

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE PANIC OF THE *ROBANIÑOS*:
GRINGO ORGAN STEALERS, NARRATIVES OF MISTRUST, AND THE
GUATEMALAN POLITICAL IMAGINATION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

BY

DANIEL ROTHENBERG

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MARCH 2018

Copyright 2018 Daniel Rothenberg.

All rights reserved.

In honor of my father, Abraham Joseph Rothenberg, for the constancy and depth of his love, for all that he taught me, and for understanding what is most important about this and other work.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	vi
Acknowledgments.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
1. Outline of a Nationwide Panic	1
2. “It is Something Completely New”: The Importance of an Integrated Analysis of the Panic ..	10
3. Situating the Panic within Anthropology’s “Discovery” of Violence	20
4. Narratives of Revelation and Uncertainty	27
5. Narratives and Violence	32
6. Narratives of Mistrust	41
7. Study Methodology and Structure.....	55
Chapter 1 – Certitude and Verification: The Truth Claims of “Fantastic” Tales and the Narrative Expression of Uncertainty.....	58
1. “ <i>Es la pura verdad</i> ”: The Tales’ Binary Nature and the Challenges of Verification	58
2. Witchcraft Claims, Occult Economies, and the Power of the Fantastic to Make Sense of Contemporary Social Systems	70
3. How Fantastic Stories Work: Three Perspectives	81
4. Antecedents to the Panic: Guatemala’s International Adoption Industry	103
5. The Panic Starts: The Appearance of Tales of Organ-Stealing <i>Gringos</i>	121
Chapter 2 – The Panic of the <i>Robaniños</i> : Narrative Logic and the Legacy of State Terror in Guatemala.....	127
1. Simple Tales and the Legacy of State Terror	127
2. The Legacy of <i>La Violencia</i> and the Impact of State Terror on Representation.....	134
3. Tensions within Transition: Truth-telling and Accountability in the Period Preceding the Panic	148
4. Discovered and Mutilated Corpses: The Communicative Logic of Brutalized Bodies	158
5. What is Hidden and Revealed: The Narrative Logic of the Tales of the <i>Robaniños</i>	177
Chapter 3 – Riot in Santa Lucía: Guatemala’s Justice Crisis and Critique of the Country’s Democratic Transition	181

1. Popular Violence in Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa.....	181
2. The Riot as an Expression of Guatemala’s Justice Crisis	190
3. Questioning the Open Promises of Political Transition: Democracy as a Metanarrative.....	199
4. The Context of Mistrust and Social Uncertainty in Guatemala’s Justice Crisis.....	213
5. After the Riot: the Political Significance of an Expressly Apolitical Threat	220
Chapter 4 – Riot in San Cristóbal: The Signifying Power of <i>Gringo</i> and Other Bodies	226
1. Incident in San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz: Violence against <i>Gringo</i> Bodies.....	226
2. Another Riot: The Motivating Power of Bodies Present and Absent	236
3. <i>Gringo</i> Status and <i>Gringo</i> Bodies	252
4. <i>Gringo</i> /Non- <i>Gringo</i> : The Relative Value of Bodies.....	265
5. Children’s Bodies, the Truth of <i>Gringo</i> Intentions and the Compromised Body Politic.....	272
Chapter 5 – The Legacies of the Panic: The Logic of Narratives of Mistrust	285
1. Crisis and Dissolution: The Events of 1994 as a Moral Panic	285
2. Continued Stories: Attacks on <i>Gringos</i> and Generalized Threats	298
3. <i>Los Linchamientos</i> : Public Popular Violence against Criminals	306
4. The “Success” of the Panic of the <i>Robaniños</i> : Engaging Narrative Form and Narrative Operation.....	314
5. The Panic and the Idea of Spectacle	328
Conclusion – Narratives, Political Imagination and the Meaning of Guatemala’s Transition from “War” to “Peace”	335
Bibliography.....	349

List of Tables

Table 1 Overview of Approached to Fantastic Tales	102
Table 2 Communicative Logic of Brutalized Bodies	179
Table 3 Bodies Seen/Unseen and Local/Distant.....	249
Table 4 Narrative Form of the Tales of the Organ-Stealing <i>Gringos</i>	320
Table 5 Narrative Operation - Elements and Accountability in the Tales of the Organ-Stealing <i>Gringos</i>	324

Acknowledgments

This document is the result of years of research, thinking, and writing. To complete this project, I relied on the kindness, generosity, and patience of far too many people to mention. However, several individuals stand out. Very special thanks to my dissertation committee: Stephan Palmié, John L. Comaroff, and Judith B. Farquhar. They were exceptionally helpful in guiding my work, providing critical support, and displaying the very best of the field's vision and commitment. Over the years, I also worked closely with other University of Chicago faculty, including Albert Alschuler, Arjun Appadurai, Douglas Massey, and Marshall Sahlins. In addition, while they were not directly involved in this study, I have been fortunate to have several inspiring academic mentors, including Mary Gluck, Martha Nussbaum, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Robert Scholes. I owe a special debt to a number of friends who stood with me throughout this process including Nassim Assefi, Paul Berman, Alberto Coll, Laura Dickinson, Noah Feldman, Carolyn Frantz, David Gartner, Robert Kaestner, Julia Lieblich, Michael Hechter, Gabriel Rebeiz, Jim Silk, Paul Silverstein, and Neda Ulaby. In Guatemala, I worked closely with many people involved in civil society and human rights issues and am particularly grateful to Victoria Sanford and Amílcar Méndez and his family. This project has been guided by a sense of responsibility to those who spoke with me about their lives, detailing brutal acts of political violence and the crushing impact of poverty and lost dreams. There is no way to adequately acknowledge the value and significance of these encounters. I only hope that this work and related activities serve to honor their lives, concerns, and stories. I am deeply thankful for the support of my parents, of blessed memory, who stood with me at all times and taught me about the joy and importance of big ideas. A very special thanks to my brother, David, who has always been an inspiration, and also to his family. Finally, I am grateful beyond words for the love, care, insight, and unwavering support of my wife, Ilissa, and the always joyful presence of our son, Isaac.

Introduction

1. Outline of a Nationwide Panic

For a period of approximately four months in 1994, stories circulated throughout Guatemala that *gringos* (light-skinned foreigners) were abducting children, murdering them, and extracting their organs for sale, export, and use in transplant operations. The *gringos* and their assistants were known as *robaniños* (child stealers). They preyed upon the most vulnerable members of an already vulnerable group – the children of the poor – transforming them into life-saving commodities to benefit wealthy residents of distant places, revealing a brutal extractive process premised on the cruelty of profound disparities of power. The *robaniños* were said to earn extraordinary profits through this illicit trade and their operations were believed to rely upon the assistance of local agents and corrupt government officials.

The stories were macabre and overtly violent. They detailed the discovery of the bodies of mutilated children, missing organs, found by the side of the road or abandoned in garbage dumps or fields. The tales exhibited striking regularity and great consistency in tone, structure, imagery, and themes. They referenced the individual, visceral experiences of others, as those telling the tales were not directly involved, either as victims or witnesses.

The tales appeared daily on television, in newspapers, and on the radio, reaching virtually every community in the country. A story of the discovery of the organ-less corpse of a child in a rural *aldea* (village) in a remote region of the country would be reported by major media outlets in the capitol. A related tale from an urban *barrio* (neighborhood) would be similarly picked up, discussed in the media, and repeated in multiple reports. In this way, specific accounts referencing *robaniños* in one part of the

country gained broader significance as nearly identical accounts were reported from other sites. This produced a cascade effect through which local claims built upon each other. And, as the tales were told and re-told, reported and re-reported, a standardized narrative emerged that both captivated and enraged the public. The pace and circulation of the tales created a situation in which it appeared that the corpses of mutilated children were appearing everywhere in Guatemala and it seemed as if everyone knew of someone who knew of someone with a link to a case in which the predatory *gringos* had preyed upon a vulnerable child.

The tales of the *robaniños* motivated intense fear and concern, especially among the nation's majority poor. Parents refused to allow their children to go to school, sometimes keeping them locked inside their homes. Neighbors formed vigilante groups to protect their communities. Foreigners were viewed with enormous suspicion and were followed, taunted, and chased. The situation was widely described as a "hysteria," a "wave of fear," and a "panic."

In several communities, crowds rioted and attacked police officers, judges, and institutions of state authority that they believed were assisting or protecting the organ-stealing *gringos*. In Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, locals attacked a police station where officials were holding an American woman believed to be stealing children. Soon after, in San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, another police station was ransacked when a second female American tourist was held, also after being accused of being a *robaniño*. She was brutally beaten, raped, and left in a coma.

This event created a political crisis with international implications. However, the lack of evidence and the strange quality of the claims of *gringo* organ theft left many officials unclear of how to respond. Outrage by the U.S. embassy and the formal issuance of a Travel Warning significantly impacted the nation's large tourism industry and led to a focused response by the Guatemalan government and a number of civil society groups. These efforts included an intense campaign to quell the stories and assure the populace that there were, in fact, no organ-stealing *gringos*. Physicians groups

held press conferences clarifying the scientific impossibility of the stories. Government officials went on record explaining that the tales were false. These actions produced a shift in media reporting as well as increased Guatemalan state commitment to protect foreigners as well as preparations for new instances of popular, public violence.

Still, the stories continued to circulate. Several attacks against foreigners were barely averted and U.S. citizens and others (including many who lived and worked in Guatemala for years without incident) reported constant threats, insults, and harassment. Then, as suddenly as it appeared, the panic ended, disappearing quickly, leaving behind a complex legacy that continues to resonate within Guatemalan society.

Despite the intensity of the social unrest caused by these tales, there were no verified cases of organ-stealing *gringos*. No actual victims of these practices were ever found. Officials never uncovered any evidence of an international mafia involved in the abduction and murder of Guatemalan children whose organs were extracted for sale and export. As such, the authority of these tales – their ability to excite the imaginations of thousands and to motivate popular action – did not depend on their factual accuracy.

What, then, were these tales? How did they start and what sustained them? Why did brutal accounts of the abduction and murder of children for profit captivate the Guatemalan public and motivate an intense social panic? Given that the stories lacked factual veracity, why did people believe them with such intensity? How and why did these tales serve as the catalysts for attacks on institutions of state power, particularly when well-documented cases of actual state abuse – from institutionalized corruption to systematic atrocities – did not similarly motivate local residents to act? What does the panic tell us about the historical moment when it occurred, core cultural tensions within Guatemala, and the complex social and political environment of the time? More generally, what can we learn from

reflecting on the panic of the *robaniños* about the power of certain types of narratives to encode and express lived experience in particular and significant ways?

In this study, I seek to answer these questions by presenting the first ethnography of the Guatemalan panic of the *robaniños*, situating the phenomenon within the social, historical, and cultural context and connecting my analysis with key theoretical debates within anthropology. This study is based on over eighteen months of fieldwork: an initial six-week exploratory visit, a fifteen-month period of sustained field research, and two subsequent research trips. I use the data collected during this time to reconstruct what occurred during the nationwide panic and to read this material in relation to scholarly debates on the meaning and impact of violence, the capacity and operation of narratives to evoke and encode lived experience (especially within social contexts overdetermined by political discord and deep-rooted political uncertainty), and the intersection of theories of moral economy and the political imagination.

Guatemalans live within a social system defined by vicious inequality, deep-seated racism, a complexly resonant legacy of colonial and post-colonial oppression, and the legacy and lingering impact of decades of brutal state-sponsored terror. The panic of the *robaniños* occurred at a crucial moment in Guatemala's history when the internal armed conflict was coming to a negotiated end as guided, encouraged, and enabled by significant international pressure and assistance. Compared to many of the other shifts in Guatemalan society at the time – the rise of indigenous political movements, increased documentation of systematic human rights violations (such as torture, mass murder, rape and sexual violence, disappearances) and pressure for accountability, as well as various mechanisms to address inequality and poverty through programs to improve access to land, housing, healthcare, and education – the panic was, quite obviously, a relatively minor episode.

Yet, it is the position of this study that focusing on the specific, bounded, momentary crisis of the panic of the *robaniños* provides insight into core elements of the local political imagination and

enables a more subtle understanding of the complexity of lived experience in Guatemala under conditions of extraordinary stress, trauma, and uncertainty. In this way, the tales help us understand how people process the domain of the political, especially within circumstances where the open expression of ideas, opinions, and positions on questions of power is dangerous and potentially life-threatening. Analyzing the panic provides clarity on how extraordinary inequalities of power, systematic repression, racism, and complex legacies of structural violence impact local reality and come to define the possibilities of social expression.

Formally, the political and social shifts of Guatemala in the 1990s involved complex contestations about how to bring a decades-long internal armed conflict to an end. Woven into this process were intricate debates regarding the most effective means of creating structures, policies, and programs to reform virtually every governmental institution (armed forces, police, judiciary, congress, intelligence services, ministry of education, ministry of health, etc.) and nearly every area of state responsibility (economic policy, addressing illiteracy, school access and other educational issues, domestic security, human rights, health care, indigenous rights, etc.). While many ideas, plans, and proposals were presented, the discourse of these plans and the debates surrounding them were infused with grand promises and broad claims about the benefits that would accrue through the internationally mediated and internationally funded peace process and its associated mechanisms of post-conflict reconstruction.

However, as with so many political shifts of this type, the substance, impact, and meaning of these claims on the daily lives of many locals – those presented as the core beneficiaries of these changes – were difficult to assess. More to the point of this study, the legitimacy of these claims, promises, and visions for the future rested upon a generalized sense of trust in key actors – domestic and international – a lack of which was one of the characteristic elements of Guatemalan society at the time (and, arguably, to this day). In fact, when the panic of the *robaniños* occurred, the ideas evoked

and proclaimed by the government, various organized movements, international donors, and aid groups, were especially difficult for many Guatemalans to understand. The proposed changes were widely viewed with suspicion, especially among the more vulnerable members of society, long accustomed to being disregarded, disrespected, and victimized by the government and empowered social actors.

In this study, I argue that the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* are examples of what I term “narratives of mistrust,” modes of interpreting social reality through stories whose management of truth-claims and capacity to inspire action is the result of the stories’ particular ability to powerfully express the concerns, questions, and fears of those who tell them. Specifically, the panic of the *robaniños* evoked, encoded, and critically engaged two modes of violence – state terror and structural violence – which served as the interpretive corollaries and locally grounded critiques of the master narratives of democracy and development. Taken together, these represent the defining pillars of the formal policy and politics of Guatemala’s political transition of the 1990s. As narratives of mistrust, the tales expressed core elements of the political imagination of the country’s majority poor by expressing an alternate interpretive frame for processing official modes of defining the terms and conditions of a changing social reality.

In this study, I argue that the logic of tales’ modes of signification expressed an indirect critique of authority that expressed core elements of the Guatemalan political imagination at a specific, highly contested historical moment. I present a detailed, ethnographic analysis of the panic of the *robaniños* to demonstrate how narratives of mistrust elucidate the special social salience of certain types of stories within a cultural context overdetermined by violence and systematic oppression.

The foundation of this study, then, is the claim that understanding the panic of the *robaniños* requires engaging their specific elements of their narrative form and narrative operation. The overall argument is grounded in an inquiry into and explanation of the ways in which the stories functioned,

as narratives, as central to their critical ethical reflection on the conditions of Guatemalan social reality during the political transition. In 1994, the country faced an *apertura* (opening) in which an evolving discourse of truth-telling and accountability occurred within a traumatized society within which governance was associated with corruption and dysfunction. This created what I call a “justice crisis,” revealing a moment in which open communication could be tested to give voice to deep-rooted frustrations, resentments, and suffering, precisely as the possibilities of a new and more inclusive political order were evoked (albeit in differing ways) by multiple national and international actors. To do this, the study presents an ethnography of the panic of the *robaniños* that describes in detail what occurred, contextualizes the events, and critically interprets this material in relation to anthropological theory.

As this study will show, an ethnography of the panic of the *robaniños* reveals an understanding of what occurred and how the events elucidate core aspects of local social struggles and the Guatemalan political imagination that have not been discussed in the scholarly literature. Many of the particular issues raised in analyzing the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* and the resulting panic have relevance for understanding the nature of narrative – or, at least, certain types of narrative – and for making sense of key issues of meaning, agency, and expression within contested political environments.

The narratives exhibited a set of specific qualities essential to their motivating power and role in enabling a nationwide panic unlike anything that had previously occurred in Guatemala. The stories operated through a highly formulaic, repetitive, and simple set of core elements. They inspired binary assertions of their clear truth or obvious falsehood among locals. Those who circulated the tales exhibited a marked resistance to questions of verification or countervailing information. In this study, I document these issues and argue that they reveal that the stories’ authority was intimately bound to how these elements functioned within an indeterminate space of narrative uncertainty, linking a tale

of victimization with a core resistance to factual grounding. For those telling the tales, they could not be disproved because their very purpose and logic involved a process of voicing deeply held mistrust. Yet, central to this process is my analysis that the stories' structure and mode of signification – brief, imagistic, evasive – mirrored core elements of the lived experience of brutal political violence, exhibiting a narrative logic that expressed a particularly locally resonant tension between what was hidden and revealed. These aspects of the phenomenon illustrated the challenges of representation, truth-telling, and accountability in Guatemala as related to the legacy of state terror and the country's political transition at the time of the panic. In this way, the tales can be viewed as a form of “anti-politics,” engaging the political through a mode of expression that was difficult to openly repress because its claims and operation stood outside commonly understood mechanisms of politicized action.

Further analysis of the tales highlights the interplay and engagement of multiple bodies structured in relation to one another in a manner that captured and expressed key elements of the popular imagination, thereby underwriting the logic of these narratives of mistrust. The tales' engagement with bodies – the victimized dismembered child, the distant *gringo* beneficiaries, etc. – linked the complex semiotic power of specific bodies as bound to a general “social body” and “body politic.” The bond between the bodies referenced in the tales and the acts of public performative violence expressed through the panic resonate with the literature on the multiple meanings of bodies and understandings of how individual physical “bodies” exist in complex relationships with collectivities, identities, and values. In this way, the narrative operation of the panic was premised on overlapping understandings of multiple, entwined characters and their relative responsibility and potential accountability for the cruel dismemberment of poor children for profit.

I argue that the tales were successful because they engaged the tellers and the listeners through a process which required a common imagination of what was implied. The stories only “made sense”

when a generalized connection existed between those circulating the tales, such that they could “fill in” the missing pieces to enable narrative coherence. In this way, the panic rendered visible the semiotic logic of the stories, functioning as a type of spectacle which rendered open and public the moral critique of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*.

Fully engaging the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* and the resulting panic of the *robaniños* requires seeing beyond the stories as a mode of presenting information and considering the narrative form and operation discussed above with an awareness and acceptance that one of the key issues that drove these stories and captured the imagination of millions, was narrative pleasure. The tales were told, re-told, whispered, discussed, and commented upon with a level of common engagement because they produced and enabled pleasure. This study weaves all of these issues into a coherent whole as a means of exploring and explaining how a relatively specific and surprising moment in local history can be interpreted to reveal key elements of the Guatemalan political imagination while expressing aspects of the general significance of certain, to date inadequately analyzed, narrative forms.

My interpretation of the panic of the *robaniños* plays off of core elements of storytelling and politics (Arendt 1998) revealing the ways in which narratives are “a vital human strategy for sustaining a sense of agency in the face of disempowering circumstances” (Jackson 2006: 15). The stories played with “the exemplary and the extraordinary” (Gilsenan 1996: 58) allowing Guatemalans the possibility of expressing values and ideas that could not otherwise be voiced. The power of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* as narratives of mistrust, then, lay in the ways they focused a generalized sense of victimization and its associated anger and resentment into a concentrated story that voiced these experiences. It was this power – what it evoked and celebrated – that created the signifying space for the panic’s long term impact. For narratives of mistrust, the telling, re-telling, circulation, and reaction to specific stories define a commonality of experience, creating a community of the disempowered whose shared moral outrage is itself a core achievement of political imagination.

The narratively grounded panic of the *robaniños*, then, was a celebration of mistrust, linking the narrative pleasure of the outrage of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* with the transgressive public performance of spectacle. To be denied a voice, disempowered in interactions with the state, subjected to brutal political violence, and forced to endure humiliation, defined the lived experience of so many Guatemalans. Just as trust undergirds a variety of complex social relations, mistrust also operates to structure interrelated expectations, ideas, responses, and demands. Mistrust can be the source of pain and disempowerment, yet it is also the foundation for broad-based and unifying reactions, some of which allow for intense engagement and even a joyful embrace of the unifying power of living under difficult and abusive conditions. This is a core element of the logic of the tales and the resulting panic.

2. “It is Something Completely New”: The Importance of an Integrated Analysis of the Panic

The panic of the *robaniños* was commonly described by Guatemalans as unlike anything they had experienced before. While many of the informants I spoke with presented varied explanations regarding the meaning and significance of what occurred, almost all agreed that the panic itself was something “new” and “surprising.”

An important Catholic religious leader in the majority indigenous highlands explained:

Never before had I seen anything like it. I believe the hysteria began just this year. It is something *completely new*.¹

The governor of the department of Alta Verapaz told me:

I was really *surprised* by all this. I never thought that my people could act in this way. I never thought that such a thing could happen.²

A young mother – echoing the concerns and language of many female informants – explained:

¹ Interview with Monseñor Flores, Cobán, July 1994, emphasis by the author.

² Interview with Juan Villale, governor of Alta Verapaz. August 1994, emphasis by the author.

This is something new. Before, mothers were not so worried about their children. They used to leave them alone. Now, we keep them inside and walk them to school. There is less freedom.³

An American who lived in Guatemala for over forty years said:

There has never been anything like this before. Everyone believes the body-parts story. And now, things are completely different for foreigners here.⁴

Whether members of the country's elite, expatriates, professionals, *campesinos* (peasants), indigenous leaders, human rights advocates, aid workers, or government officials, I found widespread agreement that the heightened fear and public violence inspired by the tales were viewed as both significant and surprising. Over and over, people described the panic of the *robaniños* as an event that was different, distinct, and unlike anything the country had previously known.

Claims about the novelty of what occurred are interesting for two reasons. First, the tales of organ-stealing *gringos* that inspired the panic were not, in fact, new. Identical stories of *gringos* and their assistants abducting children to extract and sell their organs had circulated throughout the country (and in Latin America) for years. Second, while the violence depicted in the tales – the mutilation of children, the public display of corpses, a series of barbarous acts committed against innocents – might have seemed surreal, and unimaginable in other countries and social contexts, in Guatemala this imagery mirrored very real occurrences and was no more extreme or disturbing than what had occurred daily only a few years prior to the panic. That is, during the country's long internal armed conflict, state security forces and their agents committed tens of thousands of atrocities as brutal and disturbing as those depicted in the stories of the *robaniños*.

The tales of organ-stealing *gringos* have been documented in Guatemala since at least the late-1980s (USIA 1988, U.S. Department of State 1989). While it is impossible to determine their exact

³ Interview with young woman, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, July 1994, emphasis by the author.

⁴ Interview with Bob Rosenhouse, American businessman living in Guatemala City, July 1996, emphasis by the author.

origins, research on these stories reveals that they first appeared in the Guatemalan media as early as 1987.⁵ The first recorded mention I found was in a series of press reports collected by the U.S. government. The articles described how Guatemalan agents rescued fourteen infants who “were going to serve as ‘raw material’ for transplants for children of Americans.”⁶ And, the Guatemalan reports of organ-stealing *gringos* were identical to the tales that appeared a few weeks earlier in Honduras. These stories were picked up by wire services and reported across Latin America, playing a role in their widespread diffusion throughout the region.

Initial reporting in Guatemala led to a series of subsequent articles and editorials, some repeating the original claims and others recounting new incidents. As these stories circulated and public concern increased, the state responded. In 1988, foreigners were arrested for running a *casa de engorde* (fattening house) that allegedly held babies who were being exported to be killed for their organs. Newspaper accounts reported that:

the captured confessed that they were exporting babies to Israel and the United States of America where there were to be practically dissected in order to sell their organs, for the sum of 75,000 dollars each, to families needing transplants for their children with deficiencies.⁷

In these tales, the children of the poor provided literal salvation for foreign children, as organs extracted though their murder were used to offset “deficiencies.” In this way, the tales expressed a vicious mode of exchange in which the lives of poor children were exchanged for the health and future of distant, wealthy, and empowered children.

The tales of organ-stealing *gringos* in Central America resonated with concerns regarding the foreign adoption industry. In fact, for years Guatemala was a significant source of children adopted

⁵ While I often asked informants about their memories of the stories, none could recount exact cases of the tales of organ-stealing *gringos* any time before the mid-1980s. Typically, when people remembered these stories (other than those who studied them), they could not place them as bound within a specific time frame. However, that changed quite significantly as a result of the 1994 panic.

⁶ “Authorities rescued 14 infants,” *Prensa Libre*, February 5, 1987 (in English, as reported in Embassy cable, February 1987).

⁷ “A luz exportación de niños para ‘destace,’” *El Gráfico*, January 24, 1988.

by foreign parents, including many in the U.S. Often, babies and young children were held in private homes, known as *casas de cuna* (cradle houses), while awaiting transfer to foreign couples. The industry was premised on significant inequalities in the country – by gender, class, indigenous identity, etc. – in which poor (often indigenous Maya) women, sometimes the victims of rape or abandonment, were convinced, cajoled, and threatened to give up their children for adoption. At times, this process involved monetary payments, but often the exchange was premised on quality pre-natal care and the promise of a better life for the baby or young child. In Guatemala and other countries, then, the stories were clearly tied to very real concerns about a lucrative industry that exported babies and children from the poor to empowered *gringos*.

While the available record suggests that these stories first surfaced in Central America, there is no way to be certain as to where or when they originated. However, what is clear is that throughout the 1980s and well into the 1990s, tales of organ-stealing *gringos* were told and retold, considered, consumed, and circulated throughout the region. In fact, these stories were found in almost every country in Latin America as documented by extensive press reports. My research revealed that there have been allegations of the abduction and murder of children for organ trafficking in the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

Not only were the tales widely told and consistently reported by news media, but they often motivated significant political and policy responses. National and international non-governmental organizations investigated the tales and criticized the operation of networks of organ-stealing *gringos*. International entities such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, various United Nations bodies, and the European Parliament, formally expressed concern about the murder of Latin American children for their organs. The tales' claims were viewed as so significant that a specific prohibition on the practice of killing children for their organs was integrated into the defining

international instrument designed to define and prohibit human trafficking. In this way, the tales not only inflamed popular concern, but also stimulated significant interest, engagement and policy response by a variety of institutions charged with managing international development and protecting fundamental human rights.

In response to the proliferation of the tales of organ-stealing *gringos*, a small but significant literature emerged. Academics from various fields (as well as journalists, government officials, and political analysts) have presented a variety of interpretations as to their meaning of these tales. Some have understood them to be Cold War-era examples of communist propaganda (USIA 1988, U.S. Department of State 1989), an anachronistic retreat into the past based on the surfacing of “an irrational symbolic code, a dangerous translation of reality” (Rojas-Riachi 1989: 147), or an “alternative discourse to officialdom” in response to an “uneasiness” about foreign adoptions (Samper 2002). Others have focused on the tales as examples of an “urban legend,” expressing broad cultural anxieties (Brunvand 1981, 1984; Benett and Smith 1996; USIA 1994), viewed them as a specific, local appearance of a “universal tale” (Campion-Vincent 1990), or understood them as a “contemporary legend” which entwined and expressed multiple elements of popular social concern (Campion-Vincent 2005).

These interpretations have all presented the power of the tales as the signs of something else – as stories whose compelling quality and emotional impact was an expression of a fundamental untruth. That is, as nuanced and distinct as these analyses may have been in some respects (and they vary in rich description and analytic scope), they interpret the stories by explaining away their excess and “irrationality” in order to grasp their actual meaning. These analyses considered the stories as a social phenomenon largely disconnected from the context of their circulation and reception. Or, when they engaged local context, they did so with reference to a particular issue whose truthfulness, reality,

and certitude was widely accepted, such as well-known problems with international adoptions in Guatemala and throughout the region.

The majority of these analyses claimed that the stories served, in one way or another, as symbolic representations of a set of generalized fears. In this way, these approaches failed to adequately engage what I view as the significance of the tales, suggesting a process of manipulation, substitution or a certain universality of their signifying power. They present the tales as meaningful because of how they represent other things that are clearly and actually true. Yet, it is important to note that none of these interpretations have been based on detailed field research. They have generally engaged the phenomenon through reports on what occurred rather than by engaging directly with those who circulated the tales, believed them and, in the case of Guatemala, lived through the panic.

It is important to note that as shocking as the brutal acts depicted in the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* may have appeared, the violence they depicted was not at all fantastic within the context of Guatemala's tragic history. The use of brutal repression against innocents (including children and infants) was a characteristic element of Guatemala's political reality during its brutal thirty-six years of internal armed conflict, especially during its most intense periods in the later 1970s and early to mid-1980s. As detailed in multiple reports by human rights and civil society groups, and in two large-scale documentary projects – the Commission on Historical Clarification (CEH, or Guatemalan Truth Commission) and the Catholic Church's Recovery of Historical Memory project (REMHI) – Guatemalan security forces committed systematic torture, rape, murder, massacres, and disappearances. Some acts involved targeted repression against individuals believed to be threats to the state, whether members of the armed insurgency or participants in various non-violent movements linked to organized labor, student activism, indigenous rights, church-based programs, and community development. Others were broadly indiscriminate, such as massacres of entire villages. Many of these practices involved the mutilation of corpses and the public display of brutalized bodies, similar to the

imagery of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*. So, while the tales might seem impossibly brutal and unimaginably cruel those unaware or disengaged from the country's recent history (it was not until the 1990s that these acts were openly revealed and they were not discussed or acknowledged among many Guatemalans, especially elites, the well-educated, and those living in urban areas), the presentation of children's organ-less corpses in the tales was, in many ways, "unsurprising."

