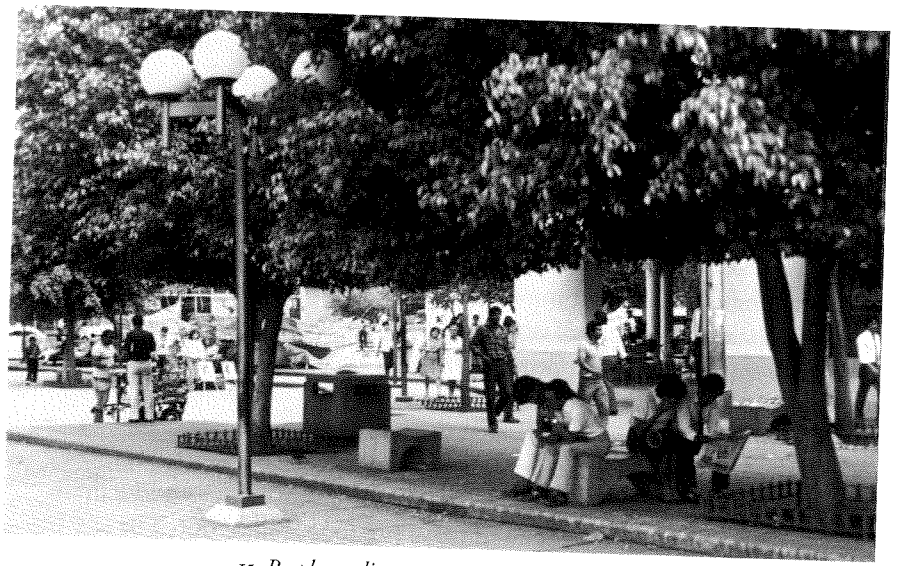
Early morning seems to be a time when people sit on the benches to rest and then move on. They sit for two or three minutes, then stand, straighten their clothes, and move on. Some read or study, but most just sit and stare. I would call it waiting, but maybe this is what Tomás calls *meditar* [to meditate, reflect, think] (see Photograph 15). A couple of women begin to talk, but in general there is little interaction. Morning does not seem to be a social time, but rather a passage to work or an early break in the day. The most active group are the sweepers who are cleaning the plaza. They talk and call back and forth to one another. The food sellers and jewelry sellers are not out. The first gringo shows up, sitting alone on the benches under the trees.

One comes over and sits on the pipe bench. There is so little activity that it is hard to be a participant observer, and I am so sleepy that I treat myself to coffee at the hotel café.

Plaza de la Cultura, 9:00 A.M.–3:30 P.M., Tuesday, January 6, 1987—First impressions on field trip #3.

The plaza is not filled up yet. There are very few people who talk or even walk by. The old woman who begs from tourists is sitting on the steps of the hotel café (see Photograph 16), and a few single men are reading the newspaper along the tree-lined edge. The hammock and whistle men begin to set up. Most of the tourists are still in the hotel restaurant (see Photograph 17), and the group of gringo men have not yet appeared. This morning is not very different from my previous early-morning observations.

By noon the plaza is packed with people. Early in the morning it was slow and sleepy, but now that I am back there is an apparently drunk man playing with a soccer ball and a long line of teenagers watching. There are a lot of young people, mostly males but some females, in groups and a few in pairs. This is a dramatic change because of the school vacation. When school is in session, teenagers usually do not come to the plaza until late afternoon or evening (see Photograph 18).

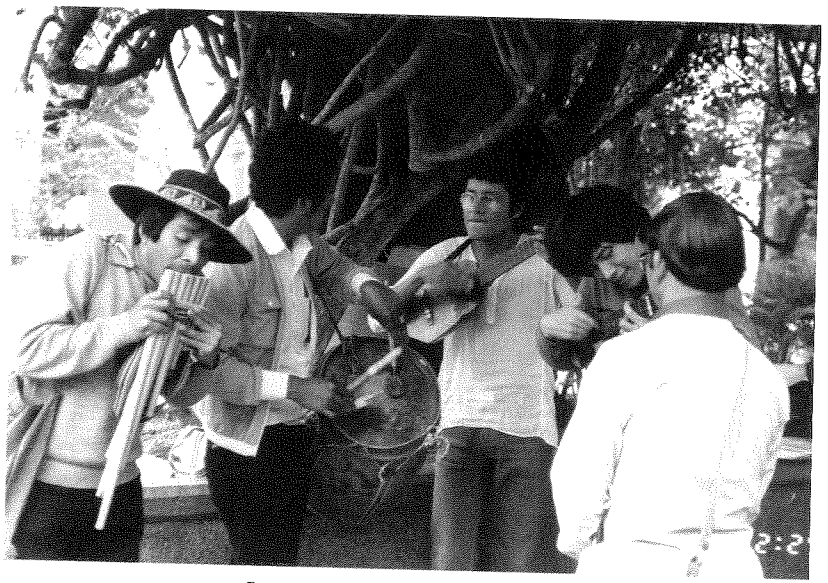


15. People reading newspapers in Plaza de la Cultura

16. Old woman in Plaza de la Cultura

17. Tourists having breakfast in the Gran Hotel café

18. Teenagers in Plaza de la Cultura



19. Peruvian singers in Plaza de la Cultura

By 1:45 P.M. the plaza is no longer loaded with people; there are fewer teenagers, but the gringos are now in full swing. Other things have changed but not the pick-ups. There is a group of Peruvian singers performing for tourists at the edge of the planter (see Photograph 19).

All of the gringos are sitting beside me on the center pipe bench trying to pick up three girls near us. One guy with a tattoo even speaks to the girls in Spanish. He seems to be doing pretty well; his conversation moves from Vesco [a well-known North American financier who fled to Costa Rica to escape prosecution in the United States] to chefs, restaurants, and then to girls.

I ask why they have come. A man in his fifties replies that they all have different reasons. He is a disabled veteran who had a "nervous breakdown." He has had the same girlfriend for over eight months. He says that most of the men are concerned about the Costa Rican women lying to them. Most have been divorced or widowed and are bitter and disillusioned about American women. He goes on: "They are looking for real love and trust, not just sex, even though they say that they are interested only in sex."

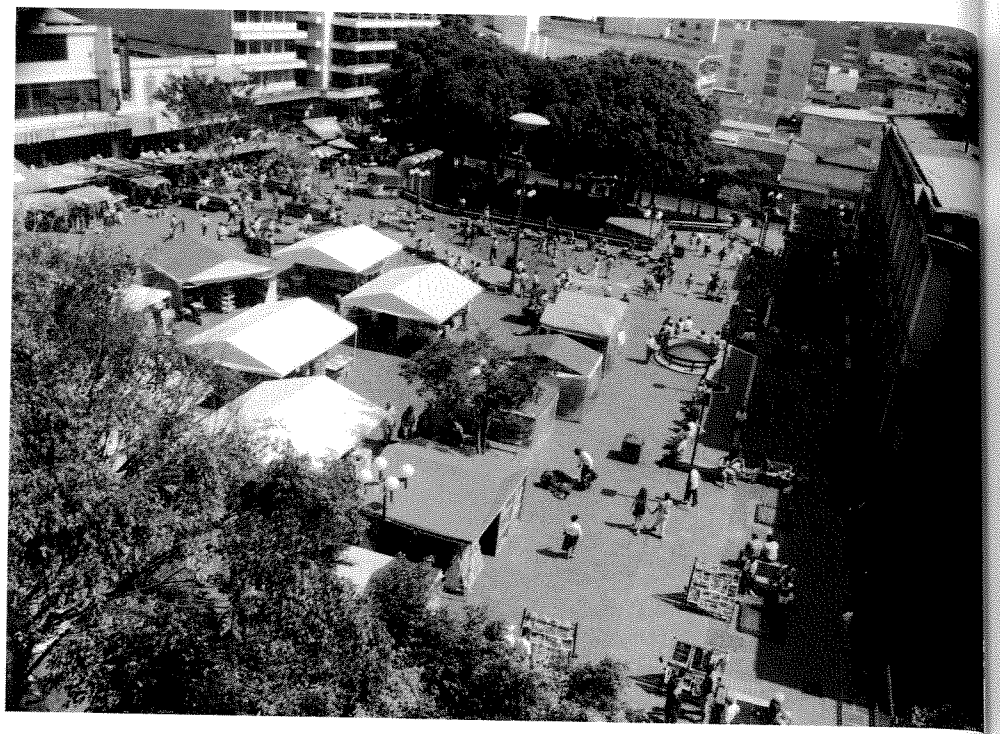
Just then two women and four small children who sell *chicles* [chewing gum] walk into the middle of the plaza. The youngest boy drops his tray of chewing gum, and one of the women beats him as he tries to pick it up. The gringos tell me that this mother sends her children out to beg every day and beats them if they do not sell enough. One man comments: "She is a hard woman." The men drift off to home and dinner. The plaza is quiet and dark.

Plaza de la Cultura, 3:30–9:30 P.M., Saturday, January 10, 1987—Saturday afternoon and evening during field trip #3.

The tourist stalls are set up in front of the hotel for the Saturday handicraft market. Ceramics, leather, hammocks, blouses, and paintings predominate. The whistle boy begins to wrap up his merchandise.

There are only a few people here, especially compared to Parque Central. Lots of girls, groups of women, and a few gringos are sitting in the sun. Single men sit under the trees. The only excitement is the approach of two cute girls, who are greeted with howls and calls such as "Morena [brunette], come here" by a group of teenagers.

I greet the Gran Hotel bouncer, who is standing at the edge of the hotel café, as I go in for a soda. He says that he works every day from



20. Plaza de la Cultura with vendor stalls

3:00 P.M. until 10:00 P.M. I ask if there are people on the plaza at night. He answers: "Yes, after 7:00 P.M. people come out, particularly the teenagers."

I am making a sun-and-shade map and overhear a gringo talking about his most recent conquest. The air is clear, birds are singing as I sit in the afternoon shade. The mountains look as if you can touch them. A couple eating Pops ice cream [a popular Costa Rican brand of ice cream sold at the edge of the plaza] joins me. They murmur between bites. He keeps his hand on her shoulder. A mass of families walk through, everyone eating ice cream. I can hear children behind me screaming at the pigeons. Even *campesinos* [people from the countryside] come here to sit and stare at the sky.

"Vicky," a middle-aged performer I have seen before, is here playing his tiny guitar and telling lewd jokes to a large crowd. The rest of the area is quiet. I sit next to a gringo who visits Costa Rica with his wife. He tells me about his wife being mugged four years ago by a guy on a motorcycle who grabbed her purse and dragged her away. He was mugged on a bus during his first few days here.

I return later, about 9:30 P.M., to see if what the Gran Hotel bouncer had told me was right. As he had said, the plaza was full of people, too many to count, and many more than I expected. I could see and identify the teenagers, some single men, but no specific activities from that distance.

Plaza de la Cultura, December 13, 1993—
Interview with Renato Cajas, the head of tourism, during field trip #4.

I ask Mr. Cajas why the Plaza de la Cultura was originally designed and built. He responds:

> San José started without a plan, so it developed in response to commercial and industrial needs. More than half the population of Costa Rica lives here, over a million people. The transportation is terrible, you can not walk or breathe. This administration decided that it was necessary to reform the city government and to use 10 percent of the sales tax for the municipality. In 1990, Oscar Arias reformed the city governance so that we could create new policies for urban development. . . .
>
> We want to humanize the city. Something that we can do quickly and easily. The Plaza de la Cultura was the first project to attract tourism, and President Carazo got credit, even though President Oduber started it.

Plaza de la Cultura, December 16, 1993—
Interview with Rudolfo Sancho during field trip #4.

I ask Mr. Sancho what he thinks is going on with all the vendors totally covering the plaza (see Photograph 20). He answers:

> The 1974 design of the plaza was what was in style. The objective was to save the National Theater. Now what has happened is that the Guatemalan and Honduran vendors have a good lawyer to fight for them, arguing that foreigners have the same rights as Costa Ricans. We have had a year of this; there are at least four or five groups that are still fighting based on the "Bill of Rights." The result is that the Plaza de la Cultura is full of vendors and is no longer a plaza at all.

Plaza de la Cultura, January 22, 1997—
Interview with Ibo Bonilla during field trip #5.
[The Plaza de la Cultura was closed for renovation during the last field trip.]

The plaza was entirely fenced off and full of rubble. The architect, Ibo Bonilla, greets me with a smile and offers to show me around. I am very disappointed that it is closed and concerned that it is being redesigned so soon after opening. He explains that he will not change the basic design, but wants to incorporate the observations that he has made concerning how people use the plaza. His objectives are to add color, redesign the pattern of groupings, that is, the way that people gather, and to correct some technical elements.

He feels that the first plaza was not a park but a "cultural space," and that the public was timid about entering at first. He felt that it looked like any internationally designed space and had little to do with Costa Rica. But now the public have claimed the space and are upset that it is closed. He has put windows in the construction fencing so that passersby can see the work going on and the changes he is making.

Later in the interview he comments that he is thinking about people coming from outside the city to meet and trying to give separate groups their own space:

> I want it to be a more closed space, but the openness of the plaza allows a sense of security because it provides many visual axes. When surrounded by high buildings, people feel less secure. The most dangerous place is the passageway by the National Theater.

I conclude the interview by asking why there are so many stories about the plaza being dangerous and unpleasant, to which he replies: "There are many myths about the plaza. The majority of people who talk about it do not use it, and negative information always travels fast."

CHAPTER TWO

Public Space and Culture

The Case of the Latin American Plaza

■

The plaza in itself, considered limited in space by its four sides, is the most exquisite expression of social life ever achieved by Man's [*sic*] city planning and architectural genius. The giant monuments of ancient cultures are grotesque and shapeless imperfections in comparison. The pyramids of Egypt, the palaces of Babylon, the temples of Greece, managed to convey a limited aspect of human life, but in so doing they sacrificed the wholeness of life. For that reason, they always bear within their beauty a mortal and definitive seal of sadness. They are closed circuits, frozen or gruesome perfections, because Man [*sic*] was never able to fully inhabit them, in spite of all their rich and complex existential temporality and eternity.

In contrast, the plaza affirms and resolves all things that are incompatible to pure reason; it preserves them, and gives them a voice and a future. The simplicity of its space is clearly an invitation to the social and moral freedom of the people. But its fortress-like lines are a definitive reminder that life and freedom can be lived only in a concrete and limited location, for a well-defined purpose. If those limits disappeared, there would be nothing left but the naked countryside, in which nature has absorbed and destroyed the essential freedom of human art and ingenuity.

—FERNANDO GUILLÉN MARTÍNEZ

The Latin American plaza has been an object of aesthetic inspiration and controversy since its inception. Its architectural beauty, political symbolism, and cultural importance have been discussed and debated

by legions of scholars. As the above quotation illustrates, its architectural geometry has evoked philosophical treatises on the plaza as the ultimate architectural expression of social and moral freedom. It is seen as a testimony to human rationality, a defense against unbridled nature, and an example of enlightened urban design.

The plaza also provides a physical, social, and metaphorical space for public debate about governance, cultural identity, and citizenship. Journalistic reports of how politicians manipulate the political symbolism of these charged public spaces portray the plaza's power to elicit civic commentary and social action. For example:

> In all of Mexico, no place has been shaped by destiny or scarred by history more than the enormous concrete square in this city's heart that is known by some as the "gran tortilla" and most simply as the Zócalo.
>
> This is the very spot where Cortés sweet-talked the Aztec Emperor Montezuma into believing his intentions were noble; where General Winfield Scott declared the American victory over Mexico in 1847; where one Mexican President after another has come to receive the adulation—or scorn—of the masses.
>
> Because it is a potent symbol as much as a physical space, the Zócalo often succumbs to the ambitions of politicians who impose their own touches on the long stains of its history. Over the centuries, successive leaders have arrived and undone the work of their predecessors so their own efforts can be better seen. (DePalma 1998, A2)

This newspaper account goes on to report that an ostensibly benign proposal to plant trees in the Zócalo, the central plaza in Mexico City, engendered an intense reaction by those who viewed it as an attempt to reduce the plaza's effectiveness as a space for public protests and state ceremonies. Some people interviewed were concerned "that the only thing trees would clear the air of is civic expression" (DePalma 1998, A2) by restricting rallies and mass demonstrations that occur in front of the National Palace and Metropolitan Cathedral. There were, of course, others who agreed with the plan to transform it into a park to reduce pollution. The political symbolism of "greening" the open plaza could reflect the mayor's intention not to retain a monumental plaza traditionally associated with adulation and a cult of power, or his desire to make an environmental statement associated with left-leaning politics. In either case, the proposed new plaza design is politically significant, as evidenced by the amount of public debate and degree of national concern.

These purely aesthetic and macropolitical interpretations, however, are not sufficient for understanding the plaza because they leave out the people who use the plazas and its importance in their everyday lives. These perspectives exclude the indigenous archaeological and ethnohistorical past, as well as the memories, stories, and conversations that create the myths and meanings of plaza life. Instead, Eurocentric explanations of the origins of plaza architecture and formalistic readings of political symbolism determine what is known, while the local stories go untold.

Plazas are spatial representations of Latin American society and social hierarchy. Citizens battle over these representations because they are so critical to the definition and survival of civil society. Plazas are also centers of cultural expression and artistic display reflected in their changing designs and furnishings. And finally, plazas are settings for everyday urban life where daily interactions, economic exchanges, and informal conversations occur, creating a socially meaningful place in the center of the city.

These aesthetic, political, and social aspects of the plaza are dynamic, changing continually in response to both personal action and broader sociopolitical forces. They are also contested through conflicts about the use, design, and meaning of the space. By tracing these changes and conflicts and their impact on plaza architecture, social activities, and political meanings, scholars can use the plaza to understand urban public space through the examination of this specific cultural form.

In order to address the importance of the plaza as a particular kind of public space and to provide a more complete narrative of plaza life, this book interweaves ethnography, history, literature, and personal narrative. These multiple genres are employed to create a more multivocal and multilocal representation of a place. Diverse scales, methodological strategies, types of narrative, and points of view purposely move the reader through the physical, social, and conceptual spaces of the analysis. The resulting dialogue includes the reader in an ongoing conversation about the importance of public space and culture in everyday life.

I explore three questions in this conversation: (1) Why is public space culturally and politically important—particularly urban civic spaces such as the plaza in Latin American cities? (2) What are the theoretical underpinnings of the relationship of space and culture, that is, of spatializing

culture? (3) How are individual narratives, ethnographies, and histories interwoven into a loose fabric in which fragments of experience and memory are juxtaposed with theory and interpretation?

The conversation begins in Part I, Introduction, with an immersion in the setting of the plazas of San José, Costa Rica, through ethnographic field notes, followed by an overview of the book. Each question, then, is examined in the subsequent sections and chapters. Part II, Histories, uncovers the contradictory ethnohistories of the European and indigenous origins of the Spanish American plaza, and how the power of writing history, as well as of building the historical landscape, contributes to different interpretations of these ceremonial public spaces. Part III, Ethnographies, presents cultural descriptions of two plazas in San José, Costa Rica, that conceptualize the spatialization of culture, social and spatial boundaries, and commodification and artistic mystification of urban public space. Part IV, Conversations, explores various kinds of narratives—literary, conversational, and personal—in an effort to include Costa Rican voices and perspectives on the experience and memory of plaza life. The conclusion discusses what has been learned from this project about the importance of the politics of public space within a participatory democracy.

The Meaning of Public Space

There has been considerable concern about the demise of public space in the United States: civic spaces are no longer democratic places where all people are embraced and tolerated, but instead centers of commerce and consumption. The public's reaction to the loss of public space has been so dramatic that new communities such as Celebration, the Disney company's residential development in Florida, are being designed as ersatz versions of small-town America, including a town hall and a central square (Mark 1997). Even the Chicago suburb of Schaumburg, Illinois, a place synonymous with mall culture, is building a central square in a search for a sense of place, "a sort of civic soul" (Johnson 1996). But these suburban public spaces lack the diversity and complexity that residents seek, becoming theme-park versions of an idealized original.

Increasing privatization through collaborative public/private partnerships between municipalities and local businesses has transformed such places as Bryant Park and Union Square in the center of New York City into safe, middle-class environments maintained by strict surveillance and police control. The urban multi-use development of Battery Park City in New York City has become yet another piece of the spatial board game in which the capitalist system is reproducing the central city as a homogeneous professional domain. The public space of Battery Park City is upper-middle-class space, not simply because only the wealthy can afford to live or rent offices there, but also because its design vocabulary and limited public access exclude other less affluent members of the city's population. Even city squares and village greens are no longer places for public discussion and casual loitering, but instead have become filled with regulated green markets, military reenactments, and seasonal county fairs.

There are observable differences between central urban plazas in Latin America or Europe that retain a vibrant public life and civic spaces of Los Angeles and New York. Unless North American urban spaces become commercially successful—the best examples being New York City's South Street Seaport, Boston's Faneuil Hall Marketplace, San Francisco's Ghirardelli Square and the Cannery, or Baltimore's Harborplace—or public/private models of center-city development such as Bryant Park or Battery Park City, their future remains in question. Commercialization and privatization, however, limit participation to those who can afford it and who conform to middle-class rules of conduct and appearance.

In contrast, the Latin American plaza has been identified as a preeminent public space, a source and symbol of civic power, with a long tradition as the cultural center of the city. The plaza represents the aesthetic of the city and is considered a metaphor of the urban cosmology (Da Matta 1984). In and around it are located the gardens and buildings most basic to the social life of the community: the church, representing religious power, and the government offices, representing political power. Traditionally, commerce was separated in another downtown area where impersonal transactions took place; however, over time, banks and businesses as well as theaters and restaurants have surrounded the plaza.

It is an arena where diverse social groups and social classes appear together in a highly structured way, segmented by space and time, yet intermingling and interacting on the same site. These rules of social encounter, of hierarchical complementarity and tolerance, however, are particular to the *cultura* (culture) of the plaza and are not necessarily obeyed in other parts of the city.

Moreover, this culturally distinct urban design tradition is also under attack from the pressures of global capital and generic architectural and planning vocabularies, but it has resisted commodification, or at least

slowed its pace. In order to explain this seeming resistance to change, Part II unravels the confluences of history, power, and local politics that allow this form of public space to maintain its salience even in the large capital cities of Mexico and Central America. In these chapters, I trace the role of power and spatial symbolism in the evolution of the New World Spanish American plaza. Chapter 3 introduces the two plazas in San José, Costa Rica, and provides the specific ethnohistorical and sociopolitical context for this study. Chapter 4 presents evidence for European architectural models of plaza design, while Chapter 5 presents archaeological as well as ethnohistorical materials that argue for an indigenous origin of the plaza's spatial form. I conclude by highlighting the syncretic nature of Latin American plaza design and meaning.

Spatializing Culture

Theoretically, this work is about how culture can be understood spatially and what spatialization tells us about culture. Social and economic relations produce space. To think of the built environment as space rather than a collection of objects is useful because its parts become conjoined within a system, a kind of ecology. Through this ecology we begin to understand the causal relationships between economy, society, and culture on the one hand, and the urban environment on the other.

Theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu (1977), Manuel Castells (1983), Michel de Certeau (1984), David Harvey (1985), Anthony King (1980), Henri Lefebvre (1991), Neil Smith (1991, 1996), and Sharon Zukin (1991) have contributed to this discussion, linking political economic theory with the social production of the built environment at different urban scales. Anthropologists James Fernandez (1992), Keith Basso (1990), Fred Myers (1989), and Miles Richardson (1984) and the architectural historian Dolores Hayden (1995) have been more concerned with relating expressive culture to the experience of place. My objective is to bridge these understandings through spatializing culture, that is, integrating the social production of the built environment with the daily routines and ceremonial rituals of the cultural realm and the phenomenological experience of individuals.

Part III develops this theory and provides ethnographic examples of how spatialization works as an analytic framework as well as a method for uncovering spatially embedded aspects of culture. Chapter 6 sets out the larger theoretical agenda by proposing that social production of space and social construction of space must be understood as a dialogical process in which there is a high degree of conflict and contestation. Chapter 7 explores gender, class, and cultural differences that give shape and form to the world by permitting labeling and classification. Chapter 8 considers Costa Rican plazas both as artistic, architecturally designed expressions and as valuable commodities manipulated for political power and economic advantage, and it examines the contradictions that come to light when artistic style and political purpose are compared.

The Experience of Place

A final concern is how to link the history and ethnography of the plaza with the experience of being in the plaza. The sociopolitical and cultural forces that produce the plaza create an environment and an ecology in which the individual experiences the impact of these forces. Individual users and residents also generate their own memories, understandings, and feelings that color and shape the real and perceived environment. Further, other forms of expressive culture such as paintings, photographs, novels, short stories, autobiographies, and poetry represent plazas and urban public space in ways that transform an individual's perception and experience of a place. These memories, stories, and personal reflections create places within the constraints of local histories and social structure discussed in Parts II and III.

Throughout the book I include Costa Rican memoirs, short stories, poetry, and field notes that reflect alternative experiences and perceptions of being in the plaza. In Part IV, however, I focus on how Costa Rican conversations—both fictional ones found in novels and actual conversations I had with people who had lived near Parque Central—present still another dimension of the plaza experience. Talk is the centerpiece of the analysis, providing the reader with dialogue and personal accounts of plaza life. Chapter 9 presents excerpts from novels written by Costa Rican authors that portray conversations occurring in parks and plazas. Chapter 10 records conversations with five Costa Ricans about their experiences of growing up on or near the main plaza and the quality of the time they spent there. Chapter 11 concludes by weaving these various threads of conversation into the multistranded and textured fabric of plaza life.

Methodology

This project began with a methodological problem that was transformed into twelve years of ethnographic fieldwork and ethnohistorical research.

I was concerned with how public space was studied and represented in anthropology, environmental psychology, landscape architecture, and urban design and planning. Studies of public spaces were either behavioral, describing the numbers and kinds of people who used the space, or architectural, describing the physical characteristics and architectural history of the built environment. There were few ethnographic studies, and even fewer environment-behavior studies that emphasized sociocultural processes and social relations. Yet the theoretical questions I wanted to address required the integration of architectural, archaeological, historical, ethnographic, and phenomenological materials to construct a multilayered analysis and nuanced account.

RESEARCH METHODS

The ethnographic descriptions are based on long-term fieldwork in San José beginning in August 1972 through July 1974 (see Photograph 21), continuing during the summers of 1976 and 1979, and including five field visits that focused only on the urban plazas: the first, February through March 1985; the second, May through September 1986; the third, December 1986 through February 1987; the fourth, November through December 1993; and the fifth, during January 1997. By observing over a long period of time, I was able to record a variety of sociopolitical situations and changing social behaviors and designs—creating a series of natural experiments. By selecting different months, I was able to sample a variety of seasonal ecologies: summer months coincide with Costa Rica's rainy season, characterized by late afternoon showers or torrential downpours that interrupt plaza life. During these periods I would stand with other plaza occupants under the closest available shelter or visit one of the local cafés to wait for the rain to stop. The winter months are the dry season, with clear, sunny, and cooler weather. Especially around Christmas and New Year's Day, plaza use increases, and the plazas are filled with informal markets for seasonal gifts of nuts and fruits.

Two plazas were selected for study as particularly important public spaces and centers of civic life: Parque Central, located at the center of San José and bordered by the national cathedral, was the Plaza Principal (main plaza) during colonial times and is the preeminent symbolic space of San José. Plaza de la Cultura is a more recently designed and constructed modern plaza only two blocks northeast of Parque Central,

21. The author in the field in 1973

located next to the architecturally distinguished National Theater and the major tourist hotel, the Gran Hotel Costa Rica. These field sites and the surrounding city were the focus of data collection for the ethnographic and phenomenological portions of the research (see Photograph 22).

Observation

Because of my concern that participant observation in a public space might not capture all the ongoing activities, I utilized three different observational strategies:

1. Each plaza was observed by sector, and everything that occurred in that sector was recorded for a designated period of time. This time/place sampling provided a system for nonsequentially observing all the sites throughout the day on both weekends and weekdays. A series of behavioral maps locating activities and counts of people by location, sex, and age were also created.
2. After the first month of time/space sampling, a map of activity

22. Aerial photograph of central San José, 1982

locations had emerged, so a second set of observations concentrated on documenting these activities and the people engaged in them.

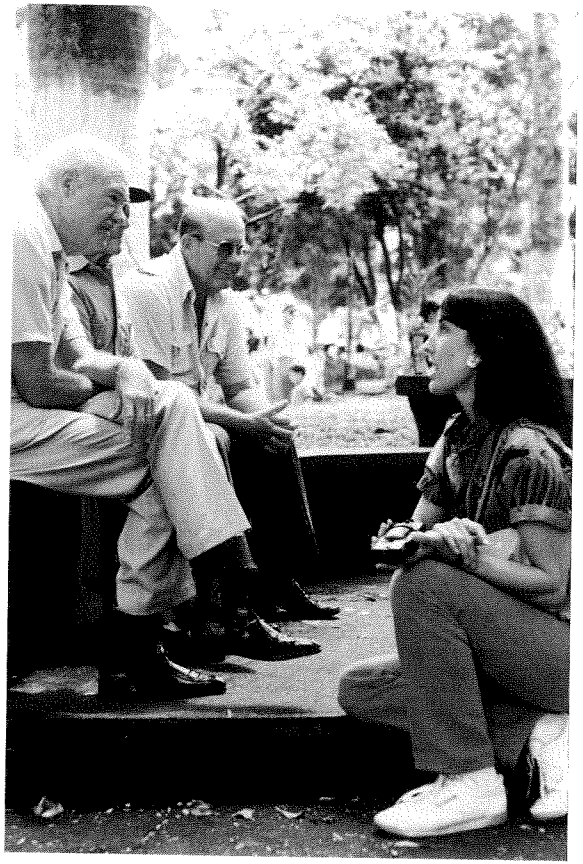
3. During the third phase of participant observation, I carried a camera and map, spoke to people, and became more involved in everyday plaza life (see Photograph 23). By this time plaza users were quite used to seeing me with my clipboard and pen, and they were delighted that I was now taking photographs and involving them in my until then seemingly clandestine task. The camera gave many people an excuse to talk to me and to ask what I was doing. I began to make friends and hang out with some of the plaza occupants, even visiting them at home or joining them when they went for a drink or a meal.

Interviews and Historical Documentation

At the conclusion of these observations, I collected a series of interviews with plaza users, using questions that had emerged during the observational period (see Photograph 24). A systematic series of interviews with the managers, owners, and directors of local institutions located on or near the plazas were completed; and blueprints, design guidelines, and plans for the design of the plazas were collected and discussed. Interviews with local historians and archival work in the National Library and at the Universidad de Costa Rica provided documentation of the oral histories of Parque Central. Interviews with the current and previous Ministers of Culture, the previous Minister of Planning (President Oscar Arias), and the chief of Municipal Planning, as well as with the architects involved in the design of the Plaza de la Cultura, provided contextual data for the ethnographic descriptions and documentation of the design and construction process. Finally, Costa Rican literature and poetry, newspapers and magazines, television presentations, and conversations with friends and neighbors provided data on the broader context of public life. These phases of data collection were repeated during each of the five intensive field visits.

Ethnohistorical Archival Research

As a 1990 Research Fellow at the John Carter Brown Library, I uncovered the origins of the Spanish American plaza working with early North

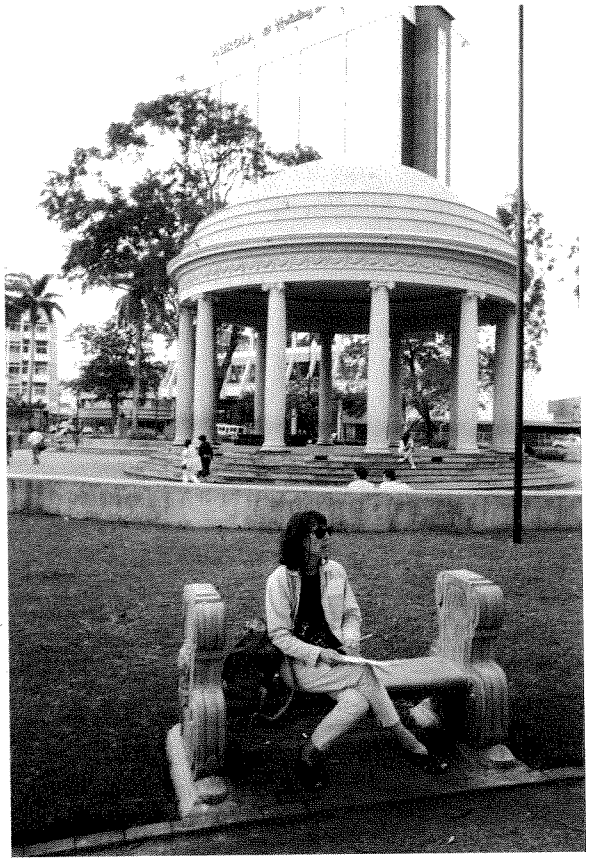


23. The author interviewing in 1986

American and European contact documents, including original maps and plans. It was there that I was able to find evidence that the Spanish were influenced by indigenous architecture and urban planning in their New World urban designs. This separate project produced the ethnohistorical background for understanding the Spanish American plaza in indigenous as well as European terms.

Photographic Documentation

Throughout the field visits, photographs were taken to document the physical changes in the design and use of each plaza and the surrounding city. These photographs soon became an irreplaceable source of data as the plazas began to change. During each subsequent visit, I would



24. The author mapping in 1997

arrive in San José and unexpectedly find that the plaza I planned to photograph and field-check would be under construction or overrun with vendors and tourists. Thus, the original photographs and the data they contained became part of my personal archive of the plaza's history. It was fortuitous that the research project encompassed over a decade of observation, since it was the historical sequence that provided the most important clues to the meaning of users' resistance and response to plaza changes as well as the State's control of spatial design.

Analysis

These methodologies and procedures were effective in providing different kinds of data that could be compared and analyzed. The content

analysis of field notes, interviews, maps, photographs, and historical documents generated a series of themes and theoretical typologies that illuminate the cultural underpinnings of plaza design and use. The observations, interviews, archival documentation, and spatial and architectural maps and drawings provided distinct texts that could be read in relation to each other, uncovering areas of appropriation, conflict, and contestation over time. These analytic findings are the basis for the historical, ethnographic, and conversational chapters that follow.

PART TWO Histories

Chapter 2 Place and People in a Transnational Borderzone City

Introduction

Antigua Guatemala is a place of contradictions: colonial, modern, and postmodern; Ladino, Maya, and foreign; a tourism site and a place for tourists to rest; an expensive suburb of and playground for elites from Guatemala City; the administrative and economic center of the department of Sacatepéquez. *Antigüeños* (residents of Antigua) view it as a preserved-in-time Spanish colonial city, a modern cosmopolitan city, or a combination of these. To tourists, Antigua is both inauthentic, corrupted by tourism and tourists themselves, and authentic, a place where "Indians," colonial architecture, and Western conveniences blend together. Some Mayas view it as their Ladino enemies' town, but others claim it as theirs, the place where they buy needed items and earn a living.

This chapter describes why Antigua is a heterotopia, a space that juxtaposes "in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are themselves incompatible" (Foucault 1986). It refers to tourists who travel independent of guided tours and who also visit Antigua to study Spanish. Comprehending the multiple meanings of Antigua depends on learning how people live, work, and survive in this heterotopia. Meanings are linked to the ways that people conceive of time, place, other people, and themselves. What Antigua is and what it means to those who live and work in it also relates to the specific ways that people use it. By paying attention to the heterotopic dimensions of the city, it is possible to draw out the contradictions between touristic constructions of Antigua and how people live in it. Drawing on specific cases of how people use Antigua can illuminate the city's unique social dimensions.

This chapter is framed by two concerns: first, how to describe Antigua and the people who live and work there, and second, heeding Alejandro Lugo's (1997: 61) call to make the study of borderzones "*anti*disciplinary" where their dimensions are framed within Foucaldian "terrains of Power" and nation-making. In other words, time, place, and people intersect, both with national and international tourism and with the local government and the nation-state. To address these issues, three different scenarios are described and discussed. These fragments illustrate particular aspects of the city and basic ways to engage it methodologically and theoretically.

Hence, this chapter looks at how Guatemalans and tourists use Antigua and the types of contradictions that arise from that use. Bruner (1996b) explains that some tourism spaces between First and Third Worlds are borderzones. But this chapter is concerned with how one such borderzone, Antigua, is made significant by local governments and people, then used by the Mayas, Ladinos, and tourists who inhabit or visit it.

First Scenario: Viewing Maps / Viewing the City

Antigua is manageable for local residents and visitors alike. They can imagine its limits. Tourists walk unimpeded from one corner of the city to the other. There are no ghettos, no mean streets with suspicious-looking characters. Maya vendors, laborers, housekeepers, nannies, gardeners, construction workers, security guards, and bank tellers, who come from surrounding and quite distant towns, likewise comprehend the city as a whole.

These perceptions are tempered by tourists' practices of surveillance, which is a convention of tourism itself. In fact, tourism operators and handicraft vendors encouraged surveillance to help tourists conceive of Antigua as a contained, manageable place. Surveillance is done primarily by reading maps of the city and by viewing people from high places, such as second-floor balconies of hotels and restaurants, colonial ruins, and the Cerro de la Cruz, a hill with a cross monument that overlooks Antigua. Both forms of surveillance remove tourists from the immediacy of who and what they desire to see and to understand.

On buses entering Antigua, one can watch tourists studying maps in guidebooks, planning where they will sleep and eat and learning where the Post Office, the telephone company, and major attractions are lo-

cated. No respectable guidebook is complete without a map of Antigua. These maps list hotels, churches, the municipal marketplace, the bus terminal, the Central Plaza, and the local INGUAT (Guatemalan National Tourism Institute) office. On the streets, tourists are barraged by even more maps, especially if they follow their guidebook's instructions and go to the INGUAT office, where they are given more maps—a map of the city and maps promoting museums, Spanish schools, restaurants, and tour companies, should the independent tourist want to participate in some guided sightseeing. In hotels, restaurants, bookstores, and Spanish schools, even more maps are available.

Those who work in the tourism industry are self-conscious about maps. INGUAT publishes two different Antigua maps, one printed in color on glossy paper and the other printed in black and white on inexpensive paper. The former is free but harder to find. On the opposite side of this map, hotels, cultural centers, artisan products, restaurants, Spanish schools, banks, travel agencies, bus companies, and car rental companies are listed. The other map, which costs US$0.04, is a simple one showing the churches, the Central Plaza, and museums. Businesspeople want to be included on the glossy INGUAT map, since it indicates which businesses the Guatemalan government endorses.

Businesspersons also purchase advertising on other maps or collectively publish maps themselves, with their advertisements in the margins and on the opposite side. Maps produced by Cartoon's Advertising, Gare de Creación, and Agencia Publicitaria contain information about festivals, folklore, and brief histories of Antigua. Agencia Publicitaria publishes a monthly map, which includes a calendar of events. These maps cater to businesses owned by Ladinos and foreign expatriates.

Maps are important to Maya *típica* vendors and other merchants in tourism because they know that tourists read them. The vendors who sell in the Compañía de Jesús Artisan Marketplace have been particularly distressed about their relationship to the maps published by INGUAT, as well as those published by local Antigua businesspersons. Not only do the INGUAT maps *not* list the Compañía de Jesús Artisan Marketplace, but the more commonly distributed black-and-white map indicates that the municipal bathrooms are located along the southeast side of the Compañía de Jesús ruins where the marketplace is located. This is problematic to vendors because tourists do not frequent municipal/public bathrooms. To no avail, vendors have tried to get local INGUAT officials either to remove the reference to the bathrooms or, better yet, to list the

location of the marketplace on the map. Marketplace vendors also have been refused advertising space on the other above-mentioned maps. This is an example of the exclusionary practices of the Guatemalan government and of non-Maya Antigua businesspersons that have caused concern among vendors, who worry about tourists not knowing that they exist or, if tourists do learn that the marketplace exists, about them not frequenting it because it is not supported by the government.

The power of the state (INGUAT) or of non-Maya businesspeople, however, is not complete or consistent. Vendors learned that an expensive map (US$10–$15), "Modern & Colonial: Guatemala City & La Antigua Guatemala," with detailed illustrations and artwork, does include the Compañía de Jesús Artisan Marketplace and was sold by Colección Verás. The map was made for the Maya World (Mundo Maya) promotion organized by the governments of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. A free map distributed by Burger King is the other map to include the marketplace, which surprised vendors because they had not asked to be represented in it. The limited distribution of these maps, compared to those published by INGUAT and Agencia Publicitaria, led vendors to figure that the maps would not bring many shoppers to the Compañía de Jesús Artisan Marketplace. They did not feel, therefore, that they were quite within the tourist gaze.

Drawing on Foucault, James Urry (1990, 1992), who has discussed various aspects of "tourist gazes," argues that "there are ways of being a tourist that do challenge and disturb dominant constructions of the spaces of a town or city—heterotopias, in other words" (1992: 178). In the case of Antigua, tourists comprehend the city first by studying maps and then by looking out over Antigua from the tops of Spanish colonial church ruins like Santa Clara, San Francisco el Grande, and the Capuchinas Convent. The effects of such gazing, or surveillance, can lead to a "process of interiorization as implied by the panopticon," where the subjects of the gaze "may believe that they are always about to be gazed upon, even if they are not" (Urry 1992: 177).

These panoptic effects are double edged. Mayas and Ladinos are aware of the tourists' gazes. In fact, for *antigüeños* who are involved in tourism, not being within the tourist gaze, such as not being shown on a map, worries them, even though being within the gaze may result in forms of self-discipline. For instance, Maya vendors advise each other to watch their behavior because tourists will see them acting up and then not visit the marketplace.

Tourists also find themselves being gazed upon by Maya and Ladino businesspersons, as well as by other tourists. Although only some people and things in Antigua warrant being gazed at by tourists, tourists are markedly different enough from locals that they, in turn, are the subjects of gazes. Castañeda (1996: 232–258) discusses how in the marketplace at Chichén Itzá both he and vendors were busy watching each other. Mutual watching is common in tourism places, but unlike Castañeda's self-example, being watched is not what tourists in Antigua expected or desired. In fact, they expected to be invisible while viewing their maps and standing on the upper balcony of the town hall (Ayuntamiento) and gazing down on the Maya street vendors, Ladino schoolchildren, and other tourists in the Central Plaza. Some felt that they should decide if and when to "reveal" themselves to the subjects of their gaze.

The incongruity between the map, which helps tourists conceptualize Antigua as colonial, and self-conscious subjects who want to be gazed upon disrupts and undermines the ways tourists imagine Antigua and its inhabitants. Because there are so many tourists in Antigua most of the year, they cannot ignore each other. For those who are in Antigua to regroup with fellow travelers, to rest, to send e-mails, and to eat non-Guatemalan foods, the city is a welcome stop where they can seek out other like-minded people with whom to compare travel notes and experiences. Some, however, are bothered by other tourists, who remind them that Antigua is touristic and that residents there expect and anticipate tourists' gazes.

The preponderance of maps undermines the touristic experience. It is one thing to read a map that was included in a guidebook purchased in a bookstore at home, yet quite another to be confronted everywhere one turns with another map suggesting what she or he should see and do. Sometimes, maps themselves undermine tourists' conceptions of Antigua's contained wholeness by revealing ways that the borders of the city are not contained—historically, economically, or culturally. For example, the cover of the Cartoon's Advertising map features Coca-Cola symbols. The Burger King map combines company advertising and information about Antigua. The brochure/map for the art exhibit "Painted Bodies: Forty-five Chilean Artists" that was displayed in the reconstructed parts of the Compañía de Jesús Monastery, which are occupied by the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional), places Antigua in an international art scene. These maps remind tourists that Antigua is an international city with transnational companies, as well as one that is self-consciously maintained as a Spanish colonial time capsule.

Anzaldúa (1987: 3) writes, "Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary." The dividing line between tourists and Others and between colonial city and transnational city is not clearly marked. Maps, then, ultimately fail to delineate the boundaries between tourists and others, and instead reveal to them, like seeing other tourists, the heterotopic dimensions of Antigua. Tourists, Ladinos, Mayas, and all others living in and visiting Antigua find themselves in a borderzone where the historical city of cobblestone streets and colonial buildings coexists with and contradicts the transnational city of Burger King and Radisson International resorts.

Second Scenario: Remaking a Colonial City

The Guatemalan historian Jorge Luján Muñoz wrote that during the first decades of the twentieth century Antigua remained a quiet, forgotten place. Interest in it returned when, "with the motive of its 400th anniversary [1941], . . . the rubbish was removed, the ruins were made adequate *without irrelevant restorations* [emphasis in original], and flowers were planted in the cloisters and atriums. Thanks to its tranquil life as a large town, hardly any new buildings had been constructed. Then it was rediscovered by many Guatemalans and it began to be enjoyed as a cultural and touristic center" (Pardo 1944: 259, quoted in Luján Muñoz 1966: 17).

RE/CONSTRUCTING COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE

The single defining characteristic of Antigua, and the one especially described in national and touristic discourses, is its colonial architecture. From its establishment in 1541 until it was shaken by a series of earthquakes in 1773, it was one of Central America's prominent cities. Not only a Catholic religious center, where Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, and others were represented, it was an important administrative, political, and educational hub. Christopher Lutz (1994: 168) explains that Antigua

was composed equally of Spanish, indigenous, and African populations, making it one of the most diverse Central American cities in the 1700s. Over time, the city became increasingly more Ladino, less overtly indigenous and Spanish, with few surviving traces of the African slave population. Today, Ladino residents, government officials, and Mayas conceptualize Antigua as a Ladino town, despite the fact that Mayas work there

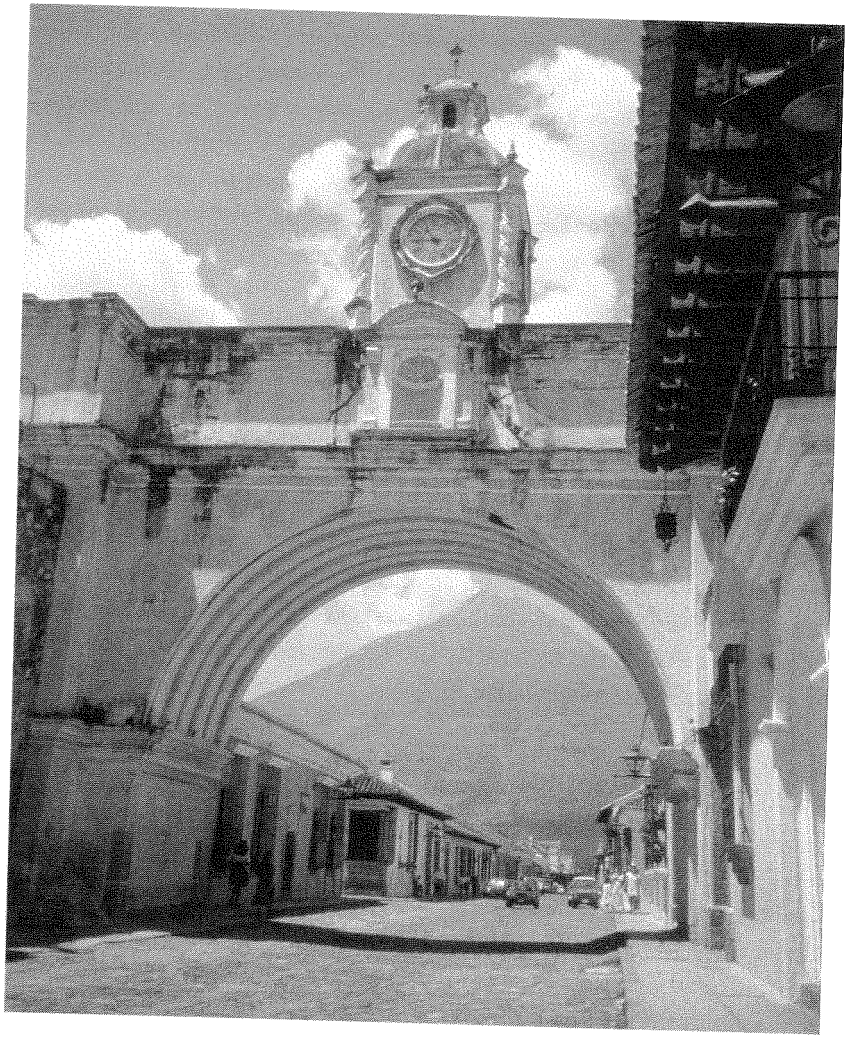


Figure 2.1. Antigua, looking through the Arc of Santa Catalina on 5ª Avenida Norte, facing south toward the volcano Fuego. This view is commonly reproduced in guidebooks and on postcards. Photograph by author.

and participate in Catholic and Protestant church services and activities.

When Guatemala's capital was moved forty-five kilometers east to its present-day location of Guatemala City, following the 1773 earthquakes, Antigua practically languished in oblivion until the development of tourism early in the twentieth century. By the 1940s, Antigua was firmly on the tourism circuit, appealing to tourists because it appeared to be stuck in time, with its Spanish colonial buildings, cobblestone streets, and a large number of artisans who produced cotton textiles, ceramics, baskets, nets, furniture, musical instruments, jewelry, forged iron, and candles (see Subcentro Regional de Artesanías y Artes Populares 1990). Joaquín Muñoz (1940: 83) wrote, "It is the most impressive monument of Spanish Colonial magnificence and grandeur that exists in the world. Guatemala proudly shows their visitors this Jewel City with its ruins, history, and legend that very few cities in the world perhaps can equal." Although Muñoz's (1940) guidebook was the most widely distributed in the 1940s (it is still available in bookstores in Guatemala as well as in used bookstores in the United States), other guidebooks from this time praised Antigua's colonial features.[1]

Antigua's importance as a tourism center and its fame as a well-preserved colonial city grew after it was named a National Monument on March 30, 1944, by governmental decree. In 1965, the Eighth Assem-

Figure 2.2. Tanque de la Unión Park. Photograph by author.

bly of the Pan-American Institute of History and Geography named it a Monumental City of the Americas. Then in 1979, UNESCO included it in its World Heritage Site List. Despite these honors, little was done to restore or maintain Antigua's colonial buildings, although a national law was passed in 1969 to protect the colonial architecture. The Tanque de la Unión—a rectangular park with two rows of palm trees and a large community *pila* on its eastern side—although not a relic of the colonial period, was restored, since it was dedicated in the 1930s to dictator Jorge Ubico. The church of San Francisco el Grande and Fifth Avenue North were renovated and made more colonial. By 1972 the National Council for the Protection of Antigua was formed to regulate restoration projects. According to two of Antigua's prominent amateur historians, Elizabeth Bell and Trevor Long (1993: 15), "Tons of dirt and rubble covered fountains and courtyards. The city streets were a jumble of neon signs, billboards and other trappings of a contemporary 20th century."

Following the 1976 earthquake, the city fell into greater disrepair, but that natural disaster provided an opportunity for city officials and private citizens to ensure that the city would retain its colonial-style architecture. The National Council for the Protection of Antigua regularly published reports announcing the progress of renovations and the rehabilitation of the city. Both the municipal and the national governments were self-conscious about Antigua's look and were adamant about enforcing building codes.

Residents and merchants discuss building codes with mixed feelings. For some, the codes are too strict. While all agree that prominent historic buildings should be restored in colonial style, many argue that the codes inhibit the modernization of private buildings. Tensions between conservators and private citizens play out as individuals construct the buildings they desire, attending to the codes as they see fit. One debate that predominates in local newspapers is building height. Preservationists argue that with the exception of municipal and church buildings, few were two or more stories high in colonial times. To maintain the colonial integrity of the city, no buildings should be built over one story. However, for *antigüeños* with growing families or small businesses, building up is the only way they can gain extra needed space.

On June 10, 1997, the newspaper *Siglo XXI* reported that Mayor Víctor Hugo del Pozo granted construction licenses that violated building codes. Further denouncements were made against the mayor in the same newspaper on August 1, 1997, because of the incorrect renovations

that were made on the Convent of La Merced, the Arc of Santa Catalina, and office spaces in the Municipal Treasury building. By the end of August, as reported in the newspaper *La Prensa Libre,* the mayor was in search of a new conservator for the city. Three months after his appointment, the new conservator, Ramsés López, resigned under controversy about his lack of experience in historical conservation and restoration (*La Prensa Libre,* March 6, 1998).

Typical building violations included demolishing colonial-period walls, displaying signs that protruded into the street, constructing buildings greater than one story, using roofing materials that did not appear to be tile, installing doorways that did not reflect a colonial aesthetic, and painting buildings in bright color combinations like purple, yellow, and green.

In January 1998, in order to curb construction violations and better regulate restoration projects, the Guatemalan National Congress considered revamping the heritage protection laws, but in the end did not. Failure to comply with the new laws would have resulted in a maximum fine of Q100,000 compared to the current maximum fine of Q500 for similar violations. During the same month, under Mayor del Pozo's direction, concrete barricades were installed on some streets to block the passage of large commercial trucks and buses that were destroying the

Figure 2.3. La Merced Church and *típica* vendors. Photograph by author.

cobblestone streets because of their weight and ruining the paint on buildings because of their exhaust (*La Prensa Libre,* January 16, 1998). *Antigüeños* petitioned the mayor to be even more rigorous and diligent in the enforcement of traffic.

RE/CONSTRUCTING PEOPLE

At work in Antigua since the 1930s is the social construction of people living and working in the city. As both Christopher Lutz (1994) and John Swetnam (1975) have documented, Mayas have always been an integral and important part of the city's history. In part, the continuing practice of reconstructing and conceptualizing Antigua as a Spanish colonial city relates to how Mayas are represented touristically and allowed to present themselves culturally. Subsequent chapters deal with the problems Maya vendors have working in Antigua. Suffice it to say, in order to make a living, Maya vendors of products in the utilitarian marketplace and of handicrafts and other items for tourists accept the roles they play in reconstructed colonial Antigua.

At the same time, tourism representations re/construct Antigua as a colonial space and re/construct its inhabitants to fit the space. References to Mayas in guidebooks frequently locate them in historic terms or in particular roles, such as vending agricultural produce and handicrafts, which have been practiced since the colonial period. Thus touristic views of what is authentic are reinforced. For example, Víctor Díaz (1927: 18) described the process of erasing Mayas from Antigua and condemned Spanish colonial practices. He wrote of the early colonial period that "the unfortunate indigenous race from nearby towns . . . commenced to diminish . . . because of the hard work . . . , living in oppressive servitude, and laboring on the construction of buildings . . . , in order to enrich the families of the conquistadors." The passage indirectly inscribes Antigua as a Ladino place, since it infers that neither Mayas nor Spaniards exist in the city. Díaz's guidebook advised its readers that in order to see Mayas, or rather "*indios* [Indians]," one had to leave Antigua and visit nearby towns like San Antonio Aguas Calientes.

Similarly, Pedro Zamora (1943: 24) locates Mayas historically but does not deal with them as contemporary social actors. He described how the Central Plaza, "where women and *indios* who sold products met," served as the city's marketplace prior to the 1773 earthquake. A later guidebook

that was published and distributed to tourists in the 1960s and early 1970s by the Sacatepéquez Departmental Body of Tourism firmly places Mayas in the marketplace: "Antigua's market is one of the best in the country, because of the great variety of products offered by the Indians from the nearby villages."

Today, Mayas who perform economic roles as vendors occupy a well-defined social space in Antigua that corresponds to the physical reconstruction of buildings. Not only do buildings need to be made in colonial style, but some people need to be located within the city as colonial subjects. Since the city's founding, Mayas have been the manual laborers, gardeners, and vendors of handicrafts and produce. Tourism practices continue to perpetuate these roles. Mayas who do not conform to them are out of place and out of time. Maya *típica* vendors use this legacy to argue that they "naturally belong" in Antigua. Whenever the municipal government or police tried to regulate the numbers of vendors and the places where they sell, vendors in the Compañía de Jesús Artisan Marketplace and peddlers in the Central Plaza explain their rights in terms of primordial origins. One Kaqchikel Maya vendor expressed the general sentiments of all: "We've always come here, bringing and selling farm products and handicrafts. Tourists want to see us."

Mayas who are not vendors or manual laborers are culturally silenced in their occupations. Maya scholars working in Antigua are invisible to tourists, even though they are openly promoting and living their Mayanness. Maya linguists and scholars working with the Francisco Marroquín Linguistic Project; a library and research center, CIRMA (Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica); and a Maya linguistic research team, OKMA (Oxlajuuj Keej Maya' Ajtz'iib'; 1993), do not deny their culture, and, in general, they are not denied it by Ladino businesspersons and institutions of tourism. These Mayas occupy social spaces and physical places that are, at best, at the margins of Antigua tourism. A few Spanish students at Francisco Marroquín Linguistic Project are aware that they can study Maya languages, but the school is internationally known for its Spanish language classes.

Usually, Mayas must conform to Ladino norms if they get work in occupations other than vending or labor. Mayas who work in better-paying jobs, including positions in tourism, security, banks, restaurants, and hotels, must, according to them, act like Ladinos—wear Ladino-style clothing and not speak a Maya language—in order to keep their jobs. To illustrate how Mayas working in Ladino socioeconomic spheres are domi-

nated by and coerced to conform to Ladino culture in order to get and keep their jobs, I present two examples: a security guard for GUATEL (previously the name of the national telephone company) and a bank teller.

For several years, 1994 through 1997, I used the telephones in the main GUATEL office, sometimes accompanied by Maya vendor friends. One day late in 1997, a GUATEL security guard approached me in the Central Plaza, telling me that he was a Kaqchikel Maya from San Juan de Comalapa. He had been hesitant to identify himself and his corresponding cultural identity because he feared repercussions from Ladino clients of the telephone company and from his Ladino supervisors.

In the other case, the bank teller and I crossed paths at a wedding in San Antonio Aguas Calientes, his hometown. He had served me at the bank and knew that I was working with *típica* vendors and Kaqchikel Mayas, teaching their own language. He began talking to me as if we knew each other, but I could not place him. When he explained where he worked, I realized who he was. On the job, he had to be Ladino, which was difficult for him when he had to help Maya clients of the bank. He spoke of how liberating it must be for the Kaqchikel teachers to have visible, prestigious work in Antigua that did not require them to "deny their language and culture." Of course, by passing as a Ladino, he has a better job than many of his peers.

EFFECTS OF RE/CONSTRUCTION AND GLOBALIZATION

In Antigua, few people would disagree about the economic benefits of maintaining, conserving, and constructing buildings in the Spanish colonial style for the promotion of tourism. Mayas also find themselves complying with a colonial legacy that assigns to them particular occupational roles when they retain their cultural identities, or negates those identities when they secure other types of jobs. Architecture and occupational roles articulate together to give visitors (not just U.S. and European visitors but also Guatemalans and other Latin Americans) the impression of a timeless, colonial city. It was because of the articulation of "Indians" with the Spanish colonial buildings that foreign tourists visited Antigua.

Baudrillard's (1983) theories on simulacra and Saskia Sassen's (1996) thoughts on the globalization of cities can be used to think about the re/construction of Antigua. Baudrillard (1983: 11) writes of the final phase of an image that "it bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum." Later, he explains that simulation is based "on the structural law of value" (Baudrillard 1983: 83). In other words, the simulation operates at the level of signs for the sake of signs themselves, divorced from, yet based upon, the original and somehow better than it. He uses Disneyland as the ideal example of a simulacrum. And, it is ironic that some tourists to Antigua characterize it as a "Disneyland."

It is important to think about the image, or representation, of Antigua and what that representation means. More precisely, how Antigua is decoded by tourists who visit and how it is used by Mayas and Ladinos who live and work there reveal the unique characteristics of the city—part simulacrum of a colonial city and part actual colonial city. Those persons rebuilding and working in the shadow of colonial Antigua are clearly aware that Antigua today is a representation of a colonial city from a previous historical period. The politics of how Antigua is remade into a new colonial image of its former real colonial self is at the heart of debates among residents and those who work there.

Unlike Disneyland, which was constructed from scratch to entertain, Antigua's history has been one of constant rebuilding and change, primarily because of earthquakes, although in the twentieth century much of the rebuilding related to tourism. Building owners and government officials debated about what is colonial, which type of colonial style is to be used, and should only the façades of buildings be colonial or whole buildings from the ground up. According to an *antigüeño* friend who has worked on restoration projects, there is no one recommended colonial style. Residents and builders have their own particular visions about what Spanish colonial style consists of and how much a building should conform to it. Often, debates revolve around appropriate colors of paint, building heights, and the correct use of signs. The simulacrum always threatens to be unmade because of these debates. The internal tensions at work, related to how buildings are constructed and who occupies the city, are so great and so overtly contradictory that most tourists, especially those who spend more than a couple of hours there, see Antigua as a re-creation and representation of a colonial city.

Disneyland, unlike Antigua, does not have the problem of being more than what it is. Antigua, on the other hand, is something that signifies meaning and refers to both the real and the imaginary. Disneyland does not refer directly to the real, the authentic. Of course, Disneyland is physical and it can and does refer back to itself. It is a thing, too. However, Antigua

is different. Some buildings, streets, and artifacts are actually from the colonial period, but at the same time, the city is a reconstruction of itself.

Antigüeños' debates about how to remake Antigua also relate to those who visit. Although the tourism industry promotes it as a colonial city, *antigüeños* know that foreign and national tourists would not stay and spend money if it really were a colonial city. Visitors expect both a colonial city and numerous amenities that will make their stay comfortable. In Disneyland no one is surprised to see fast-food restaurants, hotels with air-conditioning, and places that send faxes and e-mail messages, but in Antigua, these can threaten the authenticity of the city. Guided tour companies are careful to avoid these problematic places. Frequently, they will not pass by fast-food restaurants, like Burger King and the popular fried chicken restaurant Pollo Campero. They avoid bars and computer cafés, weaving through the city and selecting sites thought to exemplify the colonial period. To further safeguard against rupturing the colonial image, tourists are kept so busy, so overwhelmed with facts and activities, that they do not have the time to explore Antigua on their own. In their hotel, which is not marked as colonial, especially the guest rooms, tourists are not in colonial Antigua.

The majority of independent American tourists who visit Antigua go there to see a Spanish colonial city and to study Spanish. They look at colonial buildings and artifacts, gaze at and converse with "real Indians" (identified by their clothing and occupations) in the marketplace and streets, and eat dinner at the Fondo de la Calle Real restaurant, which serves typical Guatemalan food. If they are not disappointed by or want some of the conveniences of home, they can read and send e-mail messages, eat pizza for lunch, watch programs in English on cable television, and go to a sports bar to watch U.S. basketball games with other tourists. The interests of *antigüeños* are split between efforts to rebuild a colonial city and trying to serve their tourist guests.

Sassen (1996: 221) holds that "globalization is a process that generates contradictory spaces, characterized by contestation, internal differentiation, continuous border crossings." According to her, this disarticulates local interests from those of the nation, connecting them more to global political, economic, and social arenas. Antigua is one of these places. Mayas, Ladinos, and tourists meet in this borderzone, disrupting the notions that Antigua is singularly a Ladino place and the Maya towns in the highlands are singularly Indian places.

Third Scenario: A Typical Tuesday in Antigua

Another way of comprehending Antigua is by walking through it and living in it. This, of course, is a process of getting to know a city that differs from panoptic forms of gazing from the top of a tall building or at a map. To practice these latter forms of viewing, explains Michel de Certeau (1984: 92), "is to be lifted out of the city's grasp. . . . When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors and spectators." However, he advises that in order to get at everyday practices, to know how the city is lived, it is important "to [begin] on the ground level, with footsteps" (de Certeau 1984: 97).

The following description of how I tended to spend Tuesdays in Antigua illustrates one way to understand the city. My interaction with the city helps demonstrate, according to de Certeau's theories of "spatial practice," the "contradiction between the collective mode of administration and an individual mode of reappropriation . . . [in which] . . . spatial practices in fact secretly structure the determining conditions of social life" (1984: 96). In other words, this section shows how an "everyday practice" can contradict the ways a place is constructed officially by the nation-state as well as by the economically and politically dominant participants.

EVERYDAY SOCIOSPATIAL PRACTICES OF AN ANTHROPOLOGIST

On most Tuesdays, for nearly one year, my day followed the same basic routine. From 5:30 AM until roughly 7:30 AM, I entered fieldnotes in my computer, watched CNN, and thought about the previous day. Aside from the occasional crow of a rooster or the calls of bus *ayudantes* (helpers), Antigua's brisk mornings were quiet. By 7:30 AM, joining the hundreds of schoolchildren rushing to school, I left my apartment on Segunda Calle Oriente to eat breakfast at Café Condesa, located on the south side of the Central Plaza. En route, I purchased two daily newspapers, *Siglo XXI* and *La Prensa Libre,* and talked to vendors who were going to breakfast or to get their merchandise out of storage.

Owned by an American woman, the Café Condesa is one of the restaurants in Antigua that will serve anyone—provided they can afford the prices and want to eat U.S.-inspired food. Daily, it fills with a mixture of tourists and locals—foreign expatriates, retirees from the United States,

Antigua businesspersons, and others—intent on eating pancakes, scones, and American fried potatoes. Few Mayas go there to eat, which is not true for the many pizza restaurants located throughout Antigua. However, it was one of the few restaurants, other than those in the marketplace, where I did not have to worry about my Maya friends being refused service. We could meet, have conversations, and plan future projects. The backdrop of the restaurant—the U.S.-style food, the hushed mix of languages (Spanish, German, English, French, Hebrew, Japanese, and others), the colonial architecture with fountains and flowering plants—provided a perfect atmosphere for my Maya friends and me to make cultural comparisons.

The differences of the place and the food from the houses and meals of Mayas elicited descriptions of their own kitchens and thoughts on food and other topics that I could compare later when I was in their homes. It was a place where I could share a small part of my culture with friends whose chances of obtaining a visa from the U.S. government and saving enough money to visit me in Chicago were not likely. It was one of those places where my Maya friends and I could go unnoticed, where our presence did not matter to anyone, where we were not tourism spectacles. Café Condesa was also where I could find other anthropologists on leave from their research sites or en route to them.

After breakfast, around 10:00 AM, I usually went to the Compañía de Jesús Artisan Marketplace, located one city block from the Central Plaza. At this hour vendors were still unpacking merchandise and setting up their displays. They rushed to get their locales in order before tourists and Spanish students came to look at "Indians," practice Spanish, browse, and buy. I joined them by carrying bundles of clothes, bags, and other items; by sweeping and picking up trash left by tourists the previous day; and by relaying messages among friends and family members within the marketplace.

As in the Café Condesa, the sounds of the marketplace are a mixture of languages: Spanish, Kaqchikel, K'iche', Ixil. Vendors yelled instructions to each other in their respective languages, talked across language differences by using Spanish, and practiced phrases in English on me. Sometimes, I heard a voice a couple of aisles away yell, "*La at k'o,* Walter?" (Are you there, Walter?).

"*Ja*" (Yes), I would reply.

"*Tab'ana' utzil. Achike nab'ij chaleco pa ingles?*" (Do me a favor. How do you say *chaleco* in English?), the vendor might question me.

"Vest," I would yell back.

"Vest," the vendor would say. "*La ütz, xinb'ij?*" (Did I say it right?)

"*Ja,*" I would answer.

K'iche' speakers frequently interrupted my discussions in Kaqchikel by teasing me with comments like "When are you going to learn a real Maya language?" and "You'll never speak correctly unless you learn K'iche'." To kid me, other vendors would ask questions such as "*Walter, ¿puede decir 'buenos días' en koreano?*" (Can you say "good morning" in Korean?) or "*¿Sabe los números en japonés?*" (Do you know the numbers in Japanese?), knowing that I did not know the answers. By the time tourists started coming in larger numbers to the marketplace, around 11:00 AM, the linguistic terrain of the marketplace was even more complex: vendors talking to each other in their respective Maya languages, tourists speaking to each other in their own languages, each group trying to figure out what the other group was saying, and finally negotiating business transactions in mixtures of Spanish and English, or Spanish and Italian, or Spanish and German, or Spanish and Japanese, or Spanish and any other language.

The morning setup routines in the Compañía de Jesús were the times when vendors talked about the daily news, spread gossip, and thought about home. They discussed newspaper articles about the thieves, drug dealers, and murderers that were making Antigua a dangerous city. They fretted over articles that described violence that was increasing throughout Guatemala (murders, kidnappings, and robberies) and speculated how it would affect tourism and sales in the marketplace. Gossip topics ranged from wondering if the mayor of Antigua would kick all *típica* vendors out of the city to rumors about the amorous relations of other vendors. Despite the vendors' preoccupations about crime and the mayor, conversations always returned to home—to that place that made sense, that was comforting. Even those vendors from the departments of Chimaltenango, Sololá, and Quiché who suffered from Guatemalan military campaigns and guerrilla tactics in the 1980s thought of home in positive ways.

By 12:30 PM, I was often eating lunch with a group of male vendors (Kaqchikel, K'iche', Ixil, Ladino) in one corner of the marketplace. We purchased our meals from Oralia, a Kaqchikel woman from San Antonio Aguas Calientes. Typically, she made different main courses—fried chicken, chow mein, spaghetti with tomato sauce, beef stew, and occasionally seafood soup and *pepián*—all of which were served with tortillas, rice, potatoes, and a vegetable. Vendors ate lunch quickly, keeping an eye on po-

tential customers. When interrupted by a group of tourists passing through the marketplace, they cut short their conversations about soccer teams and television programs they had watched the night before, stashed their meal out of sight, and greeted their customers.

Around 1:30 or 2:00 PM, I left the Compañía de Jesús Artisan Marketplace and walked to the Central Plaza to observe and have conversations with tourists and ambulatory vendors. In the late afternoon, I ran errands, checked my e-mail, and interviewed a vendor in one of the other marketplaces, such as in the courtyard of the Catholic church, San Francisco el Grande, or in the palm-tree-lined park, Tanque de la Unión. Occasionally, I sat in the park talking to tourists, where I was constantly being interrupted and teased by ambulatory vendors from Kaqchikel towns such as San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Sololá, and Santa Catarina Palopó, and K'iche' towns such as Momostenango and Chichicastenango. Vendors used this good-natured teasing to get me to introduce them to tourists or as a form of entertainment when business was slow.

By 6:00 PM, I returned to Compañía de Jesús to help some of my friends pack up and store their merchandise, always stopping at Antonio's vending locale. He is a Kaqchikel vendor from the town of San Juan de Comalapa. He and his children were among the first of my Kaqchikel teachers. Their home was one of my refuges from Antigua, where I could listen to and speak in one language, Kaqchikel, where I could sit at a warm hearth and listen to stories, and where I was not treated as a tourist—because in Antigua, if you are a white-skinned American, you're a tourist. Tuesday night, however, was our night to eat hamburgers and French fries from Burger King and watch professional boxing matches on cable television. We sat on the couch, eating our burgers, with me interpreting the English-language commentaries of the announcers into Kaqchikel and Antonio, who knows far more about boxing than I, explaining moves and strategies and telling me about learning how to fight when he was in the Guatemalan army in the early 1960s.

My paths and interactions with the places, people, and institutions of Antigua illustrate but a tiny fragment of the total ways that residents, workers, and visitors use the city. Tourists walk well-established routes, following instructions from maps, guidebooks, and guides, as they visit sites that are designated culturally and historically significant. The paths of handicraft vendors in Antigua (examined in depth in the next chapters) intersect with those of the tourists, but there are divergences in the ways that they use the city. Other Mayas who are laborers, cooks, gardeners, housekeepers, and clerks working in the city follow another set of paths that usually go unnoticed by tourists but are well known to Ladinos and crucial to the local economy. Ladinos follow yet different paths through the city that take them to the marketplace where they purchase food to serve their student/tourist guests, to local churches to participate in services, and to the homes of friends and family members. Each of these paths intersects one another, is trodden and retrodden by multiple users, constructing a living map of the city that contradicts the formal maps produced in the guidebook descriptions and the reconstruction of colonial buildings in Antigua.

A Transnational Borderzone City

Antigua's links to the global economy can be seen and experienced through the flows of commodities, people, and media that enter the city, pause, and then move on to somewhere else. Transnationality operates concretely according to the ways that people use the city and how spaces are defined by those people. My personal interaction with the place and people who populate it, like the interactions of other individuals, was continually entwined with transnational institutions, products, and individuals.

According to James Holston and Arjun Appadurai (1996: 199), the global marketplace "contradict[s] national boundaries." *Antiguëños* eat at Burger King and Domino's Pizza. They buy apples from Seattle, dates from the Middle East, padlocks from China, and cars from Japan. They use electronic mail accounts and watch cable television, which broadcasts stations from the United States, Mexico, Germany, and other countries. They host, entertain, and teach foreigners from different countries how to speak Spanish. They sell handicrafts to tourists and exporters, who take their purchases home, give them away, or resell them. The Guatemalan nation-state is of little import until it gets in the way economically, by restricting commerce and taxing or fining merchants, and politically, by not controlling crime.

Mayas, Ladinos, and tourists are all part of an intricate late-capitalist global system in which cultural differences come together in Antigua. The colonial architecture; the Maya Indians in costume; the mixture of Spanish, K'iche', Kaqchikel, and other Maya languages; and the two volcanoes, Agua and Fuego, distinguish Antigua from other global cities.

Mayas come from towns throughout the highlands of Guatemala to sell handicrafts, vegetables, and utilitarian items. Ladinos from Antigua itself provide Spanish lessons, operate restaurants, and rent rooms to foreign guests. Tourists, be they Guatemalan or foreign, come to eat, relax, and experience Antigua's Maya and Ladino cultural mix, its colonial and modern cultural mix. For foreign tourists, these are particularly significant in order to have an authentic and enjoyable experience.

Rosaldo (1989: 217) points out that ethnographers now "look less for homogeneous communities than for the border zones between them. Such cultural border zones are always in motion, not frozen for inspection." What the ethnographer strives to observe is quite different from what the tourist is promised. Tourists usually visit a designated site because it is perceived to have some enduring quality. Tour company owners and guides are aware of this as they whisk their tourists through Antigua before they realize how Mayas and Ladinos use the city. Usually, they tour the city in motor buses, making strategic stops at historically and culturally significant sites. Between stops, guides fill the time by telling stories, providing practical information, and explaining the next stop. These can be considered maneuvers of distraction, which, like sleight of hand tricks, take the tourists' attention away from what the guides do not wish them to see.

When one walks through the city; engages it by choosing a place to eat or somewhere to sleep; wanders through its marketplaces and shops; and finds postal, computer, and telephone services, Antigua as a borderzone becomes obvious. Here, the issue for tourists is not whether one has or does not have culture or even history;[2] rather, it is the breakdown of boundaries. A simple walk through Antigua reveals how boundaries between colonial and modern Antigua, Ladino and Maya Antigua, and "the West" and Guatemala are not always well defined.

Through the juxtaposition of the Ladino homeowners, the student/tourists, and the Maya vendors, distinct but conventional cultural boundaries in Antigua emerge. In one case, the cultural barriers between Ladinos and Mayas faded. The Ladina hostess from whom I periodically rented a room from 1994 to 1997 attended equally to her family and all her guests (anthropologists, students, and Mayas). Her behavior contrasted with the manner in which Ladinos treated Maya vendors in Antigua. The latter are accustomed to hearing derogatory and condescending comments, being denied service in some stores and restaurants, and even serving as convenient scapegoats for the police when they are looking for criminals. For

Mayas, being waited on and served a meal by a Ladina and then having her sit and converse with them as equals upset the order of Guatemalan society they were familiar with.

Living in this house allowed me to meet Spanish students and independent tourists, a group of boarders who represented a relatively narrow segment of the tourist population. Rarely did anyone older than thirty years of age stay in the house. Most of the guests were Northern Europeans and North Americans, but students and tourists from Australia, Japan, Korea, and Israel also stayed there. Although roughly equal numbers of men and women stayed in the house, relatively few U.S. women were among the boarders. Independent tourists stayed the shortest length of time, one week, which was longer than most tourists, but they used that week to take Spanish classes before continuing their trip. One group of American surfers spent their mornings surfing on the Pacific coast a few hours away and their afternoons studying Spanish for a week. Most dedicated a week to learning Spanish during the day and drinking and dancing in the clubs at night. The Spanish students were primarily motivated to study Spanish and usually stayed one or more months, occasionally up to six months. Most often those staying in the country longer than a month combined their Spanish learning with volunteer work in local Antigua clinics and nongovernment organizations or in other places of the country after completing their studies.

The Spanish students and tourists, however, reacted quite differently to my Maya visitors. After listening to them speculate about who the "Indians" were, wonder whether or not they could be considered Mayas, and question the authenticity and quality of their handicrafts, I thought they might not mind having the persons they were so curious about visit. The foreign guests tended to react negatively to the Maya visitors. They defined the interior spaces of the house as an English, then Spanish, language domain, since these were their common languages. Maya guests upset this order. I spoke to them in Kaqchikel and then in Spanish, the hostess and her granddaughter quizzed them about how to say words in Kaqchikel, and conversations switched with difficulty between Spanish and Kaqchikel and English. During dinner one evening a student said in outrage in English, "I didn't come all the way to Guatemala to listen to some language I can't understand and don't want to learn. Speak English! I'm tired." Concerned about the happiness of her guests, the hostess inquired what was wrong. Before I could reply, the Maya guest told her that the student was tired and wanted us to speak English.

My Maya friends were seen by the students and tourists as not only invading their "home" space but also disrupting their concepts of who Indians and Mayas could be. Not understanding Kaqchikel or K'iche' was really of minor concern to tourists when compared to their resistance to conversing with the Mayas. As more than one student or tourist reminded me, they did not want to know that "Indians" have cable television, follow U.S. sports like basketball and football, buy Jansport backpacks, and eat pizza and hamburgers. The student and tourist guests repeatedly asked me not to bring Mayas home, preferring distant observations of them and limited personal contact with them in spaces defined as "Indian," such as marketplaces.

These student and tourist reactions to the Maya guests were precipitated by several factors that did not necessarily have to do with Mayas themselves, such as exhaustion from studies and late nights at bars; illnesses related to altitude and food; and a general unfamiliarity with the place, food, people, and language. Immersion in a new cultural setting is difficult and unsettling, and finding a place and time to reenergize oneself in a Spanish-speaking household can be a challenge. Most often their solution was to go on the weekends to Panajachel, San Pedro La Laguna, or Monterrico; stay in a hotel; and associate with other travelers.

Bruner (1996b) argues that Westerners do not want to see impoverished Others at home, but when viewed in faraway places, that Other is exotic and a "pleasure." He explains that "there is a racialization at home and a primitivization over there, in exotica." This certainly applies to the general tourists visiting Antigua. However, the students and tourists who lived in the house with me desperately tried not to notice that the "Indians" whom they had come so far to see shared some of their same interests and were in some ways like them.

Foreigners are haunted by "Indians" who don't behave in ways that match their portrayal in the tourism literature, as discussed in the previous chapter. Certainly, Maya vendors are concerned with marketing themselves and their products to tourists by making differences clear, particularly in language and clothing. But like others using Antigua, they send e-mail; eat at their favorite Italian-style restaurants; and ponder political, economic, and entertainment events in other areas of the world. By observing how Mayas use Antigua, tourists learn that the boundaries between their culture and that of Mayas are not rigid or clearly defined. One of the effects of this contact, as well as the realization that built into the colonial architecture are modern conveniences, is that some tourists

question the authenticity of Antigua, its Ladino residents, and its Maya workers because the roles and activities of each, including the supposed functions of buildings, are not contained by clearly marked boundary lines.