Perhaps for these reasons, anthropologists and other scholars with substantial experience working in Guatemala generally engaged the panic of the *robaniños* not by focusing not on the narratives, but on the acts of collective violence they inspired. They did not find the brutality of the stories' imagery to be unbelievable since they were well aware of the systematic use of torture, rape, killing, and various forms of cruelty and violence by the state. Much of the anthropological literature on the stories of organ-stealing *gringos* in Guatemala has sought to explain the attacks on institutions of state authority away from the responsibility of locals and towards some aspect of the country's nefarious and often secretive security structures. Part of what motivated this approach was the recognition by scholars working in the country that the panic of the *robaniños*, especially the acts of public violence, was something new and surprising and therefore in need of explanation. This is because after decades of brutal state repression and the creation of a complex and intricately domineering intelligence system, ordinary citizens were not known to form mobs and attack police officers or burn down state offices. Such acts were far too dangerous as actions far less aggressive would commonly lead to arrest by the authorities, detention and terrible abuses within a social context defined by near complete impunity for perpetrators.

With this in mind, anthropologists and others with years of fieldwork experience in the country, generally viewed these events as signs of manipulation, likely managed by the intelligence services. Victor Perera suggested that the panic "may be part of a right-wing strategy to create a climate of instability hostile to human rights monitors" (Perera 1995). Angelina Snodgrass Godoy supported

this idea, “there are indications that individuals linked to the armed forces may have concocted these incendiary rumors” (Snodgrass Godoy 2006: 4). These ideas were also picked up by journalists writing about the riots who reported on related claims by civil society groups, “human rights observers and Western diplomats suspect that right-wing elements in the military are behind the baby-parts stories,” yet acknowledging that “it is impossible to know what – or who – is behind them” (Booth, 1994).

When Diane Nelson, one of the most sophisticated anthropologists working in the country, heard about the attacks, she began speaking with her friends and fellow scholars. Within this group, she found a commonly-held interpretation that ordinary citizens – Maya and *ladino* villagers – would not engage in such cruel attacks on civilians; that they were surely victims rather than perpetrators. “We tended to agree that the Mayan villagers were not to blame – a view echoed by solidarity organizations and the progressive press” (Nelson 1999: 65). After all, the anthropological community working in the country had long defined itself through close relations to victimized populations who had suffered from profound economic inequality supported by state-sponsored violence.

For many, the idea that the panic of the *robaniños* was a right-wing plot was appealing in its explanatory coherence because it shifted responsibility for violence to the state which had a long history of brutal repression.⁸ This perspective supported an understandable desire among many scholars committed to solidarity with the marginalized poor to believe that ordinary Guatemalans would not act in such a vicious manner towards those who had not committed a crime nor engaged in any form of abuse. Furthermore, some anthropologists noted that the attacks on American women during the panic highlighted the gendered nature of what occurred (Adams 1998), while also touching

⁸ When I worked in Guatemala and colleagues from the expatriate human rights community learned that I had gained access to video footage of the incidents in Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa and San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, they were eager to view the material, certain that the tapes would reveal the presence of intelligence agents directing the violence.

on a fear among foreign anthropologists that they might now be the targets of violence, a disturbing thought after years of relative safety.

As with many interpretations of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*, this approach directed attention away from the panic and narrative logic of the tales and towards familiar modes of explaining a variety of politically resonant claims within Guatemala. After all, following decades of brutal repression, the infiltration of intelligence agents into communities and organizations, and the systematic manipulation of political activities, the idea that the panic of the *robaniños* was a sign of the hidden hands of power acting to create social chaos was not unreasonable. The claims were rooted in efforts to make sense of years of brutal state repression, U.S. government complicity in the country's counterinsurgency, and the operations of various domineering and predatory forces upon the lives of poor Guatemalans. So, this interpretation was neither absurd nor unreasonable given the widespread use of propaganda to question the motives and actions of those viewed as challenging the state.

However, the idea that the panic and its associated violence was largely a case of state manipulation failed to engage the reality of what occurred. The panic of the *robaniños* was experienced by people throughout the country as substantive and “unlike anything that had previously occurred” even before the acts of popular violence. That is, the resonance of the tales – along with the surprise and newness of what occurred – was rooted in the fears and concerns of many in a way that cannot be adequately explained solely through reference to state manipulation (even as there likely were supportive actions by state intelligence and other groups). The rise of the tales' salience and their role in catalyzing acts around the country is best explained as bound to a set of complex and deep-rooted elements of the country's political imagination, defining a core moment in the peace process and what followed. Furthermore, as this study will show, the panic represented the first of a series of hundreds of acts of public collective violence associated with the country's democratic transition that came to be known as *linchamientos* (lynchings), in which groups of ordinary Guatemalans attacked, beat, and

sometimes killed alleged criminals and burned down police stations and other institutions of state authority (Handy 2004; Mendoza 2003; MINUGUA 2001a, 2001b; Rothenberg 2009; Snodgrass Godoy 2006; Torres-Rivas 2003), processes which clearly cannot have been managed by state agents and others (even if some of these cases were, in fact, guided or influenced by these actors).

Interpretations of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* in Guatemala and elsewhere and efforts to make sense of 1994 panic tend to direct attention either towards the complex challenges of veracity and belief posed by the stories or towards the difficulties and concerns associated with understanding what motivated public acts of popular violence. I argue against this interpretive divide, suggesting that the phenomenon must be understood using an integrated analysis that identifies three distinct elements of the panic, yet reads these as part of a larger whole. The panic is best understood as involving: *the tales*, as a mode of expression whose power and appeal is bound to the specific, constrained narrative form and its constituent elements; *the widespread concern* the tales created as a broad social process expressive of deep-rooted mistrust and profound uncertainties about the nature of political authority; and *the acts of public violence* that highlight the motivational power of the tales, the fear they enabled, and the collective action that is complexly expressive of the political demands and needs of the disempowered.

Making sense of what occurred in Guatemala requires engaging these elements as jointly constitutive of the larger phenomenon of the panic of the *robaniños*. To do this, I interrogate the discursive production of meaning presented by the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*, the panic they produced, and the violence they inspired. Key to this process is an engagement with the complex connections, relations, and discontinuities that define the tales' local reception, repetition, and analysis. In giving voice to a set of concerns and fears that were widely shared, but also diffuse, uncertain, and potentially dangerous, the panic bridged gaps of understanding and experience that helped render sensible the complex relations the local and the national, both structuring and interpreting these links.

In many ways, the inadequacy of existing explanations of the panic of the *robaniños* is a function of the fact that, until this study, there have been no focused ethnographies on the subject. In her book *A Finger in the Wound*, Nelson references a piece I wrote shortly after the panic (Rothenberg 1994) stating, “I want to read the rumors as Daniel Rothenberg does . . . But, a great deal more must be said about the work of condensation in these rumors . . .” (Nelson 1999: 67) This study seeks to do this, to meet Nelson’s challenge and to expand on the way the tales engage in “condensation,” that is, gaining specific emotive power through marshaling imagery that captured the imaginations of Guatemalans in a way that sheds light on the complex and contested nature of their social reality. This process requires an integrated analysis of the panic of the *robaniños* as read through a number of overlapping anthropological theories.

3. Situating the Panic within Anthropology’s “Discovery” of Violence

The goal of this study is not simply to outline “what happened” during the panic of the *robaniños* – although I reconstruct a factually accurate account of key events – but rather to use a detailed ethnographic investigation to engage how these narratives provide insight into core social tensions within Guatemalan society and the ways in which these issues were processed and expressed on the ground. I argue that the panic of the *robaniños* is notable because of how the tales expressed a particular logic of signification that provided insight into the lived experience of Guatemalan social reality. To do this, I bind an analysis of “the politics of truth” (Briggs 2007b: 316) with “the politics of narration” (Feldman 1991: 12).

My work both builds on and diverges from the insights and analytic advances of recent anthropological literature, offering a new understanding of the operation of narratives of violence for expressing and managing lived experience while providing insight into the logic of the political imagination in Guatemala. Yet, this study proceeds with an understanding and sensitivity to the

difficulty of making sense of violence and even of defining it as a subject for critical inquiry. In one of the defining edited collections on the subject, Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois describe the problems associated with engaging the subject, “Violence is a slippery concept – nonlinear, productive, destructive, *and* reproductive” such that “in the end we cannot say that we ‘know’ exactly what violence is” (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004: 1-2). Veena Das, one of the more sensitive theorists on the issue and a scholar whose work helped guide the field towards more focused and contextually engaged analyses, echoes this problem by describing a “definitional vertigo” in making sense of the concept of violence and suggesting that “the ethnographic record shows the concept of violence to be extremely unstable” (Das 2008: 283).

Yet, while its definition may be elusive, violence is both a consistent element of human society and a defining feature of many of the most pressing issues. It is precisely the poignancy, immediacy, impact, and multi-faceted nature of violence – its interlinked demand for reaction and interpretation and the difficulty posed by its analysis – that I seek to unpack in making sense of its role and meaning within the panic of the *robaniños*.

Acts of violence, broadly understood, have long been part of the material gathered by anthropologists in the field. However, up until the 1960s, the discipline presented minimal theorizing of the meaning of violence outside of its role within ritual, as an element of the “anthropology of war,” or as ethnographic evidence of various mechanisms and processes whose operations produced and reproduced conditions of cultural stability.⁹ Anthropology’s lack of formal engagement with

⁹ Violence in anthropology was commonly discussed largely in relation to other concepts such as “war” (Ferguson 1984, 1990; Hass 1990 Reyna and Downs 1994) or “ritual” (Douglas 1966; Gluckman 1971; Hubert and Mauss 1964; Turner 1969), and in ways that resonated with a structural-functional understandings of society. Much of the earlier anthropological work referencing violence focused on small-scale social orders such as villages and collections of communities, as well as on pre-state or non-state systems. In general, the field did not overtly engage with broader global political perspectives on violence and political repression which later became central to the field and is discussed in detail here. In this way, engagements with violence often focused on particular communities or cultural groups identified as “violent”, such as the Yanomami described by Chagnon in the book, *Yanomamo: The fierce people* (Chagnon 1968) as well as

violence has been widely discussed (Nagengast 1994; Whitehead 2004) and is now an accepted aspect of the intellectual history of the field, with scholars largely agreeing that “there is rather little discussion of violence per se in anthropology” (McFarlane 1986:192) and describing the critical flaws inherent in decades of scholarship as “the embarrassed silence, in classic anthropology, vis-a-vis violence” (van Binsbergen 1996).

Then, from the mid-1980s onward, there was a profound disciplinary shift in the scope, complexity, regional diversity, and vision of anthropological analysis involving an explicit engagement with violence.¹⁰ As one scholar writing in the late 1990s observed:

if there is anything that seems to typify the current moment in anthropology . . . it is a significant interest in violence as both constituted by, and itself constituting, cultural and political processes” (Krohn-Hansen 1997: 233).

As the field “discovered” violence, the issue became a core focal point for multiple ethnographies and a set of complex and competing theories. Even a brief review of significant works in the field reveals a large and strikingly rich literature that serves as a theoretical foundation for this study (Aijmer and Abbink 2000; Aretxaga 1997, 2000, 2003; Argenti and Schramm 2012; Auyero, Bourgeois and Scheper-Hughes 2015; Benson 2008; Benson, Thomas and Fischer 2011; Besteman 1999; Briggs 2007;

warring Plains tribes such as the Kiowa (Mishkin 1940). These were sometimes compared to cultural groups identified as “peaceful”, such as the *!Kung* described by Marshall in *The Harmless People* (Marshall 1989) and the Inuit (Briggs 1970).

¹⁰ To a significant degree, anthropology’s focus on violence as a mode of social practice in need of detailed analysis is linked to the field’s engagement with state formation and the structures of global political reality from the 1970s, 1980s and on. This shift resonated with the field’s engagement with Marxist theory (Bloch 2010, Godelier 1973), world systems theory (Wallerstein 1974, 1984, 2004; Gunder Frank 1967, 1969, 1975, 1980), as well as reflections on global economic structures, colonial domination, and decolonization (Mintz 1985, Wolf 1969, 1982). While these scholars did not generally focus on violence per se, they stressed links between local reality and larger social, political, and economic systems within which violent practices operated as core components of repression, domination and control. Some have suggested that these shifts are connected to broad-based social reflections on the Vietnam conflict and a subsequent increasingly overt critical political engagement within the field. Others have suggested that this trend was bound to broad considerations within anthropology and other social sciences of core links between modern industrialized capitalism and war with an interest in detailing and criticizing a permanent arms economy (Mandel 1999) as well as emerging engagements with globalization and what has been termed a “twinning of economies and violences” (Lutz and Nonini 2000). From a different, though related perspective, the discipline’s post-structuralist move was also influential in questioning the solidity of the core concepts through which violence was previously understood and by which more focused analysis may well have been constrained.

Bourgois 1990, 1995; Carlsen 2011; Chaturvedi 2011; Daniel 1996; Farmer 2004; Falla 1994; Feldman 1991, 1995; Hinton 2002a, 2002b, 2005; Hoffman 2011; Mamdani 1996; Malkki 1995; Menjivar 2011; Nagengast 1994; Nelson 2015; Nordstrom 1997; Nordstrom and Martin 1992; Nordstrom and Robben 1995; Olujic 1995, 1998; Riches 1986; Robben 1995, 1996; Robben and Suárez-Orozco 2000; Schmidt and Schroder 2001; Sluka 1992, 2000; Stewart and Strathern 2002; Taussig 1987; Daniel 1996; Warren 1993, 2000).

The literature is so complex and contextually varied that the discovery of violence within anthropology stands as a sign of a number of broad disciplinary shifts occurring at around the same time. Yet, what motivated the evolution of this new critical interest in violence? One explanation is that the field was responding to substantive changes in the larger world. In a major edited volume on the subject, Whitehead writes, “The last decade has seen a frightening increase in the use of violence as a means of political and cultural assertion” (Whitehead 2004: 3), suggesting that an increased anthropological engagement with the term was necessary because of shifts in practices, often as linked to ethnic and other conflicts associated with post-colonialism and globalization. Das and Kleinman suggest that this shift is a response to developments in global social reality, “a new political geography of the world” related to the transformation of entire regions into “violence-prone areas” (Das and Kleinman 2000). In these places, violent practices represented “a new moment in history” that existed beyond prior classificatory systems where brutality was practiced among “social actors who lived in the same worlds and knew or thought they knew each other” (Das and Kleinman 2000: 1). This idea is echoed by Arjun Appadurai’s claim that violence at the end of the 20th century was not only on the rise, but reconfigured as an expression of shifting social forces and meanings, expressing:

[a] distorted relationship between daily face-to-face relations and the large-scale identities produced by modern nation-states and complicated by large-scale diasporas” (Appadurai 1996 154).

While the world is always changing and constantly presenting new and emerging forms of social practice, I am suspicious of the claim that recent social, economic, and cultural developments signify a substantive shift in the pervasiveness or significance of violence.¹¹ While modes of violence and the meanings of violence are bound to the particularities of historical moments and social structures (one of the core elements of this study), I believe that caution should be exercised in arguing for the radically distinct significance of violence in the 1990s and onward.

Instead, I suggest that the best way to understand the growing significance of violence within the field is as a useful corrective for other, more mechanistic, engagements with the management of power and the interpretation of the domain of the political. In particular, the field's engagement with violence openly addresses the complexity of state power and its limitations with a resulting engagement with questions of the fragmentary and shifting nature of cultural practices and the ways in which social order is complexly constructed and experienced.

Many definitions of violence bind the concept to acts of physical harm (Keane 1996; Ross 2004)¹² or outline typologies to clarify forms of violence in relation to distinctions of behavior, intent, and actors (Riches 1991; Tilly 2003)¹³ often suggesting a functionalist approach within which violence

¹¹ As regards reflections on violence, scholars often make excessive statements that, with the passage of time, reveal a problem born of reading too much into the analysis of a particular moment. For example, Desjarlais and Kleinman reflect on how the world faced a "new wave of violence" linked to the end of Cold War claiming, "In fact, most human rights abuses occur in places like Bosnia where there is no effective central government" (Desjarlais and Kleinman 1994: 10). As enticing and seductive as such claims may be, they are often painfully incorrect. For example, the same year as that statement was published, an authoritarian Rwandan government mobilized a genocide that killed an estimate 800,000 in three months by hand (Hatzfeld 2005; Gourevitch 1998; Straus 2006) in a brutal repressive process rarely linked to post-Cold War shifts in political power. Similarly, at the same time as this point was made, some of the most brutal of state-centric repressive regimes in recent history, such as Iraq under Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party and authoritarian North Korea, were engaged in modes of extraordinarily intrusive and brutal systematic governmental repression.

¹² See Daniel Ross in *Violent Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press. 2004: p. 3) who defines violence as an "action forceful enough to produce an effect . . . violence is something physical, something that affects things in the world" or John Keane in *Reflections on Violence* (London: Verso. 1996: p. 6) who writes that violence is "any uninvited but intentional or half intentional act of physically violating the body of a person who previously had lived 'in peace'."

¹³ Charles Tilly's *The Politics of Collective Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press. 2003, p. 13-16) outlines a typology of interpersonal violence that seeks to distinguish between elements of coordination and impact to identify which social processes lead to collective violence. They are: "violent rituals" (lynchings, public executions, gang rivalries); "coordinated destruction" (genocide, some types of terrorism, efforts to annihilate political opponents); "opportunism" (where there is an absence of external control, acts of looting, gang rape, piracy, pillage); "brawls" (one actor or small group engage in

is a means to achieve a set of distinct desired goals. Much of the important anthropological work on violence understands the concept in a far more open-ended and evocative manner, defining the term beyond a necessary grounding in the physical and in a clear relation between externally visible acts and their implications. That is, many of the more interesting anthropological perspectives on violence suggest that its operation and meaning are inherently complex and multi-vocal, “It can be everything and nothing . . . visible or invisible; necessary or useless; senseless and gratuitous or utterly rational and strategic” (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004: 2).

David Riches, one of the first anthropologists to devote considerable time to studying violence, defined violence as “physical hurt of contested legitimacy” (Riches 1991 292-5). That is, violence is not a concept which represents the exercise of force, but rather the exercise of force which involves physical harm in situations where there is a debate as to the legitimacy of the act and its implications. This idea is echoed in the work of Paul Hugger, who defines violence as “the conscious or unintended infliction of physical or mental harm, without social legitimation” (Hugger 1995: 22). And, related claims of the link between violence and illegitimacy are found in other fields as well, such as the philosopher Robert Paul Wolff’s definition of violence as “the illegitimate or unauthorized use of force to effect decisions against the will or desires of others” (Wolff 1969: 606). These claims suggest a fundamental connection between the concept of violence and established social norms, within which violence challenges authority and accepted modes of deploying power, “What constitutes violence is always mediated by an expressed or implicit dichotomy between legitimate/illegitimate, permissible or sanctioned acts” (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004: 2). Carolyn Nordstrom and

focused harm through rape, assault, etc.); “scattered attacks” (widespread but small scale acts like sabotage, arson, clandestine attacks, etc.); “broken negotiation” (acts that generate broad conflict and resistance such as violent demonstrations, coups, systematic state repression, etc.). Also, see David Riches, one of the first anthropologists to carefully study violence as a general social category, who outlines five types of violence in “Aggression, War, Violence: Space/Time and Paradigm” including “mental violence,” “symbolic violence,” “structural/institutional violence,” “ritual violence,” and “violence where the victim is not fully human.”

Joann Martin suggest that idea of violence operates much like the concept of “terrorism” in that “both are avoided by perpetrators and the state while being employed by victims who have suffered the consequences” (Nordstrom and Martin 1992: 7). In this way, the field’s engagement with violence reflects critically on broad questions of state power and the exercise of force since the “legitimacy” of violence has long been a core definitional element of the state (Weber 1946). Many forceful acts committed by the state would be considered “violence” if committed by forces outside of official power.

Documenting violence, then, is a process of revealing positionality and situation. Or as Strathern and Stewart claim, “violence pinpoints the differences between people’s perceptions of what is proper and appropriate in different contexts” (Strathern and Stewart 2002: 3). This suggests that the underlying meaning of violence as well as its usefulness for social and cultural analysis, lies in the way it reveals judgments of those involved in the acts. Yet, the relational process is multi-varied and multi-directional. That is, where acts appear as “violence” they suggest some element of the illegitimate and in so doing mark a position of the party making this claim.

In this way, this study builds on these two interrelated insights: first, violence as a concept that reflects on the legitimate and illegitimate exercise of power, with a direct relationship to the solidity of governance and the sense in which people can trust those wielding formal authority; and second, violence as a process and practice through which perceptions and positionality are revealed and enacted. The violence of the panic of the *robaniños* – both the narrative presentation of violence and the commission of violent acts – are best understood as situations involving contestations of legitimacy in which the claims made by the tales and the larger response define core relations of social position. The authority of the tales both embodies and expresses these relations. In addition, the specific imagery of the tales (which resonated powerfully with a long history of acts of state terror)

and their narrative logic reflect on multiple forms of experienced violence, while also displaying the mechanisms through which claims of violence speak for contested positions that are politically salient.

In this study, I seek to contribute to Veena Das' interest in exploring "what kind of work anthropology does in shaping the object we have come to call violence" (Das 2007: 7). Not only is the development and expansion of anthropological thinking on violence essential to this research, but the study seeks to contribute to the field's potential to provide substantive insight into the complex ways in which violence operates. In this way, the focus of this study on "narratives of mistrust" engages larger question of how stories define, interpret, process, and inspire violence.

4. Narratives of Revelation and Uncertainty

In the simplest sense, a narrative is a story. The term is based on the Latin verb *narrare* which means "to recount" and is also related to the Latin adjective *gnarus* meaning "knowing" or "skilled" (Oxford English Dictionary 2007). The term is expansive and plays a core structuring role in multiple aspects of existence. "We dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative" (Hardy 1968: 5). Humans have been viewed as "the storytelling animal" (Gottschall 2012), and narrative is ubiquitous within their social practice; it may be understood as "a metacode, a human universal" (White 1981: 2). While stories have long been the subject of reflection, consideration, analysis, and practice, the field of "narrative studies" or "narratology" is relatively new (Abbott 2008; Bal 1985; Genette 1980; Ricoer 1984; Todorov 1969). It was born of the linkage between philosophy and linguistics that became semiotics (Barthes 1967, 1987; Chandler 2007; Eco 1976, 1986), and the rise of efforts to understand the ways in which social reality is constructed and lived. In fact, the contemporary engagement with narrative is rooted in a certain self-consciousness and awareness about

the ways in which stories make and re-make the real, a sensibility that is infused with an understanding that the narrative nature of social practice is somehow suspect. As Hayden White writes:

To raise the question of the nature of narrative is to invite reflection on the very nature of culture and, possibly, even on the nature of humanity itself. So natural is the impulse to narrate, so inevitable is the form of narrative for any report of the way things really happened, that narrativity could appear problematical only in a culture in which it was absent – absent or, as in some domains of contemporary Western intellectual and artistic culture, programmatically refused. (White 1981: 1).

So, even as narrative lies at the very heart of social practice, the centrality of stories for formal self-conscious critique is the result of an uncertainty regarding the solidity of the narrative form and the core problems it presents with truth and veracity. In many ways, this perspective resonates with larger debates regarding modernity's operation as involving a "disenchantment" of the world. Yet, as Gilsenan nicely explains, "There is too much magic and enchantment in the world to be ignored" (Gilsenan 2000: 599). Yet, what is sometimes lost in these discussions is the value of the operation of narrative – its creative power and status as a mechanism for establishing the ground for human experience – in revealing the complexity of modernity's own enchantments.

Narrative is generally described as diegetic; that is, it presents information that evolves over time, involving "the recounting of a series of temporal events so that a meaningful sequence is portrayed" (Kerby 1991: 39). Yet, diegetic presentation of information alone does not enable a narrative since the term envisions a level of coherence and sensibility among those for whom it has value. The form of a narrative, then, is inadequate for explaining its significance, which involves not only the presentation of information but a process through which a story binds together participants – a link between a narrator (or narrators) and an audience. In this way, narrative has a "fundamentally transactional nature" (Leitch 1986: 25). So, the concept of narrative involves a minimal set of qualities – sequence and communication – which distinguish it from other presentations of information and provide the key for explaining its power and significance.

The value of narrative studies for anthropological inquiry is born not of these minimal elements, but through an engagement with the field's insights on how stories operate within complex social contexts to define truth-claims, elucidate cultural positions, and produce and reproduce social relations. For some phenomenon, such as the panic of the *robaniños*, narrative studies provides a theoretical foundation for explaining phenomenon which deepens anthropological engagement. What is central here, then, is not just the narrative form per se, but an inquiry into how certain stories capture people's attention, binding tellers and listeners. As Frank Kermode explains, successful narrative is "the product of two intertwined processes," one of presentation and the other of progressive interpretation in which "the first tends toward clarity and propriety, the second towards secrecy, toward distortions which cover secrets" (Kermode 1985: 136). The appeal of narrative, and the foundation for its power, lies in the link between its structure, which weaves information into stories that lend coherence to claims, and its mode of telling, which involves revelation, uncertainty, expectation, and the emotional power of the communicative exchange. It is this structure that provides the ground for the motivational power of narrative as well as its pleasure, a concept whose significance is essential to understanding the power of narrative and the relation between stories and heightened emotional engagement (as seen in panics, riots, and multiple forms of collective action).

The power of narrative has everything to do with the intricate ways in which the presentation of information and the forging of truth-claims are bound to *revelation* and *uncertainty*. This aspect of narrative highlights how and why a specific social environment "requires and rewards narrativity" (Scholes 1982: 62). That is narratives demand an active engagement in the process of evoking and managing meaning through an ongoing exchange involving the teller and the audience. Storytelling, reception, comprehension, and reflection are best viewed as unified elements of a larger process. This is the reason not all diegetic presentations of information meet the basic conditions of "sequence and communication" that defines narrative. And, this is why only some narratives are successful at

engaging communities within a given social context. Furthermore, this is the reason that narratives which are powerful within one cultural environment often garner limited interest or even fail to function in the most basic communicative sense when transferred to a different cultural environment.

So, in theory, while any set of diegetic data presented in a basic communicative format (shared language, etc.) could constitute a narrative, many such constructions cannot operate as narratives in any serious way. “Any utterance is potentially a tellable story, but its narrative potential is released only when a storyteller invites an audience to supply details necessary to establish the story as coherent and tellable” (Scholes 1982: 40). Narrative theory helps define how the motivating power of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* rests on their ability to encode information and stimulate emotions in a manner that is engaging for those who tell these tales, receive them, and re-tell them.

These ideas resonate with important anthropological work on the central role of narratives, whether conceived of as myth (Leach 1969; Levi-Strauss 1962), regarded as a way to combat reductionism (Fernandez 1985), or seen as a method of highlighting the importance of performance and speaking (Bauman and Sherzer 1975; Bauman 1975, 1988). Generally, narrativity is understood to be essential to ethnography and fieldwork-based methodology even where the specifics of what this means are not specifically theorized. Still, anthropology embraces narratives and ethnography is commonly conceptualized as a narratively engaged encounter. “Anthropology is about telling others’ stories, but it is also about listening to others’ stories” (Angel-Ajani 2004: 226). Within the field, there is a significant literature which informs this work by reflecting on how storytelling helps construct and negotiate identity (Herzfeld 1985; Myerhoff 1978), reveals elements of moral positioning (Basso 1970), and explains the complexity of oral performance (Bauman 1988 2002; Bauman and Briggs 1990; Finnegan 1977).

Anthropology has made substantive contributions to the exploration of how narrative is related to social function and positioning, despite the fact that the field often does not formally engage

narrative theory. Sometimes this is because narratives are so central to ethnography that the complexity of the narrative form and the particulars of narrative expression are either assumed or set aside in order to engage the subject of a specific study. Furthermore, a significant amount of narrative theory tends towards formalism and focuses analytic attention away from issues of context and social embeddedness, such that the potential value and insights of these works are not referenced by ethnographers. That said, this study understands narrative as a process that engages, first and foremost, conditions of communication among social actors; one proof of something that is “non-narrative” is found where an utterance cannot effectively communicate (as seen in jokes and stories which lose intelligibility when lifted from one cultural context to another). In this way, studying specific narrative phenomenon demands a consideration of what social elements enable effective communication, especially where stories reveal or create communities of understanding, as in the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*. This point illustrates an issue raised by Hannah Arendt, who described narrative communication as involving “the subjective in-between” (Arendt 1958: 182). This term is defined as an element of social practice within which individual and group interests are multiply represented, competing at times, yet unified through the understanding and communicative nature of storytelling. It is within this space that the social power of stories appears. As Walter Benjamin wrote:

The storyteller takes what he tells from experience – his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale” (Benjamin 2007: 87).

The power of narrative – and the power of the tales as narratives of mistrust – lies in how the stories’ circulation binds people together, creating a community of similar understanding and the common lived experience of violence, through voicing of deeply held fears and uncertainties in new and resonant ways.