Conclusions

As visualized by Bruner (1996b), the tourism borderzone is where "the natives have to break out of their normal routines to meet the tourists. . . . The tourism borderzone is like an empty space, an empty stage waiting for performance time." As Bruner also notes, it is, of course, also a place of work and income. In contrast to Bruner's definition, in Antigua the normal routine of local people *is* tourism. Because of how Antigua is displayed and used by tourists and locals, especially when tourists rent rooms from Ladinos, the lines between home and work, tourist and local, blur.

The socioeconomic spaces in Antigua that have been opened by tourism and are enjoyed by Ladinos and Mayas have unmoored these citizens in some ways from the nation-state. Some Maya vendors go to the city to sell handicrafts, the sale of which the local government and police forces cannot regulate. The money they make from these sales goes untaxed, which is lost revenue known to exist by the local and national governments, yet out of their reach and control. Ladino families hosting Spanish students and tourists are also unregulated. Mayas and Ladinos are more concerned with foreign capital and commodities than with national policies and concepts of who is Guatemalan. Money earned from foreigners, especially if it is not in Guatemalan currency, is hidden from authorities and kept out of banks. In a country that has historically been plagued by violence, in addition to extreme social, economic, and political inequalities (see Montejo 1999 for a recent synthesis of this), hoarding foreign currency is a form of insurance.

For those working in Antigua, the concern about rebuilding Antigua's colonial buildings and mapping the city relates more to appealing to international tourists than to any sense of national sentiment or patriotism. State and local governments become an impediment to merchants, tour guides, handicraft vendors, and families who rent out rooms. War and military service, trade regulations, and taxes impinge on those who make a living in Antigua and remind them of the nation that they other-

wise try to ignore. In other words, mechanisms such as INGUAT, maps, brochures, guidebooks, guides, and legal apparatuses used for policing the boundary lines and keeping colonial, Ladino, Maya, and tourist roles separate and distinct are inadequate and usually ineffective.

Although mapmakers and municipal planners attempted to construct a whole, contained city with identifiable boundaries, walking and living within Antigua calls attention to its borderzone and transnational qualities. The intended methods of containment through mapping and reconstructing colonialism are exposed when one walks, lives, and works in Antigua.

I tried to follow Lugo's (1997: 60) strategy "to juxtapose the analysis of" Antigua as a tourism site "with the analysis of the fragmented lives of" Ladinos and Mayas who live and work there, "both in the larger contexts of history and the present, the global economy and the local strategies of survival, and, finally, in the more intricate, micro contexts of culture and power." Conceptualizing Antigua as a borderzone not only allows its heterotopic characteristics to be described but also shows how Mayas, Ladinos, and tourists are located within structures of power related to tourism, the local municipal government, and the state. The next chapters, relating first to vendors and markets and then to community, continue to examine these juxtapositions.

Chapter 3 Antigua *Típica* Markets and Identity Interaction

Introduction

When Ma Xuan[1] and his fellow *cargadores* (porters) go to work at 6:00 AM, the streets of Antigua are quiet. Most mornings are cool and brisk. It is possible to spot a few tourists with cameras, taking advantage of the empty streets and the clear morning sky to snap some pictures of unobstructed colonial buildings and of Agua, the quiet cone-shaped volcano that dominates the southerly view, but most tourists are still in bed. It is too early to see schoolchildren, who fill the streets between 7:00 and 8:00 AM. Shopkeepers are still in their homes, just rising and eating their breakfast. For most people, locals and tourists alike, Antigua is a town that gets up late. Its rhythms often follow those of Spanish students and tourists who do not have to be anywhere until 8:00 AM, but usually later. But for Ma Xuan and other *cargadores,* the day begins early.

This chapter begins with a description of *cargadores'* work because a day in the marketplace starts when they take *típica* bundles out of storage and ends when they return the bundles to storage. Hiring *cargadores* is something that most *típica* vendors do in common.

The chapter looks first at marketplace locations and vendor locales from a closer perspective than in the two previous chapters, which dealt more generally with the spatial-temporal than with the social interactions in Antigua between vendors and Ladinos and tourists. It also provides an overview of the participants in the tourism market, who are discussed in greater depth in the next two chapters.

Second, it locates Guatemalan *típica* marketplaces within ethnographic studies of periodic marketplaces and examines various strategies and tactics that *típica* vendors use to make sales, deal with government officials, and co-exist with other vendors in a glutted handicraft market.

Overall, this chapter addresses how life and selling in a marketplace

Walter E. Little

Mayas in the Marketplace

Tourism, Globalization, and Cultural Identity

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of foreign versus local interviewers but finally decided that sensitive outsiders are granted greater latitude in asking nosy questions than would be allowed of locals (much less *ladino* university students or trained Indian interviewers from other villages). No family ever refused to be interviewed; however, three completed interviews were thrown out because of doubts about their reliability. Respondents were paid a small fee "for their time," which a few people politely refused. Data were initially analyzed in Guatemala City with a statistical package developed by the Instituto para Nutrición para Centroamérica y Panamá (INCAP), and then reworked at the University of Chicago using SPSS and SCSS statistical packages. I believe the data are generally reliable, and have tried to flag where I think they may not be. Until 1983, and for many years before, the Guatemalan *quetzal* was on 1 : 1 par with the U.S. dollar. During that time, inflation was generally low and prices were relatively constant. Since then, inflation has taken off, so some dollar amounts may seem improbably low to some readers.

This research was not guided by an initial hypothesis on religion. Much time in the field was spent doggedly trying to understand the social impact of tourism as viewed through the semiotic window of textile production. In graduate school at the University of Chicago, "What does it mean?" seemed like a perfectly good question; but my two elderly weaving teachers, Doña Paola and Doña Victoria, never quite seemed to understand what I was talking about. Instead, they preferred to answer "How is it made?" As it happened, Doña Victoria is devoutly Catholic, and her sister-in-law, Doña Paola (to whom she does not speak), is devoutly Protestant. The focus of this research began to shift while, sitting at the loom to learn how it is made, I came to understand that the same activity had far different meanings for each of them—and then, that that difference had something to do with their religions.

Ríos Montt came to power and was overthrown after I left Guatemala. What I had observed about Doña Victoria and Doña Paola began to make more sense. Fortunately, I had included Protestant/Catholic as a descriptive variable on my questionnaire, so post hoc, I began to reanalyze the data with new questions in mind.

As a final note, I should add that I never saw Edgardo Robertson after the incident described at the beginning of this chapter. I understand, however, that he was forced to leave the country several years ago under threat from the guerrillas.

2

Colony of a Colony

A Thumbnail History of San Antonio and the Lake Quinizilapa Towns

THE MODERN town of San Antonio Aguas Calientes is one of Guatemala's best-known and most accessible Indian towns. It lies in the crook of a usually green, crescent-shaped valley, about seven kilometers by an all-weather gravel road from Antigua and another thirty-five kilometers by four-lane asphalt to Guatemala City. Tourists from all over the world know and visit San Antonio. The image of the San Antonio woman at the loom—clad in her *huipil* of blue and red and orange and a dozen other colors—has become a national icon for use on tourism and export promotion brochures.

The quaint beauty of the town itself was probably permanently lost in the earthquake of 1976 when most dwellings were knocked down. Though the town was rebuilt, the patina was lost as the old tile and thatch roofs, covered with flowering vines, were replaced by galvanized tin; brick and board replaced the more graceful adobe walls.

Yet the setting, if not the town itself, is still spectacular. The curve of the valley is formed by a sharp, low volcanic ridge. At its southeast corner rise the first elevations of the slopes of the massive, inactive Agua volcano. At the southwest edge begin miles of coffee fields, ascending toward the twin peaks of Acatenango volcano, and just beyond that—about three kilometers as the crow flies from crater to crater—is the active Fuego volcano. Fuego erupts irregularly, lighting up the sky and hurling volcanic grit and ash miles into the air. In San Antonio, nestled at the foot of the three volcanoes, it is said that the rumbling and eruptions are caused by "Jews," mythic creatures who were swallowed into the earth and imprisoned for their role in the Crucifixion. There they restlessly twist and struggle, shaking the ground and spitting fire as they try to escape eternal damnation.

Excavations and systematic archaeological analysis have not been carried out in this region, so no one knows for certain whether this

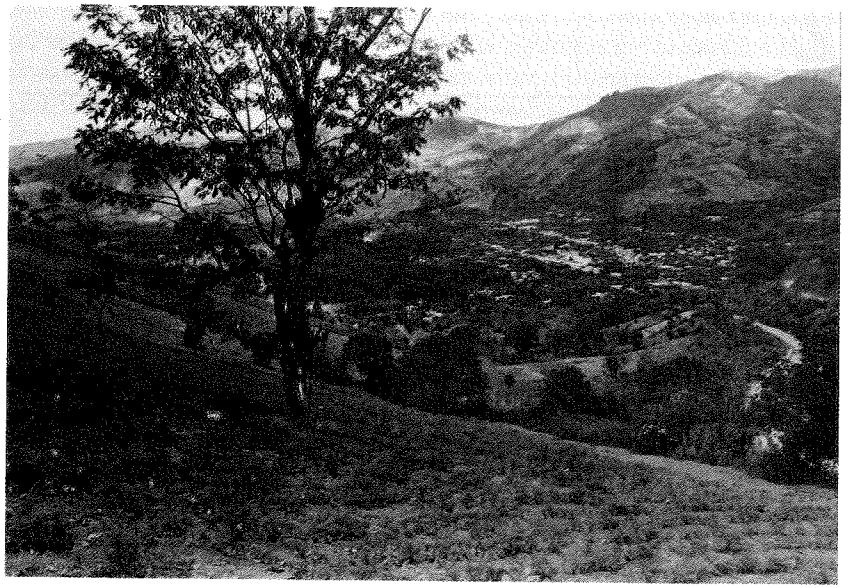


Figure 3. View of San Antonio from a ridge to the southeast of the town.

particular valley was inhabited when the Spaniards invaded in 1524 and located their capital in the neighboring Almolonga Valley in 1527. Today, a walk through a freshly turned field during the rainy season is likely to turn up a handful of pottery shards, so it appears that *someone* lived there in earlier times. But who and when is difficult to determine. Archaeologists familiar with the area suggest that shard samples are of Late Classic origin,[1] supporting the generally held view that the valley was unoccupied when the Spaniards arrived several hundred years later at the end of the Postclassic Maya era.[2]

As shown in Figure 4, six towns are today located in this valley: San Antonio, Santa Catarina Barahona, San Andrés Ceballos, Santiago Zamora, San Lorenzo el Cubo, and San Miguel Dueñas. Each of these towns was founded along the shores of what was once a lake, known long ago as Lago Quinizilapa.[3] Elders recall hunting for ducks and fishing in the lake during their childhoods. The lake, however, was a health menace. In the early years of this century, yellow-fever epidemics killed as much as a third of the population. In 1927, villagers petitioned the government to drain the lake, diverting the natural springs into the Nima Yá River. The following year the lake was drained, and the rich bottomland was equitably divided among town members through a "lottery." What remains of the lake today is

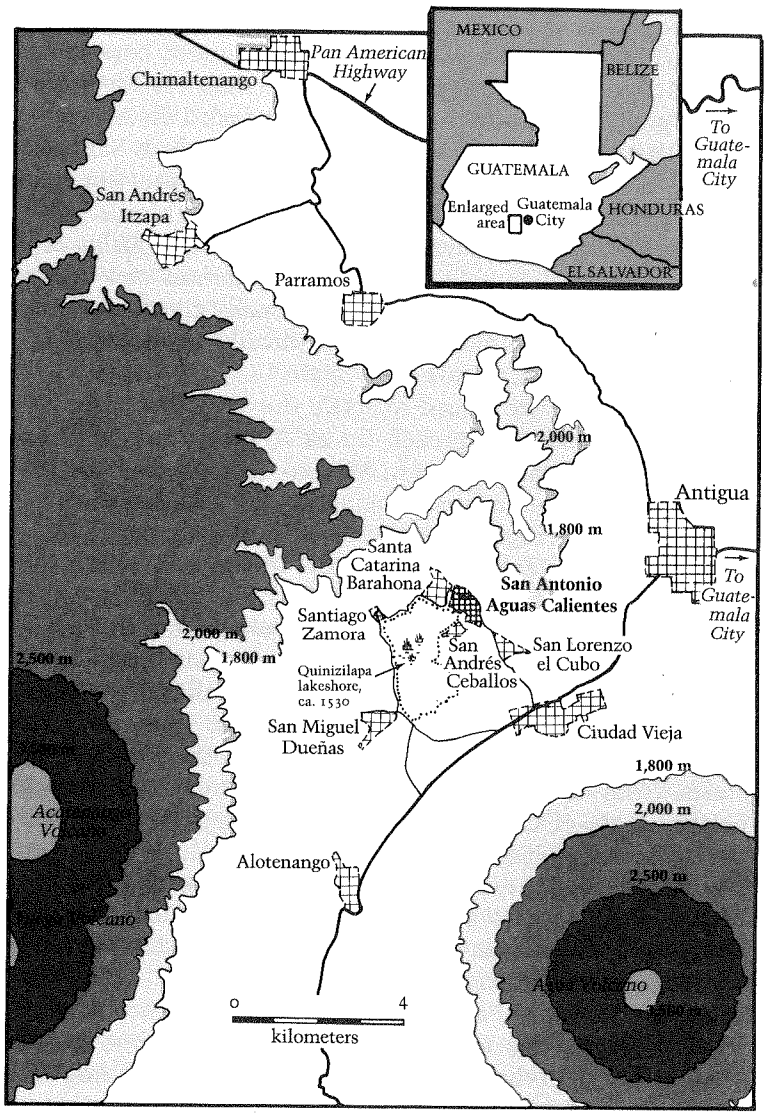


Figure 4. Map of the Quinizilapa region.

a small marsh, still referred to locally as the *laguna* (meaning "lake," not "lagoon").

The six towns of the former shores of Lake Quinizilapa were all founded within a few years of the Spanish Conquest, between 1524 and 1530. *Milpas*, as these settlements were then called,[4] were initially land grants with which Conquistador Pedro de Alvarado rewarded his lieutenants, who settled a few miles off in Santiago en Almolonga, the site of modern-day Antigua.[5] The towns were named after their soldier-owners and supplied with a workforce of slaves who had been rounded up during the Conquest. The "*Milpa* of Juan de Chávez" (renamed San Antonio Aguas Calientes two centuries later) began as such a slave colony, but was legally given to its inhabitants about 1550, when slavery was juridically abolished and the founder, Juan de Chávez, returned to Spain.[6]

The Indians who were forced to settle the six Quinizilapa towns circa 1530 were generally picked up as Alvarado fought his way south from Cortés' headquarters in Mexico City. He gathered the future settlers from an extensive geographic and a highly diverse linguistic area. The heterogeneous origins of these Indians is suggested by a letter to the Spanish Audiencia Real in 1567, in which the inhabitants of Santa Catarina Barahona indicate to the king that their ancestors (relocated on the lake just forty years before this petition) came from five cultures: Chameltecos (probably San Juan Chamelco in present-day Alta Verapaz, an area where Kekchí is now spoken), Utlatecans (from Utatlán, capital of the Quiché state, i.e., Quiché speakers), Atitlán (Santiago Atitlán, capital of the Tzutujil state), Chontales (from Tabasco or Oaxaca in modern-day southern Mexico, i.e., speakers of Chontal Maya), and Pipiles (from the Pacific coast of Guatemala, possibly the area around Escuintla).[7] In a similar letter to the king in 1567, Indians from the neighboring Panchoy Valley refer to their ancestors as Tlecuiciahtecas (Tlacuiciahtlecas?), Xalanan (?), and Nauatlacas (Nahuatl speakers, probably but not necessarily from central Mexico).[8]

Because of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Quinizilapa and Panchoy areas, one might suppose that the *ladino* language, Spanish—rather than the Indian language, Cakchiquel—might have emerged as the lingua franca. With no common indigenous language or root serving as a cultural core, the region could have been expected to have "ladinoized" rather than "Cakchiquel-ized" over the following centuries.[9] But that did not happen. To the contrary, the Spaniards were not interested in assimilation. They wanted unequal separation. They created a new class of beings: *indios*, an identifiable work force, tribute payers, potential soldiers, and the usually

pliant objects of the civilizing, missionary, and charitable impulses of the conquerors. The Indian-*ladino* ethnic division reinforced a social order in which the Spanish colony's agricultural labor requirements were met, property rights were defined, and political authority was allocated. As Rodolfo Stavenhagen succinctly puts it, such "colonial relations" were characterized by "ethnic discrimination, political dependence, social inferiority, residential segregation, economic subjection and juridical incapacity."[10] That met Spanish colonial needs.

It also gave rise to the closed "corporate" Indian community,[11] a defensive but internally dignified indigenous response to social and economic discrimination. Supplying their own ideologies and institutions to govern local affairs, Indian communities created adjunct economies, appropriate technologies, and cultural boundaries to mark off that which was Indian and that which was *ladino*. If these spheres were unequal in power, at least communities maintained the prerogative to shape life within the limited spheres that they themselves controlled.[12]

Between 1550 and 1581, beginning just twenty years after the initial Hispanic settlement, the Quinizilapa population was already in decline as Indians fled or died from hunger, disease, and epidemic. In addition to the devastating regional pandemics that swept Mesoamerica in the 1540s and 1570s, local epidemics broke out in the Quinizilapa towns during every decade (except the 1580s) for the next two centuries.[13] These successive levelings of original population probably hastened the pan-Indian acculturation process. Then, during the long, relatively stable colonial and early independence periods, the lake towns acquired the features that have today come to be associated with "traditional" Indian society.[14]

The newly forged Indian identity (which genetically included even black slaves imported from the Caribbean[15]) was reinforced by a succession of export economies: sugar, indigo, cochineal dye, and coffee.[16] The principal crops of successive export economies changed, but the social organization of "colonial relations" did not. Although slavery was formally abolished shortly after the Conquest, forced payment of tribute or labor, which amounted to much the same thing, continued until just forty years ago. That stability formed the basis of what is here called "Indianness," meaning a particular cultural identity that took its form as much or more from the Spaniards as from the root characteristics of the Maya themselves.

The Town and Its Hinterland

Just as the Spanish colony (Guatemala) maintained its own form of colonial relations with its economic and political exteriors (Europe, and later the United States); and the colony's colonies (larger Indian towns like San Antonio) maintained colonial relations with the Hispanic overclass; so too, the colony's colonies developed *their* colonies, poorer, dependent hamlets in the rural hinterlands—these also distanced and protected from their exteriors through locally specific religious practice, language, and dress.

The colonial legacy of San Antonio can be read today in its physical characteristics and muted urban development. The combined, contiguous population in San Antonio/Santa Catarina in 1987 was approximately six thousand persons, which is a sizable urban concentration by Guatemalan standards.[17] Yet the "town" does not exhibit most of the traits that are normally associated with a settlement of this size. To the contrary, it is conspicuously "underdeveloped." There are no paved streets. There is no gas station, no mechanic, no welder. There is no doctor, lawyer, or government office, and no hardware or agricultural supply store. Apart from two or three families who vend food from their doorsteps on Sunday mornings, there is no public eatery, not even a *comedor* (a rustic restaurant). Despite forty or so years of tourism, there is no *pensión*, much less a hotel. And, perhaps most unusual by Guatemalan standards, there is no marketplace (marketing takes place in nearby Antigua).

In outward appearance, the richest and poorest homes in San Antonio are not greatly dissimilar. There is no "prestige" *cantón* or neighborhood that can be identified with some particular social group (e.g., rich people, *ladinos*, Protestants, weavers, craftsmen).[18] With few exceptions, all San Antonio homes are more or less alike: a cornstalk fence separates extended family compounds (called *sitios*) from the dusty public thoroughfare. Each *sitio* contains several rectangular, freestanding rooms, usually constructed from cornstalks and mud-daubing. Normally one nuclear family occupies each *sitio*, although there may be as many as three nuclear families as well as renters. Domestic groups that share a hearth usually operate as a discrete economic unit—that is, they share not only cooking but also land, income, labor, food, and child care. As space permits, most families raise animals (generally poultry), "kitchen crops" (herbs, fruit, and vegetables), and some commercial crops (especially coffee) within their compound.

With so little external physical differentiation, the town appears to be an "overgrown village," impressing most visitors as being

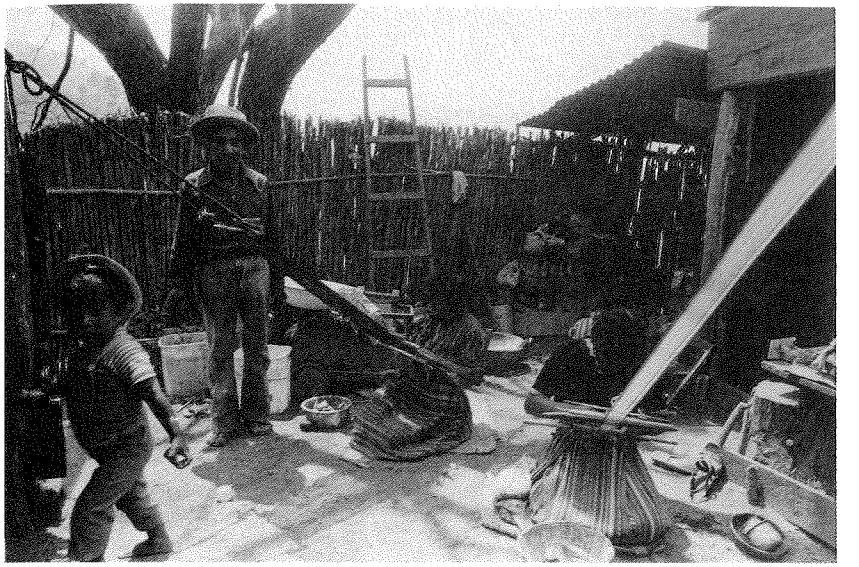


Figure 5. Interior of a San Antonio household compound.

smaller than it actually is. Aside from minor topographic variations, only three features break the homogeneity of appearance:

The plaza. This dusty open space in front of the church is delimited by the four *capillas* (small "chapels") of the respective *cantones* (quarters of the town), a public *pila* (laundry area with standpipes for drinking water), recently constructed municipal buildings, and several tourist *tiendas* (makeshift structures for the sales of handweavings), including one which has preempted the small gazebo at the centerpoint of the plaza. Unlike the charming town plazas of southern Mexico and elsewhere, the plaza of San Antonio has no fountains, benches, grass, shrubbery, monuments, sidewalks, or artistic ornaments to define or reflect its public use.[19]

The "main street." No streets in San Antonio have formal names. The main street, such as it is, extends from the "bus-stop corner" (one block from the central plaza) to nearby Santa Catarina Barahona. It is a meter or two wider than other streets, allowing two-way vehicular traffic to pass—though slowly and very carefully. There are several one-room *tiendas* (in the sense of "general stores," usually no more than a wall and counterful of goods), a rustic *cantina*, a room for billiards, and several tailors' workshops.

"Tienda Row." As many as fifty to sixty tourist stalls extend along

Figure 6. Young woman weaving as she tends the store.

Figure 7. Children offering a textile to passing tourists.

the access road from the outskirts of town to the plaza.[20] These *tiendas* are usually three-walled buildings with hard dirt floors, cornstalk walls, and galvanized sheet-metal roofs. As shown in Figures 6 and 7, woven goods are hung on open display and hawked loudly to passing tourists.

The apparent under-urbanization belies the economic importance of San Antonio within the microregion. As will be discussed in the following chapter, the town is a center for high- and mid-altitude vegetables such as carrots, cabbages, beets, and lettuce. San Antonio farmers are not only growers but also intermediaries. With a tight control over the flow of produce from their own hinterlands, they provide produce to the wholesale markets of Antigua, Guatemala City, and the lowland towns of the Pacific coast.

The town has been an economic "success" for over four hundred years. Yet what seems remarkable is how little of the agricultural or touristic wealth that passes through the town sticks there. As elsewhere in Guatemala (best described by Carol Smith in her various studies of marketing in the western highlands),[21] the region's agricultural produce flows up and out through a complex, tiered arrangement; and manufactured goods flow down and in. This happens without neighboring communities developing strong lateral link-

ages. Locally owned economic institutions (markets, restaurants, agricultural supply stores, welders, mechanics) that would divert the flow of capital and resources into physical development tend not to emerge.

Largely because of its favorable location, San Antonio has become preeminent among the Quinizilapa towns.[22] It organizes a sparsely populated hinterland that bears much the same relationship to San Antonio that San Antonio bears to Antigua and Guatemala City. That is, the rural hamlets channel agricultural produce and human labor to the higher-order centers—in effect, they are colonies of the colony's colony. In all, there are four subsumed towns and an extensive rural hinterland, described briefly below.

Santa Catarina Barahona

Though there is no natural or physical boundary marking where San Antonio ends and Santa Catarina begins, the two towns are distinct. Santa Catarina is the *cabecera municipal* (seat) of a separate *municipio*, with a territorial extension of thirty-one square kilometers and a 1987 population of about 1,700 residents.[23] Although no demarcation is visible to the outsider's eye, townspeople in both communities are well aware of the difference. Santa Catarina has its own churches and its own fiesta and ritual calendar. There is a subtle variation in Cakchiquel dialect between San Antonio and Santa Catarina. More importantly, San Antonio has been able to benefit economically from its slight locational advantage—more-direct access to produce markets and, in recent years, first shot at incoming tourists. Gradually, San Antonio farmers have gained land that Santa Catarina farmers have lost, and as a result, many Santa Catarina farmers now work as day laborers (*mozos*) for the generally more prosperous San Antonio farmers. Similarly, women in Santa Catarina frequently work as commissioned weavers or as wholesale textile suppliers for vendors in San Antonio.

San Andrés Ceballos

Also physically contiguous with San Antonio is the *aldea* (hamlet) of San Andrés Ceballos (1987 population, about 500). Though it has its own church, fiesta, and separate oral history, San Andrés has been under the administrative jurisdiction of the San Antonio *alcaldía* (mayoral office) since 1935.

In the early 1950s, INCAP field researchers described San Andrés and its residents as being at a "lower economic level [than San Antonio] . . . and not much interested in the betterment of their community."[24] Today, however, the town is a tightly knit and widely envied pocket of affluence. Most of the agricultural land belonging to the present-day community is former bottomland that was once Lake Quinizilapa. In recent years, these fields have been converted from corn to intensive vegetable and coffee production. Some San Andrés families have made further transitions from vegetable-growing to truck-farming, from buying pickups to offering transportation services. The relatively few San Andrés families now operate two small bus lines and several trucks.

Santiago Zamora

At the other end of the local spectrum is the *aldea* of Santiago Zamora, about three kilometers to the west. Of the six former lake towns, Santiago is today the most disadvantaged in natural resources and access to external opportunity. The village is located at the base of the jutting volcanic ridge, just *above* the bottomland of the former lake. This higher land is generally dry, seriously eroded, and unproductive. The bottomland that does belong to Santiago is not fully drained and is therefore suitable only for the production of marsh reeds (*tul*). These reeds are woven into flat mats called *petates*, and provide serious employment for only the poorest of the poor (see Chapter 3).

Over the years, Santiago has lost much of its once extensive holdings. Today, few families farm as much as ten *cuerdas* of their own land.[25] Most men work on nearby coffee plantations (*fincas*) or in recently opened nurseries that grow ornamental flowers for export. Many families trade their labor for the right to harvest an agreed-upon quantity of reeds from the nearby *fincas* or from the San Antonio landowners. For example, in exchange for *tul*, a man agrees to clean fifteen *cuerdas* of bottomland owned by the *finca*. Thus, the family is assured of raw material that will produce supplemental income, and the landowner is assured of laborers during times of peak demand for workers.

San Lorenzo el Cubo

The *aldea* of San Lorenzo el Cubo lies less than a kilometer from San Antonio along the road to Antigua. The town belongs to the administrative jurisdiction of a larger nearby city, Ciudad Vieja. It is the only one of the original towns not settled literally on the shores of the former lake.

Like its neighbors, San Lorenzo was founded as an Indian-slave agricultural community, the *Milpa* of Diego Monroy, Señor of San Lorenzo. The land grant to Monroy was converted to a tribute-paying *encomienda* in the late sixteenth century. However, despite its origins identical to those of the other Indian settlements, the town is now considered to be purely *ladino*.[26]

Why San Lorenzo lost its "Indianness" while San Antonio, a stone's throw away, became all the more Indian, is an intriguing question. Within this region, San Lorenzo is the only community that is today nearly landless. Land was lost mainly to upper-class Guatemala City families who built coffee *fincas* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,[27] and the remainder was lost piecemeal to encroachment by the better-off farmers from San Antonio and San Andrés. It is therefore tempting to conclude that the accelerated ladinoization process in San Lorenzo was caused by a weakening of Indian cultural institutions that could not survive in the absence of a land base. However, the ladinoization of San Lorenzo apparently was well underway in the mid-nineteenth century and predates the incursions of the large coffee *fincas*. More than a century ago, José María Navarro remarked of the people in San Lorenzo, "their dress, language, and customs are identical to the other [Quinizilapa] towns, with the difference that these people are much taken by ladino dress and the Spanish language."[28] So perhaps there is a more subtle reason than loss of land. (It should be noted that in nearby San Miguel Dueñas, the sixth Quinizilapa town, ladinoization also occurred rapidly. Today the town has few remnants of its earlier Indian origin. In this case, the influence may be a more-biological *mestizaje* [through the incorporation of a larger number of blacks and mulattoes] rather than a more-cultural *mestizaje.*)[29]

San Lorenzo now subsists on income from wage labor, mostly in Ciudad Vieja and in nearby Antigua. Every morning a stream of workers departs from San Lorenzo—the men on bicycles, the women walking. During periods of peak agricultural demand, the landless San Lorenzo *ladinos* frequently work as *mozos* for San Antonio Indian farmers, a highly unusual ethnic role reversal for Guatemala, a society strictly stratified by race.

The Hinterlands

In the hinterlands to the north and west of San Antonio is a sprinkling of remote, named places, often merely fields or a cluster of houses. Little infrastructure is found here—only crisscrossing footpaths and one all-weather gravel road. Much, if not most, agricultural produce is still hauled by human portage. It is not uncommon for a San Antonio farmer to carry his family's supply of firewood from his own land to town (a distance of seven to eight kilometers) two or even three times a week. Carriers generally use the *mecapal*, or tumpline (see Figure 8), to transport crops from the fields to the road. Produce is then carried into San Antonio by foot or hired pickup truck, then to Antigua on a truck or public bus.[30]

Over the years, San Antonio has expanded its land base through purchase and, to a lesser extent, through a government land redistribution project implemented during the 1950s (see Chapter 3). Today San Antonio–owned lands extend well into the Department of Chimaltenango, abutting and reaching into the *municipios* of Parramos and San Andrés Itzapa. In some areas (particularly the *aldeas* of Chimachoy, Chicasanga, Pampay, and Chicarona) the former local owners have virtually been forced off their land by San Antonio farmers. Most have left for the coast or the capital; some are living on their former lands as renters or day-laborers; many have migrated to the *cabecera municipal*, where they work as laborers or intermarry with San Antonio families; and a few have maintained their ownership and continue to farm—but within the orbit of the San Antonio economy.[31] Unlike Indians in midwestern and western Guatemala, farmers in the Quinizilapa towns do not seem to prefer full-time rural residence; instead, they live in town and, when necessary, temporarily reside on the land. There is, however, a need for resident rural laborers. Landless peasants from San Antonio and the neighboring towns fill this need. They migrate to the countryside to live in these tiny hamlets and work the vegetable fields that are owned by nonresident farmers. There the migrants become full-time *mozos*, *peones*, or *colonos*.[32] Poor couples frequently have no choice but to begin their married lives in this fashion. As a result of this ongoing exchange of population between San Antonio and the hinterlands (with corresponding intermarriage), the whole area has come to be dominated by San Antonio. Symbolically, this cultural and economic hegemony perhaps is reflected in the adoption of the San Antonio *traje* (dress style) throughout an area well beyond the boundary of the actual *municipio*. The immediately identifiable colors and designs of the San Antonio woman's blouse (*huipil*) have become regionalized, absorbing and supplanting heretofore distinct local styles in the "colonized" hinterlands.

Figure 8. Man with *mecapal* carrying cornstalks.

Literacy and Language

San Antonio is exceptional for an Indian town—in fact, for any rural Guatemalan community—because of its high rate of literacy, particularly its high rate of female literacy. In the late 1970s, John Early found that San Antonio had the highest female Indian literacy rate for any *municipio* with a population more than 90 percent Indian.[33] According to both my field data and the 1973 census,[34] about three-fourths of the adult population is literate. The median is about four years of school, with of course much higher rates for the younger people.

The uniqueness of San Antonio's high literacy can be appreciated by comparison to other Indian regions. For example, the Department of Alta Verapaz—with a 1973 population of more than 250,000 (including urban and *ladino* as well as Indian populations)—had an estimated overall literacy rate of only 14 percent. In El Quiché, the overall departmental literacy rate was only 22 percent.[35] A cross-tabulation of available census data indicated a literacy rate among adult, rural, female Indians of only about 2 percent in 1973.[36] In other words, the town of San Antonio, with a population of about 5,000, had about three times as many literate Indian women as the entire Department of El Quiché, with a population of nearly 300,000.[37]

High rates of literacy and school attendance are not recent phenomena in San Antonio. Navarro glowingly described San Antonio's *two* schools in 1874,[38] a hundred years before many small Guatemalan Indian towns had *any* schools. Today there are three schools: a government public school, a recently opened, foreign-supported Catholic parochial school, and the Protestant Nima Yá school.[39] Graduates of the primary schools may go on to *básico* in Antigua, and many children have continued through secondary schools and even the university.

San Antonio is also unusual in its longstanding bilingualism. Unlike many communities in western and northwestern Guatemala, San Antonio never experienced a period of predominant monolingualism. A hundred years ago, Navarro described San Antonio Indians speaking Spanish "as if it were their native language." In the late 1940s, field researchers from the Instituto Indigenista Nacional estimated about three-fourths of the population was bilingual. In the early 1950s, two INCAP field workers noted, "All the inhabitants (of San Antonio and San Andrés) speak Spanish and Cakchiquel, except a few women in San Andrés who do not understand Spanish."[40]

During the past generation, two important shifts in language have taken place. First, Spanish has become the more widely used of the

two languages.[41] Second, an almost total reversal has occurred from Cakchiquel to Spanish as the first language of children. In my field survey, none of the present group of one- to four-year-olds were learning Cakchiquel as their first language, while almost all children in the generation now over forty learned Cakchiquel first.

What may be somewhat more surprising about language is that higher levels of education and income correlate with bilingualism—not monolingualism in Spanish as might be expected. To "make it" socially and economically requires facility in both Indian and non-Indian spheres. As the formerly Indian *ladinos* of San Lorenzo illustrate, one does not cast off Indian identity and then move up. Language represents a social boundary, not an obstacle.

Conclusion

The strong Indian identity of San Antonio has maintained itself in the face of influences that might be expected to be strongly acculturating—the proximity within ten kilometers of a major *ladino* center, four hundred years of intense interaction with *ladino* society, no common indigenous roots, a high level of literacy, and longstanding bilingualism.

As the next chapter will discuss, San Antonio is unlike most other Indian towns in its degree of economic "success." Yet what "success" means is replication from one generation to the next of colonial relations. What is replicated is Indianness, a permanent state of unequal separation. Acculturation occurs not because of cultural or physical proximity but because of breakdown in the smooth, generation-to-generation transfer of Indianness. Latter chapters will elaborate more fully how the Indian economy, Indian identity, and colonial relations are all intimately linked—and how that knot is unraveling, loosened by those individuals who are either too successful economically or not successful enough to fully accept Indianness. And it is here, at the margins of Indian cultural stability, that Protestantism has emerged as a force.

3

The Economy of a "Rich" Indian Town

FOR A TOWN of rural Guatemala, San Antonio is fortunate in its generous endowment of resources and its wide range of economic opportunity. Indians from neighboring communities often say that San Antonio is "rich."[1] And indeed it is—at least by Guatemalan standards of relative poverty.

According to calculations from the late 1970s based on a survey of seventy-four households, the median annual family income in San Antonio was $1,115 (mean, $1,254)—a per capita income of $214, or $.59 per day per person.[2] Median family wealth—that is, the total cash value for *all* family assets—was $2,037 (mean, $4,006),[3] and the median per capita wealth, $407. By contrast, documents from government and international development agencies generally report "average" family incomes of $400 to $500 or less for other highland Indian communities.[4]

Yet an informed walk through the town reveals that though San Antonio may be less abjectly poor than other villages, it is still poor.[5] Homes are built of the most rustic of Guatemalan construction materials: cornstalk (*caña*) and mud daubing.[6] All but a few families prepare food as does the woman in Figure 9: on an unraised, open, wood fire with *comales* for heating tortillas and her cooking pots propped upon three rocks—smoke filtering upward through the walls and roof. During the earthquake of 1976, all the older clay-tile and thatch roofs crashed down; they have been replaced with corrugated panels of galvanized sheet metal. Quinizilapa houses virtually never have formal, suspended ceilings—just the underside of the sheet metal. Although concrete floors are becoming common, most homes, like the one shown in the photo, still have hard-packed dirt floors.[7]

Like most towns in the Sacatepéquez area, San Antonio has potable water.[8] Only about a quarter of the families have a pipe and spigot actually inside their household compound. But for the most

Figure 9. Elderly woman at hearth grinding corn.

part, they do not have to walk very far to reach water. Only about a third of the families have to walk more than a long block to reach a standpipe.[9]

No family has pipe drainage or closed indoor plumbing. No family has flush toilets, of course; but unlike those in many less-advantaged areas of the country, most families do have rustic, covered latrines.[10] In contrast, in the departments of Sololá, Totonicapán, and San Marcos, I found that only 40 percent of rural or village families have latrines, sanitary or not; and in rural Quiché, only about 17 percent.[11] Although I have no recent, reliable medical data, I know—from living in the village for a year—that chronic diarrhea regularly kills or contributes to the death of San Antonio children, despite the nominal presence of latrines and potable water.[12] For the year 1974, Julia Marina Arreola Hernández estimated that infants under one year of age had a mortality rate of 87 per thousand (a neonatal rate of 24 per thousand plus a postnatal rate of 63 per thousand).[13] By comparison, U.S. rates are generally 12–15 deaths per thousand. For a developing country, rates of over 100 per thousand are considered to be extremely high.

Child mortality is closely associated with chronic diarrhea and malnutrition, each of which has a compounding, exacerbating effect on the other.[14] And income, or lack of it, is obviously related to incidence of malnutrition.[15] Yet even with the relatively high incomes that San Antonio families enjoy, Arreola Hernández estimates that only 30 percent of children under five are unaffected by malnutrition. She estimates that 55 percent of children suffer from relatively mild, Grade I malnutrition, and 13 percent from Grade II malnutrition. However, only 2 percent suffer from clinically severe, Grade III malnutrition.[16]

So, indeed, the "wealth" of San Antonio is a relative matter. Although the town is certainly poor, it is at least less poor than most others. Although there is hunger, there is less hunger; and despite the constant anguish from child death, there is less child death than elsewhere.

Sectors of Economic Opportunity

What accounts for the Antoneros' fortune to be not-so-poor Indians? The easy answer is: good land, a mix of crops, access to markets, education, convenient opportunities for wage labor, tourism, and, more recently, moderate insulation from political violence. Compared to other towns, San Antonio offers a wide range of economic alternatives. While I lived there, I studied ten distinct economic activities: *milpa* agriculture, cash-cropping, small family business, animal husbandry, wage labor by men, wage labor by women, wage labor by children, *petate*-making, small-scale vegetable marketing, and textile production for sales to tourists.[17] In each "sector," I found San Antonio families to be shrewd and energetic in exploiting every shred of opportunity. In general, I believe the key to their "success" is their practical capacity to match labor and investment capabilities to the endlessly shifting permutations of opportunity. Yet there are also subtler reasons. The remainder of this chapter explores these reasons by more closely examining the character of several economic "sectors."

Milpa Agriculture

The *milpa*[18] is the cornerstone of food production for most families in the Quinizilapa towns. Virtually all families who own or rent any land grow corn[19] as their first crop. As it has for at least four millennia, the cycle of corn production serves to organize the use of time and resources for a large majority of San Antonio families.

What seems odd is that corn production appears to have a low rate of return compared to virtually any economic alternative. Studies of

Table 1. ***Costs, Yields, and Profits from One*** **Cuerda** ***of Corn Production***

Labor Costs[a]	*Days*	*$/Day*[b]	*Cost ($)*
Prepare soil	7.1	2.17	15.40
Plant	.9	1.84	1.66
Weed/"clean"	1.1	2.20	2.43
Apply fertilizer	.8	1.88	1.50
Calzar la mata[c]	1.6	1.89	3.03
Doblar la mata[d]	1.3	1.83	2.38
Harvest	2.4	1.61	3.86
Subtotal			30.26
Nonlabor Costs	*Weight (Lbs.)*	*Cents/Lb.*	*Cost ($)*
Fertilizers	53	9	4.78
Seed	3.7	8	.31
Transportation	61	5	3.10
Subtotal			8.19
Total costs			38.45
Yield[e]	*Weight (Lbs.)*	*Cents/Lb.*	*Value ($)*
Good crop	579	7.4	42.85
Bad crop	366	7.4	27.08
Profit (value of yield minus total costs)			
Good crop	($42.85 − $38.45)		$ 4.40
Bad crop	($27.08 − $38.45)		−$11.37

[a] Completely accurate labor costs are difficult to determine because of (1) variations in planting techniques and land characteristics, (2) the practice of responding to questions with ranges (e.g., "Oh, it takes me about two or three days to do that"), (3) the difficulty of calculating inputs of family labor, and (4) the difficulties in translating a farmer's thinking from his actual land (perhaps work on several plots, all of different sizes) to a hypothetical one-*cuerda* plot.

[b] The going rate for agricultural labor was $1.75–$2.00 per day when this survey was carried out. These estimates reflect the value of that labor even though some or all labor may have been provided by the family. Variations from row to row reflect a tendency to "over-report" paid versus family-provided labor—that is, a paid laborer is likely to do the hard manual labor of preparing the soil, while the wife and children are likely to help out during the easier work of the harvest.

[c] *Calzar la mata* is to build a "boot" around the stalk at its base, thus protecting it from wind and directing the water flow.

[d] *Doblar la mata* is to bend over the stalks, just below the ears, after they reach physiological maturity. They are then left inverted in the field to dry and await harvest in the dry season.

[e] A "good crop" was defined as (1) a crop grown in a season of optimal growing conditions, (2) a crop harvested from rich or recently fallow soil, or (3) a well-fertilized crop. A "bad crop" was defined as (1) a crop grown under poor growing conditions, (2) a crop from high-clay or exhausted soil, or (3) an unfertilized crop. See also endnote 21 for this chapter.

Figure 10. Stored corn drying in the sun.

agriculture in this region generally show that dollar output per unit of land is about four times higher for commercially grown vegetables than for corn.[20] The gross cash value of one *cuerda* of corn with a "good crop" is only about $43; with a "bad crop," $27 (see Table 1). When the farmer's costs are deducted from the value of the yield, a "good crop" comes to about $4 a *cuerda*, while a "bad crop" represents a theoretical loss of about $11.[21] And poor crops are far from uncommon.[22]

Why, then, continue to produce corn? Why doesn't everyone just grow vegetables instead?

The continued reliance on corn despite its ostensibly low rate of return represents, first, a pragmatic response in which very poor people avoid the worst-case nutritive risk. The hardiness of corn is remarkable. Despite misuse of the land, neglect, insufficient rotation, lack of fertilizers, drought, and eroded topsoils, corn survives. By planting corn a family might assure itself of poverty, and possibly even hunger—but it will *not* face starvation.[23]

Not only is corn agronomically reliable, but when consumed with beans and modest supplements of fresh vegetables, it makes a nutritionally complete diet. Marina Flores and Emma Reh reported in 1955 that cereals (almost exclusively corn) accounted for about 77 percent

of total caloric intake for San Antonio families and 62 percent of all their protein intake. (Beans provided another 9 percent of caloric intake and 19 percent of all protein intake. Meat, milk, and eggs together were sources for only 15 percent of protein intake.) In addition, cereals accounted for 52 percent of all fats, 83 percent of all calcium, 53 percent of all iron, 63 percent of all thiamin, and 66 percent of all niacin.[24] Thus, when asking why people don't plant vegetables instead of corn, the true comparison is not between the cash value of corn versus the cash value of vegetables but between an almost-certain guarantee of minimal family nutrition versus a possibility of better nutrition. Understandably, the poorer the family, the more likely they are to be cautious and pro-corn in making this choice.

The *milpa* has survived as the dominant form of peasant agriculture despite more than two decades of efforts by the Ministry of Agriculture and international development technicians to persuade small farmers to shift to the seemingly more lucrative production of vegetables. As a development technician myself, I initially shared the bias against the *milpa*—or at least held the view that *milpa* agriculture would inevitably decline as "development" proceeded and more farm families reached a threshold of nutritive security.

But in fact, the issue is far more complicated. The *milpa* persists not only because of its nutritive reliability; beyond that, it also serves as the physical and intellectual "suprastructure" of a versatile and surprisingly practical productive system. Like "Indianness," the highland *milpa* is in many ways a place-particular legacy of colonial relations (see Chapter 2). Its key characteristic is that it "produces" by absorbing the low-cash-value "spare inputs" that a poor family is likely to have in abundance and transforming them to higher value. Moreover, this occurs in a way that is socially stabilizing: by optimizing input rather than maximizing output, the *milpa* produces nothing that can be extracted; thus, it reinforces the internal sphere (village society) without increasing vulnerability to the extractive external sphere (the *ladino* overclass).

Agronomically, it is easy to misread what is happening in a seemingly simple, half-*cuerda*-or-so plot of corn. During my early fieldwork, I consistently misunderstood both the quantity and the character of *milpa* production. Most often, I overlooked intercrops—even after I was well aware of their importance. In early stages, I frequently mistook tuberous and vine crops for weeds. Farmers often casually described plants by saying "*solo es monte*" (just weeds) even though such "weeds" can be sold as herbs, medicinal plants, dyestuffs, or can be fed to the turkey. In field inventories I frequently

Figure 11. Fields above the town toward the end of the dry season.

did not see or failed to ask about crops of very rapid maturation, usually ornamental flowers and occasionally radishes. I misunderstood that plants which seemed inedible can at some times or during some seasons be prepared in edible forms.

The point here is that the *milpa* is an agronomic system that operates by producing a very large number of very small quantities. In many instances, the intercrops can be more important than the primary corn crop. Because of the biotic diversity and seasonal variability, the precise output defies quantification. Since most *milpa* inputs require no direct outlay of cash, a farmer is unlikely to have a corresponding notion of what is produced. Upon being asked what is being grown in a particular field, a farmer is likely to simply respond "*milpa*" or "*maíz*" (in some senses, the words are interchangeable). The ambiguity arises because the farmer conceives a cornfield as a place with corn, beans, some carrots, a few *guicoy*, a half-dozen-or-so *ayotes*, a row or two of radishes, several kinds of *chiles* for cooking, a couple dozen *pacayas* for Easter, three coffee bushes, two *gravilea* trees for shade and firewood in the northwest corner, fodder for his brother-in-law's cow, dried cornstalks to be used for a new kitchen wall, and so forth. The alternative to asking a farmer what and how much he produces from a given unit of land—on-site case studies of individual plots based on field observation during a full agricultural cycle—is inordinately time-consuming and does not lend itself to aggregation of statistical data for more than a few cases.[25]

While population in the Quinizilapa towns has increased dramatically over recent generations, land ownership has become increasingly skewed. The majority find themselves with more and more family members to support on smaller and smaller plots of land. For them, the *milpa* is ideally suited for crop intensification. Because of its reliability and dietary importance, corn is the logical choice for the primary crop. Because of its nutritive and agronomic complementarity to corn, either a ground or climbing variety of beans is generally planted as a second crop.[26] But beyond that, a farmer's selection of intercrops can be based on a complex range of agronomic, spatial, demographic, and social factors. What varieties are best suited to the land, slope, water, available light? What are the interactive effects among combinations of crops? If his *milpa* is distant, for example, or if he has other employment, a farmer is less likely to choose intercrops that require daily care. Who is available to tend secondary crops? Is there a young son who can be sent daily to weed vegetables and watch for pests? Crops can be more or less processed (e.g., sorted, cleaned, cooked, bundled) before being sold at market. Is someone available who has the time and skills to do the processing—someone, moreover, who cannot earn a higher rate of return at some other occupation during that unit of time?

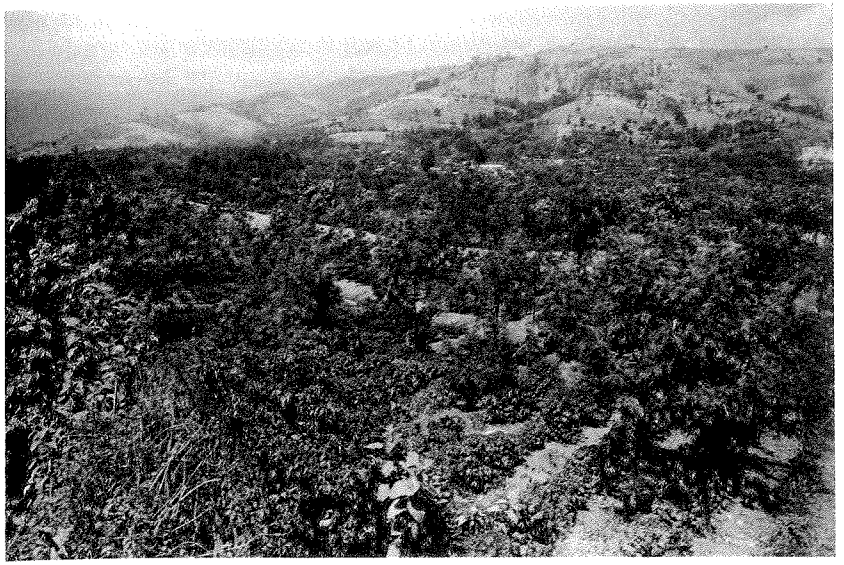


Figure 12. View of an intensely intercropped San Antonio field.

What is remarkable about the *milpa* is its capacity to absorb "inputs" that might otherwise be wasted—microquantities of resources that the family may have in abundance but have no use for without the transformative suprastructure. The *milpa* utilizes "resources" that may be abundant but are otherwise unusable: dawn weeding hours, after-school hours, knowledge of flower-growing, a particular style of food preparation, waste water, human and animal feces, the fact of an upcoming fiesta. What is more important socially is that because the *milpa* is built upon the principle of optimizing inputs rather than maximizing outputs, it yields little that can be extracted. *Milpa* product, for the most part, is consumed by the family or traded within the village. That means that no one can get rich or make someone else rich by farming a *milpa*. Since it works against capital accumulation, it is antithetical to entrepreneurship.

In short, planting a *milpa* optimizes resources in a very particular way. First, it works to assure nutritive security, even, ironically, if that means ensuring material poverty. Second, it "tidies the household environment." In a sense, the *milpa* acts as the horticultural equivalent of a pig—a biological transformer which recycles table scraps into pork—only in this case, the scraps include loose bits of

unproductive time and pieces of miscellaneous information, as well as material and human wastes.[27] Third, it reinforces the family and household unit as the basis for social organization by optimizing "resources" that exist largely as a result of the sociodemographic fact of the family (e.g., a grandmother's availability for weeding and her knowledge of herbs is a tangible resource within the context of a family-operated *milpa*). And fourth, because of its fundamentally anti-entrepreneurial character, it reinforces the egalitarian character of the village (discussed more fully in Chapter 4), a cultural trait which came to be central to the Indian society that evolved during the postcolonial period.

Nevertheless, despite the agroeconomic versatility of the *milpa* and its conservative social character, there are practical, physical limits to a form of production that is based on input substitution and crop intensification. The most obvious constraint is land. Landless families can still operate within this traditional productive system by renting land in exchange for labor—and therefore preserve the lifestyle and ideology that has evolved along with that system—but only if *some* land is available.

San Antonio has maintained, even improved, its landholdings relative to its neighbors; yet the absolute availability of land has decreased substantially over the last century. In 1874, Navarro reported a population of 1,340 persons (264 households) and landholdings of 16 *caballerías* (approximately 6,400 *cuerdas*), about 24.2 *cuerdas* per family.[28] I estimate that 5.9 *cuerdas* are necessary to provide an average family with corn for one year (5.1 persons per household × 1.1 pounds of corn consumed per person per day × 365 days per year ÷ 350 pounds of corn per *cuerda*).[29] Assuming a reasonably equitable distribution of village land one hundred years ago, each family would have had roughly four times the amount of land needed to assure self-sufficiency in corn. Today, the population is roughly four times greater than in the 1870s, and according to calculations from my survey results, San Antonio's landholdings today total about 16,000 *cuerdas*, or about two-and-a-half times the amount that was available one hundred years ago.[30]

The difficulty is not only that there is relatively less land per person; what is more important, land ownership within the community is considerably less equitable than it used to be. Fully 40 percent of the families in my sample of households owned no land (though some had access to land through rental, parcels borrowed from parents, or labor exchange, as discussed in the next chapter). The top five landholding families owned nearly half the total land in the sample.[31] Among those families who owned *any* land, the median holding was 4.7 *cuerdas*—that is, considerably less than the minimum 5.9 *cuerdas* needed for subsistence in growing corn.

There are limits to adaptiveness. As land becomes more scarce, a subsistence equilibrium can be re-established up to a point through intercropping, multiple cropping, and increased use of nominally marginal inputs. But the incentives to keep re-establishing that equilibrium begin to break down for people in two categories: those without minimal land or hope for land and, at the other extreme, those with abundant land (i.e., those who do not have to farm by the logic of intensification). What actually happens is examined and explained in Chapter 4.

Cash-Cropping

Poverty of material resources, nutritive threat, and cultural subjugation have each worked to reinforce the stability of an egalitarian, internally self-sufficient, self-regulated culture. The *milpa* embodies the technology of that culture and is in turn at the core of the particular ideology that has come to be identified with the Indians of the highlands. Yet commodity production—growing cash crops for external markets—is nothing new in San Antonio. In a very real sense, connection to the external world through markets is as fully "indigenous" as is the *milpa*. To view the *milpa* as "traditional"—and therefore more indigenous—and commodity production as modern—and therefore alien or foreign—is to misunderstand Indian history and society.

Production for outside markets is as old as the town itself and, in fact, was one reason why Juan de Chávez founded the town in the first place. Whether through forced labor, tribute, or the marketplace, the town has always been an exporter—though of course, it has always tried to improve its terms of trade. The earliest known document concerning the *Milpa* of Juan de Chávez, "Los indios que eran esclavos . . ." (from the mid-sixteenth century) is a formal protest to the king of Spain in which the newly freed Indians argue against having to provide fodder for the Spaniards' horses and having to sweep the streets of Antigua on fiesta days.[32]

The zone has always been a center for commodity production. For four centuries San Antonio and the Quinizilapa towns were stable because they adjusted to each of the successive export booms—in sugarcane, indigo, cochineal, and coffee—upon which the colonial export economy was based. In the late nineteenth and early twen-

tieth centuries, large tracts of prime coffee land were taken over by wealthy *ladino* coffee growers. Today, medium and small plots are farmed intensively, and sometimes extensively, by Indian vegetable growers. The area has evolved into an important regional center for the bulking and distribution of commodities. Among just the seventy-four families in my sample, the following crops, among others, are grown for sale outside the town: corn, beans, cauliflower, carrots, cabbage, turnips, beets, radishes, sweet potatoes, squash, potatoes, watercress, onions, peanuts, coffee, cut flowers, ornamental ferns, marsh reeds, firewood, palms, oranges, lemons, and avocados.[33]

As in most peasant societies, production for consumption (versus production for the market) is determined more by the needs and resources of the family than by the price of equivalent commodities. As previously explained, the family first produces corn, then beans, and then whatever crops nutritively complement corn and beans and optimally "absorb" surplus inputs of space, sunlight, children's weeding hours, and so forth. Total output is dictated first and foremost by the utility of a particular crop mix to the household, balancing the nutritional and psychological security of those crops against the disutility of not having and having to produce or buy them. Beyond that, the key question is the availability of land and other cash-related inputs, such as purchased labor. Generally, the greater the residual resources available to the family, the more likely they are to engage in commodity production—and if not agricultural commodities, then nonagricultural, commodity-like business enterprises.

Table 2 illustrates the incentives and some constraints to growing cash crops instead of *milpa*.

The first two rows of Table 2 illustrate that the classic "*milpa* crops," corn and beans, have similar labor and cash requirements (Columns A and B) and about the same rate of return (Column E). At the risk of oversimplification, I have aggregated information for several crops (such as carrots, cabbage, and cauliflower) as "garden vegetables" in the third row of the table. These crops can serve as *milpa* intercrops or, on a larger scale, can be semi-commercial cash crops. In this collection of data, I was not able to distinguish between, say, cabbage for household consumption planted in the *milpa* and cabbage planted strictly for the market. Nevertheless, a marked difference still emerges in both inputs and profitability between these garden vegetables and the standard crop of corn and beans. To better illustrate a "true" cash crop, I have included potatoes on the fourth row of the table.[34] Thus, the table should be understood as follows: corn and beans represent traditional *milpa* output; garden vegetables represent an intensified *milpa* (or alternatively, an underfinanced

Table 2. *Corn, Beans, Garden Vegetables, Potatoes: Comparative Data (per* cuerda)

	(A) Labor Input ($)	*(B) Cash Input* ($)	*(C) Total Inputs (A + B)* ($)	*(D) Selling Price* ($)	*(E) Profit (D − C)* ($)	*(F) Profit as % of Input (E/C)*
Corn	12	13	25	34	9	36
Beans	14	9	23	31	8	35
Garden vegetables	32	32	64	101	37	58
Potatoes	42	102	144	225	81	56

Note: This table is derived from my field data, supplemented by information provided by the regional office of BANDESA in Antigua. The discrepancy in corn production between this table and Table 1 is accounted for by changes in market prices and labor costs between the years 1977 and 1979 and by BANDESA's slightly different method of computing the value of family labor, which I have adopted here in order to make the table internally consistent.

commercial crop); and potatoes represent an extensively planted cash crop.

Column E shows that the garden vegetables generate four times the net income of corn or beans—and potatoes, about eight times the net income of those two staples. The semi-commercial garden vegetables require three times the cash input and at least double the labor input (there is the additional practical difficulty of finding as well as being able to pay supplemental workers). On the other hand, although inputs are more expensive for the garden vegetables and potatoes, they yield not only much better selling prices and profits, but also returns to scale, i.e., a much higher ratio of profits to inputs (Column F).

The other side of the coin is that the higher-yield cash crops also entail higher risks—principally because of variation in market prices, and also because of bugs, worms, molds, mildew, and the weather. San Antonio farmers are fully aware of the disadvantages of a cash crop like potatoes. They realize that potatoes are many times more expensive to plant than corn or beans, that there are no readily available storage facilities, that market prices fluctuate unpredictably, and that potato blight is a constant threat. So despite the incentive of relatively generous, low-interest bank loans and encouragement from government agronomists, I found no San Antonio farmers planting potatoes during the 1977–1978 agricultural season.

The key to a farmer's decision-making in crop selection is largely a matter of his willingness to make these trade-offs between safety and gain. I certainly never discerned any mystical attachment to corn for its own sake. Government technicians and popular books with chapters like "Corn Is King" and "The Mystery of Maize" commonly propound the notion that Mayan farmers have either an obdurate or a mystical attachment to corn. In my experience, this is nonsense. Farmers do not grow corn because they like to, because they can think of no other alternatives, or because their ancestors did it that way; they grow corn because it is an efficient and practical response to restricted resource opportunities. And by extension, those factors that reduce risk and improve gain work to shift choice in the direction of the more lucrative commercial crops.

In San Antonio, a number of factors, discussed below, have been at work during this century to improve the reliability of returns on higher-yield cash crops—at least for some farmers. These are what I am calling the "anti-*milpa*" forces, because they tend to push and pull at the social equilibrium of the community. Although they are not the only forces that undercut the stability inherited from the colonial era, by widening opportunity they challenge and disrupt both the harmony within the internal culture and the relationship of that culture to the powerful external sphere.

Windfalls of High-Quality Land

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, San Antonio farmers withstood land-grabs by *ladino* coffee entrepreneurs far more successfully than did those in the five other Quinizilapa towns. The town lost relatively less land and then gradually recouped losses at the expense of its neighbors. In addition, some families benefited from two communal land acquisitions. First, in the mid-1920s, municipal and public health officials agreed to drain the lake, leaving potentially rich bottomland available for agriculture (see Chapter 2). Town authorities surveyed the bottomland and divided it into equal plots. A "lottery" was then held to determine who would receive each plot. As a result, nearly one hundred winners (according to one elderly informant) each received several *cuerdas* of prime land. In the nearly three generations since, the original plots have been divided and subdivided, bought and sold, lost and gained. Many microplots of one-fourth or even one-tenth of a *cuerda* (the size of a large room) are passed from father to son. On the other hand, some growers have been able to consolidate these microplots into choice *finquitas* for vegetables and coffee.[35] The unusually high world coffee prices between 1976 and 1979, in turn, provided an unexpected cash boon to many families with coffee land.

A second windfall occurred during the land reforms of Jacobo Arbenz's presidency, from 1951 to 1954,[36] when many San Antonio families obtained highly productive lands in Calderas, an area on the slope of the volcano Acatenango. Most lands expropriated during this period were returned to their previous owners after the CIA-engineered overthrow of Arbenz in 1954.[37] However, one large Calderas *finca*, apparently expropriated during World War II,[38] was eventually sold inexpensively and with favorable financing by the Instituto Nacional de Transformación Agraria (INTA) to San Antonio families in 150-*cuerda* plots. For the most part, those families who were fortunate enough to acquire and hold on to these generous tracts are today the wealthiest farm families in the town and include many of the people engaged in larger-scale, commercial vegetable production.[39] Seizing upon their advantage, these families typically have acquired additional small plots from marginal producers, further skewing intra-village land distribution and exacerbating wealth differences. The land-gainers, though still marginal by the standards of agribusiness vegetable production, now own more land than they can work with family-supplied labor (and of course face no constraining nutritive threat). With excess land, they possess ample collateral for borrowing capital to hire labor, purchase chemical fertilizers and pesticides, store crops, and control marketing. That is a far different proposition than struggling to upgrade *milpa* production through more intense use of pre-dawn weeding hours, feeding weeds to the family's two turkeys, and so forth.

Access to Agricultural Inputs and Development Programs

William Cameron Townsend, the evangelical missionary who arrived in San Antonio in 1917 (and later founded the Wycliffe Bible Translators; see Chapter 5) was the son of a failed Oklahoma tenant farmer. With the memory of early poverty, he grew up in the lushness of Orange County, California. As someone who had been "saved" himself, Townsend believed in and promoted "modern" agriculture.[40] Confronted with the *milpa*—tied to a cycle of fiestas, debt, and forced labor on the southern coast of Guatemala—he inveighed not only against the witchery of the "Romish church," but against what he viewed as economic enslavement and primitivism of daily life. In Townsend's view, economic and spiritual liberation were inseparable, the Indian's passport to independence. As entry points for proselytization as well as means for projecting their vision of the Indians'

future, the missionaries not only built a church but also established the Nima Yá school, an "agricultural store," and a small coffee-processing plant.

The coffee-processing plant was established with the help of a St. Louis coffee manufacturer, A. E. Forbes, who read of Townsend's work in the *Christian Herald* and sent money for a turbine and a coffee sheller. With a sheller in operation and the Forbes company to buy all the products, Townsend was able to help set up a production and marketing cooperative, which must have been one of the first such cooperatives for Indians in Latin America.

The farm store, like the Nima Yá school, was open freely to the community. According to elderly informants, the religious message did not discourage patronage. As a result, all farmers had access to pesticides, fertilizers, wire, tools, pumps, and improved seeds. Such a farm store must surely have been rare in an Indian community sixty years ago, and indeed, one like it does not exist in San Antonio today. Recently, imported agricultural inputs have become generally available from hardware and farm stores in nearby Antigua. So, one way or another, for more than half a century San Antonio vegetable farmers have known about and could purchase materials that facilitate experimentation with cash crops.

As Charles and Geraldine Katy have pointed out about the allocation of health services by private voluntary agencies, the density of development projects tends to be highly correlated with the attractiveness and convenience of the setting for development technicians.[41] Thus, it is not surprising that picturesque San Antonio, only fifteen minutes by bus from colonial Antigua and less than an hour from Guatemala City, has attracted more than its share of post-sixties development programs. And since San Antonio farmers have a reputation for being technically progressive, literate, and willing to innovate, they have frequently been selected for pilot rural development programs. For example, the first regional office of the national agricultural development bank, BANDESA, was established in Antigua, and San Antonio farmers were among its first and most consistent borrowers.[42] For a great many San Antonio vegetable and coffee growers, BANDESA loans are as regular a feature of the agricultural cycle as they are to the wealthy *ladino* agroexporters of the Pacific coast. Similarly, AID-financed programs in soil conservation, forestry, marketing, nonformal education, and agricultural extension have actively sought out participants from San Antonio.

Interestingly, the cooperative movement (in textile handicrafts as well as in agriculture) is relatively weak in San Antonio, despite the missionary history and the organizational groundwork laid by two

generations of Peace Corps volunteers and other cooperative promoters. Probably cooperatives failed to take root here because so many coop services (marketing, credit, agricultural supplies, technical assistance with new crops) are already relatively available. Farmers have little incentive to invest the considerable time and energy required to make cooperatives work, particularly since the key middle-income small farmers (those who are typically most attracted to cooperative services) can individually obtain these services on the open market.

Surplus Cash

Because of the proximity of wage-earning opportunities and the additional money derived from tourism, occasional cash surpluses within families are not uncommon. When that happens, a family either reinvests in expanded agricultural production or "diversifies" by shifting resources to a sector that yields a higher rate of return on capital investment. Often a land-owning farmer and members of his family will work as *mozos* on a neighbor's land or as day laborers in Antigua during their agricultural slack season. With cash in hand, the farmer will then hire *mozos* during his own peak seasons—quite possibly, the same farmers for whom he and his family recently worked. Through this mechanism, every farmer tries to ratchet up his entrepreneurial activity. Obviously, the more cash that a family can mobilize, the more it can withstand crop failure, afford risk, and enhance its productive capacity through returns to scale.

High Educational Level

Although there is much debate as to the precise causal connection between education and market-oriented agriculture,[43] in Guatemala—and in San Antonio—there is certainly a *positive* association.[44] As pointed out in Chapter 2, the town has exceptionally high rates of education and literacy. Virtually all adult men, all school-age children, and most women know how to read.

The relationship between education and agricultural income is suggested in Table 3, which shows correlations between the number of family school-years (among persons over fifteen) and income from corn and beans, from cash crops, and from all (including non-agricultural) sources. As shown in Column A, there appears to be no association between number of years of schooling and corn and bean production—that is, *milpa* farming may require a high level of skills, but those skills are not related to school learning. Column B,

Table 3. *Correlation of Years of Schooling with* Milpa, *Cash Crop, and Total Income*

	(A) Income from Milpa *Corn & Beans*	*(B) Income from Cash Crops*	*(C) Total Income*
Years of schooling			
Correlation (r)	.07	.23	.43
Significance (p)	(.55)	(.05*)	(.000***)

*$p \leq .05$
**$p \leq .01$
***$p \leq .001$

however, shows a positive and statistically significant association between years of formal education and income from cash crops. The relationship is doubtlessly not so simple as "more years in school equals greater ability to read the instructions on a can of pesticide." Column C indicates that years of schooling are strongly associated with overall family income, and as suggested in the preceding section, the availability of surplus cash and the capacity to make lateral income transfers strongly affects a family's propensity to invest in cash-crop agriculture. The high level of education in San Antonio probably affects agriculture indirectly rather than directly, yet it certainly is a factor that undermines *milpa* stability.

Location

In many parts of the Guatemalan highlands, marketing presents a far greater obstacle to commercialization of vegetables than does actual production. The frequent lack of roads, storage, and processing facilities makes sales to nonlocal markets a high-risk venture at best, and flatly impossible at worst.

In this regard, San Antonio enjoys a locational advantage. Not only is the town within convenient access to the daily market in Antigua, but it also has relatively easy access to the large Bus Terminal Market in Guatemala City, the highland regional market in Chimaltenango, and the coastal markets of Escuintla and nearby towns. As have the farmers of Almolonga, Zuñil, and San Pedro Sacatepéquez (Department of San Marcos), the Indian vegetable growers of San Antonio have capitalized upon their initial locational advantage by purchasing transport vehicles.[45] In turn, reliable access to transport strengthens their hand as intermediaries and their control of the production and flow of commodities from the hinterlands.[46] The corresponding cash gain and the reduction of a significant risk factor—benefiting some families far more than others—has in turn prompted further shifts toward cash crops.

Locational advantage, land windfalls, and the other factors discussed here have not created a transformation from *milpa*-farming to cash-cropping. They are simply factors that encourage and enable such a change—for some families. There is no inevitable substitution of one system for another, but rather a simultaneous widening and constriction of opportunity. Since the "rich" farmers and roadside textile entrepreneurs are highly visible to outsiders, it is tempting to expand upon the "San Antonio is a rich town" theme. Yet, on balance, accumulation of wealth has been highly selective, and most people are as poor as ever, if not poorer. Probably families are becoming poorer at a faster rate than they are becoming richer.

The following section examines how a poor person operates in San Antonio. It is a short case study in "*milpa* logic." It illustrates the range of choices and how decisions are made in weaving *petates* (mats), a non-agricultural economic activity for those who are very poor.

Petate Making

The weaving of mats from dried, flattened marsh reeds almost certainly predates the backstrap loom in Middle America. Fossilized mat impressions, usually occurring on burned adobe fragments, have been found at many early archaeological sites.[47] At the Late Preclassic site of Kaminaljuyú (today the location of Guatemala City), a substantial number of impressions have been found in the hard-packed fill of the Miraflores-Arenal tombs (300 B.C. to A.D. 200). Viewing these mat impressions in museums or on bookplates, one can see that they are virtually identical in construction to the *petates* that are woven in San Antonio today.

Contemporary San Antonio *petate* makers gather reeds, called *tul* (*Cyperus* sp.),[48] from the swampy bottomland of the now-drained lake. The reeds are cut with a machete, dried in the sun, and stored in tall bundles. Weavers say that the reeds are more pliable and easier to work at early dawn and dusk or during the rainy season. Apart from a heavy, round pounding-stone (much like a *metate* for grinding corn) to flatten the reeds, no tool, loom, or stabilizing device is used in making *petates*. The weaver simply sits on the reeds to hold them in place and creates a twill by interlacing the strands at right

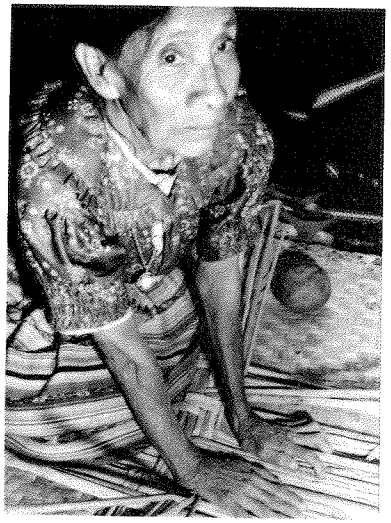


Figure 13. Elderly woman seated on reeds with her pounding-stone.

angles—over-two, under-two, over-two, under-two (see Figure 13). He or she begins with the long reeds to make large, "bed-sized" *petates* and then uses the leftovers to make smaller sizes. Three to four hours of weaving are required to make a large mat. Though more common among women, the work is not strongly associated with sex roles, as is farming (male) or backstrap weaving (female).

It has often been observed that artisans in peasant societies frequently come from the poorest groups, especially from among the landless poor.[49] This is certainly true in the Quinizilapa zone, where in this sense, *petate*-making—and not handweaving—is the true artisanal occupation. Only the very poorest families engage in full-time *petate*-making. A typical *petate*-making family is an elderly couple: she, eyesight failing, with arms and joints too weak for weaving; he, landless and too old to rent land or work as a day laborer. Or a very young couple: she, illiterate and caring for one or two toddlers; he, the landless son of a landless family, helping out with *petates* between stints as a day laborer. In the nearby *aldea* of Santiago Zamora and occasionally in San Antonio, these families subsist largely on *petate* income—the elderly family until death, the young family until they find something better.

More commonly, however, *petate*-making is a complementary, fill-

Figure 14. ". . . failing eyesight, with arm strength and joints too weak for weaving."

in activity among poorer but not the poorest families. For most, *petate*-making is one element of a larger set of activities, at the heart of which is the *milpa*. Each of these activities improves the overall efficiency of the household by absorbing (with minimal cash inputs) labor or skills from the least economically productive workers (the elderly or older children) or improves the output of the primary wage earners by upgrading the value of their normal "down time" (dawn, dusk, the rainy season). Accordingly, *petate* income among San Antonio families correlates positively with the number of elderly persons (ages sixty-five and over) in the household ($r=.27$, significant at the .021 level), not because it is a particularly archaic or "traditional" craft but because younger persons can usually find more lucrative work elsewhere.[50]

None of the families in my seventy-four-family sample subsist solely on full-time *petate* income, which accounted for less than 1 percent of total income earned by all the families in the sample. Only twenty-two of the families (30 percent) reported any *petate* production.[51] The highest annual *petate* income in the sample—which is to say, one of the poorest of the seventy-four families—was $200. The mean value of their production was only $47; the median, only $36.[52]

Is $47 a significant contribution to household income, even by standards of relative poverty? Yes, at least for some people. Assuming that the mean of $47 were a complete per capita income, it would be sufficient to provide the barest maintenance—the equivalent of 500 person-days of *tortillas* (1.1 pounds of ground corn per day at 6.5 cents per pound) and not much else. In other words, an elderly couple with both husband and wife working regularly at *petates* and planting a small but intensive garden could survive, if just barely; or an elderly parent living with adult children could "pay her own way."[53]

Although *petate*-making is an occupation of the poorest—within the region, within the community, and within the family—it is by no means an uncomplicated activity. In order to optimize his or her meager output, the *petate* maker must weigh an extraordinary range of choices before making each "microdecision." As shown in Table 4, there are dozens of possible "routes" which can lead from acquisition of raw material to sold *petates*. Each step is partially dictated by resource advantage at that point; each step has costs associated in cash, time, and entrepreneurial effort. These must be balanced against likely variations in rate of return. At nearly every decision point judgments must be made: the resource advantage can be further enhanced . . . or cashed in.

Wage Labor and Doorstep Businesses

Though it accounts for less than 2 percent of San Antonio's total economic output, I have elaborated upon *petate*-making in order to illustrate the nature of decision-making under the normal conditions of greatly restricted opportunity. The key point to this illustration is that the colony-of-the-colony's historic legacy is not a physical artifact (a "Mayan vestige," such as the *petate* or *huipil*), or even a technology (handweaving or the *milpa*), but an approach to production, a way of handling resources that both ensures survival under the colony's terms and sends up the flags of cultural identity.

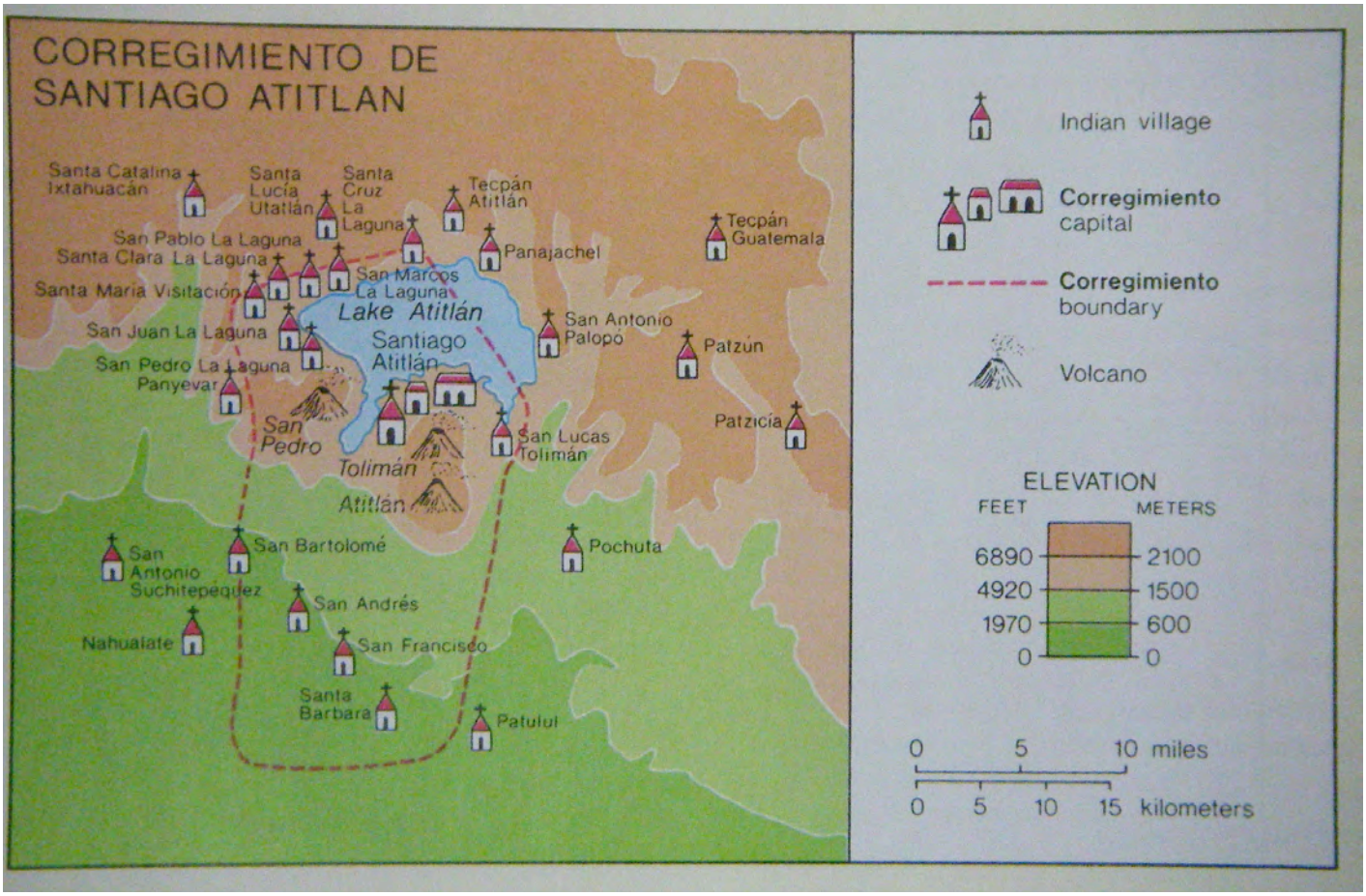
On the other hand, the situation is complicated by the fact that opportunity and access to resources have selectively widened during this century. For all its political and economic problems, Guatemala has sustained the strongest and most diverse economy in Central America. Although oppression and exploitation have been constant, twentieth-century Indians have nonetheless encountered a widening set of economic, entrepreneurial, and educational choices (though always within limits established and condoned by the larger *ladino* society).