5. Narratives and Violence

These insights – the structure of narrative, its reliance on an essential tension of clarity and uncertainty, and its operation as a socially embedded process whose coherence is bound to the relationship between the teller and the audience – provide a theoretical foundation for interrogating the narrative production of meaning of the panic of the *robaniños*. Yet, to do this, it is important to situate this study specifically within the anthropological literature on narrative and violence, a relatively diverse and expansive literature.

Rather than review the full collection of relevant ethnographies, I outline four interpretive trends within anthropology as regards the relationship between narrative and violence. These approaches include: first, an understanding of narratives of specific acts of violence as a creative response to the experience of trauma, displaying the power of stories to provide coherence and interpretive solidity within conditions of chaos and disorder; second, an engagement with narrative as bound to performance and the poetics of storytelling within which violence operates as a signifier for multiple issues, reflecting not on the violence itself, but rather serving to establish hierarchies and other forms of social relations; third, the role of narratives of violence as foundational mechanisms for establishing broad elements of social identity, often in relation to historical events and the idea of historical memory; and fourth, work that highlights the impossibility and/or risks of representing violence and the inherent flaws of attempts at narrating violence. While these theoretical engagements are varied and complex, they each take on the fundamental question of how narratives serve to represent violence and each suggest a different set of core tensions about storytelling and the social process of representation.

A significant body of anthropological research on violence – whether state-sponsored terror, the ravages of war, sexual violence, or crime – are rendered sensible through narratives that explain, interpret, give meaning, and otherwise process the lived experience of trauma. The approaches taken

here are distinct and reference diverse fieldwork sites and situations, yet they are unified in drawing attention to the special explanatory value of the narrative form as a mechanism of enabling order and producing a context-specific analysis necessary for managing daily life. In researching the urban violence and the social impact of crime in Brazil, Teresa Caldeira shows how narratives are used to symbolically restructure the chaos and suffering of ongoing victimization “by trying to reestablish a strategic picture of the world” (Caldeira 2000: 20). She explains that narratives play a special role in creating order within contexts of disorder and suffering. Caldeira views the process as both fundamentally creative and bound to the everyday. She explains, “The talk of crime . . . is contagious. Once one case is described, many others are likely to follow” (Caldeira 2000: 19), leading to the creation of a set of reinforcing claims as processed through narrative. She remarks that despite the high level of repetition and similarity of stories, their circulation does not produce exhaustion but rather heightens interest and emotional intensity. Perhaps the most interesting of her findings is that widely told stories serve to manage the experience of danger even as they produce a sense of commonality and with it a mode of order. “Thus the talk of crime feeds a circle in which fear is both dealt with and reproduced, and violence is both counteracted and magnified” (Caldeira 2000: 19). This approach is helpful for making sense of the panic of the *robaniños* because it helps explain the ways in which these tales gain power and authority as they are repeated and discussed. That is, their structural similarity and the constancy of their simple imagery serve to reinforce the social logic of their representation of deep-rooted fears and uncertainties. Their telling and retelling “feeds a circle,” serving to inflame popular sentiment and enable public violence.

In his influential research on political repression in Northern Ireland, Allen Feldman engages the role of narrative in mediating the intersection of social space and bodily space through a mechanism that he views as defining a core element of terror. He argues that violence forces a reconstruction and reconstitution of social relations by “making power tangible as a material force”

(Feldman 1991: 2), which is then interpreted and rendered sensible through narrative. To make this point, he argues that violence impacts the domain of the political as a core practice which alters affected subjects who process these experiences through stories in what he terms “the politics of narration” (Feldman 1991: 12). In this way, stories and storytelling become a core mode of defining politics and gauging its operation. For Feldman, violence is a complex process bound essentially to narrative; a contextually grounded set of ideas and practices that undermine, remake, and problematize social concepts and categories such as class, ethnic identity, and ideology. Feldman shows how narrative provides an essential creative response to trauma and serves as a necessary means of reflecting upon the ravages of systematic political repression. Interestingly, Feldman suggests the ordering power of narratives is so essential to understanding the experience of violence, that he argues that the very reality of political violence can only be understood by engaging the tales told about what occurred. “*The event is not what happens. The event is that which can be narrated*” (Feldman 1991: 14, italics in the original). In fact, as this study argues, the power of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* issues from their status as narrative, not from the “events” described. Yet, the processing of violence and trauma through narrative is substantively less direct in the case of the panic than in Feldman’s analysis. That is, the tales of the *robaniños* represent a distinct type of storytelling – a narrative of mistrust – with its own signifying power and value.

While Caldeira and Feldman differ greatly in their approaches, both are concerned with how the ordering power of narrative defines and expresses agency. They see the stories told about violence as a means through which populations render sensible what they have lived through, producing ordered understandings and enabling the representation of lived experience. This, then, serves as a process which holds within it the possibility of empowerment. A related position is found in the Charles Briggs’ investigation of stories of infanticide among indigenous people in Venezuela, although his focus on contested narrative visions further solidifies the more general claim about the ordering

powers of narrative and its political nature. He reviews how indigenous women use narratives to challenge positions imposed upon them by dominant forces (elites, the medical establishment, development NGOs, etc.), such that they stand in opposition to “the politics of truth embraced by the state and activists alike” (Briggs 2007(b): 316). This point is especially relevant because it shows how narratives play a central role in defining claims of authority by distinct social forces, suggesting a competing set of actors whose positions are commonly bound to narratively-based claims. This work builds on Briggs’ interest in revealing

how the politics of truth of narratives about violence are shaped by how stories construct themselves as epistemological objects through projections of their own making, dissemination, and reception” (Briggs 2007(b): 325).

While I try to avoid the seduction of seeing how “stories construct themselves” – viewing tales as social actors – I wholly agree with Briggs’ idea that certain types of competing truth-claims about violence can only be adequately grasped by understanding the fundamentally creative power of narrative.

Caldeira, Feldman, and Briggs all highlight the core, constructive role of narrative in managing the lived experience of trauma. They suggest that stories are necessary for enabling processes of individual, communal, and societal ordering in the aftermath of brutality and overwhelming suffering. Because violence impacts the lives of victims so directly (and all three base their field research on victimized populations), they define a core space of contestation within which the process of representation brings order to the chaos, disorder, and destruction produced by violence. The diversity of narrative forms documented and analyzed by these scholars is also significant, with Caldeira interested in the broadest description of narration (“talk” about crime), Feldman focusing on personal narratives (oral histories of insurgency and counter-insurgency), and Briggs considering narration in a general sense of social positioning related to a set of highly specific and dangerous claims (accusations of responsibility for infanticide). While these modes of narration are similar enough to be grouped

together to identify the ordering powers of stories and associated claims of agency, the diversity of the narrative forms reviewed suggests anthropology's open-ended engagement with the concept of narrative in relation to violence and trauma. In this sense, there is a certain lack of the adequate definitional rigor as to what narratives are for the approaches demonstrated by these scholars to be effectively applied to the specific operations of the tales that motivated the panic of the *robaniños*.

A second approach engages the poetics and performance of narratives of violence and their value in defining multiple forms of relations through socially embedded processes of storytelling. Here, narrative is viewed as similarly creative in terms of its capacity to interpret violence as a powerful element for structuring societal relations through storytelling. One of the more complex and sensitive scholars working in this area is Michael Gilson, who analyzes how men create relationships among themselves through narratives of violence, including stories of past events that construct core identities of self and other (Gilson 1996). This work highlights the aesthetics of rhetoric, suggesting that the mode of presenting stories stands as an essential means of defining social order, often in an intimate manner whose narrative grounding demands highly nuanced interpretation. It is not simply that narratives provide order within contexts of uncertainty and disorder, but that aestheticized performance elucidates complex social truths. Narratives of violence, then, are not representations of the truth of experience as a direct response to the impact of trauma (such as talk that responds to the chaos of rampant criminality to enable order and coherence), but rather are evocative modes of communication within which social actors are bound to one another through interpretive codes that are constitutive of identity and community:

The rhetoric that life was a tissue of calculated performance, aesthetic elaboration of form, artifice, and downright lies behind which one had to look for true interests and aims of others was common to all. In this sense a violence that was not physical coercion but was of a more diffuse kind and integral to accounts of human relations was common to all (Gilson 1996: 64).

In the context of Gilsenan's research, stories of violence are inseparable from their telling. The role of narrative is one of performance in which the representational value of the story must be understood as thickly woven into social practice. The tales in Gilsenan's studies are told with a self-awareness of the storytelling process, so that the narrative representation itself is about forging and maintaining relations. This is worth reading in relation to Renato Rosaldo's analysis of the stories that Ilongot men tell about the violent acts of hunting and how they operate to define the experience and its larger cultural meaning, "in this respect the story informs the experience of hunting at least as much as the reverse" (Rosaldo 1980a: 134).

This approach to narrative links with a substantial literature on "verbal art as performance" (Bauman 1974; Bauman and Sherzer 1975), and the "poetics and performance" (Briggs 1986; Bauman and Briggs 1990), which focuses on how narration (not only of violence) provides a frame for establishing claims and enabling communication. The work of E. Valentine Daniel is also of interest, particularly his understanding of the ways in which acts of collective violence reveal a dissonance between different discursive practices (Daniel 1996). In his work on the civil conflict in Sri Lanka, he found that making sense of certain cases of violence, both the acts as they occur and their social meaning afterwards, requires engaging the tension between modes of "being in the world" and "seeing the world" (Daniel 1996: 50). This tension produces narratives that both support and undermine a "master narrative." His work is bound to Peircian semiotics and grounded in an engagement with the aesthetics of narration (in the sense of producing interpretive claims of a certain type).

These scholars provide an important corrective for those who seek to interpret stories as disconnected not only from context, but from their circulation through specific processes of telling. While this study does not engage as directly with the performance of these tales as I would have liked (they were only "performed" for me within the context of formal research as I was not present for the actual panic), this ethnographic approach highlights the significance of the aesthetic quality of the

tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* as a key element of their interpretive power. They are not tales about violence that occurred, but rather tales of violence whose primary representational significance lies in their telling, their circulation, and the almost ritualistic manner through which their documentation of events speaks of other, more severe, modes of violence.

A third approach to the relationship between narratives and violence is seen in the way foundational stories play a key role in defining social identity. Lisa Malkki's work among Hutu refugees provides a powerful example of this form of analysis. She engages how narratives about remembered violence shape understandings of identity and history through processes of "making and unmaking categorical identities and moral communities" (Malkki 1995: 17). She explores the ways in which narratives are structured to create a "mythico-history" that establishes matter-of-fact claims about individual and group consciousness. These ideas are nurtured and enabled through stories which are both overtly political and naturalized as a foundational set of assumptions upon which social life is constructed. Her work was conducted almost a decade before the Rwandan genocide of 1994, one of the defining cases of atrocity in the late 20th century. Malkki's work provides a pre-genocide critique of non-contextual claims about ancient tribal rivalries and illustrates why anthropology's acceptance of the complexity of political violence and terror enables a much-needed corrective to the simple descriptions and clear policy proscription that dominate much of the discourse on human rights.

A related approach, though distinct in its argument, is seen in Eric Mueggler's work, *The Age of Wild Ghosts*, in which he seeks to understand how stories of past political violence are processed through "a more familiar vocabulary" (Mueggler 2001: 7), involving the relationship between the living and those who have passed, read as "a narrative of a tortured relationship between a wounded community and an imagined state" (Mueggler 2001: 8). My work echoes Mueggler's claims that stories are "an alternative kind of doing" that present particular creative and interpretive responses, often because their representation of actual atrocities is indirect. Within many social contexts – China under

authoritarian rule and Guatemala in a complex post-war context – the open evocation of state terror is dangerous, difficult, and political, even as the impact of severe violence extends far beyond ordinary understandings of politics. I view the panic of the *robaniños* as linked to Mueggler’s interpretation of the tales he studies as “creating collective ethical responses to past violence and its inevitable returns to the present and the future” (Mueggler 2001: 9). In this study, I take inspiration from Mueggler’s approach – respectful, inquiring, sensitive, yet aware of the difficulty of understanding trauma – to understanding how narratives of violence provide insight into core questions of the lived experience of atrocities. My work echoes his questions, as related to a very different context, as he writes, “How do people inhabit worlds fissured by violence and loss? This question is elusive in its every aspect. How do we represent another’s pain and with what methods might we seek its meanings?” (Mueggler 2001: 23).

A fourth approach to how narratives of violence operate involves claims that the subject matter itself makes the referential demand of storytelling impossibly flawed. This is seen in Carolyn Nordstrom’s extensive and insightful work on war zones and the ethnographic challenges of researching trauma and the impact of systematic violence. Nordstrom works extensively with first-person narratives of violence and celebrates the truth value of experiential claims as well as the creative potential underlying focused research among victims. However, her work in war zones also left her with a profound concern for the ways in which narrative “domesticates experience” (Nordstrom 1997: 22). She argues that the processes of representation through which stories render sensible the devastating experiences of war and conflict may also rob them of their intensity and core meaning:

Narrative organizes experience *after the fact*. Though narratives may reaffirm past violences, infusing old into new, they will never *be* the raw primary experience of which they speak. They can never be synchronous with that which they ‘tell about,’ for raw experience is now-to-*now*, and narrative is a now-to-*then* process. Disputed, even embattled, realities and identities are the meat of experience, the conditions facing humankind. It is narrative that flows through the cracks and bridges the disjunctions

to give meaning, but the narrator judges what ‘whole’ the fragments sold produce, what ‘reality’ flows through ruptures (Nordstrom 1997: 22).

The issue raised here is significant in that she engages the power of narrative to order experience in ways that obscure the complexity and depth of lived experience. Nordstrom is suspicious of the ways in which narratives reinterpret the brutality and chaos of war such that the harsh disorder and viciousness of what people have lived through is minimized such that something essential in its cruel intensity is lost.

This is a mode of interpretation with implications, one of which is a loss of the inchoate, less bounded sensibilities of what is lived before stories are told about what occurred. This issue is key to understanding the panic of the *robaniños* in that one of the core motivating features of these tales is that they engaged precisely the sort of brutal political violence that defies representation. Yet, their signifying logic expressly avoided direct reference to decades of state repression.

These divergent examples of anthropological work linking narratives and violence provide a theoretical foundation for this study. This body of work shows how narratives create stability and order from the chaos and trauma of systematic violence, whether bound to crime or state terror. It also illustrates the poetic power of tales, using the representation of violence to reflect aesthetically on multiple issues, highlighting the pleasures bound to storytelling and reception. The literature provides insight into the power of narratives of violence for defining social identity and historical memory. And, finally, some scholars reminds us that just as narratives of violence render meaningful complex and disturbing acts, the limitations imposed by mechanisms of representation may tame and mask the brutality of lived experience. These insights provide a useful foundation and set of multiple reference points for engaging the relationship between narratives and violence.

6. Narratives of Mistrust

At the time the panic swept the nation, Guatemala was experiencing a political transition from military to civilian rule and “democratic consolidation” (Diamond 1999; Linz and Stepan 1996; O’Donnell 1996; Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñan 2014). At the core of this process was an internationally negotiated end to the conflict and significant roles played by multiple foreign actors (Burrell 2014; Byrne 1997a 1997b; Garst 1995; Padilla 1997; Sieder 2001; Conley-Zikic 2016). The peace process included mechanisms to document, analyze, and account for years of systematic human rights violations (Beristain 1998a 1998b; Short 2014; Stanley 2013; Wilson 1997, 1998). It also included extensive and specific plans for broad-based social and economic reforms designed to address the nation’s extraordinary poverty, deep-rooted inequality, inadequate state services in areas such as health and education, and marginalization of the indigenous Maya majority (Heasley, Hurley, Irwin, Kaufman, Moustafa, and Persona 2001; Konefal 2010; Little 2010; MacKenzie 2016; McSherry and Molina Mejía 1992; Sieder 1997 2002).

In early 1994, just before the panic began, it was clear that a negotiated end to over three decades of internal armed conflict was inevitable. Nevertheless, the specifics of how this would be managed, what the terms might be, and which sectors within Guatemalan society would win and lose power and influence, remained unclear. It was precisely this contest among multiple forces that defined the peace process as it advanced and played a key role in establishing the historical context within which the panic of the *robaniños* occurred.

It is useful to understand the Guatemalan situation through the operation the two master narratives, or metanarratives, of the regional political transition in Latin America: *democracia* (democracy) and *desarrollo* (development). These core concepts structured the formal discourse on the country’s historical shift from a long tradition of authoritarian military rule, in which violence was used to ensure domination by a small elite over a majority population of poor indigenous people, to a

vision of a new political structure premised on the rule of law and the creation of a more equitable social and economic system.

In this context, *democracia* represented the new mode of structuring state power and *desarrollo* the corresponding and interconnected modes of social and economic advancement. The resonance of these core structuring ideas was expressed through official pronouncements, public discussions and debates, and policy planning, all of which were mediated, managed, and often funded by the international community. The concepts of democracy and development defined the foundational metanarratives – both discursively and ideologically – of the open promises of a new social order designed to move the country beyond the devastation of war, past atrocities, and injustices, through a reconceptualization of state institutions and social relations.

The metanarratives of democracy and development structured the broad vision of the political moment in grand, ritualistic pronouncements on the peace process and its expansive claims. Yet, they similarly provided the justification and legitimation for countless efforts to develop policy reforms related to primary education, health care delivery, infrastructure, government efficiency, rural community micro-lending, human rights compliance, and multiple other efforts. That is, the value and impact of these metanarratives is that they created and sustained the foundation for ideas and actions related to the political transition, serving to define and explain the process of substantive advances towards a more equitable and just society.

However, the possibility of a genuine, progressive transition in Guatemala must be viewed in relation to corresponding and countervailing ideas of violence, specifically “state terror” as the expression of a core threat to democracy, and “structural violence” as the expression of a critical reflection and core threat to development. While these concepts will be examined in detail in the study, it is useful here to outline some aspects of the dynamic between the open promises of core structuring metanarratives and their resonance within a social context overdetermined by profound, world-

defining violence. In other words, woven into the core metanarratives are forms of violence whose salience as lived experience undermines their possibility and vision. In this way, there is a core tension between democracy/state terror and development/structural violence which lies at the core of the powerful, motivating logic of the panic of the *robaniños*.

The political transition in Guatemala was an effort to move beyond a period known locally as *la violencia* (the violence). This term highlights the central role of political violence in defining the social context, a situation in which brutal systematic repression was so severe and so constant that it reconfigured core aspects of the social order. The situation in Guatemala was a Cold War-era Latin American internal armed conflict in which a repressive militarized state, supported by the U.S. (Immerman 1982; McClintock 1985; Schlesinger and Kinzer 1983), adopted a mode of governance known as “National Security Ideology” (Brett 2016; CEH 1999; Esparza, Huttenbach and Feierstein 2013), in which all forms of dissent and protest were violently repressed. During the 36-year conflict, over 200,000 people were killed (CEH 1999; Nelson 2015), of whom 50,000 were disappeared, with the majority of deaths occurring between the late 1970s and mid-1980s. At the peak of the conflict, when the country had a population of around 8 million, over one million were forcibly displaced by political violence (Carmack 1988; CEH 1999; Manz 1988; Falla 1994; REMHI 1999). The repression was so severe that the Guatemalan Truth Commission determined that the state committed genocide against the majority indigenous population (CEH 1999; Garcia 2006; Hawkins and McDonald 2013; Higgonet 2009; Pitrarch, Speed and Leyva-Solano 2008).

Guatemalan society was profoundly transformed by mechanisms of brutal repression (Carlsen 1997 2011; Green 1999; McAllister and Nelson 2013; Nelson 2009; Sanford 2003; Stoll 1994; Wilkinson 2002) in which a military-controlled government engaged in widespread human rights violations as a core expression of its mode of governance (Jonas 1991; Schirmer 1998; Weld 2014). And, during the worst years of *la violencia*, terrifying acts of brutality – a “scorched earth” policy

destroying thousands of rural communities, massacres, systematic torture, forced civilian complicity in committing atrocities, militarization of society, rape, beatings, totalizing surveillance coupled with brutal reprisals, the display of mutilated corpses – were widely committed by state agents in the majority indigenous highland areas which suffered the most intense levels of armed conflict (Brett 2106; CEH 1999; Rothenberg 2012; Ulrich 2011).

One of the core elements of the peace process, then, were demands for “transitional justice” (Bakiner 2015; de Brito 1993; Boraine and Scheffer 1994; Cohen 1993, 1995; Kritz 1996 Malamud-Goti, Jaime 1990 McAdams 1997; Minow 1998; Roht-Arriaza 1995; Shaw, Waldorf and Hazan 2010; Teitel 2010) and an emerging “politics of truth” (Hayner 1994, 1995, 2012), which focused on the documentation and analysis of past atrocities alongside policies designed to address the legacy of state terror.

These efforts were especially significant for understanding the context of the panic. At the time, public awareness and acknowledgment of atrocities was limited, yet years of serious, detailed research on systematic human rights violations was beginning to impact the larger Guatemalan society (Amnesty International 1980-1990; America’s Watch 1985-1988; Carmack 1988; Manz 1988; Falla 1994; Perera 1993; Sanford 2003, 2009). In the places where *la violencia* was most intense – poor, indigenous communities in the highlands – locals were aware of the intensity of brutal state repression, yet these issues were rarely discussed openly. And, in other parts of the country among significant portions of the population – particularly urban elites – emerging evidence of systematic human rights violations was routinely denied, defining debate as to the nature of *la violencia* as one of the most politically significant contestations over truth-claims in the country’s post-war era.

Efforts to document past atrocities and build the foundations for a responsive, representational democracy reflect critically on the Guatemalan government’s use of violence during *la violencia* as an example of “state terror.” This term names a mode of governance in which the state

becomes a predatory entity, acting to create terror among its citizens rather than operating as the guarantor of basic conditions of order and security, “State terror is a premeditated, patterned, and instrumental form of government violence. It is planned, inflicted regularly, and intended to induce fear ...” (Pion-Berlin and Lopez 1991: 63). The concept does not reference atypical excesses in the use of force associated with processes of ordinary governance, such as isolated cases of police brutality, nor does it reference excesses or crimes committed during war time (i.e. war crimes), but rather names the use of brutal violence as a core mechanism of governance.

The idea of state terror describes very real practices by multiple governments – Guatemala during *la violencia* represents a textbook case – while also questioning the assumption that ideas of terror and terrorism involve expressions of power that challenge the state. As Carole Nagengast writes, “state violence is often construed as law enforcement and anti-state violence as terrorism” (Nagengast 2001: 452). The term’s value, then, is as an analytic tool for understanding the purposeful use of brutal violence in a systematic manner as a mechanism of official rule and the ways these policies impact the social order.

The concept of state terror turns on its head the idea that core assumption that when force is exercised by the state, it is essentially legitimate; or, phrased differently, that the state is defined by its ability to manage and deploy force. As in Max Weber’s classic definition of the state as “a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (Weber 1991: 78), state power is widely understood to involve the management of coercive force in a manner that naturalizes operations through the establishment of the legitimacy of political authority. As Kapferer has noted, this aspect of state power implies a “paradox of the monopolization of violence” (Kapferer 2004: 64). That is, to the degree the solidity of the state’s management of power rests on its monopoly on violence, its use of force is understood as legitimate,

demanding that repressive state acts are not viewed as modes of terror, but are reframed as mechanisms of exercising authority.

For those living under the rule of a government engaging in state terror, life is infused with uncertainty and a constant feeling of risk and threat. And, this constant sense of pressing danger is imposed by the very force that one is expected to turn to for protection. As such, there is enormous experiential complexity and suffering under state terror because people not only face the possibility of violent repression, they suffer radical vulnerability, a situation where no empowered forces exist to either promise or provide protection. The impact of state terror does not only involve the damage done to bodies and psyches, but also to the very processes of representation.

Guatemala's structural violence is bound to its status as among the poorest and most unequal nations in the hemisphere. Over three out of four Guatemalans live below the poverty line, with over 60 percent living in extreme poverty (World Bank 2012). More than 40 percent of children under five are chronically malnourished, and the country has some of the region's worst social statistics regarding health, housing, education, and opportunity. Based on every measure of social well-being, Guatemala's indigenous people – representing between 40 and 60 percent of the total population, mainly Maya, but also including small groups of Xinkas and Garifunas – are poorer and more socially marginalized in comparison to the nation's *ladino* population (a local term used to refer to an immigrant of mixed Spanish and indigenous heritage) (World Bank 1997).

Yet, despite the crushing poverty, malnutrition, infant and child mortality rate, limited access to health services, and low levels of educational achievement, Guatemala is and has always been a nation rich in natural resources. The majority of productive land, which is organized into large *fincas*, is controlled by a small, urban elite (2.5 percent of the nation's farms control 65 percent of the agricultural land, including the most productive parcels); a pattern like so much else in Guatemala that dates back centuries (Barry 1992). From the colonial era on, Guatemala's social and political systems

have supported gross inequality, linking the economic dominance of a minority with systematic discrimination against the majority, especially the nation's indigenous population (Casaús Arzú 2006, 2008, 2010; Cojti Cuxil 1991; Fischer and Benson 2006; Fisher and Brown 1996; Manz 2005). The nation's structural inequality has long been supported by laws, regulations, and other mechanisms of governance that were backed up by violence and designed to protect the interests of a privileged elite (Carlsen 2011; Warren 1998; Wilson 1999). The exploitative nature of the system was especially clear in the late nineteenth century during the process of the state's modernization, which was linked to an increasing dependence on export agriculture that created "a violent and dehumanizing system" as "the State gradually evolved as an instrument for the protection of this structure, guaranteeing the continuation of exclusion and injustice" (Rothenberg 2012: 180).

Guatemala's "structural violence" references the impact of social systems, institutions, and organizations, both formal and informal that harm individuals, communities, and the larger society in multiple ways producing "avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs" (Galtung 1969: 170). The qualities of these forces are distinct from direct forms of physical harm because they are "built into the structure" and show up "as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances" (Galtung 1969: 171). Structural violence is ever-present in many social contexts, yet it is often difficult to pinpoint and hard to identify, especially when compared to the gross physicality of atrocities, such as massacres and torture. Yet, the apparent invisibility of structural violence as violence is a sign of its explanatory power in that understanding the impact of complex systematic processes whose constancy and brutal demands define the lived experience of "social suffering" and "the weight of the world" (Bourdieu 1993).

As Paul Farmer, one of the most articulate anthropologists working on these issues, writes, "the concept of structural violence is intended to inform the study of the social machinery of oppression" (Farmer 2004: 307). The value of the term highlights the significant suffering that is

produced by operations that are become profoundly naturalized such that they provide the expected conditions of social reality and exist beyond accountability. Structural violence serves as a unifying analytic term for making sense of the broad impact of oppressive systems, linking economic structures, modes of governance, and global systems of various kinds. These deep structural features are viewed as productive of more direct forms of violence:

The structural violence exerted by financial markets . . . is matched sooner or later in the form of suicides, crime and delinquency, drug addiction, alcoholism, a whole host of minor and major everyday acts of violence” (Bourdieu 1998: 40).

Structural violence produces a set of preconditions that are constitutive of multiple forms of suffering commonly bound to inequality, poverty, and disempowerment in a “chronic ‘state of emergency’” (Scheper-Hughes 1996: 9). Structural violence is also commonly viewed as linked to psychological conditions that adapt to the daily lived experience of suffering, humiliation, and affronts to basic dignity. As Torres-Rivas explains, structural violence “is rooted in the uncertainty of everyday life . . . which is translated into hunger and delinquency, and a barely conscious feeling of failure” (Torres-Rivas 1998: 49). The term’s explanatory value, then, lies in its power to focus analysis on “the sheer weight of the suffering” (Farmer 2009: 19) of marginalized peoples and to seek to disentangle the mechanisms through which these conditions are produced and reproduced.

The term structural violence provides an analytic tool for grasping the extraordinary suffering of much of the Guatemalan population due to the combined impact of complexly entwined social, economic, and political systems. These forces define the conditions under which the population lives, severely limiting basic opportunities for realizing human potential. The term “violence” here highlights the pain associated with these forces, which often creates physical harm (as seen in infant, child, and maternal mortality, chronic malnutrition, high levels of preventable illness, etc.) and produces deep psycho-social impacts. Given that these processes are structured along lines of gender and ethnicity,

they serve to produce and reproduce social relations and identities of severe disempowerment, with direct implications for state policies that functioned as the foundation of *la violencia*.

Some scholars have critiqued the concept of structural violence as “too much of a black box” (Philippe Bourgois and Nancy Scheper-Hughes 2004: 318). That is, the broad-based nature of the term allows it to be used to theorize almost any social practice that occurs within a context of profound inequality and systematic social suffering. Certainly, there is much to be concerned about regarding a term that “conflates full-fledged domination with mere social disparity and then collapses forms of violence that need to be differentiated” (Wacquant 2004: 322). Similarly, the moral judgment commonly associated with the term’s analytic use – “the notion that it involves ‘sinful’ social structures” (Kirmayer 2004: 321) – can lead away from substantive analysis and towards politicized posturing.

Nevertheless, the term provides a structuring set of ideas, perhaps more as metaphor than rigorous description that names elements of social practices which provide insight into the lived experience of the marginalized and disempowered. So, I stand with Farmer to embrace the explanatory power of the term, although I acknowledge the critique that the idea of structural violence is broad and lacks specificity for some forms of analysis. To address this, the study suggests that, as with the political violence of state terror, the narratives are specific in how they give voice to the experience of structural violence, and the term has a descriptive quality and critical accuracy essential for naming what lived experience, certainly more than related economic markers such as inequality and poverty. My embrace of these terms – state terror and structural violence – highlights the significance and value of an ethnographic approach that links documenting lived experience with the powerful ways in which violence, broadly understood, creates conditions of whose overwhelming dangers force local populations to adhere to particular forms of narrative to express political understandings.