At the village level, this "widening" is most apparent in opportunities for wage labor outside the household and village. Today, wage labor is the largest single source of cash income in the town. According to my calculations, it accounts for nearly 40 percent of total income; indeed, it surpasses agriculture, which accounts for only a quarter of all income. The total value of this wage labor among seventy-four households was more than $34,000, roughly $460 of supplemental income per family.[54]

Table 5 illustrates the range of wage opportunities found within this sample of households. As shown, there were eighty-three distinct outside-the-household "jobs"—that is, an average of 1.1 jobs per household.

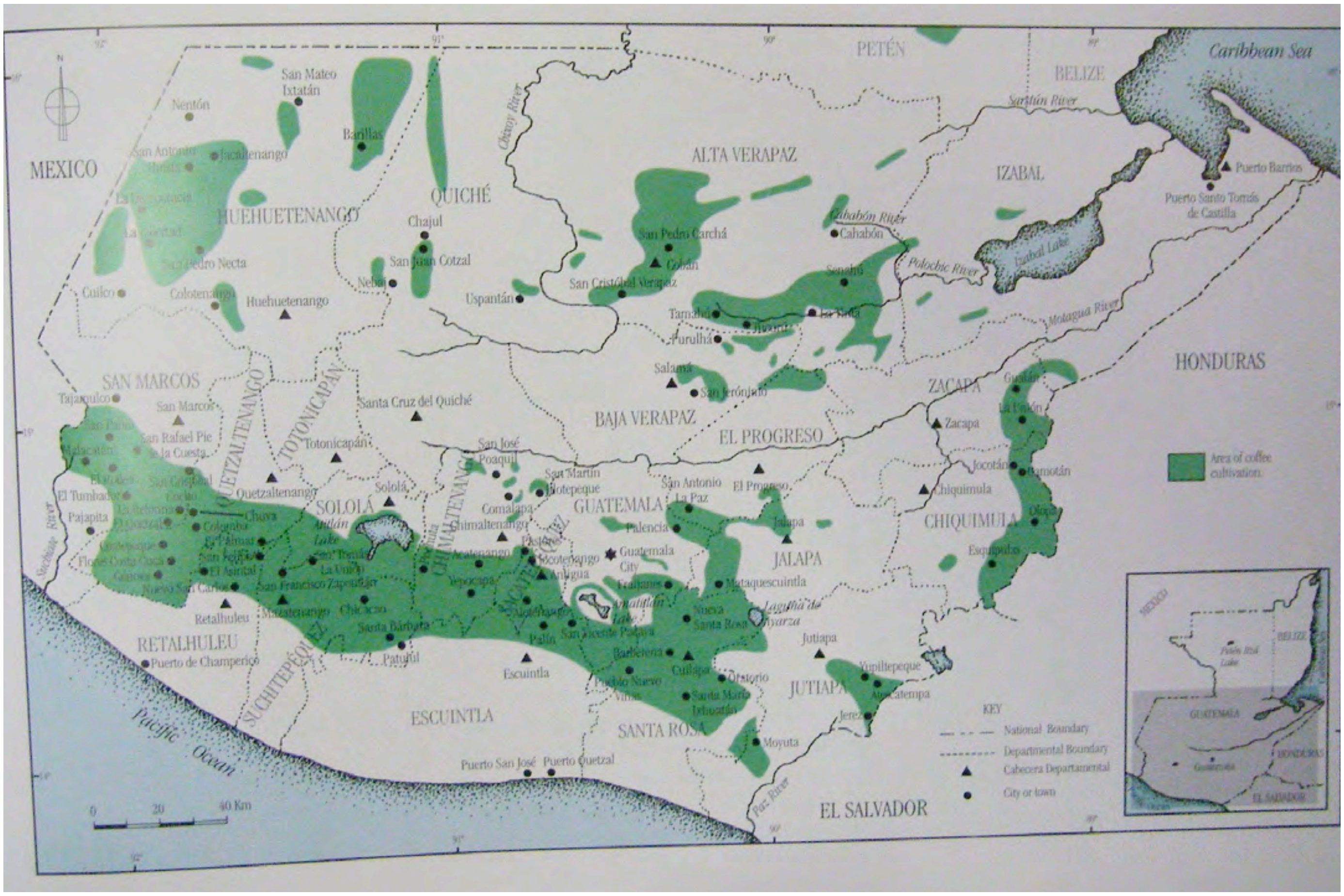
One might ask whether domestic agriculture is being displaced by wage labor. The answer is no. There are basically two categories of farmers in San Antonio: those with enough land and those with insufficient land to meet their subsistence needs. Table 5 shows that the largest job category—representing fully 35 percent of all jobs and 24 percent of all wage income—is accounted for by agricultural day laborers (*mozos*). Relatively few San Antoneros are full-time, permanent *mozos*. Rather, *mozo* labor allows families with insufficient land to generate supplemental income that stabilizes their *milpa*-centered livelihood. And it allows families with more than enough

Lake Atitlán




La plaça de
atitlan
El meson
Las casas de cabildo


Cultivated area ca. 1880
Expansion of cultivated area, 1880-1935
Expansion of cultivated area, 1935-1970
BRITISH HONDURAS
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
Caribbean Sea
Pacific Ocean
MESETA CENTRAL, 1840s first major coffee production in Central America
COSTA RICA
PANAMA
EXPANSION OF COFFEE CULTIVATION 1850-1970
0 100 200 300 miles
0 200 400 kilometers



MEXICO
HUEHUETENANGO
QUICHÉ
ALTA VERAPAZ
PETÉN
BELIZE
Caribbean Sea
IZABAL
HONDURAS
SAN MARCOS
QUETZALTENANGO
TOTONICAPÁN
SOLOLÁ
CHIMALTENANGO
BAJA VERAPAZ
EL PROGRESO
ZACAPA
GUATEMALA
JALAPA
CHIQUIMULA
RETALHULEU
SUCHITEPÉQUEZ
ESCUINTLA
SANTA ROSA
JUTIAPA
EL SALVADOR
Pacific Ocean
San Mateo Ixtatán
Nentón
Barillas
Jacaltenango
San Pedro Necta
Cuilco
Colotenango
Huehuetenango
Chajul
San Juan Cotzal
Nebaj
Uspantán
Chixoy River
San Pedro Carchá
Cobán
San Cristóbal Verapaz
Cahabón River
Cahabón
Senahú
Polochic River
Izabal Lake
Sarstún River
Puerto Barrios
Puerto Santo Tomás de Castilla
Motagua River
Tamahú
Purulhá
Salamá
San Jerónimo
Tajamulco
San Marcos
San Rafael Pie de la Cuesta
Malacatán
El Tumbador
Pajapita
Suchiate River
Santa Cruz del Quiché
Totonicapán
Quetzaltenango
Chuva
Colomba
Sololá
Atitlán Lake
San Tomás
La Unión
El Asintal
Nuevo San Carlos
San Francisco Zapotitlán
Retalhuleu
Mazatenango
Chicacao
Santa Bárbara
Patulul
Puerto de Champerico
San José Poaquil
San Martín Jilotepeque
Comalapa
Chimaltenango
Acatenango
Yepocapa
Jocotenango
Antigua
Guatemala City
Palencia
San Antonio La Paz
El Progreso
Jalapa
Fraijanes
Amatitlán Lake
Palín
San Vicente Pacaya
Escuintla
Barberena
Cuilapa
Pueblo Nuevo Viñas
Santa María Ixhuatán
Oratorio
Nueva Santa Rosa
Mataquescuintla
Laguna de Ayarza
Jutiapa
Yupiltepeque
Atescatempa
Jerez
Moyuta
Paz River
Puerto San José
Puerto Quetzal
Zacapa
Gualán
La Unión
Jocotán
Camotán
Chiquimula
Olopa
Esquipulas
Area of coffee cultivation.
KEY
National Boundary
Departmental Boundary
Cabecera Departamental
City or town
0 20 40 Km

The Story of the Rabbit and His Uncle Coyote: A Tzutuhil Story

They say that because he is small, the rabbit calls the coyote uncle, and that he is the *compadre* of the buzzard.

In a church, a priest said mass everyday, but not many people came. Also, food was very scarce. He just ate avocados every day. Thus, the father prepared a garden where he planted a good selection of vegetables—lettuce, cucumbers, pumpkins, watermelons, cauliflower, and others. The father blessed his garden and left for the convent.

In eight days he went to look at the garden. The cultivation had all come up. He blessed it again and went to mass, asking God to give him a harvest later on, because he needed to eat a little better.

First the cucumbers began to give fruit. But also, the rabbit needed to eat the cucumbers, and when he realized that there had been a garden planted, he seized the cucumbers. When they were half ripe, he said, "I'm going to eat my cucumbers." And he ate them all up. The father had not realized what had happened in his garden. He thought that the cucumbers were good and ready to eat.

When he arrived there wasn't a single cucumber. The father said, "My goodness, who came to steal them?" He said,

"I'm going to have patience. I have hope for the watermelons." And he returned again to his convent.

But the rabbit saw that the melons were ready to eat. He began to eat watermelons until he finished them off.

When the father arrived to get watermelons, there weren't any. The father knelt down on his knees saying, "My goodness. All of my fruit perished. Who could the thief be? Well, I'm going to have patience with the pumpkins." And he went back again to his convent.

But the rabbit realized after he had finished off the watermelons that there were pumpkins, and he said, "My goodness, I have *suerte* [luck]. I've everything to eat without suffering much. There are some who plant, work very hard, and even kneel down praying to God, but they never have the luck as I."

One morning, the padre very happily went to the garden to get his pumpkins, but when he arrived there was not a single pumpkin. "Who's the devil who's betraying me? I'm unable to eat a little better. All the fruit has been stolen. But I'm going to have patience. My hope is that I will still have my lettuce and cauliflower. And so that a thief will not enter, I'm going to put a guardian in the entrance."

Then the reverend made a dummy of black wax in the form of a little boy, and he put it in the entrance. He told the dummy, "You're going to guard here to see who the thief is." The father blew on the face of the dummy as a *secreto* and blessed him.

A little later the rabbit wanted to enter, but he had problems because in the entrance was a dummy of wax. And he said, "Negro, get out of my way." But he never spoke. The rabbit was angry, and he said, "Now, I'm going to hit you." And then the rabbit hit him with his left paw, but his paw stuck to the wax. He said, "Let go of my paw!" But the wax did not respond.

The rabbit said, "If I hit you with my right paw, I'm

going to kill you." When he hit it with his right paw, his other paw became stuck in the wax [because when wax is warm it's sticky]. The rabbit became more angry and said to the little Negro, "You want to equalize your force with me. I still have two paws. If I hit you with my other paw, little Negro, you are going to die." But the little Negro did not answer.

The rabbit hit the Negro with his other paw, and the same thing happened to it—the paw got stuck in the wax.

The rabbit said, "You have grabbed three of my paws, and if you don't release me, I'll kill you. I still have free my strongest paw."

And he hit him with his other paw, and the same thing happened—his four paws were now entangled. He said, "Little Negro, you have seized my four paws, but with my head, I'm going to kill you." The wax didn't answer.

The rabbit said, "This time there's really no forgiveness. I'm going to kill you." And he hit him with his head. The same thing happened. The rabbit remained completely entangled in the wax.

Then the priest in the morning thought about going to see the dummy. When he arrived at the vegetable garden, he found the rabbit stuck in the wax dummy. The father ran to advise the sacristan. The two carried a chain and tied up the rabbit with it. The padre said, "Damned rabbit. Because of you I'm suffering a lot. You have done me a lot of damage. You have left my garden without any fruit. Your sentence is that we are going to pour boiling water on you and put a hot *asador* [roasting rod, spit] up your anus. You're going to die tortured."

The father obliged the sacristan to boil the water and heat the roasting iron until it sparked. He obeyed and made the fire in the patio.

The poor rabbit was very sad waiting for his torture, but he could do nothing. Suddenly the coyote passed, very mannerly and of good humor, taking a walk. He saw the rabbit in

the distance and approached him, "Nephew Rabbit, what are you doing here?"

The rabbit said that he felt a great relief when the coyote arrived. He said, "Uncle Coyote, here I am waiting for lunch. They invited me to eat meat, but I'm very small and I don't eat much."

"You're my nephew. You can give me a little meat. I'm hungry," said the coyote.

The rabbit answered, "Uncle Coyote, if you would like to take my place, when the hour comes for lunch, to you they will give all the meat. I don't like meat. I like vegetables more."

The coyote replied, "Thanks, nephew, I'm very grateful. The truth is that I'm very hungry." The same coyote asked, "Why do you have the chain around your neck?"

The rabbit, who was very clever, told him, "It's because they appreciate me very much. The señor doesn't want me to go, and, for that reason, I'm with this chain. But it's easy, uncle, to take the chain off me," said the rabbit.

The coyote took off the chain and freed him. The rabbit said to the coyote, "Uncle, allow me to put the chain on your neck so that they will give you a lot of meat, and the owner of the house will be very happy with you."

"Yes," said the coyote, and he was tied up with the same chain.

The rabbit was very happy to be set free, and he went to do more damage in the garden.

Then the hour arrived for the sentence of the rabbit, and the father and the sacristan went to see if the water was boiling. But when they came and there was no longer a rabbit, the father said, "See how clever this animal is. In the morning there was a rabbit; now there is a coyote. But we're going to see what is going to happen to him." Then the coyote was frightened, but there was nothing he could do.

The father and the sacristan carried the coyote for the torture. They poured hot water on him, stuck a hot roasting

rod up his anus, and said he was paying for what he had done, not leaving any fruit in the garden. The poor coyote was howling from the great heat of the boiling water and much pain in his body from the roasting iron. The father told him, "This is just a punishment. If you return again you are going to die."

The poor coyote left crying because of his suffering. His whole body was blistered, and he had a burned anus.

Little by little, he was recuperating. "One day," he thought, "I'm going to go looking for the rabbit, and if I find him, I'm going to kill him and eat him."

The rabbit was very happy in an *injertal* [*injerto* tree, grove], eating ripe *injertos* [soft, brilliant green fruit]. The coyote was passing through the *injertal* looking for the rabbit.

The rabbit said, "Uncle, where are you going? Because you are so thin and so ugly, you walk like a sick person."

When the coyote realized that the rabbit was there, he said, "You damned rabbit! Because of your deceit, I suffered a lot. Remember when you said that you had an invitation? It was a deception. Now come down from the tree. Today, I'm going to kill you."

The rabbit said, "No, uncle, it wasn't I. It was probably one of my brothers. We are twelve brothers and we all seem alike."

"You're not going to lie to me anymore. I know you," said the coyote.

"Honest, uncle, it wasn't I."

The coyote said, "All's forgiven, give me a ripe *injerto.*"

"Very well, uncle," said the rabbit. "Open your mouth. Here comes your *injerto.*" When the ripe *injerto* fell into the mouth of the coyote, Uncle Coyote liked it.

"It tasted good, throw me another one," said the coyote.

The rabbit looked for a big green one and said, "Uncle, open your mouth. Here comes the ripe *injerto.*"

The coyote opened his mouth to receive the *injerto.* Since the fruit was green, it stuck in the coyote's mouth, and the

coyote fell to the ground rolling over trying to get it out but he was unable. He remained three days in the *injerto* grove before he was able to get it out.

The rabbit went away very happy, because he was able to deceive the coyote again. When the coyote recovered, he went looking again for the rabbit to kill him.

The rabbit, however, had a foreboding that the coyote was going to kill him. He looked for a big clay kettle and filled it with wasps. Then he ate dinner. He was there when the coyote arrived and said, "Little wretched rabbit, you tricked me again, and because of what you have done to me, you are going to pay with your life. Now, I won't forgive you. I still feel sick from the *injerto* that you left stuck in my mouth."

When the rabbit heard these words, he began to dance. And the coyote said, "Good, you're dancing because of all the bad things you have done."

"Coyote," said the rabbit, "I'm dancing because of happiness. Look there; there's a kettle full of tamales. Today is my birthday. We are going to eat the tamales when my little brother comes, but on the condition that you have to dance until my brother arrives."

The coyote said, "Rabbit, have a little respect, because you are tricking your uncle."

"Look, uncle," said the rabbit, "I've never behaved poorly with you. It was probably my big brother. He is more mischievous. There are twelve of us brothers. Uncle, forget all that has happened with my brother. Later we can eat the tamales. Dance, uncle, dance! Today is my birthday," said the rabbit.

"Yes," said the coyote. He danced and danced until he got tired.

"Well," said the coyote, "I'm just dancing, and the rabbit is not coming. It's better that I rest awhile."

The rabbit didn't arrive. The coyote was waiting and waiting. Finally, he said, "Now, the rabbit is not coming. He

fled in fear. This time I'm really going to eat all the tamales," and he opened the kettle that was full of wasps.

The wasps were very angry, and when they came out of the kettle, they began to sting the coyote all over his body. He shouted a lot because of the ache of the stings. Because of the pain, he began to run, but the wasps followed him. Finally, the coyote freed himself from the wasps, but his whole body was swollen.

"My goodness," said the coyote. "This time he deceived me like an ignoramus, but with the forgiveness of God, I'm going to look for the rabbit and his life will be over. I'm going to eat him."

He left in search of the rabbit without realizing that the rabbit was walking behind him. The rabbit said, "I'm going to trick him again." He placed himself again as if he were supporting a rock with his back.

When the coyote saw him he said, "Damned rabbit, because of you the wasps nearly killed me."

The rabbit didn't answer.

"Rabbit, I'm talking to you."

"Uncle, right now we're going to die," said the rabbit, acting as if he were supporting the rock with his back. "Now is the final judgment. The world is going to end."

"Right now I'm going to eat you," said the coyote.

"No, uncle, if I leave here, it's sure that the final justice is coming. Help me, uncle, you are much stronger than I. Look here, your back can sustain the rock, because if you don't help me the world is going to end."

"Yes," said the coyote, exerting a lot of effort supporting the big rock.

"Uncle, use more force; don't let go. I'm going to look for big sticks to fix the world."

The coyote said, "Run to look for sticks for support before we die."

The coyote remained, spending his effort, and the rabbit

went away content, and now didn't return. The coyote howled and howled until finally he used up his strength and said, "My goodness, I'm going to die," and he quit below the rock. And the rock did not move. Then the coyote cried over his unfortunate luck and said, "I'm suffering much deceit from this damned rabbit. Now is the time to look for and kill him once and for all so that he won't trick me again."

The coyote went in search of the rabbit, and when he found him, the rabbit was seated on the edge of a spring of crystal clear water. In this spring one could see the moon well, and when the coyote came near he said, "Rabbit, this time now your life is really mine. Now I'm going to kill you."

The rabbit, seeing the moon inside the spring did not want to answer. And the coyote again said, "Damned rabbit, your life is over."

"Uncle, what are you saying?" said the rabbit. "I've never talked with you. If something bad has happened, it was done by my brother, not me. It's that we are twelve brothers, it was probably my little brother."

"No, I know that you always have tricked me, and now I'm going to get revenge," said the coyote.

The rabbit continued to just look at the brilliance of the moon in the spring, looking under the water. And he said, "Uncle Coyote, here I have a problem. I brought meat for you, but it fell inside the water. Here I want to give you this meat, but I'm unable to get it out of the water. Try, uncle, perhaps you can get it out."

"No, I can't," said the coyote.

"But it's certain that inside the water you can see the meat," said the rabbit.

"Yes, I see it," said the coyote. But it wasn't meat; it was just the reflection of the moon that was seen in the water.

"Uncle," said the rabbit, "I want you to come get the meat out of the water."

"Yes," said the coyote, "I'm hungry."

"Stay here guarding it while I go to get a *botecito* [small jar] to take out all the water, and then it will be easy to get the meat out," said the rabbit.

"Very well, nephew, run because I'm very hungry," said the coyote.

The coyote was guarding and looking into the spring, wagging his tail a little, licking his chops a little, saying, "I want to eat meat." He was waiting and waiting, but the rabbit did not return again. The poor coyote was trembling with cold, and he didn't gain anything.

"Well, this is another deceit. We're going to see," said the coyote. "The rabbit is going to be my food. I'm going to look for him until I'm able to kill him. I'm an animal a lot bigger than he, and he's tricking me. I've suffered a lot." And the coyote took off in search of the rabbit.

One afternoon the rabbit was very happy. He made a hammock of lianas and placed it over a *barranca* [ravine] and began to swing happily when suddenly the coyote arrived and said, "Rabbit, come down out of the hammock. Today's your day; I'm going to eat you."

The rabbit continued to swing in the hammock, very content, and the coyote again said, "Get out of the hammock."

"Uncle, here it's very pleasant. Come with me. Let's have a good time. The two of us can amuse ourselves."

"No," said the coyote. "I have suffered a lot because of your deceit."

"It wasn't I. Perhaps it was some of my brothers. We are twelve and are the same color. Uncle, come to the hammock. Two are more fun."

Finally, the coyote climbed up in the hammock. Then the two began to have fun. And the rabbit asked, "How do you feel?"

"Very happy," said the coyote. And that's the way they were for a while.

Suddenly the rabbit said to the coyote, "Uncle, stay here in the hammock while I go to get us a refreshment."

"Very well, nephew," said the coyote.

When the rabbit arrived at the edge of the ravine, where he had tied the hammock, he cut the liana. The poor coyote fell to the bottom of the ravine. He broke six ribs and knocked out his four fangs and broke his tail. The poor coyote did not eat for a month.

The rabbit went on very happily obtaining food in the plains.

When the coyote recovered his health, he just kept talking saying, "My goodness, I'm suffering a lot in this world. My goodness, I'm forsaken. What is my fault? Can it be because I'm the most sinful among all the animals? Or is it that my luck doesn't help me. A smaller animal has done me a lot of damage. This time I really know that as an ignoramus I have suffered a lot. From now on I'm going to use my head," said the coyote.

One day the rabbit was on some land where there was a lot of dry grass. Where he was walking, it had just been cleaned by a campesino. Suddenly the coyote arrived and said, "Why talk a lot? Now, I'm going to eat this rabbit."

When the coyote tried to catch the rabbit, he couldn't. The rabbit said, "Already you have seen that I'm clever. When you want to catch me, you can't. It is because I'm innocent. God helps me a lot. Uncle, forget all that has happened. It isn't I. You can stay here. They have told me that today they are going to celebrate a fiesta. I have to sweep and prepare a place in the center of this land so that all around there will be dry grass and no one will see us and kill us."

"When are they going to have the fiesta?" said the coyote.

"Tonight," said the rabbit.

"Who's going to have a fiesta?" said the coyote.

"Uncle, my eleven brothers are going to come. They're

going to bring many lights, light many firecrackers, and explode many *bombas* [fireworks shot from mortars]."

"What are you going to eat?"

"We're going to eat chickens. Uncle, stay with me to prepare this place. Help me sweep the center where we are going to be, and put all around us the dry grass so that no one will see us."

"Good," said the coyote, and he began to sweep the center of the land and cover it all around with dry grass.

When it was all ready, the rabbit told the coyote, "We are going to wait till night comes."

"Very well," said the coyote.

"Uncle, your hair is too ugly, not like mine, which is fine. Uncle, if you like, I have a remedy so that your hair will be finer than mine."

"Thanks, nephew," said the coyote, "give me this remedy so that my hair will be fine."

"Very well," said the rabbit. He poured tar all over the body of the coyote. "Uncle, your hair is going to come out very fine."

"Thanks," said the coyote.

When night came, the coyote asked, "What time is the fiesta going to begin?"

"Be patient, uncle, the night is long," said the rabbit.

"Uncle," said the rabbit, "it's better that I go to call my brothers. Already it's late, and they haven't come. Stay here and guard this place. You can't go with me because you have tar on your body. We're going to come with a lot of light, and when we are close, we're going to light firecrackers and explode *bombas* as a signal. Uncle, please, so that the fiesta will be more gay, you have to dance and jump with joy."

"Good, very well," said the coyote, and he stayed in the place cleaning.

Then the rabbit left and lit a fire around all the grass that surrounded the coyote, and the rabbit ran off and sat down on

top of a tree trunk to see what was happening with the coyote. When the fire caught strongly, the rabbit sat on the trunk and said, "Uncle, now we have come, begin to dance."

"Yes," said the coyote, and he began to dance, but without realizing that he was not able to leave because he was surrounded by the fire. When he realized it was a fire, he began to shout and cry. Finally, he took off running and he passed through the flames. But as he had tar all over his body, when he went through the flames, the tar caught fire. The coyote saw that he was on fire, and he threw himself into the spring of water. Only then did he put out the fire. But when he left the water, he had neither hair nor whiskers.

He spent a lot of time sick, and when he regained his health, he went to God to accuse the rabbit. He said, "My Lord, I want justice. The rabbit has played tricks on me and lied to me. I was at the point of losing my life, and for that reason, I want justice."

God told him, "With much pleasure I will do justice, but you have to present proof."

The coyote said, "Well, there isn't much proof, but no one is able to deceive God."

"Yes, but here we need proof," said God.

"Look how I have a body full of blisters without hair. Touch me. I have six broken ribs; I don't have four fangs. Feel my tail! It's broken!"

"It's true," said God. He sent to call for the rabbit, and when the rabbit arrived God said, "You're a small animal, but I see what you have done to your uncle. It is a mortal sin."

The rabbit didn't answer.

"Now I am sending you to hell," said God.

The rabbit answered God, "Lord, I know that you pardon sinners. You have pardoned thieves, adulterers, and murderers. I know that you are going to forgive me."

God told him, "I'm going to forgive you but you have to do a job. You have three days beginning tomorrow to look for

two shark eyes. If you don't bring the eyes of a shark, I will send you to hell."

"Very well," said the rabbit, and he went away a little sad and a little content. He thought, "What am I going to do to get the eyes of a shark?" He went many places looking until he arrived at the ocean. He saw woodcutters working, and he sat down looking at the men sawing wood. Then lunchtime arrived, and the workers took their lunch and went to sit down in the shade of a tree to eat. But they forgot their shotgun.

The rabbit, seeing that the men began to eat, little by little went to steal the shotgun. And then he went again to the beach to see if a shark was there. In a while, a shark of the ocean appeared. The rabbit, very confident in his astuteness, grabbed the shotgun and hit a shot in the face of the shark. But he didn't die. He went again into the ocean.

The rabbit remained thinking, and he saw a buzzard and said, "*Compadre,* come with me." And the buzzard alighted on the sand.

"*Compadre,* what do you want?" said the buzzard.

"Please carry me to the other side of the ocean. I'm looking for a shark, and I only need his two eyes."

"Very well," said the buzzard, "get on."

The rabbit sat down on the buzzard until they reached the other side of the ocean. "*Compadre,*" said the rabbit, "if I am able to kill the shark, you can eat all of the meat. I just want the two eyes. But with one condition, you have to carry me to the other side of the ocean."

"With much pleasure, *compadre,*" said the buzzard.

The rabbit buried the shotgun in the sand, and he began to dance. Suddenly the shark came out of the ocean, and he said to the rabbit, "Muchacho, you are dancing."

"Yes, sir," said the rabbit.

The shark said to the rabbit, "Muchacho, I had bad luck on the other side of the ocean. Without realizing, I wanted to sun myself a little on the sand when a man shot me in the face.

Thanks to God that my face is like bronze, and the lead didn't penetrate, but if this man shoots me in the tail, this time I would be dead," said the shark.

"Then you sharks carry your life in your tail," said the rabbit.

"Yes," said the shark.

The rabbit said, "This time with confidence you really can be on the beach. I'll guard you so that no one will be able get near you."

"Please watch over me. I want to sleep a little while on the beach to enjoy the sun."

"Don't worry, sleep. I'm a little animal, but honorable."

"Thanks," said the shark, and he went to sleep on the sand.

When the rabbit saw that the shark was fast asleep, he went to take out the shotgun and he discharged a shot in his tail. The shark did not move anymore. The rabbit was very happy, and with his claws he removed the eyes. Then he told the buzzard, "Now, you have meat to eat."

"Thanks," said the buzzard, "I'm going to eat a little so that I will have strength to fly over the ocean." Then the buzzard carried the rabbit to the other side.

"Thanks, *compadre,* go back. All the meat is yours."

When the rabbit presented himself before God with the two shark eyes, God was amazed at the cleverness of the rabbit and said, "Rabbit, today I believe that you are a damned animal. And you will remain little forever. You won't get any bigger. You will also always move around with your butt on the ground. Your ears are going to get very large." And God pulled his two ears. For that reason, the rabbit has two big ears, and each time he hops, he always lands on his ass.

And God told the coyote, "For your stupidity you broke your ribs and your canine teeth. Your punishment is that all your life you will go around looking down toward the ground,

and as you broke your tail bone, you will go around always with your tail hanging down. And for having had your hair poured with tar, your hair won't grow any longer. It will be short. And for the last punishment you will keep eating green *injertos* and sleep on the rocks because if you were a little more clever, I would give you a better place. This is a remembrance of the justice of God."

The Story of the Man [Devil] Who Was Put Inside a *Tecomate*

The old folks use this story as an example to educate. It is a story of a woman who was pretentious, exorbitant, and arrogant.

This woman lived with her parents. She was neither very pretty nor very ugly. Many men of the town were in love with her, but her pretention was to have a husband with gold teeth. Her father said, "Do you want to marry?"

"Yes," she said, "but when I find a man who has gold teeth." The woman was already thirty years of age, and she wasn't able to choose a husband with gold teeth.

One day the woman went to wash clothing in the river below a bridge. The devil thought about deceiving this woman, seeing all her exaggerations. When the woman was happily washing clothing in the river, the devil took the form

of a man with gold teeth, and he placed himself on the bridge with his face looking down at the woman. When the woman looked up, seeing the man with gold teeth, she said, "Only now am I having any luck." And she told the man, "Come down here with me. You are my husband. I've wanted a man with gold teeth for so long! How happy I am now that I have one!"

The man came down with her to the river and said, "You are my woman. I'm the man who will make you happy. Look at my gold teeth!"

The woman said, "Many wanted me, but none of them had gold teeth. Now let's go to my house." And the two went to her house. When they arrived the woman told her parents that she had found the man that suited her.

Her parents gave them a house to live in. The father of the woman told the man, "Son-in-law, now we're going to the campo to cultivate the land because this is my work."

The son-in-law answered, "We'll do it tomorrow."

The next day the father-in-law said, "Let's go to work."

He answered, "Today, I don't want to work. I have to continue my practices."

"What are your practices?"

"My practices are different," he said.

This man got inside a glass of water and disappeared. Then he got inside a kettle and disappeared. At times he got into a fire and disappeared. The mother of the woman cried and told the man, "Behave yourself! Don't do devilish things." But the man just smiled and smiled, and did nothing in the way of work.

For advice, the woman who had wanted a man with gold teeth went to a shaman to ask what to do about her husband, who was a devil. The shaman told her, "To conquer the devil is easy. Look for a *tecomate* [gourd jar], neither large nor small with a plug. Then tell your husband to get inside the jar, as he can do anything. And when he is inside the jar, cork it well

MOAOYOAON FOLKTALES

FOLKLORE FROM LAKE ATITLÁN, GUATEMALA

Translated and Edited by James D. Sexton

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CHAPTER 8

Tourist Town amid the Violence: Panajachel

By Robert E. Hinshaw

Panajachel epitomizes the cultural diversity, charm, and beauty of Guatemala, "The Land of Eternal Spring." Lake Atitlán, a volcanic crater into which the Panajachel River flows, forming the delta on which the town is situated, lies fifty miles west of Guatemala City. Secondary volcanoes ring the lake and overlook the Pacific littoral on the south. Aldous Huxley, in the early 1930s, found Panajachel a "squalid, uninteresting place, with a large low-class Mestizo population and an abundance of dram shops." Regarding the lake, however, which "touches the limits of the permissibly picturesque, it is really too much of a good thing." The lake's breathtaking beauty is enhanced by the fourteen-centuries-old Indian communities along its shores. The cultural patterning of these communities was first described in scholarly fashion by the anthropologist Sol Tax, and in the intervening years scores of social scientists have deepened both Guatemalans' and foreigners' understanding of the pre- and post-Conquest history, cultural geography, demography, and ethnology of the region.

Apart from Guatemala City and the colonial capital of Antigua, Panajachel has been visited by more foreigners than any other community in Guatemala. By the 1970s, it had become a cosmopolitan melting pot of socioeconomic differences within the nation, as well as a haven for 85,000 foreign tourists each year from all corners of the Americas, Europe, and Asia—hardly the "squalid, uninteresting place" Huxley found it to be in the 1930s.

Yet despite its growing visibility and sophistication, Panajachel contrasts markedly with other communities in the Guatemalan high-

lands with respect to the direct impact of the civil war, which finally reached the highlands at the beginning of the 1980s. The ethereal quality of Panajachel has persisted through the violence, and the community has remained an island of comparative tranquillity. No Panajacheleño has been killed, abducted, or tortured, and there are no widows or orphans resulting from the war. To my knowledge no Panajacheleño has joined any of the guerrilla groups opposing the government. Several Panajacheleños have been involved in the war as military recruits, but, as far as is known, all of them enlisted voluntarily. Most of them had left Panajachel to join the army or to look for work elsewhere before the violence erupted. The bias of the great majority of Panajacheleños on the eve of the violence and still today is pro-Guatemalan government, pro–United States, and anti-Communist.

Because of Panajachel's anomalous position among highland communities, my focus is less on the current violence and more on its economic effects. All rural communities have been negatively affected economically by the war, but for Panajachel we have unusual longitudinal data which permit us to examine in detail the economic consequences of the violence.

Changes in Panajachel Through Time

Fifty years ago, Sol and Gertrude Tax commenced a study of the towns bordering Lake Atitlán. Of these, Panajachel was the first to become accessible by paved highway, and for that simple reason it was the first to attract tourists. But in 1941, when the Taxes ended six years of intensive documentation of Panajacheleños' income and expenditures, fully 95 percent of their income still derived from traditional agriculture. The handwriting was on the wall with respect to the potential impact of tourism, but that impact was yet to be felt by any of the Indian families of the mixed ladino-Indian population.

I commenced a restudy of Panajachel in 1964, by which time Panajacheleños' reliance on tourist-related income had climbed to 55 percent of the population, and by 1978—when fifteen Beloit College students joined me for a four-month stay in Panajachel to measure the impact of tourism—I estimated the reliance to have reached 75 percent. The population on Panajachel's one square mile of delta land had climbed from 800 in 1935, three-fourths of whom were Indian, to 6,000 in 1978, slightly more than half of whom were Indian. About

540 Panajacheleños, representing fully half of the households, were employed in tourist-related services by 1978, their wages totaling $500,000, or one-tenth of the $5 million deposited in the community by foreign tourists that year. Panajachel-grown fruits and vegetables sold to hotels and tourist restaurants added to the Panajachel income derived from tourism, and if we include the construction industry in Panajachel and neighboring communities, which Panajacheleños dominate, it would be difficult to find a Panajachel household whose income in 1978 was not in part derived from tourism. Panajachel, therefore, had become the most tourism-dependent community in Guatemala, a dependency which brings both costs and benefits. We were able to examine costs and benefits at the zenith of tourism's growth in the 1970s on the eve of the violence which brought tourism virtually to a standstill. Finally, in the summer of 1984 I returned to determine how Panajacheleños had coped with the unexpected critical turn of events in the intervening half-dozen years.

Tourism in Guatemala had begun to wane by 1979, though it was still a good year for the country as a whole. Income from tourism that year totaled $200 million compared to $211 million from the sale of cotton and $495 million from the sale of coffee. By 1981, however, when Panajachel's largest hotel was bombed in a guerrilla raid from the lake, tourism came virtually to a halt. Also in 1981 a branch of the Bank of Guatemala in Panajachel was robbed. During the next year the municipal headquarters of both Panajachel and San Andrés, the neighboring *municipio* on the northeast, were held briefly by guerrillas, and the San Andrés municipal building was burned. Several soldiers were killed in the action at San Andrés, and as the guerrillas retreated northward out of Panajachel, they killed four residents of a village named Patanatic. In other regional incidents, two residents of San Jorge, the town bordering Panajachel on the west, disappeared and were assumed abducted and killed, and three similarly disappeared in 1982 from Santa Catarina on the east.

The hotel was rebuilt, and guerrilla attacks on tourist interests in Panajachel ceased, but even into 1984 tourism remained limited to Guatemalans and small numbers of Europeans. When I returned in June 1984, a national planning conference on tourism was in progress, and North American travel agents were being flown in by the national airline, Aviateca, to see for themselves that the areas of major tourist attraction were fully pacified. While North American tourists still

were conspicuously absent, the mood in Panajachel was ebulliently optimistic, and tourist-oriented communities in the region were poised in anticipation of a much improved season in 1985. Apart from the fact that streets and hotels were empty of all but a few European tourists, Panajachel appeared just as it did during the height of tourism in 1978: hotels were open, restaurants and shops were open and fully stocked, and Panajacheleños, apart from a dozen young men and a few families who had left (for Guatemala City, the army, or the northern oil fields), were still there.

Employers have absorbed the losses these past several years as have their employees, obviously on the assumption that the depression was temporary, and, surprisingly, few Panajachel Indians have lost their jobs. Hours were cut back or wages otherwise reduced in many instances, and where more than one family member was employed, not uncommonly one was released. Remarkable sharing and self-help efforts by the community have enabled Panajacheleños to survive and even to absorb additional vendors of arts and crafts fleeing the violence in the north and west. The community rapidly developed a reputation as one of the safest places to be in Guatemala. The immigrant merchants also brought with them their contacts with foreign buyers, middlemen who had dominated the textile market in more remote *municipios* less frequented by tourists. As a result by 1984 even Panajachel vendors were catering largely to such middlemen, and a few of the wealthiest Panajachel merchants with capital reserves were well positioned to benefit from the violence: they purchased family heirlooms, such as old huipils (women's hand-woven blouses) from families throughout the highlands who were in need of money or who had been forced to abandon their homes and possessions. Some Panajachel homes are virtual museums, repositories of the cultural heritage of the region. The buyers are, for the most part, wealthy collectors from Europe and the United States. Huipils selling for $1,000 are not unheard of, but unfortunately this income is even less broadly shared by Panajacheleños than was the money spent by tourists before the violence.

The Economic Impact of Tourism

Let us turn now to a cost-benefit analysis of Panajachel's shift away from agriculture toward dependence on foreign tourism. Specifically, I want to report on the findings of my 1978 research and follow-up

inquiries in 1984 on the cost of living in Panajachel, compared to that of neighboring communities. One of the questions addressed in 1978 was: Are the increases in wages keeping pace with the rising cost of living, reflected in food commodity prices in the weekly market? Since food purchases represented 70 percent of the average household expenditures in 1964, I have assumed that this continues to be the best single index of cost of living. Of course, there has been a steady inflation in most commodity prices throughout the region for many years, requiring me to control for that variable if I am to determine whether tourist competition for commodities has been an additional local factor in inflated prices.

I used the methods in the mid-1960s that Sol Tax had used in the 1930s to survey the Panajachel market: native data collectors, on several consecutive market days at the same time of year, asking the same questions. Paul Yamauchi, a member of the Beloit team in 1978, repeated the procedures, as did I again in 1984. We lack, however, reliable comparative information for neighboring markets. Only for 1978 do we have reliable comparisons with three markets in the area: one, San Andrés on the east, is considerably smaller than Panajachel; another, Sololá, the departmental capital on the west, is considerably larger; and San Lucas, across the lake, is of comparable size to Panajachel.

Yamauchi found negligible price differences among the markets in commodities common to towns in the region or imported into the towns. Fruits imported from the coast were cheaper in San Lucas, for example, because of its closer proximity to coastal supply routes. Prices in the markets were averaged for comparison with prices in Panajachel. Forty commodities were compared, attention being given to fifteen commodities which hotels and restaurants reported purchasing regularly to satisfy tourists' tastes. In determining the impact of tourist competition on inflated prices, I arbitrarily assumed that 1964 prices in Panajachel were the base line and that they were representative of prices in the entire region. Tourists in Panajachel even at that time were probably influencing prices, but with only seven hotels and four restaurants in 1964, compared with twenty hotels and forty-two restaurants-bars in 1978, any inflation owing to tourist competition for commodities would have been negligible in 1964. If we assume uniform prices in the region in 1964, then 1978 comparisons reveal an average price inflation of 190 percent for commodities outside Pa-

najachel and 250 percent inflation for Panajachel commodities. Of the fifteen commodities most in demand by tourists, fourteen were priced significantly higher in Panajachel than in all of the other markets. We concluded that 75 percent of the inflation since 1964 was common to the whole region, while 25 percent of the Panajachel inflation was directly attributable to local tourism.

From Sol Tax's analysis (in his book *Penny Capitalism*) of the relative importance of different foods consumed by Panajacheleños, we judge that the foods most in demand by tourists also constitute approximately 75 percent of the average family's traditional diet. This assumes that Panajacheleños' diet has not changed, but data collected in 1978 and 1984 reveal shifts away from meat, fish, and dairy products; greater utilization of rice and potatoes; and less total fruit consumption than earlier. These shifts clearly reflect differences in commodity price inflation, and these differences have health and infant-growth implications, to be examined below.

Inflated cost of living is one side of the coin; the other is inflated income. The crucial question is, Has income inflation kept pace with cost-of-living inflation? In 1978 unskilled male wage earners were receiving up to $2.00 a day, most women and many of the men in the tourism labor force earning closer to $1.00 a day. The comparable figures and range in 1964 were $0.50-$1.00. While in 1978 larger numbers of skilled wage earners were earning up to two and even three times the unskilled wage of 1964, we judge that average wage income in Panajachel has little more than doubled over the fourteen-year period. When the increased income to Panajacheleños from sale of their produce at the inflated prices is factored in, Panajacheleños were earning from all sources considerably more than twice the community's income in 1964, but still short of the three-and-one-half times increase they would have needed to keep pace with the cost of living.

Only a very few of households have the marketable skills to command tourist income sufficient to keep pace with the rise in cost of living. Fortunately, half the households were not dependent on or were only minimally dependent on wage employment, using the community's shrinking agricultural land base to advantage in growing the products most in demand because of tourism. In between are roughly half the households, who have lost their land (except for house sites) and have become dependent on tourist employment at the minimum wage. These are the Panajacheleños who stood to suffer most from the demise of tourism and to whom we look for understanding of the adjustments in standard of living that have occurred.

This brings us to my latest visit to Panajachel. While my market surveys in June 1985 were not fully comparable to those in 1978 and 1964 (coming two months later in the year), there is no good reason to think that commodity prices changed during those two months, except that imported staples of corn, wheat, and beans were in perhaps somewhat shorter supply by early summer. Excluding these staples, vegetables (seventeen varieties) were down 5 percent over 1978 prices in Panajachel, fruits (eight varieties) were up 28 percent, and fish, meat, and eggs were up 40 percent. The explanation for such continued inflation in prices for fruits and meat, even in the absence of foreign tourists, lies in the increased use of Panajachel as a vacation site by Guatemalans. The recent decline in rural violence, coupled with government-imposed financial disincentives to vacation outside Guatemala, have resulted in the increased popularity of Panajachel to nationals; thus the continued competition for, especially, fruits, meat, and dairy products in the Sunday market. Ironically, while domestic tourism results in continued cost-of-living inflation, it does not employ Panajacheleños nearly as fully in hotels, restaurants, and gift shops as does foreign tourism. Consequently, cost of living currently is running ahead of income more than ever before.

Dietary shifts, accordingly, have become even more pronounced this past year (1986), according to the physician who directs the local health center. There has been a noticeable upturn in infant illness, reflecting animal protein and fruit vitamin-mineral deficiencies. Panajacheleños would be more alarmed if it were not for the hope—encouraged by the local ladino elite and the government—that foreign tourists will be returning soon.

Unfortunately, with few exceptions, Panajacheleños do not understand how inexorably their destiny is linked to the ongoing turmoil in other Central American countries. North American tourists will probably continue to avoid Guatemala as long as war rages in El Salvador and Nicaragua, despite the anticipated calm in Guatemala over the next few years. The worst may be yet to come in terms of deteriorating health, and now that absence of violence is no longer a Panajachel monopoly, we might see a rapid upturn in out-migration if the North American tourists fail to return. It may well be that inadvertently I myself encouraged some out-migration, by sharing with friends what

we learned from our analysis of the 1978 data: that only 10 percent of the $5 million spent by tourists at the height of tourism was returned to Panajachel workers in the form of wages, and that the cost of living was inflated locally about 25 percent higher than in the wider region. Panajacheleños have been aware of commodity inflation, of course, but have had no regular, public monitoring of prices in other markets, despite occasional intermarket visitations by virtually everyone. If their collective knowledge were effectively pooled, they would learn—and probably act on that knowledge—and bring Panajachel prices more into line by reducing the local demand. That this knowledge is not effectively pooled reflects the "impersonality" in social relations characteristic of Panajacheleños, so graphically described by Sol Tax forty years ago.

Most Panajacheleños probably believe not only that they are better off economically than their neighbors by virtue of tourism but also that their standard of living has improved over that of their parents and grandparents. From longitudinal information gathered since the 1930s, we know that they are not better off, and if this is the situation in Panajachel, it is reasonable to conclude that the standard of living has been deteriorating at least as rapidly, and probably more rapidly, in the highlands generally. Yet the western highlands have fared better economically than have regions of the country in the west and north, where in the late 1970s frustration first led to politicization of the Indians and then siding with guerrilla forces.

In 1978 I expected to find that tourism was reversing the negative regional and countrywide economic trends for at least the fortunate few in Panajachel, but, in fact, the data indicate that even Panajacheleños were worse off in 1978 than were their parents and grandparents. That they do not perceive this to be the case, and still harbor few reservations about living in Panajachel today, reflects the stimulus of life in the fast lane—or, rather, fast path (i.e., life oriented to tourism). Panajacheleños are more impressed with comparing their present income levels to those of neighboring communities than with comparing standards of living with those of earlier generations. The paradox is that Panajacheleños may not be faring much, if any, better than their neighbors who do not benefit from tourism. If this is the case and yet Panajacheleños perceive it otherwise, the reason may be that the economic benefits of tourism are more visible than its costs. Panajacheleños are less aware of the inflated cost of living than they are of the

larger income they enjoy. But the same can be said of my coresidents in Boulder, Colorado. Boulderites know that they make more money on the average than the residents of outlying towns in the county, but they need an economist to tell them that equivalent housing costs 25 percent more in Boulder than elsewhere in the county.

It will be interesting to observe the choices Panajacheleños make over the next few years if, as I predict, tourism does not significantly improve and their understanding of their economic situation is finally clarified. Will they be able to act on this knowledge, when and if it comes, to better their life chances?

The Absence of Violence in Panajachel

Panajachel largely appears to have avoided the violence of the civil war. Directly or indirectly the community's dependence on tourism seems to provide an explanation for the community's good fortune in this regard. Over the past half century those Guatemalans who have purchased land for vacation homes in Panajachel; vacationed in the government-owned hotel, Casa Contenta; or driven out from Guatemala City to spend weekends on the beach and in the restaurants and bars have been among the wealthiest and most conservative of Guatemala's upper and middle classes. Many befriended and hired Panajacheleños, sometimes providing access to more remunerative employment elsewhere in the country. Panajacheleños early on chose to accommodate rather than to reject these national tourists and, accordingly, were disposed to assimilate many of their political biases.

Such conservative biases were reinforced by the foreigners, largely North American, who also began to frequent Panajachel fifty years ago. The first Protestant missionaries in the region were headquartered in Panajachel, and in the intervening years fully half of all Panajachel families have had some formal involvement in one or more of the several Protestant sects active in Panajachel. The missionaries were for the most part as politically conservative as the wealthy North Americans frequenting the hotels and purchasing or renting homes for more prolonged sojourns in Panajachel. The foreign tourists gradually became more diverse in age, life-style, economic status, and religious and political orientations. The sentiments of several hundred North American counterculture youths living for months at a time in Panajachel during the 1960s might have rubbed off on their Panajachel

peers and friends if the civil strife had reached the community at that time. But by the late 1970s and early 1980s, the colony of hippies had become much smaller and was growing older and more conservative.

Panajacheleños have learned much about North America through association with its tourists. A number of friendships have resulted in visits to the United States by Panajacheleños and, in some instances, U.S. immigration and employment. North Americans are viewed as friendly, unprejudiced toward Indians and the poor, and, above all, prosperous. Panajacheleños like and admire North Americans more than the Europeans or the Guatemalan elite who frequent the community.

Panajachel's resident priest since the early 1950s is a Spaniard of means with basically conservative political views. He is well integrated in the social elite of Panajachel, accommodative toward tourists and upwardly mobile Panajacheleños exploiting the tourism opportunities, and pragmatic in his treatment of other religions. Professionals and representatives of national agencies (e.g., physicians and nurses, schoolteachers, lawyers, extensionists) are similarly well positioned socially and often can use appointment or wealth to settle in this attractive community.

In short, exposure of Panajacheleños to non-Panajacheleños in their work, recreation, schooling, and worship has produced a political conservatism which goes beyond mere pragmatism. Few Panajacheleños need to migrate to the coast for the seasonal employment upon which so many of Guatemala's Indian communities depend to tide them over the lean months each year. The *municipios* adjacent to Panajachel are among these latter communities, and so was Panajachel earlier in this century. Residents of most other lake communities, therefore, have more frequent contact with and knowledge of coastal plantations and the broad range of experiences that migrant laborers bring back from the plantations. ORPA, the guerrilla organization operating in the southern *municipios* of Guatemala, recruits more successfully in the plantation environment. It is not surprising that the lake *municipio* which has experienced the most violence and presumably has shown the most sympathy for the guerrillas' cause is Santiago Atitlán, across the lake from Panajachel and extending down to the coastal littoral, where plantations are much more easily and of necessity frequented. All the municipios bordering the lake on the south, including San Pedro la Laguna, have experienced more turmoil and violence than municipios like Panajachel bordering the lake on the north.

The *indirect* consequence of tourism has been to improve the economic opportunities for wage employment and to heighten family income in Panajachel to a point where no Panajacheleño need beg, emigrate, or seasonally work elsewhere. The *direct* consequence of tourism is a level of satisfaction with the status quo among Panajacheleños that is probably unmatched in the region. Panajacheleños have not been inclined to bite the domestic or the foreign hands that feed them. Given Panajachel's economic history, guerrillas did not focus much energy on recruiting support in the community. The image of Panajachel as a peaceful tourist center has been protected by both sides of the conflict to a surprising degree. The limited attacks by guerrillas in 1981 and 1982 seem to have been symbolic gestures, aimed more at demonstrating the left's ability to strike at will than at destroying Panajachel's image. When the hotel was bombed, very few tourists were staying there, and none were injured. The Guatemalan army has also contributed consciously to the maintenance of this image of tranquillity. Even the notorious and ubiquitous civil patrols are not visible in Panajachel; they operate only at night between 11:00 P.M. and 5:00 A.M., when tourists are asleep.

Harvest of Violence

The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis

Edited by Robert M. Carmack

University of Oklahoma Press : Norman and London

Cuchumatán Mountains

A los Cuchumatanes

¡Oh cielo de mi Patria!

¡Oh caros horizontes!
¡Oh azules, altos montes;
oídme desde allí!
La alma mía os saluda,
cumbres de la alta sierra,
murallas de esa tierra
donde la la luz yo vi!

Del sol desfalleciente

a la última vislumbre
vuestra elevada cumbre
postrer asilo da:
cual débil esperanza

allí se desvanece
ya más y más fallece:
y ya por fin se va.

En tanto que la sombra
no embargue el firmamento
hasta el postrer momento
en vos me extasiaré;
que así como esta tarde,
de brumas despejados,
tan limpios y azulados
jamás os contemplé.

¡Cuán dulcemente triste
mi mente se extasía,
oh cara Patria mía,
en tu áspero confín!
¡cual cruza el ancho espacio,
ay Dios, que me separa
de aquella tierra cara
de América el jardín.

En alas del deseo
por esa lontananza,

mi corazón se lanza
hasta mi pobre hogar.
¡Oh, dulce madre mía
con cuanto amor te estrecho
contra el doliente pecho
que destruyó el pesar!

¡Oh, vosotros que al mundo

conmigo habéis venido,
dentro del mismo nido
y por el mismo amor;
y por el mismo seno
nutridos y abrigados,
con los mismos cuidados
arrullos y calor!

¡Amables compañeros,

a quienes la alma infancia
en su risueña estancia
jugando me enlazó
con lazo tal de flores,

que ni por ser tan bello,
quitárnosle del cuello
la suerte consiguió!
Entro en el nido amante

vuelvo al materno abrigo:
¡Oh, cuánto pecho amigo
yo siento palpitar,
en medio el grupo caro,
que en tierno estrecho nudo,
llorar tan solo pudo
llorar y más llorar.

¡Oh cielo de mi Patria!

¡Oh caros horizontes!
¡Oh ya dormidos montes
la noche ya os cubrió¡
Adiós,oh mis amigos,
dormid, dormid en calma

que las brumas en la alma
¡ay, ay! las llevo yo.

Juan Diéguez Olaverri

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WHERE THE TWO CAME TO THEIR FATHER

BEYOND THE WINDY PLACE

LIFE IN THE GUATEMALAN HIGHLANDS

by MAUD OAKES

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Chicken Thieves, Witches, and Judges: Vigilante Justice and Customary Law in Guatemala*

JIM HANDY

Abstract. This article explores the reasons for the spread of vigilante justice (*linchamientos*) in contemporary Guatemala. It investigates three specific *linchamientos* and suggests that the roots of such vigilante justice lie in a collapsing peasant economy, insecurity of all sorts, and an unravelling of the social fabric in rural communities through the militarisation of rural Guatemala.

The article also argues that *linchamientos* are caused partly by a conflict over the attempts by the Guatemalan state to impose a certain type of order in rural Guatemala. It discusses the literature on customary law, in Guatemala and in various other locales around the world, and suggests that attempts to impose a state sanctioned legal system without adequate provision for customary law has helped contribute to a perception that the legal system is illegitimate, not just incompetent.

The rule of law and respect for the judicial functions of the state are generally considered to be essential components of democratic societies. As the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB) reported in 1999, 'In a healthy democracy, the judiciary is supposed to stand with the executive and legislative branches as one of the three pillars of government …' As the IDB report went on to note, however, '[I]n most Latin American and Caribbean countries, the judicial pillar is fractured, weak and incapable of supporting the weight of its constitutional responsibilities.'[1]

One of the most important struggles in contemporary Guatemala is an attempt to invigorate a judicial system that has, in many ways, ceased to function. The incapacity of the judicial system and the general lack of respect for it is apparent in many ways: from the impunity that high-ranking military officials continue to enjoy, protecting them against prosecution for human rights abuses perpetrated in the 1980s, to dramatic increases in violent crime. Two prominent features of the debate surrounding the judicial system in

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[1] IDBAmérica, 'Special Report: Judicial Reform: Can Trust be Restored?,' Nov.–Dec. 1999, p. 1.

Guatemala are the prevalence of vigilante justice (*linchamientos*) that has permeated mostly rural Guatemala for much of the last decade and its complex relationship with demands for a reinvigoration and recognition of indigenous customary law. The *linchamientos* have prompted substantial concern about the governability of rural Guatemala and helped create a perception among much of the urban population that the countryside is a site of superstition, lawlessness, and violence. Public debate, and the reports of governmental and international agencies have understandably condemned *linchamientos*, but their assessments of the reasons for their proliferation are at best only partial, concentrating on the most obvious effects of the civil war which ended in Guatemala in 1996 and the accompanying violence or focusing on the most apparent inadequacies of the judicial apparatus in rural areas. *Linchamientos* have also helped to stoke debate about the wisdom of extending indigenous or customary law, as provided for in the peace accords signed in 1996.

This article attempts to provide a fuller explanation for *linchamientos* through two divergent perspectives. In one, the experiences of vigilante justice, customary law and various other related phenomena in diverse sites around the world are explored, with the aim of drawing some understanding from similar experiences. In the other, the tensions apparent in rural Guatemala are interrogated, using three specific *linchamientos* as starting points: the chicken thieves, witches, and judges of the title. *Linchamientos* are not an expression of customary or popular law; however, there is a complicated nexus linking *linchamientos* to both the history of and more recent demands for an invigorated system of community controlled justice. It is suggested here that relatively recent changes in the degree of community control over judicial decision making have contributed to their proliferation. *Linchamientos* are the result of a complex set of circumstances, differing in each community, but almost always related to the increasing precariousness of peasant livelihood, some fundamental concerns about security, and disgust with the ineffectiveness and corruption of judicial agents. More seriously, *linchamientos* are also provoked by a conflict between differing concepts of what judicial systems should do and who should control them. In this way, *linchamientos* and the attempts to control them are part of a more generalised struggle over the maintenance of a particular type of 'order' in rural Guatemala, one sanctioned and controlled by the state.

Chicken thieves, witches and judges

The Peace Accords signed in December 1996 did not pave the road to peace and an end to violence. Instead, a generalised economic crisis, the legacy of more than a decade of violence and social dislocation, and the presence of lots of people with lots of guns, led to accelerating rates of

criminal violence and decreasing levels of confidence in the police and judiciary. In 2001, the government estimated that there were more than two million illegal weapons in the country.[2] And, two studies by the Inter-American Development Bank indicated that Guatemala had the highest indices of violent crime in Latin America.[3] By 2001, the rector of the national university complained, 'In this country, blood and mourning are almost our daily bread.'[4]

Perhaps the most notorious example of this violence has been the prevalence of vigilante justice in the form of 'lynchings' (*linchamientos*) in rural Guatemala for much of the last decade. The number of *linchamientos* is not clear, as many go unreported and it is sometimes not clear whether incidents fit into this category.[5] The United Nations Commission for Guatemala (MINUGUA) reported 421 cases of *linchamientos* in the country, with 817 victims and 215 deaths between 1996 and the end of 2001. The situation was so prevalent that in 2001 the minister responsible for decentralisation of government services, declared that one-third of the municipalities in the country were 'ungovernable'.[6]

Linchamientos are both complex and very specific to a particular situation in a particular community. Nonetheless, we can draw a picture of a 'typical' *linchamient*o. This picture is taken from approximately 200 newspaper reports over the six years from 1996 to 2002 and from the two reports on *linchamientos* issued by MINUGUA. A *linchamiento* often takes place spontaneously after someone is caught in the prosecution of a crime or believed to have been caught in such an act. A 'mob' quickly gathers. While some mobs of more than 1000 people have been reported, usually the instigators and perpetrators of the act are much fewer in number. Usually those reported to have been instigators of the crimes were adult males over the age of 35. Victims tended to be beaten after being tied up. In cases resulting in death,

[2] *Prensa Libre*, 4 Feb. 2001, p. 2.

[3] Alejandro Gaviria and Carmen Pages, *Patterns of Crime Victimization in Latin America*, IDB Working Paper, no. 408, 1999; Juan Luis Londoño and Rodrigo Guerrero, *Violencia en América Latina; epidemiología y costos*, IDB Working Paper R-375, 1999.

[4] Cited in *Tiempos del Mundo*, 1 March 2001, p. A3.

[5] For example, Rachel Sieder describes a case in which a local tribunal consisting of elders and *alcaldes auxiliares* (deputy mayors) imprisoned two boys accused of robbery and sentenced them to a fine and permanent expulsion from the community. The mother of one boy complained to the Human Rights Ombudsman and the local actions were declared to be illegal. A detachment of over 200 police was sent to the community to free the boys. Many cases reported as *linchamientos* were similar in nature: Rachel Sieder, 'Customary Law and Local Power in Guatemala,' pp. 97–115 in Rachel Sieder (ed.), *Guatemala after the Peace Accords* (London, 1998), p. 113.

[6] MINUGUA, *Los linchamientos: un flagelo contra la dignidad humana*, 19 Dec. 2001; MINUGUA, *Los linchamientos: un flagelo que persiste*, 2002; Rocael Cardona cited in *Siglo Veintiuno*, 3 March 2001, p. 4.

victims were occasionally hanged, but more frequently they were beaten or stoned to death and often burned. Victims varied, but there appear to have been two distinct types: known criminals or troublemakers in the community, or outsiders suspected of crimes. In the case of known criminals or criminal gangs, the *linchamientos* were often not spontaneous, but occurred after substantial planning by a significant number of people in the community.

This sketch, of course, leaves hidden more than it reveals. To understand more clearly the choreography of a *linchamiento* it might prove useful to look in somewhat more detail at three specific cases: one 'typical' and two more celebrated examples.

On 21 December 2000 in the early morning hours, Diego Sabán a 24 year old resident of the aldea Montúfar, was surprised in the process of stealing chickens in the municipality of San Juan Sacatepéquez not far from Guatemala City. Sabán was tied to a tree and beaten by residents of the community; over 100 neighbours either took part or witnessed the event. The police, advised of the incident, arrived in the village, but had to negotiate with Sabán's captors for two hours before they agreed to turn him over to the officials. Sabán died from his wounds in the Roosevelt Hospital in Guatemala City at 9:00 in the morning. No charges appear to have been laid against those responsible for the *linchamiento*.[7]

While the case of Diego Sabán might be considered fairly 'typical', the two others of our title are more unusual and more celebrated. On 29 April 2000 a group of Japanese tourists was visiting the mountain town of Todos Santos Cuchumatanes in the Department of Huehuetenango. Todos Santos is a highland town with a predominantly Mam population. It is a frequent stop on the tourist trail and, in more peaceful times, it was considered to be a good starting point for days of hiking on mountain trails in the region. The town has always had a reputation for witchcraft and belief in *brujos*, which has been part of its appeal to tourists.[8] Todos Santos was hit badly by the violence in the late 1970s and early 1980s, however. After a band of guerrillas from the Guerrilla Army of the Poor visited the town late in 1980 the military descended, killing more than a dozen community leaders and forcing many others to flee into the mountains, Mexico, or Guatemala City. It was many months before the town was effectively repopulated and many people never moved back. Informants in Todos Santos freely talk about how it has had a 'bad feel' ever since, despite its apparent return to normalcy in 1983.

[7] *elPeriódico*, 23 Dec. 2000, p. 3.

[8] For earlier accounts of *brujos* and all things spiritual in Todos Santos see the two excellent books by Maude Oakes, *Beyond the Windy Place* (New York, 1951) and *The Two Crosses of Todos Santos* (Princeton, 1951).

Before the Japanese tour group arrived in Todos Santos there had been much talk, a significant amount of it promulgated by an evangelical Protestant preacher, about the need to keep on guard against witches who were the agents of Satan. Villagers were warned that Satan would come to steal their children. One of the Japanese tourists, a young woman named Tetsuo Yamahiro, was dressed in black and spent much of her visit taking photographs of a group of young children. A group of men in the community accused her of being the devil's agent, of wanting their children for body parts, and she was attacked. The bus driver attempted to intervene and they were both stoned to death. Two other tourists and two policemen who tried to intervene were also injured.

This attack provoked widespread outrage throughout Guatemala. Eleven people were accused of being involved and six were eventually brought to trial; three, two men and a woman, were to be tried for double murder. While the killings appear not to have been widely supported in the town, state authorities still believed it necessary to hold the trials in Quetzaltenango, rather than risk a violent incident in support of those charged if they were to hold them in the more accessible departmental capital of Huehuetenango. At the time of writing, no sentence had been passed.[9]

If the fate of Tetsuo Yamahiro seems a bit surreal once one leaves the mist covered hills of Todos Santos, the last hours of Alvaro Hugo Martínez, Guatemala's best known *linchamiento* victim, seem to be equally crafted from myth. Hugo Martínez was the justice of the peace in the small town of Senahú, Alta Verapaz. The municipality of Senahú has 169 aldeas with about 60,000 people. The municipal capital has around 4,000 residents, but often appears almost empty when residents are off in their fields. Hugo Martínez's life in Senahú reads like any portrait of a quiet man living a lonely life. He had been sent to Senahú six years earlier, when he was 45, as part of a government plan to make 'justice' more accessible by placing more officials in rural areas.[10] No relatives accompanied him; on weekends he would return to Cobán, 118 kilometres away, to visit his family. He lived in a room in the *juzgado* (court house), ate his meals in a local *comedor*, was pleasant and agreeable with everyone, but was friends with no one. Those who would speak about his work suggested he was conscientious and careful in his decisions. Despite the routine, or perhaps because of it, he seemed to like his life in the municipality. He often commented to his wife on the weekend visits in Cobán how peaceful the town was with good people.[11]

[9] Among numerous reports see *elPeriódico*, 25 Sept. 2000, p. 4.

[10] Victor Ferrigno, 'Derecho indígena: debate jurídico o controversia política?' pp. 105–48, in Jorge Solares (ed.) *Pluridad jurídica en el umbral del siglo* (Guatemala, 2000).

[11] See especially, 'Retrato del juez según el pueblo donde murió,' *elPeriódico*, 19 March 2001, p. 6; and 'Senahú vive calma sin paz,' *Siglo Veintiuno*, 15 March 2001, p. 8.

The final disruption to Hugo Martínez's peaceful routine began with an event far removed from his office. On 8 March 2000 Pedro Cacao roped an eight year old girl as if she were a cow and dragged her behind his pickup truck for a few metres. This was the last straw for many of the inhabitants. While the town might have seemed peaceful to the judge, it appeared otherwise to many residents. They complained that the dirt road out of the town was often impassable because of assaults, to the point that a couple of weeks after the *linchamiento* an ambulance rushing someone to the hospital in Cobán was stopped and the inhabitants robbed. The municipality was the scene of frequent robberies and assaults. When neighbours took Cacao – who was considered to be a town bully and criminal – to the judge, the judge ordered him released for lack of evidence; although he did arrange to have Cacao pay Q150 in medical costs for the girl.

People in the community were outraged. A mob of between 200 and 1,000 people went to Cacao's abode with the intent of confronting him, but he had already fled. They then approached the *juzgado*, demanding to know why the judge had let him go. Rather than responding to their questions, (quite possibly because of a problem with language – the judge did not speak Q'eqchi), the judge refused to speak to the crowd and locked himself in the *juzgado*. When the mob began to throw stones at the building, the judge fired at them through the door, wounding three people. After 13 hours of attacking the juzgado through the night, the crowd gained entry to the building at ten in the morning, beat the judge to death and then burned him. The three injured men were charged in the crime, but no one else.[12]

Despite some discrepancies in the newspaper accounts, most of the above seems to be agreed upon. However, the 'spontaneous' mob seems to have been carefully created; before the attack on Cacao's home, a religious radio station in the community had sent out messages calling on all male residents of the aldeas to gather in the municipal capital at six in the afternoon without their wives or children. No one would admit to knowing who was responsible for these messages. While the attack was going on, the 'mob' cut off the access road to the town, cut the phone wires to the town, and according to one report, dumped a load of paving stones in front of the *juzgado* to be used in the attack. In the months following the attack, there were some rumours, though scantly substantiated, that those responsible had headed a car theft ring that Hugo Martínez was attempting to close down.

[12] *Prensa Libre*, 14 March 2001, p. 3; *elPeriódico*, 14 March 2001, p. 3; *Siglo Veintiuno*, 14 March 2001, p. 3. *Siglo* says two hundred *vecinos* were involved, *Prensa Libre*, about a thousand. *elPeriódico* says that the original perpetrator was a man named Pedro Pop and that he was charged with attempting to kidnap a four year old. *Siglo* says two people were injured by the judge.

There were also serious questions about the response of the authorities. The local police sub-station was destroyed and the agents disarmed to prevent them from intervening. However, the judge had been able to send word to Cobán pleading for assistance some ten hours before he was killed. Nonetheless, authorities, including police forces and representatives of MINUGUA, did not enter the town until 1:30 in the afternoon; some three hours after the judge was killed. The family of the judge subsequently sued the police and the ministry of government, arguing that the killing could have been prevented if the police had done their job. The police responded saying that 'we couldn't enter (the town) shooting the people that were in the barricades, creating a new Panzos (the site of one of the first military massacres in Alta Verapaz in the late 1970s) in Senahú'. Many people accused the police of being frightened of the mob.[13]

'*A scourge to human dignity*'

What are we to make of these incidents? What can they tell us about the tensions that exist in rural Guatemala and about the possibilities for reconstruction and reconciliation after the violence of the 1970s and 1980s? There is no lack of opinion concerning the causes of *linchamientos* and how to deal with them.

In the Guatemalan press and in the publications of various social and academic institutions in Guatemala, five, sometimes linked, explanations prevail: the *linchamientos* are a result of the perversity, illiteracy and poverty of rural inhabitants; the perpetrators are driven by the inefficiency of the police and inspired by the lack of punishment for their crimes; they are an attempt to challenge the authority of the state; they are the result of the war and military counterinsurgency. A small number of people suggest that the *linchamientos* are the result of the inappropriate nature of the judicial structure in Guatemala.

The least thoughtful approach to the *linchamientos* is perhaps the most common one. This approach suggests that people in the countryside engage in *linchamientos* because of their inability to understand the complexity or finer points of the Guatemalan legal system. According to a lower level judge in Santa Cruz del Quiché,[14] they want immediate gratification, demand unreasonable punishments for minor crimes, expect decisions without adequate proof, and believe that when judges fine defendants they are accepting bribes. While aspects of her argument are no doubt true, there is little there to help us understand why rural inhabitants 'fail' to understand the legal system.

[13] See 'Linchamiento de juez fue planificado,' *elPeriódico*, 27 March 2001, p. 6; 'Linchamiento de juez pudo evitarse,' *Prensa Libre*, 15 March 2001, p. 8; *Siglo Veintiuno*, 15 March 2001, p. 8.

[14] Cited in *elPeriódico*, 4 Oct. 2000, p. 4.

Most telling was her prescription for ending *linchamientos*; rural residents need to be both bullied into accepting justice, through the threat of severe and immediate punishment for *linchamientos*, and 'educated' to be proper citizens who accept the law and its agents. The demand for ready punishment for perpetrators of *linchamientos* is the most common response to the crime, taking central place in the MINUGUA reports as well. While few would disagree with the need to punish some of those involved in the *linchamientos*, this approach seems particularly counterproductive. It echoes both a perception of rural areas as sites of superstition and barbarism that need to be tamed, and the need to shape people to the institutions meant to serve or control them, not the reverse.

This particular view of the countryside is not unique to Guatemala. Orin Starn argues that the same thing happened in Peru after the creation of peasant civil patrols (*rondas campesinas*) and the perception was equally false. He argues that, 'The geography of imagination made it easy for unsympathetic city dwellers to sensationalize or dismiss the rondas as a sign of the ignorance and brutality of the Andean peasantry.'[15]

Other interpretations of the *linchamientos* see them as a challenge to the authority of the state. This is primarily the approach of the national police and the government. In October 2000 the director of the National Police argued that the *linchamientos* are the work of people who 'disrespect the authorities and are working against the sovereignty of the state', those responsible have 'fallen into acts of rebellion against the state'.[16]

The third explanation for the *linchamientos* is much more subtle and linked to history, at least recent history. This explanation focuses on the role of the violence of the 1970s and 1980s, and especially of the counter-insurgency implemented by the military. Some argue that the violence stems primarily from the military's policy of forcing village residents to engage in military supervised acts of brutality which are reflected in the ceremonial aspects of *linchamientos*. Many point to one famous incident in which a suspected guerrilla leader was subjected to 18 hours of public torture while residents of the community were forced to take part. As an editorial by Margarita Carrera made clear, 'The origin of the linchamientos, from the historical point of view, is clear. It stems from the terrorist practices of the Army during the internal war.'[17]

[15] MINUGUA, *Un flagelo contra la dignidad humana*; Orin Starn, *Nightwatch: The Politics of Protest in the Andes* (Durham, NC, 1999), p. 107.

[16] *Prensa Libre*, 9 Oct. 2000, p. 10.

[17] 'Origen de los linchamientos,' *Prensa Libre*, 23 March 2001, p. 16; see also, Interview with Alejandro Rodríguez, research director for the Instituto de Estudios Comparadas en Ciencias Penales, in *Prensa Libre*, 18 March 2001, p. 6; and Adrián Zapata, 'Los raices contrainsurgentes de los linchamientos,' *Siglo Veintiuno*, 21 March 2001, p. 10.

Others who blame the military focus more attention on the civil patrols. At the height of the military violence, 900,000 men in highland Guatemala were organised into civil patrols controlled by the military. They were supposed to target suspicious actions and actors, keep guerrillas out of the rural communities, and assist the military in their operations. In the process, civil patrols acted in very different ways in different parts of the country. In some areas men were clearly organised reluctantly, dissolved the patrols as soon as they could, and attempted to do as little harm as they could while they existed. In others, the patrols, while established and controlled to some extent by the military, became true village organisations reflecting a reinforced sense of community and village autonomy. In many, however, the patrols were controlled by brutal men who used their position for their own ends and to terrify the community, or the patrols reflected continuing divisions within the community, but were now allowed brutal and officially sanctioned means for dealing with these divisions. Many, especially MINUGUA, see the hand of the former civil patrol leaders in the *linchamientos*, Finn Stepputat argues that, at least in the more isolated areas, the military encouraged the leaders of the civil patrols to act as 'wild men' of the frontier. As the area has been brought under civil control once again, they are now treated as savages.[18] We will return to this question of the frontier below.

There is much to recommend this argument and the role of civil patrols certainly deserves more investigation. There are some difficulties with this as an explanation, however. In some instances *linchamientos* involved the active participation of hundreds of citizens, far more than could be easily mobilised by civil patrol leaders, no matter how influential. In addition, some of these attacks occurred in communities in which the civil patrols were mostly ceremonial, engaged very rarely in violent actions, and were quick to dissolve once permitted. This includes Todos Santos where more than 500 people are reported to have taken part in the killing of Tetsuo Yamahiro and the bus driver. Some point to the large numbers of *linchamientos* in Alta Verapaz and El Quiché, departments that were brutally hit during the war and in which civil patrols were particularly important, as proof of the impact of the war. However, this doesn't seem to explain such departments as Totonicapán, eighth on the list in the number of *linchamientos* according to the MINUGUA survey, in which the impact of the war, at least in terms of direct violence and the importance of civil patrols, was much less apparent than in other departments with fewer *linchamientos*. Even in regions with many active and violent civil patrols they often seem to have little to do with *linchamientos*.

[18] 'At the Frontiers of the Modern State in Post War Guatemala,' pp. 127–40, in A. Arce and N. Long (eds.), *Anthropology, Development, and Modernities* (London, 2000).

Simone Remijnse's superb study of the civil patrols in the municipality of Joyabaj, El Quiché, one of the municipalities most famous for civil patrol violence, suggests that they had little direct involvement in the several lynchings that have occurred in the community since 1996.[19]

The most complete discussions of *linchamientos* were the two reports published by the United Nations Commission for Guatemala in December 2000 and early in 2002, entitled, '*Un flagelo contra la dignidad humana*' and '*Un flagelo que persiste*' respectively. These reports echo many of the interpretations signalled above, concentrating much of their attention on civil patrol leaders and the absence of effective punishment for those involved in the *linchamientos*. However, there is evidence of a substantially more refined approach in the second report, which also discusses the impact of marginalisation, poverty, and illiteracy in fostering the *linchamientos*, reporting that almost all of the cases they investigated occurred in municipalities with indices of Human Development below and levels of poverty and illiteracy significantly above the national average. The second report also comments more extensively on discontent with judicial authorities.[20] To assess the value of these explanations for the prevalence of *linchamientos* it might be useful to explore many of these concerns – and to suggest new ones – through a fuller discussion of the three cases mentioned above.

Chicken thieves and the dilemmas of a persecuted peasantry

The case of Diego Sabán, our 24 year old chicken thief, is typical in many ways: the perpetrator was caught in the act of committing a fairly minor crime, many people were involved in the *linchamiento*, the punishment went on for a long time in public, the police needed to engage in a long negotiation to have the prisoner released into their custody, and no charges were laid against those involved. It is perhaps useful to examine each one of these aspects to help us understand both the reasons for the *linchamientos* and their relationship to the implementation of justice in Guatemala.

First, not all *linchamientos* are the result of 'petty crime'; many are reactions against violent acts, often murder, by notoriously dangerous people in the community. A day before the killing of Sabán, a young 18 year old named Francisco Caal was killed in the village of Chipac of San Pedro Carcha, Alta Verapaz. Caal was murdered after killing and robbing three men who were travelling from the community to buy cardamon. Caal was described as having been responsible for frequent assaults on the road into town. In March 2001 two people were burned to death by a crowd of over 400 people in Chisec,

[19] Simone Remijnse, *Memories of Violence: Civil Patrols and the Legacy of Conflict in Joyabaj, Guatemala* (Amsterdam, 2002), esp. 223–5.

[20] MINUGUA, *Un flagelo que persiste*, esp. pp. 3–4, 12.

Alta Verapaz after they killed a local merchant and robbed him of 500 Quetzales (less than $100). In November 2000 a 'mob' hung a man and his son who were responsible for stabbing to death another local man in the *aldea* La Cumbre, San Gaspar Ichil, Huehuetenango. In this latter case, with the support of the local *alcalde auxiliar* (deputy mayor), the men were tried by residents of the *aldea* before the killing.[21]

Nonetheless, one aspect of *linchamientos* that disturbs commentators is the seemingly disproportionate nature of the punishment in relation to the crime. People have been killed for robbing peasants of corn, tools, small amounts of money and virtually every imaginable kind of livestock.[22] In this regard it appears to be worthwhile to keep in mind two things: the desperate poverty of much of the population of rural Guatemala, and the increase in criminality and robbery throughout Guatemala, very often in areas in which strong community structures had meant very little crime until recently.

According to recent government, World Bank, United Nations, and InterAmerican Development Bank estimates, between 75 and 86 per cent of the rural population of Guatemala lives in poverty and over 67 per cent of indigenous children suffer from chronic malnutrition. The virtual elimination of Guatemala's cotton harvest since the late 1970s and the collapse of coffee prices in the last four years, have meant that opportunities for paid agricultural labour have been substantially reduced. Earlier successes for cultivators of small plots in the highlands in new horticultural products have proven to be very difficult to maintain as markets are insecure, the costs of necessary chemical inputs increase dramatically, and the land suffers from both exhaustion and chemical dependence.[23] Figures for increasing 'petty' crime in rural Guatemala are difficult to encounter. Nonetheless, the increasing violence and crime in much of rural Guatemala is obvious in any number of ways: assaults on highways and back roads and violent robberies in small towns are everyday occurrences.

The *linchamientos* cannot be understood without appreciating this sense of desperation. Explorations of somewhat similar practices in other parts of the world also help explain the importance of effective punishment for robberies. The famous *rondas campesinas* in the Peruvian highlands were established during the 1970s and 1980s in the face of increased common

[21] *Prensa Libre*, 31 March 2001, p. 12; *Prensa Libre*, 18 Nov. 2000; p. 12.

[22] See for example, *Prensa Libre*, 11 Nov. 2000, p. 12; *Prensa Libre*, 16 Oct. 2000, p. 12; *La Hora*, 11 Feb. 2002; *La Hora*, 28 Dec. 2001.