Undergirding the metanarratives of democracy and development and the processes of Guatemala's political transition is the idea of trust of the operations of the imagination. Like violence, the concept of imagination (and its corollaries: the "imaginary" and "the imagined") has come to play an increasingly significant role in anthropology (and in social theory more generally). This is seen in the work of a number of significant scholars, from Benedict Anderson's highly influential concept of "imagined community" as a way of explaining the nation-state, nationalism, and the development of modern geopolitical order (Anderson 1991), to Schroder and Schmidt's "violent imaginaries" (Schroder and Schmidt 2001: 9) through which narratives, performances, and inscriptions use violence by constructing idealized and competing relations imbued with moral qualities, to Goran Aijmer's claim that the concept of "the *imaginary order* of society" (Aijmer 2000: 3) is a means of elucidating multiple alternate visions of violence as an "idiom" structured by "imagery and discourse" (Aijmer 2000: 1).

What explains this move in social theory? For Arjun Appadurai, the claim of a special significance of the imagination is bound to complex shifts in global culture in which, "the imagination has now acquired a singular new power in social life" (Appadurai 1991: 53). For Charles Taylor, grasping the demands of "multiple modernities" requires analyzing the "forms of social imaginary" that underpin the foundational moral order which serves as "an imperative prescription" (Taylor 2004: 2-7). These two positions are linked in that they suggest that the space and discourse of "the imagination" and "the imaginary" are essential for social theory – for self-understanding within the modern world. (Taylor linking the two, "From the beginning, the number one problem of modern social science has been modernity itself" [Taylor 2004: 1].)

And, as read through the demands of anthropology, they are necessary as a means of engaging complex struggles of representation and analysis that move beyond the confines of instrumental rationality. This point is echoed in much of the anthropological literature of the last two decades.

Stephan Palmié explains that the western conception of modernity is, “an entity known as much through its negatives and absences as through any definable characteristics of its own (Palmié 2002: 7); a point picked up by Jean and John Comaroff viewing modernity as “itself always an imaginary construction of the present in terms of a mythic past” which “has its own magicalities, its own enchantments (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993: xiv).

Whether we live in a moment when the imaginary is especially salient or not, the concept is essential for problematizing foundational ideas taken as matter-of-fact truths, such as the metanarratives of democracy and development. The point here is not to accept these metanarratives as structuring and substantive, as commonly presented, but just the opposite; to use an in-depth ethnographically grounded analysis of the panic of the *robaniños* as a critical interpretation of the impact of these ideas at a specific time in Guatemalan society, such that their salience, power, and complexly constructed quality is revealed.

Support for this approach is seen in some of the more penetrating social science analyses that help elucidate underlying operations of state terror and structural violence. While these issues will be explored in greater detail in the chapters that follow, it is useful to review some core theoretical touchstones upon which my use of “political imagination” is structured. Regarding political violence, the role of the imagination is especially useful in seeking to address experiences of trauma, war, conflict, and systematic violence. As Elaine Scarry so eloquently explained, there is a core “inexpressibility” of intense physical pain and there are profound political consequences of this phenomena, as illustrated in her analysis of the logic of torture (Scarry 1985). She demonstrates that the torture involves “the conversion of real pain into the fiction of power” (Scarry 1985: 27). The radical subjectivity of individual suffering is utilized by the domineering force of the torturer and the system s/he supports is turned into a “world destroying” process. While Scarry’s work focuses on the body and the experiential plane of the individual victim, these insights are relevant for the larger

processes of state terror. As Strathern, Stewart, and Whitehead explain, the complexly domineering utilization of systematic violence to instill broad-based fear among a population operates powerfully at the level of the imagination. Just as torture's impact on the individual victim extends beyond physical harm, state terror's impact destroys the social fabric, replacing the comforting certainty of established understandings and reasoned expectation with brutality and uncertainty:

Terror implies the imagination because terror consists precisely in intrusions into expectations about security, making moot the mundane processes on which social life otherwise depends (Strathern, Stewart, and Whitehead 2006: 6-7).

Issues of structural violence similarly demand an engagement with the imagination. The hypocrisy, corruption and failure of internationalized practices of economic improvement have been interpreted as a “development discourse fantasy” and an “anti-politics machine” (Ferguson 1994). The point, echoed by other critics of development (Escobar 2011), is that political decisions about the allocation of resources produce clear beneficiaries in a situation that is presented as it is logical, necessary and even natural. The instrumentalist logic grounds the presentation of problems and solutions for inequality and crushing poverty – some conditions of what was “the Third World” and has been remade as “the developing world” – are removed from an engagement with structural conditions of unequal power relations and are seen instead as an issue to be addressed by new “post-colonial” forms of global administrative control. The way in which these processes are bound to the imaginary is clearly seen in the trajectory of the work of John and Jean Comaroff in their criticism of “civil society” as a term that highlights the way the “political imagination” can be both liberational as well as a means of reifying and obscuring power relations (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999), in their revelation of “occult economies” as an imaginative response (“the *production*, in imaginative and material practice . . . by which human beings *create* community and locality and identity” [Comaroff and Comaroff 1999: 295]), and in the way counter-discourses of violence provide an imagining (“Everywhere these days, criminal violence has become an imaginative vehicle . . .” [Comaroff and

Comaroff 2006: 41]) that reveals the impact of structural violence and the failure of broad claims of global order.

I build on these insights, using the term “political imagination” as a means of linking this study to several key elements of the analytic value of the move towards the imaginary. This includes: embracing the fluidity of social practice within which imagination is understood as essential; highlighting the role of creativity; and understanding that representations of social relations rest on narrative constructions that lie at the core of experience. My focus is on the essential connection between symbolic actions as integrated into social practice, engaging the power of representation yet acknowledging a fundamental fluidity of meaning and belief (Palmié 2013). As Vincent Crapanzano explains with his concept of “imaginative horizons,” the idea of the imagination proposes something that “by its very nature, unreachable in fact and in representation” (Crapanzano 2004: 14).

This idea resonates with an understanding of social practice as fluid and shifting, operating within a context in which creative modes of representation – deeply rooted in the imaginary – are always at play, “The meaningful world is always fluid and ambiguous, a partially integrated mosaic of narratives, images and signifying practices” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992: 3). Yet, not only does the term “political imagination” link an analysis of the panic to these concerns, it also serves to redirect attention and respect to disempowered actors’ modes of engaging their experience of poverty, war, and conditions of injustice. The panic of the *robaniños* enables a critical review of a complex political moment and its overarching demands, not through the goal-oriented, formalism of a campaign for reform, but through oddly compelling tales at whose heart lay a sense of wonder, fear, anger, spectacle, and narrative pleasure. My approach links to Carolyn Nordstrom’s idea of a “creative imaginary” in which “average civilians unmade the possibility and power of violence” (Nordstrom 1997: 220). While the panic of the *robaniños* is hardly as uplifting a story as exemplified by her research among civil society

groups in Mozambique, what is similar is the way in which the phenomenon reveals a different mode of politics, grounded in the imaginary.

Above all, my work is based on the insights of Cornelius Castoriadis who defined “social imaginary” as a means through which social actors pose and answer questions through processes that are structuring in nature.

Society must define its “identity,” its articulation, the world, its relations to the world and to the objects it contains, its needs and its desires. Without the “answer” to these “questions,” without these “definitions,” there can be no human world, no society, no culture – for everything would be undifferentiated chaos. The role of imaginary significations is to provide an answer to these questions, an answer that, obviously, neither “reality,” nor “rationality” can provide . . . Society constitutes itself by producing a *de facto* answer to these questions in its life, in its activity. It is in the *doing* of each collectivity that the answer to these questions appears as an embodied meaning; this social doing allows itself to be understood only as a reply to the questions that it implicitly poses itself (Castoriadis 1987: 147).

My project, then, is an extension of these issues and an effort to bring together a number of compelling ideas on narrative, violence, and the core structuring ideas of the specific socio-political moment in Guatemala in which the panic occurred. By “political imagination,” here, I am referencing the link between the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*, the panic they inspired, and the ways in which these events both voiced core elements of the lived experience of the political and operated as a specific expression of a form of agency and action. The tales excited the population. They enabled the pleasure and horror of an encounter with a vicious, predatory figure whose mode of operation mirrored elements of state terror and structural violence. Yet, they were not associated with a political program or bound to any type of action that might be understood as a mode of formal politics. Rather, they filled ordinary daily life with a charged sense of meaning, creating a moment of outrage and drama and motivating outbursts of public violence.

7. Study Methodology and Structure

In conducting this ethnography, I focused on collecting as much information on the tales, their reception, and their circulation as possible to allow for a careful reconstruction of the panic and its impact on Guatemalan society. I visited key sites where public acts of violence occurred to document the events. I spoke with as many people as possible in and around these places to seek an understanding of what happened, the characteristics of the communities, and how people processed the stories and the panic. I conducted formal and informal interviews with a wide variety of informants: local leaders, often identified through my contacts with popular organizations such as the human rights groups *Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo* (GAM), the *Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala*, (CONAVIGUA) *Comunidades Étnicas Runujel Junam* (CERJ) and the *Equipo de Arqueología Forense de Guatemala* (EAFG); religious figures from the Catholic Church and the country's many evangelical sects; government officials (from judges involved in processing these cases to police officers and local politicians); locals from various areas of interest and representing diverse class and ethnic backgrounds; and a variety of individuals I met through social networks with a particular focus on members of the country's indigenous majority.

In seeking to gauge the broader circulation and impact of the tales, I followed up on leads to clarify reported cases of organ-stealing *gringos* in multiple sites. I also identified several key groups within Guatemalan society whose opinions, ideas, and interpretations of these tales appeared especially significant including: leaders and members of popular organizations (as outlined above, I focused generally on human rights and indigenous organizations); lawyers (especially those working in international adoptions, an issue related to the tales); social science students and faculty at the major national university (*Universidad de San Carlos*) and a major private university (*Universidad del Valle*); middle class and upper class urban residents. Given the impact of the tales on multiple foreign populations, I also made a special effort to speak with expatriates who lived in the country for many

years, foreign NGO workers, Peace Corps volunteers, journalists, U.S. government officials, and U.N. staff and officials.

I linked interviews and site visits with archival research of all of the major Guatemalan newspapers, collecting reports and commentary on the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* and the panic. I gathered substantial information from U.S. government archives on the general circulation of the tales and on formal responses to the panic. In addition, I obtained material from television and radio broadcasts, particularly video footage of the riots from local journalists. This provided insight into some key events in real time since aspects of the public protests were recorded.

The study is organized in a manner that links a careful historical reconstitution of the panic of the *robaniños* with the discussion of a set of core interpretive issues that, taken together, present interlocking pieces of the larger argument. The chapters are divided into multiple subsections, usually five per chapter. The first subsection of each chapter reviews specific ethnographic data as linked to key questions about the meaning and impact tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* and the panic of the *robaniños*. The remaining subsections explore these issues, connecting relevant thematic literature and analysis alongside a diachronic account of the panic's beginning, rising tensions, and rapid dissolution.

I interpret the ways in which the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* created and enabled meaning as bound to an understanding of Guatemala society and culture not as a unitary or fixed entity, but rather a series of dynamic processes involving continual negotiation, positioning and re-positioning involving multiple voices, communities, identities, and practices. It is difficult to analyze broad historical shifts, such as peace processes and political transitions, by focusing on specific, "smaller" aspects of cultural practice such as the panic of the *robaniños*. That is the core challenge of this study, to focus on a particular, notable, and surprising moment within a tense and contested context, and use this as a means of reflecting on a number of larger issues about the role of narrative in representing the political imagination. Ultimately, the goal of this study is to support an analysis of politics pays

greater attention to the lived experience of those who are so often ignored or silenced, to consider their voices, and to engage their stories on their terms.

Chapter 1 – Certitude and Verification: The Truth Claims of “Fantastic” Tales and the Narrative Expression of Uncertainty

1. “*Es la pura verdad*”: The Tales’ Binary Nature and the Challenges of Verification

When I first began conducting interviews in Guatemala, I occasionally referred to the tales as *cuentos* (“tales,” or complex representation of events, possibly based on fact, including rumors, but also potentially fictional, the product of invention).¹⁴ I quickly learned that this term was unacceptable to many informants, even those with high levels of education and a sophisticated engagement with modern science and medicine who had reasons to doubt the veracity of the tales. A prominent labor leader corrected me quite directly during an interview stating, “You must understand these are not tales (*cuentos*). They are stories (*historias*).”¹⁵ While *historias* may be used to refer to literature or other fictional accounts, the term also implies a greater degree of general truthfulness, as in the reporting of a narration within which accuracy is assumed as an essential element, as in the idea of “history.” When I asked him why he demanded that I change my word use, he replied quite simply, “*Eso es facil. Estas historias son la pura verdad.*” (That’s easy. These stories are the pure truth [completely true]).¹⁶

Like many other informants, he claimed that there was simply no way to consider the phenomenon as anything other than true. However, it is worth noting that the labor leader (and others making similar claims) accepted some variance in interpretation within the context of Guatemalan

¹⁴ The terms “*cuento*” and “*historia*” can be used to refer to stories of various types. However, in general a “*cuento*” is understood to be fictional, though it may reference rumor or gossip, and while a “*historia*” can be fictional, it is also used to reference what actually occurred, as in its relation to the concept of “history.” The *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* (2005) defines the terms as follows: “*cuento*” is defined as: “(1) Short narration of fictitious events or of a fantastic character, created with didactic or pleasurable goal...2) Lie, pretext or simulation...; 3) rumor, gossip...;” and “*historia*” has many definitions, which include: “(2) a systematic review of past actions related to any human activity;...4) Collection of actions referenced by historians...6) any general storytelling...”

¹⁵ Interview with Rene B., Quetzaltenango, June 1996.

¹⁶ Ibid.

society. For example, he was willing to accept the idea that some versions of the tales told on the street were less accurate than others and might involve elements of fabrication or excess, such as descriptions that were physically or scientifically impossible. Furthermore, he acknowledged the likelihood that a specific version of the tale might shift as it was told by one person to another, in chains of repetition, such that not all stories were wholly accurate. Yet, regardless of these distinctions, he was certain that the tales of the *robaniños* were “*la pura verdad*.”

In fact, this position was common. For example, when I asked a young woman in Guatemala City about the panic, she told me:

The *gringos* come here to steal children. They kidnap them or they have others do that part. They take them away and hold them places and then ship them to the United States where they are killed for their organs. *This is certain. Everyone knows this.*¹⁷

Even those who worked closely with foreigners and might have had a less critical interpretation of the intentions of “*gringos*” commonly described the tales as self-evidently and unproblematically true. A Guatemalan development worker who cooperated with U.S. Peace Corps volunteers on forestation projects told me:

The idea is this: the *gringos* rob children to sell their organs for dollars . . . *There is no doubt that the traffic in organs exists and that children here disappear.* In the U.S., they have discovered that people use the organs of these children. They kidnap the children here and it is over there, in the north, where they do the operations. *It is the truth.*¹⁸

Here the tale is presented in a manner that deviates from the standard story in which the organ removal and transplantation takes place “in the north,” which he explained was necessary because of the scientific/medical challenges involved. Yet, he was certain that the tales’ core elements were not only believable or possible, but clearly and completely true.

¹⁷ Fieldwork interviews with the Bonilla family, Guatemala City, July 1994.

¹⁸ Interview with indigenous leader, Momostenango, November 1996.

At the same time, other informants – from highly educated urban elites who dismissed the stories as another example of indigenous superstition to grassroots political organizers who were sure that this was another manipulation by the intelligence services – described the tales in exactly the opposite manner, as simply, clearly, and evidently untrue. For example, a *ladino* owner of an appliance store in a Cobán, a departmental capital in the highlands, explained:

*These stories are simply false. It is impossible to take the organs out of people, store them and then ship them off to other places. It [the belief in the stories and the related panic] is a psychosis of the people.*¹⁹

And, an indigenous leader in San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, the site of one of the attacks on police and institutions of state authority, described the widespread belief in the tales in this manner:

*All this talk about robaniños is a lie. What happened is that there exist groups of people interested in taking advantage of the ignorance of the people here. There are political forces trying to stop the changes that are coming to this country . . . Everything I am telling you is true.*²⁰

Here, the tales were presented as “a lie,” a clearly false tale that should be exposed as such.

The local circulation of these stories involved a binary tension regarding their veracity, as the tales were generally understood to be either wholly true or wholly false. The clarity of claims of truth – “This is certain.” “It is the truth.” “These stories are the pure truth.” – existed in stark opposition to, and in conversation with, claims of non-truth – “These stories are simply false.” “All this talk about *robaniños* is a lie.” In this way, tensions regarding the truth-value of the tales exhibited and defined a key element of the panic of the *robaniños*. Not only were the tales generally described as true or untrue, informants were often self-conscious about the truth-value of the tales and consistently raised the issue of their truthfulness without prompting or direct questioning. Staking a position on the tales’ truth – as true or as untrue – was an essential aspect of the panic and its meaning.

¹⁹ Interview with Otto Zéa, Cobán, July 1994.

²⁰ Fieldwork interview, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, July 1994.

In many ways, this idea is illustrated by the widespread use of the phrase “*la pura verdad*” to affirm the stories’ veracity. The term suggests a colloquially resonant sense of certainty that acknowledges an inherent space of contestation. That is, one would not use the term “*la pura verdad*” when something is obviously, factually true, such as a claim like, “there is chair by the table” or “it gets dark at night.” Rather, it is a way of emphasizing the salience of a truth-claim. The use of this term by various informants suggests a need to highlight the truthfulness of something because it is either open to question or for emphasis and communicative impact. For this reason, one might end an interesting personal account of something strange that is witnessed, a surprising conversation overheard, a potentially controversial claim, or a key point in an argument with the phrase, “It is completely true!”

Linked to the binary nature of how locals engaged the tales’ truth-claims was the question of verification, or ascertaining the truth of these tales. One day early in my research, I was sitting in the back room of a small shop in San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz speaking with Yasmin, a young Q’eqchi woman, about local accounts of the *robaniños*. She was a friend of a trusted contact, dressed in *traje*, in her early 20s.²¹ Yasmin was self-composed, confident and seemed interested, even eager, to tell me what she knew about the organ-stealing *gringos*.

I asked Yasmin if, before the riot, she had heard of any stories regarding local *robaniños*. She nodded, and said:

They found the body of a child by the side of the highway, its stomach filled with dollars, the body missing eyes, with no heart, no kidneys, with a piece of paper, a note of some kind.²²

²¹ *Traje* is a general term that refers to traditional clothes commonly worn by indigenous women. The term includes a *guipil* or *huipil* which is a colorfully decorated rectangularly-shaped woven shirt and a *corte* or skirt. In Guatemala, variations in *traje* commonly indicate the place where the woman is from and play a key role in the complex social-political meaning of the general and specific indigenous identity, gender issues, and the indigenous/ *ladino* divide. For more on the link between indigenous dress and identity, see Kathryn Anderson’s *Weaving Relationships: Canada-Guatemala Solidarity* (Anderson 2003) and Carol Hendrickson’s *Weaving Identities: Construction of Dress and Self in a Highland Guatemala Town* (Hendrickson 1995).

²² Interview with Yasmin, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

The narrative was short and focused and, as I later learned, characteristic of the logic and imagery of the tales (see Chapter 2). She expressed herself with great clarity and certitude, and gave a crisp account of a brutal act that had occurred near the rural community where she spent most of her life.

In an effort to learn more about the specifics of the case, I asked Yasmin a series of questions to help me investigate, and ideally verify, some of the factual elements of the narrative:

DR: Who found the body?

Y: I'm not sure. I wasn't there.

DR: Where was the body found?

Y: They say by the highway.

DR: What happened to the body?

Y: I don't know. It's just what they say.²³

Regardless of the questions I asked, Yasmin's responses were brief, clipped, and evasive. And, as my questions continued along these lines, her responses remained similarly unhelpful for verifying any aspect of the factual nature of the tale, suggesting an inability or an unwillingness to confirm the claims made or to engage in an inquiry into its veracity.

While further questions reaffirmed Yasmin's certitude that the story was true, she remained unable to provide specificity about any element of the tale, stating that she didn't know more because she hadn't experienced any aspect of the case firsthand and "wasn't there." And, when pressed on any number of factual issues, she retreated to the position that whatever she knew was based on what she had heard, "I don't know. It's just what they say."²⁴ Attempts to clarify issues she might have been able to address, such as who told her the tale or who might know more about the incident, yielded similarly vague and unhelpful responses.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

This interview occurred during the first stage of my research and, at the time, I found her resistance to elaboration and factual engagement (and similar responses by others) to be intriguing. I was pleased with the willingness of so many people from multiple backgrounds and in different areas of the country to talk with me about the tales and the panic. I was not initially worried about these responses because I fully expected that further inquiries and a larger pool of informants would yield more complex and detailed accounts of the tales of the *robaniños* and provide an opportunity to assess the veracity of specific claims. That said, I did not expect my investigation into the tales to lead toward an engagement with actual cases of organ stealing (although I wondered if this might be possible in some more complex, technically plausible situation). Nor did I expect that the truth of the tales lay in their “fully accurate” descriptions of events such that the referential content of the stories would be backed up by a set of forensically verifiable facts. Rather, I hoped that engaging in a detailed ethnography of these narratives and the panic they evoked might reveal a rich diversity of tales that might reveal the stories’ narrative complexity and intricate referential power.

Yet, that was not the case. The stories I collected from around the country during over eighteen months of fieldwork remained strikingly similar to Yasmin’s narrative, and my efforts to follow up on factual claims among those who told the tales were frustrating and inconclusive and involved many conversations similar to what I experienced that afternoon in San Cristóbal.

Not long after my interview with Yasmin, I spoke with Maria, a *ladina* woman in her late 30s who lived in Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, where the first attack and riot occurred. She described a case of child-stealing as follows:

On the fifth of September 1993, they stole a child from the bus terminal.²⁵

This story was similar in its brevity and declarative simplicity to the many accounts of child-stealing

²⁵ Interview with Maria H., Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

that I collected. When I asked for additional information, she explained that she was not a direct witness, but that the case was known “by everyone.” While she had limited knowledge of what occurred, her account was notable for the specificity of a particular date and a clearly identified place (the local bus station). I interviewed as many other members of the community as possible, including those working in and around the bus station. My attempts to corroborate the September 5th kidnapping yielded no more substantive information and no greater certitude as to what occurred, even for an account of a stolen child that didn't involve organ stealing.²⁶ While I found others who knew about the case, I could not find any witnesses, police reports, or other means of affirming the veracity of the incident.

When I returned to speak with Maria, she mentioned a second case. At this time, early in my research, I was committed to following up on every possible lead; not because I expected some factual resolution of these tales, but rather to seek an understanding of why these tales were being discussed with such passion and certainty. This story was distinct from most of the tales of stolen children in that Maria knew the victims personally:

About three or four years ago, my neighbor lost a child. She [the child] was four years old. They had come here for the cane season between November and April. [The family] came from the mountains, from the cold areas. After that happened, they disappeared.²⁷

²⁶ The issue of stolen children in Guatemala is extremely complex. Certainly, children in Guatemala disappear, although exactly how many children disappear and for what reasons is a complex and shadowy issue. Statistics on crime in Guatemala are extremely unreliable. Many people do not report specific crimes to the police who represent a feared and discredited state institution for significant portions of society. In those cases where people do notify the state about kidnapped children, authorities rarely undertake serious investigations, leaving the majority of cases unresolved. Most reports of stolen children in the Guatemalan press are not based upon serious investigations to determine what really occurred. Rather, they present allegations and references to possible crimes and rarely including any follow-up. As such, it is impossible to know to the real incidence of child abduction in Guatemala. Nevertheless, there is a clear consensus on the part of almost all individuals and institutions involved in issues of children's rights, international adoptions, and crime control that children in Guatemala are sometimes stolen. Some children are kidnapped for ransom, as has been widely documented, both by state agencies and private security firms. However, these acts are generally directed at the children of the wealthy. And, of course, some children are stolen by one family member from others in the family as part of custody disputes and related issues, as occurs throughout the world. The most salient issue as regards child theft in Guatemala, especially at the time of the panic of the *robaniños*, involved allegations that children were stolen for international adoptions and sent to the U.S. This is discussed in detail below.

²⁷ Interview with Maria H., Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

Since the family had left the community, I couldn't immediately visit them, but I thought it might be useful to interview others who knew about the case to find direct witnesses or others who could help verify the tale. I even imagined the possibility of tracking down the family and visiting them in their home village.²⁸ However, further questioning yielded the usual lack of specificity and I found almost no details about the family or the young daughter. And, in the end, neither the woman nor anyone else in Santa Lucía provided me with meaningful details or possible contacts that would allow me to follow up. This story and my attempt to trace possible leads proved interesting because even where a story involved a direct link between the teller and the victim, the tale's elements operated in a manner that created a reasonable lack of verifiable details.

In relatively integrated Guatemalan communities, whether rural towns or even a small cities like Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, it is possible, though sometimes complex, to follow leads of this type. If a story references someone well-known in the community, it is very likely that one could track down friends, relatives, and others who could provide substantial information and possibly even verify key elements of what occurred. Yet, in this account, the family was part of the large migratory labor force that travels down "from the cold areas" – the indigenous majority *altiplano* – to coastal regions each year to work in the sugar cane harvest. As such, they were present in the community, yet disconnected from the web of local social relations that bind one person to another and allow a researcher to follow specific leads. And, the more I asked about this family, the clearer it became that this case was – like all the others – a tale for which actual verification would be impossible.

²⁸ It is striking how, in Guatemala, one can find individuals in rural areas with minimal amounts of specific information. I have been able to trace family members and contacts in small villages with little more than a first name and a bit of data about the person's relatives or links to others in the same community or a nearby community. Knowing that someone "has a cousin that runs a small store off the main plaza" or "sells vegetables in town on market day" or similar information is often enough to find people in rural communities. This is the result of many overlapping and intersecting social networks.

Later, when I grew frustrated with my attempts to verify the tale, and upon another return visit with Maria, I asked her what she believed had happened to the child and the family. She responded, “*Saber?*” The statement translates as “who knows?” and in Guatemala it serves as an iconic phrase of avoidance and disengagement, a strategy of immense protection within a world defined by uncertainty, threat and violence. It is used to reference insignificant issues as well as profound and dangerous matters. *Saber* is a powerful concept within Guatemala in that it provides the perfect evasion of responsibility within a context of such profound inequality of power that being held accountable – even for relatively minor issues – can involve severe penalties, especially for more marginalized members of society.²⁹ The evasiveness and lack of ability to ascertain the veracity of claims (especially where these might have implications for accountability) is a resonant cultural form within Guatemala. The point here is that the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* played off a deep-rooted set of cultural practices within which responsibility for the implication of claims – whether significant or less so – was commonly avoided; a process that makes certain forms of clarity elusive even as it heightens the power of suggestion, rumor and possibility.

The difficulty of verifying the stories was echoed in my conversations with Guatemalan journalists who, as I did, tried to follow up on the tales of child theft and *robaniños* circulating

²⁹ In my fieldwork, I encountered many examples of the power of *saber* and its flexible deployment by multiple members of Guatemalan society. While I often encountered the term and related evasions of responsibility when interviewing officials about human rights violations, I found the idea most interesting when used in ordinary contexts involving basic issues of responsibility or reliance on some professional expectation or promise. For example, a relatively typical and fairly inconsequential (in terms of what was at stake) anecdote comes from an experience at a local dry cleaner. One day, I went over to pick up some shirts. I had a ticket with me that stated the shirts would be ready by the day before my visit. I showed the woman at the counter my ticket and asked for my shirts. She said they weren’t ready. I asked her when they would be ready. She said, “*Saber?*” (“Who knows?”). Then, I said, “Well, the ticket here says they were supposed to be ready yesterday. So, can you tell me when they’ll be ready so I know when to return?” She responded, “Well, I didn’t give you that ticket,” suggesting that regardless of the issue, she couldn’t be held responsible for any problem. I said, “I understand that, but the ticket is from this dry cleaner, so is there anyone here who might know when the shirts will be ready.” She said, “*Saber?*” The conversation continued in this way with me looking for some clarity as to when I should return and the woman at the counter providing a set of claims that suggested she had no knowledge or responsibility for what occurred and that the issue could likely not be resolved. This moment echoed with countless similar encounters in Guatemala – especially where there were significant power disparities between myself and the person I spoke with – where I faced that perfect evasion of clarity and responsibility.

throughout the country. Occasionally, the frustration of this process became a part of reporting on the panic, as seen in a column in *Siglo XXI*, a major national newspaper, by a well-known writer, former labor activist, and later president of the Association of Guatemalan Journalists:³⁰

Based on the two cases, we began by sending a journalist to go around almost all of Villa Nueva. Have the world had heard about the two cases and confirmed them. When we asked them if they knew the mother or any relatives, the response was always negative. *No, they told me. Who? Well, in this other place they'll be able to tell you, look for Mrs. so-and-so.* We went there and found the same thing. They sent us from one store to another, from one street to a new neighborhood and no one was able to say, "I spoke with the mother" or "I saw the child" or "I saw the body". That is to say that everyone had heard about the rumor but nobody knew anything . . . In Xela they also spoke of the same thing but it was impossible to corroborate anything. Recently there was a rumor in zone 18 of the appearance of children's cadavers with the organs removed. Various people who were interviewed knew about the cases but they said *they told me.* They were unaware. I asked to speak with the mother or a relative of one of the children that had appeared murdered and I realized that they didn't know the mother or anyone in the family. What they were certain of is that the children were kidnapped and they knew the look of a car with foreign license plates that had arrived to circle the schools and they were afraid for the safety of their children.³¹

The journalist's discovery that "everyone had heard about the rumor, but nobody knew anything," alongside the certainty of those they interviewed, perfectly described the response I found time and again in seeking verification of the stories.