[23] World Bank, *Report no. 24221-GU; Poverty in Guatemala*, Feb. 2003, p. 54. SEGEPLAN, *Política de desarollo social y población*, June 2002; *Guatemala: la fuerza incluyente del desarrollo humano*, United Nations in Guatemala 2000, p. 292; Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil, *Equidad, justicia social, combate a la pobreza y desarrollo social*, Guatemala 2002; *La Hora*, 11 April 2002; *Realidad socio-económica de Guatemala: con énfasis en la situación del niño y la mujer*, UNICEF, 1994.

crime and apparent abandonment by state law enforcement authorities. They evolved into complex community organisations, with differing relations to both the police and the military, in different parts of Peru. Orin Starn reports that one of the major reasons for the creation of the *rondas* was to stop rustling. He estimated that in one community the *rondas* meant each family gained an average of five animals because of the virtual end to cattle thefts. This had a dramatic impact on peasant livelihoods.[24] Vigilante justice groups, called *Sungusungu*, in Tanzania and eastern Uganda were created partly to guard against an increase in cattle rustling.[25] José de Souza Martins, in an argument derived from his study of lynchings in Brazil in the 1980s, suggests that the explanation for this hyper violent response to petty crime derives partly from the perceived consequences of the crime. He says, 'Lynchers see theft of a poor person's possible gain as a crime against a person, and ultimately against a family's survival. It is not a crime against possession but against being.'[26] Similarly, Andres Guerrero suggests that lynchings in Ecuador are the result of a complex integration of indigenous communities into a neo-liberal economic order, in which lynchings have become 'a perverse confrontation where a right to kill responds [to] the liberal policy of let them die'.[27]

These examples seem to fit well Michel Foucault's assertion that 'popular justice' sought to fit punishment to the consequences of the crime and often exhibited a heightened sense of betrayal when the crime was directed inwards towards one's poor compatriots.[28] Or, as one member of the civil patrols in Peru expressed it, 'No one dreamed the rondas would ever work … This is the clean justice that we have never had.'[29] There is, however, a significant step from the relatively mild punishments usually meted out in the Peruvian case and the much more violent response in Guatemala. We are left uncertain as to the extent to which Guatemalan lynchings are an expression of 'popular justice'.

As in the case of Sabán, *linchamientos* are also clearly a response to unease in the face of increased crime and official ineptitude in dealing with it. Simone Remijnse discusses a series of *linchamientos* which occurred in an *aldea* of Joyabaj designed to end the predations of a gang of crooks operating in the region. Despite numerous complaints, the authorities refused to investigate

[24] Starn, *Nightwatch*, p. 95.
[25] Ray Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 35–6, 48.
[26] 'Lynchings – Life by a Thread: Street Justice in Brazil, 1979–1988,' pp. 21–32 in Martha K. Huggins (ed.), *Vigilantism and the State in Modern Latin America: Essays on Extralegal Violence* (New York, 1991), esp. p. 27.
[27] Andrés Guerrero, 'Los linchamientos en las comundidades indígenas (Ecuador): la política perversa de una modernidad marginal?,' pp. 463–89 in *Bulletin d l'Institut Français d'Etudes Andines*, 29: 3 (2000), esp. p. 464.
[28] *Discipline and Punish* (New York, 1977), p. 83, 92.
[29] Cited in Starn, *Nightwatch*, p. 104.

the criminal organisation. Finally, five members of the gang were killed. After the lynchings, a statement was drawn up giving the authorities 15 days to take action against the rest of the gang or 'the people will continue to enforce justice'. After the first lynching in the community following the peace accords, that of some visiting *ladinos* who had killed a bus driver, Reminjse reports that while people often spoke of the lynching with horror, many approved of it, suggesting, 'They had showed the criminals what they were capable of and were convinced that it was the lynching that kept crime at bay.'[30] Studies in other areas of Guatemala have similarly reported general support for the *linchamientos*. One survey in 1998 suggested that 69 per cent of the population and 76 per cent of the indigenous population approved of *linchamientos* 'as a form of justice'.[31] MINUGUA reported that small robberies were the major motive for *linchamientos* and that discontent with the actions of police and other authorities was the third most commonly stated justification for lynchings. One of the respondents to the MINUGUA study put the matter succinctly: 'Before, the law of linchamientos didn't exist, but now, as justice doesn't function and there are many robbers, it is justified.'[32]

As in Sabán's killing, *linchamientos* are often very public affairs, dragged on for many hours. This seems to meet a number of needs. First, the involvement of the community – either formally as in the case of La Cumbre or more often informally through the, at least, tacit approval granted through observation – both heightens the 'popular' aspect of the crime and binds the community to the act. This makes it more difficult for the community to turn against the perpetrators at a later date and may, at least in some instances, strengthen community ties, as Starn argues the *rondas* did in Peru. There is also clearly an element of spectacle to the *linchamientos*; the punishment which is often brutal, of long duration, and involves the active involvement of large numbers of people in the community, fits quite remarkably Foucault's famous discussion of the execution with which he opens his *Discipline and Punish*. Quite clearly one aspect of the *linchamientos* is the reappearance of 'punishment as spectacle'. The reason for the need for punishment as spectacle in contemporary highland Guatemala is complicated. It seems fitting to remind ourselves that Foucault believed that the shift of punishment from 'festival' to 'school' was an important part of the extension of state power and the construction of hegemony in modern Europe. The failure of this shift in Guatemala must say something about the limitations of state power in contemporary Guatemala. As Foucault suggests, it also says much

[30] *Memories of Violence*, pp. 223–5.
[31] Cited in World Bank, *Report No. 24221-GU; Poverty in Guatemala*, p. 152.
[32] *Un flagelo que persiste*, pp. 10; 4, 8.

about the inability of the Guatemalan state to 'order discipline' in rural Guatemala.[33]

The limitations of state power were also demonstrated by the need for state authorities to negotiate the release of Sabán over a number of hours. This also fits a pattern; on the few occasions that police have convinced 'mobs' not to continue with *linchamientos*, they have done so through a complicated process of negotiation with those involved, rather than a simple demand that they obey laws, as one might expect. They have been much more successful in doing so in large urban centres or rural regions close to Guatemala City. Effective state power clearly dissipates as one retreats from Guatemala City.

The limited power of state representatives also helps explain why few of those charged with committing *linchamientos* have been convicted. Despite numerous calls from judges, the MINUGUA and elements of the government for firm action against those people responsible for *linchamientos* in order to prevent their spread, by September 2000 only 77 cases had been brought to the courts; 17 were ruled on by lower court judges. Seven were absolved, ten sentenced. Of these ten, two were resolved on appeal, six were still in appeal, and only two had their final appeals heard and were convicted.[34]

In many instances, those arrested for involvement in *linchamientos* have been released by mobs who have threatened both police and judges. In the case of the *linchamientos* that took place in Chisec, for example, four of the people believed to have led the killing were arrested later in September. Residents of the community then took prisoner three other youths they accused of crimes. The residents demanded that representatives of MINUGUA, the Public Ministry, the human rights ombudsman and members of the municipality negotiate with them over the release of the delinquents. One of their demands was the release of the four people arrested earlier. The three delinquents were only released after 35 hours of negotiations.[35]

This fits a more general pattern in parts of rural Guatemala. Rural residents have prevented police from carrying out their functions on numerous occasions; in one well-publicised incident, eleven police agents were hurt and seven patrol cars destroyed when police attempted to engage in raids looking for illegal weapons in Ixchiguán, San Marcos.[36] On other occasions,

[33] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 8, 111, 272. See also Anton Blok, 'The Symbolic Vocabulary of Public Executions,' pp. 31–54, in June Starr and Jane F. Collier (eds.), *History and Power in the Study of the Law* (Ithaca, NY, 1989).

[34] MINUGUA, *Un flagelo contra la dignidad humana.*

[35] *elPeriódico*, 23 Sept. 2000, p. 3; 25 Sept. 2000, p. 4.

[36] *Siglo Vientiuno*, 28 April 2001, p. 7; *Prensa Libre*, 19 Oct. 2000, p. 2; *Siglo Vientiuno*, 19.

police have themselves been attacked. In September 2000, two police agents in Fray Bartolomé, Alta Verapaz were taken prisoner by a mob when they were involved in an accident in the town. When they attempted to return to their substation they were removed by force and the police station was ransacked.[37]

One common thread, both throughout Guatemala and in other locales in which *linchamientos* have occurred, is what appears to be a generalised distrust of the national police. Robert Carmack points out, in his study of Momostenango, that the national police located in the community were seen to be in conflict with municipal police and were generally resented.[38] *Rondas campesinas* in Peru were in fairly constant conflict with police and on more than one occasion police were 'arrested' by *ronderos* when they ventured into their communities.[39] Numerous other examples could be provided; resentment of national police in Guatemala and elsewhere is clearly not just a function of their perceived corruption and inefficiency. It relates as well to a perception of their illegitimacy.

Witches, the trade in body parts, and modern legal systems

So far our discussion of the fate of Diego Sabán has not strayed very far from the characterisation of *linchamientos* presented in the MINUGUA reports: focussing on issues of poverty and the ineffectiveness of the judicial apparatus. Our other two cases suggest deeper and somewhat more complex issues surrounding *linchamientos*.

What are we to make of the apparently bizarre killing of Tetuso Yamahiro? It is not the only incident of its kind; two American and a number of Guatemalan women were beaten and stoned in small towns in Guatemala under the mistaken impression that they were there to steal children. Fear of child theft, of *robachicos*, is a constant concern in many rural areas. Certainly part of the story here is a function of the folk belief in the trade in children's body parts. This belief is widespread in Guatemala, as it is in many other parts of Latin America.[40] Nancy Scheper-Hughes in her wonderful discussion of the life of poor migrants in the northeastern Brazilian town of Bom Jésus, attempts to explain the reason for the belief's persistence there. In Bom Jésus it seems to have been a personification both of the way in which the sugar fazendas used up the bodies of those who worked there

[37] *elPeriódico*, 23 September 2000, p. 3; *La Hora*, 22 Oct. 2001.
[38] *Rebels of Highland Guatemala: The Quiche-Mayas of Momostenango* (Norman, 1995), p. 284.
[39] Starn, *Nightwatch*, p. 66; Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-Rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980–2000* (Amsterdam, 2002), pp. 207–8.
[40] See for example the discussion of robachicos in Daniel Wilkinson, *Silence on the Mountains: Stories of Terror, Betrayal, and Forgetting in Guatemala* (Boston, 2002).

and of the medicalisation of poverty and hunger as a strategy to make poverty an individual failing. It is given substance by the frequent campaigns to intern street kids in the FEDEM institutions and the fact that many kids are thought not to emerge from them.[41]

In the Guatemalan case, as in Bom Jésus, the belief is an extrapolation of real threats to children. Certainly children are at risk in Guatemala. Street children in Guatemala City have been the target of police and death squads for many years. Attempts to prosecute those believed responsible have had only very limited successes. More generally, while there is no evidence of a body parts trade, there has been significant evidence of a live body trade, as fraudulent adoptions and illicit orphanages seek to tap the lucrative market for children for couples in Europe and North America, or young girls are stolen for the sex trade in both Latin and North America. Guatemala provides more babies per capita for international adoption than any other country in the world. According to the NGO Casa Alianza, in 2002 there were 2,993 adoptions from Guatemala, costing in total US $59 million.[42] A number of countries have either halted adoptions from Guatemala or required DNA tests on children and their mothers to prove that those giving up children for adoption are the biological parent. Mothers' fears concerning the stealing of babies can be seen as an only slightly exaggerated response to a real, although limited, threat and, perhaps, a not unreasonable belief – highlighted by occasional newspaper reports about the costs of 'replacement organs' in rich countries – that the rich are consuming everything else in the world; why would they not seek to commodify children and their bodies as well?[43]

But fear for their children was only part of the reason for the killing of Tetsuo Yamahiro; she was also branded as a witch. The linking of witchcraft and a trade in child's body parts is a seemingly common phenomenon. Witches are often portrayed, as Ralph Austen suggests, as 'insatiably hungry: they seek to 'eat' others by imbibing their reproductive powers in the form of corpses, children, sexual fluids, etc'.[44] Witchcraft is also often marked by the perception of an exaggeratedly evil commercialisation, of selling what should never be sold. But dealing with suspected witches is immensely difficult for official legal systems. Modern legal systems operate on a basis

[41] Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (Berkeley, 1992).

[42] Casa Alianza, rapid response, 20 Jan. 2004.

[43] See for example the story of a woman who was rescued from a linchamiento in Feb. 2002 after attempting to steal five children and cross the border into Mexico. *Prensa Libre*, 23 Feb. 2002; *La Hora*, 17 June 2002.

[44] Ralph Austen, 'The Moral Economy of Witchcraft: An Essay in Comparative History' pp. 89–110 in Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (eds.), *Modernity and its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa* (Chicago, 1993), esp. p. 91.

of proof and rational expectation of harm. Under this belief, official legal systems not only fail, in the minds of many rural inhabitants in Guatemala and elsewhere, to address adequately fears of witchcraft, but often 'mistakenly' charge those who act against witches with crimes. This becomes part of a generalised phenomenon when legal constructs are imposed from the outside on different cultures: a disagreement over what is objectionable behaviour and what is a crime. Thus in colonial Africa and India, the colonial state was branded as a 'friend' to witches because it refused to act in what were considered to be clear cases of witchcraft and often persecuted those who brought charges against witches.[45] In cases where modern, 'rational' states have been forced to deal with witchcraft as a crime, they have often had to jump through complicated legal hoops to do so; thus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, republican Brazil attempted to prosecute 'witches' for practising medicine without a license.[46]

In contrast with official judicial systems, rural areas in Guatemala (as elsewhere) often perceive witchcraft to be a major concern, a tension addressed frequently in customary law. This has a long history; Robert Carmack reports how in Momostenango the community effectively resisted national control over the community's judicial concerns, especially as these often included charges of witchcraft.[47] In regions as widespread as rural India, Tanzania, and southern Chiapas, dealing with suspected cases of witchcraft and identifying witches has been an important part of the functioning of customary law, and used as both an element of oppression and a means for fostering harmony in rural communities.[48] As in the widespread concern over *robachicos*, fears of witchcraft seem to be especially prevalent in parts of rural Guatemala today. This, too, reflects the history of similar concerns elsewhere. Studies of witch hunts in Europe, especially in Britain, suggest that the increased concern with witches was prompted by tensions in rural communities precipitated by economic and social change brought about by increasing reliance on a cash economy and heightened differentiation in wealth within the community.[49] Ralph Austen has argued that

[45] Abrahams, *Vigiliant Citizens*, p. 25.

[46] Dain Borges, 'Healing and Mischief: Witchcraft in Brazilian Law and Literature, 1890–1920,' in Ricardo D. Salvatore, Carlos Aguirre and Gilbert Joseph (eds.), *Crime and Punishment in Latin America* (Durham, NC, 2000), pp. 181–210.

[47] *Rebels of Highland*, p. 150.

[48] Ajay Skaria, 'Women, witchcraft and gratuitous violence in western India,' *Past and Present*, 155, May 1997, p. 111; June Nash, *Mayan Visions: The Quest for Autonomy in an Age of Globalization* (London, 2001), p. 60; and various articles in Jean and John Comaroff, *Modernity and its Malcontents*. For a discussion of this in the European context see Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (London, 1996).

[49] See for example, A. McFarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (New York, 1970); Ian Whyte, *Scotland before the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1995).

concern about the increased commodification of elements that had previously not-been entirely subject to market forces, leading to charges of witchcraft, was heightened by the prevailing belief in many places in Africa that the accumulation of new wealth must come at the expense of others.[50] A similar fear was identified by Michael Taussig; the pact with the devil, the *sabbat*, that allowed some people to accumulate wealth, threatened community both because it led to the impoverishment of some and because it was prompted by the commodification of elements that had been previously controlled by complex community social relations. As Taussig argues, this is neither unique to Latin America nor to the modern era. 'When Luther ascribed usury and early manifestations of capital to the workings of the devil', Taussig asserts, 'he was merely giving vent to the outrage and pain that many persons felt toward the flowering of the profit motive and the subjugation of social relations to the economic laws of commodities. For them this was certainly not a natural phenomenon'.[51]

Rural Guatemala is generally impoverished. Nonetheless, some community members appear to be accumulating significant levels of extra capital, usually through remittances or because they themselves have travelled and worked in the north. At the same time, market considerations are increasingly predominant for rural communities, affecting control over factors which previously had significant community constraints over their use and disposal. This is especially true in the case of land, as a so-called 'market assisted' agrarian reform, favoured by the World Bank and other lending agencies and negotiated as part of the peace accords, slowly penetrates rural Guatemala. In such a context, it is not surprising that concern over witchcraft and inappropriate commodification should be so prevalent. This is occurring at the very time that customary means for controlling tensions in rural communities are severely constrained.

The case of Tetsuo Yamahiro also suggests a refinement of Finn Stepputat's comment about the frontier. Ray Abrahams agrees that, '[v]igilantism is a frontier phenomenon', but suggests that we need to understand the frontier in a broader context than the borders of the state or even the distance from state institutions. Frontiers also include ethnic divisions and the borders between different cultural conceptualisations of what the state should do. Understood in this way, the 'frontiers' that help foster the spread of *linchamientos* in Guatemala include not just those that determined 'marginal' areas in the ways described by the MINUGUA report, but those that delineate regions not yet, and perhaps not ever to be, inculcated with the values that predominate in the rest of the society, values

[50] Austen, 'Moral Economy of Witchcraft,' p. 104.
[51] Michael Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (Chapel Hill, 1980), p. 29.

reflected in the judicial system. As Ray Abrahams has described those who developed *Sungusungu* in Tanzanias, '[v]illagers who are commonly situated at the edge of the state and at the bottom of the political heap'.[52]

Deliver us from justice

An analysis of the killing of our third victim, Alvaro Hugo Martínez, the justice of the peace in Senahú, Alta Verapaz, compels us to delve further into tensions in rural Guatemala and to explore in greater depth the conflicts between the official judicial apparatus in Guatemala and concepts of customary justice. Doing so suggests concerns that demands for a greater extension of the national judicial apparatus as a necessary and effective method for controlling *linchamientos* might be misplaced.

Alvaro Hugo Martínez was not the first judge to be attacked by a mob in Guatemala. However, he was the first one to be killed and his death prompted much debate about the issue of justice and *linchamiento*s. The head of the union of judges in the Supreme Court, Amada Ramírez de Arias, was perhaps the most alarmist, arguing that the killing was part of a generalised campaign against judges designed to force them from the countryside. Some were more restrained; one judge in what was certainly an example of understatement, said, 'I think that for the first time people will be aware that being a judge in this country is not an easy thing.' Still the prevailing opinion fitted well with Ramírez de Arias's perception. Former president and human rights ombudsman, Ramiro de León Carpio, called for the death penalty for all those convicted of *linchamientos*. Perhaps the most cynical response came from former military dictator Efraín Ríos Montt, himself hiding behind his congressional immunity to avoid having to face charges of genocide for his role in the violence of the early 1980s, who argued that it was '*impunity* that allowed them to take justice into their own hands' and echoed de Leon Carpio's call for the death penalty.[53]

Other responses to the killing of Hugo Martínez were more thoughtful and might begin to help us discuss the relationship between *linchamientos* and customary law in Guatemala. In a particularly insightful editorial, Franco Sandoval argued that the judge was not the victim of the enraged people of Senahú, but rather that his killing was the sad product of the imposition of one system of justice that was alienated from and alienating for the majority of people: 'The judge was the victim of a system of justice that was cold, bound by procedure and weighted with books. In this sense, one can say he killed himself.' Sandoval pointed out that one reason for the judge's death was his inability to explain his actions to the people in their own language,

[52] *Vigilant Citizens*, p. 3, 25. [53] *Siglo Veintiuno*, 14 March 2001, p. 2, for Ríos Montt.

Q'eqchí. He argued that there needed to be an understanding that 'along with a system of justice with a small j, there exists La Justicia, a concept that requires diverse means of expression.'[54] It seems to me that Sandoval's argument, roundly condemned in Guatemala when it was written, begins to help us explore the role of customary law, and its conflict with national judicial apparatus, in the *linchamientos*.

Evening prayers for French peasants used to beseech the lord, 'Deliver us from justice'. In a phrase this captures some of the ambiguous character of judicial systems. A properly functioning and 'blind' judicial system is an important part of the development of effective modern democracies. Even a cursory understanding of historic struggles in Latin America makes it clear that one focus of attention and concern for 'common' folk has been forging judicial systems that function as they were rhetorically meant to function and not according to the whims of the locally powerful and dominant. The very limited success enjoyed by workers, peasants, indigenous, and women in finding courts and judicial systems that matched rhetoric to words apparently did not prevent many from continuing to try to use the legal system in the prescribed ways.[55]

On the other hand, courts and judicial systems have always been partly about constructing hegemony, building the powers of the state and, according to Foucault, 'entangling' more popular forms of justice. Foucault suggests, '… my hypothesis is not so much that the court is the natural expression of popular justice, but rather that its historical function is to ensnare it, to control it, to entangle it, by reinscribing it within institutions that are typical of the state apparatus'.[56] Not just the functioning of courts, but the definition of a 'crime' and the nature of punishment were frequently constructed in opposition to popular conceptions of what they should entail. Crimes became transgressions against the state and punishment became a constant lesson in the state's perception of the nature of crime.[57] This is not restricted to France or to Foucault's particular sensibilities; Ian Whyte has argued that in Scotland until the middle of the eighteenth century, 'much of the law … had evolved from within communities, tailor-made to fit their needs'. But after 1747, the focus of the law became that of a systematised

[54] '¿Quién mató al juez de Senahú?,' *elPeriódico*, 24 March 2001, p. 9.

[55] See Charles Walker, 'Crime in the Time of the Great Fear: Indians and the State in the Peruvian Southern Andes, 1720–1820,' in pp. 35–55; Arlene Díaz, 'Women, Order, and Progress in Guzmán Blanco's Venezuela, 1870–88,' pp. 56–82; Juan Manuel R. Palacio, 'Judges, Lawyers, and Farmers: Uses of Justice and the Circulation of Law in Rural Buenos Aires, 1900–1940,' pp. 83–112; all are in Salvatore, Aguirre and Joseph (eds.), *Crime and Punishment in Latin America*.

[56] Michel Foucault (ed. Colin Gordon), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Writings and Interviews, 1972–1977* (New York, 1980), p. 1.

[57] *Discipline and Punish*, p. 11.

code 'imposed from above by the state', centralised and designed to meet the needs of national bureaucrats rather than villagers.[58]

Judicial systems were also used to bind people to the state and to build citizens, to reinforce uniformity. As one author writing in the professional journal of Mexican criminologists argued in 1939, 'We are all Mexicans, and on being mestizos, with a common tradition, with a common mestizo intellectual formation and culture rests the great future of our country and the solution to ethnic problems.' Refusal to assimilate to the mestizo nation of Mexico made the Indian 'a delinquent as a result of anti-social action'.[59] The tendency for legal system discourse to paint indigenous populations as criminal appears to have been widespread in Latin America. Benjamin Orlove's study of conflict in the 1930s in Peru notes how the police and courts turned 'specific crimes committed by people who happen to have been Indian (into) discussions of Indian criminality'. Those on the other side of the legal divide also became a unity, in opposition to the Indian. As one policeman said, in giving a eulogy for a fallen comrade, the problem lay in the 'compassionate confidence that we have all fatally deposited in the indio'.[60]

While one can make too much of the differences, there are fundamental contrasts between the nature of western legal systems and the uses to which they were put and what Foucault called popular justice in the European tradition and what is most often called 'customary law' in the colonial context. Customary law, by its very nature, differs fundamentally from locale to locale but there appear to be certain common attributes that allow for some generalisations. According to Sally Falk Moore's often cited study of customary law in Tanzania, customary law contained a number of distinct characteristics that contrasted with more rigid western legal systems. It was at heart 'a system of ideas that ranged from the most materialistic sorts of cost accounting in cattle to the most mystical notions of the causes of misfortune'. Customary law flowed from a distinct world view which saw cause and effect, responsibility and rights, authority and obedience in entwined ways related to distinct societies and locales. Just as Western legal systems were crafted out of their own distinct world views, customary law on Kilimanjaro was, in the words of Moore, 'a framework of organisations, relationships, and cultural ideas, a mix of principles, guidelines, rules of preference, and rules of prescription, together with conceptions of morality and causality, all of them completely intertwined in a web of ordinary

[58] Whyte, *Scotland*, pp. 210–16.

[59] Cited in Robert Buffington, *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico* (Lincoln, 2000), p. 161.

[60] Benjamin Orlove, 'The Dead Policemen Speak: Power, Fear and Narrative in the 1931 Molloccahua Killings (Cusco),' pp. 63–95 in Deborah Poole (ed.) *Unruly Order: Violence, Power, and Cultural Identity in the High Provinces of Southern Peru* (Boulder, 1994).

activities. It was not a special domain of knowledge or practice, but a body of ideas known to all and used by all.' Perhaps of most interest, customary law in the Kilamanjaro region was determinedly local, regulating a complex web of interactions – personal, environmental, and spiritual – that only made sense in the local context: from land tenure and irrigation rights, to bride prices and spiritual warfare.[61]

In the context of the imposition of colonial regimes and western notions of the state and nationalism, the continued importance given to customary law was also an important tool of resistance. Continued reference to customary law kept the agents of the state mystified about and marginal to important affairs of the region and community. In doing so, in regions as diverse as Kilimanjaro, Togo, southern Mexico and the Andes customary law became a core element in maintaining culturally distinct communities against attempts to expand state power and influence. In the process, Laura Nader has argued, the harmonic intent of customary law was strengthened. That is, communities she studied in southern Mexico consciously strove to maintain harmonious relations among members of the community partly because they realised that to do otherwise invited state intervention. Thus, harmony and the desire for community control over their own judicial affairs became mutually reinforcing impulses: only local control could ensure a 'judicial' understanding of sufficient local complexity to guarantee that as often as possible 'punishment' would fit the consequences of the crime, abide by local understanding of the severity of the transgression and, most importantly, facilitate reconciliation among the contending sides; only a deliberately maintained aura of harmony, created by both effective reconciliation and the concealment of disputes from outside officials, would allow the community to remain free of most active state interventions in its legal affairs.[62]

It is a mistake to think of customary law as 'ancient'. As Sally Folk Moore has pointed out, 'custom also means current local practice' and customary law is continually in flux, while maintaining its relationship to tradition.[63] Many individuals within communities, and many communities themselves, became adept at using state judicial systems when they thought it might be to their advantage. Over time the 'customary' aspect of customary law becomes 'fuzzy' reflecting the hybrid nature of all colonial/colonised regimes. Nor is customary law inherently more 'just' that a codified legal system. The

[61] Sally Falk Moore, *Social Facts and Fabrications: 'Customary' Law on Kilimanjaro, 1880–1980* (Cambridge, 1985), esp. p. 43, 51, 91.

[62] Laura Nader, *Harmony Ideology: Justice and Control in a Zapotec Mountain Village* (Stanford, 1990), esp. pp. 8–10; see also Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 92.

[63] Sally Folk Moore, 'History and the Redefinition of Custom on Kilimanjaro,' pp. 277–301 in June Starr and Jane F. Collier (eds.), *History and Power*, esp. pp. 277–8.

practice of customary law reflects the differing and inequitable power relations that are both part of custom and accentuated through the colonial encounter. This is, perhaps, most often reflected in women being disadvantaged in customary law. One notable case in June 2002 in which a young woman in Pakistan was reportedly sentenced to gang rape by a Panchayat council because of a perceived transgression by her brother, provides an exaggerated example of this imbalance.[64]

Customary law in Guatemala has reflected all of these various elements. Works which explore the historic use of state court systems in highland Guatemala suggest how limited their hold over the community has been. People appealed to regional and national courts when they thought it advantageous to do so. When permitted, they were more likely to avoid them and use local institutions. Attempts to impose the Livingston codes, a judicial system devised by a Louisiana jurist in the early nineteenth century, helped inspire a widespread peasant revolt that toppled the government. Robert Carmack's study of court records in Momostenango during the late nineteenth century demonstrates the continuing hold of customary law. Recent work on struggles in highland communities during the 1920s has shown that communities took advantage of conflicts in national politics to assert or re-assert control over communities. Cindy Forster's study of court records in the Department of San Marcos during the dictatorship of Jorge Ubico during the 1930s and 1940s, often considered to be a period of intense political and legal centralisation, illustrates quite clearly the limited force of national laws and national courts and their continued illegitimacy in the eyes of many. My own work during the revolution from 1944 to 1954, indicates that even when presented with sympathetic court and administrative initiatives, residents of highland Guatemala were just as likely to settle local disputes without recourse to those instruments.[65]

Of more immediate interest is the evidence for the continued importance of customary law in recent decades. The 1957 municipal code enacted following the overthrow of the revolutionary government in 1954 reasserted the central place of the municipal authorities and their, admittedly limited, autonomy. The 1965 Guatemalan constitution somewhat contradictorily argued that the judicial function would be exercised exclusively by the

[64] 'Victim recounts brutal gang rape,' *Star Phoenix* (*Saskatoon*), 4 July 2002, p. C1.

[65] See R. Carmack, 'State and Community in Nineteenth Century Guatemala: The Momostenango Case,' pp. 116–140, in Carol Smith (ed.) *Guatemalan Indians and the State* (Austin, 1990); Cindy Forster, *In the Time of Freedom* (Pittsburgh, 2001); Jim Handy, *Revolution in the Countryside: Rural Conflict and Agrarian Reform in Guatemala, 1944–1954* (Chapel Hill, 1994); for discussions of the struggles in the 1920s see *El Excelsior*, 3 Jan. 1927, p. 1; 24 Oct. 1927, p. 1; 4 Nov. 1927, p. 1, 4; 7 Feb. 1928, p. 1; Benton McMillin (US ambassador to Guatemala) to the State Department, 25 Aug. 1921, United States National Archives, Department of State, 814.00.

Supreme Court and its tribunals. Nonetheless, it also allowed that '*alcaldes municipales*' could act as judges. In the opinion of Guillermo Cac, this meant that *alcaldes* played a dual role, as both political and judicial figures in the community; a large part of their role was to 'impart justice among the neighbours in the municipality'.[66] In reality, they were most often assisted in this process by the advice of elders and *alcaldes auxiliares* in the various parts of the municipality.[67] Thus, until that constitution was replaced in 1985, community leaders were legally empowered to deal with many local and criminal disputes. All evidence suggests that they were constantly used in this regard. Reflecting decades of research in the municipality of Momostenango before the violence of the 1980s and the 1985 constitution, Robert Carmack argues that customary law and 'traditional authority' held sway in the community to such an extent that 'almost everything that takes place in Momostenango falls under the municipal corporation's jurisdiction'. That corporation was deeply traditional, with leaders of the Municipal Corporation coming from four prominent Indian families and municipal police chosen by municipal authorities. In Carmack's words, 'Traditional authority at the lowest level is vested in an informal council of married clansmen, led by the clan head, himself a priest-shaman. The clan head makes all important decisions in consultation with adult men and is the chief executor of these decisions. For example, he pronounces the judgements made by informal clan judicial bodies and determines who will apply the sanctions.'[68] Similarly, Simone Remijnse's has argued that in Joyabaj before the violence of the 1980s, traditional indigenous authorities determined most of the affairs in the indigenous *aldeas* surrounding the cabacera of Joyabaj, especially determining access to land and to community forest preserves.[69]

Quite clearly, customary law and traditional authority didn't operate in a vacuum. They were constantly affected by and constrained by ideas from outside and attempts to control indigenous authorities and to impose national laws. Adrienne Wiebe examined 114 cases from the court records in the municipal archives of Comitancillo, San Marcos dating from 1921 to 1968. The justice was the *alcalde* until 1922. After that local cases were decided by a tribunal with three indigenous authorities, one *Ladino* resident, and the municipal secretary. Wiebe argues, 'The code of conduct enforced within the tribunal is overtly based on the codified legislation of the national

[66] Guillermo Cac, 'Código Procesal Penal Guatemalteco y derecho consuetudinario,' pp. 77–88 in Jorge Solares (ed.) *Pluridad jurídica en el umbral del siglo* (Guatemala, 2000), esp. p. 78.
[67] Rachel Sieder, *Derecho consuetudinario y transición democrática en Guatemala* (Guatemala, 1996).
[68] Carmack, *Rebels of Highland Guatemala*, pp. 283–322.
[69] Remijnse, *Memories of Violence*, p. 133.

Guatemalan legal system …; however, in many ways it is a Mam code of conduct that is being maintained within a framework of the state laws.'[70] This makes perfect sense and reflects the hybrid characteristics of customary law identified by Moore for Tanzania. In the context of Guatemala, Rachel Sieder suggests that 'legal culture in indigenous communities throughout the country consists of a hybrid mixture of local adaptation and practices and elements of universalist or national legal norms'.[71]

Still, there are some fundamental differences between 'customary' law and national legal practices in Guatemala. Indigenous cultural activists and others interested in promoting legal recognition for aspects of customary law make similar points about the importance of these local non-institutional means for settling disputes: unlike the formal legal system they sought reconciliation and the return to harmony; restitution was preferable to punishment, punishment when it occurred was meant to be exemplary and public and to provide a lesson to the whole community – generally this took the form of public work in full view of the whole community – and every effort was made to reincorporate the offending individual into the community. The goal of much of the efforts of customary law was to cleanse the air through public discussion and apology. The latter was especially important in suspected cases of witchcraft; curses could be removed through the public airing of their intent. Most importantly, perhaps, customary law was constructed through an intense and deep understanding of the community, its living and spiritual inhabitants and their histories.[72]

Decisions in this semi-permitted, semi-clandestine network of customary law were made using local wisdom derived from a local embeddedness. Decisions were made and implemented very quickly, in sharp contrast to the state legal system that fragmented testimony, hurried decisions and then took forever to implement them. It is worth repeating that this did not mean that they were just or fair, that they did not reflect unduly the power of local elites, or that they did not treat certain groups harshly. Nonetheless, Leonardo Cabrera, a member of the commission on '*derecho indígena*' or customary law in COPMAGUA, (the Confederation of Maya People of Guatemala) explained the differences between it and 'official' justice in this way: 'State law is written, onerous, it is not consensual, it focuses on punishment rather than reparation, it is rigid, disintegrative, and requires endless paperwork; while indigenous law is oral, is not onerous,

[70] Adrienne Wiebe, 'Widening Paths: The Lives of Three Generations of Maya-Mam Women' unpublished PhD diss., University of Alberta, 2002, esp. pp. 124–5.

[71] Rachel Sieder, 'Customary Law,' p. 107.

[72] For an interesting discussion of the role of spirits in customary law, see Charles Piot, *Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa* (Chicago, 1999).

is consensual, preventative, flexible, and seeks to maintain family and communal unity; moreover, it is quick.'[73]

Quite obviously the heightened violence of *linchamientos* seems to be far removed from the idealised vision of customary law presented above. How then are the *linchamientos* and customary law linked? The conditioned control exercised by customary law in rural communities in Guatemala has been challenged in two fundamental ways since the early 1980s. The violence of the early 1980s and the imposition of military control in highland communities disrupted mechanisms of local control and helped foster intense levels of conflict within many communities. This conflict ensured that a degree of internal harmony, in the view of Laura Nader necessary for the functioning of customary law, has been very difficult to reinscribe. Just as importantly, the 1985 constitution represented a determined attempt to impose national judicial structures. This combination of internal unrest and an ongoing challenge to customary law helps explain the wave of *linchamientos* that has afflicted Guatemala in the last decade.

The military campaign of the late 1970s and early 1980s was not the beginning of the attempts to impose national standards that have helped foster unrest in rural communities. Since the 1940s, Guatemalan highland communities have been sites of severe conflict. Indigenous perceptions of the world, local power structures, and the functioning of customary law have been rapidly altered through powerful state agencies, the actions of evangelical Protestants, Catholic catechists, migration, poverty, guerrillas and, most importantly, the incursions of the military in the late 1970s and early 1980s. All of these forces brought tremendous changes in the functioning and viability of 'customary' law.

Perhaps most important in this was the imposition of civil patrols which ironically often reinforced 'local' control over judicial decision making (virtually no one appealed to the courts in rural Guatemala during the late 1970s and early 1980s as they had ceased to operate in any real manner), while deeply fracturing much of the community cohesion necessary for the functioning of customary law. In many communities civil patrols operated in ways that were even more deeply antithetical to ideas of harmony, restitution, reconciliation, and reincorporation than formal legal systems were. In Joyabaj, for example, in the 1980s the military and their accomplices in the community took over all the important posts in the community. People stopped paying attention to the indigenous authorities, particularly with regard to the use and disposition of communal land. People refused to

[73] Cited in *Saqb'ichil*, July, 1998, p. 6; see also *Prensa Libre*, 21 Sept. 1998; See also Guillermo Cac, 'Código,' Miguel Angel Reyes Illescas, 'El derecho consuetudinario: más allá de la comunidad pequeña,' Solares (ed.) *Pluridad jurídica*, pp. 53–76; and *El sistema jurídico maya: una aproximación* (Guatemala, 1998).

pay taxes to indigenous authorities for the use of the land, cut wood without permission, and even began to sell the land. More poignantly, Linda Green has described how in another highland community, 'The fragile, intricate bonds that held communities together have been severed by the effects of violence that resonate through daily life.'[74] Or, as Judith Zur argued, 'Recent violations of cultural norms have left people unsure of what is permissible behaviour on both moral and legal grounds.'[75]

After 1985, power at all levels of Guatemalan society began slowly and painfully to be pried from military hands, first at the formal level of national politics, then through the reconstitution of a national civil society, then in the forced demilitarisation of rural communities. The military left behind communities more deeply fractured than at any other time in the history of Guatemala. In many communities, those involved in the civil patrols desperately tried to hold on to local power; they were often opposed by local residents integrated into popular organisations working diligently to demilitarise rural communities, reduce the power of those involved in the civil patrols, and make some of them accountable for the violence they helped bring about. In addition, the reconstitution of democratic political power nationally was sought in often contradictory and confusing ways. The 1985 constitution removed the provision that had allowed for the legal, if somewhat subterranean, functioning of customary law. From this point legal decisions could only be made by authorities invested by the Supreme Court explicitly to operate within the judicial system.[76] However, the political and legal vacuum that existed in rural Guatemala as the military withdrew was not quickly filled by representatives of the state's legal system as envisioned by the constitution. Instead, the vacuum was filled by a hodge-podge of old community institutions, new NGOs, powerful individuals whose power rested in their affiliation to the civil patrols, evangelical Protestants, and local incarnations of national or regional indigenous or peasant organisations. Much of Guatemala was left essentially lawless, as communities attempted to reconstruct sufficient harmony or consensus for aspects of customary law to be reinstated.

By the early 1990s civil authorities in Guatemala attempted to reassert 'democratic' institutions in Guatemala. Again, despite the provisions of the Peace Accords and Convention 169 of the ILO which explicitly called for the recognition of indigenous authority and customary law, national institutions were aggressively pushed in rural areas. Compelled by international agencies and the United Nations Mission for Guatemala, which began to

[74] Linda Green, *Fear as a Way of Life: Mayan Widows in Rural Guatemala* (New York, 1999), p. 32.
[75] Judith Zur, *Violent Memories: Mayan War Widows in Guatemala* (Boulder, 1998), p. 275.
[76] Cac, 'Código,' p. 79.

focus on good governance as the new panacea, the Guatemalan government, like many other Latin American governments, sought to decentralise. But decentralisation did not mean a recognition of customary law and authority but rather the provision of 'meaningful' government institutions to rural areas. One of these measures was assigning justices of peace to rural areas, one of whom was Alvaro Hugo Martínez in Senahú. The result was anything but beneficial. Many of them could not function in the Mayan language of the district to which they were assigned; they had no history in the region, no understanding of the basis of customary law, no roots, and no way to understand the world view that needed to inform the application of justice. As Victor Ferrigno says, 'the medicine was worse than the disease'.[77]

This attempt at imposing more outside juridical control came at a particularly inappropriate time in rural Guatemala. Since the end of the violence of the 1980s a determined effort had occurred in rural Guatemala to reassert aspects of community control. This has been partly a natural response to the imposition of intense military control for more than a decade and especially rough treatment afforded localised identity during that time. There is also clearly a nostalgic flavour to some of this longing. For communities that had suffered so much, especially perhaps for many people who endured periods of exile, there is a natural tendency to attempt to return to an imagined community past that highlights all that was good about that imagined past; as Jim Scott has argued in another context, returning to 'a remembered village and a remembered economy … against which to deplore the present'.[78] For many this meant deliberate attempts to limit outside state influences; what Orin Starn identified, in the context of highland Peru, as 'an intensification of localism' in the face of continued unwanted incursions from outside.[79]

The *linchamientos* cannot be understood without keeping in mind this combination of deeply fractured communities and an ineffectual attempt to reinforce an alien legal 'system', coupled with the lingering violence of the last decade of brutal counterinsurgence and a peasant economy in acute crisis. Guatemalan society is currently in the middle of an intense debate over the nature of the Guatemalan state that is being built from the ashes of the violence of the 1980s.[80] One part of that debate concerns the nature of the Guatemalan judicial system and the relative weight of institutions of customary law and community control in relation to a national judicial

[77] 'Derecho indígena,' p. 117.

[78] Jim Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, p. 178.

[79] Starn, *Nightwatch*, p. 145; see also, Jim Handy, 'Demilitarizing Community in Guatemala,' *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 19: 37–38 (1994), pp. 35–60.

[80] See Jim Handy, 'Democratizing What?: Some Reflections on Nation, State, Ethnicity, Modernity, Community, and Democracy in Guatemala,' *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 27, 53 (2002), pp. 35–71 for fuller discussion of these points.

system and judicial apparatus. There has been much discussion of the right, enshrined in various national and international agreements, to levels of customary law and local control. However, virtually all the debate surrounding *linchamientos* has assumed that this wave of vigilante justice can only be effectively attacked by strengthening national judicial institutions and its apparatus: justices of the peace, national police, etc.

This article does not suggest that a more effective national judiciary and more competent national police force would not be beneficial in attacking levels of violence in Guatemala. Rather it suggests that understanding the reasons for the wave of *linchamientos* in Guatemala in the last decade requires consideration of a complex interplay of causes stemming from poverty, marginality, the disruption of community norms, prevailing levels of fear and anxiety in rural Guatemala. Among these causes is an attack on community authority and customary law that was carried out to devastating effect by the military during the violence of the 1970s and 1980s but which has been continued by succeeding civilian administrations in their attempts to impose national judicial institutions in rural areas. Seen from this perspective, any movement to strengthen a national judicial system must be carried out in careful consort with efforts to help strengthen community authority and recognise community legal traditions. From this perspective, what is necessary to end the *linchamientos* is to give people real control over justice in their communities and to allow the justice system itself to reflect that control. In this fashion, accepting the legitimate functions of customary law may not only help end *linchamientos*, but might also assist communities in reconstructing a sufficient level of harmony to reinscribe revised community traditions. In the opinion of Víctor Montejo, in this fashion, customary law may help revive 'the cultural values and morals of the indigenous pueblos that were displaced when the civil patrols destroyed those values and converted themselves into criminal henchmen at the side of the military'.[81]

[81] 'Maya Itz'at: Injusticia y linchamientos,' *Siglo Veintiuno*, 10 Dec. 2000, p. 11.

CHAPTER ONE

Señoras, it is impossible to make the trip to Todos Santos and back in one day. I have lived in Guatemala all my life but I have never been up there. I know that only one or two strangers a year visit the place and they never accomplish the journey in one day. It is a long and difficult trail. Look up there at the pass. It is called La Ventosa, 'The Windy Place.' It is eleven thousand two hundred feet high and beyond lies Todos Santos in a high valley."

The owner of the hotel in Huehuetenango made a wide gesture with his arms as he looked at Mary and me. Then he added: "Formidable are these mountains, the Cordillera de los Andes."

I turned to Mary and said: "What do you think?"

"I admit it sounds risky," said Mary, who knew the country far better than I did. "But Maud, just how important is all this to you?"

"From everything I have heard of Todos Santos," I answered, "I feel sure that it is the place I am looking for."

I had arrived in Guatemala four months earlier on a grant from a Foundation in the United States. My mission was to find an isolated Indian village where the Indians still carried on the religious practices of their ancestors. Here I would live and record their ancient customs, and their way of life.

As I travelled about by bus or horse to various out-of-the-way pueblos, I found that most of them were coming in touch with our world by the ever spreading roads and government communications, and that the pure form of their religion was being slowly changed by the Catholic Church and official schools. The Ladinos, people of Spanish and mixed blood, were moving into the pueblos in increasing numbers, opening up liquor shops and exploiting the poor Indians in every way.

I had heard three things about Todos Santos that appealed to me: first that no roads led to the pueblo, second that there was no resident Catholic priest who might have colored their religious ceremonies, and third that the Indians, known as Mames, still lived by the ancient Mayan calendar.

Mary and I started off next morning at five on our way to Todos Santos, riding through the dark, empty streets of Huehuetenango in an ancient taxi and carrying with us a thermos of tea, bottles of water, and food. The sky was clear and the stars seemed to say "no rain today." After we passed through the small village of Chiantla, about three miles from Huehuetenango, we started to climb into the black mountains that hung over us. When dawn came we could see way beyond the darkened valley three volcanoes which stood out against the clouds and the sky: the sharp peak of Santa María near Quezaltenango, and the double peak of Tajumulco near the Mexican border.

The old Ford panted and wheezed as it wound back and forth up the steep, narrow road and became so hot we stopped to cool the motor and admire the view. The sun came up and we saw the beauty of the valley as it cast off its cloak of darkness and came into being. At nearly four thousand feet we turned off onto a plateau, crossed a treeless plain toward a few huts which seemed to cling to the edge of the grass. This was Paquix, the village where we were to change from taxi to horses.

Mary tried to impress on the taxi driver the importance of his being back at Paquix at four o'clock that afternoon to fetch us. But he was as doubtful of the possibility of our getting back from Todos Santos by that hour as we were of the chances of the Ford making the climb a second time that same day. We waited in the car, sheltering ourselves from the cold wind, until the horses arrived, and when they did the worst of our fears were realized. The animals looked half dead already.

Just the same we mounted them and rode off into a Daliesque landscape of stunted pines, twisted cripples of the tree world, and strangely shaped grey-black rocks. Mary and I were both thankful when we left this land of foreboding and entered a slowly rising terrain covered with scrub pines, cedars, and a variety of flowers. As this was in August, the rainy season, now and then we found ourselves riding through meadows rich with green grass.

Near the top of the pass the cold wind became so violent we were forced to dismount. We wrapped scarves around our necks and heads, and walked to stimulate our circulation, although breathing was made difficult by the high altitude and the freezing blasts. I thought to myself: "No wonder this pass is called 'The Windy Place.'" But then as we descended on the way to Todos Santos the wind lessened. The trail wound through very tall, straight pines, firs, and hemlocks. Mountain walls rose on either side and we could see glimpses of the distant valley way below. Streams flowed on all sides and flowers grew everywhere. On the slopes we could see Indians working their potato patches. The view of the fertile valley slowly opened up while the mountains on each side rose high and higher. It was as if there were two valleys: the earth valley opening out beneath and the sky valley closing in above.

I saw an old shepherd coming up the trail driving his sheep before him. Without thinking, I snapped his photograph. He cried out as if in agony, saying in Spanish: "What have you done to me?" I felt as if I had stuck a knife into him. We could tell that he was a Todos Santos Indian by his red-striped pants. "Uncle Sam's Boys," the tourists called them. As we neared the village we met more and more of these tall, bearded, arrogant men. They were all polite and curious, asking where we were going and where we had come from.

"These Indians," I said to Mary, "are unlike the other down-

trodden Indians I have seen in Guatemala. They seem to be more like the Navahos."

"Were the Navahos friendly when you worked with them?" asked Mary.

"I was with them three years and it took six months for them to start being friendly and a year before they really accepted me. These Todos Santos Indians will probably be even more difficult. I've been told they are a bellicose tribe."

On the lower slopes the corn which we had noticed growing thinly up above became increasingly taller, thicker, and more beautiful. There seemed to be more and more of it covering every available piece of earth. Sometime near ten o'clock we came upon two houses and thought we had reached our destination. Alas! our guide told us that it was only an outlying hamlet of Todos Santos; we still had quite a distance to go. At last, however, we came to the valley. The houses became more numerous. In front of some of them women sat weaving; they politely returned our greetings. Stone walls and sometimes fences lined the trails, and still the bright-green corn grew everywhere. From the top of a sudden rise we saw the village spread out below. It was built on a slope that climbed up from the river into the hills. The houses were white-washed and had high, thatched, Chinese-looking roofs, colored with the wonderful shades that straw acquires with age. Everywhere apple and peach trees sprawled over the walls and fences.

As I rode into the pueblo of Todos Santos I felt that already I knew it. It was as though this place remembered me. I had never seen it before but I felt this was my place. Here I would live and do my work. My search was ended.

The trail Mary and I were riding passed through the heart of the pueblo, a village of several thousand people. It was not only the main street, but the ancient Mayan route from the highlands

to the lowlands. On this we found a sixteenth-century church, flanked on one side by the thatched-roofed market and on the other by the school. Opposite was the plaza with its two fountains, one for humans, the other for animals, as well as the town hall and two houses occupied by the few Ladino officials.

Our first move was to call on the *Intendente,* the Mayor of the town, a pleasant man with a Spanish face, neatly dressed in European clothes. He greeted us formally and suggested that we visit with him the Mayan ruins of Cumanchúm which lay above the town.

It was a steep climb and we felt it, not only because of the fatigue of our journey, the heat of the morning sun, and our growing hunger, but also because of the altitude, which must have been over eight thousand feet. From the ruins was an awe-inspiring view of the towering mountains opposite; up the valley toward the pass from which we had come and where we would soon be returning, and down the valley toward the lowlands and Mexico. Below us lay fields of beautiful waving corn, and the village.

"What an ideal location for temples of worship!" I said to Mary. One pyramid was still almost intact, and seemed to be on a smaller scale than, but of the same period as, the Zaculeu ruins outside Huehuetenango. The other was crumbling away and overgrown with tall grass. Next to this pyramid were two crosses, one of old wood and the other of stone and whitewashed adobe. The Mayor told us that the Indians practiced their ancient customs in front of these crosses.

"The Indians have a sacred coffer which they call the *Caja Real,*" he went on to tell us. "The head of their religious body, the Chief Prayermaker, guards it in his house. This box is very sacred to the Indians, and on New Year's Day, when the prayermakers come into office, they carry it in a procession encircling the mountains that surround the pueblo. One of my *mayores* when he was drunk

one time told me that when the procession visited the different places of worship it took a day and night. They passed at night when it was quite dark into a huge cave in the mountains, and within were large stone idols. Only the Chief Prayermaker and the head priest know the secret of the whereabouts of this cave." Mary and I exchanged glances. "Señoras, I have lived in this pueblo nine months with my wife and three children. I find these Indians good people as long as I don't meddle in their affairs. They are dependable and honest and I have had no trouble with them; but there have been *intendentes* who interfered with the Indians' religious matters, and even broke open their sacred box. Then there was trouble. They had to send for soldiers from Huehuetenango for protection."

As we walked down the winding trail to the village Mary said to me: "He's a nice man, for a Ladino."

The children we saw as we walked along ran behind the houses to hide from us, although their mothers remained weaving on their porches, watching us curiously, their beautiful faces full of dignity and character.

When we returned to the town hall, or *Juzgado,* as it is called, the *Intendente* made some of the Indians pose for their photographs. They did not wish to, until I promised to send them their pictures. They all had strong faces, shadowed by straw hats. In their red-and-white striped Uncle Sam pants and black coats they looked like pirates. I could see that some of them were terrified of the camera, especially the Chief of Police, a man with long, drooping mustachios.

I told the *Intendente* about the old shepherd who had cried out when I photographed him that morning. He explained to me that the Indians believe that when you take a picture of a man you take of his strength, and the photograph might even be used to cast

a spell against him. From then on I never took an Indian's picture without asking his permission.

Across the way was a shop, or *tienda,* that sold material and buttons, cotton for weaving, needles and thread, kerosene, candles and incense, cigarettes, tobacco, matches, and a meagre assortment of sweets. Here I stopped and bought five candles.

"What are you going to do with those?" asked Mary.

"I am going to burn them in the church to the gods of the mountains and pray that I may be allowed to live and work here. There is no doubt in my mind that this is the place."

The church I entered was crudely built but gave off a wonderful feeling of peace and quiet. As my eyes became used to the dark I observed on the ceiling the most beautifully carved beams and quaint angels, and on the altars primitively carved saints. I lit my candle and said a prayer with hopes in my heart that it would be possible for me to live in this pueblo. Then I joined Mary, who was waiting in the doorway, looking out on two crosses which stood opposite—two crosses like the ones we had seen at the ruins; one, obviously of very ancient wood and very tall, the other, short and squat made of whitewashed adobe. There was much charcoal and candle drippings about so we knew that here in front of these crosses the Indians practiced their ancient customs.

We decided to eat our lunch in the midday sun on the steps of the church. We had just started to examine what Señor Maldonado, the innkeeper at Huehuetenango, had given us to eat, when we found that we had an audience. All the little girls from the school were gathered before us looking at us with large, dark, curious eyes. When I stood up they screamed with terror and ran to a safe distance. Mary laughed at them and explained in Spanish that we were not dangerous. Their teacher, a polite Ladino woman, came and greeted us, asking where we had come from and why we were here, and then led the children away.

Señor Maldonado had done well by us, probably because Mary was the wife of Julio Matheu, manager of the famous Mayan Inn in Chichicastenango. We unpacked enough hard rolls for an army, plenty of fruit, eggs, a roast chicken, and our thermos of hot tea. Never had food tasted so good! As I was licking my fingers after doing away with my half of the chicken, I had a feeling someone was looking at me. I raised my eyes and saw an old man standing near me with an incense burner in his hand. He greeted me and looked deeply into my eyes with a searching, impersonal glance. I had never seen such a beautiful face. It was the face of a sage, full of wisdom, peace, and strength. His hair was white, he was beardless and his eyes were full of power. We gave him bread, which he accepted hesitantly, asking where our country was. We motioned to the north and said. "Far, far away." We told him how much we liked the pueblo. He smiled and passed into the church, wishing us a good journey.

I asked Mary if she had felt the power of his look, and she said: "Yes, it went right through me." We decided he must be a medicine-priest, or *chimán,* and probably one of the head ones.

Our guide had told us that the return trip to Paquix would take four hours, so we were ready to leave at one o'clock and went to say good-by to the *Intendente.* He was sitting in front of his house with his wife. Mary explained to him my work for the Foundation and that I had been all over Guatemala searching for the most interesting Indians, and that of all I had seen I liked the Indians of Todos Santos best. Would it be possible for me to rent or buy a house?

"I know of no houses at the moment," he said, "maybe later. Why don't you and the Señorita return for the Todos Santos *fiesta* on All Saints' Day, the first of November, and by that time maybe I will have something for you."

"That would be fine," said Mary. We said good-by and thanked him for his kindness.

We told the guide to follow us with the horses as we wished to walk through the pueblo and on the way we stopped at the second *tienda* and bought some cigarettes. The owner, a Ladino, waited on us. Back of him I saw a pretty Indian girl. I asked if she would sell me her blouse. She laughed shyly and said no, it was the only one she owned. Little did I suspect then how well I should get to know her later.

Our return trip to Paquix was one of rain, wind, and fatigue. When we saw the waiting taxi we greeted the driver as if he were a long-lost friend.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

"Good morning, Don Pancho," I said, before he could say it to me.

"*Buenos días,* Señorita Matilda," he replied with an eager look on his face. "I have some information for you of the greatest importance."

I felt like saying: "Spill the beans," but instead I gave him my most bewitching smile and offered him a chair and a cigarette. Don Pancho had a peculiar way of sitting down; it was always done in a gingerly fashion, as if he expected the chair to collapse.

"Señorita, I have discovered that the Mames will celebrate their new year about the twelfth or fifteenth of March. It is called the *Fiesta* of the *Chimanes.* Each Indian will go to the house of his *chimán* the night of the *fiesta* bearing a gift of a chicken or a turkey, and the *chimán* will answer all questions and forecast for the new year."

"I am delighted to have this information. Rosa has already told me the same thing, only she says the date is the tenth. Don Pancho, have you ever heard of a village not far from here called Santiago Chimaltenango? I have been reading in a report written by the American who built this house that the Indians of Santiago Chimaltenango are Mames who are little touched by civilization and apparently not hostile and they still carry on the customs of their ancestors."

"Yes, Señorita, I have passed through the village many times and once I spent the night there with a Ladino family, friends of mine. The wife used to live here in Todos Santos and speaks Mam fluently. There are only about three Ladino families in the village, and the Indians are very much like the Indians here."

"Don Pancho, I should like you to go to the village tomorrow

and find out if they will celebrate the *fiesta* of the new year, and if it will be on the tenth as Rosa told me, or on the twelfth or fifteenth as you have been told. Also, find out any other information that comes easily. I will pay all your expenses besides what I am giving you."

Don Pancho returned in three days with glowing reports. "Señorita, when I reached the house of Doña María San José at Chimaltenango, I explained to her that I would like to see a *chimán*, so she introduced me to one called Pedro Sánchez. 'Are you a *chimán?*' I asked him, 'and if you are, will you cast your beans? Will you tell the *mixes* for me?'

"'Yes, I am a *chimán,* but one who asks God to give health to the people of the pueblo. I am a diviner. I know only the four gods that serve me. In five days it is the first day of the year—*T'ce*. A very important day is *T'ce*.'

"Señorita, I then became the detective, and I said: 'Chimán Sánchez, in my pueblo in five days the *chimanes* will have a big *fiesta*. Is it the custom for you here to celebrate it the night of the fourth day, or the fifth?'

"'Señor, it is the custom everywhere to celebrate it the night of the fourth day, for *T'ce* is born when the first cock crows on the fifth day. Have you a question to ask my stone, Señor?'

"Señorita, he took out of a red cloth a small stone of quartz, and holding it in his hand, he answered my question. I gave him ten cents, which I hope is not too much, and five cigarettes. Doña María also checked the date for me, so the new year is the tenth, as Rosa told you, and the *fiesta* is the night of the ninth."

"Don Pancho," I said, "you should have given the *chimán* a package of cigarettes. You have done a wonderful job. I have now decided to go to Chimaltenango myself the morning of the ninth and see if luck is with me. Maybe I could get into one of the *chimanes'* houses. I know that Chimán Calmo will not ask me

here. I shall take Domingo and Andrés with me and would be delighted if you would like to come along. I will pay you whatever you feel is just."

"Señorita, I would be contented to take you to Chimaltenango. You can sleep in the house of my friends, or at the *Juzgado*."

At six-thirty on the morning of March 9 we were on our way to Santiago Chimaltenango. Don Pancho and I rode, he on Pichón and I on a rented horse. Andrés carried my army cot, Domingo the blankets, tinned food, and medicine. Their loads were slung from leather straps across their foreheads.

I had no plans, but I hoped that the god of luck would smile on me, for in my hand I carried eight candles wrapped in a red cloth, as was the custom for those going on a holy mission.

The sun shone as we climbed through the clouds back of my house. We passed through new country. We dipped down into deep valleys, thick with ferns and strange flowering bushes and plants, and by rushing brooks, where we watered our horses. Then up steep trails through forests of oaks covered with moss and parasitic flowering plants. We often rode along the tops of the mountain ranges in the teeth of a strong cold wind, a wind that blew the clouds away and revealed to us another world. As far as the eye could see there rose one mountain range after another, and to the north there stretched the distant lowlands of Chiapas in Mexico. I noticed that daisies grew everywhere here, but without stems. They spread sideways and grew to a large size and looked as if they were stars fallen to earth.

During the six hours that we rode we saw only one pueblo in the distance, San Juan Atitán, though we did pass, now and then, a few Indians going to the market at Todos Santos. During the last hour we saw no one, but were not surprised for we knew that the Indians were off worshipping in the mountains or in their houses, this day being the last of the five that preceded the

new year. The modern Indians considered these five days evil, as the Mayans had done long ago. Those Indians who still live by this calendar do not work, eat meat, overeat, or have sexual relations on these days. Nor can the *chimanes* prognosticate, tell their *mixes,* or lead their normal everyday lives.

We descended into Santiago Chimaltenango, situated about halfway down a steep mountain, each house on its terrace—a patchwork of thatched roofs with no sign of life, not even smoke. As we passed down the steep, narrow path to the plaza a few curious Indians poked their heads out of their houses to take a look at us. Their costumes were striking. The women wore bright red *huipiles* with fine lines of yellow-white through them. In front and above the breasts there were six designs of different colors. They had wide, stiff woolen belts of black, white, and red, lovely in design, and blue skirts. Their hair was worn up and held in place by a red woven band. The men wore white cotton trousers, and sometimes blue-and-white striped blouses. They wore red scarves around their shoulders or wrapped like turbans around their heads. Over the blouses they wore dark-brown or black woolen *capixaijs.*

On one side of the small plaza stood their church, primitive but charming, with a cross in front of it, and on an adjoining side the *Juzgado,* which served as meeting place, court, and jail, and in which we were to spend the night. This building consisted of one big rectangular room with a large table, a bench, and a government telephone. A few friendly Indians watched us unload and with great interest observed me wash at the *pila* in the center of the plaza. When we were ready, we went to call on Don Pancho's Ladino friends. The husband was away, but his wife, seven children, two pigs, two ducks, chickens, and dogs were all very much in evidence. The wife, named Maroka, had a long Spanish face, full of character but weary and worn out. Not only did she cook,

wash, clean and look after the children, but she also baked bread for the pueblo. Indians love sweet bread. She had lived in Santiago Chimaltenango most of her life, though at one time she had lived in Todos Santos, and spoke Mam like a native. I could see she was very much respected by the local Indians.

She told us that all the Indians were in the mountains or in their houses and that the *chimanes* would receive in their houses, that night, those Indians who had questions to ask or who wished to hear the prognostications for the coming year; that is, if the Spirit should come. She informed us that roosters and turkeys would be sacrificed that night and the next day in front of the church and the cross.

I asked if it would be possible for us to go that night to the house of one of the *chimanes.* Maroka said she would ask but doubted it very much, as no outsiders or Ladinos were allowed at any of their religious rites. Nevertheless she sent one of the children to the house of a woman *chimán,* only to discover that she had already gone to the mountains. By chance, however, a woman whose son was learning to be a *chimán* passed by. Maroka told her in Mam that Don Pancho and I wanted very much to go to the house of a *chimán,* that I had come from a distant country, and that, in my country, I was used to visiting *chimanes,* especially for the new year ceremony. She also said that I had come all the way from Todos Santos to see a *chimán* on this special night and to burn my candles. As she said this, Maroka pointed to my candles wrapped in the red cloth, and then she told the woman that we were her friends and were like members of her family. The woman asked why I had not gone to the ceremony at Todos Santos. Maroka passed this on to me, and I told her to tell the woman that the *chimanes* in Todos Santos did not have sufficient power. The woman thereupon said that she would speak to her son, who was going that night to the house of his teacher,

and perhaps he would speak to the *chimán* who was doing *costumbre*. In about half an hour she returned and said that the *chimán* teacher did not like the idea, for he felt that we would not have sufficient respect and might think their customs ludicrous, and that the Spirit might not enter the house if we were there. We tried to convince her of our sincerity and respect for Indian *costumbre*, gave her twenty-five cents by way of additional persuasion, and told her that we would bring the *chimán* the customary presents and pay him besides. I would never have dared put on this much pressure in Todos Santos for fear of what I might lose if it didn't work.

She returned in an hour and a half and said: "If you are willing to walk eight miles up into the mountains to the house of the *chimán* in order to be looked over, and if he then approves, you can stay through the night and return at dawn. If he does not approve you will have to return immediately to the pueblo."

If we agreed to this, she said, she would take us there herself, leaving at six in the afternoon. We accepted, little knowing what was ahead of us. I was tired, for I had gotten up early and had a cold, but I knew this was an opportunity in a million. I bought four bottles of *aguardiente*—which is always used in Indian ceremonies and is a customary gift to the *chimán*—six packages of cigarettes, and eight candles for Don Pancho. Andrés was left behind to watch our baggage, and at six we were on our way. Our guide was about sixty years old, with bright eyes and a pleasant smile, and I could tell she was not sure she was doing the right thing. She reminded me of a little bird every time she looked back over her shoulder to see if we were following. We were all on foot, our guide padding along on bare feet. Up and up we went, until breathing became difficult. I wondered how far we had to go and if my strength would hold out. Now and then I would pause to catch my breath and admire the view.

We were stopped by numerous Indians returning from the coast to celebrate the new year. They questioned Domingo and our guide, and I could see by their faces that they did not like the idea of our journey.

When we reached the top of the ridge the sun was just setting and a glorious view spread for miles before us: range after range of mountains of all colors, deep mysterious valleys, and, like a king of kings, the huge volcano Tajumulco keeping watch over his domain. For a long time we went along the crest, then down into a small valley, then up again until we came to a section called Florida on the other side. In the darkness we could see the glow of several fires. Domingo said these were houses of *chimanes* who were receiving. Our guide pointed out a distant light halfway down in the valley, our destination. Both Don Pancho and I were relieved that the rest of the way would be downhill. Suddenly I remembered that we had left our flashlights behind. We had a good laugh over our carelessness, for this was the night we needed them most. We turned off the main trail and then followed a tortuous one through brush and trees where it was so dark that I could hardly see Domingo ahead of me. When I had about given up hope of reaching the place we stepped out from the trees into the light of a blazing fire. We had arrived.

As we approached the house there was great excitement and we were led into the light of the fire so that the *chimán* could look us over. He was dark in complexion, with large penetrating eyes, a short black beard, a strong face, and a powerful build. I noticed another, much older man watching us from the other side of the fire. He had a long face, pensive grey eyes, a beautiful Mayan nose, and two deep lines that ran down the sides of his face from nose to mouth. One sensed great strength, dignity, and also sadness in him. The two men talked together, looking at us intently, and then asked Domingo several questions about me. I was being

appraised and judged, and I felt naked and inadequate as I stood there, the focus of all eyes. When Domingo told us the *chimán* said we could stay, he seemed to me like a guardian who had been ordered to open wide the portals to the inner sanctum.

The outside of the house was decorated with pine branches, and around the door were placed the leaves of the *pacaya* plant. As I went inside I saw a large rectangular room, with several fires burning on the right, and on the dirt floor lay many clay vessels of all sizes and shapes, steaming, with women busy about them. We sat to the left of the door on a narrow bench against the wall. Opposite us, built into the corner, was the *corral* of the *chimán,* a little enclosure made of cane; around the doorless entrance was another decoration of *pacaya* leaves. Within was an altar. The floor was covered with pine needles. This was the room from which the *chimán* would answer questions if the Spirit, or *Dueño de Cerro* (Master of the Mountaintop) came.

A small fire was built at our feet, and by its light the faces were revealed. The *chimán,* who did not speak Spanish, asked us through the older man—whom I termed "Mayan Nose"—why we had come. He also questioned Domingo, who spoke the same tongue. I was deeply impressed by their sincerity and friendliness. First passing around cigarettes, I then answered what he had asked:

"I have come tonight with my candles and questions for I am far away from my country, my family, and my friends. In my country there are also *chimanes,* and since I am unable to go to them, I come to you. This night is an important night. We are leaving *Ik* and entering into *T'ce,* a good year. My thoughts turn to my country and my family and so my question is: 'How are my mother, sister, and brother?'"

Domingo translated this to the *chimán,* who seemed impressed, as was also "Mayan Nose," he of the sad face, of whom I was more

acutely aware than of the *chimán.* Don Pancho, for his part, said that he had come because of a strange buzzing in his left ear which he had now had for over a year and which no doctor could cure.

The *chimán* asked if we had brought our candles and *aguardiente,* and as I handed him the candles I said: "Here they are for the four *Alcaldes del Mundo,* two for each," as I knew this was the custom. He went into his little *corral* and put the candles and the two bottles (I gave him only two of the four) on the altar with the other offerings.

To the left, in the shadows, two musicians played, one being the brother of the *chimán.* They played on a home-made violin and guitar. Their music was good and I felt that they improvised as they went along.They played all night, seldom the same tune, and never anything gay or violent. Their music expressed nature—the sad side of nature.

The men all crowded around us, those who spoke Spanish questioning and then translating. Domingo gave a long oration, and though I could not understand it, I felt it was about me, how I had cured people and paid off his contract. I watched the faces of the men and boys around me: strong, good faces, well modelled and aristocratic, the contours standing out boldly when touched by the light of the fire, then melting into the mysterious darkness that filled the room. These were pure Mayan, and probably none of them realized what a great civilization they had sprung from.

The roof was very high and steep and carried out and up through the thatch the smoke of the fires. From the roof hung a platform which was about seven feet from the earth floor and about four feet from the walls. It was used, I could see, for storage.

The *chimán* told us that it was their custom for all to eat together on this night before the Spirit came. We ate *tortillas* and drank coffee and smoked cigarettes given us by the *chimán.* I

noticed that "Mayan Nose" had gone into the little room of the *chimán* and was keeping a fire of *ocote* sticks going. He had a beautiful profile, very much like one of the priests on the carvings of Palenque. I wondered who he was. Domingo asked someone and told me:

"He is the teacher of the *chimán,* and the *chimán* is the teacher of the son of the woman who guided us."

About ten-thirty the *chimán* spread pine needles all over the floor of the house and then entered his *corral.* Shortly after, I was called in and, although I had no idea what was customary, I knelt before the altar on the pine needles between the two older men. The *chimán* was on my left in front of the altar, the teacher on my right. As the space was tiny, we were crowded close together. Around the altar I noticed a band of the same leaves I had seen before, together with bananas. The altar, which was the table of the *chimán,* was covered with a white cloth with a band of red on it. On the altar were two carved gourd bowls, in each a small gourd cup.

Rosa Bautista explained to me later: "The gourd cup, or *guacalito,* is used by the *chimán* to put *aguardiente* in; he can drink the spirit of God which presents itself during the hours of prayer. The gourd bowls or cups—*jicaritas*—are used for drinking *batido* [a ceremonial drink made of ground corn, sugar, and water]. When one drinks it, it signifies the union of all the participants, that all are one."

Between the two bowls lay the candles and the gifts of *aguardiente* from the people. At the back of the table were four skyrockets, and on the floor in front six clay candleholders. "Mayan Nose" asked me the names of the members of my family and gave them to the *chimán,* who took my candles in both hands and, speaking in a quick, strong voice, pressed them against my shoulder. He held them there as he prayed. The only words I could

understand were Santiago (Saint James) who is patron saint of the pueblo, the four *Alcaldes del Mundo,* and the names of the members of my family. He then went to the altar and prayed for a long time before lighting my candles and putting them in the six holders. The two extra ones he stood on the floor. As he sat to the left of the altar I noticed a heavy metal chain like a dog chain lying on the floor at his feet, and wondered what it was. It seemed strangely out of place.

The *chimán* now opened one of the bottles and took from the altar a crystal wine glass with a broken stem, filled it with *aguardiente,* and passed it first to his teacher, then to me, then to himself, and finally to his pupil. I drank a toast to them and to the four *Alcaldes* and drained the glass in one gulp, that being the proper custom. I was asked to put ten cents on the altar, and they were more than pleased when I put twenty-five cents there. Thereupon the *chimán* motioned to me to leave and I got up and left to make room for Don Pancho. When they were finished with him they called me back with the *chimán's* young pupil and the *chimán's* wife. We drank again and again and the *chimán* became very much agitated. His hands trembled and the force from his voice was awe-inspiring. All this time the teacher stood there, calm, cool, and sad. Again I was offered a drink, but instead of taking it I passed it to the wife of the *chimán,* who seemed grateful for it. We went back to our bench and the *chimán* came with us. The teacher remained praying while we drank coffee and smoked.

Just before midnight the wife of the *chimán* carried into the room a beautiful white rooster and handed it to the three *chimanes* who sacrificed it in the *corral.* Of this I caught only a glimpse because a man standing in the doorway obstructed my view. A *pichacha* with copal stood on the floor in front of the altar. The two *chimanes* held the rooster, head down, while the one officiating cut its throat. The rooster flapped its wings as the blood

flowed into the *pichacha* onto the copal. A few minutes later the woman came out carrying the limp body of the fowl. Then two turkeys were sacrificed. By that time it was nearly midnight. A boy sitting next to me told me that since sunset many birds had been sacrificed, twenty in all—possibly, I thought, for the twenty days of the calendar. A blanket was placed over the entrance to the *chimán's corral,* leaving the three *chimanes* inside. All fires in the outer room were put out and we sat in darkness.

The *chimán* now began to pray in a strong voice, and as he spoke I could smell burning blood mixed with the copal. He pronounced the names of the *Alcaldes del Mundo* and Santiago and, I assumed, called on the Spirit to come. He must have stood there supplicating for a good half-hour when suddenly his voice changed. It was as if it had been spurred on to a double tempo. He spoke so fast and with such force that it sounded like a machine gun. I could feel the force invade me, and I tingled all over. During this time, when his voice was the strongest, I suddenly saw in the darkness a blue light. It seemed to move about the room at head level. It was indigo blue and about the size of a hand. I kept shutting my eyes because I thought it might be an optical illusion, but when I opened them it was still there, though it did not stay long. The voice of the *chimán* never stopped for breath until he began to make what seemed to be statements and to answer questions. He would call: *"Chucia Chuán,"* and his wife, who was in the outer room with us, would answer. What she said sounded like: "Yes, Father, we are here. Do not leave us."

This went on for a good hour and a half. Among other things, I heard him say: *"Estados Unidos,"* so I knew he was answering my question. The bench I was sitting on was so uncomfortable that I could scarcely bear it. I had to close my eyes to keep the smoke out of them, and moreover it was all I could do to keep awake. Suddenly I felt something touch my head. I looked up.

It was "Mayan Nose" passing me on his way to send off a skyrocket, for the Spirit had gone.

When the *chimán* came out from his *corral* he was bathed in sweat and looked exhausted. I felt strongly that here was no fake. We all had coffee and a smoke and were told what the Spirit had said. The Spirit had accepted us and said that we were all right, that my family was well but that my mother was sad because I was so far away; that the Spirit said I must come three years in succession, then I would be well for the rest of my life. Don Pancho's ear trouble could be cured, but he had on him the sin of his father or grandfather, who had shot and killed a man. I told Don Pancho to give the *chimán* another bottle, which he did, and we were then called again into his *corral* for another drink. The *chimán,* through "Mayan Nose," told Don Pancho that because of the sin he had on him he would have to make an offering to the church next morning of two turkey eggs, copal and ten candles. Don Pancho got out of it by giving the *chimán* thirty-five cents so that he might perform the *costumbre* for him.

As I came out into the large room I saw the women putting the plucked and cleaned birds in a huge pot. The *chimán's* brother, the musician, came over to me and asked me if I could cure him, that he was very sick; he could not eat, and when he did he lost his meal; that he had no strength and had chills all the time. I questioned him a little more. It was obvious he had malaria.

"Yes, I can help you," I told him, "if you take two pills a day of the twenty yellow pills I shall give you. Then you will be relieved." I laughed to myself at the thought that the brother of the *chimán* would come to me to be cured, and at such a time and in such a place.

The lights were put out again and the *chimán* went into another trance behind the blanketed doorway. He repeated what he had done before, though this time I saw no light. When the Spirit

had departed the second time another skyrocket was sent off. When he came out the fires were relit. He carried in a red cloth the bananas that had decorated his altar. They were cut on the red cloth into as many pieces as there were people, about thirty-five or forty. They were put into hats and passed around, and whatever was left, such as the skin, was very carefully collected and put into the red cloth and burned.

I invited the *chimanes* to visit me if they came to Todos Santos, and they both seemed pleased. We left about four in the morning, though they begged us to wait and eat of the sacrificed birds and to see the last skyrocket, which would be set off at dawn. I thanked them for their kindness in letting me come and said that we had a long trip ahead but that I would be back in a year.

Though I was exhausted, the return journey seemed short. The night smells, the sound of rustling in the bushes and among the trees, the flickering pine torch that Domingo carried, and the light it cast on the trees and on my companions, all contributed to my elation; but the real fuel that gave me strength was that I knew I had been a part of an esoteric ceremony, a ceremony that had probably been performed by the Mayans themselves long before Columbus discovered America. What I had witnessed would contribute greatly to my work. So far as I knew I was the first outsider who had ever been admitted to a Year Bearer ceremony.

CHAPTER TWELVE

We arrived home at noon, tired and dirty, to find Simona with her head hanging in shame. During lunch she told me a garbled story that made no sense, and I could see by her face that she had been drinking heavily. After lunch Margarita and Satero came to call. Margarita swept in like a queen with never a look at Simona, who was out in the kitchen. Her eyes were snapping with excitement and she could hardly wait to announce:

"Señorita, Satero and I like you. You are our neighbor and when you are away we watch your house for you. Since you have been away Simona has been sleeping in the kitchen with Juan, her friend. Sunday night she and Basilia entertained four Ladino men in your kitchen. Simona became very drunk and they all made much noise. I was sitting in my house with Satero when bang, something heavy landed on our roof, so we went out and saw in the darkness that the Ladinos were in your garden throwing rocks at your house. They were so drunk that the rocks were going in all directions, some even hitting our house. Satero sent for the police and the Ladinos escaped over your fence. The police found Simona so drunk that she fell on the earth. Basilia, who was slightly drunk, told the police that she had tried to persuade the Ladinos and Simona to go to Simona's house and drink, that it was not respectful to the Señorita to drink in her house, but they would not move. When Juan, Simona's man, arrived, the Ladinos left but threw rocks at the house because the girls were with an Indian and not with them. The police carried Simona home and told her they would report all to the Señorita when she returned."

Up to this time Satero hadn't had a chance to get in a word, but he nodded in agreement with all Margarita said.

Migration and the Transnationalization of Fiesta Customs in Todos Santos Cuchumatán, Guatemala

by
Jennifer L. Burrell

In the past decade, wage-labor migration to the United States has accelerated in Todos Santos Cuchumatán, a Mam Maya town in northwestern Guatemala, to the point that almost every family can claim at least one member who is living *elna* ("west," the Mam word used to refer to the United States).[1] While this pattern is now common throughout much of Mexico and Central America, local reactions to it have been quite varied (Binford, 1998; De Hart, 2002; Loucky and Moors, 2000; Gledhill, 1995; Rodriguez and Hagan, 2000; Rouse, 1995). Many places have become veritable ghost towns, while others are largely populated by women, children, and the elderly, in a landscape dotted with the new and vacant houses of migrants who hope to return one day to their home communities. Todos Santos, in comparison, though intensely affected by migration, has remained vibrant and dynamic.

As the wage-labor migration experience enters its second decade, the annual celebrations of All Saints Day and the Day of the Dead in Todos Santos have themselves become transnational social fields (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton, 1994) shaped by a continually shifting interplay of political economic and historical forces (García Canclini, 1988; Guss, 2000). Notable as a site for observing the imagining of community (Guss, 2000: 2)

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as it is in the process of happening (Bakhtin, 1984: 211), the fiesta exhibits the multistranded relations that link together societies of origin and settlement, crossing national boundaries (cf. Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton, 1994: 7, 27; Goldín, 2000; Kearney, 1996). It has consequently become the ground on which concepts of community and family are renegotiated and enacted and terms of belonging are (re)established.