Early in my research, I thought these responses might be a sign of the difficulty of the research subject given that I was a *gringo* working in a country traumatized by decades of brutal violence. I imagined that the responses I elicited from those with whom I had limited relations and minimal trust might be expected to embody and express the evasiveness (Warren 1993) and "state of fear" (Torres-

³⁰ "*Siglo Veintiuno*," also called "*Siglo XXI*" is a Guatemalan daily newspaper that was founded in 1990 by José Rubén Zamora as a newspaper that would not be linked to traditional elites and would engage in serious investigative reporting. The paper focused on a critical review of the process of democratization, judicial reform, inequitable taxation in the country, and made a name for itself by reporting on complex, contentious, and potentially dangerous issues, such as human rights, the military, and corruption leading, at times, to death threats and attacks. In 1995, the staff of the paper won an International Press Freedom Award of the Committee to Protect Journalists. Zamora won the Maria Moors Cabot Prize from Columbia University and was named one of "50 World Press Freedom Heroes of the 20th century" by the International Press Institute.

³¹ Miguel Ángel Albizures, "Los rumores, el robo, secuestro, adopción ilegal y tráfico de niños," *Siglo XXI*, April 14, 1994.

Rivas 1999) widely documented by scholars working in the field. Certainly, this made sense given the personal, familial, community, and national trauma of decades of systematic state repression and the existence of a complex network of spies of various types, both formal and informal, producing a social order described as a “society of fear” (Koonings and Kruijt 1999).

Yet, as I developed friendships and trusting relations with locals, I engaged in open discussions of personal concerns and potentially dangerous and contentious political issues, precisely those themes commonly met with marked silence (Burrell 2014; Green 1999; McAllister and Nelson 2013) and the powerful impact of a “phenomenology of terror” (Sanford 2003). While I worked in the country during a contested moment of political transition, it was striking how many people, once one established a trusted connection, would speak openly and specifically about massacres, torture, extrajudicial execution, and other brutal practices. Through these interviews, it was often possible to verify particular cases of abuse through visits to sites of past violence that were characteristic of a growing body of human rights documentation projects (Americas Watch 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1988, 1989a, 1989b, 1990a, 1990b, 1991; Amnesty International 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1981, 1982, 1987, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c, 1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1997; CEH 1999; Human Rights Watch 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1997a, 1997b; REMHI 1998; RFK Center 1992, 1993; Ulrich 2011; Weld 2014). Yet, even those willing to speak openly with me about their direct experiences as witnesses and victims of torture, rape, murder, and even massacres, told the same versions of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* and were similarly resistant to critically engaging the stories’ factual elements.

These three issues – the binary nature of openly presented truth-claims about the tales (presented as either clearly true or clearly false), the impossibility of verifying the tales or productively raising the issue of verification among those claiming the tales were wholly true, and the tension I experienced between my ability to verify accounts of brutal repression with multiple sources (within a

political context defined by the legacy of *la violencia*, the dominance of fear and lingering threats of state violence) and my inability to pursue verification of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* – led me to reflect on a series of questions about the nature of the truth encoded in these stories and expressed in the resulting panic.

Why was the truthful status of these tales so openly referenced and described in such a stark oppositional manner? Why was verification so difficult and so inadequate for questioning the stories' power and authority? Why were these tales so specifically resistant to discussions of truthfulness and verification? Were they forms of symbolic representation, evocative through their ability to “stand for” pressing social and political experiences? Was their veracity bound to their close link to very real problems, through modes of exaggeration, confusion, or structural similarity? Were the questions about truthfulness windows into deep-rooted epistemological issues whose analysis would reveal core cultural elements of meaning? Overall, what were these tales in terms of their modes and mechanisms of representation?

This chapter examines these questions by arguing that the significance of the tales lies in an engagement with the contestation over truth that they engendered and their resistance to verification. The stories function most powerfully in an indeterminate space of narrative uncertainty that binds the victimization tale – in which poor children are abducted, killed, mutilated, and commercialized by outside forces – to an inability and resistance to factual grounding. This resistance is a core element of their narrative significance and operation and enabled a heightened power of representation for these stories, processes which I believe played a key role in motivating the panic of the *robaniños*.

The chapter addresses these issues through a four-part process. First, it reviews some key elements of the rich anthropological literature on witchcraft, with a special consideration of the power of contemporary witchcraft claims as well as possible links to “occult economies.” This literature, while broad and complexly bound to multiple issues, provides a foundation for understanding the

contextually grounded significance and valence of allegations of the operations of power, moral reasoning, and causality. Second, it explores the relationship between “fantastic” tales and truth-claims by reviewing the work of three scholars – Nancy Scheper-Hughes, Michael Taussig, and Louise White – each of whom have written extensively on these issues. This chapter compares the scholars’ approaches and explains how this study both builds on their insights and presents a distinct focus, highlighting issues of narrative form and process which support the multi-stage argument presented here. The chapter then looks at Guatemala’s international adoption industry, widely viewed as providing a factual basis (if not *the* factual basis) for the panic of the *robaniños*, thereby defining what occurred as an exaggeration of or confusion about very real threats and abuses involving the very real commercialization of children’s bodies. The chapter builds on these issues to trace the beginning of the panic with the appearance (or more accurately re-appearance) of the tales of organ-stealing *gringos*, which rapidly generated what was described as a “hysteria.” The shift from popularly told tales of abuses within the adoption industry to the stories of the *robaniños* illustrates the special power and significance of these narratives. The chapter concludes by returning to the binary tension regarding the tales’ truth-claims and the impossibility of verification, suggesting that these qualities are essential for making sense of their status as narratives of mistrust.

2. Witchcraft Claims, Occult Economies, and the Power of the Fantastic to Make Sense of Contemporary Social Systems

The tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* are “fantastic.” By this I mean that they evoke a sense of excess, wonder, amazement, anger, and surprise, even as they engage the possibility of the imaginative, the fanciful, the strange, and the illusory.³² This idea resonates with a broad anthropological literature

³² I have chosen this word as a means of linking the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* to a set of overlapping and potentially contradictory ideas that are multiply referenced by the term “fantastic.” According to the online Collins English Dictionary (www.collinsdictionary.com) the word comes from “*fantastik* imaginary, via Late Latin from Greek *phantastikos* capable of

on the powerful resonance and salience of contemporary witchcraft (Ashforth 2005; Austen 1993; Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; 2000; Geschiere 1997; 2013; Kapferer 1997; West 2005)³³ as well related scholarship engaging “the fantastic” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999a: 281), which often highlights the complex social roles of predatory visions and imaginations as naturalized within multiple social worlds, including those of academics.³⁴ The point of understanding the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* as “fantastic” is not to diminish their accuracy (they were, after all, circulated as *historias* and not *cuentos*), but rather to highlight their role in drawing attention to themselves, demanding reactions and heightening emotional responses and doing so through a complex and overt play over the nature of their truthfulness. In fact, the significance and authority of these tales, and the resulting panic, was intimately bound to the tensions between the local affirmation of the *robaniños* as clearly true or clearly false as entwined with a marked resistance to verification. This bound the fantastic with

imagining, from *phantazein* to make visible.” The same source defines “fantastic” as an adjective that means: 1) strange, weird, or fanciful in appearance, conception, etc.; 2) created in the mind; illusory; 3) extravagantly fanciful; unrealistic ⇒ fantastic plans; 4) incredible or preposterous; absurd ⇒ fantastic verdict; 5) (informal) very large or extreme; great ⇒ a fantastic fortune, ⇒ he suffered fantastic pain; 6) (informal) very good; excellent; 7) of, given to, or characterized by fantasy; not constant; capricious; fitful ⇒ given to fantastic moods. It further lists these synonyms: “= wonderful, great, excellent, very good, mean (slang), topping (British) (slang), cracking (British) (informal), crucial (slang), smashing (informal), superb, tremendous (informal), magnificent, marvelous, terrific (informal), sensational (informal), mega (slang), awesome (slang), dope (slang), world-class, first-rate, def. (slang), brill (informal), out of this world (informal), boffo (slang), the dog’s bollocks (taboo) (slang), jim-dandy (slang), bitchin’ (US) (slang), chillin’ (US) (slang), booshit (Australian) (slang), exo (Australian) (slang), sik (Australian) (slang), rad (informal), phat (slang), schmick (Australian) (informal), beaut (informal), barrie (Scottish) (slang), belting (British) (slang), pearler (Australian) (slang); = enormous, great, huge, vast, severe, extreme, overwhelming, tremendous, immense; = strange, bizarre, weird, exotic, peculiar, imaginative, queer, grotesque, quaint, unreal, fanciful, outlandish, whimsical, freakish, chimerical, phantasmagorical; = implausible, unlikely, incredible, absurd, irrational, preposterous, capricious, cock-and-bull (informal), cockamamie (slang) (mainly US), mad; = unrealistic, odd, wild, ambitious, ridiculous, eccentric, ludicrous, extravagant, visionary, grandiose, off-the-wall (slang), far-fetched, comical, oddball (informal), zany, illusory, outré, cockamamie (slang).”

³³ My point here is not that the category of witchcraft – complex and contested as it is – is encompassed by the idea of “fantastic” phenomena, but rather that this is a core issue often addressed in the literature.

³⁴ For example, Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff begin a very influential article with the description of four “fragments” (short anecdotes of odd occurrences in post-apartheid, transitional South Africa involving the “necklacing” of a baboon, the appearance of a large, mysterious monster, the proliferation of pyramid schemes and the alleged mutilation of victims to sell their body parts), describing these as appearing from a distance as “the fantastic” pointing out that “These fragments appear lurid, even salacious, from the cool distance of *Academia Americana*. In their own context, they are not that at all. . . Each of them, moreover, has parallels elsewhere: those parts of Europe and the United States . . . the parts where ordinary people live, produce their own fair share of the fantastic” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999a: 281).

the truthful through a semiotic logic that frustrated critics and motivated explanations which drew attention away from the tales and the panic.

Here, it is useful to reflect briefly on anthropology's long engagement with witchcraft. Witchcraft beliefs are widespread, found in multiple social contexts,³⁵ and complexly diverse in meaning, belief, and practice.³⁶ As Evans-Pritchard famously explained, the value, meaning, and power of witchcraft belief does not lie in its expression of superstition or irrationality, but rather is bound to its social utility as a mode of explaining a variety of phenomena and experiences (Evans-Pritchard 1976). A belief in witches allows people to make sense of the uncertainties, challenges, and threats of the world around them, such as illness, bad luck, a poor harvest, failed personal struggles, among other experiences (as well as various forms of good fortune). Witchcraft is not undermined by rationalist expressions of causality regarding specific issues (a lost crop is caused by an infestation of insects), but rather serves to render sensible the logic and purpose of what transpired, attempting to explain how and why a particular issue occurred (we experienced the infestation and our neighbors did not because of the actions of a witch). While this approach has been justly interpreted as functionalist (Stewart and Strathern 2007), it illustrates a core disciplinary insight that structured differences in belief and explanation are indicative of complexly defining engagements with what is "socially relevant."³⁷ For these reasons, witchcraft beliefs are not easily challenged by countervailing scientific explanations, a lesson distinct from resistance to verification of the tales of the *robaniños*, yet similar in revealing the

³⁵ For example, an interesting article reviewing anthropological and historical research on witchcraft reviews conclusions from 148 studies covering sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, the Americas, Australia and Oceania among other regions, (Hutton 2004).

³⁶ While there is some debate about whether the terminology of "witchcraft" is ethnocentric and bound to Western understandings (Crick 1979), scholars have argued that the concept operates in a broadly analytic manner that merits global use (Meyer 1999) and, in fact, most anthropologists writing on the subject use the term (Ashforth 2005; Geschiere 1997; Stewart and Strathern 2007).

³⁷ "Zande belief in witchcraft in no way contradicts empirical knowledge of cause and effect. The world known to the senses is just as known to them as it is to us. We must not be deceived by their way of expressing causality and imagine that because they say a man was killed by witchcraft they entirely neglect the secondary causes that, as we judge them, were the true causes of his death. They are foreshortening the chain of events, and in a particular social situation are selecting the cause that is socially relevant and neglecting the rest" (Evans-Pritchard: 1976: 25).

power of contextually relevant understanding of claims about how and why things occur that resonate with local modes of meaning.³⁸

Witchcraft beliefs and practices have been widely interpreted as modes of structuring and mediating social conflict and pressing social concerns. Claims of witchcraft serve to negotiate, express, resolve, and engage various tensions within a social order, as outlined in numerous classic ethnographies. Beginning around the time of the panic of the *robaniños*, a new and richly explanatory literature on witchcraft and “modernity” emerged linking multiple ethnographic accounts of rising witchcraft claims associated with democracy, globalization, and encounters with techno-medicine, neoliberal policies, state efforts on formal rule of law policies, and related issues. Some scholars have argued that contemporary witchcraft claims are motivated by a “sense of injustice,” deep-rooted insecurity, and “the experience of illegitimate violence and exploitation” associated with democratic transitions and the multiple complex failures of state governance (Ashforth 2005: 17-18). Others suggest that witchcraft operates as a critical idiom which enables the presentation and voicing of a moral economy about illicit and unjust accumulation and wealth (Austen 1993).

Within this body of work, modern witches play a key role as modes of interpreting “new inequalities” (Geschiere 1997: 11), engaging uncertainties in a manner that makes sense for local populations. Witches appear in multiple contexts as a contemporary predatory force (Kaspin 1993), whose monstrous practices elicit fascination that is often widely reported in the media (Bastian 1993) and play off efforts at state control within an acknowledgements of profoundly experienced disorder (Auslander 1993). And, like the *robaniños*, contemporary witchcraft claims are often bound to and

³⁸ Stanley Tambiah’s review of “the European witchcraze” and his argument that “it is unsound to detach the witchcraft beliefs from their total embedding” (Tambiah 1990: 89) states that current witchcraft beliefs and related ideas require a similarly sensitive engagement with what contextual demands and conditions undergird their salience, power, and meaning.

expressive of an erosion of trust, serving to embody deep-rooted anxieties about the failure, incapacity, and corruption of formal state institutions (Geschiere 2013).

An analysis of contemporary witchcraft explains the practice as a “signifying economy” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993: xxvi), which enables complex moral and political claims that utilize bodies as a mechanism for voicing locally resonant social critiques that express the lived experiences of disempowerment and vulnerability. These issues are analyzed in relation to a number of different social processes associated with “modernity” (a term so complexly contested that it can be used to reference multiple and conflicting processes), including mass domestic and international migration, the profound dislocation of neoliberal policies, and expanding domains of commodification. Underlying these analyses is a common understanding that the deeply resonant images, tropes, figures, and social construction of witches and witchcraft has special relevance for rendering sensible the complex demands, insecurities, and suffering of contemporary reality. Often, this occurs through a process of “retooling culturally familiar technologies as new means for new ends . . . it is new magic for new situations” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999a: 284).³⁹

Seriously engaging witchcraft, then, requires sensitive ethnography that respects the complex nature of social logics that enable and encode meaning. Critical reflections on contemporary witchcraft commonly express this profound disciplinary commitment to engaging local interpretations (of witches or *robaniños*) not as symbolic representations of something else, but as a vibrant modes of creating and interpreting social reality (West 2005), openly embracing particular imaginative spaces and possibilities which embody their own signifying logic (Kapferer 2003), and generally respecting the “notions” people use to confront “invisible forces” and their role in understanding complex insecurities (Ashforth 2005: 17).

³⁹ To highlight the resonance of this idea in classic anthropological writing, Comaroff and Comaroff quote Evans-Pritchard at the start of the essay: “New situations demand new magic . . .” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999: 279).

That is, witchcraft gives voice and provides explanatory and semiotic focus to the experiences of various social problems. In this sense, witches operate in ways similar to the figure of the *robaniño* outlined in the pervasive tales. Because of this, my analysis of the panic of the *robaniños* is influenced by work outlining the close link between witchcraft claims and rumor (Stewart and Strathern 2007), as well as an acknowledgment that where contemporary witchcraft beliefs engage the formal domain of politics, they “are mainly expressed in rumors and allusions” (Geschiere 1997: 19). And, while not all scholars acknowledge this issue, the approach taken to understanding the panic of the *robaniños* here engages the insight of those scholars who recognize that witchcraft beliefs engage complex social pleasures and heightened emotions, demanding a recognition of, “the fear and excitement it contains” (Geschiere 1997: 21). Engaging contemporary witchcraft beliefs requires strong grounding in ethnographic research to tease out the specific operations and resonance of what is occurring in a particular place at a specific moment.

Often, those working in Guatemala and outside the country raise the issue of how the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* are closely linked to local understandings of *brujos/brujas* (male witches/female witches) and the issue of *brujería* (witchcraft) more generally (Handy 2004). In fact, Guatemala – like all of Central America and the Americas – has a rich history of witchcraft ideas and beliefs (or at least understandings that can be described under the generalized idea of “witchcraft”). And, these belief are widely influential and play key roles in many aspects of local practice. Generally speaking, *brujos* engage in actions that harm people. They are part of a larger cultural world of those engaged in spiritual and supernatural actions. These include various forms of healers (*curanderos, jerberos*, etc.) who address a variety of harms, but may not be able to counteract witchcraft. And, they also include other actors including Mayan priests, Catholic priests and, with ever greater frequency Protestant pastors, all of whom play a role in addressing acts of *brujería*. All of this is to say that witchcraft beliefs and practices in contemporary Guatemala are widespread and exists at multiple

levels. They are addressed in many formal settings (for example, ads for protection from *brujería* are common in local newspapers, including many cited in this study) as well as in informal settings (one can find *brujos* and healers in communities across the country through trusted local links).

Perhaps what is most interesting about the literature on current witchcraft in Guatemala is the depth and breadth of its link to a variety of social issues, suggesting that these ideas serve multiple social functions and are well-integrated into society. Many studies document how indigenous ideas about the body and health engage claims about *brujería* (Berry 2006; 2010; Logan 1979; Michel, Mahady, Veiz and Soejarto 2006; Wall 2014; Weller, Ruebush and Klein 1991).⁴⁰ In addition, as seen in research from around the world, witchcraft in Guatemala is used to engage globalization and the penetration of commodification to rural, indigenous communities (Carlsen 1993; Goldín 1992).⁴¹ Scholars have identified that the economic stresses and unequal benefits associated with large scale indigenous displacement from traditional lands, as well as collaboration with the military, linked to *la violencia* have been associated with witchcraft accusations (Falla 2001; Stoll 2003). In addition, Guatemalan witchcraft beliefs appear malleable and adaptive to changing circumstances; as mass migration abroad (mainly to the U.S.) has transformed Guatemala, *brujos* are described as able to cast spells to impact those living abroad, thereby engaging another element of recent and profound social change (Briggs 2012). The significant and rapid rise in Protestant, especially evangelical, churches

⁴⁰ Significant medical anthropological research on local ideas of health and well-being commonly reveal modes of harm and illnesses that challenge Western techno-medicine and engage the discourse of *brujería*. These include *susto*, a malady associated with fear and trauma (Berry 2006; 2010; Logan 1979; Michel, Mahady, Veiz and Soejarto 2006; Wall 2014; Weller, Ruebush and Klein 1991). Many aspects of women's and children's health are understood in relation to witchcraft accusations, with *brujería* described as one of the most widely expressed explanations for maternal mortality and birthing problems (Berry 2006; 2010; Wall 2014) and witchcraft generally associated with women's health issues (Michel, Mahady, Veiz and Soejarto 2006).

⁴¹ While the literature on these issues is far less developed than for work on sub-Saharan Africa, scholars have engaged this issue from a variety of perspectives. For example, some have explained how selling traditional handwoven Maya clothing – linking it to a larger market economy (especially one involving tourists and the global economic system) – may expose locals to the dangers of witchcraft (Carlsen 1993). Others suggest that witchcraft is a common explanation for the economic success of community members, a powerfully resonant cultural idea through which those less fortunate plot and take action (including through witchcraft) against those who are more fortunate (Goldín 1992).

throughout the country has often been enabled and inspired by missionaries from the U.S., and one the characteristic elements of its appeal, and its public discourse, lies in a pointed criticism of traditional belief systems, especially Mayan priests and associated ideas of various supernatural figures. Many are drawn to the thousands of evangelical churches that, from the 1980s on, have opened around the country (with particular growth in the indigenous majority rural areas most severely impacted by the brutal counterinsurgency) as a protective response to the predatory and dangerous actions of witches (Garrard-Burnett 1998).

While witchcraft has not been one of the core idioms through which post-war social order has been generally discussed, the larger issue of local customs for dispute resolution lies at the core of many debates on the inadequacies of the national reconstruction after *la violencia* (Chase-Dunn, Jonas and Amaro 2001; Hawkins, McDonald and Adams 2013; Sieder 1997). Witchcraft in Guatemala is also used to engage core failures of governance, especially as a means of reflecting on high levels of criminal violence in the country (Smith and Offit 2010) and a loss of local capacity for resolving social conflict and tensions. This is useful in discussing the issue of the country's "justice crisis" (see Chapter Three) because witchcraft, as well as customary law and multiple local dispute resolution mechanisms, is often at odds with formal, state-sanctioned modes of social control (Roberts 1979).⁴² Some ethnographers have pointed out that concerns about public actions against witchcraft, including acts by the state, have led to increasingly private and hidden *brujos* practices (Metz 1998). Others have argued that witchcraft beliefs play a key role in local post-war discussions of trauma and causality (Foxen 2008), while still others argue that *brujos* provide a powerful counter-narrative for addressing issues of responsibility and justice following the ravages of *la violencia* (Viane 2010).

⁴² "...even where judicial institutions are found they do not always enjoy the unchallenged pre-eminence in the business of dispute-settlement which our courts claim and manage to exercise. Fighting, and other forms of self-help, resort to supernatural agencies, the use of shaming and ridicule, or the unilateral withdrawal of essential forms of co-operation may all constitute equally approved and effective means of handling conflict." Roberts (1979: 26).

In other words, witchcraft beliefs are profoundly resonant in Guatemala. And, as in much of the world, they operate as a “signifying economy” that serves to render sensible a variety of complex experiences associated with the profound social shifts linked to the internal armed conflict, the redefinition of social relations in rural areas, neoliberal policies, the penetration of global economics and cultural practices, migration to the U.S., and multiple other transformations.

However, the *robaniños* were not witches. In my field research, I never encountered an informant that suggested a link between the *robaniños*, or their actions, and *brujos* or *brujería*. In fact, what I found was just the opposite. Even when locals provided detailed reviews of local witchcraft beliefs (most notably in San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz), the power of the *robaniños* was consistently conveyed as something to be addressed outside of reference to witchcraft, even among those who otherwise engaged with issues of *brujos* and *brujería*. I never spoke with a Guatemalan who suggested the phenomenon of the *robaniños* was expressly connected with the country’s robust witchcraft discourses and practices.

So, while witchcraft in Guatemala provides a powerful reference point for engaging “the fantastic” – in terms that have a longstanding history and deep set of cultural roots – explaining the panic of the *robaniños* is not well served through a detailed examination of this set of cultural practices, except as a reference point for what these tales are not in terms of local understandings and ideas. Yet, recognizing the powerful cultural significance of witches and witchcraft is important because it helps explain elements of the local meaning and contestation of truth-claims associated with the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*. While ideas about *brujos/ brujas* are salient in Guatemala, I found that informants’ notably did not engage the idiom and social practices of *brujería* when speaking about the *robaniños*. This is striking since the panic expressed many of the ideas associated with the contemporary witchcraft literature, including voicing moral and political claims, the deployment of bodies as a modes

of social critique, an engagement and imaginative configuration of the operations of “invisible forces,” and the seductive social pleasures of a moral panic and the popular expression of generalized fear.

In fact, the *robaniños* were generally referenced in a manner that can be understood as symbolically and culturally opposed to that of the *brujo*. The *robaniños* did not act through spells, spirits, and supernatural forces. They could not be opposed through any of the established mechanisms to combat *brujería*. Rather, they operated through the interconnection of several elements explored in this study: a deeply corrupt political system through which the powerful could do whatever they wanted to the poor and vulnerable; proficiency with technical knowledge (the ability to engage in organ transplantations) managed by *gringos* and expressive of a distant world capable of all sorts of expressly non-spiritual, yet extraordinary innovations; and a marked absence of ethics, respect, and moral values. The *robaniños*, then, served as the embodiment of a set of forces viewed as real and threatening in a way that was distinct from the dangers posed by *brujos*. The *robaniños* operated in a realm understood to be pointedly not-supernatural, a domain of overtly deployed violence, commodification, and a set of actors linked to distant worlds of global science and exchange that preyed upon the bodies of the poor. The *robaniños* then, functioned within a distinct social space and discourse than *brujos*, such that their power and threat was more akin to other brutal actors that created and enabled a system of structural violence, profound inequality and overwhelming, constant repression and abuse.

My work here is also influenced and inspired by scholarly work on other explorations of how people make sense of complex, new demands through an engagement with “the fantastic.” Jean and John Comaroff have analyzed multiple claims, practices, and social phenomenon that reference emerging challenges within contemporary post-colonial and post-revolutionary societies through the ideas of “occult economies,” within which various claims of supernatural actions and emerging predatory figures create “new forms of consciousness” that enable the expression of anger, discontent, frustration, and loss within a world guided by complex invisible forces that have left so many

vulnerable and disempowered (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999: 284). The overlapping and mutually reinforcing ideas of linking value with abstract accumulation, severe inequality, labor uncertainty in a shifting world, new experiences of the compression of space and time within globalization, concerns about social reproduction, and the use of bodies (whole and in parts) as signifying elements of corrupt and corrupting systems of power. Here, a key insight lies in the way occult economies engage the idea of the production of value as experiences and imagined, all as deeply bound to issues of morality and fairness.

These ideas engage with a critical review of neoliberal policies (an essential element of the metanarrative of development) and the ways in which they have impacted local populations around the world in complexly disempowering ways, as a response to the ravages of “millennial capitalism” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001). Here, what is significant is not only the interlinked operations of domestic and international market policies and formal politics, but also the “experiential contradictions at the core of neoliberal capitalism . . . to produce desire and expectation on a global scale” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001: 8). This critical vision is at once analytically expansive in its coverage of disparate issues – the murder of women and Mexican *maquiladoras* (Wright 2001) and the shifting understandings of belonging (Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2001) – and locally grounded in the specific phenomenon studied. These issues are “at once profoundly parochial and so obviously translocal” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001: 282), raising a set of questions about why certain figures and claims about the links between value (monetary and ethical) and the flows of people and things have gained such complex cultural traction. This both reinvigorates a set of debates about the meaning of the local/global nexus (Appadurai 1996; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Kearney 1995, 2004) and suggests the necessity of “the fantastic” for rendering sensible such broad and transformative changes. At the heart of these ideas, there is a rich and emerging body of scholarship on the interpenetration of the abstraction of value, heightened by the pace and scale of accumulation, whether analyzed in

relation to African witches (Ashforth 2005), the ways that Afro-Cuban traditions confront and interpret the commodity form (Palmié 2002), or identity in a globalized world (Geschiere 2009).

The domain of “the fantastic” (as I am using the term) presents a useful mode of gaining insight into a variety of contemporary social and political challenges. It is in this way that the analytic approach taken here towards the panic of the *robaniños* is linked to related, though distinct, issues raised by ethnographies of contemporary witchcraft and millennial capitalism; as social manifestations and practices which problematize dominant explanatory discourses of power and evoke complex, imagistic demands, emotions, and excitement. Above all, these distinct social phenomena are connected in the urgency of their operation to give voice across multiple social domains to the lived experience of profound disempowerment, uncertainty, and vulnerability.

3. How Fantastic Stories Work: Three Perspectives

While the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* were not understood locally as elements of the supernatural, they were experienced as “fantastic.” That is, they generated focused interest, emotional intensity, and a self-referential engagement with the special quality and nature of their truth-claims. And, they were widely viewed as something distinct, different, and surprising, both by those who affirmed their veracity and those that viewed them as wholly false.

One way to address this issue and to build a theoretical foundation for making sense of the issues raised here is to consider the work of influential scholars who have engaged the meaning of “fantastic” tales in distinct places and contexts. Of special interest is the work of three prominent scholars: two anthropologists, Nancy Scheper-Hughes, Michael Taussig; and a historian, Louise White. Scheper-Hughes has devoted significant energy and focus to the tales of organ stealing. She began analyzing the phenomenon while working in the shantytowns of Brazil and later engaged the issue more generally within Latin America and around the world (Scheper-Hughes 1992, 1994, 1995b, 1996,

1998, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b, 2006b, 2007a, 2010). Taussig researched stories that utilize the imagery of the devil for addressing profound social, economic, and political inequality in Colombia and Bolivia (Taussig 1980). White investigated tales of blood-extracting beings in Central Africa – using the term “vampire” – that emerged under colonialism and continue to the present day (White 2000).