While vulnerable and minimal in their positions as mostly undocumented and marginalized wage-labor immigrants in the United States, migrants can exert influence and change the cast and/or character of certain relations of power and ways of experiencing culture when they return to Todos Santos because of their relative economic strength and buying power and the ways in which these free them and their families from local labor relations. Seeking to concretize their continued status within the community, migrants frequently insist on perpetuating fiesta practices and traditions that mirror their understandings of the "authentic" and a common past, in the process maintaining customs and relationships that no longer reflect contemporary politics, structures of power, and experiences of domination. In doing so, they may uphold or subvert hierarchies of race, ethnicity, and local authority. In this way, many wage-labor migrants actively imagine and create the conditions for their eventual return to their home villages even as they build new communities and lives in the United States. At the same time, their families are complicit in, react to, and are reshaped by the creation and continued maintenance of these border-spanning social networks (cf. Landolt, 2001). Examining cultural practices and fiestas, I argue, shows that transnational migration is both part of ongoing processes of global integration and linked to the specifically local, challenging the traditional assumptions that cultures are subordinated in processes of globalization.

FIESTA CELEBRATION

One of the highlights of the renowned celebration of All Saints Day in Todos Santos Cuchumatán is the *corrida de caballos*—a running of the horses that takes place on November 1. From eight in the morning to four in the afternoon 10–20 men, who have been dancing to marimba and drinking through the night at the home of the team captain, ride back and forth on rented horses along a quarter-mile course, colored streamers and feathers flying from their hats, sheathed machetes fastened to their belts, their new clothing spattered with mud from the paths of the town and the track on which they are riding. A principal objective is to stay on their horses and finish the event. Large crowds gather to watch these men ride, closely observing who is

participating and how the men are dressed. In the late 1940s the ethnographer Maude Oakes (1951: 210) commented to the effect that at least part of the excitement of the fiesta was the hope (or fear) that the drunk riders might fall from their horses, and this is still true today. On November 2, the fiesta moves to the cemetery, where the dead are honored with marimba music, *bombas* (bags of gunpowder set off from canisters), and various other offerings, such as tortillas, sections of oranges, *cuxa* (a locally produced alcoholic beverage), *quetzalteca* (a popular commercially produced sugar-based alcohol), flowers, candles, and beer.

The fiesta is the time for Todosanteros to show off new clothing, handwoven by the women, as a testimony to prosperity and innovation. In the past, riders wore their best clothes, with red bandannas tied around their heads and over their mouths. While the teams of riders still frequently wear the hats bedecked with ribbons and streamers that Oakes (1951: 210) reported seeing in the 1940s, today men and women judge one another's clothing in terms of innovative weaving techniques, imaginative additions, original color combinations, and interpretations of older styles (Hendrickson, 1995).[2] The men who participate in the running of the horses often add some sort of personal touch to their ensembles for luck, to differentiate themselves, or both: a favorite leather jacket, a special pair of cowboy boots, or a Stetson-style hat rather than the woven straw hat with the colored leather band identified with the town. In 1999 one young Todosantero rode back and forth on his horse attired in a denim jacket, the back emblazoned with a large raised U.S. flag, a Stars-and-Stripes bandanna around his head, and a full-sized U.S. flag flung across his shoulders. In choosing to wear this ensemble during the most public spectacle of an occasion in which clothes are important, he distinguished himself, followed a popular fashion trend in the U.S.A. that year involving the flag, and made a statement about the terms of his participation in this event and about changing perceptions of migration. Local commentary on this unique outfit was both playful, respectful of the role that this young man had taken on in the fiesta, and suggestive of a level of support and recognition of the role of migration in contemporary life.

Once the end result of or itself an act of transgression, wage-labor migration to the United States is now widespread and deeply influential socially and economically in many Mayan communities. As distinctions are increasingly blurred between legal and illegal status and between early migrants who left Todos Santos in the late 1980s amidst a climate of fear and distrust sown during the 36-year civil war and those who went later, migrants have become local heroes and role models as well as new arbiters of style and consumption.

The flag-draped Todosantero was visiting Todos Santos briefly, had money, and was willing to spend it to engage in an act of community solidarity—participation in the corrida—that simultaneously reinforced his memories of and nostalgia for community. His presence and appearance also suggested that a major and visually memorable role in a special event concretized his affiliations and his membership in a community that increasingly crosses different kinds of spatial, social, and economic borders, social realities, and disparate experiences, all the while extending the limits of inclusion and belonging.

I use this narrative about one Todosantero (the only one I have seen dressed in such a way) to highlight the experience of men and women who return to their home villages with new life experiences and new sets of knowledge to bring to the arena in which notions of community and family are negotiated. These are actively expressed in the fiesta, changing the character and meaning of social, historic, and traditional relationships and subversions inherent in this special annual event. Traditions and practices associated with the fiesta are central to processes of culture, identity, and community and tie people in complex ways to a significant past. Shifting modes of participation indicate how migrants and those who remain in the village are embedded in changing capitalist relations, histories of war, violence, and post–Peace Accords initiatives and the political and economic marginalization they are subject to in both Guatemala and the U.S.A.

The fiesta provides an annual opportunity to examine how the re-visioning and reaffirmation of community emphasize the ways in which it is imagined from places beyond regional and national borders. Notions of belonging, exclusion, and inclusion are contested and refigured in Todos Santos and among groups of Todosanteros in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in Cancún, Mexico, and in Guatemala City. A particular quality of social experiences and relationships (Williams, 1977) underlies a common past as well an increasingly differentiated present.

The intensification of wage-labor migration and the role it plays in the persistence of traditional fiesta practices and rituals is particularly notable in a Mayan municipality that has frequently been referred to in popular guidebooks as the kind of place where time has stopped and the Mayan calendar is still in use. Wage-labor migration to the United States, hardly "traditional" or "authentic," may in fact be among the most important factors in maintaining certain practices of a common past.

Choices made by migrants regarding fiesta participation make clear the importance of both concretizing alliances and publicly enacting membership. In contrast to individuals and groups concerned with Pan-Mayanist

efforts (see Fischer, 2001; Fischer and McKenna Brown, 1996; Warren, 1998) to supplant community and linguistic group affiliations with a broader Indian identity (Fischer, 2001: 116), migrants in Todos Santos are interested in perpetuating the very local from transnational locations. Both migrants and Pan-Mayanists effectively claim historical legitimacy and authenticity. However, in the multiplicity of Mayan voices (Montejo, 2002) that seek to be heard in Guatemala today, while the role of the Pan-Mayanists is well documented, the importance of migrants as sociocultural as well as economic actors remains underexplored. Central to one substantive accord,[3] for example, has been the promotion of a "culture of peace," including the promotion of cultural identity. The end result is that the state ideally searches for "a culture," a series of practices to support or revitalize or a set of practices that can be used to represent the whole of a multicultural nation (see Burrell, 2005, for further discussion). Migrants actively support a set of cultural practices around the fiesta but do so to represent their own continued roles in their communities.

While migrant interventions may inadvertently contribute to transitional state goals, the terrain of the fiesta is at the same time an arena of *local* struggle and conflict. Individuals may use both participation in particular fiesta customs and the way in which the fiesta brings community members together to settle or to engage in disputes with one another and with outsiders.[4] This aspect of the fiesta and fiesta participation situates community not only at the crossroads of shared interests and identity but also in terms of local, national, and transnational discord.

MIGRATORY EXPERIENCES

Over the course of the past decade, migration to the United States has become commonplace in Todos Santos, as it has in other parts of Guatemala, Mexico, and Central America. For Todosanteros, however, the numbers of people leaving have recently increased to the point that almost one-third of the population of this rural and mountainous municipality resides in the United States—a phenomenon that Binford (1998) refers to as accelerated migration. Few jobs, modest salaries, and increased prices for land and the construction of houses as a result of migration have created a situation in which many young men—and, increasingly, young women—feel as though their only opportunity to secure a future for themselves and their children is to work in the United States.

Most migrants from Todos Santos find work in seasonal agriculture, landscaping, technology and furniture piecework, or poultry and meat process-

ing. Others work as domestics in Guatemala City or in hotels and restaurants in Cancún. Many young people now leave for the United States shortly after finishing their secondary school studies, and *coyotes* (transporters, often local men, who escort groups of undocumented immigrants to the U.S. border with Mexico and sometimes over the border) leave from Todos Santos up to several times a week during the busiest times of the year.[5]

Wage-labor migration is not new in Guatemala,[6] nor is it new to Todosanteros. By the 1940s, according to Oakes (1951), Todosanteros had already been working on the large coastal plantations for decades, and they were still doing so in the 1980s, as illustrated in the films of Olivia Carrescia (1982, 1989).[7] Oakes (1951: 209) comments that plantation agents roamed the streets during the fiesta she attended in 1947, looking for drunken victims to sign up for work. Bossen (1984: 66) notes that in the 1970s villagers remarked that seasonal migration was so widespread that the whole population was present only in late October, for the harvest and the fiesta, and at Easter time. Data collected by Bossen (1984: 68) in the mid-1970s support the fact that seasonal wage migration at that time was nearly as prevalent as migration to the United States is now, with 28 percent of rural women, 50 percent of rural men, and 23 percent of urban women and men traveling to the plantations each year.[8]

The civil war further disrupted local patterns of work and labor possibilities for many Todosanteros. During the early 1980s curfews were imposed that made it difficult to work in the milpas, and the army burned many cultivated fields. Mandatory service in civil patrols meant that wage-labor migration outside of the village required arrangements to pay for replacements or increased reliance on male family members. Others who had fled to refugee camps or nearby cities in Guatemala took whatever work they could find: in restaurants, as porters, and as domestic help. While some Todosanteros traveled to the United States by the mid-1980s, most families did not have the economic resources to send members, and few coyotes existed during those years to help people across the border. Many of those who managed to cross the border initially went to Florida and California, where they joined thousands of other refugees in competing for day labor.

What is novel about the contemporary trend of migration is the increasing distance that people travel for work, the borders they must cross to find it, and the interventions they make in community life to concretize belonging and identity while continuing to live transnationally. Todos Santos has in many ways become a transnational village as defined by Levitt (2000: 7): a large proportion of a relatively small community has left and resettled in nearly the same place in the United States; those still in Todos Santos depend on remittances; migrants and nonmigrants know each other and each other's families

well; as a result, there is a clear sense of bounded solidarity and a network that monitors social interactions. Despite a drain of middle-aged and younger people, a crucial difference between Todos Santos and other such places in the region is that Todos Santos seems locally flourishing and vibrant, with a largely localized but highly developed institutional bridge between home and migrant communities. While tourism is at least somewhat responsible for this, the remittances, construction, shops, telephones, and new transport companies resulting from migration have not only improved the quality of life for many in the home village but also cemented migrants' long-term connections to Todos Santos and their intent to return to it. Literally and metaphorically, the increasingly built-up center is concrete testimony of how migration has affected the physical landscape.[9]

The unintended costs of migration are subtler. Women effectively head many households in the absence of men, something that had occurred in Todos Santos, albeit to a lesser degree, when the war left many women widowed.[10] This situation has brought about changes in the way in which men and women relate to each other in general, shifts in gendered divisions of labor both in households and at the level of the municipality, and a gradual movement toward encompassing different kinds of social situations and relations. The meaning of this loss of the traditional family and family life, central to social relations among the Maya, will become increasingly clear as a generation of children raised without fathers or, increasingly, without both parents reaches adulthood.

Recently, women have been migrating almost as frequently as men, leaving their children with grandparents, sisters, or hired women. As a result, both men and women are renegotiating the role of parenthood. When these parents return for the fiesta, they have a condensed relationship with their children. With little time and high emotional expectations, the one thing they can do is spend money. The character of this relationship at the fiesta has fueled increasingly bigger and more expensive video and carnival games, Ferris wheels, and temporary movie halls where tapes of films are shown at volumes so high that they can be heard in surrounding *aldeas*. For some of these migrant parents and their children who remain in Todos Santos, the activity that they can most comfortably engage in together is watching and discussing the latest violent action film. Children in this position aspire to the life led by their parents, who often insist that they finish school first before making the journey to the United States. Much like the brutal journey across borders, the liminality of living as an undocumented worker, the drastically reduced quality of life, and the cruel and often demeaning ways in which migrants are treated are social costs that remain unspoken.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF MIGRATION

In spite of or perhaps because of these costs, Todosanteros are rethinking the meaning of family and migration. This process is best illustrated by two migrants' own words, bracketing the decade in which wage-labor migration has touched the lives of almost all Todosanteros. In the early 1990s, when there were few Todosanteros in the United States, one young man, Gregorio Gerónimo, who first traveled to the United States in the late 1980s, commented on his experience as a wage-labor migrant in the following way (Carrescia, 1994):

> Up here, I have all this stuff, you know. The problem is just being by myself. In Todos Santos and Guatemala, we spend more time with the family together. My mother—she's crying. It's like, "He's dead" [referring to himself]. If nothing happened, no problem with the army, the guerrillas, we don't worry about money, we're happy to be together. But comes the problem. Big destruction. They kill the family. That's the army. "Hey," they say, "you're Indian. What are you doing here? What do you want?" Here, you see, you're independent, you see, you walk wherever you want. Nobody's bothering you. They still have the *patrullo civil* in Todos Santos, because it's the same thing. The changes with the government, you know, we have new government, new president, but they're still killing like before. It's not like '84, '82, but it's not a good life.

While Gregorio commented on the damage and sadness inspired by his own migration and recognized that political and structural violence had damaged his family, by the mid-1990s there was a sense that family and community were in the United States already and that independence from the intergenerational family and social ties that bound one locally—especially in the case of women—was something useful. In this 1996 quote from a woman who was left in Todos Santos with her own three children, two of her sister's, and, eventually, four of her brother's, a new sense of family and possibility in the wake of more than a decade of migration emerges:

> My sister lives in Michigan. She earns her own money there. She built this house. But her children are here. She misses them but she has to work. . . . The life of women here in Todos Santos is very difficult, very difficult. There's nothing for me here, [only] weaving, cooking, the children, errands, but there, I can live with my brothers and sister and work to earn my own money. Then, I can build my house. I am going to return to be with my children, but I can live there for a few years and they [my brothers and sisters] will help me to find work. My children will have a better life if I go, and my life will be easier.

This gendered perspective acknowledges that there is family outside the physical space of Todos Santos and that by migrating one can legitimately

escape from overburdened or overregimented lives, parents' homes, strict social control, and responsibility for one's own children and those of siblings by migrating. Without a husband and with children to care for, to this woman the United States represented a place that was no longer lonely but a temporary refuge from the various responsibilities that had been heaped on her as a result of the absence of her siblings.

Women's migration, far from mirroring the migration of men, takes on a character of its own, concentrated on their roles in transnational household economies. Migration, as the words of these individuals demonstrate, moved in a decade from a desperate necessity for the livelihood of one's family or a political necessity to a choice and a social mechanism reflecting contemporary global processes on the local level. Households and extended kinship connections themselves are now part of transnational social networks that increasingly widen the possibilities for individual choice.

More worrisome to some Todosanteros is the use of migration as a way of avoiding local responsibilities, conflicts, and disputes. For example, in a number of cases men have left behind pregnant women whom they refuse to acknowledge or support. In another case, a couple of men who were wanted for questioning after lynchings left immediately for the United States (see Burrell, n.d.). One community leader expressed concern over this: "Migration is now the vice of our people."

Migration also puts other kinds of pressures on those who remain in the village. Other aspects of what migration has wrought locally—increased social differentiation and class stratification between those who migrate and those who remain in the village, lack of possibilities for those who stay, increased prices for land and for construction of new houses, more local crime—mean that migration is now claiming some of the best-educated and most productive members of the community. People who have been central to community life must leave if they are to create opportunities for themselves and their children. Recently, so many local Mam/Spanish bilingual teachers were in the United States that young monolingual graduates from Huehuetenango, the departmental capital, were coming to teach these classes. Teachers cite the impossibility of saving or improving one's life on their salaries, an observation supported by massive teachers' strikes in Guatemala in the first half of 2003.

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND RELATIONSHIPS

As more people migrate to Grand Rapids or Oakland or Boston, much of what they think of as community comes increasingly from their experiences

with other Todosanteros in the United States with whom they share nostalgia, memories, social gatherings, and gossip. In established communities in the United States, Todosanteros speak Mam with each other and wear the clothing particular to their town when they gather. These are powerful tools of the idiom of community. Todosanteros in the United States share a perception of common experience, including the difficulties of arriving, settling, and finding work while maintaining contact with their families at home, that is not necessarily preempted by internal differences. This perception, following Gavin Smith (1999: 206), is fitted first into a context of particular local struggle and then into a wider field of conflict that provides the possibilities, idioms, and opportunities for local expression. Whenever they gather in Grand Rapids for soccer games or send money and gifts home for the fiesta, migrants share a form of knowledge and a way of expressing it that comes from the direct extension of local experience and what Raymond Williams calls "intimate culture" to a wider, transnational field.

Even as the idiom of community is reinforced through contact with other Todosanteros in the United States, these communities have also become additional forums for addressing intracommunal or intrafamilial disagreements, disputes, conflicts, and struggles that are sustained in multisited and increasingly more complex ways. While these most often erupt over the kinds of things Maya have struggled over for generations—land, politics, and access to resources—they assume new resonance as they are filtered through the lens of migration. Because many conflicts emerge from a concern that migrants act according to community norms and show respect for local hierarchies and power structures, fiesta participation gains added importance as an acceptable and accessible way for migrants to dismiss this anxiety.

More recently, conflicts have been intergenerational in nature, arising especially in relation to local problems with gangs, which include some young men who have worked in the United States and others who have family members who have done so. For example, one young man, nearly lynched in Todos Santos in 1997 ostensibly for activities related to his alleged leadership of a local gang, was stabbed during a bar fight in Michigan. After recovering in a U.S. hospital, he returned to Todos Santos, resuming the type of behavior that had supposedly led to these problems.[11] His nemesis, who allegedly headed a second gang operating out of the town, was deported from the United States after committing a petty crime in relation to their struggle.

People also continue to observe the differences that they lived in Todos Santos. As far as the fiesta is concerned, if they cannot be physically present, they send decorations for their *cantones* (neighborhoods) in addition to video cameras, videotapes, Instamatics, and film for recording all of the major events in which their family members and friends participate for viewing

later in the United States. Families that have nursed intergenerational disputes in Todos Santos continue to hold these grudges in the United States and may settle in different communities. However, now anchored at multiple sites, migrants are united at least partially through shared interest in what goes on at home. Accordingly, other kinds of distinctions that may have separated people in home communities—Maya and Ladino, urban and rural-based, Todosanteros and residents of neighboring villages—are sometimes erased.

The fact that migrants move back and forth with various kinds of emotional and physical baggage and that the fiesta incorporates spaces for their participation makes community something that continues to be relevant and central for them. This, I argue, is central to the fact that wage-labor migration, even if it lasts for decades, is always considered temporary. The comment of one man encapsulates this sentiment: "This *pueblo* [Todos Santos] is where I have my roots and my future."

SUBVERSIONS, CRITIQUES, AND AUTHENTICITIES IN FIESTA CELEBRATIONS

The ways in which migrants selectively remember the past in order to shape their present in often hostile circumstances and suboptimal living conditions emphasize community and a strong sense of place. However, migrants are in constant dialogue with their families and other people in their village, who respond to them from a different set of recent experiences and histories. In this sense, migrants' selective memories of community and daily life are also bounded by their ongoing dialogues and relationships with their families and friends in and from Todos Santos. Therefore, their return visits are crucial. Their central concern is affirming their own roles within a community in which they no longer experience everyday life and validating how and what they remember.

The everyday quality of life in factories and fields of Oakland, Florida, and Boston reinforces the ideas and expectations that migrants have about community and belonging. Nostalgia is about the remembered flows and rhythms of past daily life. It is about memories of a common past patterned by the exigencies of contemporary life. These memories compete and are contested in relation to their authenticity in the arena where ideas about and terms of inclusion and belonging are shaped and reshaped. In this arena, priorities are reordered and classifications are reworked in order to incorporate increasing social and economic differentiation and broader experience.

Subversions of everyday life and relationships have historically provided a release from the daily petty humiliation, degradation, and domination imposed by the state, the church, and hierarchies of race, ethnicity, gender, and class, changing the typical order of things. During the fiesta and built into its central events is a suspension of the kinds of hierarchies that people live with and the power that they struggle against. However, that usual order, as part of the everyday, is now sometimes embraced by migrants, since it is part of the shared and authentic past. Money and experiences of migration have changed the local cast of much of the petty economic domination, and the ethnic hierarchy that placed Maya on the bottom is less rigid in Todos Santos now as a result of Ladino flight during the war and such other socioeconomic factors as tourism and NGO funding that privileges indigenous over Ladino Todosanteros.[12] Many migrants are relatively sophisticated as a result of living within different systems of power and struggle and are wealthy by local standards. Nevertheless, because history is a common denominator and considered authentic, it is powerful. There is efficacy in the way the ancestors did things, even though contexts have changed. Because certain practices and customs are understood as authentic, it makes sense to migrants to align themselves with these and perpetuate them. Therefore, former subversions have shifted to authenticating moves for migrants that are powerful not in terms of reversing what happens in the everyday but because they are a direct link to a shared past. As a result, certain customs and practices themselves, like the corrida or the Dance of the Conquistadors, become sites of contestation, especially with respect to material culture, as it is the most accessible for interventions in terms of authenticity and memory.

Under these circumstances, everyday social relations themselves, along with the networks of power in which they are embedded, are transformed into something desirable and even prestigious. The pleasure of sitting down and eating with the family, drinking beers with buddies in the cantinas, strutting around in a new set of clothes that one's mother has woven while wearing new Nike sneakers or cowboy boots, and buying eggs from the man blamed for injuring one's uncle in a drunken brawl all fulfill the yearning for the everyday experience of the present and the past. And yet, these are precisely the experiences that migrants can barely apprehend as guests on short visits. Instead, special meals are cooked for them every day with a rotating cast of family, neighbors, and other visitors, they are obliged to invite friends to cantinas for beers, and in the constant whirlwind of activity there is no opportunity to slip into the rhythm of quiet work in the milpa or commune with the spirits of ancestors.

Although the All Saints Day fiesta in Todos Santos is nominally associated with church holidays, the spectacle of it is largely outside the realm of

the church. In addition, there are holidays in North America and Mexico (Halloween and Day of the Dead) around the same time, and material aspects of these (orange plastic pumpkins and elaborate skull candies) have now permeated the fiesta in Todos Santos. This supports the idea that authenticity is of particular importance to the migrants who return to celebrate with their friends and families.

CORRIDA

The corrida was formerly referred to as the *corrida de gallos*, "the rooster race" (cf. Oakes, 1951: 209). Live roosters were tied by their feet to two ropes stretched across the road, and as teams of riders passed this point on their horses they competed to see how many chicken heads they could pull off. While the rooster aspect has now been minimized, some riders still observe it during the last half hour of the corrida.

The corrida is sometimes described as a re-creation of the arrival of the invading Spaniards in the valley of Todos Santos: drunken, screaming, with boots on their feet, swords in their belts, and feathers in their hats. The Guatemalans who claim ancestry from these Spaniards, called Ladinos, happen to be the owners of the horses that are rented for the corrida. On the afternoon of October 31, the horses arrive in town from the primarily Ladino town of Chiantla at the foot of the Cuchumatanes. It is a festive moment, and people gather along the main street to watch. The horses are driven to the center of town, and the participants in the corrida come to take them home.

The Ladino owner of a horse ridden in the corrida is historically an honored figure in the fiesta pantheon of participants in the event. He and his family live with the rider and his family for at least two days, are special guests at all meals, and are served the best food and drinks. On the night before the corrida, as the teams of riders (usually of up to 14 men) dance to the marimba, drink, and smoke while dressing and preparing for their ride the following morning, the horse owner may also be present. Dressing for the corrida is extremely ceremonial, largely because high levels of alcohol consumption turn it from an event of skill or showmanship to one of luck and chance—under such circumstances, a misplaced machete, it is believed, could make the difference between life and death, a good experience and a negative one. A horse owner may be invited to help in this task, depending on the individual beliefs of the riders. The owners of the horses are offered special places from which to view the corrida and are escorted by the wives and families of the riders. Formerly, part of this relationship was respect that Maya paid to Ladinos in an ethnic hierarchy in which Maya were on the bottom. It was a

way of thanking the Ladinos for renting their horses to Maya and for attending the corrida. Another aspect was economic: a horse was a huge expense for an agricultural worker or day laborer, who might not earn the equivalent in an entire year. As a result, the Ladino owner of the horse and his family were treated graciously and generously as honored guests in an attempt to cushion the blow if anything happened to the horse or the rider. If there was trouble with the horse, it would be a long time before the Todosanteros would be able to replace it. If the man died and the horse survived, his family would have difficulty paying off the rental. As one Todosantero commented, "If the two [the horse and the man] die, it's better. If only one of them dies, there's trouble."

Transnationalism, however, has a way of evening out some hierarchies even as it creates others. Relative to historical ethnic hierarchies, as I have pointed out, the riders are well-off by local standards. Most of them could easily buy several horses if they desired. Although the economic basis for honoring the Ladino owner has long since passed, maintaining this custom is preserving an active link to a shared past and is an authentic act amidst a sea of change. By observing this relationship a migrant who lives in the United States full-time and has children who have not learned Mam (his parents' language) can feel as though he is having the same experience as his grandfather had 50 years ago. The prestige of the past authenticates the present. From the vantage point of shared migration experiences, respecting and perpetuating these kinds of relationships may function as a means for Ladinos to gain access to local networks and privileges, concretizing contemporary political and economic relationships.

Formerly, riders received a spiritual calling to take part in the corrida and would gather with a captain in whose house meetings, preparations, and festivities took place.[13] Although some still claim to receive a spiritual calling, when asked why they participate men are more likely to answer, "for my community/town."[14] Because many of the participants are migrants, what this means these days seems, as I have argued, to be wrapped up in the concern with the maintenance of community across borders, experiences, and increasing social and economic differentiation. While teams have generally been organized by kin groups and composed of family members and/or people who live in the same cantón or barrio, now they include men who have settled in the same community in the United States, who may also be kin or neighbors. Todosanteros now meet in bars in the Latino barrios of U.S. cities and discuss their impending participation in the corrida, making plans and sending money to the women who support them in their home community (wives, sisters, daughters) to begin the preparations. Recently, if men are

unable to attend, they will finance sons', brothers', or other relatives' participation in the corrida.

Mesoamericanists have historically commented on the leveling or equalizing function of these fiestas; individuals can never get too far ahead economically before they are called upon to divert substantial resources to fiestas or other community celebrations or practices (Cancian, 1992; Brintnall, 1979; W. Smith, 1977). Migration twists the meaning of these expenditures in new ways: the role of financial equalization is reduced, but expenditures are now more significant socially—that is, a role for a migrant may be seen as concrete proof of one's continued alliance with and desire to belong to the community, honoring a common past while seeking to create building blocks for a shared future.

THE BAILE DE LOS CONQUISTADORES

The Baile de los Conquistadores (Dance of the Conquerors) was historically performed during the two main days of the fiesta and a month later, at the beginning of December. Two teams of 20 individuals, including one woman and one girl, each ideally dance. The version danced in Todos Santos is distinguished by a "dog" character. The dance mocks and critiques the plantation or hacienda system and the hierarchy of owners, overseers, foremen, their wives, their treating the animals better than the workers, and so on. The dancers wear elaborate costumes representing the ornate clothing of the Spanish invaders and white-faced, blue-eyed masks with blond hair. In this dance white people in general as well as Ladinos are ridiculed and made the butt of jokes; hierarchies of plantation authority and race are reversed. Only during this dance could Todosanteros mock the systems of economic domination that imprisoned them for the rest of the year. The dance took on a particularly wrenching significance during the years when many men had taken cash advances from plantation agents in order to celebrate the fiesta and would be loaded into trucks several days later to begin a period of grueling and low-paid work from which they would be lucky to bring home enough money to feed their families for the rest of the year and pay off their debts. This was the case until well into the 1980s, as documented by Carrescia (1982; 1989) and Bossen (1984). These days, the dance no longer reflects the dominant work experience of most Todosanteros, although some of the kinds of hierarchies mocked may be prevalent in their working lives. In lieu of heading off to the coastal plantations to pick cotton or coffee, now Todosanteros are more likely to arrange for a coyote to take them to the United States. Another aspect of the dance is that it is a group activity that ideally

spans a period of four to six months including preparations, practicing intricate steps, traveling together to rent costumes, and so forth. This time frame means that migrants cannot easily participate.

In 1997 the dance was not performed because no one wanted to take on the expense of costume rental. That year people commented to me that the lack of a dance saddened them, as it was a poignant reminder of *la violencia*, when Todosanteros had neither the heart nor the money to perform it. In 1999 a donation of costumes was made by a national cultural preservation organization, and without the burden of rental there was a revalidation of customs around costuming that had not been practiced in years.[15] Without this expense, people were willing to dance, but participating in a team of dancers was not necessarily seen or experienced as a sacred calling that people received and prepared for together throughout the year. One woman remarked that other Todosanteros she worked with disapproved of her participation in the dance. For these kinds of reasons, and with more money than time, migrants can generate more prestige from participation in the corrida. During the fiestas of 2000 and 2001, the dance was performed as the project of a resident community leader interested in cultural revitalization. In 2002 he chose instead to participate in the corrida, and the dance was not performed.

In considering the fiesta as a site where changing labor struggles and transnationalized work experiences are expressed, I have emphasized the strategic employment of authenticity and the power of nostalgia as essential to pursuing continued community identity and belonging. Embedded in this quest is the potential for substantial local political power. Todosanteros who are capable of bridging the narratives and practices of the past with visions of a shared future that encompass wage-labor migration experiences that now touch all Todosanteros hold considerable power. Seen in this way, the stakes involved in migrant participation in fiesta practices are significant. As migrants increasingly enter the local political landscape, the ongoing ties they have maintained with community and the shared memory of their participation become critically important.

CONCLUSIONS: THE LOCAL, THE NATIONAL, AND THE TRANSNATIONAL IN THE FIESTA

While wage-migration experiences in the United States are now part of academic and popular discourses and debates, migrant experiences in their towns of origin, particularly their cultural interventions, have received less attention. I have argued that understanding this aspect of migration is central to exploring strategies for and meanings of the maintenance of community

and understanding the fluidity of power, politics, and conflict across borders, showing a wider range of migrant participation in cultural, political, and economic life. Fiesta participation is a site for community building and for envisioning shared pasts and futures.

Ethnographies of migration and migratory experiences shed light on both the changing nature of political economy and the influence of transnational experiences of late capitalism and the subsequent transformations in social relations of production and reproduction on community, culture, and identity. Interventions in fiesta practices central to the imagining of community are one way to assess these processes in various localities. As migrants fashion transnational lives, households, and practices in attempts to concretize local identities, they may become—inadvertently or not—actors as important socioculturally as they are economically, fulfilling a crucial if unacknowledged role in the transitional state.

While I have used migrant participation in fiesta practices to comment on local belonging, neoliberal policies also raise issues about national belonging in which citizenship and the rights that it confers on or withholds from individuals or groups contribute to significant incorporation or marginalization. Migration has had the paradoxical effect of, on the one hand, bringing migrants into the nexus of the state—passports and other substantiating paperwork (Poole, 2004) are required for obtaining working papers in the United States—and, on the other, removing them from national jurisdictions and other networks of power. In this latter sense, they are in a unique position to challenge local and national authority and power. However, as I have shown, they may transcend differences and hierarchies of authority while upholding practices that contribute to them or support former relationships of power for reasons of authenticity, to strengthen connections with a common past, and to build political capital for the future.

Referring to the particular juxtapositions that face anthropologists and other cultural wanderers, Gavin Smith has commented on the phenomenon of coming home and finding no home there, something that he claims migrants do all the time. Breaking down the meaning of "home" into physical and abstract parts, Smith (1999: xii) suggests that one may be tied to a space and yet find it unrecognizable. The realm of material culture and of the fiesta and the claiming and privileging of a shared past and an "authentic" set of customs is one arena in which the cultural and physical upheaval inherent in migration and transnationalism can be, if not circumvented, at least channeled in mutually productive ways for migrants and for community members who remain behind.

NOTES

1. Mam is one of the four most widely spoken languages in Guatemala. In addition to references to people who have gone *elna*, the word is also used to refer to the origin of mail, telephone calls, telegrams, etc., that come from the United States.

2. Such innovations are frequently a commentary on the prosperity of one's household. If a woman is a good weaver and able to devote herself to creating new color combinations and designs, her labor in other household sectors can be spared.

3. The substantive accords on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples and on Socioeconomic Aspects and the Land.

4. The role of alcohol consumption in fueling some of this must not be underestimated.

5. Most commonly, Todosanteros borrow money from relatives and/or moneylenders who have already made the journey, usually between US$3,000 and $7,000, paying them back within their first years of work in the United States.

6. The tradition of wage-labor migration is a long one for most Maya. By the time the Liberal reforms of the 1870s introduced schemes to mobilize workers for the vast plantations on Guatemala's coastal plain, forced labor for both the Spanish (in land and labor grants given to Spanish conquerors and settlers) and the Ladino elites seemed to many Maya just one more aspect of established custom (McCreery, 1994: 265). In fact, many Maya eventually worked on the plantations to avoid having their land privatized—a situation that also had labor-extracting consequences, as they would be forced to pay rent with their labor. Under General Jorge Ubico, an intense struggle to control the rural populations' labor power ensued in the form of an overhaul of the rural labor laws. Although ostensibly putting an end to such customs as debt servitude, the payment of wage advances, and the restriction of the time workers would serve to work off a debt to two years, new laws and the redefinitions they offered served to make things worse. Debt servitude was replaced by a vagrancy law specifically intended for agriculture, and a "vagrant" was defined as any man (women were not subject to the law) without sufficient property to provide an "adequate" income, anyone who contracted for work on a plantation but failed to comply, and anyone without a contract for agricultural labor who did not cultivate a certain amount of specific crops each year, and few Maya had access to enough land to reach these goals (McCreery, 1994: 317). Subsequent clarification of this law taxed men in terms of labor days, and the majority of indigenous men ended up owing between 100 and 150 days, which were recorded in an identity booklet that all agricultural laborers were required to carry and in which employers would record the number of days worked for wages. State control was also strengthened under Ubico, and locally elected officials were replaced with state-appointed *intendentes* (cf. McCreery, 1994; Handy, 1994). Old men in Todos Santos still speak of the forced labor they did at this time, particularly on the railroad line constructed from the coast to Huehuetenango.

7. Carrescia shows people signing up with labor recruiters and later piling into the trucks that would take them to the coast, especially in the days following the fiesta, when many people were broke.

8. Approximately 20 families moved there full-time, returning for fiestas and sending their teenaged children back to Todos Santos for secondary school (see Perera, 1989). In addition to wage-labor migration, before and during the war Todosanteros were also moving to other places in Guatemala to take advantage of land distribution, particularly in the Ixcán, in northern Guatemala (see Manz, 1988), and later, La Rochela, on the southern coast (Perera, 1989).

9. Census data indicate that between 1994 and 2002 the number of houses increased more quickly (42 percent) than the population (36 percent), most notably in the rural areas of Todos Santos. There has been a tremendous increase (65 percent) in the number of uninhabited houses

in rural areas and only a 13 percent increase in the number of abandoned houses, probably indicating that migrants are building houses they do not yet live in.

10. Between 1994 and 2000, when I conducted the bulk of my fieldwork, more of the woman-headed households I encountered were the result of migration than the direct result of war. Census data for 2002 indicates that 36 percent of urban households and 24 percent of rural households in Todos Santos are female-headed. The majority of these households specify that a partner is living elsewhere, which in all likelihood indicates that men have migrated. These percentages are consistent with estimates I made during my fieldwork. A peak in the number of widows between the ages of 45 and 59 is probably related to deaths during the war.

11. This young man was killed by the national civil police (PNC). The circumstances surrounding these actions are unclear.

12. Many businesses and buildings along the main street, almost entirely owned by Ladinos prior to the 1980s, are now owned by indigenous families.

13. See Oakes (1951: 214–221) for a more in-depth discussion.

14. However, the sense of danger is also ever-present. For this reason, for example, some teachers told me that they would not participate in the corrida. They perceived their roles in the community as too valuable to take on this level of risk.

15. The captain put on his costume and, accompanied by a marimba, visited the house of each dancer in turn. The dancers emerged from their houses fully attired, and all the team members danced and drank.

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Guatemala's Altos de Chiantla:

Changes on the High Frontier

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Abstract: The Altos de Chiantla in the Cuchumatán Mountains represents an economic and environmental anomaly compared with areas surrounding it in highland Guatemala and Mesoamerica in general. For example, this cold and remote plateau region is dominated by sheep and potato production instead of maize, with maize being synonymous with surrounding Maya ethno-linguistic groups. Floristically, the area is also unique compared with surrounding areas. The Altos de Chiantla plateau is dominated by páramo grasslands and scattered groves of juniper, pines, and fir forests. Therefore, economically and environmentally, this area more resembles Andean South America as opposed to northern Central America. And while long-standing activities such as sheep ranching persist in this region; cultural, economic, and environmental changes are taking place. This paper discusses general landscape changes in this region, with an emphasis on the various impacts that modernization such as remittances and agricultural development projects have brought.
Key words: Altos de Chiantla plateau; sheep ranching, potato farming, remittances.

Introduction

The Altos de Chiantla, a high plateau in Guatemala's Sierra de los Cuchumatanes, presents a fascinating landscape anomaly compared with the surrounding areas in highland Guatemala and Mesoamerica in general (Figure 1). In the first instance, this cold and remote plateau lies above the elevation limits of maize production, but supports several thousand rural Guatemalans. Maize cultivation and consumption is synonymous

with Maya culture throughout Mesoamerica. Instead, the people of the Altos de Chiantla region rely for their livelihoods on sheep and potatoes. In terms of natural flora, the area also presents several anomalies. The Altos de Chiantla plateau is dominated by páramo grasslands and scattered groves of juniper, pines, and fir forests found among rock outcrops and karst sinkholes (Figure 2). The páramo represents the most northern extent of this ecoregion in Central America. The Altos de Chiantla was also only one of two areas in Central America that were glaciated during the late Pleistocene, the other being the Cordillerra de Talamanca in Costa Rica (Lachniet 2004). As a result, culturally, economically, and environmentally, the area more resembles parts of Andean South America as opposed to northern Central America. The uniqueness of the Altos de Chiantla has been commented on by scholars, travelers, and explorers for centuries (Sapper 1894; Termer 1927; Ricketson 1940; McBryde 1947).

This paper presents an overview of landscape history, as well as landscape changes presently taking place in the Altos de Chiantla. This paper employs a political ecological conceptual framework to examine landscape change in the high Cuchumatanes Mountains in general and the Altos de Chiantla specifically. Political ecology is guided by the perspective, that to understand local environmental and cultural changes, one must expand the scale of inquiry to understand outside, larger-scale forces (i.e globalization) that influence local scale (see Zimmerer and Bassett 2003, Robbins 2004 for surveys of the field). The local landscape is not a passive actor in this situation, with change only emanating from "above." Local cultures re-make and resist global influences (Scott 1985), but in most instances, change, in various forms, is driven by outside factors such as regional, national, and global markets. Lawrence Levine notes that, culture (generally

speaking) is not a "fixed condition", but instead "a process: the product of interaction between past and present" and as we discuss a product of the interaction between local and global (Levine 1978, cited in Cobb 1992:x). Similarly, local environments are not passive in the multi-scale process. Nature plays an active role in shaping human–environmental dynamics, even in the face of global pressures (Zimmer and Bassett 2003). This is especially true in the Altos de Chiantla, where high elevations limit the choices local people have regarding land use practices.

We interviewed 24 adult male residents for this paper using a standardized set of questions about land use, cultural, and economic changes in the area. We focused on a small number of individuals to draw out more details about landscape change. Most questions were open ended, leaving flexibility for the informant to answer as he wished. Sometimes females were present and contributed, but our conversations focused on males because of the controversy of males interviewing females in this conservative landscape (in some households). Combined, the authors have spent about 19 months in the field, much of it in the region discussed in the paper, over the past decade. Interviews were conducted in the field with farmers/ranchers in the summer of 2005, with follow up visits in individuals' homes in January 2006 by the second author. Interviews took place in and around Chemal, Nimjul , Cinabal, San Nicolás, Quilén Novillo and Huito. This research is part of a larger interdisciplinary study which examines past and present cultural and environmental change in the Cuchumatanes by the authors and several other colleagues.

A Unique Mesoamerican Environment

From the Pan American Highway in western Guatemala, the Cuchumatanes Mountains loom in the distance, appearing as a great east-west running wall. As one

leaves the department capital Huehuetenango (1900 m.a.s.l.) and begins to travel up the steep wall along a switch back highway into the Cuchumatanes, Mesoamerica slowly recedes. Maize gives way to fields of wheat, oats, and eventually potatoes, while scattered groves of pines and juniper replace coffee farms and pine-oak mid-elevation forests. Eventually the road reaches the ridge top at La Capellanía, whereupon the landscape opens up as you enter páramo proper.

A large ice cap, estimated to be some ~60 km^2 in diameter covered the high Altos de Chiantla plateau during the late Pleistocene, resulting in modern complexes of boulder-studded moraines and outwash plains (Lachniet 2004) (Figure 3). As a result of the high elevation and geologic past, the floristic community also contributes to the making of this unique Mesoamerican landscape. The origin of the Cuchumatanes dates to the Cretaceous, forming an ancient core of Central America (Steyermark 1950). Steyermark (1950: 368) observes: "Upon these old rocks are found some of the most remarkable genera endemic to Guatemala…" This high plateau is dominated by bunch grasses (*Agrostit tolucensis*) and groves of juniper (*Juniperus standleyi*), pines (*Pinus hartwegii*), remnant fir forests (*Abies guatemalensis*), along with scattered *Agave hurteri*, some planted on fence rows (Islebe et al. 1995). While this open, grassy landscape, crowded with sheep, might not look unique in the Andes, the plateau is an outlier in Mesoamerica.

During the past 400 years, and perhaps even earlier, humans have played an important role in shaping this environment. The environmental impact of large numbers of sheep and associated pasture burning on the plateau's vegetation begs the question: how natural is the Altos de Chiantla plateau's grasslands? Might the plateau's grasslands

have been eventually replaced by trees during the Holocene as the earth warmed during the past 10,000 years? Given the glacial past and high elevation, obviously some natural alpine grassland existed prior the introduction of sheep in the early colonial period. But have sheep and also occasional pasture burning expanded the "range" of the plateau's páramo grasslands in areas where trees might naturally occupy? According to elderly informants, trees were "more common" in the past, but how extensive is unknown. Twenty-two of our informants claimed trees were more noticeable and accessible in the past (the "past" varied, depending on their age). The human role in the creation of this ecoregion is an important and ongoing theme in páramo-related research throughout its range (Baslev and Luteyn 1991).

Early Perceptions and Uses

The Sierra de los Cuchumatanes in general and the high plateau specifically, remains little studied and therefore least understood pre-Columbian Maya landscapes in Mesoamerica (Lovell 2005). Little systematic historical and pre-historical human-environmental research or archaeological work has taken place in the Cuchumatanes, and especially in the upper elevations (Smith and Kidder 1951; Lovell 2005). It is not clear as to why this highland region in Guatemala has long been neglected by archaeologists and other researchers, for at least 140 Maya archaeological sites in the area have been identified (Lovell 2005).

It is unclear how Pre-Columbian peoples used and impacted the Altos de Chiantla plateau. If one examines maps indicating pre-Columbian sites and settlements on the eve of the Spanish conquest (see Lovell 2005), it is clear that the plateau area supported few permanent residents and no settlements of any significant size. But surely natives

exploited certain resources such as salt and firewood (Lovell, personal communication). Again though, the plateau appeared to have few if any permanent settlements. There are a few terraced areas on the plateau, but it is unclear their exact origin. According to informants, terraces date to the "old times", which usually refers to the colonial era.

It was not until the Spanish arrived that the high plateau became a *commercially* exploitable and desirable landscape. The Spanish introduced sheep and new varieties of potatoes, both perfectly adapted to the high plateau's vegetation and boggy soils in the case of potatoes. After sheep were introduced, the plateau became a center for sheep production in colonial Central America (Lovell 1983, 2005). There has been a debate within geography and other disciplines about whether or not potatoes arrived in Mesoamerica before the Spanish via diffusion through the Central American isthmus. Were they indeed, introduced after the Conquest? McBryde (1947:140), in his classic study of the cultural geography of southwest Guatemala, claims that a desirable local potato, grown by farmers in Todos Santos (a Mam Maya town below the plateau to the west), was probably a pre-Columbian introduction. McBryde (1947) states that the potatoes grown by the Todos Santeros were more or less in a wild, weedy state. Perhaps nearby farmers traveled to and from the plateau and their potato fields from nearby towns such as Todos Santos, or they semi-propagated the weedy potato variety mentioned by McBryde (1947) near or in their maize fields at lower elevations. So possibly potato agriculture never evolved past collecting weedy potatoes on field margins. It seems likely that if potatoes were being grown on a large-scale, there would have been permanent settlements on the plateau when the Spanish arrived, or at least enough potato production that this activity would have been recorded by the Spanish. J.D. Sauer (1993) in his

Historical Geography of Crop Plants, as well as geographer and Andeanist Dan Gade believe that potatoes were a post-contact introduction (Sauer 1993:149; Gade, personal communication).

Sheep production became the main economic activity on the Chiantla plateau by the 17th century and this economic importance of sheep ranching continues to this day (McBryde 1947; Lovell 2005). By the 17th century, tens of thousands of sheep grazed the Cuchumatán plateau. In fact, according to Lovell (2005), the Cuchumatán plateau contained some of the best pasture in Central America.

Present-Day Changes and Global Linkages

While the Altos de Chiantla have hardly remained cut-off from the outside world during the past 400 years, however, the area has remained one of the most isolated locations in Guatemala, and even Central America. In addition to spatial isolation of the plateau area, Guatemala is said to have retained a colonial economic, political, and cultural system longer than any other society in Central America (Paige 1997). Thus, this historic socioeconomic conservatism further contributed to the isolation of the Altos de Chiantla.

However, while the Altos de Chiantla remains remote, it has been increasingly drawn into and impacted by the world economy through international migration and the remittances sent home by its former residents, agricultural intensification projects, modernization of its sheep economy during the past three decades, and a vastly improved road network. Likewise, Maya residents in the plateau area were drawn into and impacted by Guatemala's 36-year civil war that ended in 1996.

The Altos de Chiantla plateau is found in the department of Huehuetenango, although the Cuchumatán Mountains in their entirety stretch beyond this single department. Huehuetenango is predominantly a Maya region and stands as one of the most economically depressed departments in the country with over 93% of its population living in poverty (United Nations 1999). In addition to high levels of poverty, Huehuetenango experienced extreme violence during the 36-year civil war, especially in the early 1980s (Kobrak 2003). As a result of poverty, insecurity created by civil war, and continued subdivision of land into plots of below subsistence sizes, there has been a massive wave of out-migration from the department by individuals seeking brighter economic prospects and as a means to avoid violence. Every individual we interviewed had at least one family member who had left – usually bound for Guatemala City or the United States. In fact, of all the departments in Guatemala, with the exception of the Department of Guatemala (which includes Guatemala City), Huehuetenango has had the most people leave its towns and villages (Guatemala National Census 2002; Moran-Taylor forthcoming) (Taylor et al. 2006).

In addition to the economic and cultural impacts of large numbers of often young people leaving the department, remittances sent back home have also impacted the Altos de Chiantla plateau area (see Jones 1995; Durand et al. 1996; Jokish 2002; Taylor et al. 2006 for a discussion of the varied impact of remittances on development in Guatemala and elsewhere in Latin America). Remittances have allowed families to alter the built environment and invest in agricultural modernization efforts. For example, new cinder block houses have sprung up even in the most remote areas of the plateau. All of our informants claimed that remittances had directly impacted their daily lives, usually

allowing them to expand or build homes. Although it is important to point out that while there are financial benefits, many complained that as more people leave, a family and general village suffers. It is stunning to return to a remote area after a two year or so absence, and instead of finding the traditional Maya house types that once existed, some with wooden shingle or grass roofs (Figure 4), one now finds two-story cinder block houses with corrugated roofs. One informant joked that by replacing the grass roof; he no longer "lives with the rats." Many new and old homes alike also have electricity, which arrived in 2002-2003 (Taylor 2005). The conversion of traditional looking villages (based on house types) to villages with houses that contain new materials and styles has created a remittance landscape on and around the plateau (Figure 5). All informants had altered their houses in some fashion with remittance money, often creating a combination house-type of both traditional and modern. Many return migrants also purchase pick-up trucks. Private transport also allows potato and sheep farmers to command a better price for their products because they take the products to market rather than waiting for buyers to find their way out to rural homesteads. "With my truck, I no longer need the buses, or the buyers who make all the money, I keep more money now." one informant told us.

Despite the changes that migration brings to the high plateau, the ways in which residents earn a living from the land remains little changed. Residents still produce the same products that their forefathers did - potatoes and sheep as the dominant products. All our informants were still involved in potato production, and 21 involved in sheep ranching (at various scales). The harsh environment of the high plateau in the Cuchumatanes simply cannot support other forms of agriculture.

While sheep production has a long history in the high Cuchumatanes, modernization efforts have also impacted this industry in recent years. In speaking with informants, several explained how they had imported new breeding stock from Wyoming, USA. The improved ewes bear several lambs thus increasing profits for owners who supply meat to the rest of the nation. While new breeding stock was considered desirable, only 10 of the 24 informants had incorporated it in their flocks. New technology is often closely guarded so as to provide a competitive advantage. Cost and availability were most often cited as reasons why shepherds had not purchased improved ewes. Residents also told us that there has been an increase in the demand for lamb and mutton given the growing national population in Guatemala, and the growing popularity of meat. Thus national population growth, often blamed in Guatemala for various environment problems such increased deforestation, is seen as a boom to the sheep industry. Wool also remains in demand within Guatemala, as it has for centuries, especially among artisan weavers such as those in the weaving center of Momostenago, a K'iche' Maya town. These same shepherds were optimistic about the future prospects of their industry. Soil erosion due to overgrazing has been noted as a serious problem in the Altos de Chiantla (Islebe et al. 1995), and it seems that growing demand for mutton will exasperate this problem. However, erosion was not mentioned as a concern among most informants. Twenty of our informants claimed they saw “little or no” increase in erosion during the past five years due to sheep ranching. The other five informants claimed that while erosion has increased, it was usually due to rain fluctuations and was short-term, rather than increased grazing pressure.

In addition to concerns over pasture degradation and associated soil erosion, the Altos de Chiantla forests have also been impacted by humans for centuries. Today, there are no large stands of intact high elevation forests on or near the plateau (Islebe 1993). The only significant stands of juniper, pine, or fir exist on steep slopes. Local residents continue to harvest branches and cut entire trees for fuel wood, building materials, and pine resin (Islebe 1993). Electricity has reduced some of the pressure on forests resources, but its use is not widespread enough to have substantially curtailed wood harvesting (Taylor 2005). While informants didn't appear to recognize increased soil erosion, all complained about the lack of forest products, especially firewood. As one elderly informant told us, "The trees are almost all gone now. Not like when I was a boy. This is very hard on the old people who are poor." Another stated, "(development) agencies come and go, they waste money and time, why don't they help people with the trees, with (lack of) firewood?" When asked to rank how important the forest (or lack thereof) issue is, 22 of 24 informants claimed that the scarcity of wood and other forests products was "very important" or "severe."

Another indicator of the continued commitment to sheep ranching on the plateau is the maintenance of the intricate and expansive system of stone fencing. Hundreds (if not thousands) of miles of stone fences crisscross the plateau's grasslands (Figure 6). According to local people, some of these fences are centuries old, tracing their origin to t when sheep were first introduced in early colonial times. Many of these walls contain a soil "pocket" on the top of the wall in which plants such as agave (*Agave hurteri*) are planted. We initially believed these stone walls would be giving way to wire fences as they crumbled and needed repairs. Similar to folk house types, traditional fencing often

departs from the landscape due to the influence of new materials. Yet, wherever we traveled on the plateau, people were investing the time and energy in repairing, maintaining, and even completely rebuilding their stone walls. Only one of our 24 informants had partially converted to wire fencing. Modernization, in this case, did not mean replacing these structures with store-bought wire. Instead, people are taking great pains and pride to maintain these landscape features. One informant apply summed up this pride when he stated "These walls are part of the community, the people. Wouldn't you take care of them too?"

Conclusions

Upon initial observations by an outsider, it might appear that the Altos de Chiantla has undergone little change, not only in the past few decades, but perhaps even the past few centuries. For example, the area's ethnic makeup remains overwhelmingly Maya, and sheep and potatoes dominate the agricultural economy, and have for centuries. However, when one examines the landscape more closely, changes are indeed taking place. Today, remittances sent back to the region by relatives working abroad are fueling a building boom. Traditional folk house-types are being replaced by cinder-block houses with electricity. Even the traditional Mam Maya *chuj* (sweat bath) is now made out of cinder blocks instead of local rock and a live sod roof. More and more pick-up trucks are to be seen, another indication of outside money flowing in. Remittances from migrants have also allowed local residents to invest in agricultural modernization projects, which may ultimately lead to further environmental degradation on the plateau.

The Altos de Chiantla is at a historical crossroad. Greater contacts and connection with the outside world, accompanied by agricultural modernization projects, could lead to

a further abandonment of traditional cultural identities and increased environmental degradation. Or it may lead to local people taking stock in the uniqueness of their cultural and environmental landscape, which in turn might lead to greater investments in more sustainable resource-use practices (i.e. reforestation efforts).

However, even with the encroachment of the global economy and the infusion of cash and the changes this has brought, life on the Altos de Chiantla plateau is still dictated more by the movement of sheep, the seasonal variation of rains, and the potato harvest. While globalization is impacting this region, the region also continues to maintain its longstanding identity as one of the more distinctive landscapes within Mesoamerica.

Current and future research by the authors includes a palynology study of sediment cores taken from the Altos de Chiantla plateau which will shed light on past human impacts on vegetation, pre-Columbian forest cover, and possibly provide a chronology of when, more specifically, people and agriculture entered the landscape. In addition the authors' research, studies that examine fuel wood consumption and range management in the high Cuchumantes will benefit the local population and answer questions regarding sustainability in this unique region.

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Captions

Figure 1 – Maps of the Cuchumatánes Region – cartography by Jeff La Frenierre

Figure 2 - Typical landscape in the high Cuchumatanes Mountains – photo by Michael Steinberg

Figure 3 – Former glaciated valley on the Altos Chiantla plateau – photo by Matthew Taylor

Figure 4 – New, two story house built with remittance money from the USA – photo by Matthew Taylor

Figure 5 – Traditional house type in the high Cuchumatanes – photo by Michael Steinberg

Figure 6 – Landscape scene showing extensive rock walls, first built in the colonial era – photo by Matthew Taylor

San Mateo Ixtatan

Far away from Huehue and the tourist masses, you can follow the road out to the rustic and scenic mountain town of San Mateo de Ixtatan. On the way, you pass through the village of **Soloma**, distinguished by its women wearing long, pristine white huipiles and necklaces made of gold-painted beads. San Mateo, at 2600 meters, is cold and often shrouded in mountain mist and is set on a point of land overlooking a long, rugged valley. This Chuj-maya speaking town is as isolated linguistically as it is geographically. Most of its neighbors speak the more pervasive Kanjobal Mayan language. The inhabitants still worship nature and consider the sun as their father and the moon as their mother, thus explaining the red sun patterns found on the traditional huipiles worn by women. Collectors prize the multi-colored, star-shaped designs woven in San Mateo. Adjacent to the village is an old mine still producing a black salt highly praised throughout the Cuchumatanes and Huehue for its medicinal properties. San Mateo is one of the most distant marketplaces reached by chicken bus in the Cuchumatan Mountains.

Salt

The salt of San Mateo Ixtatán has been mined for 2500 years. In fact, the name "Ixtatán" is a variation of the Nahuatl (spoken by the Aztecs) word meaning "Place of Salt.," so this salt has an ancient history.

The salt is available in two forms, white and black. The black salt is roasted with corn over a wood fire until it becomes quite hard and black. The black salt is highly prized and very flavorful. San Mateo Ixtatán is also known as "la Tierra de la Sal Negra" or "The land of the black salt."

There is a Chuj legend (The Mayans who live in San Mateo Ixtatán speak Chuj), which tells the story of two sisters who cook for their brother. One was called K'a (bitter) and one was called Atz'am (salt). K'a was jealous of Atz'am because the brother preferred Atz'am's cooking. So K'a spied on Atz'am and found that Atz'am was spitting in the food. This enraged the brother and he hit her and caused her to bleed and cry bitterly. She took herself off to Ch'ilon and cried and bled until the ground around her was covered with her blood and tears. To this day salt water comes out of the ground in Ch'ilon, a neighborhood within the town limits of San Mateo Ixtatán.

THE WAYS OF THE MAYA

Salt Production in Sacapulas, Guatemala

RUBEN E. REINA
JOHN MONAGHAN

1
An older couple from the *barrio* of San Sebastián. The woman's necklace, her brightly colored *huipil* or blouse and the distinctive head band are all made in Sacapulas

2
Map of Guatemala

Guatemalans of Maya ancestry, living in rural communities, possess a wide variety of skills and technologies for the manufacture of domestically needed items. Men and women of each community are known throughout the highlands for the production of one or two of these articles, which are distributed through a well-established market system. Whether the specialty is the manufacture of pottery, textiles, lime, salt, grinding stones, reed mats, gourd utensils, jewelry, baskets or hats, or the cultivation of vegetables or flowers, its anthropological importance lies in each product's position in the culture of the people who create it. From the ethnographic research carried out in this century we have learned that both the way the society is organized and its world view support the specialization of each community and encourage its continuity. The interrelationship of these cultural elements brings about a strong tradition within a definite boundary. To speak of "community" here is to speak of a fundamental principle of social organization. In addition, these differences in specialization are vital to the existence of the region. Through the market system each community has access to a wide range of expertly made products that as an isolated entity it could not enjoy. While homogeneity of product and technique plays a vital role in the makeup of each individual community, differences between communities are essential for the functioning of the regions as a whole. In other words, community specialization can be credited for the level of complexity achieved in this part of the world.

Most children born in a community with a specialization will not only practice the craft when they become men and women but will associate these activities with specific values. To protest or question what one should be or do would only invite

ridicule and contempt. To obey (*respetar*) such a deep tradition is to live according to a concept of vital importance among traditional Maya people. Such pressure for cultural homogeneity therefore limits the choices open to an individual. This situation has a positive side. To follow the prescribed in life is also to enjoy the prestige of craftsmanship considered *muy antiguo*, very old. In this way it is fulfilling, and children socialized into such a pattern become in time the overseers and transmitters of the same skills and values their parents had.

This particular activity and knowledge are not perceived solely as means of obtaining practical advantages. They are integral to the history of each group of specialists: a symbol of their existence. Therefore, anyone who takes it upon himself to bring about changes in his community's specialization can face serious problems. Their ancestors left them with an identity and an assignment which serve to distinguish them from other groups. The individual who takes up a craft that is the property of another community also rejects his identity, becoming as someone from another place. Within the traditional culture such individual action is seldom considered, migration from one Maya community to another is socially very painful, and one can never become a full-fledged member. Even marriage between communities is rare, and seems to be a last resort for the parties concerned. Craftsmanship, one's place in the society, and traditional values, summarized by the word *costumbre*, cannot be separated.

SALTMAKING IN SACAPULAS

The Maya people of Sacapulas operate one of the three ancient salt production centers in northwestern Guatemala. For us, salt is taken for granted as an inexpensive commodity that is always close at hand. It is hard to believe that in many areas of the world it is difficult to procure, often at a high price. Some scholars feel this was true for the Maya of antiquity. Noting the lack of suitable salt sources in the Petén, they have even blamed "the Classic Maya Collapse" on the cutoff of this substance. Whatever the merits of this argument for the ancient Maya, it is apparent that salt has always been an important commodity for the Sacapultecos and in the past it served as a medium of exchange. Father Bartolomé de Las Casas reported this in the 1560s and it continued to be true in Guatemala at least until the 1890s. Today, no meal is considered complete without salt with the corn *tortillas* and chiles. Such demand made Sacapulas a wealthy community in the past, and continues to make salt production a very profitable enterprise.

For scholars interested in the continuity of Maya culture, Sacapulas affords an excellent example. A report from the colonial period describes in detail the production of salt in the early 1600s, and a native document, the *Título* of Sacapulas, gives us insights into the Maya view of the process. Observations made by the authors in recent years both confirm and elaborate on these early documents. Widespread political and economic changes have not altered the basic structure of values, nor the technology that surrounds saltmaking in Sacapulas. To illustrate this, we will begin by discussing some of the early accounts, and follow these with observations and photographs made in the course of our work in the community.

The Título of Sacapulas

While the text of this document remained unwritten until the colonial period, the *Título* represents an oral tradition that existed long before the arrival of the Spaniards. The document, produced in the context of a land dispute, was for the protection of the rights of the Sacapultecos to their lands and resources. For this reason, the *Título* of Sacapulas is very much concerned with the sources of salt in the area. However, the document is more than a land deed. It is also an origin myth, which shows the intimate connection these resources have with the lives of these people. The writers of the *Título* begin by explaining how their people arrived in the land they now occupy. They came, as one of the original seven peoples, "from the other side of the sea, from between the seven caves and six canyons." They were led by the Ahau Canil, who, through his *nagual*, or spiritual coessence, brought the Sacapultecos to their land. During their wanderings they fought wars and suffered slavery and illnesses. Despite all this they arrived at Monte Blanco, the White Mound, or Sac-pulas. There the *nagual* sat down, and began to urinate. His urine formed the salt from which the Sacapultecos were to make their livelihood. He then taught the Sacapultecos how to recover the salt and assigned this task to them and to all their future generations.

Acknowledgment
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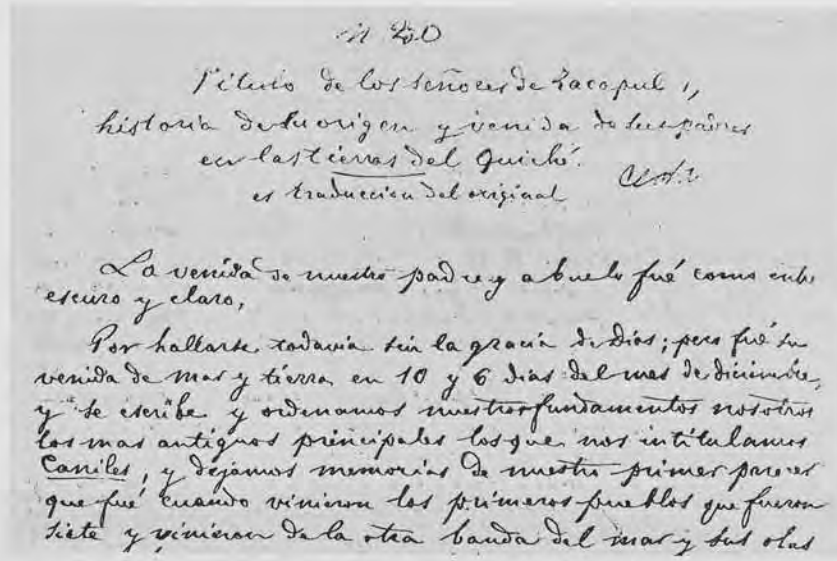
3
A general view of the valley and *pueblo* of Sacapulas

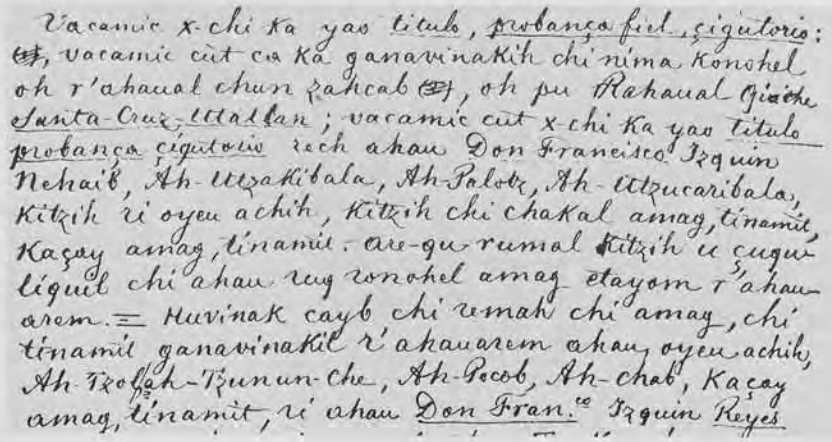


Título de los señores de Sacapul,
historia de su origen y venida de los españoles
en las tierras del Quiché.
es traducción del original

La venida de nuestro padre y abuelo fué como cosa escuro y claro,

Por hallarse todavía sin la gracia de Dios; pero fué su venida de mar y tierra en 10 y 6 días del mes de diciembre, y se escribe y ordenamos nuestros fundamentos nuestros los mas antiguos principales los que nos intitulamos Canilés, y dejamos memoria de nuestro primer parecer que fué cuando vinieron los primeros pueblos que fueron siete y vinieron de la otra banda del mar y sus olas

4
The *Título* of Sacapulas: a Spanish translation of the original *título*, whose whereabouts is not known. It may still be in the safe keeping of the *principales* of Sacapulas



Vacamic x-chi ka yao título, probança fiel ejecutoria: vacamic cut ca Ka ganavinakik chi nima konohel oh r'ahaual chun zahcab, oh pu Rahaual Giache Santa-Cruz, Utatlan; vacamic cut x-chi Ka yao título probança ejecutoria rech ahau Don Francisco Izquin Nehaib, Ah-Uzakibala, Ah-Palotz, Ah-Utzucaribala, Kitzih ri oyeu achih, Kitzih chi chakal amag, tinamit Kaçay amag, tinamit. Are-gu-rumal Kitzih u cuqui liquil chi ahau rey konohel amag etayom r'ahau arem. = Huvinak cayb chi remah chi amag, chi tinamit ganavinakil r'ahauarem ahau oyeu achih, Ah-Tzolah-Tzunun-che, Ah-Pocob, Ah-chab, Kaçay amag, tinamit, ri ahau Don Fran.co Izquin Reyes

5
A page in Quiché from the same text as Fig. 4

The Colonial Documents

One of the first Spanish reports of salt production in Sacapulas came, in 1574, from three Franciscans who worked in an adjacent region. They tell us that lack of salt is a grave problem in their area, and salt must come from Sacapulas, a four day journey. Many Indians from their jurisdiction make this trip, hiring themselves out as laborers in the salt works (*salinas*). As payment they receive a quantity of salt, which they then take back to their own communities to sell for a profit.

In the year 1629 salt production in Sacapulas once again appears in colonial documents, in an account written by Martin Alfonso Tovilla, the Alcalde Mayor of the province of Vera Paz, Golf Dulce, Sacapulas and Manchen. Tovilla toured the area of his jurisdiction, and set down his impressions in a book entitled *Relaciones Historicas Dyscriptivas*. Before going to Sacapulas, Tovilla visited in the Quiché region a group of Indians related to the Sacapultecos. He was accompanied there by the grandson of the last Maya ruler, the *Ah Pop*. Together they visited the site of Utatlán, the former capital of the powerful Quiché. He was told that in the days before the Spanish conquest by Alvarado, there were in the region twenty-four leaders, whose wealth and power depended on the tributes from their vassals. The old inhabitants of Utatlán had been engaged in wars, expanding their influence through military domination. Among those conquered were the Sacapultecos. Tovilla was also told that the Quiché, after capturing members of a rival, Cakchiquel-speaking group, sent them to Sacapulas to work at producing salt. These captives were kept in a cave at night, and at dawn were taken to the *salinas* for a hard day's work. A great deal of salt was produced, an additional source of power and wealth for the Maya rulers.

Tovilla was extremely curious about the way in which salt was made. Back home in Spain, he had been inspector of the royal salt works in Murcia before coming to the New World. He found the Sacapultec method different from anything he had ever seen and "quite extraordinary." He set down a careful description of the operation, and left us some information on the social makeup of the village of Sacapulas. According to Tovilla, the area was made up of six *parcialidades*, or land-holding groups whom the Dominicans had gathered together to form the village of Sacapulas. Each group retained its name and identity, as well as its respective portion of land. Even though some groups were geographically uprooted, changes in their economic specializations were minor. For the most part they continued to be farmers,

preparing their maize fields as they had for centuries. Yet, one *parcialidad,* San Sebastián, from which writers of the *Título* of Sacapulas had come, was different from the rest. These were the people who had been led into the region by the Ahau Canil, and who owned the salt works. Around them the other groups were clustered, and they became, as they continue to be today, the most important group in the *pueblo* (village).

Tovilla took great care in describing "for those who are curious and wish to entertain themselves," how the Sacapultecos manufactured salt. He tells us that the works were set next to the river and were made up of *playas* or tracts of land well-scraped and clean. Spread about these *playas* were twelve water holes containing hot mineral water. Each morning, *salineros* spread a layer of fine soil over the *playas,* wetting it down from time to time as the day passed. In the late afternoon they carefully gathered the soil into piles, knowing that, aided by the sun's heat, it had absorbed the salt from the earth. The mounds were then covered, in case of rain, and the process was repeated using the same soils the following day. When the soil was saturated with salt, it was packed into stout baskets and a large *tinaja,* or clay water vessel, was placed underneath. The *salineros* then poured water from the hot springs into the baskets, leaching out the salt contained in the soil. This leaching process ended when the soil was judged to have lost its "strength." The author goes on to say that the *legía,* salt water, was finally portioned into *cajetes,* small clay containers which were then set over a fire. As the water boiled, the *salineros* occasionally dropped corn dough into the *cajetes* to thicken the water and form the white salt. Tovilla felt that the work was difficult and the price of one *real* for fifteen cakes of salt extremely low, considering the amount of wood needed for the firing process. He seems to have found this method of making salt ingenious, and realized its importance in the local economy.

Tovilla's seventeenth century account gives us an accurate description of the technology involved in the production of salt in Sacapulas. It is unfortunate that he did not set down more of the social and cultural factors related to salt production. One has the feeling that he may have known more. However, he did show surprise and admiration for the achievement of these people, and recognized the technology as wholly native.

6
The *cofradía,* or civil-religious organization, celebrating the fiesta of the Patron Saint from one of the *parcialidades*

SACAPULAS TODAY

Today, the *pueblo* of Sacapulas has a population of about two thousand people, organized into several *barrios* or neighborhoods. Dispersed among these people are a handful of *ladino,* non-Indian families who are largely bilingual. Some of these *ladino* families have been residents in the village for over two centuries, interacting and intermarrying with the Maya. However, it is the Maya who carry on and preserve the Sacapultec identity, and it is they who are the saltmakers. In fact, it is the descendants of the Ahau Canil, still living in the *barrio* of San Sebastián, who enjoy the rights to the salt sources. Only the people from this *barrio* own kitchens and sections of the *playa* along the river. These men and women were born in the *barrio* of San Sebastián and are of Sacapultec Maya ancestry.

Flooding from the nearby river has always been a problem for the *salineros. Playas* cannot be used during the rainy season because they are filled with water. Some years this flooding can be quite serious, as the remains of a protecting wall constructed over sixty years ago by order of one of Guatemala's presidents readily illustrate. This situation explains an apparent paradox. The 1932 local census listed fifty full-time *salineros.* Why, considering that salt making continues to be profitable, are a smaller number of *salineros* active today? The answer lies in a disastrous series of floods in the late 1940s and early 1950s. All the *playas* were buried under tons of silt and rock. Slowly, people began uncovering their *playas,* until today there are eleven kitchens worked by approximately thirty-five full-time *salineros.* The recovery was not complete however. From descriptions given by older *salineros* it is apparent that only about one-fifth as many *playas* are operating now as were before the floods. Enlarging a plot by excavating more of the sediment entails a tremendous amount of work; few have the time or means to do so. Still, those families who hold rights to the *playas* can point out where their plots are, although they remain buried under five meters of earth and rock.

In the past, salt making was totally a male enterprise. "In the old days," as one *salinero* told us "no woman would come to the *playas.* Women were permitted by tradition to bring us our noon meals, but they remained on the hill above the *playas* where they were met by the men. It was *costumbre.*" A seventy year old *salinero* explained why these changes were necessary:

> Our ancestors changed some ways to meet their needs. It happened after a great flood when our *playas* along the river were ruined, and a large amount of stones and mud were deposited over them. Before this, our *playas* were guarded by two *naguales,* a man and a woman. With the flood, the female *nagual* left us, going downriver to another place. Who knows why she left? It is said that the salt still flows over the stones where she sits, but the people who live there do not know how to use it. They were not given the knowledge for salt making so they are ignorant on this matter. Because of her departure we have less salt now for after all we only have one guardian, the male *nagual* (Rahau Salinan, Ri Diosil Salinan). Since the woman *nagual* left, our wives may join us in working the salt. There are many women who own kitchens and *playas.*

Occasionally, at night, the male *nagual* can be seen. He is tall, dressed all in white, and wears a wide-brimmed hat. On May third of every year a celebration is held in

7
View of the back of the church from the *barrio* of San Sebastián. This church was erected after the one built by the first Dominicans was destroyed by an earthquake

his honor. It takes place around the cross set up in the *K'animak* or heart of the *salinas* and is directed by one of the oldest *ahk ij* or shamen, of San Sebastián. The fact that this ceremony takes place in the heart of the *salinas* is very important. As are all things of great moment in men's lives, the *salinas* is seen as being animate; it exhibits many of the properties of a living being. It has an immortal soul—heart and soul being the same thing for the Maya—and also has a coessence, the *nagual*, a type of spiritual alter-ego. The *nagual* is an integral part of Mesoamerican belief systems, since it is through their *naguales* that divinities interact with men. Likewise, men have *naguales*, but there are few men who have *naguales* that are strong enough to initiate or sustain such interaction. The *ahk ij* is one such person, and it is he who asks both pardon of the *nagual* of the *salinas* for any trespasses the *salineros* may have committed, and that he continue supplying them with salt. The *ahk ij* burns *copal*, or incense and candles and pours libations of corn liquor at the base of the cross. The corn liquor, normally called *guaro*, here is called *orientan* which translates as "a prayer" and is a ritual means of establishing contact between the *ahk ij* and the *nagual* of the *salinas*. After the *ahk ij* has finished, a marimba is brought out, and fireworks are set off. People then begin to dance for the *nagual*. The older men begin, joined later by the women and younger men. The costs of the celebrations are borne by the active owners of *playas*, each contributing an equal amount. In recent years, due to the small number of operating *playas*, the celebration has been less elaborate, a drum being substituted for the expensive marimba, and the amount of food and drink offered being reduced.

Although the census supposedly reports all the Maya owners of *playas*, we learned that the list is far from complete. Many of the saints in the church are also owners of salt *playas*. These saints are the objects of veneration of the *ah patan*, or civil-religious hierarchies. While these *playas* are now covered over, many of the older *salineros* can point out their location. They were either worked by the *Cahauschel*, the leader of the *ah patan*, or rented to a third party, the proceeds being used to pay for the candles, incense and fireworks used to celebrate the saint's day.

8
Dionisio and Rosa Acietuno

SALT MAKING IN 1978

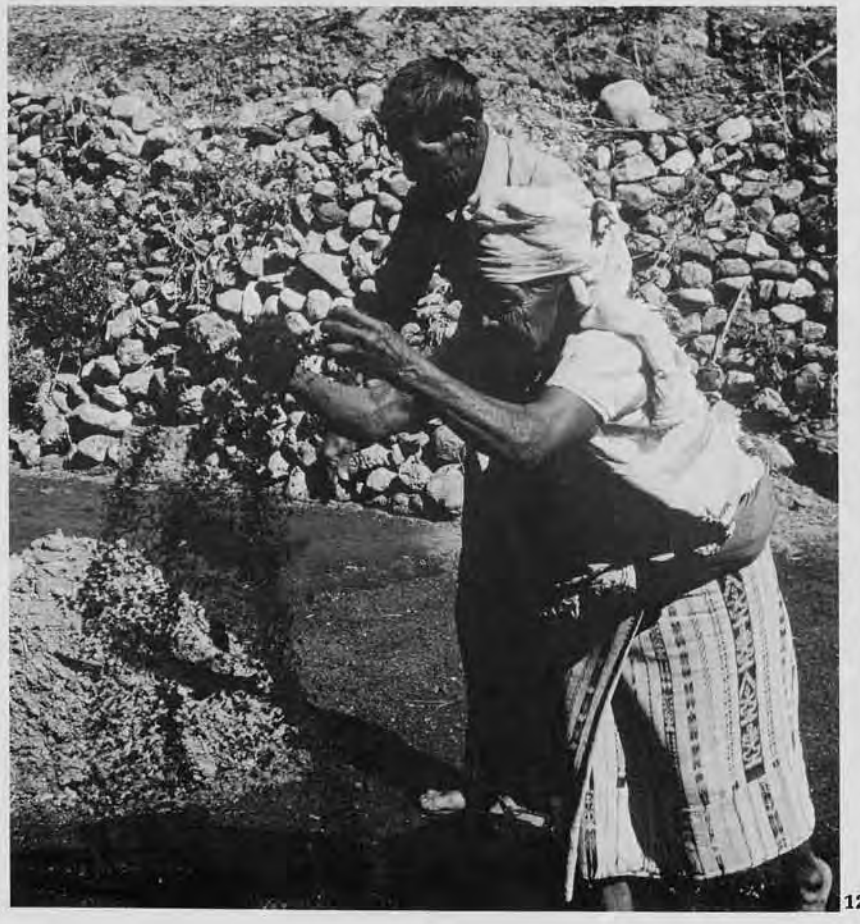
On a typical day in the dry season (from November to June) *salineros* still execute the steps that Tovilla outlined in 1629 for the production of salt. As already mentioned, the *playas* are too wet to work during the rainy season. People employ this time preparing their *milpas*, corn fields, and replenishing the stocks of wood used for cooking the salt. The salt that is produced during this time comes from the salty soil they have kept in storage.

To illustrate the steps that the Sacapultecos take to make salt, we will follow two of our *salinero* friends, Dionisio and Rosa Acietuno, as they go about their work at the *salinas*.