Each of these academics developed robust, ethnographically grounded research outlining questions of truth and verification that deepen conversation about how to make sense of the tales of the *robaniños* and the resulting nationwide panic. I engage the work of these academics here because of the influence of their scholarship on anthropology and the social sciences more generally and because they each present distinct, substantive modes of engaging a common problem: how to understand the significance, operation, and meaning of “fantastic” tales.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes: Symbolic Substitution and Real Organ Stealers – Nancy Scheper-Hughes first encountered the tales while working in the *favelas* (shantytowns) of Brazil. She described the tales in her book *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*:

Shantytown residents reported multiple sightings of large blue or yellow vans, driven by foreign agents (usually North American or Japanese), who were said to patrol poor neighborhoods looking for small stray children whom the drivers mistakenly believed no one in the overpopulated slums and shantytowns would ever miss. The children would be nabbed and shoved into the trunks of the vans. Some were murdered and mutilated for their organs, and their discarded bodies were found by the side of the road or were tossed outside the walls of municipal cemeteries. Others were taken and sold indirectly to hospitals and major medical centers, and the remains of their eviscerated bodies were said to turn up in hospital dumpsters. (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 233)

She termed these stories “bizarre rumors” and examples of “a strange and outrageous rumor” (Scheper-Hughes 1996: 245), viewing them as shocking and disturbing and as a phenomenon that demanded explanation. Scheper-Hughes’ initial interpretations focused on how these “seemingly farfetched” stories were modes of meaningfully engaging a context of great suffering and vulnerability.

She argued that the accuracy and vibrancy of the tales was a function of the idea that “these stories are metaphorically true, operating by means of symbolic substitution” (Scheper-Hughes 2000: 5). That is, while the stories depicted occurrences that were not factually true, they had enormous symbolic power and gained their salience by “standing for” real experiences.

For Scheper-Hughes, then, the tales and their brutal vision of a predatory world were a way of symbolically representing the “violence of everyday life in Brazil” as experienced by poor shantytown residents. Scheper-Hughes interpreted the stories within the context of *favela* reality, where poor people’s lives, and especially their bodies, were defined and marked by enormous structural inequality, “the rumors testify to the way that poor people’s bodies are mishandled, disrespected and abused...” (Scheper-Hughes 1993: 5). The tales played off the locals’ understanding of the enormous divide between “the two Brazils,” the world of wealthy Brazilians who can take advantage of the amenities and benefits of modernity (including organ transplants that *save* lives) and the world of poor Brazilians (Scheper-Hughes 1992).

Scheper-Hughes outlined how the tales resonated powerfully with multiple aspects of the lives of poor Brazilians including, their mistreatment within the health care system, the disrespectful handling of their bodies in cemeteries, and the brutal murder of street children by police officers and death squads often paid for by local merchants. She argues that the tales’ interpreted social relations through exaggeration and inference. That is, the real and systematic disrespect and abuse enacted upon the bodies of poor *favela* residents were condensed and focused through stories that bound the openly enacted violence of kidnapping and murder with the crass commercialization of organ extraction and sale. Scheper-Hughes argued that, within this context, the truth-claims of tales that poor children were murdered for profit appeared entirely reasonable. The validity of the stories, then, was best understood through residents’ experiences of profound social disempowerment:

. . . these seemingly farfetched rumors of body- and organ-snatching have their basis in poor people's perceptions, grounded in a social and in a biotechnomedical reality that their bodies and those of their children might be worth more dead than alive to the rich and powerful (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 58).

This interpretation acknowledged the lack of evidentiary truth of the tales while viewing the motivational and explanatory power of their circulation as a mode of symbolically representing the lived experience of suffering. In other words, for Scheper-Hughes, the “symbolic substitution” of the stories and the ways in which they were “metaphorically true” provided an ethnographically grounded analysis of the ways in which these tales represented the real:

The rumor expresses, albeit obliquely and covertly, the abnormality of the ‘normal’ and the chronic ‘state of emergency’ in which poor people live (Scheper-Hughes 1996: 9).

By linking the tales' power to a social context of constant, overwhelming pressure, she read the “fantastic” quality of the tales through an engagement with the extreme nature of daily suffering. Her argument was that the truth-value of these tales was a function of perspective and social positioning, such that the tales appeared “normal,” rational, and valid to *favela* residents, even as they appeared just the opposite – abnormal, irrational, and false – to those approaching them from a different, less brutal social context. The underlying logic of Scheper-Hughes' claim is intimately bound to anthropology's commitment to taking seriously the significance of context and the specific grounding of social meaning, while expressing a special sensitivity to the lives of the disempowered.

Still, it is important to note that Scheper-Hughes' work moved back and forth between a fascination with the tales' evocative power, prevalence, and demands on accuracy and veracity as well as her commitment to using anthropology to address the meaning of inequality and structural violence. That is, her work accepted the interpretive, symbolic power of the stories of children stolen and murdered for their organs, but remained committed to an epistemology in which these claims were,

in the end, factually untrue.⁴³ Scheper-Hughes was personally and professionally moved by documenting the moral suffering of those with whom she worked. In this regard, she understood the logic of the stories as brutally eloquent in its imagery and capacity to name structural violence. “Little people like ourselves,’ I was told, ‘can have *anything* done to them” (Scheper-Hughes 1996: 5).

In this way, Scheper-Hughes affirmed that the power of the tales’ claims were “true at that indeterminate level between fact and metaphor” (Scheper-Hughes 1993: 5). This allowed the stories to enable, enhance, and express a sense of profound vulnerability:

the rumors feed a culture of fear and suspicion in which ambiguity contributes to the experience of uncertainty and powerlessness, which then present themselves as a kind of ‘fatalism’ and despair (Scheper-Hughes 1996: 245).

Yet, what did it mean to suggest that the tales were true in this way, as opposed to being true in the sense of factually accurate and verifiable? What was “that indeterminate level between fact and metaphor”? Were the stories metaphorical in that they posited a relationship between things that functioned to highlight deeper understandings of an issue, that is, as a mode of representation highlighting modes of signification that extended beyond clear reference to what actually occurred? And, if so, wasn’t that an acknowledgement that the “fantastic” quality of the tales was born of the link between their ability to “stand for” profound experiences as well as their fundamental inaccuracy?

In fact, Scheper-Hughes’ position on the truth-value of the tales and their operation was complex and sometimes misleading, perhaps because in her multiple publications on the subject, she struggled to find an interpretation that adequately engaged her data while also fully respecting the

⁴³ Perhaps, it is Scheper-Hughes’ commitment to engaging injustice with a vision towards modes of political action that could improve these situations that explains her commitment to the vibrancy of a grounding in verifiable, factual reality. This foundation provides an organizing principle for claims of injustice – factual measures of inequality, quantifiable data on inadequate services, etc. – and for the crafting of policy alternatives. The approach demands an engagement with commonly accepted understandings of verifiable conditions of suffering rather than a more expansive and destabilizing vision of how power serves to structure the real. Scheper-Hughes’ claims are useful because they expand the sophistication of a debate on the truthfulness of these sorts of narratives, especially as a useful corrective to those who see these stories as propaganda – factually inaccurate stories manipulated for political ends. In this way, the position expresses a certain functionalism – often bound to some symbolic approaches – in its depiction of the stories’ operation and meaning.

ability of locals to engage issues of truth and verification. At times, she suggested that the processes through which the tales' evoked truth involved an essentially false operation:

The privileging of rumor over reality, of the fear of what can happen over the reality of what has already come to pass, may be seen as a kind of collective delirium (Scheper-Hughes 1996: 245).

That is, the appearance of these tales, in waves that come and go, is a mode of imagining "what can happen," a flight of fancy rooted in the clear knowledge of daily abuse, yet false. In many ways, Scheper-Hughes' own struggles to make sense of the tales she encountered mirrored the divide I found among Guatemalans.

Interestingly, as Scheper-Hughes continued to research the tales, she expressed a greater recognition of the core interpretive problems of her early work, writing "to say . . . that these stories are metaphorically true, operating by means of symbolic substitutions, is not enough" (Scheper-Hughes 2000: 5). In other words, she no longer believed that the tension between the tales false and unverifiable nature and their interpretive power among the poor could not be adequately described by claims of "metaphorical" truth of "symbolic substitutions."

As she looked more deeply into the issue, Scheper-Hughes came to see these "fantastic" stories not as a case of "privileging of rumor over reality," but as expressly bound to very real abuses associated with the trafficking of children for international adoptions. She revisited her prior interpretations of the tales as "metaphorically true," suggesting instead that they represented a key mode of the abusive commercialization of the bodies of poor children through reference to a black market for organs:

At first I interpreted this rumor as expressing the chronic state of emergency . . . experienced by desperately poor people living on the margins of the newly emerging global economy . . . The rumor confused the market in "spare babies" for international adoption with the market in "spare parts" for transplant surgery. Poor and semiliterate parents, tricked or intimidated into surrendering their babies for domestic and/or international adoption, imagined that their babies were wanted as fodder for transplant

surgery. The rumor condensed the black markets for organs and babies into a single frightening story (Scheper-Hughes 2000: 8).

In this way, Scheper-Hughes' analysis shifted towards an explanation of stories as a slight shift, a "confusion," between something both real and verifiable and a version which had elements that were "fantastic" while generally conveying an actual set of crimes. Furthermore, she suggested the organ-stealing narratives appeared entirely reasonable given the many abuses associated with the process of obtaining babies and children (lies, coercion, financial payments, empty promises, possible theft) coupled with the large payments by foreign parents (especially by *favela* standards), and the insertion of the most vulnerable members of the poor and disenfranchised into a predatory and exploitative global market.⁴⁴

Scheper-Hughes' analysis engaged what could be termed the "structural similarity" between the accounts of organ theft and the adoption industry. Her argument was that, within contexts of great poverty and institutionalized corruption, the bodies of babies and children were inserted into a global system of exchange characterized by very real cases of abuse within a context of systematic coercion and fraud, including even the possible abduction of babies and children. The "fantastic" aspect of belief in the tales, then, was rendered sensible and rational in that the poor – vulnerable, illiterate, and

⁴⁴ In her initial analysis, Scheper-Hughes noted a structural similarity between the organ-stealing tales and the international adoption system through which babies and children were sent abroad to join foreign families. While the stated goal of this system was to allow foreign childless couples to be parents (ideally loving these poor children as their own) the industry was premised on the transfer of large amounts of money that, in many respects, commercialized children's bodies and their "export" to distant places. As Scheper-Hughes explained, this encouraged suspicion and deep questions about what was really going on, especially where these processes involved illegal and fraudulent documents, criminal networks and a "black market." She explained, "This trafficking involves the barter and sale of human beings, coercion, and the uprooting of children from their homes and sometimes from their cultures and countries of origin. Finally, we cannot eliminate the suspicion, kept alive in the form of a strange and outrageous rumor that refuses to die, that within the clandestine international black market in babies, there are some violations resulting, more often than we may know, in the medical abuse or death of such children (Scheper-Hughes 1996: 245-6). Here, Scheper-Hughes highlighted the way in which the power and persistence of these stories supported the very real possibility ("we cannot eliminate the suspicion") that what they described was, in fact, true. Yet, her position was complex. Was she suggesting that *favela* residents and other disempowered social actors had reason to be suspicious and, from their perspective, the tales could be reasonably believed to be true? Or, were these stories best understood as "a strange and outrageous rumor," that is, as something odd and impossible?

understandably suspicious of global power, trade, and extraction – connected actual phenomena with these stories. And, they could surely be “excused” from this “confusion” given the conditions in which they lived and the information they could easily access.

Yet, as she continued her research, Scheper-Hughes engagement with the idea that the tales referenced something quite true increased in intensity and focus. And, she shifted her analysis from the link between the stories and the international adoption industry towards a global investigation of what she saw as the very real criminal world of actual organ trafficking. Her engagement with the tales shifted such that their “fantastic” quality turned out to be a window into a previously hidden global black market trade in body parts, in Brazil and around the world. She created a multi-year research and advocacy project entitled, “Medicine, Markets, and Bodies/Organs Watch” (Scheper Hughes 2000: 192). She later founded an NGO named “Organs Watch” that focused on investigating the international organ trade and seeking to create and stimulate policy responses to prevent or possibly end this industry (Scheper-Hughes 2002, 2012).⁴⁵ Scheper-Hughes’ initial efforts to interpret “a strange and outrageous rumor” led her to what many believe has been path-breaking process of uncovering and addressing the international trade in organs.⁴⁶ In this way, Scheper-Hughes directed her analysis away from an engagement with the fantastic and towards an advocacy-oriented investigation of the

⁴⁵ “On Monday, Nov. 8, a new Organs Watch program, the only one of its kind in the world, will be launched by four professors - two from the University of California, Berkeley and two from Columbia University Medical School. Their new documentation center located at UC Berkeley will investigate reports and rumors of human rights abuses surrounding organ trafficking, identify hot spots where abuse may be occurring, and begin to define the line between ethical transplant surgery and practices that are exploitative or corrupt. ‘Transplant surgery has entered a global market and we need to keep a close watch on that,’ said Nancy Scheper-Hughes, a UC Berkeley professor of anthropology who has been a driving force behind the new center. ‘In the organs trade business, abuses creep in before you know it. Research in several countries over the past five years has shown that trading in human organs has developed along class, gender, and racial lines, with organs flowing from the poor to the rich, from women to men and from brown- and black-skinned to white-skinned peoples,’ said Scheper-Hughes.” University of California, Berkeley Press Release, Nov. 3, 1999. <http://berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/99legacy/11-03-1999b.html>

⁴⁶ For example, her work played a role in the arrest of a Brooklyn rabbi working with an Eastern European crime boss that, “had over the years established shady transplant deals and kidney transplant outlets and connections in Turkey, Moldova, the Ukraine, Brazil, Germany, South Africa, the Philippines, China, Kosovo, Azerbaijan, Columbia, and the United States.” (Scheper Hughes 2010).

actual black market in organs, which she found to include various forms of overt violence, coercion, and crime. Yet, interestingly, this move towards an investigation of criminal networks led Scheper-Hughes' expertise as an anthropologist and scholarly reputation to be placed under serious scrutiny.⁴⁷

Within anthropology, Scheper-Hughes is the single most significant scholar for engaging in a sustained investigation of the “fantastic” tales of organ-stealing *gringos*. Yet, the ways in which her interpretations shifted over time reveals a fascinating move away from the complex challenges of making sense of the truth-value of unsubstantiated stories of predatory figures which elude verification and towards advocacy efforts to expose a brutal and hidden industry that *actually* benefits the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor and disempowered through activities that appear very close to what the tales described.⁴⁸

Michael Taussig: Revelation of Enchantment with the Devil in Latin America – Michael Taussig's seminal work *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism* analyzed rituals related to the image of the devil in South America among poor wage laborers working in mines in Bolivia and on plantations in Columbia. The work was (and remains) an influential example of a unique form of creative, politically

⁴⁷ In her writing, she responds with a certain outrage and defensiveness that reveals the difficulty of transitioning from the academy to the forefront of advocacy on a shadowy issue, “So, take the ethnographer, she has chosen to investigate a hidden and taboo subject, as forbidden a topic as witchcraft, incest, or pedophilia . . . Following the new paths in the global economy, she discovers not one but *several* organ trade circuits and triangles circulating body parts and living bodies – buyers, sellers, brokers and surgeons – often traveling in reverse directions. She finds that strange rumors and metaphors do at times harden into ‘real’ ethnographic facts. She learns how effectively organ theft jokes, science fiction novels, and urban legends conceal and distract attention from the ‘really real’ covert traffic in humans and their body parts . . . But once her writings begin to give credence to the material grounds underlying some of these rumors, she finds herself isolated her research disvalued as too ‘positioned,’ too engaged, and therefore lacking in methodological rigor or theoretical discernment. Worse, she is labeled as naïve for she has begun to buy into the assumptive world of her informants, many of them poor, Third World, medically and technologically unsophisticated” (Scheper-Hughes 2004: 31).

⁴⁸ “I have mapped the circuits of trade and illicit trafficking that bring strangers from different ethnic groups, classes, regions, religious backgrounds, political affiliations, and nations into intimate contact for the procurement and transfer of tissues and organs. These transactions range from consensual contracts (formal and informal), to coerced deal, to criminal trafficking verging on transnational kidnapping by local and international brokers involves in a multi-million-dollar business that extends life to some highly-privileged patient-clients at the expense of other more expendable and anonymous bodies of ‘non-patients’” (Scheper-Hughes 2004: 33).

engaged anthropology, connecting a consideration of the power of stories with an investigation of the broad implications of the lived experience of disempowerment.

According to Taussig, the devil was used to negotiate local populations' engagement with capitalism as "vividly unnatural, even as evil" (Taussig 1980: 3). He analyzed multiple references to the devil in distinct locations as a process through which individuals and communities made sense of a repressive and demanding social and economic system which they experienced as predatory, brutal, and dangerous. While his work in Columbia was grounded in richly evocative ethnography revealing the specifics of local reality, his larger analytic objective was to use the imagery of the devil as a broad critical reflection on the mechanisms through which capitalist social and economic systems defined and limited conditions of understanding and representation.

Taussig's work focused on an issue that he acknowledged appeared as "fantastic and magical." His interest in the devil was bound to his understanding that it "is a stunningly apt symbol of the alienation experienced by peasants as they enter the ranks of the proletariat" (Taussig 1980: xi). His work was influenced by Marxist theory (we rarely hear terms like "proletariat" these days) and expressive of a sensitivity to the ways in which class relations and socio-economic systems impact, determine, and structure modes of consciousness. Taussig engaged cultural forms – especially phenomena that appeared "fantastic"– as interpretive mechanisms that gave voice to power relationships which reflected the true ground and operation of a repressive social order. These practices and associated modes of representation enabled and expressed inequalities of power through interpretive schema and epistemology that revealed the impact of oppression on modes of thought and the possibilities of expression. That is, social and economic domination demanded an internalization of relations among social actors which established the ground for "truth," forcing the oppressed to seek alternate means of expressing their lived experience, of rendering it visible. Taussig highlighted the significance of those claims, images, and related narratives – such as the intensely

motivating claims about the devil – which functioned at the limits of the dominant demands of established truth as modes of gaining insight into the meaning of conditions of domination.

His reference to “commodity fetishism” in the title directed the reader to the imposing, reality-defining operations of capitalism as read through the image of the devil. He understood this figure as “symbolizing” key elements of the political economy and social construction of meaning in the sites he researched, and evocative of the larger global system. In Bolivian mines and Colombian plantations, the devil was a mechanism through which oppressed workers expressed their interactions with a domineering system that reified the world and transformed social reality through a cruel logic of extraction and excess. Workers engaged “the redeeming power of the antichrist” as a mode of resistance and critical interpretation. The figure of the devil allowed him to both pose and answer his intriguing question, “What contradictions in the social experience does the fetish of the spirit of evil mediate?” (Taussig 1988: xi). For Taussig, workers do not worship the devil. Rather, the situation is just the opposite; they integrate its richly evocative power within their daily practices to give voice to the inherent contradictions and cruelties of brutal commercial exploitation. And, this semiotic process requires an engagement with the “fantastic.”

That is, what is most instructive about Taussig’s work is not his reference to “symbolism” or Marxist theory, but rather his use of the “exotic ideas of some rural people” (Taussig 1988: 3) to question the foundational assumptions that render our world stable and knowable:

My strategy is to view certain fantastic and magical reactions to our nonfantastic reality as part of a critique of the modern mode of production (Taussig 1980: 10).

The goal of his study, then, was to use the “fantastic” tales of his informants to question the solidity, logic, and apparent naturalness of “our nonfantastic reality” and, in so doing, to reveal our world as socially constructed in ways that blind us to the complex qualities of human experience and political possibilities. He suggested that our understanding of truth-claims was suspect, or at least constructed

in a manner in which ideological operations obscured a fuller, more profound understanding of social reality.

Taussig proposed that his approach was a necessary corrective to “the standard anthropological question” (Taussig 1980: 6). That is, rather than ask, “Why do people in a foreign culture respond in the way they do to . . . the development of capitalism?” he argued that an encounter with the logic of “fantastic” stories, such as workers’ fascination with the evocative imagery and power of the devil, required that we “ask about the reality associated with our society” (Taussig 1980: 6). Yet, for Taussig, this process of interrogating one’s own beliefs was a liberational act that would help us face our own society’s “enchantment of itself.” He viewed his work as a means of piercing what he termed the “phantom objectivity” of our world – the expression of dominant capitalist culture’s demands on what is “true” – which he understood to be a construction in the service of empowered interests.

In this way, Taussig saw his analysis of the tales of the devil in a faraway place as a means of intellectual liberation. This is because the stories he wrote about provided tools for grasping the idea that objectivity is constructed and its mode of representation served to obscure rather than reveal the truth of society:

The task before us is to liberate ourselves from the fetishism and phantom objectivity with which society obscures itself, to take issue with the ether of naturalness that confuses and disguises social relations . . . we must ask about the reality associated with our society. For this is the question that their fantastic reactions to our nonfantastic reality force upon us, if only we have the will to take heed (Taussig 1980: 5-6).

Despite his various references to the “symbolism” of the devil, Taussig criticized many approaches to the symbolic, such as classic ideas of Emile Durkheim, Mary Douglas, and other social theorists who viewed symbols as collective representations or emanations of societal concerns, that is, as signs of something else. Instead, Taussig suggested the strangeness of what are often reviewed as “symbolic” practices, beliefs, and stories (as well as their associated truth-claims), provided insight into the

limitations of our commitment and reliance on the epistemology committed to reviewing these social practices as reflections on an established and verifiable real.

Taussig's position relates to the panic of the *robaniños* in that he recognized that underlying the "fantastic" quality of emotionally compelling narratives there often lies what might be termed a "truer truth," that is, modes of expression that give voice to lived experience. The power of such stories is cannot be explained by claiming that they "symbolize" or "stand for" something that is actually real, but rather that the tales, as told, encode liberational possibilities that extend beyond the confines of accepted epistemological categories. Analyzing these types of narratives through detailed ethnographic engagement may enable a critical process of revealing our own limited modes of conceptualizing truth and revealing the ways in which we are bound by our own enchantments.

Taussig's position is a radical one in that he suggests the value of engaging "fantastic" tales is to gain insight into the core limitations of our way of thinking, the epistemological assumptions we rely upon to make sense of the world, and our very mode of consciousness. In this way, the "fantastic" is not "fantastic" at all; it is a window into our flawed assumptions and our grounding in a social and economic system that demands the subjugation of many. Taussig argues that we need these sorts of tales – and especially their critical perspective on truth-claims and modes of verification – to engage the profound structural violence and cruelty of our world.

In this way, Taussig's position on the issue of factual accuracy and the related stance on the terms of what constitutes truth differs quite a bit from that of Scheper-Hughes. Whereas Scheper-Hughes was committed to the idea that a factual verification of core claims lay at the heart of research (and epistemology), Taussig argued that the fantastic imagery of the disempowered was best

interpreted as a powerful mode of undermining core assumptions as to the nature of the real.⁴⁹ Taussig's approach undermined the possibility of verification by suggesting that domineering systems of understanding the world created the conditions for the possibility of such claims which further expressed and encoded relations of power and, therefore, could be approached by seeking factual accuracy. He affirmed that the apparent irrationalities of odd behavior – such as the stories about the devil that he studied – were not signs to be read, but were embodiments of lived experience that revealed a difference in “categories of thought.”

The point is that we can abandon mechanical materialism and become aware that facts and things stand in some way as signs for social relations. We then look for the meaning of these signs in this way. But unless we realize that social relations thus signified are themselves signs and social constructs defined by categories of thought that are also the product of society and history, we remain victims of and apologists for the semiotic that we are seeking to understand (Taussig 1980: 9).

Taussig suggested that our sense of the troubling truth-value of the “fantastic” was actually a sign of a failure of our own imagination, revealing fundamental limitations in a capacity to grasp claims made from outside a set of taken-for-granted assumptions. Taussig's research and analysis enabled the “revelation of enchantment” as a means to question the semiotic operations that limited and enabled understanding.

This study builds on Taussig's affirmative engagement with the stories as complexly significant of the analytic limitations of one's positionality, especially when seeking to understand the experiences and practices of those living far different lives. In addition, there is great value in his critical review of an analytic tendency towards “symbolic” interpretation, through which the belief in something “fantastic” is explained away by reference to something else and something clearly “real.”

⁴⁹ Interestingly Schepers-Hughes agreed with Taussig's depiction of “the doubleness of social being” within which “the normal” is thrown into critique by acts and tales that question normalcy, even as they require the solidity of the expected to engage in modes of rupture (Schepers-Hughes 1993: 232-233).

However, Taussig's focus on upending our own systems of understanding forces interpretation of the fantastic to a domain of self-critical epistemology, thereby side-stepping any number of otherwise evocative, useful, and revealing analyses. Similarly, his open affirmation of a pre-capitalist system and the depiction of a richly coherent and supportive signifying system were imbued with a certain romanticism, both in terms of its liberational vision and its engagement with the realm of magic in a manner that sought to embrace the open possibilities of such belief.

Luise White: "Story-Centered" Engagement with African Vampires – In *Speaking With Vampires*, Luise White analyzed rumors of *wazimoto*, bloodsucking beings in Central Africa – which she termed “vampires” – and their relationship to colonialism and the process of making sense of history. These tales were similar to the tales of organ-stealing *gringos* in that they have motivated substantial public concern as well as various acts of popular violence.⁵⁰ White was drawn to the subject in part because of the tales' motivating power, but also as an inquiry into questions of representation and truth. In fact, when she first encountered these stories she describes herself as “incredulous” and was surprised that anyone would believe these tales, “I learned the word for ‘crazy’ in Swahili in order to describe the woman who told it to me” (White 2000: xi).

Yet, over time, she grew fascinated with the stories' wide prevalence throughout many regions of Africa and came to see the tales as a powerful critique of colonialism and a complexly resonant reflection on contemporary contexts. White's work looked at how stories of vampires provided material that was useful for historical inquiry, engaging questions of the tales' veracity, their usefulness for providing insight into social reality, and their operation. She understood that the tales' power

⁵⁰ The book begins by quoting a 1948 letter from a European provincial commissioner who describes a case involving a riot linked to tales of Mumiani people, or bloodsucking, vampire-like figures, “A man . . . started a story that the Fire Brigade were Mumiani people and had been seen walking around with buckets filled with blood, and had taken a woman as a prisoner at the Fire Station with intent to take her blood . . . The story ran round rapidly and aroused a great deal of excitement . . . a larger and angry mob gathered and started to get rough . . .” (White 2000: 3) The case has clear links to the panic of the *robaniños* and the attacks on institutions of state authority.

resided in how they inspired local people and expressed issues that resonated powerfully among those who told them. The stories did a certain “work” that was unique to their narrative form, such that these “fantastic” claims might “articulate and contextualize experience with greater accuracy than eyewitness accounts” and other representations of social reality (White 2000: 5).

In explaining her approach, she rejected two possible interpretations. First, she set aside the position that the stories could be dismissed as idle tales or insignificant superstitions (a position not unlike her initial reaction). This was because that approach provided no analytic insight, failed to reckon with the relevance of the stories for the populations where she worked, and appeared to disregard and disrespect the ideas and practices of local peoples.

Second, she refused to accept an “attempt to explain these stories, to show how they made sense of the world Africans experienced.” This is more or less the approach taken by most scholars and commentators reviewed in this study in seeking to make sense of the panic of the *robaniños*. White rejected the seductive and reassuringly reductionist position that the belief in “fantastic” tales was a means of processing a variety of “anxieties” about a very real and challenging world. In this way, she rejected interpretations that the accounts about vampires are really “about colonialism, about technology, about health” (White 2000: 5). Accepting this form of analysis would rob the stories of their vibrancy, immediacy, and value as a particular form of social practice. It would explain away the tales as “really being about something else” and thereby disrespecting their value and fundamentally misunderstanding their operation. This is an important point, since the “fantastic” qualities that she originally found shocking, called out for an interpretation that might easily lead to a mode of controlled, rationalizing explanation that served to settle the discomfort of their strange claims by analyzing away the idea that people affirmed the reality of something so odd, impossible, and unverifiable. White rejected the idea that the vampire tales “simply deformed actual events” (White 2000: 5) choosing instead an apparently simple, yet analytically nuanced approach.

At the core of her analysis, was the position that she “takes these stories at face value, as everyday descriptions of extraordinary occurrences” (White 2000: 5). White’s approach to the vampire tales she collected was that they must be understood, above all, as stories told, received, interpreted, and processed on local terms and with a focus on their narrative nature. However, this position did not fully explain the stories; rather it defined a foundational, methodological, and conceptual position from which her interpretation proceeded.

She still had to reckon with the “fantastic” quality of the stories. In one exchange with an informant she asked about qualities of the vampires and was told, “No, I never heard anything like that.” She responded with other questions about their nature and heard an affirmative answer. So, she asked, “That means these stories were true?” and her informant responded, “Of course they were” (White 2000: 32).

All of this suggests a certitude in the veracity of the vampire tales coupled with a key fieldwork-based insight: the stories’ truth was both the subject and outcome of their telling, as with the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*. White criticized what she viewed as a dominant approach among scholars to determine “which parts of the account are true and thus useful in historical reconstruction” (White 2000: 33), a means by which the stories represented imperfect accounts that included elements of actual practice that, with proper analysis, could yield an accurate description of real events. She suggested that in the case of these “fantastic” tales “the speakers seem engaged in problematizing what is true” (White 2000: 33) and proposed that this was a significant element of the work being done through their circulation.

White was clear that the complexity of the processes at work with the tales was not a function of the idea that the truth-claims themselves were uncertain, but rather that these sorts of tales enabled a process of truth-seeking and truth-testing of great social relevance. “It is not that truth is fluid, but that it has to be established by continually listening to and evaluating new evidence” (White 2000: 33).