9
The west end of the *playas* from the hill where the kitchens are set. The river can be seen in the background. Note the depth of excavation that had to be made to expose the *playas* after they were covered with rock and silt from the flood

10
Soil ready to be spread over the *playa*. The lines of small rocks represent boundaries between different patches of *playa*

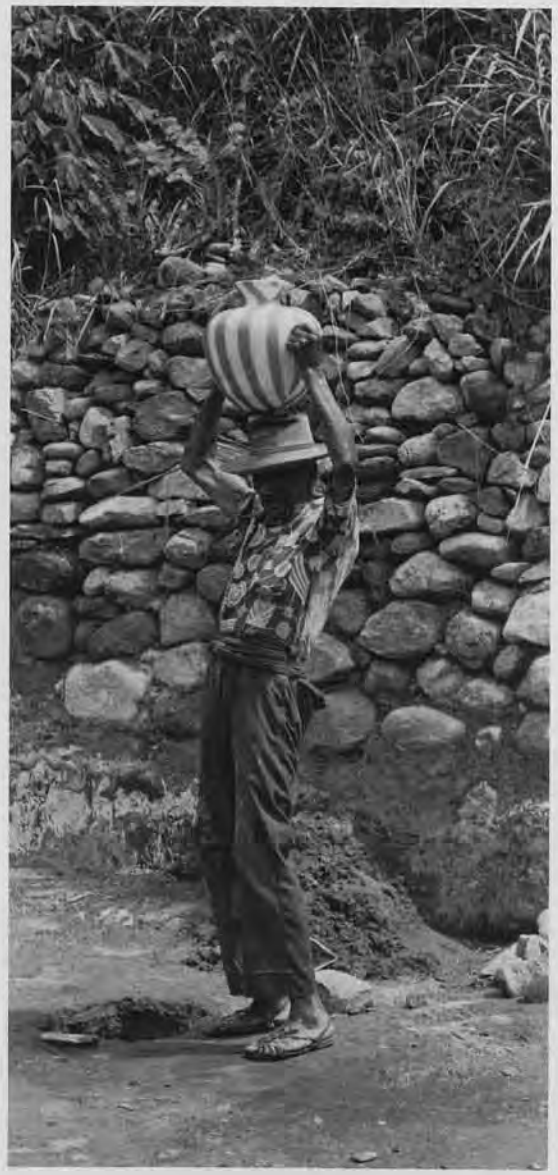
11
Rosa's sister and Dionisio spreading the soil



12
Scooping the hot spring water out of a well in the *playa* with a half gourd

Preparation of the Playa

Both Dionisio and his wife are vigorous for their seventy-odd years and are enthusiastic about their craft. They begin each working day at sunrise. A strong pull at a bottle of *guaro* "gives one strength to begin the day," Dionisio explains. Before sitting down to the fresh *tortillas* prepared by Rosa, he gives thanks to Jesus Christ in the church, to the Holy Earth and to our father, the Sun. After eating, Dionisio departs alone for the *playas*. His wife will join him later in the morning, after she gives proper attention to her household and leaves instructions about the noon meal with her daughters. Today they are to carry it down to the salt kitchens, where all



13
Dionisio carrying a *tinaja* full of mineral water to his section of *playa*

14, 15
Sprinkling the water over the *playa*

the members of the family will meet to discuss the day's events and do justice to the food their salt has purchased.

Dionisio follows the path along the banks of the river to the *playas*. Each *salinero* owns a patch of *playa*, close to three square meters in size. Actually, it is Rosa who owns their *playa* and kitchen, having inherited them from her father. Under the strong tropical sun, Dionisio begins by spreading age-cleaned soil over the *playa*, no more than a centimeter thick. With a finesse that comes from long experience, he takes baskets filled with this special soil and with circular movements of his arm scatters it evenly over his patch, covering every inch. Next, using a half-gourd, he fills a *tinaja* with water from the hot spring in his *playa*. Using the gourd, he sprinkles the water from the *tinaja* over the soil. "One needs just the right amount of water," explained Dionisio, experience alone guiding him in this task. Wetting the soil is done the first thing in the morning so that the sun will heat the *playa* and the salt "will rise up through the earth into the soil."

The soil spread during the morning has already been spread on each of the two preceding days. Just before evening on each of these days it had been gathered into a small mound in a corner of the *playa*. "After the first day the soil keeps some salt," Dionisio explains. "To leave it spread would be to lose it as the salt goes back into the earth." In the morning of the second day the soil is spread again, this time without any water. By the time this is repeated on the third day, the soil is much heavier than before. Once again, as

described, it must be sprinkled with water from the spring. "Now," said Dionisio, "the soil is saturated and cannot lift any more salt from the earth. It is time to bring it into the kitchen for storage or place it in the *cajon* (wooden filtering box) for leaching." This whole process of spreading and gathering the soil is known as *sembrar la sal*, to sow the salt. The salt is seen as *brotando*, or germinating in the soil. The Sacapultecos, being intimately involved with the natural world around them, constantly employ organic metaphors to describe their activities at the salt works, in the same way we use mechanical or industrial metaphors to describe our own actions.

"The soil," Dionisio tells us, "is something we have received from our forefathers. It is hard to replace because we don't know where it came from. We lose some throughout the years, but perhaps some is replaced as we scrape the hard bottom of the *playa*." Through generations the supply of soil appears to remain constant in the kitchens. Nowadays, no one could begin saltmaking without a supply of soil secured by inheritance or purchase. The more of this soil one possesses, the larger the amount of salted soil one is able to keep in storage during the rainy season. "The kitchen is a bank with money for us," Rosa joked, "so when we need money at any time during the year we come to the kitchen and make money, salt."

Kitchens

The kitchens are small, stone-walled rooms of approximately 6 x 8 meters set

16
The salt kitchens on the east end of the town. The scarcity of good *milpa* land can readily be seen by the fact that corn is planted even on the small plots of land surrounding the kitchens

deep into the ground, built on the high banks along the river, just above the *playas* and hot springs. The concentration of these buildings surprises strangers. The area is devoid of residences and these kitchens differ much from the traditional Maya home. At first, this cluster of buildings gives the impression of an abandoned section of the town, overgrown with grass and littered with broken pottery. During the dry season, however, the area bustles with activity.

The stout walls of each kitchen support thick beams upon which a roof of clay tiles is set. Because the kitchens are excavated, like cellars, the roofs are no more than one and a half meters above the ground. Between the roof and the walls is a gap from which smoke and heat escape.

17
The entrance to a salt kitchen

18
Salt-laden soil kept in storage inside the salt kitchen

19
The new *cajetes* made by Rosa. The firing platform is in the background

Entrance to the kitchen is by a door fastened loosely to two vertical posts. This leads down to a floor about one meter below ground level, this distance varying with the season, since the floor is made up of a large portion of the salted soil kept in storage. Piled along the walls of the kitchen is also a large quantity of this soil, which is expected to keep its salt content for at least two years. In the center of the kitchen is a platform of packed earth, about 1 x 2 meters, which is used for firing. Evenly distributed across the top of this platform are stone wedges which support the *cajetes* during the firing process. Around the platform the floor is excavated to its greatest depth, so that the *salineros* can work in a standing position. One wall is set aside for the storage of wood and the large clay vessels that will hold the salt. Most of the stored soil comes from the *playa* but scattered about are small mounds of spent charcoal dirt clods, about the size of a hand, which have been taken from the firing platform after the last firing. Some salt-laden water always spills on the platform as it is poured into the *cajetes* or overflows as it boils. When they are to be used, these clods are broken up and added to the other soil in the *cajon* when it is time for leaching.

Leaching

All during the day *salineros* trudge up the hill from the *playas* with baskets of soil on their backs, supported by the *mecapal*, or tumpline. At the kitchen area, Dionisio fills the *cajón* with soil from the

20
Dionisio posing with his *mecapal* and the basket he will use to carry soil from the *playa* up to the kitchen

21
The *cajón*, just outside the entrance of the kitchen. The stone basin for collecting the water is just barely visible beneath the wooden box

reserve. The *cajón* is a wooden box, about 1½ by 1½ meters set on top of a mound of earth a short distance outside the entrance to the kitchen. The mound is about 2½ meters high, high enough so that water poured into the box can drip through a straw mat into a plastered stone basin beneath. It takes several baskets of soil to fill the *cajón*. This is hard work since the soil is now heavy with salt. Once the *cajón* is filled, Dionisio climbs into the box and barefooted, carefully walks along the sides, packing the soil as firmly as possible with his own weight. "One must be very careful while doing this," explains Dionisio, "If the soil is packed down too much no water will filter through. Yet the packing should be firm enough to stop the water from seeping out the sides of the *cajón*. The soil in the center of the box is not packed and so remains higher than the soil along the sides."

In the center of the *cajón* Dionisio places a round basket containing the spent charcoal and pulverized clods of earth. "Everything is used in this work," Dionisio tells us. The wooden *cajón* is now ready to receive the water. He now goes down to the *playa* and fills a *tinaja* at the hot springs, carries it up the hill, then pours it slowly into the *cajón*. This will be repeated ten times in the next half hour. The contents of the *cajon* have now become a dark brown mud. Underneath, from the center of the box, clear water filters into the stone basin. As the basin slowly fills, the *salinero* shapes a small ball of maize dough and tosses it into the water. The more salt in the water, the faster the ball rises to the surface. As long as it floats, he knows the salt content is satisfactory. His work on the *playa* has been successful.

22

23

Firing

As the amount of filtered water increases, Dionisio ladles it into a *tinaja*, which he then carries into the kitchen. There he pours it into a larger *tinaja*. It is now mid-morning, and his wife arrives to help with the firing. She immediately sets to work, arranging the wedge-shaped stones on the firing platform. There are thirty-two of them that she lines up in four evenly-spaced rows. Next she examines the twenty small clay *cajetes* in which she will boil the salty water. She has brought these from home, where she made them over a mold then dried them in the sun. They are very fragile since they have not been fired, and must be handled with care. She places

22
The spent charcoal and pulverized clods of earth from the previous firing, ready to be placed in the *cajón*

23
Pouring water from the hot springs into the *cajón*

24
The contents of the *cajón*, after the water is added

25
Dionisio filling a plastic *tinaja* with the salt-laden water from the basin of the *cajón*

26
The *cajetes* placed over the stones of the firing platform. Sticks of *ocote* project from beneath the *cajetes*

24

25

26

27, 28
Lighting the fire

29
A small quantity of salt water from the basin, mixed with maize dough, is poured into each of the *cajetes* to seal their walls. The maize dough is added to make the salt finer-grained

each one on the platform, at a height of about ten centimeters, supported by four of the stones. Both her husband and she test the arrangements, to see that each *cajete* is in a stable position and will not tip over when the water is added. Following this they place *ocote,* sticks of resinous pine, between the stones and under the *cajetes.* Dionisio starts the fire, and Rosa prays, explaining to God and to the Holy Earth what they are about to do and asking pardon for any trespasses they may have committed. As the fire advances she mixes a handful of *tortilla* dough with the salt-water brought in by Dionisio. A small quantity of this mixture is poured into each of the *cajetes,* sealing the walls. At the same time the clay of which they are made hardens with the heat of the fire. At this point, some fifteen minutes after the fire was lit, each *cajete* is filled with salt water from the basin outside. Maize dough has already been mixed with the water, so that "the salt will be fine grained instead of coarse," they explained.

30, 31
Rosa fills the *cajetes* with salt water, while Dionisio tends the fire. Water must constantly be added as the contents of the *cajetes* boil away

32, 33, 34
Salt, having the consistency of porridge, is scooped out of the *cajetes* and poured into a large *tinajera* along the wall

By this time, Dionisio has filled all the large clay vessels along the wall with filtered salt water. During this time, Rosa has kept the liquid boiling by adding wood to the fire below the *cajetes*. The process seems to be going well, and they are able to take a break. Before sitting down, they thank God and the Holy Earth for the success they have been blessed with. While resting in the doorway of the kitchen, they review the progress already made and plan the steps to come. All the while they keep careful watch on the fire, since it is important to keep the heat constant. Dionisio shifts now from carrying water to helping Rosa tend the fire. However, he will continue to filter water through the *cajon* until the *tortilla* dough will no longer float.

During the next several hours, the kitchen heats up and the smoke is heavy at times. As the water boils away, the salt crystallizes on the inside wall of each *cajete,* turning it snow white. Within two hours after firing began, the *cajetes* are filled with salt. Husband and wife, using half gourds, scoop this salt into a waiting *tinaja.* As the salt is removed, the *cajetes* are filled with salt water, and the boiling continues. This step is carried out with a harmony and efficiency that comes from long cooperation. They direct each other in their native Sacapultec, since they find Spanish inadequate for the keen coordination needed to carry out this task. Each knows exactly what to do as they move around the platform scooping out salt and adding water.

The Acietunos will repeat this firing operation twice more during the day, finishing the second batch at one o'clock and the third at three. However, it is not until the first batch has been made that they are able to predict whether or not they will have sufficient salt water to carry out all three operations.

By the time the third boiling is under way, they must decide whether to turn the salt in the *tinajas* into *atzam,* small white cakes, or place it back in the *cajetes* to produce *xuupej,* black salt. The decision is based on the amount of salt they have produced during the day. Today they have made enough to make both types of salt.

At five o'clock they begin to stoke the fire to generate the additional heat needed to make black salt. Salt from the *tinaja* is transferred back into *cajetes,* and pounded with a crude mallet. More salt is added and compressed, until each *cajete* is filled with a hard cake. The *cajetes* are fired for three hours until the salt blackens. As the fire pales, a layer of white salt is sprinkled over the black salt "for decoration," as Rosa explained. Black salt, according to an analysis carried out in the University of Pennsylvania's Geology Department, contains aphthitalite, a mineral not found in the white salt. We are not sure of its significance, but the Maya favor black over white salt, and it brings a higher price. It is thought to taste better, and is famed for its medicinal properties, especially for the treatment of eye and stomach problems. These are widely held beliefs in Guatemala, and Felix McBryde tells us that along the Pacific coast, unscrupulous merchants try to counterfeit black salt by mixing black volcanic beach sand with white sea salt (see Suggested Readings).

For the Acietunos it has been a day of hard work, and they make ready to return home. Nothing is locked up, as their goods and tools are under the protection of God. Before heading home they stop to bathe in the hot springs along the river, to wash off the grime from work in the hot and smoky kitchen.

Early the next morning they are back at the *salinas,* to add the finishing touches to the salt. Inside the kitchen, Dionisio begins by turning over each of the *cajetes* that are filled with black salt and breaking their clay walls. The *cajetes* have served not only to cook the salt, but to mold it as well. While Dionisio has been doing this, Rosa busies herself with the white salt that remained in the *tinaja.* Cool, it has the consistency of porridge, all the water not having evaporated as it had from the black salt. First she removes all the stones from the firing platform, and sweeps it free of ash and charcoal. Next, she spreads a one centimeter thick layer of sand over its clean surface. A small oval, bottomless, wooden mold is set in the sand. The pliable mold is held in shape with a string, which Rosa can release or tighten as she moves the mold from place to place as her husband fills it with the white salt. The water runs out through the sand, and after a few hours these *panitos,* as they are called, are dry and hard.

MARKETING

In the two days the Acietunos produced approximately two hundred and fifty pounds of salt. They can sell it at an average of fifteen cents a pound, since the price does fluctuate with the season. Subtracting the cost of the firewood, near one-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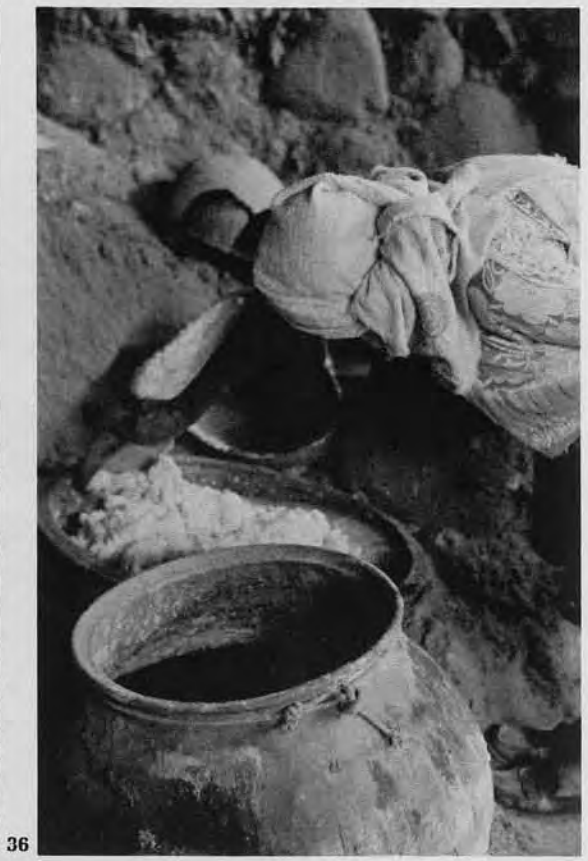
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37

35, 36, 37, 38
Dionisio begins to stoke the fire to make *xuupej*, or black salt. Rosa fills the *cajetes* with *atzam*, white salt, made in the previous firings. It is then pounded and compressed with a wooden mallet

third of the gross, they stand to gain twenty-five dollars. In a society where the daily wage for agricultural workers is two dollars, this represents a substantial profit.

It is Rosa's job to market the salt. Every Thursday and Sunday, she sets up a stand under one of the large ceiba trees in the plaza. Sacapultec salt is well known in the area; most people, including the *ladinos*, prefer it over commercial salt. Unlike many communities with a specialization, Sacapultecos do not have to travel far to market their product. Much is consumed within the boundaries of the municipality; most of what remains goes to the communities of Uspantán and Cunén to the east, and the Ixil people to the north. While their salt does get occasional wide distribution when Sacapultecos travel to visit distant


38

39
The salt, known as black salt, now cooked and hardened into loaves, stacked in the kitchen. Fragments of the *cajetes* which served to cook and mold it lie to one side. Later the sherds will be taken outside and added to the deep piles of broken *cajetes* that have been accumulating for years around the sides of the kitchen


39

communities during fiestas, the Ixil have been their steadiest customers for centuries. The Ixil like the salt not only for its taste, but because they feel it makes their animals grow faster. Older Sacapultecos remember well their trips over the hill, by foot and on horseback, to sell salt in the Ixil communities of Chajul and Nebaj. There was no formal market in Nebaj at the time, so they would conduct their business in front of the church. The Sacapultecos traded for money and for maize, something in which they have never been self-sufficient. The trip took about two days, by foot, but a road constructed in 1937 has made the journey much easier by bus. From the other Ixil municipality, Chajul, groups of ten to fifteen men used to make the trip to Sacapulas, carrying with them maize, which they exchanged for salt. This is still true during the big *fiestas* in Sacapulas when many outsiders visit.

CONCLUSION

From documentary sources, we know that salt was prepared in the past in exactly the same manner as today. In 1639, Tovilla wrote an overall account of the process. Three hundred and forty years later, we find that salt making is still a community specialization, and remains in the hands of the Maya people from the *barrio* of San Sebastián. We are accustomed to accept the notion of culture change. Here we see the other side of the coin: culture continuity that spans centuries. This craft has survived social, political and economic changes in Guatemala. We must look for an answer to this not in the isolation of Sacapulas, but in the ways that saltmaking meshes with many of the vital principles that give meaning to and guide Sacapultec life. The craft is closely tied with one's place in the society, community identity, and economic well-being. It is not only a job, but *costumbre*. It is a mission that has been entrusted to them by the *nagual* of their leader, the Ahau Canil, and links them with their past. While submitting to Spanish political domination, these Maya people have conserved their cultural values and their system has not yet perished in the face of our industrial age.

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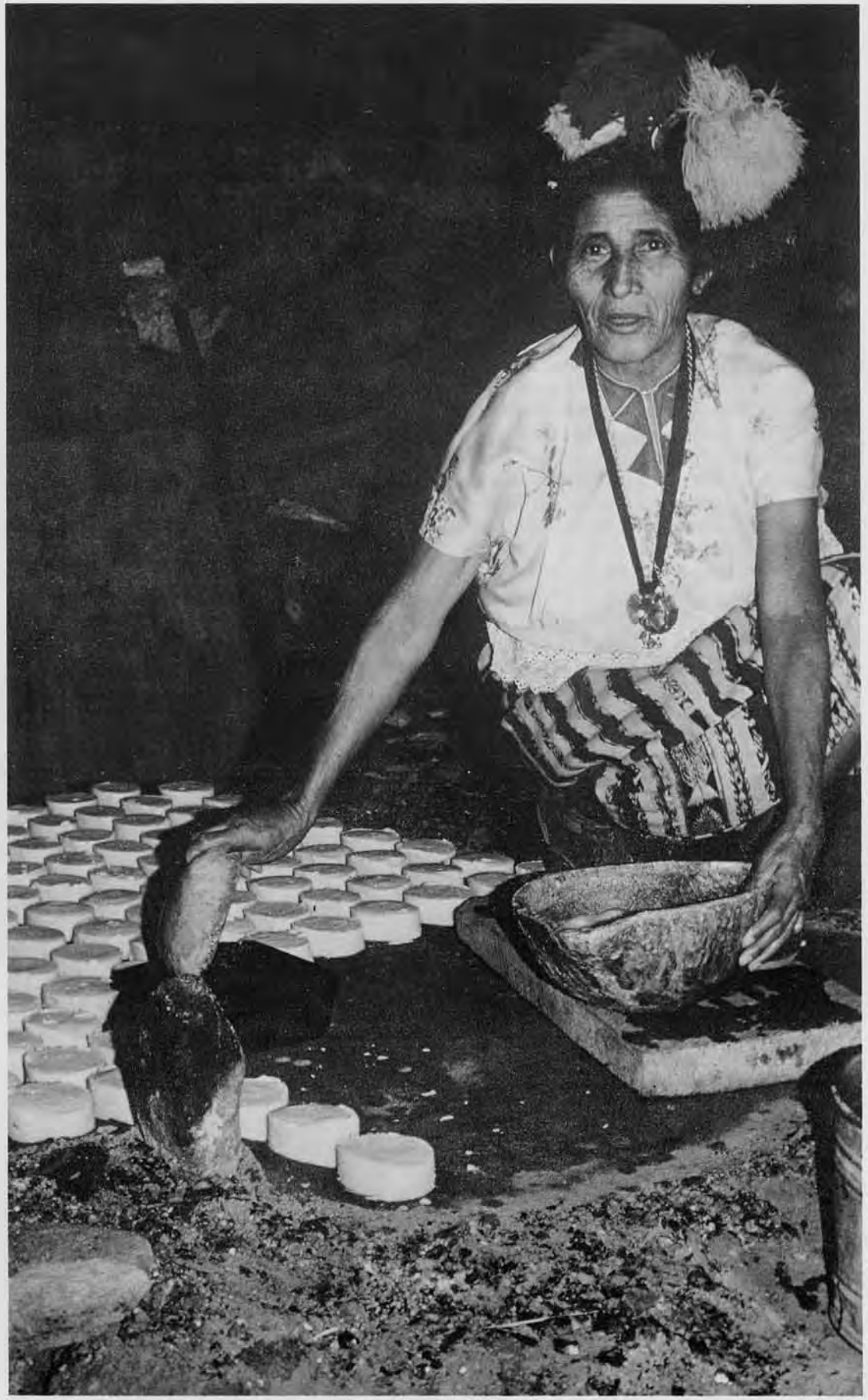
Ruben E. Reina is Curator of Latin American Ethnology in the American Section of the University Museum and Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. He began his ethnographic research in Guatemala in 1953, living with a Pokomam Maya group. His most recently published work (which he wrote with Robert Hill), *The Traditional Pottery of Guatemala*, is a complete study of pottery making techniques among contemporary Maya Indians.

John Monaghan is a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. He visited Sacapulas in 1979 and 1980, and plans to return there in the near future to continue ethnographic research.



40
Rosa, dressed in her best, at work molding the white salt into *panitos*. The ribbon around her neck holds rings given to her by admirers who have had their initials engraved on them. The *panitos* are set to dry on the firing platform, which has been swept clean and covered with a layer of sand. Once they are dry and hard, they will be ready for market

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Militarism and the environment in Guatemala

Matthew John Taylor

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Abstract This paper examines how civil war in Guatemala created and destroyed community cohesion, which, in turn, influences land use practices in the frontier region of Ixcán today. The impact of civil war on the environment and land use in this region takes many forms. Some communities took refuge in Mexico. Other communities refused to take refuge in Mexico and also refused to submit to military rule. These communities of "people in resistance" formed highly cohesive units in order to evade military detection. The lessons of cooperation and the high levels of cohesion they developed during their years in hiding have carried over to their successful management of natural resources in post-conflict Guatemala. Return refugees accumulated higher levels of cohesion while in refuge because they often participated in workshops organized and funded by outside relief agencies. Higher levels of community cohesion have allowed return refugee communities to better organize and use their land in more sustainable ways. Other communities did not flee and thus endured military rule. They were forced out of their dispersed land parcels into concentrated model villages. Concentration of community members forced intensive use of the environment in the zone immediately surrounding the new settlement. Often, distrust permeated these occupied communities and community cohesion dipped. Today, these low levels of community cohesion lead to a lack of consensus on how to use land and resources in the community. The overall goal of the paper is to point out the community level variation in the relationship between military actions, community cohesion, and the environment.

Keywords Civil war · Guatemala · Ixcán · Refugees

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Introduction: war, livelihoods, and the environment

Civil wars leave multiple and indelible scars, physical and psychological, on civilians who are often tangled in the conflict (Green 1999). Wars also take a heavy toll on the environment and natural resources upon which civilian populations often rely upon for their survival. Studying the effects of conflict on natural resources and the land base (i.e., land that people need for survival) is important in a country like Guatemala where over 60% of the population is directly tied to the land and/or natural resources for their daily survival. Guatemalans hold land close to their hearts because on that land they grow maize, beans, and other subsistence crops. War then, especially a war that restricts access to land and natural resources, has a significant impact on Guatemalans and Guatemala.

The effects of Guatemala's 42 years of conflict (1954 to 1996) on Guatemalans and their environment

are still felt and seen today. Landscapes are shaped through time and by many players (Lewis 1983; Lowenthal 1985). This paper provides the details of how war shaped, and continues to shape, people's livelihoods and, consequently, their use of the environment. The examples for this paper are taken from the Ixcán region of Guatemala that suffered some of the most brutal blows of Guatemala's insurgency and counterinsurgency actions.

In presenting the examples from Ixcán, I not only deal with the different ways in which the environment and use of the environment today was changed by civil war, but how these changes were wrought by groups of people who reacted differently to violence in their midst. Their different reactions to civil war are, in turn, a result of the unique history of each community in the Ixcán region. This entails, then, an examination of the settlement history of three representative communities and then a further study of how war ripped into these communities. Their reaction, or survival tactic, resulted in a different use of and impact on the environment upon which each of these communities survived(s). In this paper I argue that researchers must examine how war influences the cohesion of each community because, along with community origins and history, war created, destroyed, or transformed community cohesion. Changes in community cohesion brought about changes in land use, the stock of natural resources, and the ways in which the environment is managed today.

The effects of war on people and their environment are far from static. Livelihoods and environments in Ixcán continue to evolve, but they evolve heavily influenced by the war and its influence on community cohesion and structure. To achieve the goal of explaining changes in community cohesion and how it relates to community-scale effects on the environment, I first outline my methods. Then I describe the settlement of Ixcán's dense rainforests from the early 1960s to the early 1980s and how these communities became embroiled in the battle between the Guatemalan military and revolutionary forces. I then move on to present examples of war, community cohesion, and environment in three Ixcán communities. I finish with a discussion of how we can and should continue to examine the impacts of war at the community scale if we want to better understand the complex relationships between humans and their environments, especially in the times of extreme stress and pressure presented during wars.

Methods

To examine environmental and social realities in rural Guatemala I completed 41 in-depth interviews with 30 rural residents in the Ixcán communities of San Lucas, Kaibil B'alam, and Primavera. These interviews varied according to the informants' age, experiences, and expertise. For example, older residents felt more comfortable relating stories about initial settlement, subsequent repression, and rebuilding life today. Younger informants enthusiastically related migration experiences and their adaptation to life back in Guatemala after years of refuge in Mexico.

For a more quantitative assessment of resources use and views about how war changed Ixcán communities, I completed 168 household surveys in three communities (San Lucas, Kaibil B'alam, and Primavera de Ixcán) in the remote Ixcán *municipio* (equivalent to a U.S. county) (Fig. 1). I conducted household surveys after at least six months of intensive participant observation, informal interviews, and in-depth interviews. This steady accumulation of knowledge allowed me to construct valid survey instruments (Bernard 1995). Some of the results of those surveys, especially responses to questions about community cohesion, are presented in this paper.

This research has taken place over the last six years and I lived in the each of the study communities for at least four months. Therefore, the statements I make, that are backed up by in-depth interviews and household surveys, are based on close connections with the communities. I did not simply wander into war-torn communities and ask them to tell me stories of the past. As any good ethnographer should, I was aware of inconsistencies in stories told to me about changes in community cohesion. It is only through time in a community, however, that a story of past and present life emerges.

Ixcán land and history

In this section, I provide a brief history of settlement of the once-forested region of Ixcán. This history is

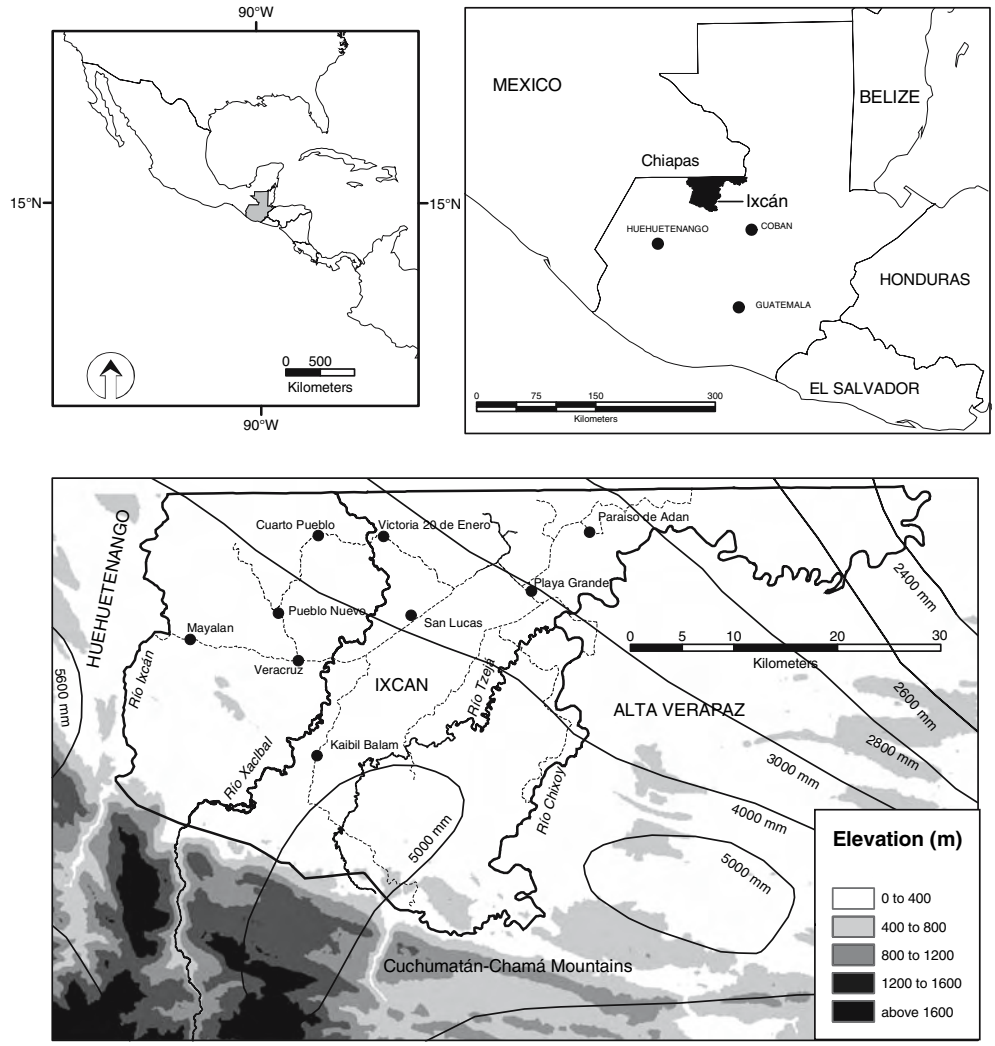

Fig. 1 Location of Guatemala, Ixcán *municipio* (county), and rural study sites. Average annual precipitation (mm) is shown for the Ixcán study region. Source: Author's fieldwork

important because it shows the origins of different communities in the region, which, in turn, helps explain how cohesive communities were prior to the conflict and why they reacted the way they did to the war that engulfed their lives in the 1980s and 1990s.

Expelled from their communities in the Guatemalan highlands by increasing population pressure on atomized land parcels and returning from the dead end alleys of the Green Revolution, smallholders sought a new life in the forested lowlands of Ixcán. Prior to their migration to Ixcán many settlers worked every year on coffee or sugar plantations and desired liberation from the drudgery of working another person's land. Settlers relate their escape from Guatemala's despotic modes of production in terms similar to those of "the great exodus from Egypt, *para salir de la esclavitud en que vivimos* (to escape the slavery in which we lived) and of a journey to the Promised Land in the early 1970s" (Le Bot 1995, p. 123).

Using the words of settlers and a compilation of secondary sources, I first present a history of Ixcán that helps to explain the wide diversity of indigenous and ladino (non-indigenous) communities and their use of the environment. But first, I describe the land Ixcán settlers inhabit.

Ixcán: rain and rainforests

Ixcán is one of the most remote and least developed regions of Guatemala. This patchwork of forests and fields (1575 km^2) occupies the northernmost extremes of the departments (states) of Quiché and Huehuetenango. The Mexican state of Chiapas and the vast Lacandon Forest form the northern border of the Ixcán *municipio* (county). The southern limit of Ixcán abuts the 3000 m-high Cuchumatán-Chamá mountain range. Rivers draining these mountains bound and flow through Ixcán. The Ixcán and Chixoy Rivers form the western and eastern boundaries of the *municipio*, respectively (Fig. 1). Most of Ixcán lies below 400 m elevation. Much of the land, however, is hilly with steep karst slopes. Average temperature ranges between 25 and 28°C. Annual precipitation increases from 1,500 mm in the northeast of the region to 5,600 mm at the base of the Cuchumatán Mountains. The area experiences a short "summer" (dry season) in March and April.

The thin rainforest soils of Ixcán are extremely susceptible to erosion upon removal of vegetation. Only 16% of Ixcán contains fertile alluvial soils. The rest of the area is made up of deeper oxisols (38%), thin oxisols on moderate to steep slopes (35%), and the remainder (11%) is comprised of slopes too steep for cultivation (Garst 1993). Most settlers cultivate corn, beans, and rice for subsistence. Many settlers also cultivate cash crops like coffee and cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*; a valuable cash crop used in Indian cooking and in Turkish coffee blends). Of the natural subtropical humid forest that covered 100% of Ixcán in the 1960s, less than 50% remains (CHF 1999, UVG 2003). Clearing of land for cattle pasture is increasingly common in Ixcán (see Taylor et al. 2006). Human population in Ixcán grew from a few thousand in the 1960s to over 70,000 today. The current growth rate, including migration, is 3.47% (Naciones Unidas 2001).

Before I delve into a presentation of differing resource use and settler adaptive strategies in the face of war, I increase the understanding of these landscapes by presenting a history of the region, a history of concurrent colonization and guerrilla warfare.

Settlement for survival: cooperatives, massacres, and life beneath the trees

The history of settlement, oil exploration, guerilla insurgency, state counterinsurgency, and the response of the local population to war in their midst, played a vital role in molding today's landscape. Guatemala's rise in population over the last 50 years, continued inequality of land distribution, and perpetual fragmentation of smallholdings led to documented internal migration to forest frontiers beginning in the 1960s (Handy 1984; Schwartz 1990). Later, massive streams of migrants, on the order of 10% of the population, headed to the United States (Taylor et al. 2005). In addition to spontaneous internal migration to the Petén and the Northern Transversal Strip (which includes Ixcán), church-sponsored settlement schemes in Guatemala's unpopulated Ixcán region began in the late 1960s and continued through the mid 1970s (Manz 1988a ; CEIDEC 1990; Garst 1993). State organized and U.S. AID funded migrants made their way to Ixcán in the early 1980s, paradoxically, at a time when violence peaked in the region (Dennis et al. 1984).

Beatriz Manz succinctly depicted the settlement history of Ixcán in her powerful book "Refugees of a Hidden War" (1988a):

> In the 1970s thousands of highland Indians successfully colonized the Ixcán, an impenetrable, isolated, and unpopulated rain forest. During this period, the area became the stronghold of the largest guerrilla organization, the Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP). The military conflict between the army and the guerrillas escalated, leading to a fierce counterinsurgency campaign in which entire communities were massacred, most villages were abandoned or destroyed, and thousands fled. Ixcán today [mid to late 1980s] is a development pole. The military tightly controls villages, while the EGP remains in the outlying areas. Armed clashes occur regularly. There are also thousands of villagers living in the jungle beyond military control (127).

The first settlers in the late 1960s were homogenous indigenous groups from Huehuetenango (i.e., from the same ethnic group and geographic area) who

occupied national lands west of the Xaclbal River in a cooperative called Ixcán Grande. These pioneering Indian groups were sponsored by the Catholic church and demonstrated *high levels of cooperation in order to survive* the rigors of settling a virgin rain forest infested with malaria carrying mosquitoes: "...social responsibility, *community cohesion*, and leadership responsibilities were paramount in the original settlements... tasks were rotated and resources pooled and, in fact, the economic, social, and political activity revolved around the cooperative" (Manz 1988a, 129–130, emphasis added).

This search for land and life involved separation from places of origin and the formation of a new community of new people. Settlement, in addition to enduring heat and tropical diseases, meant learning to adapt to new cultures and environments. The cooperatives sat in direct contrast to the traditional model of life in rural Guatemala. In the traditional model of rural life poor farmers lived in the economic and social shadows of the state and operated on the margins of the national economy. They truly live(d) on the periphery (Lutz and Lovell 1990). In contrast, cooperative members tried to establish a society that combined religious tenets, pioneer fervor, community spirit, egalitarian ideals, and finally, something unheard in Guatemala's countryside—socioeconomic development for Guatemala's poor. Colonists formed a new life, without, and in spite of the state. The utopian feeling was enhanced by success in the face of a non-committed state and by overcoming enormous geographic and ecological disadvantages (Manz 1998a; Manz 2004; Le Bot 1995).

Settlement in the Ixcán continued in the 1970s as landless Guatemalans heard about available land in the area. Potential settlers applied to the National Institute for Agrarian Reform (INTA) for a land parcel in areas where they knew land was available and then awaited a response. This resulted in non-homogenous communities made up of people from all regions of Guatemala. These spontaneously settled communities, mainly located east of the Xaclbal River, differed from the church-organized cooperatives to the west in that settlers came alone and often lived and worked in isolation on their designated parcels (Fig. 1). The settlers in the church-sponsored and organized settlements described above lived in village centers with community meeting halls, small cooperative shops, rudimentary schools, and often an airstrip (the only means, other than walking, of getting to the region in the early days of settlement).

Yet another type of settlement took place in the early 1980s. At the height of the government scorched earth campaign in Ixcán in 1981 and 1982, Guatemala's National Institute for agrarian reform (INTA) with funds from USAID saw fit to settle the northern areas of Ixcán between the Xaclbal and Chixoy rivers in a project they called *Proyecto 520* (Dennis et al. 1984). The government trucked in Ladinos en masse from eastern Guatemala and promised migrants 10 hectares each. The "520 scheme" ended spontaneous settlement of Ixcán because the government now claimed unused national lands for their project. The government aimed to settle over 5,000 families in northeastern Ixcán, but only about 1,800 families settled before the scorched–earth campaign curtailed further settlement (Dennis et al. 1984; COINDE 1993).

The settlers of this scheme received no prior training or advice about settling in a strange environment. Moreover, because they arrived in the midst of massacres, the army restricted their movements. They relied on the army for food and made weekly treks to the store at the Playa Grande military base for provisions. The harsh conditions imposed by the military upon these new settlers and insufficient parcel sizes, pushed many original settlers back to their hometowns in eastern Guatemala. In contrast to the indigenous cooperatives of western Ixcán, these communities lack infrastructure and a sense of common purpose—settlers came from different towns and lack a common history. Moreover, today aid agencies do not work in these communities because they believe that these folks suffered less than the cooperatives during the war.

Although the three distinct settlement phases, church, spontaneous, and government, produced different types of communities, all settlers encountered similar conditions upon arrival to Ixcán and endured onerous military rule in the 1980s and 1990s. It is to those years of onerous military rule that I now turn to reveal how war ripped into Ixcán communities and destroyed years of accumulated trust and social relations amongst community members. In some cases, however the war perversely resulted in higher levels of community cohesion as residents of some communities came together simply to survive. The military deliberately targeted any form of

organization for destruction. First, they eliminated priests and community catechists. Later they killed cooperative leaders, teachers, and health workers. Finally, the military lashed out on the whole population. After brutal massacres, the army forced remaining people to police themselves by creating *Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil* (civil defense patrols).

Destroying communities and controlling lives in Ixcán

Guerrilla insurgency and subsequent military repression radically altered the lives of Ixcán's residents. The hopes and realities of the settlers came head to head with the hopes and realities of another group—that of the guerrillas who followed the path of armed struggle against the state. In the eyes of the guerrillas, the search for land by the settlers was an aspiration condemned to failure if it was not framed in a revolutionary project (Le Bot 1995; Payeras 1998). Unfortunately for the settlers, the guerrillas chose the Ixcán for their new base simply because the dense forests afforded good cover and because of proximity to Mexico (Payeras 1998). Guerrilla presence and action in Ixcán, whether settlers sided with them or not, unleashed a fierce counterinsurgency campaign that focused on any form of organized life in Ixcán. In the eyes of the Guatemalan military, settlers were the sea that provided the fish (guerrillas) with sustenance. The military posed a simple solution—dry up the sea.

The *tierra arassada* (scorched earth) campaign of 1981 and 1982 forced tens of thousands of Ixcán surviving settlers to abandon their prized parcels, take what they could carry, and make the arduous journey into refuge across the border into Chiapas, Mexico (Manz 2004). Most families left behind at least one dead family member. Some families were completely eradicated though (Falla 1992). Other residents refused to abandon Guatemala and survived in the dense forests in the northerly most territory between the Ixcán and Xaclbal rivers. Finally, some settlers stayed in their communities hoping to endure military rule.

The cooperative centers of Ixcán Grande, because of their high levels of organization, were singled out for elimination by military forces. For example, Ricardo Falla (1992), a Jesuit priest and anthropologist, documents in minute detail the massacre of over 400 people in Cuarto Pueblo just west of the Xaclbal River. By 1993, only 242 of the original 1,834 families still lived in the Ixcán Grande cooperatives (Garst 1993).

Some refugees returned to Ixcán after two or three years and occupied their abandoned parcels alongside fellow settlers who did not flee. Refugees who returned after 1985 found their land parcels occupied by new settlers. Military-sponsored migrants now farmed the "voluntarily abandoned" land. The army undertook a radio campaign advertising the availability of already cleared land in an attempt to bring in a population that they could control (Manz 1988b; CEIDEC 1990).

War not only ripped into the lives of people but also physically molded a new landscape. Under the guise of development poles and model villages, the military concentrated all land owners into centralized communities where they could control the daily lives of residents (CEIDEC 1990). Community centers, clear of trees and set out in a grid pattern, permitted the Guatemalan air force and ground troops to maintain better control of the population.

During the years of observation, community members banded together to cultivate parcels nearest to the center resulting in a zone of intensive land use and deforestation around many community centers. Today many population centers live with this legacy. Paradoxically, the concentration of the population into centers facilitated certain types of post-war development such as the introduction of electricity and potable water to each household.

In sum, this period of "unrest," arguably one of the most turbulent and bloody conflicts in recent Latin American history, led to a complete unraveling of civil society. Community members who would not, or could not flee the conflict, eked out a living under the tight grip of the Guatemalan military. Refugees slowly returned to devastated home communities during the 1990s and began to reweave the fabric of everyday life (Taylor 1998; Manz 2004). Today, four-fifths of Ixcán residents live in poverty and more than 95% lack basic services like potable water, drainage, and electricity (Taylor 2005). From this hopeful and then horrific history we can point to several types of communities that evolved in Ixcán and how those communities use their available resources.

Ixcán communities today: the results of community history, war, and community cohesion

Documentation of the results of the conflict between the Guatemalan military and the insurgents in Ixcán reveals at least three types of communities: *mixed* (both ethnically and temporally), *stable* with mostly original settlers, and *new* settlements on large farms purchased by the government for the landless. I illustrate each type of community with an example.

Kaibil B'alam: a mixed community

Kaibil B'alam is made up of original inhabitants from the 1970s, new settlers brought in by the military in the early 1980s to occupy "voluntarily" vacated land parcels, and refugees returning in the 1990s. The ethnic and temporal diversity of mixed villages like Kaibil B'alam, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) state, makes attempts to organize socially almost impossible (CEIDEC 1990; CHF 2000). The difficulty in organizing cannot be attributed solely to ethnic diversity. It is the combination of ethnic and temporal mixing of residents that makes organizing difficult in communities like Kaibil B'alam.

Military control and propaganda instilled high levels of tension and mistrust among Ixcán residents during the 1980s and 1990s (Manz 2004). Kaibil B'alam is typical of many communities where original inhabitants who endured military rule in their communities were cautious of return refugees and regarded them as potential guerrillas. Likewise, new military-sponsored settlers, many of whom were non-indigenous, typically viewed original inhabitants as guerrilla sympathizers and as "Indios" (a derogative used to denigrate indigenous people) who do not understand anything and who are not civilized (CEIDEC 1990).[1] Heterogeneous communities composed of original, returned, and new settlers are characterized by "divisiveness, fragmentation—not the elements of a well-functioning rural community... the villages are unable to pursue independent initiatives, develop networks or establish the necessary contacts with cities and organizations of their choosing" because of direct army control and presence in the area (Manz 1988b, 141).

The community of Kaibil B'alam is difficult to see from a distance. It is hard to discern where the village begins and ends because trees on the 1-hectare household lots and the hummocky karst terrain prevent complete views. A 450 hectare forest reserve surrounds the 153 household lots. Individually owned and managed 30-hectare parcels (153 parcels) surround the reserve. Trees appear to dominate the landscape. Several factors explain this verdant landscape. Family lots in the village center are larger than in most communities, which permits the preservation of useful trees in the form of kitchen gardens. Also, the initially cohesive original settlers did not follow military orders to clear the community of trees. They petitioned the local commander and he ordered that settlers clear only 3 hectares in the very center of the community where all community members were forced to live. Third, an agrarian committee ostensibly regulates use of the surrounding forest reserve. Households with distant land parcels are allowed to extract firewood (fallen limbs) from the reserve. Permission for whole tree extraction is given only to families with distant parcels who need large boards for house construction. Seventeen of the forty-six households interviewed claim that all the better wood for fuel and construction in the forest reserve has already been depleted, however.

Kaibil B'alam's turbulent past has shaped the social and physical landscape today. In May, 2003 I sat in the shade of a newly constructed house porch. I shared this spot with Mardoqueo as he recounted stories of Kaibil B'alam.

> In 1970 the majority of the *antiguos* [original settlers] were already established in Kaibil. We dispersed in our town lots or on our parcels.

[1] Ladinos in one of the government settlement scheme villages joked about the naïveté of Indians in Ixcán. They told me, "those *indios* are so stupid and many of them could not even speak Spanish. At the same time they wanted to please the military, so when the troops asked those poor *inditos* something, the idiots would always agree. For example, the troops would ask the indios if they were *comunistas* (communists), and because they did not speak Spanish, the indios answered 'si, si' (yes, yes). And with that the troops would shoot them." At the same time, however, these Ladinos realized the extent of the killings in the area and recounted the callousness of the troops, "they were so used to killing that, you know how here there are no rocks to sit on—just mud, they would take their breaks and eat their food sitting on the cut off heads of the *indios*."

> When the conflict *se puso duro* [became intense] and we were all concentrated by the military in the very center—*todos amontonados* [all on top of each other]. A military outpost also occupied this place. As violence increased half of the community fled to Mexico or to their places of origin in Huehuetenango. During this time other people—*nuevos* [new settlers] came and occupied the "empty" parcels. The original and new settlers were divided because the new settlers came from a different area of the country and they were just shoved on us—the army told us to help and feed them. They [the new settlers] took advantage of all the hard work done by the original settlers—they harvested the coffee and cardamom that was there. In the early 1990s and all the way up until 1996 those living in refuge tried to return, but their passage was blocked by the new settlers, who were backed by the military. The community could not agree what to do with the returnees. The original settlers wanted them back, but the new settlers did not want to give up their land. Also, nobody wanted to divide up their land to make space for the returnees. Eventually, the government arranged for the purchase of an estate. They ended up with a good deal. They accepted and that is how Kaibil today is now made up of old and new settlers—about fifty/fifty. We still don't get along and cannot agree on anything. So here we are all fighting for what we can. Really this place is good and the cardamom that the land gives is more than anywhere else. That is why there is still forest here, because people still make money on cardamom. Business is good. But, for some reason, people want cattle and over that we are divided because with cattle we know there will be no trees and those who want to still grow cardamom will suffer because it will be too dry and hot from all of the cattle pastures.

This short excerpt illustrates how settlers recognize that their community is not cohesive. The sentiments expressed above by Mardoqueo were repeated by many members of this community. Their awareness of their lack of cohesiveness is sharpened by the fact that they know that they have to decide on which development projects to side with. For example, the government in 2000 offered the choice of roofing material, solar panels, or concrete building blocks. "We could not even, as a community, decide on what to accept from the government, even though there was no charge to us," Mardoqueo recounted.

Most residents appear to uphold the agreement that the reserve is a common area for the families who do not have easy access to wood resources and for the future of the community. In spite of this common agreement, some informants reported abuse of the forest reserve, especially by people who own cardamom dryers who are not picky about the type of wood they use in the furnaces.[2] This illegal practice occurs because no sanctions exist for abuses of the norms that are based on a common understanding and trust. Despite acknowledgment among residents of Kaibil B'alam that forest stocks are declining, there are no programs or plans to reforest or otherwise manage trees. Most community members repeat the common refrain that trees "self generate."

Kaibil B'alam residents and non-governmental organization (NGO) employees recognize that lack of community cohesion is an impediment to development and has direct consequences on the environment in terms of lack of regulation of the standing tree stock. In Kaibil B'alam resources appear to be abundant and

[2] Cultivation of cardamom and the fuel required to process this valuable cash crop presents many paradoxes. Residents of cardamom growing communities understand the environmental conditions needed for sustaining healthy cardamom plantations, but their very actions often contradict this knowledge. Cardamom grows in the shade, but wood is required to dry harvested fruit before sale to distant markets. The wood used to fire the furnaces comes from areas close to the cardamom dryers and also from the very parcels where cardamom is grown. Farmers recognize micro-climate change (hotter and dryer) through time and its damaging affect on cardamom production. They identify deforestation for agriculture and cattle as the cause of micro-climate change, but take little action to secure the future of this valuable cash crop. Upon inquiring what people did with the earnings from cardamom, I was informed on several occasions that landholders invested in cattle. In other parts of the world, such as Eastern Nepal, Cardamom is seen as a secure investment because it can be grown on marginal land not used for annual crops. Zomer and Menke (1999) report that villagers in Nepal actually reforest marginal or severely degraded areas so that they can cultivate cardamom in the shade of the forests that provide all the wood needs for drying the crop and for household consumption. The Nepalese farmers are in a win-win situation: they do not rely exclusively on cardamom, they grow it on land that is otherwise unproductive, and provide themselves with a secure fuel future.

well managed "on the surface." The number of negative comments I received from residents about wood consumption by cardamom dryers, however, is an issue for concern. Ostensibly a committee regulates wood use, but residents place little trust in the committee or their fellow residents to observe regulations surrounding resource use. Kaibil B'alam's landscape may change quickly as those with money gained from cardamom invest in cattle. Also, several "strong men" now dominate the community. Indeed, one of these strong men, Raúl Martínez, is a "new" settler and was involved in the kidnapping of United Nations peacekeepers in 1998, who were trying to negotiate the return of original settlers from their time of refuge in Mexico. Raúl Martínez and other new settlers refused to allow entry to the return refugees because the return of the refugees might have resulted in the loss or subdivision of land now in the hands of "new" settlers. Tension between old and new residents still exists and results in a divided community that does not have a strong stand on natural resource use and conservation. Levels of community cohesion and how it has evolved through time as reported by residents during in-depth interviews, are also reflected in the results of household survey questions about community cohesion (see Table 1). The information presented in Table 1 also shows that residents of Kaibil B'alam are reluctant to participate in aforestation programs. Moreover, in-depth interviews with residents reveal that they see the low levels of trust in the community as a significant impediment to organizing to use communal environmental resources in a better war to benefit *all* members of the community.

San Lucas: a "stable" community

Stable communities witnessed less flight of residents, saw little occupation of abandoned parcels by new settlers, and avoided the painful reintegration of return refugees. We can divide the stable communities into two groups: independently or church-settled communities, that demonstrate higher levels of community cohesion, and government organized settlements of northeastern Ixcán. Nonetheless, these communities, simply by deciding to stay and not seek refuge in Mexico or in the forests of Guatemala, endured the onerous rule of the military, which controlled and permeated every aspect of rural life.

"San Lucas está bien pelado" (San Lucas is without trees) lamented Joel Ramón, a Kanjobal Maya who settled in the area in 1974. Another resident, who owns several cardamom dryers, states that San Lucas no longer produces much cardamom and now he buys cardamom from other, higher elevation areas (to dry and sell at a higher price). He, along with other community members, attributes the lack of cardamom in San Lucas to the increase in longer and hotter dry seasons that dry out the cardamom plants. These longer dry seasons contrast to conditions in Ixcán when they first arrived. Then the rain fell *trece meses al año* (thirteen months a year). In turn, they cite clearing of land for cattle and crops as the main cause of climatic changes.

Indigenous and ladino settlers from Huehuetenango and Quiché formed the community of San Lucas in 1974 with a land grant from the government. A mere six or so years after creating San Lucas, men and women started running into guerillas and began to live in fear. San Lucas residents, however, decided to remain in their community and weather the storm of revolution and repression because, in their words, "we were not a cooperative like the other communities around us, and therefore we had nothing to fear from the army—we stood and defended our land." San Lucas residents own and privately manage their individual 30-hectare parcels.

During the intense war years in San Lucas (1980 to 1990), levels of community cohesion increased. Basically, community members had to cooperate to survive. They all had to present a united front and the same "story" before the military to avoid persecution. San Lucas residents all also had to band together and communally cultivate land around the village center because the soldiers who controlled San Lucas would not let villagers venture out into distant land parcels for fear that they make contact with guerillas. This cooperation was new for members of San Lucas, who previously led isolated lives on their distant land parcels. Prior to the conflict, residents of San Lucas had little need for cooperation at the same level as they did during the years of conflict. Prior to the war each family lived on their land parcels, often isolated from other families by a two hour walk through the forest. They did not live in a town center and rarely came together as neighbors or as a community.

Today San Lucas residents enjoy the benefit of a health clinic and the attention of a nurse several days a

Table 1 Community cohesion in three Ixcán communities

	Primavera $n = 40$	San Lucas $n = 82$	Kaibil B'alam $n = 46$
Questions about community cohesion			
Is your community united? % Very	91	63	27
Did conflict decrease community unity? % yes	*	21	63
Can you trust majority of people in your community? % yes	89	64	59
Do people from different ethnicities cooperate? % yes	94	71	44
Do you participate in communal projects? % yes	96	88	58
Do you participate when the whole community meets? % yes	98	82	78
Are you a member of a committee or organization? % yes	95	53	46
Is the committee (above) made up of diff rel. & eth? % yes	97	72	61
Does the committee have contacts outside the community? % yes	96	57	59
For everyday help, ask neighbors for help? % yes	98	69	43
For help when you are sick, ask neighbors for help? % yes	97	44	48
Do you sell crops communally? % yes	99	2	14
Do you trust the government and its projects? % yes	78	49	72
Do you trust NGO projects? % yes	83	68	84
Would you work on a communal forestry project? % yes	92	62	35
Do people respect community rules on forest reserve? % yes	79	14	51

* Primavera de Ixcán did not exist during the war. Their history suggests that the conflict increased community unity when they lived in the communities of population in resistance (CPR)

week. Children attend a government-funded elementary school staffed by four teachers. Other than the two above-mentioned government services, life in San Lucas remains much as it did when they founded the community in the early 1970s. Residents see the government and aid agencies getting involved in reforestation projects, alternative cash crop schemes, constructing meeting halls, building improved houses, creating access roads, providing diesel generators for street lights, and laying pipes for potable water in surrounding communities that fled during the war. People in San Lucas claim that governmental agencies and NGOs ignore them because they "sided" with the army during the conflict and thus did not "suffer" to the same degree as refugees. Settlers in San Lucas, however, state that they only sided with their land.

In San Lucas there are no or very few community rules concerning resource use (see Table 1 which asks residents if there are any rules about using the forest reserve). The communal forest reserve gave way to clearing for agriculture and to fuel household stoves and commercial cardamom dryers. Today, the land where the forest reserve once stood has been divided up to provide children of original settlers with a place to build their own houses.

Characteristic of many communities in the Ixcán where families now live concentrated in a village center,[3] San Lucas residents who own land far from the center (13 of 82 respondents) report wood

[3] Although the military forced concentration of dispersed households into village centers, most families have elected to remain in the center because of access to amenities such as schools, stores, and medical facilities that were not available during initial settlement. Families are now free to live on their parcels. Indeed, many farmers, especially those with parcels distant (2–3 h walking) from the center, reside on their parcels for several weeks at a time during periods of intense agricultural work.

shortages for construction and cooking. In a rainforest setting it may be surprising to see families purchasing wood. But as researchers show in other parts of the world, "woodfuel scarcities" are often a result of labor shortages, land endowments, and social constraints even if the fuel itself is not physically scarce (Mearns 1991).

Development, especially less tangible and slow-return projects like reforestation, in Guatemala and Ixcán often depends on community committees that, after agreement, must submit *pedidas* (proposals) to request certain types of aid. Communities that are particularly organized and united have a distinct advantage. San Lucas residents participate in committees and groups that maintain links to groups outside the community. Older residents, however, feel that there is less community cooperation now than during the war years. Settlers report that the conflict bought people together to survive and "now that the necessity has ended, everybody drifts off on their own again." The dip in community cohesion, many report, is also because more and more people migrate to the United States and can send good money home. This money from the outside makes them less reliant on good relations with neighbors because they can now simply buy labor (Taylor et al. 2006). There is a sense in the community that the heydays of outside funded projects in Guatemala is coming to an end and that the youth of the community do not care to participate in community events, *ni trabajar la tierra con sus manos* [or even work the land with their hands]. Although two thirds of San Lucans say they can trust the people in their community, they also say that few people respect the norms of resource use on the communal land near the river (Table 1).

This slow disintegration of civic engagement does not stop older residents from trying to bring better things to the community. For example, older settlers banded together and formed a potable water committee. They petitioned the government for pipes and paid a surveying company to chart a route from source areas in the mountains to the village. Many San Lucas residents provided labor for the project. Many residents criticized the project when it ran into technical snags, seeing this project as another failed dream and a waste of labor.

In the case of San Lucas I have illustrated how residents recognize how their environment is not in the "best" of conditions and how their cardamom is "burning" due to the deforestation by neighbors as they create pasture for cattle. So, if we were to measure the "shape" of the environment in San Lucas we would find that it is in a worse state than both Kaibil B'alam and Primavera because of military-directed deforestation around the town center, intensive land use in the areas just outside the community center during the years of conflict, and now because of lack of consensus on how best to use the environment and the lack of any sort of committee to regulate land use on private plots (they recognize that land use on one private plot of land influences the climate on adjacent plots).

San Lucas, however, possesses potential because of past experience in organizing during the conflict, to make improvements in their environment and management of resources through the formation of groups to control and manage resources like trees (see the question in Table 1 about willingness to participate in communal forestry projects). San Lucas possesses the potential that the next case study, Primavera, has put into action.

Primavera de Ixcán: a new community

During the massacres and subsequent repression in Ixcán many settlers sought refuge from the army in the dense forests of northwestern Ixcán, creating the base for communities that I label *new*. Dispersed groups of farmers and their families from many Ixcán communities slowly combined to form *Comunidades de Población en Resistencia* or CPR (communities of people in resistance).[4] These communities, comprising hundreds of families, survived 12 years of hardship living in the forest with few resources. Extraordinary levels of cooperation and community cohesion evolved to ensure a minimal food supply for subsistence while constantly evading the military (Falla 1992). These communities were comprised of multiple ethnic groups, including Ladinos, but ethnic diversity did not prove an obstacle to survival. Most

[4] Ironically, the army used the same initials (CPR) to refer to this population, but with quite a different connotation: Comunidades de Población Retenida (Communities of People being Retained). The military viewed these communities as non-civilian populations under guerrilla control (CEIDEC 1990).

of the CPR members, however, were members of the cooperatives in western Ixcán. These cooperatives were "wiped off the map" by the Guatemalan military during the early 1980s. Finally, these communities *salieron al claro*, meaning literally, came out into the light after existing 12 years in the darkness under the trees. This "leaving of the forest" in 1994 took place after the Guatemalan government agreed to recognize the CPR as civilian communities (Primavera 1999).

To illustrate the evolution of the CPR, I recount the story of Esteban from Primavera de Ixcán.

> When the massacres began we fled into the mountains with whatever we could carry. We took refuge in the forest because we could not return to our communities—the army burned and looted our houses and land. That was back in 1982. Throughout 1983 the army followed us into the forest and destroyed the few crops we managed to plant. They also burnt our straw huts and destroyed the few items we saved from when we first came to the forest. Man, we suffered that year. We were forced to eat berries off the trees and eat a young plant that we call *caña de cristo* (Christ's cane) because it saved our lives. During that year as we hid from the army we often bumped into other groups of families. They had fled from different communities and were also trying to survive in the forest. Since we all had experience in cooperatives, we tried living together. But when the groups reached a size of 150 to 200 families, we made too much noise and the army could track us down.
>
> So we had a meeting to discuss options. Some families decided that exile in Mexico would work best. We decided against that, we wanted to be near our land, our little parcels, our country. At the same time we could not go back to our parcels because we knew the military would take us to reeducation camps and then make us serve in the PAC [Civil Defense Patrols]. So we decided to live in the forest and mountains and avoid the control of the Mexicans and the Guatemalan army. So that is how we lived for almost fourteen years—in resistance.
>
> We decided to break into lots of little groups scattered in the forest. About 25 families in each group. In smaller groups we could escape quickly if the army found us. With a committee in each community, each person had an assigned task to make escape easy. We learned how to avoid machine gun fire and bombings from above. We organized production of food in a better way with lookouts to watch while we tended the fields. We learned about the best wild food to eat. That way we always had food, even if the army destroyed our crops. Also, the army did not notice these wild foods from the air, whereas with maize and beans they can spot those easily from a plane or helicopter. We also planted our crops in many small places to avoid the army destroying all of our crops at once. Just to be on the safe side, we also moved location of our community every now and then.
>
> So we began to improve our lives—even there in the forest. We taught children up to the fourth grade and even had literacy classes for adults. We did the same with health care. Each little group had a person responsible for health. Because we did not have access to enough modern medicines, that person discovered certain herbs and roots that could be used to cure some ailments. And also, we cooked at night so that the army did not spot smoke from our fires during the day.
>
> And that is how we lived in the mountains. We were thousands of people, not just a few stragglers. We were *campesinos* (peasants), women, children, old people, widows, orphans—not armed young men. We were Indians and Ladinos. We came from the Mam, Kanjobal, Chuj, Cakchiquel, and K'ekchi' people. But we all learned to care about each other. The life we led in the forest gave us the strength to continue and form this new community along the same lines that we lived in the forest. That is why we call the community Primavera (Spring), because we have a new beginning here. Here we respect all of our neighbors. We include women in all of our decisions. Look, there are several women on the central committee. Maybe our life here will give birth to a new society.

This story of life related by Esteban clearly illustrates how members of the CPR came together and how community cohesion was *required* for survival. We see how these communities were not just random groups of families living together, but instead were a highly organized group of people who did everything communally and through committees. This way of life and intense organization saved their lives. This then, like San Lucas, is an example of how the pressure and hardships of war forced an increase in community cohesion. Each community in the Ixcán region dealt with the war in different ways and community cohesion resulted from slightly different circumstances (but with the more distal cause of war), however, both San Lucas and Primavera ended up more organized in their attempts to deal with the war that surrounded their everyday life. Both communities, quite simply, organized to survive.

CPR members could not return to their original communities after they came out of hiding from the forests because their plots were occupied by new settlers. Caritas Europea, an European aid agency, purchased a large farm on the banks of the Chixoy River for many CPR families.[5] These families started life once again. This time in a community they called Primavera de Ixcán. Although Primavera de Ixcán may appear anomalous, I focus on this community because other Ixcán villages witness the success of Primavera and wanted to know their secrets. The positive attention Primavera now receives from other communities stands in contrast to how they first viewed the residents of Primavera—as communists, indios, and guerrillas who bring trouble to the region.

Following the meanders of the Chixoy River, the large bus owned by the community of Primavera pushes through mud and potholes large enough to swallow smaller vehicles. After traversing the highly prized flood plains that are intensively managed by Indian K'echi' families, passing through extensive rubber plantations of private farms, and crossing the last remnants of Karst hills, the bus enters Primavera and parks at the cooperative garage alongside two communally owned cargo trucks and a pick-up truck. Residents returning from the market in Cantabal file off the bus laden with their purchases. They do not, however, walk home through a pristine environment because the land they now farm on the banks of the Chixoy river was once mostly deforested for cattle pasture by the previous owner of this one private farm. Residents, though, with the spirit, enthusiasm and high levels of community cohesion created during their years of living "under the trees" are beginning to improve their given environment and use their natural resources in the best possible fashion to ensure longevity of their community and its natural resources.

Primavera is a different place: atop every roof sits one or more photovoltaic panels and chimneys of improved wood burning stoves point skyward, hand-painted signs remind residents not to bathe in streams or collect firewood from gallery forests, and the bright yellow cooperative store sells items at cost. Cooperative vehicles that haul agricultural products directly to markets sit as proud reminder of the success and hard work of the community. Indeed, Primavera is unique in the Ixcán, if not the whole of Guatemala.

But here we must be careful not to fall into the trap advertised by Tuan (1990, p. 64), of being the outsider who too quickly "judges by appearance." Apart from solar panels and wood burning stoves in every house, walking into a house in Primavera is no different from a visit to one in Kaibil B'alam or San Lucas. And the landscape surrounding the village center is similar to that managed by residents of other Ixcán communities. The difference here lies in the unseen landscape: a palpable confidence and forward-looking attitude of cooperative members, the land-use practices that revolve around endogenously created norms and rules that people follow, astute management of development monies, and a knowledge that the cooperative holds the power to manage land in a fashion that will benefit future generations.[6]

[5] Of the 380 families making up the CPR, 120 were able to occupy their original parcels because the cooperatives to which the belonged waited for the return of all original inhabitants to occupy their own lands. Repopulation of original parcels was possible because these cooperatives are in the zone that saw sustained and intense conflict and could not repopulated by military-sponsored settlers (Primavera 1999).

[6] All people who live off the land realize that their actions will have consequences for their children. However, many families do not have the power, in the form of social or material capital, to ensure a sustainable future. See for example in Susan Stonich's book "I am Destroying the Land" (1989) where she illustrates how farmers are fully cognizant of their actions but are powerless to act otherwise.

Daily, the gasoline powered community corn grinder sputtered to life at 3:30 a.m. with an air-splitting expulsion of fumes. Then, the community loudspeaker parts the air filled by the patting sound of women's hands forming corn tortillas to announce: "to the group in charge of the cattle this week, please be informed that the cattle are out of their enclosure and need to be rounded up. Also, a reminder to the wood cutting group that we need two more six by one foot planks at the house of Doña Fulana to finish her house, and...".

Community cohesion and organization, accumulated out of necessity while living twelve years in Communities of Population in Resistance (CPR), contributes significantly to the formation and successful operation of this communally owned and operated 1350-hectare farm (see Table 1, which clearly illustrates the high levels of community cohesion).[7] Primavera residents organize their lives around a central committee. Committee membership is determined by a community vote every two years. The committee organizes all aspects of communal life, from organization of work schedules to the drafting of proposals seeking aid from the government and the international community. Primavera maintains a permanent representative in Guatemala City to stay on top of national events and to lobby politicians. Also, representatives from Primavera often make trips to Europe and the United States in search of continued financial and technical support for the community.

Life in Primavera de Ixcán also centers on many committees and associations. Community members are free to organize education groups, women's associations to make and market shampoo made from local plants, and soccer teams. Moreover, Primavera residents take turns to help in the community health center, which is staffed by a nurse. Villagers from nearby communities make their way to Primavera to use the health center. Primavera accepts these people and provides services for free or at cost. In this respect, Primavera breaks down the image that outsiders once held about this village once seen as a group of *comunistas, indios, and guerrilleros* [communists, Indians, and guerrillas]. Indeed, in times of failed crops and food shortages residents of other communities ask Primavera for help and advice. The agrarian committee in Primavera even buys green and cured cardamom from surrounding communities at a better price than middle-men from Cobán (the nearest major city to the Ixcán region). In these transactions, connections and trust develop between Primavera de Ixcán and its neighbors. Now neighbors *want* the success of Primavera.

Norms and values surrounding life in Primavera are clearly detailed in a monograph published by the community. The book codifies the needs and ideals of the community and it contains several chapters outlining the relationships between the community and the environment (Primavera 1999). The book is more than mere rhetoric. Residents generally practice care for the environment as expressed in their publication. While rules governing resource use seem obscure and in their early stages in Kaibil B'alam and non-existent in San Lucas, Primavera has well established norms and rules surrounding the use of their communally held land.[8] These rules are not necessarily reflected in the current visible landscape because the community inherited previously used land that included large areas in pasture. The community attempts, however, to reduce tree loss

[7] Most of the land is communally worked. Each member spends three days a week performing community tasks (a reduction from five when the community was first formed). Each household also has the right to 1.5 hectares of land to use as they wish.

[8] The book, written by the community with development funds from Japan (Primavera 1999), occupies a space in every house. The text contains many examples about natural resource use and its consequences on the environment: "maybe there is a part [of the farm] that we are clearing for wood, but it is not large area; and it is only now that people have started to talk about looking after the rest of the forested area. Although, like we say, we are a large community, there are so many people [260 families] and there are some that do not have the same mentality—sometimes they cut down trees for construction wood or just for firewood—they always have to cut down a tree, but in this case maybe their actions are justified because in some sections of the community there are not so many trees that can be used for firewood...it has been discussed and understood by the majority that where we have our sources of water we should not clear the forest because it is this very forest that gives us the water" (page 21). Or more succinctly "we protect the forest because it serves us today, tomorrow and for the future of our children. Also we don't just think about cutting down a tree, but about planting more, so that they can give life in the future" (page 22). (I translated both quotes from Spanish).

by using previously cleared land whenever possible (Primavera 1999).[9]

In a survey about wood use in Primavera residents revealed collection and cooking methods similar to other communities. In a fashion similar to other villagers, Primavera residents recognize that sources of fuel for cooking and cardamom drying are not infinite. They also note decline in the availability of favored woods. But here the similarity ends. Primavera possesses the organizational capacity to take action to ameliorate potential adverse impacts on their immediate environment. For example, work parties in the surrounding hills reforested 75 hectares of the farm. Other groups of men and women clear weeds from the 75 hectare heart of palm plantation, and yet others tend the beef cattle which will soon be replaced by a better breed *de doble uso* (double use cattle that provide both beef and milk). Simply put, residents spend half the week working on the communal farm while the remaining days are dedicated to the cultivation of subsistence and cash crops on individual 1.5-hectare plots. High levels of organization permit the success and sustainability of communally owned and operated land.

With a firm understanding of Ixcán life over the last thirty years, we can now move on to a discussion of land and life on a once war-torn frontier in Guatemala. Current resources use is influenced by ethnic makeup, war-time strategies, and post-war adaptation in each community. This tumultuous history produces diverse landscapes and livelihoods evident in Ixcán today.

Looking past the civil war to future uses of the environment

From the examples provided, I argue that we must look at the history of each community in the national context to better understand how communities use their natural resources today. Past experiences during the war can provide enhanced powers for community cooperation, which in turn can be a means to empower communities that leads to improved environments and livelihoods (see Table 2 for a summary of each community). All communities want to preserve their environment, but perhaps those with more developed social networks can take steps to secure a similar, if not better, environment for future generations. Communities and their cohesion, however, are not static. The example provided by Primavera, which built on community cohesion accumulated during their years in hiding, may provide incentive for other communities to create stronger social networks and community cohesion expressly to better manage their resources and improve livelihoods. We must then ask how do other communities follow the example of Primavera and create communities where levels of cooperation are higher. Other communities obviously cannot recreate the historical trajectory of Primavera, but they can see the outcomes of higher levels of cooperation and cohesion and then work on ways (unique to each community) to increase community cohesion with the goal of improving their livelihoods by using their resources in a more sustainable way, obtaining better prices for crops, and by setting up community-run institutions like health centers that distribute medicines at cost. Communities around Primavera have, through time, come to see Primavera as a community that is more successful than theirs. Added to this self-realization and awareness about their well being relative to other communities, especially relative to Primavera, aid workers must realize that they cannot enter the diversity of communities in Ixcán with a blanket solution to build better lives. This study shows that each community possesses unique characteristics that must be understood before implementing programs.

Moreover, this study shows that community cohesion can be both destroyed and created during times of conflict. Additionally, we also cannot make broad statements about community homogeneity (that is all indigenous or all ladino) communities and how that is a better predictor of community organization and success. As we have seen in the examples presented here, two communities, San Lucas and Primavera became more organized despite their heterogeneous makeup (see Table 2). Their common point and the resultant community cohesion, however, is more recent and is simply in how they dealt with war in their lives. Guatemala, though, remains a divided state in terms of contrast and conflict between the

[9] I must refrain from painting a perfect idyllic rural life. When I conducted surveys, families always spoke of other families who cut down wood in inappropriate areas or failed to follow community norms. Life in Primavera de Ixcán is not perfect. Close, but not perfect.

Table 2 Characteristics of three Ixcán communities

	Primavera	San Lucas	Kaibil B'alam
Settlement history	New community (1990s) made up of former CPR* members	A stable community formed in the early 1970s by individual settlers	Mixed community of original settlers from the 1970s and military-sponsored settlers from the 1980s
War experiences	Primavera did not exist during the war. Residents lived in the forest for 14 years avoiding military control	Most residents decided not to flee into refuge. The military occupied San Lucas and controlled lives	Many original residents fled during the conflict. The military also occupied Kaibil
Community cohesion	High levels of cohesion formed during years in hiding. Cooperated to survive	Community cohesion in San Lucas peaked during the war also to ensure survival. Cohesion is waning now	Low levels of community cohesion due to the divided nature of the community and low levels of trust between old and new settlers
Diversity	High ethnic diversity	Ethnically diverse, but temporally all settlers contemporaneous	Ethnically and temporally diverse
Environment management/use of natural resources	Many community created rules regarding use of natural resources. Rules respected	No committees governing resources use	An agrarian committee ostensibly regulates forest use, but rules not respected
Environmental condition	Primavera occupies a former cattle ranch. Residents are improving the environment (e.g., reforestation program)	Increase in deforestation for cattle pasture. Center of community and surrounding land deforested during conflict	Slow increase in deforestation for cardamom processing. Forest reserve around community still exists, but is being depleted

* CPR—communities of population in resistance

indigenous and non-indigenous population, and aid agencies would still find it hard to bring cohesion to multi-ethnic communities. Quite simply, they could not create the conditions that brought about higher levels of cooperation in San Lucas and Primavera. So despite the success of San Lucas and Primavera, even though they are heterogeneous communities, we cannot point to them as an example of multi-ethnic cooperation in Guatemala as a whole.

Society in the Ixcán revolves around village life, thus, norms and rules about natural resources must emanate from the community. If outside agencies are to foster better natural resource management they should focus on activities that increase interaction and mutual trust among community members rather than imposing formal legislation and technological change that may not be appropriate (Katz 2000; O'Keefe 1996). Higher levels of community cooperation may provide one way for farmers to overcome the many constraints surrounding settler life. This path will be difficult, however, because, as illustrated in Kaibil B'alam, the fractures of distrust and resentment run deep and provide substantial barriers to cooperation.

This discussion about the distinct histories of Ixcán communities and natural resource use takes place in the context of larger discussions of human interaction with the environment. Briefly, I turn to these discussions.

First, because the Ixcán was one of the regions most heavily impacted by the internal war, aid agencies still abound in the region looking for worthy recipients of development projects and funds. This situation is unique within Guatemala.[10] Therefore, communities in the Ixcán need to take full advantage

[10] Other regions of the country, such as the Ladino-dominated eastern side of Guatemala, receive little attention in both development plans and academic studies. Eastern Guatemala was less heavily impacted during the latter phases of the war, and, more simply, it does not embody the ethnic diversity and romance of the western highlands and its 22 different ethnic groups that have traditionally been seen as the more disadvantaged group in Guatemala's dichotomous society.

of opportunities while they exist. Villages with high levels of community cooperation reap the maximum benefit in securing development monies and in implementing successful programs.

Community participation and cohesion constantly come into play in Ixcán today and communities must pay attention to their own history and image if they want to improve their lot. NGOs and government institutions seeking to promote agroforestry projects constantly comment on difficulties in working in villages that are not cohesive. Agroforestry projects took off in Primavera because aid agencies encountered a willing and organized community. Agroforestry initiatives flounder in Kaibil B'alam and do not even reach San Lucas and other similar communities.

In a larger framework some researchers stress that land use decisions at the local scale are dominated by structural controls; there are few examples of "powerful local producers capable of influencing the very structures in which they operate" (Turner 1997). I argue that Primavera is an example of how development does not necessarily lead to negative environmental impacts, how "sustainable" and "development" can coexist, and how a united group of resource users can break traditional modes of production that relegate most smallholders in Guatemala to lives of poverty (cf. Bebbington 1997). As Garst puts it: "the returned refugees and the CPR can again introduce new concepts and models of social organization [acquired in refuge in Mexico and by living in hiding in the forests of Guatemala]...that have the potential to be a positive influence in the democratization and development of the region." (1993, p. 71)

We must temper the optimism provided by the example of Primavera with notes of caution. In Ixcán negative land use change outweighs positive change and sustainable use of resources. The majority of settlers, like many others in rural Latin America, struggle to survive *now*. They take immediate action, regardless of long-term consequences, to feed their families. A better future, for many Ixcán settlers, remains a distant desire.

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Land, ethnic, and gender change: Transnational migration and its effects on Guatemalan lives and landscapes

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Abstract

Migration to the United States of America from Guatemala effects many aspects of Guatemalan life. We document, through extensive ethnographic fieldwork, how migrants and their remittances effect gender relations, ethnicity, land use, and land distribution. Our evidence is drawn from research in four communities. San Pedro Pinula and Gualán represent communities of eastern Guatemala. San Cristóbal Totonicapán is an Indigenous town in Guatemala's western highlands, and San Lucas is a lowland frontier community in the Guatemalan department of Ixcán, which borders Chiapas, Mexico. Our results reveal that migrants and their remittances, both social and tangible, result in significant changes in land use and land distribution in Ixcán. Migrant money permits the conversion of rainforest into cattle pasture and also results in the accumulation of land in the hands of migrants. In terms of land use, we see in San Pedro Pinula that migrant money also allows the Pokoman Maya to make small entries into the Ladino (non-indigenous) dominated cattle business. In San Pedro Pinula, the migration and return of Maya residents also permits them to slowly challenge ethnic roles that have developed over the last five centuries. When we look at how migration effects gender roles in Gualán and San Cristóbal we also note that migration and social remittances permit a gradual challenge and erosion of traditional gender roles in Guatemala. We point out, however, that migration-related changes to traditional gender and ethnic roles is gradual because migrants, despite their increased earnings and awareness, run into a social structure that resists rapid change. This is not the case when we examine land transformations in Ixcán. Here, migrants encounter few barriers when they attempt to put their new money and ideas to work. Despite the advantages that migration brings to many families, especially in the face of a faltering national economy and state inactivity regarding national development, we conclude that migration and remittances do not result in community or nation-wide development. At this stage migrant remittances are used for personal advancement and very little money and effort is invested in works that benefit communities or neighborhoods. We call for continued studies of the effects of international migration on Guatemalan hometowns that build on our initial studies to better understand the longer-term ramifications of migration in a country where no community is without migrants.

Keywords: Guatemala; International migration; Ethnicity; Gender; Social remittances; Economic remittances; Development

1. Introduction

Almost a million and a half Guatemalans live and work in the United States and Canada. These migrants, who flee political repression and abysmal economic conditions in their homeland, begin to challenge and change traditional social structure, livelihoods, and landscapes in Guatemala. Absent family members, migrant earnings sent home (remittances), return migrants, and transnational ties contest and slowly transform traditional gender and ethnic relations, land-use practices,

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and land ownership in a nation characterized by patriarchy, ethnic conflict, and highly unequal land distribution.

The Bank of Guatemala and the popular press proudly report that remittances now form the most important source of income for the country—"*migra* dollars"[1] far exceed earnings from traditional money-making export crops such as coffee, bananas and sugar (Prensa Libre, 2002). Economists project that migrants in the United States and Canada will send just over U.S. $1.5 billion dollars back to family and friends in Guatemala in 2002 (Prensa Libre, 2002). Daily, Guatemala's leading newspaper, *Prensa Libre*, runs reports on migrants living in the United States, the visible impacts of remittances, the hardships endured by migrants when they cross international borders, deportation of Guatemalans from Mexico and the United States, or the impacts of migrants and their money on local economies. Glossy color photographs depict mansions in rural areas built on the sweat of migrant brows. Western Union plasters Guatemalan roadsides with bright yellow billboards that advertise the ease of money transfers. Clearly, the popular press and Guatemalan families, who rely on migration for survival, quickly recognized the all-pervasive presence or absence of migrants and remittances, yet scholarly study provides little in-depth knowledge to enhance our understanding of migration-related changes in Guatemala.

Indeed, if 15% of a 12 million-strong population migrates to "el Norte,"[2] how do these people and their earnings alter Guatemalan lives? Do Guatemalans form new places and livelihoods like "Oaxacalifornia," that are shaped by international migration (Kearney, 2000)? Do the once popular notions of adapted peasant production systems forwarded by cultural ecologists, while providing valuable baseline information, pertain to contemporary globalized rural society (Bebbington and Batterbury, 2001)? Based on a cumulative 41 months of fieldwork in four culturally and regionally distinct sending regions from 1999 to 2002, we document specific migration-related changes in gender and ethnic relations and land use and distribution in small-town and rural Guatemala. After clarifying methods and describing the study sites, we offer a brief history of migration from Guatemala. We then deliver four detailed case studies from the *municipios* (townships) of Gualán and San Pedro Pinula in Eastern Guatemala, San Cristóbal Totonicapán in the western highlands, and Ixcán in the northwestern lowlands (Fig. 1). We also place our results in the context of discussions addressing transnational migration, gender, ethnicity, and land in Latin America. First and foremost, though, the objective of this paper is to show how international migration gradually transforms Guatemalan lives and places. The discussion of these transformations is brought to life by bringing together the experience of three researchers and their distinct emphasis on changes taking place in this Central American country.

2. Methods and study sites

The results presented here rest on research by three individual researchers. We all conducted ethnographic research in Guatemala between 1999 and 2002. We each held distinct research agendas. However, after meeting many times during those fieldwork and subsequent years at academic and informal meetings, we decided to bring our results together in one paper to provide a wider view of the impacts of migration on Guatemalan people and land. Many of the statements made in this paper are based upon intensive research in each of the regions that lasted nearly 12 months for each study site. Collectively, we completed 84 in-depth interviews and numerous informal and semi-structured interviews. Our knowledge of migration-related changes in these Guatemalan communities also rests on 504 surveys (albeit not the same survey, as mentioned above we each held distinct research agendas and thus used unique survey instruments created after at least 6 months of ethnographic research in the communities). The results presented here rely heavily on the ethnographic aspect of our fieldwork—we intersperse our ethnographic analyses with the voices and proverbs of Guatemalans because, after all, they are the migrants and this is their story.

We bring together findings from distinct cultures and regions of Guatemala to provide a more nuanced understanding of contemporary migration and resultant impacts in a country that is split along ethnic and regional identity lines—Ladino and Maya. Gualán, in the eastern department (state) of Zacapa, is largely a *Ladino* (non-indigenous) community that sits in the lowlands of the Motagua River valley. The *municipio* of Gualán is dominated by *latifundias* (large coffee and cattle estates). Gualán residents generally migrate to Los Angeles (California), Las Vegas (Nevada), and Chicago (Illinois). Michelle Moran-Taylor, a half native (half American/half Guatemalan) to the region, conducted 9 months of research in Gualán. San Pedro Pinula, in the department of Jalapa, holds a rich history of migration to Boston, Massachusetts. San Pedro Pinula is also

[1] The term "migra dollars" is recognized by scholars and migrants and refers to the money earned by migrants in the United States and Canada.

[2] "El Norte," in migrant parlance, simply means the United States or Canada.

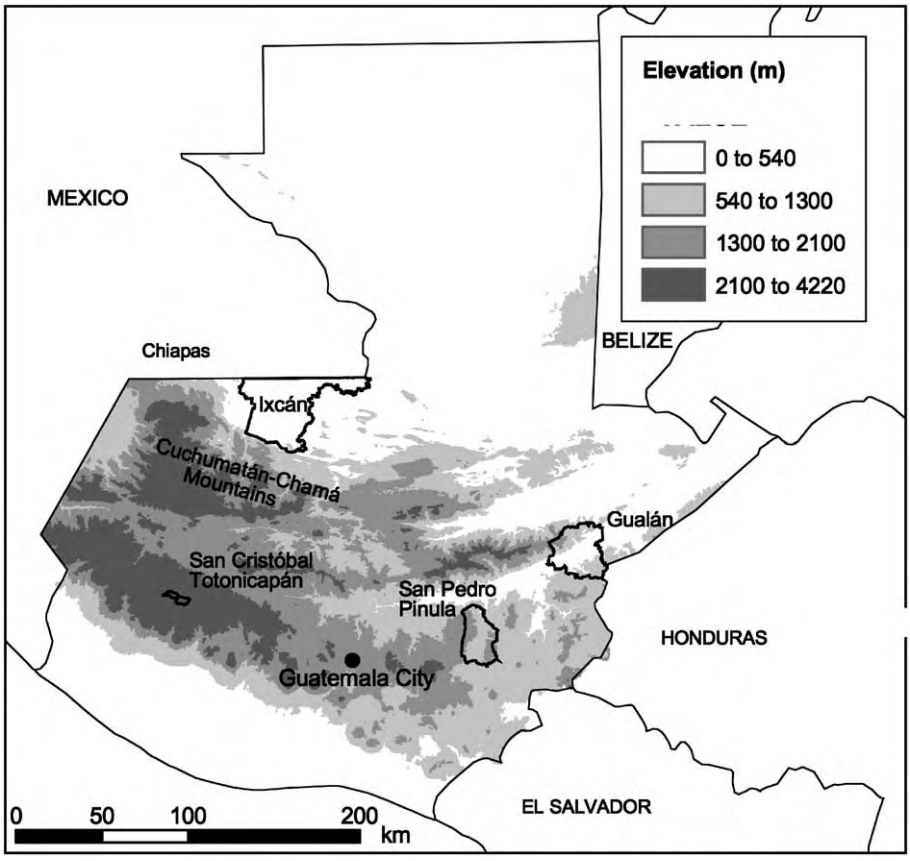

Fig. 1. Location of the four study municipios in Guatemala.

a Ladino-dominated community, but a place where indigenous[3] villages surround the town. Debra Rodman Ruiz lived for 18 months with her relatives in San Pedro Pinula. Her representations of San Pedro life, then, are also based on an intimate knowledge of the people and place of San Pedro Pinula. Our representation of migration from Guatemala's indigenous western highlands comes from San Cristóbal Totonicapán (hereafter referred to as San Cristóbal), a town with strong migrant ties to Houston, Texas, and Los Angeles, California. Moran-Taylor has conducted migration-related research in San Cristóbal since 1992, and since 1999 has lived for 9 months in this bustling indigenous town. By including research from Ixcán, we also demonstrate the impact of migration on Guatemala's lowland forested frontier zones. Ixcán residents prefer to migrate to rural jobs in Oregon, Washington, and Tennessee. Matthew Taylor lived in four frontier communities of Ixcán for a total of 14 months between 2000 and 2002. He has developed an intimate rapport with the people of this war-torn region of Guatemala.

Rather than discussing the effects of migration on gender, ethnicity, and land at each site, each author, instead, delves into their specialty. So, for example, Taylor provides details about land use in Ixcán, we learn from Moran-Taylor how international migration affects gender relations and roles in Gualán and San Cristóbal, and Rodman Ruiz elucidates emerging ethnic relations in San Pedro Pinula. While we do not intend to generalize detailed results across regions because of the circumstances unique to each town, discussion amongst the authors and visits to each other's research sites revealed that basic migration-related changes remain constant in each area.

3. Guatemala: The context of migration

Before considering the impacts of international migration on Guatemalan society, we must understand

[3] We use the term indigenous, Maya, indian, interchangeably. In doing so, however, we do not ignore the powerful connotations behind each term. The indigenous people of Guatemala most often describe themselves as *natural*, *pobre*, *indio*, or *campesino* (naturals, poor folk, indians, or rural farmer). Ladinos generally use the derogatory term *indio* when referring to indigenous people. Mayans call Ladinos *los ricos*, *gente de vestido*, or *Ladino* (the rich ones, people dressed in Western clothing, or non-indigenous). Although much scholarship reports on the rise of the Pan-Maya movement in Guatemala (Fischer and Brown, 1996; Warren, 1998), we found that few indigenous people self identify using the term *Maya*. Rather, when asked about how they understand the label *Maya*, invariably folks responded "*ah si, nuestros antepasados*" (oh yes, our ancestors).

Table 1
Distribution of farmland in Guatemala

	Below subsistence plots (<1.4 ha)	Sufficient for subsistence (1.4–3.5 ha)	Plots than can produce for internal market (3.5–45 ha)	Large, export-oriented farms (above 45 ha)
Percent of total farms	54	24	19	3
Percent of total farmland	4	7	25	65

Data are derived from the *latest* agricultural census in 1979 (Naciones Unidas, 2000).

the structures that drive migration. Quite simply, we ask: Why do Guatemalans leave their homeland? Most Guatemalans struggle to meet their every day needs. Indeed, over 80% of rural Guatemalans live below the international poverty line of U.S. $2 per day. And, of all Guatemalans living in poverty, 26% live in extreme poverty. That is, their daily income is less than one U.S. dollar. Abysmal living standards for Guatemala's majority results from a highly skewed land distribution—2% of Guatemalans own 60% of the arable land, rapid population growth, and a brutal civil war, which lasted almost four decades and laid waste to many rural communities and fields (Le Bot, 1995).

3.1. Land, population, and poverty at the country scale

Guatemala's population is still predominantly rural. Rural residents account for two thirds of the almost 12 million people (Naciones Unidas, 2001). In rural Guatemala 54% of farm plots are not large enough for subsistence farming (Table 1). Additionally, average plot size of holdings below 1.4 ha decreased from 0.7 ha in 1964 to 0.19 ha in the 1990s (Bilsborrow and DeLargy, 1990; Brockett, 1998; Elías et al., 1997). This desperate land situation is due to long-term evolution of unequal land distribution,[4] and population increase on a land base that is not getting any larger (Davis, 1997; Early, 1982; Gleijeses, 1998; Lovell, 1995). Below subsistence agriculture and lack of employment alternatives in Guatemala's cities and towns drive widespread poverty and a large informal economy (Jonas, 2000).

Forty years of conflict (1954–1996) between guerrillas and the state exacerbated poverty in most rural areas (CEH, 1999; Diocesis del Quiché, 1994; Falla, 1992; Naciones Unidas, 2001). Guerrilla insurgency and subsequent military repression radically altered the lives of Guatemalans. This period of "unrest," arguably the most turbulent and bloody conflict in recent Latin American history, left an astounding 200,000 killed or disappeared, 150,000 refugees, and 1.5 million internally displaced (Jonas, 2000; North and Simmons, 1999). During the years of violence many residents fled to refugee camps in nearby Chiapas, Mexico (Manz, 1988), and others fled further afield to the United States and Canada.

During the same 40-year period Guatemala's population quadrupled from 3 to 12 million, and environmental change, such as deforestation, soil erosion, microclimate change, and pollution, is clearly evident (Elías et al., 1997). The civil war officially ended in 1996 with the signing of an internationally-brokered peace accord, but the wounds created by the conflict are far from healed (Nelson, 1999; Nunca Más, 2000; Remijnse, 2001). In areas hardest hit by the conflict, residents still fear members of ex civil patrols (Prensa Libre, 2001a,b), distrust neighbors and any form of community organization for fear of reprisals, lack basic services, and continue to live in the midst of poverty. The state, NGOs, and foreign governments targeted regions of previous conflict for a wide range of development efforts, but these development projects do little to ameliorate the lot of poor Guatemalans (Jonas, 2000). Rural and urban populations now struggle to secure access to basic resources like land, firewood, potable water, education, and health care (Naciones Unidas, 1999, 2000). Mounting impoverishment now comes face to face with growing ecological impoverishment. In the face of apparent insurmountable adversity and lack of local alternatives, many Guatemalans follow in the footsteps of earlier migrants who left Guatemala in the 1960s for economic reasons and thereafter in the 1980s to escape death.

Despite the magnitude of the Guatemalan migrant stream, little is known about this northward movement and its effects in Guatemalan society. Most research on Guatemalan migration examines their adaptation to the United States and Canada as well as the new communities these migrants create in "El Norte" (e.g., Rodríguez and Hagan, 1992; Burns, 1993; Hagan, 1994, 1998; Popkin, 1999; Loucky and Moors, 2000; Hamilton and Chinchilla, 2001; Fink, 2003). While this previous research helps situate our study among Guatemalan migration scholarship, we also rely on migration work that relates to the Guatemalan example. These studies attend to U.S.-bound Mexican migration, especially among the Mixtec and Zapotec people (e.g., Kearney, 1996, 2000; Mountz and Wright, 1996; Cohen, 2002; Conway and Cohen, 2003). As migration from Guatemala grows and matures, assessing the effects of this trend in the homeland is imperative—we must evaluate

[4] The Gini coefficient for land distribution in Guatemala is 0.85—the highest in Central America and one of the highest in the Western Hemisphere (Southgate and Basterrechea, 1992).

and analyze transformations in sending regions to better understand the full ramifications of transnational migration in *both* home and host communities. We now turn to examine the impacts of international migration in four Guatemalan places: Gualán, San Cristóbal, San Pedro Pinula, and San Lucas in Ixcán.

For each case study, we provide an introduction that includes a description of the study area and also a discussion of the literature relevant to that section of the paper. When Moran-Taylor, for example, discusses the interplay of gender and migration, she provides the reader with sufficient background from the extant literature on gender roles in Latin America. Rodman Ruiz and Taylor perform similar literature reviews for their sections on ethnic relations and land, respectively. In this way, a reader can select a section of the paper and gain a complete understanding of the selected subject. Likewise, other readers can read the whole paper and better understand the combined impact of migration on various facets of Guatemalan life.

4. Migration-related changes in land distribution and land use in Northwestern Guatemala

At least 10% of Guatemala's population lives and works in the United States and Canada (Naciones Unidas, 1999; Rodriguez, 2000), and yet we know little about the impacts of international migration on this country's most valuable resource—its land. Who works the land when men, or both men and women migrate? When migrants return to their homeland do they buy more land to plant subsistence crops or do they intensify agriculture on existing plots? Do return migrants turn away from their maize heritage to cultivate cash crops? How does the infusion of outside capital impact land ownership and distribution? And, more generally, what is the impact of remittances and return migrants on the environment? We address those questions in this section of the paper.

Demographers traditionally neglect the environmental context of demographic change (see the calls in Gober and Tyner (2004), Hunter (2000), and Pebley (1998) for demographers to consider the environmental aspects of demographic dynamics). Granted, a notable body of work from political ecology informs the interaction of humans and the environment. Much of this research focuses on the developing world where increasingly greater shares of the global population reside and struggle with shortages of basic natural resources like land, water, and firewood (Bryant and Bailey, 1997; Hunter, 2000; Peet and Watts, 1996). However, most political ecologists triumph politics and economics over population factors (e.g., size, distribution, and composition) as variables that better explain resource-use decisions at the community and household level (Peet and Watts, 1996). By including important demographic factors like international migration and how it influences land use and ownership practices, we promise to shed light on how local ecologies, just like local places and culture, are transformed and transnationalized. We document specific migration-related changes in land use and distribution in San Lucas, Ixcán, in the northwestern lowlands (Fig. 1). But first we provide a brief discussion of land and migration in Guatemala, a brief history of San Lucas' settlement and people, and a summary of methods.

4.1. Land and natural resources: In changing hands?

Guatemalan rural landscapes are far from static and are even further from National Geographic images of the "timeless Maya" tending fields of maize (Lovell, 1995). This is not to imply that rural Guatemalans have lost their ties to the land—rather, that relationships with the land are changing due to violence and economic-related migration, population pressure, and macro-level political and economic forces (Montejo, 1987; Watanabe, 1992; Wilson, 1995). Simultaneously, land in Guatemala remains a highly charged political issue (Cambranes, 1992; Prensa Libre, 2001a; Villa and Lovell, 1999) where, despite provisions for land reform and rural social development that were included in the 1996 peace accord, distribution remains highly unequal (Bilsborrow and Stupp, 1997). In the face of state inactivity, rural and urban Guatemalans took matters into their own hands and migrated en masse to the United States and Canada to escape grinding poverty and limited access to resources (Jonas, 2000). Again, the combination of migration and unequal land distribution in Guatemala, and the separate studies of these phenomena, force us to ask, as Pebley (1998) prompted: "What are the *environmental* consequences of remittances in the sending countries." The results we provide here pull away from the macro-scale generalizations made about land and population growth (e.g., Bilsborrow and Stupp, 1997) in an effort to provide concrete examples that illustrate the impact of economic and social remittances, both of which, through infusions of money and ideas, alter rural communities and landscapes (Conway and Cohen, 1998). Preliminary investigations suggest that migration and remittances impact the land in many ways: for example, ethnobotanical knowledge erodes as agriculture is left in the hands of hired help (Steinberg and Taylor, 2002), some farmers intensify and grow non-traditional crops using more fertilizers and insecticides, others purchase land in distant areas, and some even sell their land and start small businesses (Watanabe, 1992). But again, what is needed are specific, detailed studies that can ask if "migra-dollars" are enabling environmental degradation or preserving land resources for future generations. And, maybe even more

importantly, we must ask if international migration results in concentration of land in the hands of migrant families.

4.2. Ixcán and San Lucas

Ixcán (1575 km^2) is one of the most remote and least developed regions of Guatemala. The *municipio* (county), created in 1985, occupies borderlands in the extreme north of the departments of El Quiché and Huehuetenango. The Mexican state of Chiapas and the vast Lacandon Forest form the northern border of the *municipio*. The southern limit of the Ixcán abuts the massive 3000 meter-high Cuchumatán-Chamá mountain range (Fig. 1). In this once rain forest covered region, annual precipitation ranges from 2000 to 5000 mm. Ideally, soils of the Ixcán lend themselves to the cultivation of permanent crops such as rubber, coffee, and cardamom. Most families, however, plant corn, beans, and rice for subsistence—initial yields are not sustained and much land is severely degraded. Population grew from a few thousand in the 1960s to over 70,000 today. The current growth rate, including migration, is 3.47% (Salud Pública, 1999).

The first settlers to the Ixcán in the late 1960s were homogenous indigenous groups from Huehuetenango (i.e., from the same ethnic group and geographic area) who occupied lands west of the Xalbal River in a cooperative called *Ixcán Grande*. These church-sponsored pioneering groups demonstrated high levels of cooperation in order to survive the rigors of settling a virgin rain forest infested with malaria carrying mosquitoes: "... social responsibility, community cohesion, and leadership responsibilities were paramount in the original settlements... tasks were rotated and resources pooled and, in fact, the economic, social, and political activity revolved around the cooperative" (Manz, 1988, pp. 129–130). Church-organized colonization also took place east of the Xalbal River in an area known as the *Zona Reyna* (Taylor, 1998). Indigenous settlers from the densely populated highlands of Quiché, through extremely hard physical labor and high levels of social organization, achieved a level of success similar to the cooperatives to the west. In the early 1980s, state-sponsored colonization of the area between the Xalbal and Chixoy Rivers to the north of the *Zona Reyna* consisted mainly of Q'eqchi' indians from Alta Verapaz and Ladinos from all over Guatemala (Dennis et al., 1988). Settlers from Huehuetenango, Quiché, and eastern Guatemala, formed the community of San Lucas in 1974 with a land grant from the government.

Soon after the successful establishment of families on relatively large parcels of land that varied in size from approximately 10–30 ha (versus 0.2 ha in Guatemala's western highlands), guerrilla insurgency and subsequent military repression forced many Ixcán residents of their plots of land and into refuge in Mexico or into hiding within Guatemala (Falla, 1992). San Lucas residents, however, decided to remain in their community and weather the storm of revolution and repression because, in their words, "we were not a cooperative like the other communities around us, and therefore we had nothing to fear from the army—we stood and defended our land" (during the 1980s, the Guatemalan military targeted any form of community organization for destruction, arguing that a strong civil society formed a good base for guerrilla activities; Schirmer, 1998). Escaping all pervasive violence in the region, men, 20–30 years old, first left San Lucas in 1982 for agricultural jobs in Oregon and the Miami, Florida area. Migration to the United States is now commonplace for many San Lucas men (female migrants are rare). Only three families reported that females from their household had migrated during between 1992 and 2002.

4.3. Methods

In addition to relying on ethnographic research and the voices of Ixcán residents, the results presented in this section rest on a complete household census in San Lucas ($n = 156$), a more detailed survey of sixty households, and 18 in-depth interviews. Results from the household census and survey are linked to a plan of land ownership in San Lucas in a Geographic Information System (GIS) software package to better visualize and map land use and land cover change over a 15-year period and to examine linkages between migration and land use. This was a laborious process because two satellite images of the area, land ownership maps, surveys, and resident's histories were tied in space using a global positioning system. This time-intensive method, however, produces rewarding results. This method allows researchers to explain the change seen in remotely sensed images (in this case Landsat satellite data) with social information gathered in surveys and interviews. Moreover, social explanations of observed land use and land cover change are not general (i.e., at the community level), but can provide insight into change at the sub-parcel level (i.e., an area of land that measures 30 by 30 m).

Specifically, triangulating ethnographies, satellite imagery, survey results, permits us, in this case, to document a transformation from subsistence and small-scale cash cropping to cattle raising that is intimately linked to migration and migrant money.

4.4. Migration, land use, and land distribution in San Lucas

Traditionally, farmers in San Lucas cultivate maize, beans, and rice for subsistence—small surpluses reach local markets and the revenues from sales provide

families with capital for everyday purchases. Families also cultivate and sell cardamom[5] to supplement meager earnings from maize and bean sales. The 156 families of San Lucas (average household size hovers around 9.5) always left the major part of their 30-ha land parcels relatively untouched—they simply lacked resources to exploit all the land and only employed about 1.5 ha for subsistence crops (moving to a new patch of forest every few years) and, at the most, 2 ha for perennial cash crops like cardamom. When cardamom prices peaked, as they did in the 1970s and early 1980s, farmers cultivating cardamom reaped handsome profits, which allowed settlers to realize the promised utopia of frontier life in Ixcán. Indeed, settlers in Ixcán, despite their isolation, enjoyed wealth unheard of in rural Guatemala at the time (Manz, 1988). Feelings of optimism during the "golden years" in San Lucas and Ixcán, buoyed by large tracts of land and cardamom profits, soon drowned in fluctuating and falling cardamom prices and the sea of human massacres in northwestern Guatemala during the 1980s and early 1990s.

4.4.1. From cardamom to cattle

In the 1980s only five families from San Lucas raised cattle on their land parcels. Taking the large step over from cardamom cultivation to cattle corrals requires large initial capital outlays. Pioneer investors in cattle from San Lucas first made their money in cardamom. For example, men in the cardamom trade (buying and selling) own the largest herds in San Lucas (over 100 head each). These men buy fresh cardamom, dry the seeds using firewood, and then truck the exportable product to market towns. Other cattle prospectors in the 1970s and 1980s started out small. Daniel Antonio, after a good year in cardamom in 1978, cut down his cardamom plantation and remaining forest and invested in a few head of cattle: "That is how I started," he stated, "just with a few head, and with much care those few go making many cattle".

In 2002, however, involvement in the cattle business in San Lucas is somewhat distinct—a full 61% of residents own pasture and/or cattle. Of these 94 families connected to the cattle business 57 families (61%) report that remittances from a family member(s) in the United States during the last 5 years eased their entry into the cattle trade (Fig. 2). The household census also shows that 37 non-migrant families are somehow involved in the cattle business. These non-migrant families rent land to cattle owners who need more land for larger herds. The fact that so many non-migrant families are involved in the cattle business requires more explanation: The household census reveals that fourteen non-migrant families only converted part of their parcel to pasture to rent to cattle owners—they meet the demand for pasture by putting what they deem "unproductive" land (i.e., soils to steep and/or poor for crops) into pasture and charging cattle owners U.S. $4 per head of cattle per month.

Quite simply, as new and old cattle ranchers emphatically stress, "cattle needs initial capital to start because you must pay to *botar* (literally, "drop" the forest), *sembrar zacate* (plant grass), *alambrar* (fencing), and finally, *al menos comprar un toro y una vaca buena*! (at least buy a bull and a good cow)." This initial capital now comes from the United States. Lack of credit from Guatemalan banks and the government forces farmers to look elsewhere for their start in life—they look North.

The ties between migration and the cattle trade stand out clearly in Adelio's story. We took a break from planting maize with digging sticks in a recently burnt patch of forest and Adelio recounted with pride:

> Half of my dad's parcel is already in *potrero* (cattle pasture). And all of this was done with money from over there [United States]. I spent eight and a half years in Miami in the flower/nursery business working with the plants and then later with the labels. When I returned in October last year [2001] the first thing I did was build the house where my parents and I now live. Also, with the money I paid to have land on the parcel cleared and planted in grass. It was only a few months ago that they [workers] put the fences up. The idea is this August [2002], when the grass gets big with the rains, we'll rent out the pasture to people with cattle at a price of thirty Quetzales [U.S. $4] per month per head. The section of the parcel that we were planting in maize now, and other, yet to be cleared land, will also be put to pasture and fences. The goal is to have three separate pastures to rotate the cattle—maybe have 30 at a time and that we come up with about Q900 [U.S. $115] a month. We are doing this because this is not good land—not as good as my brother's, which we will save to plant maize and beans. His land is more fertile. Maybe, if prices keep on going up for land in pasture, we'll sell the parcel and concentrate on the coffee and cardamom on other land I bought up near our home town of Barillas. A parcel that is just forested may sell for about Q100, 000 [U.S. $11,500], whereas a parcel with all the work done and in good pasture can fetch Q150, 000 or more [about U.S. $19,000]. Other migrants who are really into cattle buy the land or sometimes

[5] Scientific name: *Elettaria cardamomum*. Family: Zingiberaceae—Ginger family. Dried fruit of cardamom, known as "the queen of spices," is used in curries, European pastries, and Arabic coffee. Moreover, the oil extracted from the seeds is widely used in perfumes, confections, and liqueurs. Guatemala, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand are the main exporters of this spice. Cardamom is the third most expensive spice; only saffron and vanilla are more costly (Missouri Botanical Gardens, 2002).

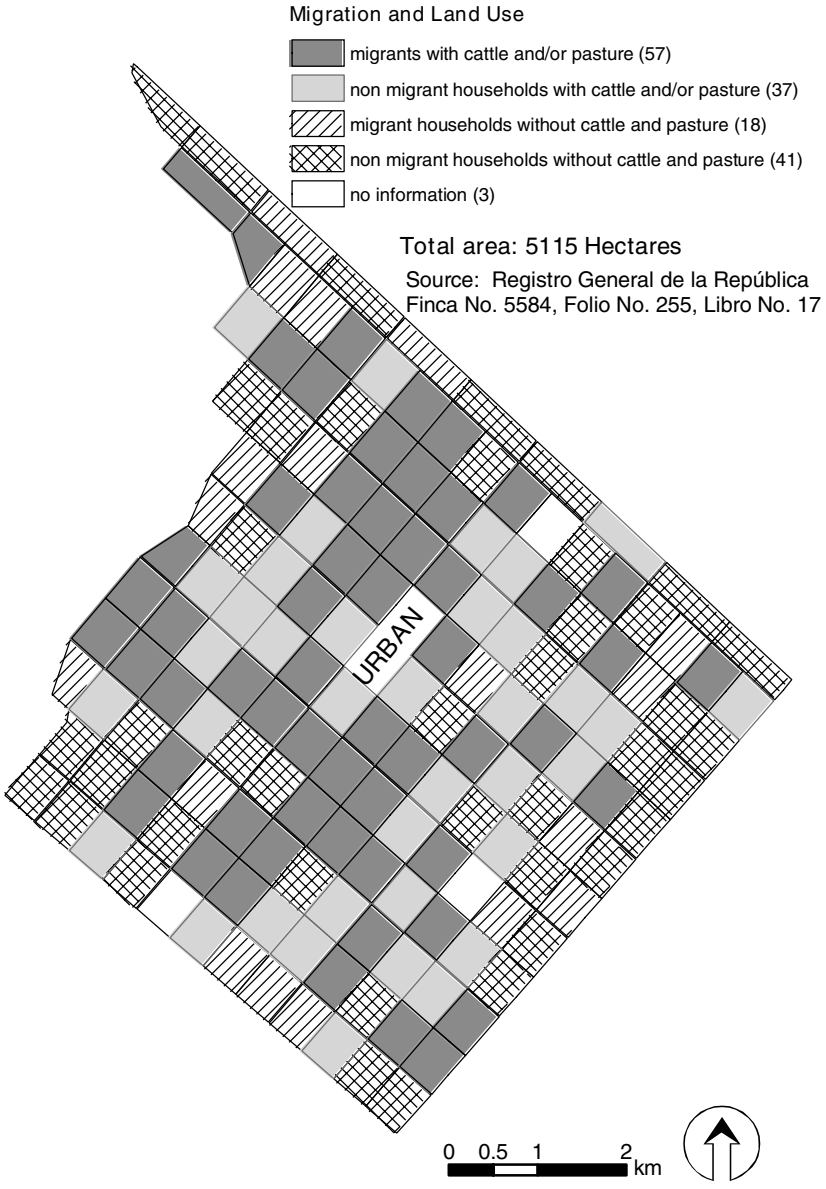

Fig. 2. Land use in San Lucas, Ixcán. Based on a complete household census, household surveys, in-depth interviews, and Thematic Mapper Satellite data from 2000. Each "regular" land parcel measures about 500 by 600 m—30 ha.

> men from Soloma or Barillas in *Huehue* [the department of Huehuetenango], who have several sons in the States, come down from the mountains and make offers on our land.

Later, after leaving thousands of maize seeds three to a hole in a charred field, we returned to Adelio's house to suck on sweet pineapple slices. Revived, Adelio donned his rubber boots and made for his dad's pasture. In the field a cow is in *celos* (heat) and Adelio wanted to make sure his bull paid attention. Clearly then, census results and everyday actions of San Lucas residents tell the story about the linkages between international migration and the transformation of forest and cardamom fields to cattle pasture.

4.4.2. Land concentration in the hands of migrants: Locals and outsiders

The mention of outsiders buying land in San Lucas, and Ixcán in general, brings us to our next migration-related change on land in Guatemala—distribution. Slowly, land in San Lucas and Ixcán concentrates in the hands of migrant families. Migrants from San Lucas and from areas outside Ixcán buy land. In San Lucas, for example, twelve migrant families own 28 parcels between them—some own up to four parcels. Another two migrant families from San Lucas purchased additional parcels in nearby communities. Non-migrant families also buy additional land parcels, but to a lesser extent. In San Lucas only four non-migrant families own an extra parcel, which they purchased from profits made from

trading cardamom, working in the petroleum industry, or as shop owners. Undoubtedly, land ownership is far from the "one family, one parcel" egalitarian origins in 1974. Moreover, owners of a second, third, or even fourth parcel invariably turn the extra land into cattle pasture. Only one migrant family uses their surplus land in a unique fashion—following the example of an international non-governmental organization (Community Housing Foundation) the head of the household dedicated one 30-ha parcel to his own agroforestry project where he planted thousands of hardwood tree saplings.

Sitting at the entrance to San Lucas while waiting for a truck to take us to a nearby community to look at land, Guadalupe Martínez explained how, and maybe why, he purchased more land in Ixcán.

> Look Matthew, I'll tell you the truth and how things work here. Right now I'm visiting from West Palm Beach [Florida] where I have lived for the last 13 years. First, I worked for a time in Syracuse, New York picking lettuce and cabbage. Now all of my family lives with me in Florida. I work repairing canals and my wife prepares lunches for about 20 men at $40 each per week. She alone comes out with $300 profit a week. I earn about $8.50 per hour and work 9 to 9.5 hours a day and make about $360 a week. I tell you, the first thing I purchased with the money was cattle and land! And now I am here again looking for more land near Santiago, Ixcán. If I can buy a parcel of 42 manzanas [30 ha] for Q125,000 [U.S. $16,000) I'll do so today and see if it is good for cardamom. You understand that cardamom gives better money than cattle *if* the land is good. The only thing about cattle is that you have to be with them every day or pay some cowboys who are expensive and only go to check the cattle twice a week when you pay for every day—*cabrones* (bastards). Cardamom requires less care, but the land must be good and not too hot.

Guadalupe wrapped up by saying "you've seen it in the States, there you have no land, but look at me here—right now I'm off to buy 30 ha! Yes, I tell you man, here you are your own boss." Many migrant men share Guadalupe's ideals, motivation, aspirations, and actions. Indeed, many men in San Lucas emphasize that the relationship between cattle and migration is far from coincidental. The household census from San Lucas shows an increase in migration and the amount of families connected to the cattle business (Fig. 2). This relationship as it stands is not causal, but in-depth interviews and detailed household surveys provide additional evidence that firmly root changes in land use and ownership in migrants and their money from el Norte. Migration and migra dollars drive the conversion from cardamom to cattle. The direct words of Oswaldo sum up the relationship: "Look, you see patches of forest here and there, but with more people migrating that will soon disappear. The only reason for the forest patches you see is that we were slowed down by the war—we could not migrate or come out to clear our parcels. If it were not for the war all that you see would be pasture."

4.4.3. Why cattle?

We now know that international migration permits migrants to buy more land and to get a start in the cattle business. But why do migrants prefer cattle to cardamom or any other crop? The men of San Lucas who meet late every afternoon in the center of the community to talk about cattle, cardamom, maize, rain, poor roads, and lack of potable water provide primarily economic reasons for the choice of cattle over cardamom. The men state that 0.7 ha of cardamom on San Lucas soils and elevation produces about 30 *quintales* [hundred weights] of green cardamom, which even at a low price of U.S. $38 per quintal gives the farmer about $1150 for his effort. A mere five to ten miles to the south, increased elevation and precipitation allow farmers to harvest 240 quintales from 0.7 ha—resulting in a gross income of $9200. From this amount, cardamom growers must pay pickers from the highlands U.S. $0.13 per pound of cardamom and provide room and board. This reduces net profit to about $6080—still a handsome income for rural Guatemalans.

Given cardamom economics we must again ask, why cattle? In San Lucas, men report that profits from cattle can double income from cardamom—provided a substantial initial investment and a stable herd size of at least 20 head. A cattle owner need only sell four head a year to equal profits from cardamom. Parcel owners stress that to grow more cardamom requires labor—surprisingly, a ready supply of labor is problematic in Ixcán because most people own sizeable plots of land. Moreover, San Lucas residents report that it is now harder to grow cardamom in their community. Why? Quite simply, in their words, "it burns. *Por el ganado* (because of the cattle) there is less humidity and shade and the plant just does not produce any more because of this".

Parcel owners also state that the cattle market is stable and indeed prices creep up every year. Demand for beef in Guatemala's growing urban areas provides incentive for Ixcán farmers to invest in cattle. Once a week a cattle truck from Huehuetenango makes a perilous decent from the high Cuchumatanes Mountains into the steamy lowlands of Ixcán expressly to buy cattle in San Lucas. The return ascent of a mere 170 km takes two days over steep, slick, muddy, gear grinding, and lurching mountain roads. During this odyssey the animal cargo reduces its weight by fifty pounds per animal, but profits makes this hardy trade viable.

Economic and ecologic (more cattle in San Lucas creates a positive feedback into even more cattle because micro-climate changes prevent cardamom cultivation) logic explains why migrant and non-migrant families turn to cattle for sustenance. We now understand how, in some regions of Guatemala, international migration and migra-dollars play an important role in the transformation of land use, land distribution, and livelihood transformation from cash and subsistence cropping to cattle raising.

5. San Pedro Pinula: Ladino and indigenous relations in the transnational sphere

San Pedro Pinula residents first migrated to the United States in the late 1960s. Now, especially strong transnational ties unite San Pedro Pinula with its migrant community in Boston, Massachusetts. In this section we describe how international migration impacts ethnic relations in a bicultural community of Ladinos and Maya in Eastern Guatemala. For many community members transnational migration reinforces inherent racism while at the same time creates new spaces for residents to discuss, confront, and transform Maya-Ladino relations.

5.1. The Maya and Ladinos of the East

San Pedro Pinula is a municipality with a 55,000 strong population in the Eastern Highlands of Guatemala. This region is identified as the *Oriente* (Eastern region)—a region of Guatemala dominated by Ladinos. Even so, the Oriente contains various indigenous groups, such as the Chortí and the Eastern Pokomam. Various ethnographies on the Chortí (Wisdom, 1940; Metz, 1995, 1998) and the Pokomam (Tumin, 1952; Gillen, 1951) document their lives, but generally the Maya of the Oriente remain outside the familiar focus of Maya cultural studies—the western highlands of Guatemala. Detailed documentation of Ladino life in Eastern Guatemala is equally scarce. Again, most research focuses on the twenty or so Maya groups of the western highlands.

This research on the Eastern Pokomam Maya of San Pedro Pinula was conducted over an 18-month period between 2001 and 2002. This section of the paper is based on over twenty in-depth interviews, participant observation, and several focus groups sessions with both local Ladinos and the Pokomam Maya. Results also rest on 3 months of research and over a dozen in-depth interviews with migrant family members of those interviewed in Guatemala in the migrant destinations of Boston and Providence, Rhode Island. While this section emphasizes Ladinos' perspective on the migration-driven changes to the community, Maya groups hold a similarly strong reaction to these changes—many of which, due to lack of space, cannot be more fully explored.

5.2. San Pedro Pinula

San Pedro Pinula's population is 98% Pokomam Maya. Ladinos, who control politics, economics, and land in the municipality, make up the remaining 2% of the population.[6] San Pedro Pinula's municipal seat is, quite simply, also named San Pedro Pinula (hereafter referred to as Pinula). The town serves as a general gathering point, supply depot, and bureaucratic center for the predominantly rural population of the municipality. The Pokomam Maya live in 46 villages and hamlets nestled in the mountains surrounding Pinula. Most Ladinos reside in the town, and even though they make up about 10% of the town's population, they dominate all aspects of Pinula life.

Anthropologist John Gillen and sociologist Melvin Tumin conducted ethnographic research in nearby San Luis Jilotepeque in the 1950s, but no past work on Pinula exists. We can, however, draw some information about ethnic relations from Tumin's work in San Luis Jilotepeque. He described the relationship between Indians and Ladinos as a "state of peaceful tension" (Tumin, 1952, vii). Tumin portrayed relations between the two groups as "castelike in character" and noted that their social system worked in "a type of equilibrium." (Tumin, 1952, p. 59). Though both Tumin and Gillen documented in great detail the disparities between Ladinos and Pokomam, they felt these relations were complementary.

Sixty year later, the general sense of small-town tranquility belies underlying tensions in the town's history and everyday discourse. In fact, through time the battle for scarce resources created hostility between Ladinos and indians and the "peaceful tension" that Tumin described, often erupted into violence. In general, we concur with Tumin and Gillen's findings about the rigid ethnic and social structure that govern Maya and Ladino relations, but disagree on their assessment of ethnic accord in this eastern region.

Ladinos in Pinula dominate the economy: raising cattle, making cheese, running the formal businesses, and owning most of the land in and around Pinula. Ladinos traditionally depend on Maya labor to maintain their lifestyle and rent land to the Pokomam in exchange for labor and a share of the maize and bean harvest. While Ladinos are the dominant ethnic group in Guatemala, ethnic divisions are particularly deep-seated in Pinula, as large populations of Maya are drowned in a

[6] These numbers have varied from census to census, but these inconsistencies may be due to attitudinal changes or assumptions made by those conducting or locally directing the census.

sea of Ladinos, with little access to land and limited economic possibilities. On the surface, daily social interactions between Maya and Ladinos are formal and pleasant and make their colonially inherited relationship bearable as well as functional. Yet racism and discrimination are part and parcel of the everyday reality and reaffirm the state's national race order that places the Ladino as racially and socially superior. Though Pinula did not suffer the same levels of political oppression as many other parts of Guatemala, especially in the Western Highlands, Pinula has not escaped past surges in violence or its present threat.

5.3. Ladino migration to the United States

Migration from Pinula to the United States began in the late 1960s. The stories of the first Ladino migrants make up part of local lore in Pinula. Residents recount how the first "adventurers" found a willing *gringo* in Mexico to take them as far as his final destination—Boston, Massachusetts. Oral histories reveal that family feuds may have propelled the first sojourners to seek refuge on foreign soil. To subsequent young Ladino migrants, migra dollars offered the chance to escape from familial and parental dependence—return Ladino migrants soon purchased their own land and cattle. Violence in the 1970s during Guatemala's civil war also added migrants to the economically driven stream of workers. During the tense years of civil unrest in the 1970s more Ladinos obtained tourist visas to join family and friends in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles. In the eighties, the migrant stream flourished as migration to the United States became the norm for young Ladinos after school graduation.

While Ladinos fled to the United States, local Pokomam Maya remained and many males endured military service. Many Pokoman males fell victim to military round-ups, but others saw military jobs as a better option than working for "*los ricos*" in the town. Many men, as young as 14, left their villages in Pinula to serve alongside indigenous peoples from other regions of Guatemala. During the 1980s, the war escalated in the Western Highlands and Maya men from Pinula were often sent to the heaviest battle zones, such as Ixcán, the Ixil triangle in Quiché, and Petén. Since the Peace Accords were signed in 1996, many ex-soldiers now add to the migration flow north. As one young man stated,

> I really wasted my time in the army. I thought I would receive training or learn some skills. Before you could get work in the city as a Congressional bodyguard, but since the Peace Accords there is no work for ex-soldiers. I spent all that time for nothing. I am going to the states because there is nothing here for me.

5.4. Indigenous entrance in the migrant stream: The importance of patron-client relations

The Pokomam of San Pedro Pinula entered the international migration stream in the late 1980s. Patron-client relations that govern Ladino and Maya interactions in the *pueblo* (town) often worked to the advantage of the Maya when a local Ladino patron helped his clients (workers) migrate to Boston. For example, Carlos administered the family farm after his father passed away. Like many young Ladinos, Carlos was poor in terms of ready cash—all the family wealth lay in fixed capital like land. Carlos left the farm in his younger brothers' charge and used family connections to migrate to Boston. Before he left for the United States, several of his *mozos* (wage laborers) begged him to take them along. Once in Boston, although his family adamantly objected, Carlos managed to lend several Maya the money for their journey through Mexico. Upon their arrival to Boston he provided them with a place to stay, janitorial positions at a prestigious Boston university, and assistance in political asylum applications. From these first few Maya migrants who utilized patron-client relations, their home village became the first to send many men to the United States.

Carlos' mother blames her son for what she sees as the "demise" of the community:

> If it weren't for my son, none of those *inditos* (damn little indians) would have anything. They wouldn't be driving their fancy pick-up trucks or their women sitting around getting fat while they wait for their dollars to arrive. The indians are lazy and they no longer want to work for us [Ladinos]. They have lost respect for the old ways.

Most Ladinos in Pinula feel that Maya migration produces "lazier" and "less respectful" indians. Despite this disparaging view of the Maya and migration, Ladinos do not let their opinions interfere with their business acumen—Ladino patrons, including Carlos' mother, underwrite Maya migration by providing high interest loans. When Pokomam Maya want to join their relatives in the United States they solicit their patrons for loans. Money lending is now big business in Pinula because interest rates stand at 10–20% per month on loans of several thousand U.S. dollars. When Pokomam folk run behind on payments, Ladinos seize homes and the small parcels of land that were put up as collateral on loans.

5.5. Maya migration and increased ethnic divisions

Since Carlos started the movement of his workers to the United States in the late 1980s, Maya migration spread like wildfire through the indigenous communities of San Pedro Pinula. Pokomam Maya prefer migrating

to the United States than working for Ladinos, migrating to the city, or joining the army. The lack of Maya laborers and increased capital in the hands of the Maya makes Ladinos uneasy—they see their traditional power over indians eroded by mass Maya international migration.

Local discourse emphasizes these divides. Terms such as *Indios Lamidos*, or *Indios Perdidos*, illustrate how Ladinos feel about returning indigenous migrants who think they are better than the position local social structures ascribe to them. *Indio Lamido*, traditionally described indians who socialized with Ladinos but "then begin to think they are just like Ladinos and act like they are something they are not and even go as far as wanting to be with Ladina women." These individuals were always tolerated but never fully accepted by local society. In the current context, *Indios Lamidos* and *Indios Perdidos* refer to indian return migrants or remittance-receiving relatives who wear Western manufactured dress, drive cars and pick-up trucks, and who generally expect equal treatment.

5.6. Rapid return of Pokomam Maya to the migrant circuit

Most Ladinos complain that indigenous migrants return to spend their money overzealously on elaborate housing and fancy cars. Indian "stupidity" and "inability" to handle the responsibility that comes with earning dollars, Ladinos believe, is the reason why Maya men rapidly return to the migrant circuit. While Ladino migrants average only one trip to the United States, Maya who arrive with the goal of staying in their natal communities often re-enter the migrant circuit within 1–2 years. Even though Maya migration is only a decade old, interviews and surveys for this research reveal that repeat migration is more common among the Maya population.

Ladinos disparagingly remark that rapid return to the United States by the Maya is due to their incompetence. This research, however, points to the low initial resource base of Maya and Ladino monopoly over viable income generation in Pinula as reasons why Maya must return the United States. Attempts by the Maya to invest in local income-generating activities are often suppressed or frustrated by Ladino control over land, material resources, and information.

5.7. Ladino monopoly over cattle and land

In San Pedro Pinula cattle ranching stands as an important symbol of wealth and power that is dominated by the Ladino sector of society. Attempts to invest in cattle by Maya migrant returnees are thwarted by lack of access to large blocks of land necessary to support cattle. In the eyes of aspiring indian cattle ranchers, Ladinos take advantage of small Maya landholdings and their general ignorance about cattle administration. One Ladino, however, offered his view of Ladino-indian interaction around cattle ranching:

> I tried explaining to this *indito* [damn little indian] how to raise the cattle. I was trying to help him out and explain to him how you raise and feed them, what time of year you have to do this and how to buy and sell. But the indians are as bad as us. We don't trust them and neither do they trust us. Even though I was telling him the truth he didn't listen to me. I sold him calves in the winter [rainy season] and when the summer came I had to buy them back at half the price. The poor things were starving. The indian gave up and left again for the states soon after.

While the Maya normally work in the cattle industry as laborers and *corraleros* (foot cowboys), local and countrywide cattle cartels hinder Maya access to the cattle trade. Ladinos raise most of their revenues, not from milk or cheese production, but by buying and selling cattle among local families and Ladinos from the Petén and the coast. As long as Ladinos maintain control over land and the cattle industry, cattle will remain a Ladino dominated activity.

Ladinos, in contrast to Maya return migrants, because of existing structures and traditions can devote their migra-dollars to long-term investments such as cattle production and local businesses. Remittances aid the purchase of more cattle and extensive tracts of land from relatives at relatively low prices. While the Maya pay as much as Q8000 ($1000) for a three-quarter hectare plot, Ladinos obtain the same land at a fraction of the price and in larger quantities by purchasing land through their families or receiving advances on their inheritances. Lower class Ladinos, without family ties to land resources, generally opt to start local businesses related to home construction, such as hardware and building supply stores that cater to the burgeoning, migration-spurred home construction boom. Some Maya returnees also set up small businesses, but they remain traditional enterprises within the accepted sphere of indian occupations, such as tailoring, small general goods stores, and liquor sales.

5.8. Maya remittance use to purchase Ladino land

Maya who return from the United States generally invest in home construction and land purchases for maize and bean cultivation. They buy land in small parcels, averaging from 1 to 7 ha. Maya acquire land from local Ladino landowners. Some Maya elders see the irony in migration and the purchase of land by Maya men with money from the United States. They explain that the United States is so wealthy because its people

originally stole all Guatemala's riches years ago and transferred the booty north. These Maya elders interpret current migration patterns as a way to return pilfered indigenous lands. Colonial manuscripts confirm that the lands around Pinula were once communally owned by the Pokomam Maya, who were eventually co-opted by immigrating Ladino families in the 1800s (AGCA, 1981; 1814, 1818; Feldman, 1981; IGN, 1983). An elder Maya man, when commenting on migration and its impacts in his hometown, said, "my children are forced to travel far to work, but it's good because now we can buy [back] what was stolen from us in the past". Maya migrants return to Pinula with a new found pride in owning land. Moreover they feel that their experience from the United States frees them from their dependence on Ladino landowners for their livelihood.

5.9. Attitudes of Ladinos toward Maya migrants

Ladino landowners and return migrants do not share Maya positive attitude about United States migration experiences. Ladino landowners think migration results in "lazy," "disrespectful," and "uncooperative" Indians. Years ago, landowners experienced no trouble finding *mozos* (laborers) to work their lands in exchange for part of the harvest. Before migration took Maya men to the United States, most Pokomam Maya worked *a medias* (sharecropping) with their patrons. This arrangement gave Maya access to land in exchange for a set amount of days to work on the patron's fields and a share of the harvest. Sharecropping creates a social relationship that places the Maya at the beck and call of the patron. When a patron needs his fields tended or fences fixed, he calls on his *mozo*. Patrons complain that in recent years client-patron relationships deteriorated and they now encounter problems finding good *arrendantes* or *mediantes* (renters or sharecroppers). Ex *mozos* now prefer to work their own land purchased with migra dollars or to use remittances to pay elevated rental prices. In other words, migra dollars free Maya men from traditional binding labor obligations with Ladinos. In the past decade, Ladinos report a significant loss in number of workers and an associated loss in land productivity.

Resentment towards Maya access to migra dollars go beyond the need for labor. Ladino return migrants also complain about changing indian attitudes and behaviors. Don Fulano, a Ladino return migrant, remembers an incident that exemplifies this sentiment.

> I remember I had a fight [in the United States] with some stupid indian from the village. We were washing dishes together in a seafood restaurant in Cambridge. He told me that here in the States I wasn't any better than him so I better stop acting *creído* [stuck-up]. I told him that even though we were the same to gringos, we both knew, no matter what, that I was a schoolteacher and he would always be an indian.

Don Fulano felt superior to Maya people and he did not sympathize with North American racial categories that lump all Latin Americans, Ladinos and Maya alike, into the same category. He returned to Pinula after earning enough money to feel secure about never working in the United States again.

While rural female Maya migration is still relatively rare, Ladina women do migrate to the United States, albeit to a lesser extent than men. Female Ladino returnees expressed strong opinions about their reasons for return to Guatemala. Primarily, they returned to be with family, but significantly they also mentioned a desire to return to their positions of privilege in Pinula. Adela, a young upper-class Ladina, recounted her negative migration experience as a chambermaid in the United States. When her younger brother decided to migrate North she warned him that he would return soon,

> I know how it is there. I worked as a hotel maid—can you believe that? I told my brother that he wouldn't like working under anyone. Like the rest of us in this family, we are used to being the boss. Here he is the *Patron* and there he will be nothing. There I was just a maid. Here I am the *Patrona*.

Adela, like many Ladinos from Pinula, did not take pleasure in her experience working in the United States and she cherishes her high status back in the home community. For many Ladinos, working as a migrant means accepting downgrades in social levels, which is often viewed as not worth the dollars they earn. Many Ladinos see little need to go to the United States and view migration as an adventure and capital-building exercise rather than as a necessity. For Adela, like many Ladinos, returning to Pinula represents a return to the high status bestowed upon them from birth.

5.10. Inter-ethnic marriages

International migration also results in the opening of a once covert and rare activity—inter-ethnic relations and marriages. Inter-ethnic relations always existed between Ladino patrons and Maya servants. Illegitimate children (*hijos de casa*) joined the ranks of their indian mothers. Formalized unions between Ladinos and the Maya are, however, new to the community. These relationships usually develop in the United States away from parental and community controls, and bring together Ladino men and urban Maya women. Conversely, inter-ethnic marriages in San Pedro Pinula generally unite urban Maya return migrants males with local Ladina women.

Community members often view these marriages as racially offensive and degenerate and attribute such

unions to greediness and witchcraft. Families caught in the middle of these trans-ethnic love affairs accuse one another of engaging in *brujerías* (witchcraft). On a few occasions I (Rodman Ruíz) became unwittingly caught in the middle of inter-ethnic family conflicts. Because I often took photographs of Pinula residents, people requested that I photograph migrants on my visits to the Boston area. Although I knew photographs often formed the material base for casting spells, my naiveté was shattered when a Maya woman arrived at my door after my return from a Christmas trip to the United States—she requested the photographs I took of her son in Boston. Prior to our meeting she received a phone call from her son, who expressed that the photographs that I took of him and his wife in Boston would be given to his mother-in-law. The Maya woman at my doorstep explained that if the photographs fell into the wrong hands they might be used to harm her son, who purportedly bewitched his Ladino wife into falling in love with him. As it turned out, the respective mothers in this inter-ethnic marriage were involved in accusations of witchcraft since their children united in the United States years before. On other occasions Ladino mothers asked me to obtain photos of the *inditas putas* (indian whores) who stole their Ladino sons away into impure marriages—I politely declined these requests.

5.11. Changing Ladino and Maya Ethnic relations

International migration undoubtedly plays a role in shaping ethnic relations in San Pedro Pinula. Traditional patron-client relations eased Maya entry into the migrant circuit, but these very same relations and rigid traditional social structures prevent Maya entry into Ladino-dominated economic activities. Paradoxically, inter-ethnic marriages and the equalizing influences of U.S.-racial categories, which ignore Maya and Ladino differences, create a new environment in Pinula whereby younger migrants challenge long-standing ethnic divides. The resulting ethnic tensions and inter-ethnic dynamics in San Pedro Pinula illustrate yet another change that international migration brings to Guatemalan livelihoods and places—albeit a gradual change that is tempered by 500 years of Ladino-dominated society.

6. Gendered transformations in Guatemala

In this section, we draw on the gender and migration literature to explore how migration brings about changes in gender relations and roles in Ladino and Maya communities. By doing so, it forces us to examine orthodoxies surrounding gender ideologies in Guatemala and other developing countries that experience large population flows to the United States. Increasingly, transnational migration scholars look at how gender configures and is in turn reconfigured due to international migration (e.g., Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; Mahler, 1999; Hirsch, 2003). The work presented here also considers whether and how migration affirms and structures gender. This section is not about stay-at-home women. It is not about caretakers and how the social reproductive labor is organized. And it is not about how social relationships alter between parents, caretakers, and children (elsewhere this topic is treated extensively, see Moran-Taylor, in preparation). Rather, it is about how gender relations, roles, and ideologies in migrant households may change due to social remittances (i.e., the ideas, beliefs, and attitudes that migrants bring back home, see Levitt, 1998, 2001). Before turning our attention to the intersection of gender and transnational migration, we first provide a brief migration history from both communities addressed in this section. We then examine how international migration affects traditional gender roles and relations in two transnational towns in Guatemala—Gualán and San Cristóbal.

6.1. U.S.-Bound migration from Gualán and San Cristóbal

The discussion that follows is based on cross-cultural and cross-regional fieldwork conducted in Guatemala over a period of 18 months with folks in the sending communities of Gualán, in the department of Zacapa, and San Cristóbal in the department of Totonicapán. Migrants from Gualán head mainly to Los Angeles, California. San Cristóbaleños, in contrast, migrate primarily to Houston, Texas (Moran-Taylor, 2003). While past comparative studies of migrant and non-migrant communities have insightfully shown migration-related changes on gender (e.g., Georges, 1990), such a research strategy is not possible in Guatemala. In Guatemala migration is institutionalized and touches, in one way or another, all Guatemalan villages, towns, and cities.

Migrants originating from Gualán and San Cristóbal (each with a municipal population of about 30,000) initially ventured northward to the United States in the mid to late 1960s. Migration increased in the 1970s, and thereafter, well-established transnational ties ensure a steady stream of migrants hailing north from both localities today. The socio-demographic composition of the U.S.-bound migrant flow emerges as a clear difference between both communities. More women journey North from the Ladino town of Gualán than those from Maya-dominated San Cristóbal. In both places, however, situated at opposite ends of the country and representative of distinctive ethnic identities, international migration pervades everyday talk and almost all households remain tightly linked to a Guatemalan community

in the United States. Importantly, these Guatemalan families rely heavily on the cash remittances sent from loved ones working abroad for their daily survival.

6.2. Patriarchy and migration

Patriarchy is generally defined as male dominance over female labor and sexuality (Hartman, 1981). And, as in many other Latin American countries, social life in Guatemala remains largely governed by traditional patriarchal norms. Women are usually shunted to the private sphere. In other words, women's activities largely become limited to a narrow domestic realm of cleaning, cooking, and caring for children. Distinctions between private and public spaces in Guatemala's countryside gradually erode as more women attend school, further their education in Guatemala City (the capital), enter the work force, control their reproductive lives (through contraception), and/or acquire a broader awareness of human and women's rights, particularly in the aftermath of the 1996 Peace Accords and the influx of foreign NGOs. In short, because of these social and cultural changes, as many Gualantecas and San Cristobaleñas put it, "today Guatemalan women are becoming more *despiertas* (awakened)." Undoubtedly, transnational migration injects new ideas and material capital into both Gualán and San Cristóbal, which are traditionally male-driven places. In turn, this shift allows, in varying ways and degrees, a change in power relations among women in private and public domains. Prevailing gender ideologies and norms of women typically relegated to the domestic versus public arena play a vital role here in how gendered spheres are viewed. And while much feminist scholarship critiques this binary model (e.g., Ehlers, 1991, 2000), it continues to be central in how many Guatemalans organize their daily realities and spaces.

A common refrain in Guatemala is that "*el machismo abunda aquí* " (*machismo* abounds here). Gualantecos say that their department [Zacapa] constitutes the most machista (patriarchal) place in the country. Newly acquired wealth, or U.S. money migrants bring back from their northward ventures, also influences the divergent ways some returnees behave, particularly males embracing a greater sense of power and social status in their home community (see also Goldring, 1998). Elvin, a male returnee in his early twenties eloquently summarized attitudes of many returnees, *vienen más brincones* (they come back more ready to pick up fights). "Perhaps," he added after some contemplation, "much of this *machismo* stuff is something that they have learned from the Mexicans over there. *They* [Mexicans] are *really machistas*, " Elvin blurted. Others mentioned that returnees "don't let anyone step over them and often carry themselves as if they were big cocks." Returnees in Gualán, for example, gather in *cantinas* (bars) where new money is spent on alcohol and women. Then, emulating America's Old West male returnees are quicker than other locals to solve any misunderstandings or conflicts that may crop up simply with a show or use of pistols.[7]

Stay-at-home Ladino and Maya women often view men who come back from the United States in the following terms: "they leave all *humilditos* (humble) and then when they return they are all full of airs." A young, Ladina non-migrant remarked that males returned more machista from the United States because they acted more jealous toward their wives. She added, "when migrants leave women behind for too long they return thinking that perhaps *certain* things have happened during their long absence." Repeatedly, Gualantecos and San Cristobaleños indicated that many male returnees tend to be spendthrifts and drink up their hard-earned cash, particularly in the case of Ladinos in Gualán. Overall, locals in Gualán and San Cristóbal say that many returnees (both male and female) come back more confident and arrogant. These attitudes help shape how gender relations and ideologies unfold in Guatemalan Ladino and Maya communities.

6.3. Female empowerment and migration

Because Ladina and Maya women increasingly participate in international migration, albeit to a lesser extent in San Cristóbal than in Gualán, their views about traditional gender roles, relations, and ideologies at home inevitably change. Women now act out their wants and needs more dynamically. Such an attitudinal change is particularly evident when female migrants in the United States, who find themselves working and earning U.S. dollars, do not want to become dependent on their husbands if they return to their home communities. Also, women's exposure to American culture imbues them with novel ways of perceiving and acting out their male–female interactions. As others show (e.g., Pessar, 1995) this exposure and employment experience often helps Guatemalan female migrants break away from the shackles embedded in traditional gender norms.

According to narratives and survey data collected for this study, international migration offers a clear option to Ladina and Maya women who have endured years of hardship under physically abusive husbands. The U.S. escape valve does not surface without complications, because, even though women may desire a life away from abusive husbands, other ties bind women to their homes in Guatemala. Some migrant mothers,

[7] In Gualán settling disagreements in this fashion was common practice prior to the arrival of a new police corps in 1999. Prior to the arrival of the heavily armed police, residents reported killings on a daily basis and a general sense of lawlessness in the town.

for instance, cannot resist the emotional pull of their children and return to their home communities. Despite the strong patriarchal constraints faced at home and the emotional hardships of leaving children behind, increasingly women migrate to seek more tranquil, stable lives, and economic independence. Such migrant flows, however, are more pervasive among young and middle-aged women, as well as many unwed mothers, in the eastern Ladino–dominated community of Gualán.

Once in the United States, female migrants not only feel that they gain greater gender equity, but also a greater awareness of how to cope with marital violence. A Gualanteca returnee in her late thirties, for instance, explained: "Because the laws in the United States protect females, then men are afraid of lifting a finger against us. They are afraid to go to jail and to be deported. But here [Guatemala], since there are no laws helping women, then men take advantage of this and feel free to belt us." Similarly, Quique, another Ladino returnee in his late forties, commented that in the United States men could not even lift their voice against women. "You can't," he asserted, "because the first thing a woman does over there [United States] is dial 911 and they [the police] then take you *bien penqueado* (beaten to death) to jail." Like Hirsch (2003) observes, such remarks reveal how domestic violence takes on new meanings in the United States. Equally important, the ideas that returnees bring back about domestic violence and state intervention may begin to influence gender ideologies back home.

6.4. Return migration and gender parity

Though past studies that examine migration and gender observe that in the home community women achieve gender equity after their husband's return to the home community (see, for example, Grimes, 1998), the path toward gender parity in Gualán and San Cristóbal is torturous and makes for slow changes. *Initial* increases in gender parity soon evaporate into the accepted gendered norms of Guatemalan life (in both Gualán and San Cristóbal). When Ladino and Maya male returnees first arrive in their places of origin, especially during the initial years, they seem more enthusiastic and likely to contribute to household chores. Male returnees report that they often change diapers, care for children, shop in the market, wash dishes, and cook—decidedly female concerns and tasks. Return migrants attribute such a transformation to an exposure to American culture coupled to the different lifestyles and hardships their compatriots endure while working and living in the United States. Male migrants must be creative in their household division of labor to survive in the United States. And, this practice often entails men taking a more active role in household duties (see also Grimes, 1998). Like other Latino migrants in the United States, when Ladino and Maya migrants go North they face numerous challenges and must contend with situations seldom encountered in their communities of origin: sharing an apartment with a dozen or more fellow countrymen, performing their own household chores, procuring and making their own food arrangements. These new experiences in the United States influence their demeanor towards what they previously may have considered female social spaces. But also, this American exposure provides male migrants with a novel understanding of women's roles in their places of origin in Guatemala, albeit for a brief period upon their return.

Olinda, a stay-at-home female in her late twenties, explained how her husband changed after working in Los Angeles for nearly a decade. Although her husband strongly expresses his male dominance from time to time, in other ways he appears open to help out with "women's things." Olinda recounted, for example, how occasionally she requests that her husband swing by the store after work and purchase sanitary pads for her. "There he brings it," she said with a big, mischievous smile across her face, "hidden, but he brings it. But then… there are men here that forget it!" she said. "They don't even like to go out in public with their wife… why do they even get married!" she exclaimed in dismay.

Eduardo's case also illustrates changes in gender relations in Guatemala. He is a returnee in his mid forties whose 8-year stay in the United States dramatically altered his perspectives and behavior. Sitting on top of several dozen 100-pound maize sacks neatly stacked in the corner of his animal feed store, he related how his migratory experiences influenced his life:

> Back then I used to change my clothing two, even three times per day and I used to wander around very well pressed, but not anymore. Now, I know that if my wife can't press my clothes it's because she's helping me in the store—then I don't demand such a request. My stay over there [United States] truly made me a more sociable person. Here, I have friends who have never left their home, their town… so if their wife doesn't serve them breakfast they don't eat. But me, if my wife is busy, I prepare my own food, serve my children, and serve *her* too.

To reiterate, changes in attitudes and behavior for many male returnees (both Ladino and Maya) are often short lived. Based on interviews and observations from this study, after merely 1 or 2 years spouses, boyfriends, and/or brothers revert to previous patriarchal ways. They revert to traditional cultural norms held before migrating to the United States.[8]

[8] In contrast, Grimes (1998) observes that changes among male Mexican returnees appeared permanent.

6.5. Decision-making and power relations within the household

In Guatemala males are typically the breadwinners and locus of decision-making within the household. A recurrent theme of locals in Gualán and San Cristóbal is that: "*el hombre es el que manda*" (men wield authority). Though Ladino and Maya community members in both localities comment that household decision-making represents a joint male–female venture, both sexes of migrants and non-migrants concur that in the end, males make the *most* important decisions, particularly when it boils down to financial matters. Even when males migrate and their wives remain behind, men often continue to exercise their decision-making authority from a distance. Findings from this study reveal that Ladino and Maya men continue to determine how remittances and any other monies should be spent within and outside the household—regardless of how women contribute to household expenses.[9] Further, regular remittances (upon which households in Guatemala rely for daily survival) also enable male migrants to maintain and reinforce their status as primary household heads. Such an approach, then, discourages the emergence of any gender parity in Guatemalan families and helps reaffirm traditional gender relations.

When further exploring the issue of decision-making within the household, contrasting ideas alluding to such actual practice and social behavior emerged, particularly among some Ladinos in Gualán. Coyly, folks admitted that women held the household reins and dictated spousal activities. Gualantecos pointed out that women were more astute and knew how to handle matters better (e.g., when it pertained to decision-making power in the domestic sphere). A male returnee, for example, commented:

> The man can yell and beat his wife, but in the end if the woman sobs, the man winds up doing what she wants. Even if the male is very macho, he will do whatever the female tells him. Also, this happens because of women's subtlety, charisma, and maturity... women have a certain level of maturity that men just don't have and can never catch up with. Perhaps it's because of the maternal instinct, but it's something that's always present.

Similarly, Quique, a married, outspoken and successful Ladino returnee assertively said: "Look, it's like this. Women allow their husbands to reprimand them in public, but once within the confines of their own intimacy, then, the woman asserts control." While such remarks illustrate subtle variations in Maya and Ladino cultures, nonetheless, they represent differences between both communities.

6.6. Migration-related gender changes

The Ladino and Maya Guatemalan case demonstrates that traditional patriarchal ideologies are neither monolithic nor fixed as they can vary according to individual social characteristics (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). Gender relations in Gualán and San Cristóbal are not changing radically. Slow change results primarily because migration reinforces a long history of patriarchy in the region. This realization does not negate evidence indicating that some men do depart from their expected male gender roles and relations (e.g., dominance over women), although for a short period after coming back home. Under the patriarchal constraints that permeate and persist in Gualán and San Cristóbal women are largely left, as many people repeatedly mentioned, with *ni voz ni voto* (neither voice or vote). Such remarks aptly capture the attitude that many Ladino and Maya men maintain towards women and highlight the "unchanged" conditions enveloping the everyday lives of many Guatemalan women.

Migration, then, provides women with options for more independent, confident, and less submissive life ways. In cases where females prefer to return and stay in to their hometowns, this experience often endows them with wisdom and confidence to challenge traditional gender roles. Even more importantly, transnational migration provides an alternative to women involved in abusive spousal relationships. Despite how much women alter their views and identity—whether due to migration or other social, cultural, and economic forces operating at the local, regional, national and global levels—this does not necessarily translate into a change in their relationships with men. Migration is driving fast and radical transformations in *other* facets of Guatemalan society such as landscapes, schooling, and rural development. But behind the new cinder-block buildings and smoked-glassed windows of migrant-built homes, gender roles and relations between men and women remain relatively unchanged. Yes, we can point to individual Ladina and Maya women who resist and fight for change, however, we must temper these isolated cases of resistances with the observation that most females in Guatemala still remain largely dominated by traditional patriarchal norms.

Quite simply, gender roles and relations in Guatemala remain largely unchallenged. As others observe (e.g., Georges, 1990; Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; Hagan, 1994), migration does little to strengthen women's gender roles and relations, particularly when analyzed from the perspective of migrants' places of origin. It is a rare case

[9] This also holds true with cases of international and internal migration. For example, see Georges' (1990) study among U.S. bound Dominican migrants, and more recently, Weinstein Bever's (2002) research on internal migration among the Yucatecan Maya from their community of origin to Cancún.

where women translate their personal transformations into new relationships with men, and at the same time, it is a rare male who embarks on large departures from entrenched macho actions and attitudes. Although women in Guatemala become aware of other options and lifestyles, the rigid structure and social norms back home in Guatemala do not permit women to act on their new found freedom and desires for equality and change in male–female relationships. Men still control most aspects of Guatemalan social life. Like the Maya in Pinula, who run into a strong Ladino dominated social structure, women in migrant towns can only begin to slowly chip away at long-standing social structures. Change is in the air, but rapid and radical migration-induced changes to male–female relationships and gender roles remains a distant desire for most Guatemalan women who continue the struggle just to survive—the struggle for equality and fair treatment takes second place to providing food and shelter for children and elders.

7. Guatemalans, Guatemala, and international migration

International migration influences every aspect of daily life in Guatemala. Migra dollars form the "bastion of the economy" (Siglo Vientiuno, 2002), make informal land-distribution possible (i.e., non-government funded buying of land by landless folk and buying "back" of land by the Maya), enhance the conversion from forest to cattle pasture, and, at the same time create tension between Ladinos and indians when indians move up the economic ladder. Moreover, international migration and the information and freedom it provides to Guatemalan women permits the gentle opening and relaxation of the gender aperture. This paper illustrates how migration and remittances interact with land, ethnicity, and gender in Guatemala. We did not focus on the minutia of remittances (i.e., who gets what and how it is sent), that is the topic of other studies and manuscripts. We know that remittances are received on a large scale and we wanted to examine the effects of remittances, not how remittances arrive to the homeland. Rather, we know that migration clearly permeates many facets of Guatemalan culture, but we must temper our temptation to label this infiltration in the category of "radical and rapid change" because new money and ideas from the North run into 500 years of rigid ethnic and gender relations. Our case studies from Gualán, San Cristóbal, and San Pedro Pinula illustrate how the potential for increased equity in gender and ethnic relations and land reform is dampened by long-standing structures. Regardless of the rate of change, we show how migration becomes the agent behind much social and cultural change.

Migration-driven change in land use and land ownership, however, proceeds rapidly. Massey et al. (1987) also report an accumulation of land by migrants. Pokomam Maya in Pinula now slowly buy back land owned by their ancestors and attempt to break into Ladino-dominated cattle cartels. Ixcán migrants with migra dollars buy more land and create cattle pasture, which in turn incites non-migrants to convert part of their parcels into pasture to support large migrant cattle herds. The ramifications of the expanded cattle industry on Guatemala's environment remains a topic open for exploration. Also, in the face of land accumulation in the hands of migrants, what awaits those rural landholders pushed out by migrants with dollars?

How does this work fit in with research conducted by other natural and social scientists investigating international migration and agriculture? The results presented from Ixcán support other case studies from Latin America that show how migration and remittances lead to investment in agriculture because money from migration permits families to overcome capital and labor constraints (e.g., Pessar, 1991; Jones, 1995; Durand et al., 1996). Research in Ixcán does not support other arguments showing how migration often leads to declines in land under cultivation due to labor shortages or lack of interest in the land, and investment in consumer items and house construction (see Jokish, 2002 for a recent summary of this debate). Primarily, families from San Lucas invest in their land. They do this because their plot sizes are significant (i.e., large) by Guatemalan standards (30 ha) and are worth improving. Yes, migrants spend money on what others might consider frivolous consumption items like clothes and cars, but migra dollars are primarily directed towards the purchase of more land and improvement of that land by any means possible—even if that means deforestation for cattle pasture. In Pinula, however, Ladino landowners do report a shortage of labor to work their land. Lack of labor to work Ladino land may lead to less land in cultivation, which may further encourage labor migration from other regions of the country or changes in the way the land is used. This is a topic open for future investigations of the type carried out by Taylor in Ixcán (i.e., research that focuses on the land and environmental consequences of migration). Only long-term investigations that build on current work will tell the full story.

Important, and almost impossible to avoid, is a discussion of our results in the context of the polarized debate about the impact of remittances on local development (see Conway and Cohen, 1998; Russell, 1986 for summaries of the debate). In the cases we illustrated here, the ramifications of international migration on home communities and countries are many and are not restricted to the narrow field of development. Migration-related change takes place in the communities we studied, especially for the families directly associated with migration. However, just because a segment

of the population benefits from financial and social remittances does not mean that we see "development" of the community as a whole. Often, as is illustrated in the communities we studied, the benefits of migration are very much a family affair. Yes, other families and individuals who are not directly associated with migration (i.e., they do not have, or have had, a family member migrate) benefit in that they are employed by migrant money and migrant stimulated enterprises (e.g., construction, forest clearing, drivers, cowboys), but the communities as a whole are not developing. If we wanted to look at migration and development in Guatemala, we would have to view development within each community as piecemeal and family oriented. Money is primarily devoted to family advancement. Rarely are funds spent on any type of public community improvement like roads, potable water projects, education, parks, or sewage systems. Jones (1995) documents a similar trend in Mexico. At this stage, we reiterate, migration is an individual affair that allows economic advancement to members of society who would normally be "locked in" at levels governed by 500 years of state development that rests on established elite landowner reliance on the majority of Guatemala's population for labor. Migration allows many Guatemalans, who for 500 years have run into a brick wall in terms of their advancement, to slowly seek many new avenues around and over the brick wall of colonial structure. The same can be said for gender relations, which should be seen as an integral aspect of development. Migration, and the new world views gained with migrant experiences and social remittances, allows migrants to slowly challenge, break down, and then rebuild the wall of gender relations in Guatemala. Migration though, in the face of state inactivity, corruption, and ineptitude, permits a development that is orchestrated from below, by the migrants themselves. This type of development, including land redistribution (see the cases of Ixcán and San Pedro Pinula) does not benefit all residents, but is better than the opportunities presented by the state. Indeed, one could argue that migration creates a new class of elite, a new elite, who accumulate land and capital with their migrant earnings. Massey et al. (1987) report a similar scenario in Mexico where migrants are the only people who can now afford to acquire land in their home communities. Remittances do not help Guatemala's poorest who cannot afford to migrate in the first place and migration therefore perpetuates the inequities there (c.f. Massey et al., 1987).

Is any of this development sustainable? If we look at the Ixcán case we can comment that cattle ranching on thin rainforest soils is not sustainable. In Ixcán, migrant monies may be better invested in forestry projects or cash crops like vanilla, cardamom, or palm hearts (see Taylor, in press). The investment in cattle is a response to the high demand and prices for meat in Guatemala's urban areas. In Guatemala's *Oriente*, specifically in San Pedro Pinula, we see how migrant money permits Maya entry into the once Ladino-dominated cattle ranching. Here, we do not see change in land use, but a change in land ownership with a similar intended land use. The sustainability of Maya cattle ranchers is yet to be gauged. Do Maya ranchers possess the expertise to manage their new lands and cattle herds in a sustainable way? This is a topic open for future research and the results will inform us about the longer term impacts of migration.

The original intent of this paper was to document how Guatemalan culture and relationships to the land *change* due to international migration. Moreover, here we illustrated how "transnationalism from below" (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998) operates at the local level in Guatemalan sending communities. Continued research in these communities over the next few decades will provide more information about the impacts of migration on Guatemalan lives and development. We then caution against hasty claims about the impacts of migration on development. Indeed, we can document migration-related change, but we call for more longitudinal studies like the Mexican Migration Project led by Douglas Massey and colleagues. Because migration is becoming such an important component in the economy and society of Guatemala, continued and larger-scale studies are imperative.