For White, the issue of the tales' truthfulness was not as central as others, such as Scheper-Hughes and Taussig, might suggest. Rather, "Africans' understandings of these stories went beyond assessing their truth" (White 2000: 41), such that grasping the larger meaning of the tales required an analytic focus that was not grounded in the issue of factual accuracy or possible verification:

people do not speak with truth, with a concept of the accurate description of what they saw, to say what they mean, but they construct and repeat stories that carry the values and meanings that most forcibly get their points across (White 2000: 30).

White based her decision to interpret the vampire rumors as a way of reviewing their value in negotiating meaning and presenting an active interpretation by engaging with the methodology of oral history (Ritchie 2003; Rothenberg 2000; Sommer and Quinlan 2003; White, Cohen and Miescher 2001; Yow 2005). In this sense, the solidity of her data was bound to an interpretive commitment to take people seriously through the ways in which they engage their lives and their world.

In addition, White suggested that when someone presented a version of the story, they "risked disbelief and derision" (White 2000: 41), and it was only through repetition, local analysis, consideration, and multiple re-telling that the tales circulation created a sense of narrative stability which enabled locally-grounded social claims:

each repetition, each repudiation, each amendment and refinement did not make a story more true or more false, but made it a more immediate way to talk about other things. Every argument or discussion a vampire story generated created a debate – stories could be evaluated on the merits of their contents . . . Vampire stories could be refashioned and made personal or local by a few names and examples (White 2000: 41).

For White, the stories were a mode of critically engaging the world through a mechanism that enabled flexibility and imagistic interpretation. Still, White did not shy away from the core challenges of tales of this type:

But, did Africans believe these stories? The answer, which may not be that important to my purposes, is probably both yes and no. Or, to put it another way, Africans' understanding of these stories went beyond assessing their truth. . . (White 2000: 41).

White suggests that the tales power was not grounded in the truthfulness of their claims, but in the interpretive liberty granted by the loose link of their content to verifiable reality. As she explained:

Their very falseness gives them meaning; they are a way of talking that encourages a reassessment of everyday experience to address the workings of power and knowledge and how regimes use them (White 2000: 43).

White acknowledged the special power of certain types of narratives to give voice to the richness and complexity of human experience. By taking “these stories at face value,” White grounded her engagement with the “fantastic” tales of vampires in the communicative possibilities revealed through narrative as “ways to talk about the conflicts and contradictions that gave them meaning and power” (White 2000: 312).

Interestingly, it is through her acceptance of the stories, as told, that their value and operation was revealed:

The imaginary makes the real, just as it makes more imaginings: it is the inclusion of both that gives depth to historical analyses, and, if not some certainty, at least solid grounds on which to assess motivations, causes, and ideas (White 2000: 308).

White’s analytic grounding in the tales, enabled an approach that revealed the power of “the imaginary,” not as a mode of engaging in a process of “fantasy,” but rather as a way of producing conversations and contestations about complex issues of identity, power, and social and political relations. It was because the vampire tales were “fantastic” that they provided a space for questioning truth-claims about broad issues of social meaning. Furthermore, White argued that this process could only be truly understood by avoiding an analysis that sought to explain away the lack of factual veracity of the stories and instead focused on the tales as told.

White viewed the analytic challenge of engaging the “fantastic” not as a question of factual accuracy and verifiability – that is, whether the tales were true or not – but rather as a question of how to grasp “how people interpret what happened to them” by respecting “the way they describe it” (White 2000: 312). In adopting this position, White openly rejected many academic interpretations of

related phenomena that sought to explain factual inaccuracy regarding a deeper set of social issues. In fact, she directed special criticism to the work of Scheper-Hughes, Taussig, and others working in the region suggesting that, “Scholars of Latin America have perhaps provided the best evasions” (White 2000: 44). White described interpretations that viewed these fantastic tales as metaphorical or symbolic to be relying on “the usual polite academic terms for false” (White 2000: 42). She viewed these scholars as engaged in serious work that was fundamentally flawed.

White found that attempting to make sense of stories, rumors, and claims that lacked factual veracity, in a manner that acknowledged the problematic nature of their truth-claims while embracing their fundamental validity, was an approach that was doomed to fail:

All these analyses, important as they are, seek to explain belief and the imaginary to an observer; they explain why someone might believe what is to most of the authors make-believe (White 2000:44).

Unlike the scholars she criticized, White chose not to present the tales as “make-believe” and instead accepted her informants’ words without subjecting the vampire stories she collected to her evaluation of their truthfulness. White sought to reveal the meaning of these stories as they served to interpret social relations through their circulation and, at the same time, avoided the imposition of her own interpretive demands on the truthfulness of the phenomenon:

How is the historian to tease meaning out of such tales? To dismiss them as fears and superstitions simply begs the question. To reduce them to anxieties – about colonialism, about technology, about health – strips them of their intensity and their detail. Indeed, to attempt to explain these stories, to show how they made sense of the world Africans experienced, would be to turn them into mechanistic African responses; it would reduce them to African misunderstandings of colonial interventions; it would be to argue that these stories simply deformed actual events and procedures. Such an analysis would turn the resulting history away from these stories and back to the events Africans somehow misunderstood (White 2000: 5).

By focusing on the tales’ circulation and use in local contexts she directed interpretation away from the various modes of making sense of “fantastic” tales and towards her understanding of how they worked in practice.

For White, then, vampire stories were contextually grounded modes of managing meaning and achieving critical discourse regarding the complexities of a social world. They were modes of negotiating common understandings through communication, the exchange of ideas, and “talking.”

[T]he use of language is the analysis by which people ascertain what is true and what is false, what they should fear and what they can profit from. It is through talking that people learn about cause and intention (White 2000: 33).

This position provided insight into the issue of truth-claims and verification in that the “Vampire stories are neither true nor false, in the sense that they do not have to be proven beyond their being talked about” (White 2000: 36). White set aside the issue of verifiability because it served as a barrier to understanding.

The point of reviewing in detail the work of Scheper-Hughes, Taussig and White is to help build on the arguments already introduced in this study and to deepen engagement with core issues of truth and verifiability that lie at the heart of this study’s analysis of the panic of the *robaniños*. These three scholars each approached the complexity of addressing and interpreting phenomena that they understood (at least initially) to be “fantastic” phenomena: Scheper-Hughes engaged “bizarre rumors” and “seemingly farfetched” stories; Taussig sought to problematize “fantastic and magical reactions to our nonfantastic reality;” and White explained that she learned the local word for “crazy” in her initial engagement with the tales of vampires.

While they each pursued their analyses through focused ethnographic research (as well as historical and comparative studies), their work reveals distinct approaches to related questions about truth, representation, and meaning. For Scheper-Hughes, her analysis of tales of children kidnapped and killed to extract their organs was initially viewed as a form of “symbolic substitution,” followed by a move towards linking the tales to ever greater modes of verification and accuracy, first through a process of “confusion and overlap” as linked to the international adoption industry, and then as a means of “accurately naming a hidden crime” by focusing on the hidden global black market for

internal organs, some of which are stolen. For Taussig, the process of making sense of oppressed workers tales about the devil was a means of the “revelation of enchantment,” a way to pierce the limitations of our ways of thinking which were bound to and expressive of a domineering and violent social and economic system. And, for White, the widely told tales of vampires in sub-Saharan Africa was best understood through a “story-centered” approach that side-stepped questions of truth and verification in favor of engaging the tales as they operate in the places where they are told. Table 1 provides a comparative overview of these three positions.

Table 1 Overview of Approached to Fantastic Tales

<u>Scholar</u>	<u>Scheper-Hughes</u>	<u>Taussig</u>	<u>White</u>
Phenomenon studied	Accounts of poor children killed for commercialization of their organs in Brazilian shantytowns and elsewhere.	Use of devil by miners in Bolivia and plantation workers in Colombia.	Tales of vampires in Central Africa.
Mode(s) of interpretation	(1) “Symbolic substitution;” (2) Confusion with structurally similar real practices; (3) Names real practice.	“Revelation of enchantment.”	“Story-centered.”
Explanation in relation to factual veracity	(1) Metaphorically true in naming experiences of suffering in ways that give voice to what is factually true; (2) Rumors of organ theft are so similar to the actual practice of international adoptions that it can be reasonably assumed to be true; (3) Identifies actual criminal practices within the black market trade in organs.	Provides a powerful illustration of the idea that factual veracity rests on categories of thought and meaning expressive of and structured by economic and social systems, allowing for a self-critical engagement with epistemology.	Avoids the issue of factual veracity in her analysis focusing instead on how the tales telling and circulation allows for specific forms of social practice.
Approach to other scholars	Criticizes the lack of political engagement and willingness to follow research that leads towards advocacy and action.	Criticizes the symbolic approaches that seek to explain the fantastic by reference to that which is verifiable and real.	Criticizes the attempt to romanticize the fantastic beliefs and the refusal to engage the validity of verification and the real.

Each of these three scholars wrestled with the difficulties of accepting the *content* and *operation* of what was expressed as richly and complexly meaningful to those who circulated them, even as they acknowledged and sought to theorize and explain the complex challenges associated with issues of factual veracity. Scheper-Hughes sought to make sense of the belief in the fantastic by forging relations with the real – from symbolic to confusion with actual process to naming hidden criminality. Taussig engaged the interpretive process as a mode of questioning accepted categories of meaning, with the fantastic serving to illustrate the link between approaches to reality as bound to socio-economic structures. White focused on how the tales she studied served to enable certain contestations of meaning through their circulation.

In this study, I embrace the seriousness of these theorists' attempts to make sense of complex and challenging phenomena while deeply respecting the people with whom they worked. I build on the richness of their ethnographic commitments and their willingness to seek to engage the complex qualities of truth and verification raised by the subjects they studied. Yet, the approach taken here diverges from this body of work through my interest in the narrative form as central to understanding the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* and to the special challenges posed by the role of narratives and the narrative process in a social panic.

4. Antecedents to the Panic: Guatemala's International Adoption Industry

In late 1993, the immediate antecedents of the panic of the organ-stealing *gringos* were multiple stories about stolen children, many of whom were believed to be trafficked for international adoptions. Guatemala has long represented an important source of internationally adopted children, particularly for couples in the U.S.

In the 1990s, in the lead-up to the panic, the number of adoptions of Guatemalan children by American parents increased significantly, nearly doubling from 257 in 1990 to 512 in 1993, just prior

to the panic of *robaniños*.⁵¹ At the time, Guatemala was second only to Korea in the number of children adopted by American parents. In fact, the U.S represented by far the most significant destination for adopted Guatemalan children as the number of international adoptions to American parents in a typical year was over three times larger than domestic adoptions (that is, of Guatemalan children to Guatemalan parents) and was greater than the total of all the other major receiving nations combined.⁵²

Scholars, journalists, political analysts, and others have consistently cited the very real, complexly evocative, and systematically corrupt system of international adoptions from Guatemala to the U.S. as a providing the foundation for the veracity of the “fantastic” tales of organ-stealing *gringos*. Some have argued that a critical local perspective on international adoptions “opens the way” to organ-stealing tales by presenting an interpretation of relations of global inequality that are grounded in actual abuses (Campion-Vincent 2005). A key element of this link is the idea that the actual abuses of power and mechanisms of corruption within the international adoption industry operated in a manner such that “organ theft and murder appears logical and plausible” (Campion-Vincent 2005: 83). From this perspective, the apparently irrational or unbelievable tales “made sense” in that they served as exaggerations of a real transnational trade within which children are actually stolen and sent abroad for reasons that are not always easy to understand.

Some have viewed the tales as a critical and empowering response to the abuses of international adoptions. In this way, the tales’ “fantastic” qualities are interpreted as a mode of resistance on the part of the disempowered with potential real world policy benefits:

The baby parts rumor also brought international attention to the inter-country adoption process and, more importantly, to the criminal infrastructure surrounding adoption in many countries. Unscrupulous social workers, lawyers, government officials, baby farms, and illegal foster homes all came under increased international

⁵¹ United States Government. “Significant Source Countries of Immigrant Orphans.” November 7, 1996.

⁵² Guatemalan government adoption statistics for 1995 were as follows: United States – 390; France – 129; Guatemala – 110; Canada – 60; England – 35; Italy – 22; Ireland – 22; Belgium – 22; Spain – 21; Israel – 17; Germany – 15; all other countries less than 15 (Procuraduría General de la Nación, Guatemala 1996).

scrutiny. Evidence of black market traffic in children prompted the United States, Canada, and Colombia to require DNA testing to verify that the person giving the child up for adoption is the mother. In addition, the rumor encouraged parents to question the motives of social workers and government officials who are supposed to counsel them impartially. Thus, the baby parts rumor compelled a sustained local and international dialogue on inter-country adoptions that addresses the claims raised by it (Samper 2002: 24).

From this perspective, the tales' broad popular support served as a mode of informal organizing in opposition to a looming threat. The stories exhibited a sense of creativity in framing in which "Latin American people the wherewithal to construct inter-country adoption as a global social problem" (Samper 2002: 25).⁵³

While divergent in their mode of interpreting the link between the panic and international adoptions these and other positions were unified in understanding the fantastic stories of organ-stealing *gringos* as rendered sensible through their reflection on the very real realm of abusive adoptions. While these perspectives did not map perfectly onto Scheper-Hughes' scholarship, they involved a similar interpretive stance of "symbolic substitution." That is, they understood the tales' power among locals as bound to a process through which the stories of organ-stealing *gringos* were built upon their structural and semiotic links, above all, to very real abuses.

This interpretation explained the panic of the *robaniños* as sensible because the motivating tales of organ-stealing *gringos* mirrored the idea, process, structure, and *reality* of international adoptions. The international adoption industry in Guatemala involved the actual transfer of poor children from

⁵³ While the panic focused attention on serious abuses within international adoptions from Guatemala to the U.S., it had very little impact on policy. Following the panic, the previously rapid rise of international adoptions slowed as the number of babies and children transferred from Guatemala to the U.S. plateaued. Guatemalan immigrant orphan visas to the U.S. dropped from 512 in 1993 to 436 in 1994, and then plateaued from 1994 through 1996 with 436 in 1994, 449 in 1995, and 427 in 1996. U.S. Department of State (Rotabi, Morris and Weil 2008: 11). As one U.S. government official explained, "The hysteria generated by this rumor has had an adverse impact on intercountry adoptions" (USIA 1996). This was viewed by officials of both governments as a sign of the malicious power of the tales' false representation and the harm enabled by baseless rumors. The panic heightened local, national, and international interest in abusive practices associated with the adoption industry, but it suspended the increased transfer of Guatemalan babies and children to the U.S. from 1994 through 1996.

Guatemala to wealthy and empowered *gringos*. The foreigners then spirited these young bodies off to a distant place; America, “el norte,” the U.S.A., an iconic site for Guatemalans, known through media representations and rapidly expanding migration, but nevertheless mysterious and deeply imagined.

The structural similarities between international adoptions from Guatemala and the tales of organ-stealing *gringos* are, in fact, quite clear, as many analysts have suggested. However, seeking to make sense of the panic of the *robaniños* by arguing these irrational beliefs are little more than a slightly exaggerated version of something quite real robs the phenomenon of its “fantastic” quality. That is, while this interpretive move is seductive, the approach closes off an engagement with what is most interesting about the tales and the resulting panic. Instead, I argue that these narratives express specific semiotic tensions whose resistance to verification is a core element of the signifying power.

Yet, even those who interpreted international adoptions as an explanation for the locals’ embrace of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* may well be missing the complex ways in this industry was understood locally. That is even as adoptions of Guatemalan babies and children to the U.S. (and other *gringo* sites) was both real and enmeshed in multiple forms of abuse, my fieldwork revealed that these practices did not exist as clear, verifiable facts for locals, but were more closely associated with a resistance to verification, profound uncertainty as to its true nature, and an expectation of near complete impunity for those responsible. That is, the international adoption industry appeared to locals as quite similar to the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*. To follow this argument, it is useful to outline in greater detail the nature and structure of international adoptions in Guatemala, at the time of the panic and afterwards, with a focus on the difficulty of ascertaining the legitimacy of claims made about its corrupt and illegal nature and the challenges faced by both Guatemalan and U.S. officials.

While international adoptions were of very limited overall significance to the nation’s economy, they were an extremely lucrative business for those Guatemalans directly involved in the

industry.⁵⁴ The system was set up in such a way that neither the adoptive parents in the U.S. nor the U.S.-based adoption agency have much to do with either the procurement of children or their care prior to legal adoption. To obtain babies and young children, intermediaries search out potential adoptive mothers. There have been numerous allegations of improprieties, including misrepresentations, broken promises, threats, and even child theft to obtain children for international adoptions, as described in a U.S. government cable (all adoptions to the U.S. are processed through the Consulate as well as through several Guatemalan government agencies):

Child stealing and baby trafficking do occur in Guatemala. Adoption fraud, namely the presentation of a false “birth mother” to irrevocably release a child for emigration and adoption as required by U.S. law has been the most significant and time consuming visa problem encountered by the consular section over the past several years...Establishing the reality in these problematic cases, which number about 30 per year, is further complicated by the high incidence of corruption and civil document fraud in Guatemala.⁵⁵

The problematic situation of international adoptions in Guatemala at the time of these stories (and onwards) was a function of “an uncontrolled legal environment ripe for abuse by the greedy and unscrupulous.”⁵⁶

At the time of the panic of the *robaniños*, adoptive parents typically paid \$20,000 to \$30,000 for the adoption process. Generally, money was paid by adoptive parents to an international adoption agency. The agencies assisted with the required U.S. paperwork and usually contracted out all work in country to local attorneys, including finding a baby (or pregnant woman), filling out all necessary forms, and managing all of the local legal processes. Guatemalan lawyers assisting with adoptions to the U.S. generally earned from \$3,000 to \$6,000 for each adoption. They commonly hired

⁵⁴ Guatemalan lawyers earn somewhere between \$3,000 and \$6,000 per adoption in 1996, defining the industry as a \$1.5 million and \$3 million annual business. Given that international adoptions were controlled by a relatively small number of attorneys and their assistants, the economic benefits for those involved were substantial.

⁵⁵ United States government cable, Guatemala 002869, March 12, 1994.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

intermediaries for much of the work, including the actual search for babies or pregnant women. These intermediaries commonly searched for young mothers in difficult personal or financial situations. The intermediaries also played a role in ensuring that pregnant women received quality prenatal care and that the babies or children were treated well while waiting for the adoption process to be finalized. It is during this time that pregnant women, babies, and young children were cared for in houses commonly known as *casas-cuna* (literally “cradle-houses”).

Women who put up their children for adoption commonly received cash payments, although this violated domestic law and the foreign adoption regulations in most nations. Yet, even where mothers received money for placing their infants and children up for adoption, the payments were relatively small (and were commonly much less than what was promised, often presented as deductions for housing, food, medical care, etc.), and always represented very small sums in comparison to the larger cost of the transaction.

Generally, the women who gave up their children for adoption were poor, uneducated, and vulnerable. Many were young women from the countryside who became pregnant while working as maids in the city, sometimes victims of rape by men living in the homes where they worked. Others were prostitutes or single mothers with limited resources. Given the extreme disparities of wealth, social power, and education between the lawyers and the mothers, coupled with the larger profits to be had by those who arranged adoptions, the potentials for abuse were quite significant. In fact, there were many reported instances where prospective mothers were tricked, lied to, intimidated, and threatened with violence, including death threats.

The transfer of babies, infants, and children from poorer nations in the developing world to wealthier countries represented an element of larger political and economic globalization. While this process allowed adoptive parents in *el norte* to create families, often in situations where few if any options exist, the costs associated with international adoptions coupled with oppressive circumstances

and lax regulations in Guatemala and other countries created conditions that enabled and rewarded cruel and repressive practices:

For decades, international adoption has been a Wild West, all but free of meaningful law, regulation, or oversight. Western adoption agencies, seeking to satisfy consumer demand, have poured millions of dollars of adoption fees into underdeveloped countries. These dollars and Euros have, too often, induced the unscrupulous to buy, defraud, coerce, and sometimes even kidnap children away from families that loved and would have raised them to adulthood (Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism 2012).

The movement of children, then, can be seen as a market-driven process linked to other global flows of money and goods. And, like so many aspects of a rapidly transforming global economy, practices driven by demand and grave disparities of wealth and power produced new forms of exploitation.

The panic of the *robaniños* was preceded by a flurry of media reports about the discovery of sites where stolen children were kept alongside allegations that they were being processed for international adoptions. The Guatemalan national media⁵⁷ played a major role in communicating information before, during, and after the panic. With increasing frequency from November and December 1993 on, national media – particularly newspapers, magazines⁵⁸, television⁵⁹ and radio⁶⁰ –

⁵⁷ One of the most useful ways to document the panic is through the national media. At the time of the panic of the *robaniños*, Guatemala had a well-established system of newspapers, magazines, television programs, and radio news reports, which all played a major role in reporting on the tales of the *robaniños*. Each source presented information in a different manner, yet they were all interconnected. Typically something reported from one source would be picked up and circulated in other media (for example, radio news reports are typically taken from published newspaper articles).

⁵⁸ In 1994, there were five major Guatemalan newspapers: *Prensa Libre*, *El Gráfico*, *Siglo Veintiuno*, *La Hora*, and *La República* and two national news magazines. There were also two national news magazines, *Crónica* and *Crítica*. The papers were widely available in the capital, Guatemala City and somewhat available in urban areas in other regions of the country. The combined circulation of all five newspapers was around 280,000. *Prensa Libre* - 120,000; *El Gráfico* - 65,000; *Siglo Veintiuno* - 62,000; *La Hora* (afternoon paper) - 17,000; *La República* - 17,000; *Crónica* - 12,000; *Crítica* - 12,500 (MINUGUA 1994).

⁵⁹ Television reached a fairly wide audience in Guatemala, although the vast majority of television owners lived in urban areas. National news was covered on: *Telesiete* (Channel 7); *Teleprensa* (Channel 11), and *Sin Censura* (Channel 12) and other programs, including talk shows. The majority of middle class and all upper class homes had televisions; in rural areas and among poor residents a single television may be watched by a relatively large number of people.

⁶⁰ Radio was the news media source that reached the largest number of Guatemalans, especially in rural areas. In 1994, there were radio stations throughout the country, including networks with local transmitters in various regions, some of which reported news in indigenous languages. There were several nationwide news reports, which were based in Guatemala City, and correspondents were based in various parts of the country including: *Emisoras Unidas/Patrullaje Informativo*, *Radio Sonora*, *Guatemala Flash*. There were also many regional radio news services, such as in Quetzaltenango, *América/La voz de occidente*, *Al Mercurio/Cadena Landívar*, *Vanguardia/Radio Fraternidad*; in Huehuetenango, *Alerta/La voz de Huehuetenango*, *La noticia/La voz de los Cuchumatanes*; in Quiché, *Ultimas noticias/Radio Utatlán*; in Alta Verapaz, *Día*

reported numerous accounts of stolen children, playing a major role in the diffusion of these stories. At the time, print media was believed to reach an estimated twelve percent of the population and radio believed to reach between fifty and eighty percent of households, especially in rural areas (Barry 1992: 185). Yet, stories reported in one media were commonly reported in other media. And, overall, media accounts of the tales provided a valuable timeline and reference point for documenting what occurred prior to and during the panic.

In late 1993 and early 1994, there were a series of cases reported in which the police discovered *casas-cuna* which were also referred to as “*casas de engorde*” (“fattening houses”). *Casas-cuna* were (and are) real; and many Guatemalans, especially in urban areas told stories about their existence, describing houses in their neighborhoods filled with babies. The *casas-cuna* were often described as “illegal” or “clandestine,” but they were more of a moral concern than a strictly legal issue.⁶¹ I often heard stories about *casas-cuna* from informants in Guatemala City, especially those living in poor or lower middle class neighborhoods, such as a woman I met at a family party at a friend’s house:

I know a woman who ran a beauty salon where I used to go. In the back of the salon, there were children, babies. The woman told me that these babies were kept there for adoptions. Later, the woman was discovered and immediately she disappeared, going off to the United States.⁶²

Any house might be a *casa-cuna*, any backroom, apartment, or garage. This contributed to the sense that the adoption business was woven into ordinary urban life. Almost all of the reports on *casas-cuna* presented Guatemalans, particularly working class women, as responsible for caring for the children,

a día/Radio Cobán; Noticiero Dos mil/Radio Cobán; in Zacapa, Impacto/Radio Novedad; in Petén, Palpitar petenero/Radio Independiente; Enfoque/Radio Petén; Tribuna Maya/Radio Petén; in Jutiapa, OIR/Radio Jutiapa; and, in San Marcos, Patrullaje Informativo (local)/Radio Tacaná. (MINUGUA 1994)

⁶¹ Unlike orphanages and nurseries, which provided long-term care and were bound by certain laws, there was no legislation in 1994 regulating houses where children were temporarily held prior to adoption. It was unclear that there was anything either illegal or clandestine about allowing a woman to care for one or more children in her home, or anywhere else. What was required were papers that allowed non-parents to have custody of the children being cared for. Few articles ever followed cases beyond the original arrest, and, in many cases, the paperwork prepared for the children was in order.

⁶² Interview with J.S., Guatemala City, July 1994.

while the houses which were often managed or owned by middle class women with close links to powerful men in government or members of the elite. Typically, Americans and other foreigners were presented as not involved directly in the *casas-cuna*, although some reports linked Americans, Israelis, and others directly to the management of these homes.⁶³

The women who worked in *casas-cuna* were sometimes arrested, as reported in numerous articles.⁶⁴ And, the “discoveries” of these houses were commonly described as evidence of a larger problem – “This proves the existence of other bands of *robaniños* who arrange false documents and then sell them abroad”⁶⁵ – often with suggestions of high-level corruption and intricate criminal networks. For example, in early 1994, accounts emerged about a *casa-cuna* run by the wife of a colonel in the Guatemalan military, confirming a widely held belief that military officers were behind the adoption industry and a reflection of the fact that the armed forces wielded extraordinary social, economic, and political power.⁶⁶

⁶³ One reported case in early 1994 involved a house in San Lucas Sacatepéquez, not far from the capital, where 29 children had been found. The couple were evangelical missionaries who, at the time the articles appeared, were out of the country. Later reports showed that while the couple was involved in helping Americans adopt Guatemalan children, no evidence was uncovered implicating the missionaries in having stolen any of the children cared for in their *casas-cuna*.

⁶⁴ On December 28th, 1993 National Police agents found five children in a house in Guatemala City and arrested two women who were caring for the children. On January 5th, 1994, National Police agents, tipped off by a call from neighbors, found a *casas-cuna* with ten children in another residential neighborhood in the capital. A January 20th article stated simply that investigators found a 5-month old baby in a *casas-cuna* in a community near Guatemala City, and had the child taken to an orphanage. On February 8th, three infants were found along with a law student and two women who were responsible for caring for the babies. “Diez menores rescatados de otra casa cuna ilegal,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, January 6, 1994; “Investigadores recuperan niño,” *Prensa Libre*, January 20, 1994; “Desmantelan otra casa cuna: 3 rescatados y 3 capturados,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, February 9, 1994.

⁶⁵ “Policia rescata a 10 infantes,” *Prensa Libre*, January 5, 1994.

⁶⁶ One article included statements from several young women who claimed that the colonel’s wife tried to convince them to give up their babies for adoption in return for money, “When she found out that I was pregnant, Señora Azucena asked me to sell it [the baby] to her when I gave birth, but I didn’t want to. The next day, she threatened to kill me....and I agreed to sell it to her: she gave me Q600.” Another woman said that the colonel’s wife and the law student visited her at a hospital after she had given birth to a baby boy, “They threatened to kill my child if I refused to sell the newborn. When I left they took me to her house where I nursed the baby for a while. In that place there was another woman with her baby and three other pregnant women, they all said that they had been threatened.” The woman went on to say that the law student later visited her at home, “He gave me a check for Q100 so that I wouldn’t say anything and would help them find other pregnant women who were willing to sell their children.” Within the context of Guatemalan society, when someone like the colonel’s wife – a woman with social power, family connections, and links to the military – threatened a poor person, the threat was neither idle nor difficult to carry out. “Desmantelan otra casa cuna: 3 rescatados y 3 capturados,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, February 9, 1994.

The “discoveries” of *casas-cuna* were often presented as linked to child theft. Many accounts claimed that the babies and children found in these houses had been stolen from their parents, sometimes described as having been snatched off the streets or pulled from their mother’s arms.

In late 1993, newspapers, radio, and television referenced multiple cases of stolen children, from in poor neighborhoods in the capital and small cities and villages around the country. On November 27, 1993, the media reported that police detained a woman found with two children, one of whom had allegedly been stolen from a public market. The child’s mother identified the woman as having “grabbed the child from her arms.”⁶⁷ Other stories reported cases of child theft that appeared to have been resolved. Yet, even these tales seem incomplete, lack specificity, and suggest the reality of very real dangers. “Two newborn girls that had disappeared several months ago were found the day before yesterday...”⁶⁸ On January 3, 1994, there was a report that two Mexican women were caught trying to leave the country with a five-month-old baby.⁶⁹ On January 6, a man was arrested after “forcibly taking a child” from its mother several days earlier.⁷⁰

In one article, a young mother suddenly noticed that her son was no longer beside her in a modern supermarket in Guatemala City. The story goes on to explain the mother’s anxiety in detail, both at the disappearance of her child and the empty faces of the people around her, none of whom came to her aid. The child was later discovered and the mother believed that she saved her child by scaring off the kidnappers. She left the supermarket feeling relieved, but also sad and angry, wondering what had become of Guatemalan society. “How is it possible that we do nothing when faced with the suffering of others? How is it that we are so inhuman?”⁷¹

⁶⁷ “Los dolares de la inocencia,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, February 17, 1994.