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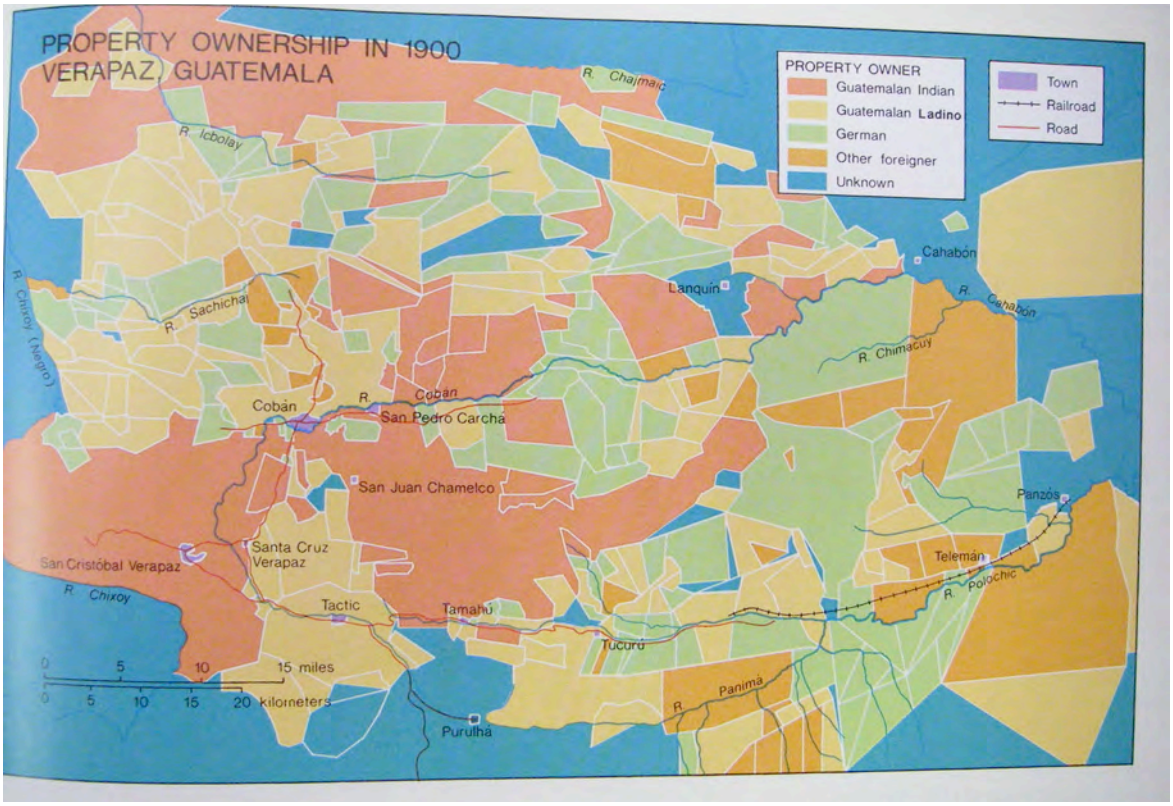
Cobán Area


PROPERTY OWNERSHIP IN 1900
VERAPAZ, GUATEMALA
PROPERTY OWNER
Guatemalan Indian
Guatemalan Ladino
German
Other foreigner
Unknown
Town
Railroad
Road
R. Chajmaic
R. Icbolay
R. Chixoy (Negro)
R. Sachichal
Lanquín
Cahabón
R. Cahabón
R. Chimacuy
Cobán
R. Cobán
San Pedro Carchá
San Juan Chamelco
Panzós
Santa Cruz Verapaz
San Cristóbal Verapaz
R. Chixoy
Telemán
R. Polochic
Tactic
Tamahú
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Panimá
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Purulhá
0 5 10 15 miles
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Michael Steinberg
Matthew Taylor

Marginalizing a Vulnerable Cultural and Environmental Landscape

Opium Poppy Production in Highland Guatemala

Poppy production in Guatemala has been embraced by a growing number of people since the end of the civil war in 1996 as one avenue out of poverty. Most cultivation occurs in the department of San Marcos, one of the least developed regions with one of the highest rates of malnutrition and other health issues associated with poverty. While poppy production has led to increased profits for some farmers, there are many direct and indirect negative impacts on the health of local people as well as increased pollution associated with eradication efforts. Defoliant spray to eradicate poppies contaminates soil and water and destroys intercropped licit crops. Illicit production causes deforestation and indirectly leads to a change in people's diet. Additionally, poppy production is accompanied by escalating violence. All these factors are increasing the vulnerability of the local people and jeopardizing their health and well-being. Increased poppy production has to be understood as a symptom of development failures. Only re-establishing faith in the long term viability of licit development initiatives will encourage local farmers to abandon illicit poppy production and increase the overall security and well-being of the local population.

A clandestine contribution to livelihoods

Until the past decade Guatemala was categorized as a "minor" opium poppy producer compared with global centers such as Afghanistan and Colombia. A more militarized landscape during Guatemala's civil war (1960–1996) apparently limited the growth of this sector of the agricultural economy. Since the end of the civil war in 1996, however, opium production has increased in Guatemala, additionally boosted by the mal-distribution of land resources and recent population growth.

Over the last 50 years, Guatemala's population has grown from 3 to 12 million people. Rural residents account for two-thirds of the 12 million people. At the same time, the country suffers from extremely unequal distribution of land; 2% of the population own 65% of arable land. And among those rural farmers who do own land, many do not own enough to support themselves. In rural Guatemala, 54% of all farms are too small to support subsistence farming. In response to declining land resources, growing numbers of Maya farmers in the western highlands have turned to both licit and illicit non-traditional agricultural exports such as snow peas, cabbage, and opium poppies (Figure 1).

These new crops (illicit and licit) are also often more profitable than traditional crops. For example, according to Guatemalan anti-narcotics officials, some farmers involved in poppy production are reported to make around US$ 6000 a month during harvest periods. This is an astounding figure in a rural region where over 90% of the population lives in deep poverty. Recent reports by drug interdiction groups now identify Guatemala as anywhere from the fourth to the sixth largest producer of opium in the world, with around 2000 ha dedicated to poppy production. While this is a relatively small area overall, given the mountainous terrain, the agricultural importance of the area under poppy production should not be underestimated. Most cultivation occurs in the department of San Marcos, a rural department in western Guatemala dominated by volcanic highlands and poverty. This region, with fertile volcanic soils and moderate climate, is ideal for poppy production.

The authors' previous research in highland Guatemala focused on agro-ecological changes that followed the conclusion of the civil war, as development agencies and other global influences entered the landscape. While conducting fieldwork over the past decade (19 months of in-country fieldwork over the past 10 years), we became aware of the emerging poppy economy through conversations with farmers. Formal surveys were avoided to ensure the safety of the researchers and the informants—drug production is a volatile issue within Guatemala, one that does not lend itself to formal field investigations. Instead, we intensively interviewed 15 current or former farmers involved in poppy production who were made known to us through previous field contacts. In order

to assure anonymity, we interviewed farmers in San Marcos, the largest town near the poppy growing areas. We then met with 5 of these farmers a year later to pose follow-up questions. Conversations were carried out with farmers in 2005 and 2006.

Poppy production increases the vulnerability of poor people

The health impacts of poppy production have not manifested themselves in increased local drug use or addiction. Local producers do not consume opium because it has too much value as an export crop. The health impacts and pollution associated with poppy production are more indirect.

Health and environmental problems

First, defoliant sprayed to eradicate poppies is one impact on the health of producers and their families. Spraying impacts local people when it is inhaled, or comes into contact with their eyes, and when its drift and residue enter water supplies or come in contact with livestock. These were concerns often repeated by local people in eradication zones. Although Glyphosate, the main defoliant used by the government, is considered relatively safe, it is unclear how careful government authorities are when spraying near households. During eradication efforts in 2006, Guatemalan officials were met with armed resistance from some of the residents in production zones, largely due to the fear associated with spraying.

The production zone was once a stronghold of anti-government insurgency forces; thus there is great suspicion of the military among many local people. When we discussed the spraying with farmers, all expressed fear and outrage. While there have been no studies that quantify the impacts of spraying on local people, there is great fear that residues from the spraying have contaminated wells, soil, and the general landscape. This pollution and contamination are real in the minds of local people.

Besides soil and water contamination, local people expressed concerns about the effects of spraying and pollution on local forests. Some farmers are apparently moving their poppy fields into more remote areas, where remnant forests still exist (Figure 2). Eradication efforts will undoubtedly follow them. Forests are important to local communities because they provide critical resources such as firewood, pine resins (*ocote*), and medicinal herbs. However, given population growth over the past several decades, highland forests have been greatly reduced. Because of this reduction, remaining forests are considered extremely valuable by local communities.

Another impact of this spraying on human health is the eradication of licit crops. Because farmers often intercrop poppies with crops such as maize, licit crops are often destroyed. Any destruction of licit crops exasperates an already impoverished landscape. Malnutrition and undernourishment are pervasive problems in Guatemala, where more than half of the children under age 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition. Certainly malnutrition existed in Guatemala long before the recent expansion of poppy production, but as more cropland is destroyed via spraying, household food insecurity increases.

A secondary, but significant impact of increased poppy production on health is the fact that more and more land is being dedicated to non-food crops. Certainly household incomes have increased among many growers, but conversion to an export crop has led many families to rely on store-bought foods, with much of the newly purchased foods being heavily processed. Tortillas, the staff of life among most Maya families, are increasingly purchased out-

"We are afraid to use the streams to wash our clothes, or bathe. We don't know what has been sprayed, but it is poison because it kills the plants." (A local resident)

"If the forests are destroyed, the community, especially the old people, will suffer. Where will fuel, the medicines, come from?" (A farmer)

FIGURE 1 Farmers loading cabbage on a truck for sale in town; such licit cash-crops have replaced subsistence crops since the end of the civil war, offering a way out of poverty and chronic food shortages. (Photo by Michael Steinberg)

FIGURE 2 Typical agro-ecological landscape in the San Marcos region. Note the clearing of agricultural fields on steep slopes. (Photo by Susanne Schneeberger)

"Yes, we made a little money, but again it feels like the violent times when we lived in fear [ie the early 1980s]." (An elderly woman, the wife of a grower)

side the home, a radical shift in household production. The popularity of certain store-bought foods such as soft drinks is increasingly apparent in villages. Tooth decay among children resulting from increased soft drink and candy consumption is now commonplace in many highland villages. Greater dependence on store-bought foods results in a generally poorer diet and less household food security.

Violence

Perhaps the most immediate impact of expanding poppy production on health is increased violence. Growing militarization and the deepening entrenchment of drug interests have contributed to a surge in rural violence. Even some poppy growers who apparently benefit economically lament the heavy presence of the military and criminal activity. Kidnappings, assassinations, and disappearances are surging to new levels in Guatemala (the highest levels since the end of the civil war in 1996), with much of this violence being attributed to organized crime and gangs who have interests in the drug economy. While rural violence is a broad interpretation of "health impacts," the physical and mental health of rural residents is being threatened as drug interests become more entrenched.

FIGURE 3 Police destroying poppy fields in the San Marcos region in 1990. Since this time, poppy production has expanded due to the region's poverty and general lawlessness and corruption. Photo provided by CIRMA (Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica)

Development failures and policy recommendations

While government crackdowns create an ebb-and-flow situation on the ground regarding exact amounts of poppy production, the longer-term trend in Guatemala appears to be toward increased production and as such increased impacts on broadly defined health issues. This trend is a symptom of larger-scale failure in the development landscape. The initial response to the growth in drug cultivation is increased rural militarization to reduce poppy production (Figure 3). However, greater militarization of the impoverished countryside will do little to mitigate the forces that led smallholders to participate in this dangerous harvest in the first place.

Events in Guatemala have important implications for other development landscapes for 2 reasons: first, illicit agricultural activities need to be thought of as development failures, not simply as illegal activities. When farmers turn to illicit activities wrought with risks, this indicates that "development" has failed. Farmers do not participate in illicit activities casually or simply out of greed. Instead, this is a sign of rural crisis. In Guatemala, farmers are forced to farm on ever-smaller plots owing to subdivision of land among offspring. At the same time, few other income generation opportunities exist in many rural villages. Thus farmers face a choice: choose crops that promise high returns (licit and illicit), or leave villages and towns in search of jobs.

Second, in drug-producing landscapes, licit development groups have been supplanted by illicit groups. Drug interests act as agricultural extension agents providing technical and material support, and as buyers and marketers for the finished product—from planting to purchase. If illicit activities are to be rejected, then licit development agencies must reconnect with the rural population in question and make long-term investments in economic infrastructure to provide viable long-term solutions for licit livelihoods. In landscapes where drug plants have been successfully replaced, such as in the hill country of northern Thailand, it has been the result of a long-term, intensive, and diverse effort on the

part of development groups (although this program has not been without problems, such as increased poverty).

One way in which the rural development landscape can be reconstructed is for development interests to make long-term commitments to projects. It is critical for local people to know that they will have access to technical and other forms of development support for an extended period of time (the amount of time obviously depends on the type of project). As "faith" in the long-term viability of licit development projects increases, drug interests will begin to be undermined. This replacement does not have to begin on a large scale.

According to our conversations with local people, commitment to a project and to a community is often viewed as more important than the amount of actual money thrown at a community (Figure 4). Farmers recognize the risks associated with poppy production. Many claimed to be willing to give up poppy production even for income-generating activities that did not produce the same levels of income (although all expressed an unwillingness to return to subsistence production).

Commodity chains must also be shortened so that stakeholders have closer connections with consumers and can thereby profit more directly. "Fair Trade" arrangements are one model that could be initiated in Guatemala where some high-end commodities such as world-class coffee are already produced. In southern Belize, for example, farmers shifted from marijuana to organic, fair-trade cacao. Although this was not a formal drug replacement program, many farmers that embraced the cacao economy turned away from marijuana production because of the long-term commitment to technical assistance and price guarantees for cacao, and because it was seen as a less risky endeavor. While Belize is non-mountainous, the lessons learned could be applied in vulnerable rural mountain areas—farmers who have confidence in licit economies because they know what to expect regarding prices and profits for their product are less likely to be drawn into illicit activities.

Along with gaining the trust of local people and promoting faith in licit development, the government must demonstrate that their target when spraying defoliant is the opium poppy and not local communities (ie poisoning people). The government must demonstrate that the chemicals used are safe, and that their intention is to eradicate only the poppy, not licit crops. There is a great deal of mistrust on the part of local people, and for eradication and subsequent development to succeed, bridges must be built. The desire for stability and profit is understandable given the great turnover of development projects and the history of boom-and-bust economic cycles in highland Guatemala (and elsewhere).

"The [aid] workers arrive with great plans, but soon enough they disappear, along with their promises." (A farmer)

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CHAPTER TWO

ETHNICITY AND A COLONIZED LANDSCAPE

This chapter provides contextual information on local identities, economy, and gender relations. The first section outlines the distinction between community and ethnic identity and briefly portrays Ladino-Q'eqchi' ethnic relations. The second section outlines class relations in the countryside, paying attention to the structure of the agricultural export economy and to existing forms of community and household production.

COMMUNITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES

Throughout this book, I will be working with a distinction between community and ethnic group. I argue that communities are constructed primarily in relation to geographical location, whereas ethnic groups are primarily linguistic classifications. This argument serves as the basis for my claim that processes of war and Catholic conversion have shifted the emphasis of identity from the community toward wider forms of association such as ethnicity and class.

Historically, the Q'eqchi' community has been a more salient basis for identity than has the ethnic group. This is partly because the population of Alta Verapaz is overwhelmingly

indigenous. Whatever criteria were used, the National Population Census of 1981 recorded that the department was 89 percent "indigenous." The vast majority of the 361,000 Q'eqchi's today live in the department of Alta Verapaz (Instituto Indigenista Nacional 1985:59). As can be seen from map 3, the Q'eqchi's cover the most extensive area of any Mayan group in Guatemala, and they are the fourth largest subgroup in population.

In the past, a strong pan-Q'eqchi' identity has not existed; people referred to themselves and others as Q'eqchi's (*aj Q'eqchi'*) only when commenting on language ability. The word *Q'eqchi'* did not originally refer to a group with shared cultural attributes, but to a language. Any person who speaks this Mayan language fluently can be called an *aj Q'eqchi'*. Members of the neighboring Poqomchi' linguistic group may also be referred to as Q'eqchi' if they speak Q'eqchi'.

Most Q'eqchi's, especially elders, identify themselves as being from a municipality or a certain village. It is an anthropological maxim that the municipality is the basis of indigenous identity in Guatemala (see Tax 1963; Watanabe 1992) and takes precedence over any pan-Mayan identification. Carol Smith (1990a:18) writes that "Indian identity is rooted in community rather than in any general sense of 'Indian-ness'."

The cornerstone of community identity in Alta Verapaz is location—the local geography. There is linguistic evidence that "location" (as in the Castilian *estar*) is much more important than "being/essence" (the Castilian *ser*). Indeed, Q'eqchi' does not have a verb for "being/essence," only for "to be located in a place" (*waank*).

Community identity is imagined in the relationship with the local sacred landscape. Villages are frequently named after an aspect of the sacred landscape, usually a mountain. Surnames are often specific to a locale. Q'eqchi's call themselves *aj ral ch'och'*, or "children of the earth," a term that is also extended to

include other indigenous groups. This aspect of identity is the subject of the next three chapters.

Community identity is elaborated in other areas of culture as well as in the landscape. Dialects vary from one microlocale to another. All women wear indigenous dress, but every community puts its unique creative stamp on its clothing. Communities that have not converted to Protestantism have their own patron saints. In some villages, there is an active religious brotherhood (*cofradía*) that is in charge of annual celebrations of the saint. Across Mesoamerica, the *cofradía* was the community institution that served for hundreds of years as a vessel for traditional Mayan beliefs and community values.[1]

Communities are not homogeneous but are the sites of political and religious heterodoxy and economic differentiation. The tendency in earlier anthropological studies of Guatemalan villages was to assume cultural and economic conformity, but John Watanabe's (1992) complex study of the Mam town Santiago Chimaltenango irreversibly put paid to this preconception. He writes (1992:9) that we should regard the community as "a more problematic locus of contingent social cooperation involving diverse—at times divergent—individual interests."

An overt, conscious Q'eqchi' ethnic identity is a relatively new social concept. Past use of the label *Q'eqchi'* as the primary way of identifying a population has chiefly been the act of outsiders. Those who draw maps of "ethnic groups in Guatemala" are doing something most indigenous people have not done historically, and that is make ethnicity the main criterion for classification.

In comparison, Ladino ethnic identity is much more homogeneous, coherently defined, and less subordinate to the concept of community. Because it continually appeals to national and international ideals of *mestizaje*, or "mixed-ness," Ladino identity is self-consciously universal and uniform.

The labels used in ethnic categorizing are contentious and vary according to the speaker. Ladinos call themselves Ladinos, but Q'eqchi's use the label *kaxlan wiing* (chicken men) or *aj Ladiin* (Ladino).[2] The chicken arrived with the Spanish invasion, even preceding it in some areas (Tannenbaum 1943:413). The Q'eqchi' word for chicken, *kaxlan,*[3] is used as a prefix to denote anything foreign. Mayan groups (see Bricker 1981:5) have chosen the chicken as the totem of the Spanish, as opposed to other Spanish imports such as the horse and the cow.

The meanings of terms have not remained fixed and immutable, however. In the colonial period, a Ladino was a Spanish-speaking indigenous person who was landless, belonged to no particular community, and acted as an agent of the landowners (C. Smith 1990a:72). In this usage, a primarily ethnic identification was initially premised upon the denial of community identity and the acquisition of a new class-based identity.

I never came across any concepts of an essence of race (e.g., the blood) that is inherited; apparently there is local agreement with the anthropological maxim that ethnicity is a social, not a physical, concept (see Pitt-Rivers 1973; Wade 1993). From the perspective of outside analysts and the new ethnic revivalists, language is the principal mechanism and criterion for classification into an ethnic group. The native tongue of Ladinos is Castilian, whereas Q'eqchi's speak Q'eqchi' in the home and village. The majority of indigenous people are monolingual; the bilingual education program PRONEBI reckons the percentage is around 90. Castilian is used primarily in the towns or when dealing with government officials. For most rural indigenous Guatemalans, Castilian is the language of power—that of the Ladino government, the army, and the *patrón*. Yet because of their numerical superiority, Q'eqchi's can usually avoid speaking Castilian even in urban areas. Many businesses and stores

are owned by Q'eqchi' speakers, and Ladinos from Cobán are frequently conversational in the indigenous language.

Indigenous peoples' knowledge of Castilian is, to an extent, gender dependent; men are more likely to be conversant because of their greater exposure to national institutions such as schools and the army. Indigenous male youths are regularly captured and forced to fulfil military service for two years. Male attendance is higher than that of females in the few schools and literacy programs available. Through wage labor, men also have more contact with Castilian speakers. Women go to the towns as frequently as men, but they are more likely to confine their dealings to those with other Q'eqchi'-speaking women in the markets.

Ethnic distinctions are partly congruent with the distinction between rural and urban. Ladinos are associated with the towns and Q'eqchi's with the countryside. Eighty-two percent of Q'eqchi's live in rural areas (CUNOR 1986). Ladinos live almost exclusively in the towns, although so do a large number of Q'eqchi's. In the rural mountainous regions, there are very few Ladinos, except in particular zones of immigration such as the Northern Transversal Strip. The only Ladinos who make forays into the mountains are plantation owners and foremen, itinerant traders, and middlemen buying cash crops. These Ladinos have to speak the indigenous language well to conduct their affairs.

As elsewhere in Latin America, dress is one of the most significant signs of ethnicity. Ethnic criteria affect female dress more than male clothing, which is determined more by class and occupational categories. Q'eqchi' women have a distinctive traditional dress similar to that of other Mayan groups but with different patterns in the skirt and embroidered blouse. Ladina clothing typically is a print dress, usually made in a Mexican factory. If, in an extremely rare situation, a Q'eqchi' woman were to discard her dress and put on Ladina clothes, she would no longer be considered indigenous.

Men's clothing is not as immediately defining. Both Ladino and Q'eqchi' males wear factory-made trousers and shirts, but those of Ladinos tend to be more expensive. The difference between the two groups lies not so much in their clothes as in what men on their feet. A large number of indigenous men wear nothing at all, and when they do it is usually a pair of heavily patched rubber boots. Ladinos, on the other hand, tend to wear socks with tennis shoes or leather shoes. Q'eqchi' men from rural areas always wear hats and carry machetes; both are as much a part of their dress as a pair of trousers.

All the preceding attributes of ethnicity are correlated instantly when people define others' or their own ethnicity. At the same time, ethnicity is clearly contextual; there are no absolute boundaries that hold for all situations. As Kay Warren (1992:203–204) puts it, "The construction of polar, mutually exclusive choices—Indian or Ladino—ignores overwhelming evidence that individuals and communities continually rework identities."

With this perspective, it is appropriate to look now at the process of "Ladinoization" by which Q'eqchi's adopt Ladino attributes. Ladinoization is, more than anything, the decision to abandon the community. This occurs most often among landless proletarians who leave their rural communities and migrate to the towns. Though they may adopt Ladino dress and language and work in Ladino occupations, many still refer to themselves as Q'eqchi's. Alternatively, they can call themselves Ladinos, but other Q'eqchi's and Ladinos may deny them this status because they know that the individual or household comes from an indigenous background. There is no intermediate category of "Ladino-izing Q'eqchi'," or *cholo,* as is used in the Andes. The cultural attributes considered sufficient to make one a Q'eqchi' in the towns may be very different from those in the mountains, where an urban Q'eqchi' may be

deemed a Ladino. Ethnic identities, then, can vary according to location and context.

I encountered few cases of apparently permanent Ladinoization. It is, perhaps, the wrong approach to try to explain why Ladinoization does not happen; this somehow presumes that it should. Nevertheless, the relative absence of Ladinoization is in part due to the overwhelming numbers of Q'eqchi's compared to Ladinos. The small size of the towns also obstructs ethnic "passing," for everyone knows everyone else's history. Most Ladinos have only recently came to Alta Verapaz from other parts of the country, and they remain exclusive as a group. Permanent transformations from Q'eqchi' to Ladino identity are difficult. Nor does there seem to be any great incentive for indigenous people to want to become Ladinos, as the linear model of assimilation or "acculturation" theories presumed.[4] Wealthy Q'eqchi's generally have a good understanding of Hispanic culture and language, but they have little reason to forsake their ethnicity. Waldemar Smith (1977) came to the same conclusion for wealthy indigenous peoples in western Guatemala.

Urban Q'eqchi's often assume Ladino attributes not out of a conscious strategy but because they are expected to speak Castilian in the workplace and may not have the financial resources to buy expensive traditional female dress. The creation of an urban, industrial, indigenous working class in Alta Verapaz is so new that it is hard to generalize about the future ethnicity of its members. My speculation is that urban Q'eqchi' workers will take on some of the attributes of national Ladino culture, yet still identify themselves as Q'eqchi'.

Urban and rural Q'eqchi's alike are involved in a continual redefinition of their identity. Ladinoization only happens in a seemingly irrevocable fashion when Q'eqchi's migrate to the capital in search of work. There they must forsake their language, and women often change their dress. If they return to Alta Verapaz, however, they are likely to redefine themselves as Q'eqchi's. Carol Smith (1984:216) writes of the difficulty of Ladinoization in the western highlands, noting that the people most likely to become Ladinos are the few young men who marry out of their communities and never return.

Throughout Latin America, the policies of the state have historically sought to advance the process of Ladinoization as part of a project of "national integration" (see Stutzman 1981). Anti-indigenous legislation characterized the nineteenth century in particular. After independence from Spain, the Guatemalan republican government passed Decree 14, which mandated all parish priests, in conjunction with municipal authorities, to "extinguish, by the most prudent and efficient means possible, the languages of the indigenous peoples" (Estrada Monroy 1974:487). President Justo Rufino Barrios decreed in 1876 that "the indigenous peoples of the aforesaid San Pedro de Sacatepequez of both sexes, are declared to be Ladinos, supposing that, from next year onwards, they use the dress corresponding to the Ladinos" (Mörner 1970:202). The last decree was only suspended in 1935, when the indigenous inhabitants were legally allowed to be indigenous again.

The policies of successive governments have deviated little from the spirit of such decrees. Through laws and the policies of government institutions, the Guatemalan nation-state has continually sought to extinguish indigenous languages and culture. At times, this strategy has involved extreme violence by the state against indigenous communities. During the scorched-earth policies of the Ríos Montt regime (1982–83), the military carried out overt genocide against Mayan peoples. The then defense minister, General Mejía Victores, said, "We must get rid of the words 'indigenous' and 'Indian'" (Minority Rights Group 1989:19).

The central motivation behind education in indigenous areas has been cultural assimilation. For the indigenous child, Guatemalan education is much like that in Judith Friedlander's (1975:147) description of Mexico. She writes that students are taught "how wonderful it is to be a working-class Mestizo, [and] the village students are strongly encouraged to want to conform to this idealized image of the Mexican and to forfeit their own Indian identity."

Even bilingual education, which is a great deal more sensitive toward indigenous languages and cultures than *castellanización* methods (where indigenous children are "Castilianized"), inducts indigenous pupils into fully Castilian classes by the fourth year. According to PRONEBI, in Alta Verapaz in 1988, 40 percent of school-age children attended schools, and 35 percent of them received bilingual education up to the third year of primary education.

In general, however, the Guatemalan state has offered few public services in indigenous areas. Statistics collected in 1986 by the national university located in Cobán (CUNOR) show low levels of state provision of education and health care. Less than 40 percent of children are enrolled in primary school, and at 74 percent, Alta Verapaz has one of the highest illiteracy levels in the country. In the few rural schools that exist, children are taught mostly in Spanish, and the government and schoolteachers refer to the entire process of education as *Castellanización*. Teachers constitute the main bearers of modernity in Q'eqchi' villages.

According to the CUNOR study, 45 percent of the population has access to health services, and there is one doctor for every 6,500 inhabitants. In the departmental hospital in Cobán in 1986, more than 5 percent of infants were stillborn, an indication of generally poor health and nutrition (*Anuario Estadístico* 1986:151). Only 12 percent of houses have drinking

water; 4 percent have a sewage system. It should be stressed that the preceding services are found almost exclusively in the towns—for example, there are no doctors permanently located in rural areas. The Catholic diocese estimates that only 5 to 10 percent of indigenous communities have access to medical care. The CUNOR document estimates life expectancy to be forty-one years, which is consistent with the national average for rural areas. Health conditions are indeed abysmal. The vast majority of children suffer from malnutrition, and everyone—including me during my fieldwork—suffers at some time from intestinal parasites. Tropical diseases run unchecked, even those that are inexpensive to treat, such as malaria.

To a certain extent, then, rural Q'eqchi's are distant from institutions of the state and national Ladino society. Yet they are by no means as isolated as they once were. Melvin Tumin (1952) applied the paradigm of caste to ethnic relations in Guatemala, a now discredited approach. He proposed that indigenous people and Ladinos had separate value systems, owing to their separate occupations and religious and prestige institutions. This ethnic isolation, wrote Tumin, prevented indigenous people from being aware of their subordinate position. This dualistic model was probably always inappropriate for ethnic relations in Guatemala, yet Tumin was writing at a time when Ladino and indigenous worlds were more segregated than they are today. Nowadays, indigenous people are thoroughly aware of their status and regularly interact with Ladinos in economic activities and in the operations of the state.

It is paradoxical that the state, in its desire to obliterate ethnic identity, has at times strengthened it. The Ladino state and its agents create their own image of "indigenous" and "Q'eqchi'," and thus accentuate ethnic identity more than community identity. The promotion of Ladinoization necessitates the promulgation of its opposed image, and in doing so it

expands the basis of association from the community to the wider ethnic group. This issue will take on more importance in the later chapter on civil war.

Indigenous peoples are discriminated against by Ladinos on a number of different levels, and some, though not all, judgments of inferiority are internalized. Rural Q'eqchi's generally subscribe to the ethnic division of labor that confines them to nonprofessional and agricultural occupations, but they do not accept Ladino depictions of them as stupid or dirty. Unlike many other indigenous groups, most Q'eqchi's are proud of their language, religion, and customs. Many overtly disdain Ladinos as people without *na'leb'*, or moral values. A priest among the Poqomchi', a neighboring group, told me, "The Q'eqchi's are very rare in their pride. Look at the Poqomchi's, they are loathe to speak their language, they won't speak it in town and always want me to do the mass in Castilian."

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

This section looks at relations of production, beginning with higher levels of organization—the nation and region—and progressing down to the community and household. Although class is not as important for identity as community and ethnic group, material conditions hold immense importance for understanding the development of the social movements (catechists, revolutionaries, and ethnic revivalists) that have developed in Alta Verapaz. This section also serves as an etic complement to the emic approach to agricultural production adopted in chapters three through five.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL PROFILE

The single most important feature of the economic landscape of Alta Verapaz is the unequal distribution of land. The department is not special in this instance. In a now-famous document

published in 1982, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) gave Guatemala the dubious honor of having the most unequal land distribution in Latin America. According to USAID, over 78 percent of all farms are under 3.5 hectares and are squeezed onto 10 percent of the country's cultivable land, whereas less than 1 percent of all farms sprawl over 2,500 hectares and occupy 22 percent of all arable land. As James Painter writes (1987:xv): "Virtually all the country's high quality land[s] . . . are owned or controlled by a few hundred Guatemalan families, who for years have treated the country as a limited company."

The country's most fertile lands are used exclusively for export crops such as sugar cane, cotton, coffee and bananas. Agricultural products account for more than 50 percent of total export earnings. The inequality of land distribution and the unstable reliance on export crops constitute a threat to the subsistence needs of the vast majority of indigenous smallholders. The USAID report (1982:6) concluded that in 1979, 88 percent of all farms were too small to meet household food requirements. Hundreds of thousands of smallholders seek seasonal work on the plantations of the Pacific coast.

The agroexport industry employs 53 percent of the labor force (Economist Intelligence Unit 1989a:16). The whole edifice of the Guatemalan export economy is predicated on mostly indigenous smallholders' coming down from the mountainous regions to work for a few months of the year on the plantations. Coffee and cotton plantations rely on over 80 percent temporary labor, and sugar cane is harvested by 89 percent seasonal labor (Cardona 1983:20). Guatemala, then, is a classic example of the *latifundia-minifundia* model (see Barry 1987; Figueroa Ibarra 1980; Flores Alvarado 1977; Paz Cárcamo 1986). In this system, vast export plantations (*latifundia*) with labor-intensive methods depend on a large labor pool of farmers whose smallhold-

ings (*minifundia*) are too small to support subsistence needs. The plantations maintain this land-tenure system in order to benefit from rock-bottom wages that, unlike those of full-fledged wage labor, do not have to take into account the full reproduction of labor power.

AGRARIAN CONDITIONS IN ALTA VERAPAZ

The department covers 8,686 square kilometers and has a population of 522,900. Its physical geography varies enormously from the hot, humid lowlands of the north to the cool southern highlands, which rise to over 2,000 meters. The climate is one of near-continual rain, apart from six to eight dry weeks in April and May; the average annual rainfall in Cobán is 1,864 millimeters (Anuario Estadístico 1986). A fine misty rain called *chipi-chipi* can fall solidly for an interminable two to three weeks during the winter months (so much for my dreams of escaping the English climate).

In Alta Verapaz, coffee and cardamom are the mainstays of the regional economy. The industrial sector is only weakly developed and centered on a few sites such as the ammunition factory in Cobán, the Chixoy hydroelectric plant, silver and uranium mines in the Polochic valley, and the oil fields of the north.

The wide range of production relations makes it difficult to characterize all the dimensions of land and labor relations in the department. Most rural Q'eqchi' households and communities have limited access to sufficient quantities of arable land. The shortage of land for subsistence production necessitates participation in wage labor on the coffee and cardamom plantations. Indigenous communities and agroexport plantations should be seen as integrated into a single system of production—one that exploits Q'eqchi' land and labor. The economy of the indigenous community is not marginal to national production, therefore, as

some elements of modernization theory assert. Rather, it is the motor of the Guatemalan economy. Furthermore, the community economy circumscribes the local manifestations of global capital, as well as being subject to the dictates of the international market. Carol Smith (1984) argues that social scientists have given too much weight to global factors influencing local communities. Using a nuanced, microsociological approach, she reverses some of the tenets of dependency theory and shows how the particularities of the western highlands shaped capitalism's development in Guatemala.

Ethnicity does not always follow class lines, but in Alta Verapaz there are not enough poor rural Ladinos or wealthy urban Q'eqchi's to negate a rough correlation between class and ethnicity. Q'eqchi' men are, in the main, poorer subsistence cultivators and rural wage laborers. Class differentiation within Q'eqchi' communities is not pronounced. Ladinos chiefly work in professional or mercantile occupations in urban areas. There are few Ladino smallholders in Alta Verapaz, and they are concentrated in locations that are spatially separated from indigenous communities. The principal landowners of the region are Ladinos, many of whom are descendants of the foreigners who came at the end of the last century with names such as Deiseldorff, Hempstead, and Leal. Class, however, is not a sufficient explanation for all aspects of Q'eqchi' and nonindigenous cultures. The categories overlap, but are not reducible to one another. In terms of people's own self-definitions, class difference is not nearly as salient as ethnic difference, except among those with a past involvement in revolutionary organizations. This situation certainly challenged my initial theoretical framework, since I went to the field as a fairly orthodox materialist, seeing class as a foundational, objective category and ethnicity as a rather derivative cultural epiphenomenon. In the field, I found that the researcher can only bang his or her

head for so long against people's contradictory priorities and self-definitions until a more nuanced explanatory narrative has to take shape.

ECONOMIC HISTORY

The unique history of Alta Verapaz provides the template for many present-day economic relations. The myriad expressions of Q'eqchi' communities have been profoundly shaped by the Spanish colonial system and the development of the capitalist agroexport economy.

During the Spanish invasion, indigenous communities were concentrated into *reducciones* and thereby removed from their original lands. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Spanish landowners quickly assumed possession of the fertile lands along the Pacific coast, but the mountainous terrain of the Verapaces was comparatively bypassed. Colonial and post-colonial reports constantly refer to the recalcitrance of the Q'eqchi's and Lacandones, who periodically abandoned Spanish towns and fled to the forest.

A letter written by the French landowner Rossignon in 1861, before coffee production took over the department, referred to the "dispersion in the mountains" of the Q'eqchi' (Estrada Monroy 1979:380). Rossignon described indigenous life as "essentially nomadic," with "the majority living in their corn fields." Freedom of movement for the Q'eqchi' in these times was possible because landowners did not have great incentives such as export opportunities to cultivate their lands intensively. Rossignon wrote about how indigenous groups "continually invaded private lands." Soon afterwards, new entrepreneurs from northern Europe would take more capitalistic attitudes than their Spanish colonial counterparts toward land ownership and Q'eqchi' labor.

Although the effects of the Spanish invasion on land tenure and labor relations were sweeping and profound, the development of coffee production in the last half of the nineteenth century had more dramatic ramifications for Q'eqchi' communities. Throughout Latin America, indigenous communities did not suffer dispossession of their lands under colonial rule to the same degree as they did after independence (1821).

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, subsistence practices came under serious threat when it was realized that land hitherto considered marginal was excellent for coffee cultivation. In the mid-nineteenth century, more than 70 percent of the country's best lands were still controlled by some thousand peasant (and mostly indigenous) communities (Cambranes 1985:88). The founders of the Republic of Guatemala were free-market liberals who quickly moved to privatize communal lands. From 1871 to 1883, liberal governments beginning with that of Barrios declared "empty" almost a million acres of land, the majority of which was occupied by indigenous communities (Handy 1984:69).

Indigenous land claims had to be vitiated in order for foreign, especially German, entrepreneurs to begin operations in the country. This was done by a combination of murders, violent coercion, and ideological deception. The new landholders were aided by Catholic priests in Alta Verapaz, as this excerpt from a letter to the president by an indigenous community indicates: "They [the landowners] have made us believe, through sermons delivered by Father Basilio Cordero, that they have received instructions from the Supreme Government to force us to leave our homes" (Cambranes 1985:80).

The majority of the immigrant Germans went to Alta Verapaz, where they built a coffee export empire on the basis of Q'eqchi' land and labor. Two-thirds of the commerce of the region was in the hands of Germans by 1885 (Cambranes 1985:165). Michael McClintock (1985:8) writes, "With their own river route to the

coast, planters of the German enclave centred on Cobán in . . . Alta Verapaz, were virtually independent from the rest of the country." From 1870 to 1880, coffee production nearly tripled to 290,000 quintals (over 13 million kilograms) as Guatemala became a leading world producer (Plant 1977:68). In a letter to the president in 1867, the inhabitants of Carchá pleaded, "After having had our houses and farms, which are the fruit of our labor, taken away from us . . . the Commissioner of Panzós has forced us to plant coffee in the mountains where we grow corn. This appears to be nothing more than an attempt to exterminate us" (Cambranes 1985:81).

From the very beginning, then, cash crops were perceived by subsistence cultivators as a direct threat to their economy. In chapters three and four, I will show how this opposition between subsistence and cash cropping has been incorporated into the symbolism of agricultural rituals.

Raul Salvadó (1980:19) writes that by the end of the 1870s, there was no untitled land left in Alta Verapaz. The coffee plantations were vast, and they drew in dispossessed Q'eqchi's as *mozos colonos*, or serfs, and remunerated them with food, usufruct or a salary. In addition to obtaining land for coffee production, landowners were motivated to acquire as much land as possible so as to mobilize indigenous labor. As David McCreery (1976:456) explains, "While they [indigenous communities] retained this [communal land], and the political and social institutions to protect it, an individual member had little incentive to labor for low wages on someone else's coffee plantation."

As foreign landowners dispossessed Q'eqchi' communities of their lands, the government passed legislation to ensure easy control of their labor power. Labor was a more crucial factor in production than land, of which there was plenty. In 1876, President Barrios sent an order to the departmental governors that amounted to a law of forced labor: "May the indigenous

peoples of your jurisdiction, provide to the plantation owners of that department that request it, the number of workers necessary, up to fifty or one hundred, according to the importance of the business" (Skinner-Klee 1954:34).

The indigenous work force was to be renewed every two weeks and its wage level arranged between the plantation owner and departmental governor. The majority of Q'eqchi's became *mozos colonos* during this time. Older Q'eqchi's still remember the days of vagrancy laws and debt servitude, which replaced the colonial *mandamiento* system. One group of elders from Cahabón recounted to me how all males had to work on the coffee *fincas* (plantations) from age seven until they were physically incapable. They were usually paid not in cash but with maize and beans. Robert Carmack (1990:129) claims that in the late nineteenth century, "the Verapaz Indians were the most proletarianized within Guatemala."

The relations of production outlined above held true in Alta Verapaz until 1943, when German property was nationalized and tens of thousands of hectares of coffee land were seized by the state. Some land passed into the hands of high officials and local members of the Ladino bourgeoisie. Other plantations became national cooperatives with Q'eqchi' members, but they were managed by a government appointee who often treated the cooperative as a private business and a source of loot.

THE REGIONAL EXPORT ECONOMY

Alta Verapaz is an integrated part of the national agroexport economy and shares with it characteristics such as an unequal land-tenure system and a reliance on export crops. Two percent of the total number of farms occupy 65 percent of the arable land and generate 61 percent of the gross departmental production (CUNOR 1986:92). Military officials are major landowners, especially in the colonization zone of the Northern

Transversal Strip. During military rule in 1983, 60 percent of Alta Verapaz was reckoned to be military property (Dunkerley 1988:467). Meanwhile, 97 percent of the agricultural properties jostle for 25 percent of the arable land (CUNOR 1979).

Although this distribution causes a dire shortage of subsistence land for Q'eqchi' villagers, conditions are not as acute as in other departments in the highlands. Pressure on the land is still intense, but it has been somewhat diminished by migration to the vast areas of virgin forest in the north of the department and in the Petén and Belize (Adams 1965).

Guatemala is now the world's largest producer of cardamom, meeting 60 percent of global requirements and earning over U.S. $40 million in 1988 (Economist Intelligence Unit 1989b:2). The majority of Guatemala's cardamom is produced in Alta Verapaz, where it is planted, tended, and harvested by Q'eqchi' hands. For the exporting Ladino elite that controls cardamom production, rural Q'eqchi' communities are a vital labor pool for the cultivation of hugely profitable export crops.

There are a variety of different types of land tenure in Alta Verapaz and I do not pretend to give here a complete and thorough examination of them all. There are, however, two main types of agroexport plantations: traditional coffee estates, and newer cattle and cardamom plantations.

Many historical coffee plantations are still run on nineteenth-century labor practices that depend on Q'eqchi' laborers, or *mozos colonos*. Conditions vary widely and remuneration may take the form of pay, usufruct, or food. In some instances, the landowner requires that tenants plant three times as much land for him as for themselves. In the municipality of Cahabón, Salvadó (1980:25) found that each male *colono* must work "three days for the landowner for each invested for his own benefit." In the majority of cases, Q'eqchi' men work unpaid for an average of ten days per month. This entitles them

to plant the minimum area of subsistence crops necessary to provide for their families. As Marx noted, in usufruct it is always clear which is the labor time of the *mozo* and which pertains to the landowner. On other plantations, workers are paid (usually between U.S. $1 and $1.50 per day) but have no usufruct. Social relations between workers and landlords are characterized by paternalism. The boss is likely to be godfather to most of his indigenous workers as well as the judicial authority and patron of religious events.

Modern cattle and cardamom farms depend on day wage labor (workers are called *voluntarios*, "volunteers") from surrounding communities and beyond. In these cases, the capitalist landowners do not assume responsibility for the reproduction of Q'eqchi' labor power. Labor relations, being more commoditized, are less paternalistic. Wages are marginally higher than on the historic plantations, averaging about U.S. $1.75 per day in 1988.

There are also many types of land tenure in Q'eqchi' communities, including national cooperative ownership, collective ownership, and different forms of smallholder tenure.

The national cooperatives are coffee plantations expropriated from German landowners in 1943. Members have no right to sell land. These cooperatives produce many cash crops using Western agricultural technology. The collectivization of resources means that more capital is available for mechanized transport to markets, fertilizers, insecticides, and advanced strains of seeds. In these cooperatives, 131 households farm 5,865 hectares on average.[5]

Along the border with Quiché, many communities lie on untitled land (*baldío*) belonging to the government land ministry, INTA. These forests are farmed by communities who are petitioning the government for land titles. The number of households on a *baldío* is usually between thirty and forty, and

size averages 880 hectares. Ownership is considered collective vis-à-vis the government, although internally, household rights are accrued by clearing a segment of forest. Rights of access may be passed from father to son. The community decides who may or may not join from outside. Usually deep in the mountainous rain forests, these villages are inaccessible by jeep or truck. Poor communications and roads make significant cash-cropping difficult. Traditionally, mobile households produced as shifting cultivators, each house a significant distance from the others. Villages were internally dispersed and had no center other than the graveyard and village *hermita,* or chapel.

Parcelas are smallholder communities created when German plantations were divided into plots. Q'eqchi's also received *parcelas* when the Franja Transversal del Norte road opened up huge expanses of primary forest. Each household owns title to its land, which can be sold. These Q'eqchi's tend to be comparatively better off. Because they own their lands, they can obtain credit to finance intensive cash-cropping methods. On average, 121 households farm a land grant of 3,100 hectares. This represents a mean of roughly 25 hectares per family.[6]

My final type is communities made up of private smallholdings. These are usually in the hinterlands of towns and are made up of mixed-size landholdings. They follow a mixed strategy of subsistence farming and cash crops. Their problems include legal registration of ancestral lands. The size of landholdings is usually smaller than in the *parcelas*.

This brief survey of land-tenure patterns demonstrates that Q'eqchi' communities are by no means homogeneous in their ownership, or lack of it, of their means of production.

HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY PRODUCTION

Subsistence production takes place predominantly at the level of the household. As Richard Wilk (1991) shows for Q'eqchi's in

Belize, the forms of households vary enormously: they may be nuclear or extended and may incorporate single parents of the conjugal unit and spouses of the children.

Relations between the sexes are remarkably similar to those reported for the Andes and are characterized by complementarity (Harris 1978). Men and women are ideologically equal, though the dominance of each is contextual. There is a rigid but interdependent sexual division of labor in agricultural tasks. Ideally, men are responsible for the staple crops, beans and maize, whereas women cultivate the gardens and tend the domestic animals. This ideal, however, is renegotiated in daily behaviour. Catherine Allen (1988:78), among many others, encountered a similar state of affairs in the Andes: "Male and female activities are conceptually distinct but flexible in practice." Thus men and women can do the majority of each other's tasks. There are, however, impermeable boundaries in some agricultural tasks; women are not allowed to plant maize, and men prefer that women plant garden crops. The exclusions against women's crossing sexual boundaries in production are more prevalent than those against men's doing so.

Women play a central role in managing household production (see Ehlers 1990) and are wholly responsible for household consumption. They alone control the processing of food, of which men claim to be utterly ignorant. Men profess not to know how even to make a tortilla, and they value this aspect of women's work highly, saying that they would starve without women. Men recognize and value the female monopoly in the preparation of food, which is seen as an integral part of the whole subsistence process.

Women dominate decision making relating to consumption, although long-term planning involves male input. All labor recruitment outside the family is based upon the provision of food for the work party. Women's control of consumption

means that they must be consulted on important extrahousehold matters, such as those involving labor during planting and harvesting and the fulfillment of ritual obligations in the saint brotherhoods and other religious commitments. Female control of consumption, then, implies an extension of power outside of the household as well.

Male and female roles in production are perceived as complementary and are accorded equal value. Women are almost exclusively in charge of agricultural production in the vegetable gardens and fruit orchards near the houses. A portion of the goods produced there is taken by women to markets in the towns and sold. Women are also responsible for the domestic livestock. Female labor in household agricultural production is obviously significant. Although men, too, work in the gardens and care for animals, those tasks are regarded as the domain of women. Maize and bean production is conventionally portrayed as the result of male labor only, but women in fact participate in the weeding and harvesting.

Villagers today depend on a single crop, maize. In most communities, maize represents up to 90 percent of the diet. This dependence is partly historic, but it has been accentuated by the war. Many Q'eqchi's fled their communities and lost a large percentage of their seeds, especially those for garden crops. In the slow process of rebuilding the village economy, displaced communities concentrated almost exclusively on reestablishing maize crops first. In communities I visited that were not affected by the war, vegetable garden products were much more in evidence and constituted a larger percentage of the diet—about 30 percent.

The comparison of maize production in different communities is made difficult by the altitudinal variation of the local geography. Two crops are cultivated per year in the lowlands, but only one in the mountains. The land is richer in the

Women going to market

lowlands and the climate is more suitable, so the highland villages need roughly three times as much land for subsistence. If the average size of a household is six members and each person consumes about 1.4 pounds of maize per day,[7] then a household needs 3,066 pounds of maize per year. A hectare produces some 1,700–2,200 pounds of maize each growing season, depending on the location and quality of the land. In the lowlands, 2.8 hectares were held to be the minimum field size for sustained reproduction of the household, whereas in highland villages, households had to plant 3.5 hectares.

Q'eqchi' households generally plant more than is necessary for mere subsistence requirements.[8] In surveys made in the

lowlands, the yearly averages are 4.8 hectares per household for those on land they do not own (rented, untitled, or on a plantation), and 8.5 hectares per household for those with titles to their land (a minority). These figures are higher than those for land necessary for subsistence requirements—roughly 2.8–3.5 hectares.[9] Although it may appear at first glance that most households have sufficient land for both subsistence and cash cropping, one must take into account that land is usually exhausted after two years' cultivation. The ideal fallow time is four to six years. Pressure on the land is much more acute in the highlands than in the lowlands. The experience of most indigenous communities in Alta Verapaz and the rest of the Guatemalan highlands is one of declining fertility and ever-decreasing crop yields.

The average overall time necessary to cultivate a subsistence plot, employing swidden agricultural methods, is eight weeks. Activity is intense during this period. At peak times in the agricultural calendar, cultivators work sixty to seventy hours per week; in the highlands, such peaks can be broken down as follows: clearing (February–March), three to four weeks; burning and planting (April–May), seven days; weeding (June–July), two weeks; and harvesting (September), seven days. Men are responsible for the first two stages of the agricultural process, and women are often involved in the last two.

Q'eqchi's sow an immense number of strains of corn and beans. I alone encountered dozens, seemingly one for each ecological niche.[10] Although this aspect of subsistence agriculture is advanced, the technology used is rudimentary—a machete, a hoe, fire, and a dibble stick for planting. Because of the simplicity of highland swidden implements, migrants have quickly adapted to lowland conditions (Carter 1969:144). Although migration to the northern lowlands has served as a pressure valve for overcrowding in the highlands, there continues to be great pressure on the land. Intensive Western methods using fertilizers and insecticides are often precluded by a lack of credit. Nor are there significant local techniques to restore the fertility of the land. Few efforts are made at conservation and repeated swidden procedures have led to massive deforestation and erosion.

Virtually all villagers plant a mix of subsistence and cash crops, a strategy Wilk (1991) has described in detail for Q'eqchi's in Belize. Indigenous farmers with enough land could plant all their land with corn and beans and be self-sufficient, but instead they choose to cultivate one or more cash crops. This mixed subsistence–cash cropping strategy allows access to local markets and provides a necessary source of cash. Modern Q'eqchi' lifestyles are premised upon access to markets for goods such as clothes, work tools, and radios, but seldom for basic food needs. Conversely, those with enough land could grow solely cash crops, but this seldom, if ever, occurs because villagers fear total reliance on the market. A similar pragmatic blend of opportunistic exploitation of coffee cash-cropping and cautious preservation of the maize-based subsistence economy is documented by Watanabe (1992:138–48) for Santiago Chimaltenango.

The optimum cash crop is one that can be cultivated during the slack season of the corn production cycle. Cardamom is ideal because it is harvested in January and costs little to start. Cardamom was the first export crop to be cultivated on a large scale by Q'eqchi' smallholders, beginning in the 1970s, so villagers still have little depth of experience in producing for the international export market. Coffee, historically grown only for export on the extensive plantations, also began to be cultivated after cardamom proved profitable. Coffee plants, however, are more fragile and demand more labor time and capital investment.

Smallholder cash-cropping is plagued by a dearth of capital and inertia in the face of elastic demand. Coffee requires five years to reach maturity, and cardamom, two, which means that producers are vulnerable to the vagaries of the international market. The large-scale producers, in a situation of declining commodity prices, can afford to destroy coffee groves and plant more profitable crops.

After interviewing farmers in twenty-two highland and lowland communities, I found that households cultivate subsistence crops on an average of 63 percent of their land; the rest is turned over to cash crops. This percentage tends to increase as land resources dwindle, until the minimal levels of subsistence are reached and the percentage becomes 100. The degree of cash-cropping is related to other factors, such as access to credit. For instance, cooperative members tend to have more scope for securing credit and pursuing intensive techniques. Access to roads and navigable rivers also encourages production for export.

Any review of community economics must also include more Chayanovian factors such as reciprocity and collective cooperation. Labor recruitment in Q'eqchi' communities combines elements of both reciprocity and wage labor. The types of intracommunity labor recruitment outlined here refer to independent agrarian communities, and not to populations of *colonos* inside plantations: reciprocal labor, which is unwaged but repaid by labor in kind plus food, and which is used during the planting and harvesting of maize and beans; nominal wage labor (Q2/day)[11] plus food, prevalent during the planting and harvesting of maize and beans; wage labor within the community (Q4/day), which includes all other agricultural labor, such as clearing; wage labor outside the community (Q4–5/day); and unpaid community labor organized by the village authority

in special cases such as road building or to help a widow with no male relatives.

Within Q'eqchi' villages, labor recruitment is not generally based on daily wages. The ritually elaborated processes of planting and harvesting staple crops have their own basis for recruitment. They are the main occasions for recruiting outside the household. Planting maize involves more labor exchange than does harvesting it, because planting is a more important religious event. Participation in the reciprocal labor pool for planting and harvesting is an archetypal feature of membership in most Q'eqchi' communities. Autonomous labor pools serve as markers for local identities, fixing the boundaries between "us" and "them." Billie Jean Isbell (1978:67) wrote of the same mechanisms of social enclosure in Chuschi, Peru. All other noncommunity agricultural labor is commoditized, especially any work on the export plantations.

Households tend to be self-sufficient in terms of labor needs. This is because most prefer economic autonomy, and the prevalence of extended families permits it. Traditionally, marriages are uxorilocal for a period of one to two years, and sons-in-law provide an invaluable labor resource.[12] The major bride-service obligation is heavy clearing work at the beginning of the agricultural cycle. In communities where land is held collectively, the act of clearing legitimates claims (not inalienable private ownership) for future years. Bride service has broken down in many areas, but even if sons stay in the house after marriage, all the house members work as a unit, sharing tasks, granaries, and the end product. The women of the household, however, will keep their own gardens, fruit trees, and domestic animals separate from those of other households, for these resources belong only to the conjugal unit.

The majority of Q'eqchi' men engage in day wage labor on

Harvesting maize

the plantations for an average salary of U.S. $1.50 per day plus one meal (in 1988). In a local-level agricultural study in the Polochic Valley, Angel Arce Canahuí (1983:89) found that nearly half of all men interviewed sold their labor power, and wage labor was the greatest source of monetary income. Although levels of participation in the labor market are high, my impression is that men are prejudiced against wage work and avoid it if at all possible. They dislike the authority of the foreman and the long, hard hours of work for low pay. This is what makes cash-cropping attractive: it allows households to earn money to spend in the local markets without having to work under the harsh conditions of the plantations.

Q'eqchi' communities have been integrated into a capitalist

labor market for over a hundred years, initially under forced-labor regulations and later out of economic necessity. Yet other dimensions of the capitalist economy, such as participation in the international commodity market, seemed for a while to be an escape from wage-labor relations. Villagers and even many urban Q'eqchi's actively maintain their positions as both wage laborers and subsistence cultivators. This local strategy echoes Carmen Deere's (1990) elaboration of multiple class relations in Cajamarcan households as a way of ensuring the reproduction of the household. Informants told me they desired access to markets but not complete dependence on them. For both rural and urban Q'eqchi's, it is of great significance to have some land on which to plant maize, because doing so is a vital aspect of indigenous identity, it provides an economic safety net, and it maintains the sacred relationship with the mountain spirits.

Given the picture I have presented in this section, I would have to disagree with Carol Smith (1990a:206), who states that "nothing resembling a peasantry exists in Guatemala"—only rural proletarians and petty commodity producers. Members of the Q'eqchi' communities are, of course, rural workers and cash-croppers, but their main agricultural activity continues to be subsistence-oriented production. They are, thus, a peasantry in a loose sense, but one that is also inextricably involved in capitalist labor and commodity networks.

Cash-cropping among Q'eqchi' villagers increased dramatically in the late 1970s and brought profits to those who had previously only worked for the benefit of the landowners. Development initiatives flourished, as did producer cooperatives. Cash-cropping allowed an escape from traditional relations of subordination to the plantation owners, but it also heralded a new set of relations of exploitation—those of the market and Ladino middlemen. Fast-changing economic and political relations in the countryside during the late 1970s

contributed to (but did not wholly determine) the development of revolutionary organizations.

Beginning in about 1981, war devastated the rural economy and halted production for export in many areas. The cash-cropping bubble burst in the mid-1980s, when commodity prices crashed, inducing the reaction against the market that is explored in chapter eight. The boom-and-bust cycle of commodity production is a major factor in shaping each community's stance toward the outside world. During recent boom periods, communities have been more "open," and indigenous identity has incorporated more elements of Ladino culture. During periods of market contraction, communities have tended to become more closed, and indigenous identity has been constructed in opposition to the wider national culture.

CHAPTER THREE

RECLAIMING A COLONIZED LANDSCAPE

This chapter looks at how local communities have traditionally been "imagined" through interactions with the surrounding landscape. Traditional beliefs about agricultural production and human health had their heyday before the mass conversions to orthodox religions in the 1970s. Now they are not so hegemonic, but they continue within a pluralistic cultural milieu. Although the earth cult is not the dominant way in which communities are now imagined, its elements are adhered to by a significant portion of the rural Q'eqchi' population. Because what is related in this chapter is a "living tradition," I describe its elements in the present tense and use past tense only when referring to aspects of tradition that are no longer practiced.

This chapter discusses ritual practices carried out before the planting of corn, when traditionalist men enter caves to make sacrifices to the mountain spirits. The tellurian deities, the *tzuultaq'as*, play a central role in traditional conceptions of agricultural fertility. *Tzuul* means "mountain," *taq'a* means "valley," and the earth gods encompass the whole of a sacralized landscape. I end the chapter with an assessment of how tradi-

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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The Resplendent Quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) in the Sierra Yalijux, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala

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Abstract The Resplendent Quetzal *Pharomachrus mocinno* is a restricted-range species occurring from Chiapas (Mexico) to Panama, generally at elevations above 1,400 m. *P. mocinno* is a frugivore that feeds on a variety of fruits. Listed as ''Lower Risk/Near Threatened Species'' and in CITES Appendix I, *P. mocinno* is dependent on standing dead and mature trees for breeding holes, which are only formed in primary cloud forest, even if tree stumps occur temporally in secondary growth as remnants of primary cloud forest. A population of *P. mocinno* in the northernmost Guatemalan mountain range (Chelemhá Plot, Sierra Yalijux, Alta Verapaz) was studied in 2002 and compared with a census at the same location in 1988. Between 1988 and 2002, the number of males did not change significantly: a small increase took place from 15 to 18 individuals per 100 ha. The species' breeding behaviour is linked to the long-term existence of primary forests such as the few remaining in highland Guatemala. Breeding success was proven and at least three juveniles from two breeding pairs were observed until the end of September 2002.

Keywords Conservation · Guatemala · *Pharomachrus mocinno* · Resplendent Quetzal · Tropical montane cloud forest

Introduction

Tropical biodiversity is threatened world-wide (e.g., Pievello 1999; Terborgh 1999; Stattersfield and Capper 2000; Douglas 2001; Paulsen 2003) and habitat loss is the major factor causing loss of biodiversity, and ongoing species extinction (e.g., Balmford 1995; IUCN 2000; Stattersfield and Capper 2000; FAO 2001; World Bank 2001; Hughes et al. 2002). Deforestation is the major factor behind habitat loss in Central America (Markussen 2003). While the mean deforestation rate in Guatemala is still high for Central America at 1.7% annually of the total country area (FAO 2001; Markussen 2003), the regional deforestation rate within the study area is believed to be lower and near zero (Markussen 2003; Voigt 2003).

The Resplendent Quetzal *Pharomachrus mocinno* is considered threatened (Stattersfield and Capper 2000; BirdLife International 2000, 2003; Solórzano et al. 2003), and as such it is a suitable focal species for conservation studies (Schulz and Menzel 2000; Fischer 2003). Powell and Bjork (1994, 1995) drew attention to movements and dispersal patterns of immature *P. mocinno* and concluded that park design must consider these movements. The impact of present land-use practices on *P. mocinno* and the importance of primary forest for future populations are described here.

Methods

The study area was located in the northernmost Guatemalan tropical montane cloud forests in the Sierra Yalijux (central Guatemala), which support c. 5,500 ha of primary cloud forest remnants above 1,800 m (Markussen 2003; Markussen and Renner 2004). A 102-ha study plot in Chelemhá (here referred to as Chelemhá Plot; Fig. 1), between 1,980 and 2,550 m altitude, was established (90°04′W, 15°23′N) in which primary forest and secondary forest each covered 50% of the total area. The plot-surrounding landscape matrix was comprised mainly of young secondary forest (2–4 years of age) and cornfields as well as 10 ha of old secondary forests (15 years). The young secondary forest was regularly slashed and burned for agriculture. Young secondary forest within the Chelemhá Plot has not been burned for

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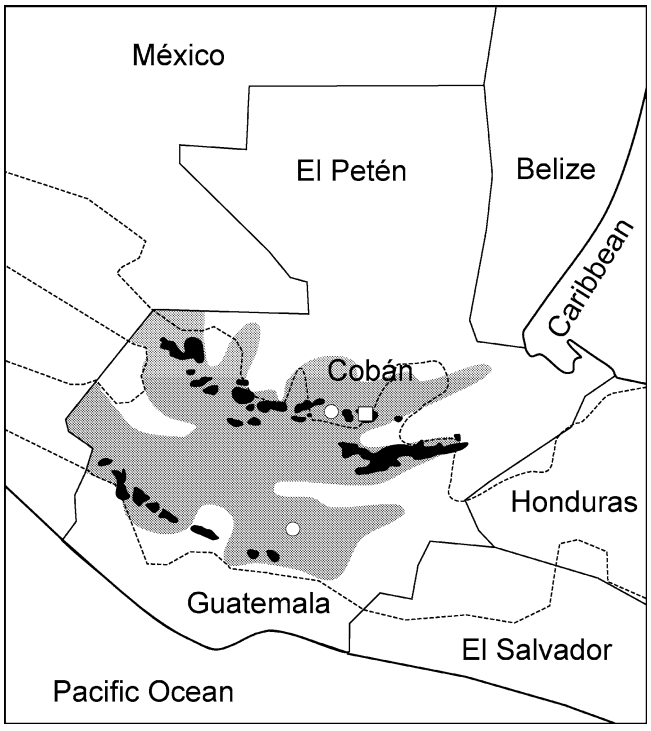

Fig. 1 Location of the Chelemhá Plot (□) and cloud forests (*black areas*) in Guatemala (Mühlenberg et al. 1989). The Endemic Bird Area 'Central American highlands' following Stattersfield et al. (1998) is indicated by - - -. *Light grey areas* represent 1,000 m above sea level

the 6 years preceding this study, and was able to support vegetation up to 10 m in height. The primary forests were not generally used by local people except for small timber and minimal subsistence hunting. Nevertheless, small pieces of primary forest are lost during the annual burning season in March and replaced with agriculture (Markussen and Renner 2004).

In 1988, Mühlenberg et al. (1989) conducted a study in the same region (community of Chelemhá, including the Chelemhá Plot) with standardized census techniques. They established a grid of point counts in a 150-ha plot and counted all audio/visual male quetzal records during the entire daylight period. Densities were calculated as individuals per 100 ha. Breeding holes, females and juveniles were also observed, but no results were presented.

Standardized censuses were conducted on each established transect (450 m per day between dawn and 0900 hours) during the breeding season of *P. mocinno,* 3 times in April, May, and June 2002. All *P. mocinno* individuals seen or heard along the total 3,150 m of transects were sexed and aged and their location and vertical position mapped within the Chelemhá Plot. The numbers of individuals per 100 ha were estimated for both sexes and breeding holes were located. Population size was estimated from the maximum number of observations of individuals per transect for all three repetitions.

Results

Population estimate for *P. mocinno* in the Chelemhá Plot

In 2002, 18 males and 4 females were recorded in the 102-ha plot (Table 1). It was presumed that fewer females were recorded due to reduced displaying and singing activity as compared to males. In addition, three juveniles were observed in the study plot at the end of the breeding season in September 2002.

Habitat use by *P. mocinno*

The Resplendent Quetzal generally uses all areas of the cloud forest regions with trees >5 m in height, i.e. also secondary vegetation. The Quetzal was not recorded in areas with vegetation <5 m in height, neither in primary forest nor in secondary forest. Males were observed in both primary forest and young secondary forest parts of the Chelemhá Plot, but almost twice as many records of individuals were from primary forest and the forest edge (26) while fewer were made in young secondary forest (14) for the same census effort (Table 1). Males were observed to move 300 m across pasture and partly agricultural land (corn fields, *Zea mays*) in two separate instances during the breeding season in April and May 2002.

Feeding of *P. mocinno*

Observed individuals ($n=4$ each habitat) collected fruits regardless of habitat within both habitat types of the Chelemhá Plot. The Resplendent Quetzal used both major habitats in the Sierra Yalijux for collecting food (compare for food quality and quantity in Wheelwright 1983; Avila et al. 1996). The quantity and quality of the food was not determined.

Reproduction of *P. mocinno*

The Resplendent Quetzal breeds exclusively in standing, dead trees (Renner, personal observation; LaBastille 1974; Unger 1988). These stumps are mainly remains of *Brosimum costaricanum* (Moraceae) (Fischer 2003). The Resplendent Quetzal uses them when the tree has been dead for several years and is almost completely rotten, but has not yet fallen over. One member of the pair excavates the nest hole, selecting tree remains at least >5.5 m in height (Unger 1988 gives a minimum of 3.0 m) and >0.6 m in diameter (Table 2). No woodpecker or allies were observed in the Sierra Yalijux region, large enough to pre-excavate a breeding hole of the size necessary for Resplendent Quetzal nests (Unger 1988; Mühlenberg et al. 1989; Eisermann 2000; Renner 2003) and no such observations were made in other

regions in Central America. Nesting holes are used several times in consecutive years until no longer suitable, for instance when the cover surrounding the tree stump is lost (compare also Unger 1988).

Three trees out of the total of eight with Resplendent Quetzal nesting holes examined in the Sierra Yalijux were observed in the Chelemhá Plot (Table 2). No potential tree with breeding holes was observed in young

Table 1 Census counts of Resplendent Quetzal *Pharomachrus mocinno* made in 2002. Listed are all records during the censuses, including incidental records

No.	Date	Time	Habitat	UTM (high)	UTM (right)	Age	Sex	Type
001	08.05.02	05:00	NF	815145	1702727	A	M	Regular
002	08.05.02	05:00	NF	815095	1702718	A	M	Regular
003	08.05.02	05:00	NF	815095	1702718	A	M	Regular
004	08.05.02	06:40	NF	814484	1702725	A	M	Regular
005	08.05.02	07:05	NF	814375	1702722	A	M	Regular
006	08.05.02	07:30	NF	814216	1702689	A	M	Regular
007	08.05.02	07:30	NF	814216	1702689	A	M	Regular
008	10.05.02	05:00	SF	815479	1703245	A	M	Regular
009	10.05.02	05:00	SF	815479	1703245	A	M	Regular
010	10.05.02	05:00	SF	815390	1703156	A	M	Regular
011	10.05.02	05:25	NF	815260	1703219	A	M	Regular
012	10.05.02	05:45	NF	815213	1703239	A	F	Regular
013	11.05.02	05:00	SF	815370	1703041	A	M	Regular
014	11.05.02	05:30	NF	815193	1702983	A	M	Regular
015	11.05.02	05:30	NF	815193	1702983	F	M	Regular
016	11.05.02	05:30	SF	815262	1702964	A	M	Regular
017	11.05.02	05:30	SF	815262	1702964	A	M	Regular
018	11.05.02	05:45	NF	815124	1703003	A	M	Regular
019	11.05.02	06:00	NF	815046	1702874	A	M	Regular
020	12.05.02	05:00	SF	815540	1702889	In	In	Regular
021	12.05.02	05:15	SF	815349	1702838	In	In	Regular
022	12.05.02	05:30	NF	815281	1702814	In	In	Regular
023	12.05.02	05:40	NF	815302	1702678	In	In	Regular
024	13.08.01	09:44	NF	815055	1702720	A	M	Incidental
025	14.05.02	05:00	NF	814179	1702679	A	M	Regular
026	14.05.02	05:40	NF	813957	1702980	A	M	Regular
027	14.05.02	05:55	NF	814059	1703430	A	M	Regular
028	14.05.02	06:15	NF	814041	1703413	A	M	Regular
029	15.03.02	-	SF	815351	1703147	A	M	Incidental
030	19.07.02	08:00	NF	814816	1702734	A	F	Incidental
031	20.03.02	07:00	NF	815134	1702706	A	M	Incidental
032	21.07.02	05:35	NF	815160	1703239	A	M	Regular
033	22.07.02	13:00	NF	815422	1702855	A	M	Incidental
034	22.07.02	13:00	NF	815422	1702855	A	F	Incidental
035	22.07.02	13:00	NF	815422	1702855	I	In	Incidental
036	22.07.02	13:00	NF	815422	1702855	I	In	Incidental
037	23.05.02	05:00	SF	815527	1702933	A	M	Incidental
038	23.05.02	05:10	SF	815251	1702626	A	M	Regular
039	23.05.02	05:25	SF	815176	1702561	A	M	Regular
040	23.08.01	10:50	NF	814744	1702685	A	F	Incidental
041	25.05.02	-	NF	815117	1703183	In	In	Incidental
042	26.05.02	05:50	SF	815422	1703288	A	M	Regular
043	27.05.02	-	NF	814213	1702707	In	In	Incidental
044	27.06.02	05:10	NF	814993	1702725	A	M	Regular
045	27.06.02	06:25	NF	814216	1702689	A	M	Regular
046	27.06.02	06:40	NF	814216	1702689	A	M	Regular
047	28.03.02	06:30	SF	815311	1702959	A	M	Regular
048	28.05.02	05:10	NF	815019	1702723	A	M	Regular
049	28.05.02	05:10	NF	814993	1702725	A	M	Regular
050	28.05.02	05:40	NF	814774	1702729	A	M	Regular
051	28.05.02	05:40	NF	814751	1702739	A	M	Regular
052	28.06.02	06:45	NF	815290	1702700	A	M	Regular
053	29.03.02	05:30	NF	815260	1703219	A	M	Regular
054	29.03.02	05:45	NF	815422	1702855	A	M	Regular
055	29.03.02	06:30	NF	815247	1702680	A	M	Regular
056	29.06.02	05:30	NF	815260	1702800	A	M	Regular
057	29.06.02	05:30	NF	815260	1702800	I	In	Regular
058	30.03.02	05:45	NF	815236	1703229	A	F	Regular

Abbreviations: *PF* primary montane cloud forest, *SF* secondary vegetation, *A* adult, *In* undetermined, *I* immature, *M* male, *F* female, *Regular* recorded during transect counts, *Incidental* outside the count census

Table 2 Dimensions of the breeding holes in tree stumps in the Sierra Yalijux. *DBH* Diameter at breast height, *PF* primary forest, *SF* secondary vegetation

Nest site	Tree species[a]	Estimated age (dead[b]) (years)	Tree height (m)	Tree DBH (m)	Nest hole height (m)	Habitat[c]	Nesting success
1[c]	*B. costaricanum*	350 (10)	9.0	1.3	4.5	NF	Observed
2[c]	*B. costaricanum*	300 (10)	6.0	2.4	4.0	NF	No save proof
3[c]	*B. costaricanum*	400 (10)	5.5	1.0	3.0	NF	No save proof
4	-	300 (20)	11.0	0.6	7.0	SF	-
5	-	350 (45)	6.0	0.8	4.5	SF	-
6	-	-	8.5	-	7.5	NF	-
7[d]	-	-	-	-	-	NF	-
8[d]	-	-	-	-	-	NF	-
Mean (± s.d.):		340 ± 41.3 (19 ± 15.1)	7.6 ± 2.2	1.2 ± 0.7	5.1 ± 1.8		

[a] Due to the dead nature of the trees, determination of species is difficult and mostly impossible
[b] Estimated years until died
[c] Within the borders of the Chelemhá Plot
[d] Not accessible, only observed from a distance of 75 m. 12 km W of the Chelemhá Plot in the western parts of the Sierra Yalijux

secondary forest of the Chelemhá Plot, but nearby one breeding hole was detected in young secondary forest approximately 20 m from the plot border (Fig. 2). While this nest is located in what is now young secondary forest, the tree itself is a remnant of the former primary forest. The surrounding area was deforested in the 1970s (Schumacher, personal communication).

Breeding success was observed in the primary forest part of the Chelemhá Plot during 2002, but not within young secondary forest. At least three juveniles were observed at three different locations in primary forest and assumed to be the offspring of three different breeding units.

Migration of *P. mocinno*

No individuals of the Resplendent Quetzal were observed from mid-August to October 2002 or in December 2001, while also visiting the Chelemhá Plot (Table 1). This possibly indicates migration of at least part of the population to lower elevations or other sites (compare Loiselle et al. 1989; Powell and Bjork 1994, 1995).

Discussion

The initial census in Chelemhá was conducted in 1988 (Mühlenberg et al. 1989) with comparable methods to this study and yielded a regional density of 15 males per 100 ha. The population size in both census years (1988, 2002) was almost the same (15 and 18 males respectively).

The maintenance of a successful Resplendent Quetzal population in the Sierra Yalijux requires three main factors operating on different timescales: (1) fruits for fledgling, (2) fruit availability during the post-breeding migration period, and (3) availability of trees for breeding holes.

Food quality and availability is regarded as essential for the survival of especially fledglings (Wheelwright 1983; Avila et al. 1996). This parameter applies mainly in the short-term, because young quetzals do not breed until 2 years after fledging, although long-term survival will also be affected particularly in small sub-populations (Unger 1988; Loiselle et al. 1989; Mühlenberg et al. 1989; Powell and Bjork 1994, 1995). Severe impacts on small regional populations can occur with a few con-

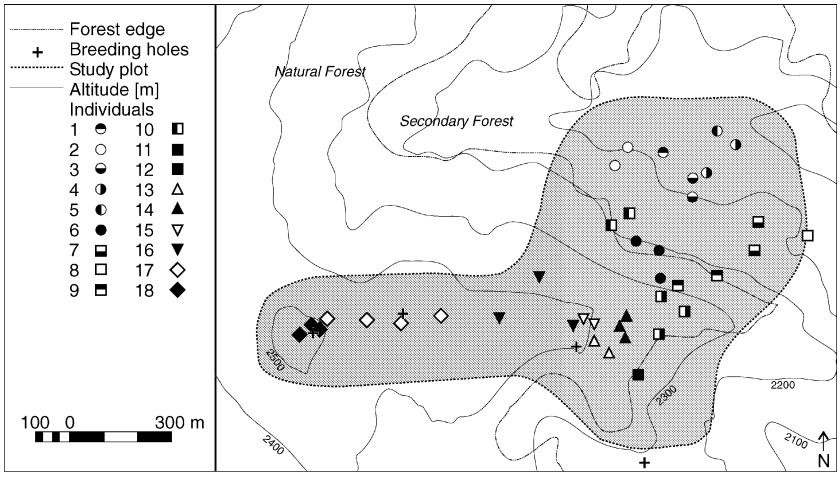

Fig. 2 Records and presumed individuals of *Pharomachrus mocinno* in the Chelemhá Plot in 2002 (*grey shaded area*)

secutive years of unsuccessful breeding due to essential fruit shortages (Wheelwright 1983; Avila et al. 1996).

Migration of immature and post-breeding adult individuals was reported frequently (Unger 1988; Loiselle et al. 1989; Mühlenberg et al. 1989; Powell and Bjork 1994, 1995), and my own data implies the absence of almost all quetzals during December 2001 (see Results). The migration to the Pacific and Caribbean lowlands needs to be carefully considered when creating reserves to protect the Resplendent Quetzal (Powell and Bjork 1994, 1995). This parameter works in a short-to-medium time scale on the Resplendent Quetzal populations because immature individuals especially migrate for more than 1 year (Powell and Bjork 1994, 1995) to the lowland forests before returning after 2–3 years to the highlands to breed (Unger 1988).

The availability of suitable breeding holes is essential for the long-term survival of the Resplendent Quetzal population in the Chelemhá Plot and the entire Sierra Yalijux. As indicated above, breeding holes are only excavated in tree stumps from primary cloud forest remnants. Quetzals can find suitable dead trees as remnants of primary forest in secondary vegetation, but only for the c. 25 years after deforestation, after which time these tree remnants will have decomposed to such an extent to be unsuitable for breeding holes. Consequently, with lack of primary forest as resource for new breeding stumps, the quetzal will have no chance to breed in secondary environments after this time delay. The critical point is that Quetzal populations do not accept or use other possibilities for breeding except for these tree stumps (LaBastille 1974). The introduction of artificial nest holes for the Quetzal was not successful, as although females generally accepted the artificial nest holes they did not breed successfully (LaBastille 1974).

The deforestation rate in Central America has remained almost constant during the last decade (FAO 2001; World Bank 2001) and is estimated to be a mean 1.7% for Guatemala (World Bank 2001). The outlook for the Resplendent Quetzal would be poor if this national deforestation rate was to extend to the primary cloud forest remnants of Guatemala. However, if the rate of habitat destruction in the Sierra Yalijux remains near zero (Markussen 2003; Voigt 2003; Markussen and Renner 2004), then the long-term survival of primary forests and therefore also of the Quetzal is more positive.

Zusammenfassung

Der Quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) in der Sierra Yalijux, Guatemala

Der Quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*), eine Art mit begrenzter Verbreitung, kommt von Chiapas (Mexico) bis Panama in Höhen über 1400 m üNN vor. Quetzals sind frugivor und nutzen eine Reihe von Avocadoähnlichen Früchten. Von IUCN und CITES wird *P. mocinno* in der Kategorie ''Lower Risk/Near Threatened Species'' bzw. im Appendix I aufgeführt, da die Art von weitgehend unberührten Nebelwäldern Mittelamerikas abhängig ist. Die charakteristischen Bruthöhlen des Quetzals sind nur in abgestorbenen, trotzdem noch aufrecht stehenden Totholzbäumen zu finden, die ausschließlich in Primärwäldern produziert werden können. Auch wenn diese abgestorbenen Brutbäume vorübergehend (bis zu ca. 25 Jahren) in Sekundärwaldbereichen und landwirtschaftlich genutzten Flächen als Überbleibsel von Primärwäldern vorkommen, ist die Quetzalpopulation aufgrund der Bruthöhlenwahl langfristig von Primärwäldern abhängig.

In 2002 wurde eine Population von *P. mocinno* in der nördlichsten Guatemaltekischen Gebirgszügen (Gemeinde Chelemhá, Sierra Yalijux, Alta Verapaz) untersucht und die erhaltenen Daten mit einer Studie von 1988 verglichen. Zwischen 1988 und 2002 hat sich die Zahl der männlichen Individuen nicht stark geändert: Eine geringfügige Zunahme von 15 auf 18 Individuen pro 100 ha wurde ermittelt. Das Brutverhalten des Quetzals ist direkt mit der Langzeitentwicklung und Existenz von Primärnebelwäldern verbunden, die zur Zeit noch im zentralen Hochland von Guatemala vorhanden sind. Im Jahre 2002 konnten junge Quetzals in der Region nachgewiesen werden, die mindestens bis Ende September überlebt haben und im Untersuchungsgebiet verweilten.

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