⁶⁸ “Recuperan dos niñas secuestradas,” *La República*, January 12, 1994.

⁶⁹ “Dos mexicanas detenidos acusados por robar un niño,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, January 3, 1994.

⁷⁰ “Policía detiene a secuestrador de niños,” *La República*, Jan 6, 1994.

⁷¹ “Joven señora frustra secuestro de su hijo en un supermercado,” *La República*, January 7, 1994.

The stories of the *casas-cuna* and stolen children played a key role in the growing fear that Guatemalan society was becoming a place of enormous danger; an environment where a common element of daily life was the disappearance of children, stolen off the street, torn from their mother's arms, thrown into passing vehicles. The more the stories were told and re-told, the greater the growing sensibility that no place was safe.

By early 1994, there were so many reported cases of child theft that some articles presented information in a form highlighting the degree to which it had become routine:

In zone 11 two girls were rescued, and in zone 3 two adults were freed, in Satellite City they successfully freed a 40-day old baby from kidnappers . . . Also, near the Roosevelt Hospital, an individual tried to steal another child but was immediately detained by the National Police, who also rescued two young people in zone 15 and another in zone 18 of the capital.⁷²

The constancy of these media stories created a sense of ordinariness regarding their incidence. The pace and intensity of these reports increased to the point where hardly a day passed without media accounts of stolen children. For example, there were significant reports of this type on 20 of 31 days in January 1994 and 22 of 28 days in February 1994.⁷³

Media reports commonly referred to a variety of professionals in the business of exporting children, describing the involvement of doctors, lawyers, and notaries, and suggesting key roles were played by corrupt government officials, including employees of the civil registry, the judicial system, and the immigration service.⁷⁴ Many believed that the business, like so much in the country, was controlled by powerful political figures and directly linked to high-level government officials, members

⁷² "Entre las víctimas hay jóvenes y niños," *La República*, February 6, 1994.

⁷³ From my review of all articles in *Prensa Libre*, *La República* and *Siglo Veintiuno*, the Guatemalan newspapers of record from January through February 1994.

⁷⁴ "The discovery of various clandestine *casas-cuna* and the involvement of people with a certain type of influence, including of the military type, places again on the table the slippery, cruel and highly profitable business of trafficking in children. . . Nevertheless, what has been published so far in the media and the limited success of the security forces, barely reveals the tip of the enormous iceberg of corruption and impunity that exists in the country, since it is obvious that these bands of delinquents act with the complicity of lawyers, social workers, judges, doctors, officials in immigration and public records in order to facilitate their shady business." "El 'florecente' negocio del tráfico de niños," *La República*, February 13, 1994.

of elite families, military officers, or others that could be described as *cuello* (powerful connections).⁷⁵ In response, the Attorney General for Minors described the frustration of having failed to capture any of the *pescados gordos* (big fish).⁷⁶ He promised to launch an investigation of officials from the previous two elected governments, claiming that key political figures had earned million dollar profits from their involvement in child trafficking.⁷⁷

As newspapers reported the discovery of illegal *casas-cuna* and stories of child stealing in public places spread, many key government officials reacted. On the one hand, the officials' statements appeared to present the Guatemalan government as responsive to a serious public concern as officials promised detailed investigations and meaningful punitive action. On the other hand, the statements appeared to be little more than self-aggrandizing actions to grab media attention, serving to legitimize the growing restlessness and brewing fear.

One of the most vocal public figures was Guillermo Carranza, the *Procurador de Menores* (Attorney General for Minors), the public figure charged with overseeing investigations into criminal violations related to minors, such as child abduction and illegal adoptions. Carranza claimed that his department received an average of ten complaints of kidnapped children each month, "many of whom had been found in clandestine *casas-cuna*,"⁷⁸ and warned Guatemalans to watch out for bands of kidnapers who took photographs and made video recordings of children in order to identify potential victims.⁷⁹ He went on to claim that there were over four dozen *casas-cuna* "dedicated to the business

⁷⁵ In one article, an agent, who refused to allow his name to be published, described *casas-cuna* that functioned as "mini-hospitals" where women give birth and were professionally attended by physicians, nurses and other health care professionals." The agent claimed that officials could not obtain adequate proof of the involvement of the "big fish" because, "The people are afraid, it seems that the professionals involved are well connected and pay well for the silence of their many accomplices." "Investigan *casas-cuna* clandestinas," *La Hora*, January 10, 1994.

⁷⁶ "El Procurador de menores revela la existencia de más *casas-cuna* ilegales," *Siglo Veintiuno*, January 9, 1998.

⁷⁷ "Investigan a ex funcionarios de Serrano y Cerezo por presunta vinculación con el tráfico de niños," *Siglo Veintiuno*, February 5, 1994.

⁷⁸ "15 mil dólares se paga por adopciones ilegales," *La Hora*, January 11, 1994.

⁷⁹ "Because of this situation it is necessary to advise all citizens not to allow strangers to photograph or video infants in order to avoid the occurrence of an unfortunate event." Guillermo Carranza Taracena warned Guatemalans about foreigners who sometimes asked unsuspecting parents for the addresses with the "ingenious" promise to send copies of

of trafficking in children”⁸⁰ and suggested that numerous children were “sold abroad” for “enormous profits,” claiming that “there exists a good number of clandestine *casas-cuna* that are used for the future sale of children’s organs, the majority of whom have been kidnapped.”⁸¹ The director of the Institute of Criminal Investigations of the Public Ministry also began discussing the problem, claiming that six children were stolen each day in Guatemala as part of a growing business of trafficking in children.⁸² Carranza promised a “war” against the *casas-cuna*.⁸³

It is important to understand that the Guatemalan government was, in fact, quite concerned with alleged illegal practices regarding international adoptions if only because allegations of these acts impacted the country’s already damaged international reputation. I spent quite a bit of time discussing these issues with various government officials charged with investigating cases and developing prosecutions. I interviewed the lawyer who headed the unit focusing on these cases in the *Procurador de la Nación* (Attorney General’s Office) and she explained the ease with which young women can be convinced to provide apparently legal authorization for their child’s adoption:

There are many “intermediaries” and many people who manipulated and coerced the poor mothers. These are women who come from marginalized areas. They are indigenous and poor. It is easy to trick them or play off their fears. Some are even told that after the child turns 18 they can get the child back.⁸⁴

She explained that groups involved in international adoptions quickly separated the mother from the newborn or a young child once all the paperwork was signed. Interestingly, even when systems were in place – for example, the required interview with the U.S. Consulate official – there were ways to use the local legal system to get around protective measures:

The mothers are taken to a *notario* and the *notario* requires that the mother sign various

the photos or video to the parents, a trick, he hinted, that allowed potential kidnapers to learn the addresses of appealing victims. “Carranza: Los traficantes de niños fotografian a potenciales víctimas,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, January 15, 1994.

⁸⁰ “Investigan conexión entre traficantes de niños y casas hogar,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, January 27, 1994.

⁸¹ “El ‘florecente’ negocio del tráfico de niños,” *La República*, February 13, 1994.

⁸² “Seis infantes se roban cada día,” *Prensa Libre*, February 10, 1994.

⁸³ “MP: Guerra a casas cunas clandestinas,” *La República*, February 10, 1994.

⁸⁴ Interview with Lic. Curup, May 6, 1997.

papers. The mother uses a fingerprint if she is unable to write. Then, the child is removed to somewhere where she is taken care of. Then, the real mother might say she wants her child back during the interview [at the U.S. Consulate]. Well, if she changes her mind, who gets the child? The *notario* can try to get the child legally defined as *en un estado de maltrato y abandonado* (mistreated and abandoned) so that the mother loses all rights to the child. This is a very easy way to deal with a mother who wants to keep the child [that she previously put up for adoption]. The papers get sent to the *Juzgado Primero de Primer Instancia de Menores* (minor court judge) and they may decide that she has no right to the child.⁸⁵

As she explained, “these things happen all the time.”⁸⁶

While the legal system involved multiple processes and mechanisms theoretically designed to prevent abuse, in Guatemala official documents were relatively easy to falsify. Some women falsified paperwork to place children up for adoption without their father’s knowledge. Others used real birth certificates for one child in place of a different child that was placed into adoption proceedings. And, paperwork was commonly forged, often through links to government ministries so that they appeared real. The lawyer from the Attorney General’s Office told me, “There are probably 80 to 100 children who are stolen each year and maybe 8 to 10 percent of adoptions involve stolen children.”⁸⁷ Still, when asked to discuss specific cases, she had trouble citing concrete, fully investigated cases. And the most significant example only reinforced a sense of near-complete institutionalized impunity:

There is a girl who was adopted legally in 1994, but the U.S. Embassy asked for a DNA test. The DNA test was negative and it turned out that the mother who presented herself as the birth mother was not the real birth mother. We presented a formal complaint to the MP [*Ministerio Público*, or Prosecutor’s Office] and they detained the mother for kidnapping. It turned out that the baby had been stolen when she was five months old. The woman . . . escaped from prison fifteen days later and the case has gone nowhere since then. The girl is now with guardians . . . the judge did not allow the child to go to the adoptive parents.⁸⁸

So, even where an actual illegal adoption was caught through DNA testing implemented by the U.S.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

government, the woman detained escaped from prison and there was no apparent effort made to reunite the child with the birth mother.

The situation seemed even more complex when I interviewed one of the main lawyers in the *Ministerio Público* (Public Ministry) the agency responsible for investigating illegal adoptions, child stealing, and related cases. She explained:

Of course, there are people who steal children to sell them for adoptions abroad. They get these children by stealing them and by buying them from parents . . . The mothers feel that they have no choice but to sell their children.⁸⁹

In her mind, there was no doubt that child theft represented a significant problem in Guatemala and that it was driven by the enormous profits realized through international adoptions. “The children who are stolen are sold for adoptions . . . In Guatemala, children have become merchandise.”⁹⁰

However, when asked to outline specific cases of stolen children, the story began to look strikingly similar to local responses to the “fantastic” tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*:

There are many cases in which children disappear but there is no proof as to what happened . . . Here at the MP we do a preliminary investigation to see if a crime has been committed but these are difficult cases and as far as I know there is nobody on jail for having stolen children. . . I don’t think we have any cases where somebody has actually been caught for stealing a child.⁹¹

There were specific teams of lawyers tasked with child protection services in both the offices of the *Procurador de la Nación* and the *Ministerio Público*. And, while they acknowledged the certainty of a systematic process of stealing children for international adoptions and considered the possibility of organ stealing (“Who knows maybe they are used for other purposes as well.”⁹²), they were largely unable to pierce the looming sense of uncertainty with the clear facts and concrete verification.

A somewhat similar situation existed among the U.S. government officials. All Guatemalan

⁸⁹ Interview with Lic. Marilys de Estrada, *Ministerio Publico*, May 1997.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

adoptions to the U.S. had to be processed and approved by the consulate in Guatemala City, which by the early 1990s, had grown very concerned with the issue of fraudulent documents and other illegalities.⁹³ As the Chief of American Citizen Services and Immigration Sections at the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala told me, “We know of cases where children have been stolen from families. We think that this is extremely rare.”⁹⁴ He also explained, “You can assume that you’ll see false birth certificates and false *cédulas* [national identification cards].”⁹⁵ Because of these concerns, the U.S. Consulate required interviews of the women placing their children up for adoption which generally lasted around 30 minutes.⁹⁶ While this represented a serious attempt to minimize fraud, it also presented a challenging cultural situation for both the women and the U.S. officials:

A very humble woman who may have never been to the capitol before must go to the United States Embassy, which looks like a fortress and go into a room to be interviewed by a person dressed in a suit who is more educated than she is. We have to try to make her comfortable and that's a real challenge . . . However, everyone knows that Mayans are timid and withdrawn when it comes to dealing with foreigners . . . [and] one of the hardest things for us is to get these people to talk. . . Also, often the woman won't even speak Spanish so we rely on interpreters that are brought in and you don't know what the woman is really saying.⁹⁷

In addition, beginning in 1993, the U.S. Consulate began requiring DNA testing for suspicious cases. Between mid-1993 and the end of 1994, the Consulate made 54 requests for DNA testing. Out of 39 cases, 3 turned out to not to be the biological mothers and 15 women refused to return for the test, raising suspicions that they were not the biological mothers.⁹⁸ However, no further investigations were

⁹³ “When I came here in 1993 we had a lot of adoptions of young children, from four to eight years old; they never had birth certificates and we never knew where they were from. I remember one woman who had lived all her life in Jutiapa and supposedly gave birth in Retalheu.” Note, Jutiapa is some distance from Retalheu. Interview with Duke Lokka, Chief of the American Citizen Services and Immigration Section at the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala, June 1996. He arrived in Guatemala in January 1993 and worked in the country until 1998.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ “My understanding was that we were the only country with a special agreement with the State Department to do mother interviews.” Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ The study was conducted by Duke Lokka and this information is from our interview of June 1996.

done to determine if the children had been stolen and there appeared to be no follow-up with Guatemalan government officials to seek further reviews and possible prosecutions.

The period from 1993 through 1994 was a significant moment for formal attention and concern regarding international adoptions of Guatemalan babies and children to the U.S. There was a wave of allegations that child stealing was involved with these adoptions and there were focused efforts by the Guatemalan and the U.S. governments to develop systems to prevent these abuses. Yet, what characterized both the social concern of child stealing for adoptions, as well as the various formal mechanisms of engaging the issue, was an overwhelming sense of uncertainty regarding what was really happening. Almost everyone involved with adoptions was sure that some level of child stealing occurred in Guatemala, yet even those charged with investigating these issues were generally unable to verify the practice. In the cases in which investigations occurred, as was often reported in the press, there was rarely any follow-up. When cases advanced, these commonly appeared to be politically motivated and revealed no illegal practices.⁹⁹ When prosecutions occurred, those accused of child theft often slipped away or were detained for brief periods of time before “escaping” or having their cases closed under complex and unclear conditions.

Perhaps most significant is that the effect of all these efforts on international adoptions from Guatemala to the U.S. was minimal and there was no substantial reform of the industry as a result. After an initial slowing of the transfer of Guatemalan children to the U.S. from 1994 to 1996, following the panic of the *robaniños*, adoptions increased rapidly, growing steadily from 427 in 1996 to 4135 in 2006 (Rotabi, Morris and Weil 2008: 11). At the same time, there was a massive increase in U.S. adoptions from foreign countries overall and over 250,000 babies and children were brought into the

⁹⁹ “We had several Americans who ran clean orphanages that were raided. The newspapers would only report the raid. They wouldn’t report that the police found out that all the children had the right papers.” Interview with Duke Lokka, June 1996.

county from poorer nations. While China and the Russian Federation were the largest sources of internationally adopted children in the U.S., Guatemala sent by far the largest percentage of their population abroad for adoptions. By 2007, the peak year, one out of every 110 babies born in Guatemala was adopted by U.S. parents (Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism 2012).

During this time of explosive growth of international adoptions to the U.S., the process was among the most corrupt in the world. “Guatemala is widely considered to have had the worst international adoption improprieties over the longest period of time” (Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism 2012). A study commissioned by UNICEF found that international adoptions created an abusive labor market driven more by financial gain than the best interests of babies and children (ILPEC 2000). The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography concluded that kidnapping, extortion, and coercion were used in the country’s adoption system. The Adoption Council of Canada discovered “illegal and unethical practices” in the Guatemala’s international adoptions (Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism 2012). Over the years, abuses within Guatemalan adoptions led more and more countries to ban international adoptions from Guatemala. In fact, by 2002, the U.S. was the only developed nation willing to consider adoptions of Guatemalan children. By early 2008, thirteen years after the panic of the *robaniños*, the U.S. formally ended the international adoption of children from Guatemala.

It is not only the reality of abuses in international adoptions that resonated with the Guatemalan public, but also the impossibility of knowing what was true in terms of allegations of a brutal, violent system of exploitation and abuse. The adoption system rested on two components: first, a global economy premised on extraordinary inequality; and second, an ineffective regulatory system. All the elements of good governance, so central to trust in the state and its agents, were revealed to be empty and open to crass manipulation – a harsh vision of social reality well-described by the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*.

5. The Panic Starts: The Appearance of Tales of Organ-Stealing *Gringos*

In early 1994, the tales of stolen children and references to illegal international adoptions began to shift and engage the issue of alleged organ stealing. The first public reference I found in 1994 formally linking children stolen for the adoption industry and organ trafficking was a February 10 statement by Carranza, “there exists a good number of clandestine *casas-cuna* that are used for the future sale of children’s organs, the majority of whom have been kidnapped.”¹⁰⁰ The article continued:

Sold as ‘spare parts’ for other infants with physical defects, Guatemalan children and foreign undesirables have been shown and proved to obtain juicy profits – in U.S. dollars – through the sale of this human merchandise.¹⁰¹

From this point on, there were multiple reported stories of children murdered so their organs could be extracted and sold.

Increasingly, the phenomenon of stolen children was linked with organ stealing, connecting concerns about foreign adoptions with the longstanding fears of the murder of children for their organs. Even articles that denied the link between stolen children, *casas-cuna*, and organ trafficking often lent credence to the idea that organs were stolen and sold. In one report, Claudio Porres – the head of the Public Ministry¹⁰² – denied “for the moment” the charge that stolen children were killed for their organs.¹⁰³ The article then went on to state that the belief that such kidnappings were occurring in Guatemala “has been constantly rumored as a result of the capture of various [people] carrying children’s organs on the border of Mexico with the United States.”¹⁰⁴ Porres discussed organ trafficking in general and this article, as well as many others, quoted a number of unnamed official

¹⁰⁰ “El ‘florecente’ negocio del tráfico de niños,” *La República*, February 13, 1994.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² The *Ministerio Público* (Public Ministry) is similar to the Office of the Prosecutor and is charged with developing criminal cases on behalf of the state.

¹⁰³ “Alarmante secuestro de niños,” *La República*, February 10, 1994.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

sources expressing concern about the issue.

By late February, tales appeared with ever greater frequency, charting the beginning of the panic of the *robaniños*. The tales of organ-stealing *gringos* presented similarities to the stolen child stories, yet their imagery was distinct. While the tales of stolen children outlined stories of theft, kidnapping, and the exportation of babies and children to be adopted by foreign families, the stories of the *robaniños* were about murder and dismemberment. Whereas the tales of kidnapping for adoption presented babies and children as objects of love and affection, albeit the love and affection of distant foreigners with no biological relation to the young, the panic of the *robaniños* was inspired by stories of brutal violence.

Stories reported in one newspaper would be repeated on television and on the radio and vice versa. In this way, media reports both documented the panic of the *robaniños* and likely contributed to its intensity and rapid diffusion. There were so many tales circulating and their number and repetition was so constant that virtually every informant remembered hearing about specific cases discussed among relatives, neighbors, friends, and community members:

There had been about two weeks of missing kid stories. Oh, they found this girl over here beat up, dead with all her organs . . . And over there, they found a child. And, out here in Chiuk (sic), they found a couple of them dead . . . I mean it was ridiculous. There were so many stories circulating like that. You'd hear them every day.¹⁰⁵

Once the media reported a case, a local story was often transformed into an issue of national concern. A story reported in one part of the country was repeated in a different part of the country such that it was impossible to trace how the tales of the *robaniños* spread and built one on the other. Even casual conversations would yield a series of stories – similar in form but told by a variety of people – referencing multiple cases and operating collectively to define an issue of broad nationwide concern. Here, for example, is part of a conversation with a group of Mormon missionaries who were often

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Mike Lewis, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

accused of being *robaniños* and, like many foreigners, were alternatively sensitive and dismissive of the issue:

M1: There were three dead kids found in my area.

M2: What happened in Atlántida? I'm sure it was true because they forced us to stay in the house early. That's where the children were found with their hearts missing . . .

M1: That's dumb . . .

M2: We heard about three children, one found in the bushes in Atlántida, another found on some rocks in Juana de Arco . . .

M1: Around March 31, a member of the church told me that they had found a cadaver missing its organs. They also said that the body of a man was found, missing its eyes. The same woman also told me that a woman came to her house and offered her money in exchange for her daughter. People here really believe that all this is true.¹⁰⁶

By the spring of 1994, the constancy, intensity, and number of distinct tales led journalists and political commentators to describe the tales as causing widespread “alarm”¹⁰⁷ and creating generalized “fear and indignation.”¹⁰⁸

Each day, with ever greater frequency there are denunciations of child stealing (*robo de niños*) . . . perhaps by organized criminal gangs, to be used as living factories for parts for children in other countries . . .¹⁰⁹

As the tales circulated, they seemed to build on one another. My review of newspaper reports from that time yielded many articles reporting cases from all over the country. For example, one article mentioned that there were cases of kidnapped children in multiple sites in the department of Suchitepéquez, specifically mentioning Patulul, San Francisco Zapotitlán, Cuyotenango, and Santo Domingo:

¹⁰⁶ Interview with two Mormon missionaries (M1 for missionary 1 and M2 for missionary 2), Momostenango, June 1996.

¹⁰⁷ “*Robaniños* causan alarma en zona 18,” *La Hora*, March 22, 1994

¹⁰⁸ “Temor e indignación de padres de familia por robo de niños,” *La República*, March 23 1994

¹⁰⁹ “Aumenta la indignación y el temor por secuestro de niños,” *La República*, March 27, 1994.

A growing psychosis is taking over the heads of families in Suchitepéquez as a result of the wave of kidnappings of children that the country is suffering. . . The situation has become so severe that in various cases they even identified bearded men and women with a *'gringa'* appearance in red and gray vehicles tried to kidnap children various times as occurred recently by the school in the San Benito neighborhood . . . while the fear surged among parents that their children could be kidnapped so that their organs could be removed and sold abroad.¹¹⁰

Around the country, communities responded. Mothers began to escort their children to and from school, instead of allowing them to walk back and forth on their own. Some parents kept their children at home, behind locked doors. Others refused to allow their children to play in the street or run errands:

. . . the panic is such that in Mazatenango . . . there are denunciations that a black pick-up with polarized windows was driving around marginal communities and tried several times to kidnap children which has led parents to accompany children to schools . . . parents are so afraid of sending their students to school that children have abandoned their studies and they won't let minors go out into the street because they might become the victims of kidnappers . . .¹¹¹

As a housewife in a small city near the capital told me:

It isn't like it was, before we didn't have this anxiety. One would send children to run errands, to go shopping. Now, we take great care with the children and with anyone who isn't known. It has been a big change for our society.¹¹²

A young mother in the highlands explained:

Women were taking children to school instead of letting them go alone. Many children were kept inside a lot. They had less freedom. The mothers were worried about their children . . . Everybody believed the stories.¹¹³

In some communities, neighborhood patrols were created to protect children. Groups of mothers appeared before the police in some communities demanding action.

¹¹⁰ "Psicosis por ola de secuestros de niños," *La República*. March 28, 1994.

¹¹¹ "Crece preocupación por robo de niños," *La República*, March 18 1994

¹¹² Interview with a middle aged woman, Chimaltenango, July 1996

¹¹³ Interview with young woman, Totonicapan, March 1996

As more and more tales of *robaniños* circulated throughout the country, the stories grew in intensity, impact, and meaning. Headlines described the situation as “a hysteria” (“Hysteria of infant kidnappings in Guatemala”)¹¹⁴ and a “psychosis” (“Psychosis from wave of children kidnapped;”¹¹⁵ “Psychosis from stolen children”¹¹⁶).

The wave of stolen children denounced in the last few months has turned into a type of “psychosis” among various sectors of the population, not only in the capital but throughout the country.¹¹⁷

In this way, the panic of the *robaniños* began.

The brisk shorthand of these tales, and their simple yet brutal representation of violence committed against the children of Guatemala’s majority poor, captivated the country. Over time I came to understand that the lack of witnesses and the obfuscation surrounding those responsible was key to the tales’ structure and a core element of the panic they produced. It was clear that this was an aspect of their status and value and a characteristic of the way that the tales operated within the context of Guatemalan society. I came to understand that inquiring into the tales of the *robaniños* required an acknowledgment of the factual slippage of the stories as told and a recognition of the narrative structure designed to evade verification in their telling, circulation, and impact.

Their power was not minimized by lack of veracity, certitude, or completeness, but rather the significance of the tales was intimately bound to these qualities. The impossibility of verifying the tales’ accuracy, and the marked binarism among Guatemalans who saw the tales as either wholly true (“*la pura verdad*”) or completely false, represented core elements of the operation of the stories’ power and the significance of the resulting panic. Inquiring into these “fantastic tales” revealed a number of

¹¹⁴ “Histeria por secuestro infantil en Guatemala,” *La Prensa Grafica*, March 23 1994.

¹¹⁵ “Psicosis por ola de secuestros de niños,” *La República*, March 28, 1994.

¹¹⁶ “Psicosis por el robo de niños,” *El Gráfico*, March 28, 1994.

¹¹⁷ “Robo de niños...realidad o ficción?” Editorial, *La República*, March 18, 1994

options as to how they operated to produce and encode meaning in such a complexly inspiring manner.

In this way, a key element of the tales' power lay in their narrative expression of uncertainty. It was not simply that the tales could not be verified, but that the stories themselves – within their structure, operation, and circulation – embodied the very difficulties of enabling verification within a world defined by powerfully predatory forces and defined by vulnerability, inequality, and impunity. The tales played off the lived experience of those who told them, but their validity and motivational power could not be tested against claims of factual certitude and verifiability. These were tales whose authority issued from their status as narratives and the particular semiotic logic they embraced and encoded.

Chapter 2 – The Panic of the *Robaniños*: Narrative Logic and the Legacy of State Terror in Guatemala

1. Simple Tales and the Legacy of State Terror

One hot, sunny day in the main square of Cobán, I struck up a conversation with a middle-aged indigenous man who told me a tale of the *robaniños*:

There was a child found dead on a *finca* (plantation/large farm) missing his eyes.¹¹⁸

His description was clear and simple. If not for the panic just a few months earlier, and the associated wave of concern and fear that had swept the country, his story would not have appeared all that significant. The narrative was as brief as possible – a single sentence. While the imagery was odd and disturbing, the man couldn't or wouldn't provide any additional information. As such, the tale was disconnected from any larger significance or meaningful contextual grounding.

Over time, I discovered that these sorts of tales – brief, focused, imagistic, and resistant to added detail – represented the majority of the tales of the *robaniños*.

Here is a story from a young man in Rabinal, an indigenous town in the *altiplano*:

They discovered a child's body by the road with no kidneys, no organs, and a note.¹¹⁹

This is a middle-aged man's account from Sacapulas:

They found the child's body completely cut up missing all her organs.¹²⁰

This is a version from a woman I met in a friend's home:

In San Cristóbal there was a child discovered in the streets, missing its vital organs, with a pocket full of dollars.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Interview with Vicente, Cobán, August 1994.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Amilcar M., Rabinal, July 1996.

¹²⁰ Interview with a middle-aged man, Sacapulas, April 1996.

¹²¹ Interview with an older woman, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

And this version came from a man in Guatemala City describing what occurred in his home village in the highlands:

There was a man who found a child dead in the street missing [its] organs. He saw the cadaver while he was on his way to work.¹²²

Whether collected in urban areas or the countryside, from subsistence farmers or educated elites, when people recounted these stories to me the versions they presented exhibited striking narrative coherence. They were similar if not nearly identical in their short, focused, crisply descriptive nature, relying on a consistent yet limited set of core images.

The verbs most commonly used were *encontrar* (to find) or *descubrir* (to discover), presenting the tales as brief, fact-based descriptions of a process of revelation. In this way, a core element of the tales was a reference to a process of rendering apparent the cruel signs of the brutal acts whose horror inspired their power and urgency. The tales often used the reflexive Spanish verb construction of discovery – “*Se encontró el cadáver del niño*” (“A child’s body was found”) – or referenced an anonymous or generalized third person such as “a man” or a common subject less verb best translated as “they”– “*Encontraron el cuerpo del niño*” (“They found the body of a child”). This created both an omniscient tone while also suggesting the difficulty, if not impossibility, of tracing the information presented back to a source.

The tales included two key elements: first, the discovery of a child’s dead body (“They found the child’s body;” “A child’s corpse was found by the road”); and second, and signs of mutilation (“the body was missing eyes, with no heart, no kidneys;” “missing all her organs”). Many stories also included references to money, often U.S dollars, attached to the body – placed in the child’s pockets or stuffed inside the corpse in the places where the organs were removed. Other stories mentioned

¹²² Interview with Andres S., Guatemala City, March 1996.

notes, often in English, that referenced the transaction in a simple, descriptive, yet harshly cynical tone (“*Gracias para su donación*” [“Thanks for the donation.”]; “*Esto es para el entierro.*” [“This is for the funeral.”]).

The stories were usually told in an even-tempered style, rarely indicating the sort of emotive tone that might ordinarily be associated with the presentation of such vicious and troubling information. The events were communicated as factual accounts, often reported calmly and in a matter-of-fact style. I found this particularly interesting because when informants, often the same individuals who told these tales, discussed the implications of the *robaniños* or their interpretations of the stories’ significance they expressed a range of emotions from fear to frustration to sadness to outrage.

The situation presented a paradox. On the one hand, the tales of the *robaniños* were profoundly motivating, inspiring complex emotions and vigorous debate, and stimulating a nationwide panic that was a catalyst for acts of popular, public violence. On the other hand, the stories were short, clipped and told in a non-emotive fashion, defined by a crisp almost ritually repetitive form. How could such simple, short stories, told with limited emotional engagement, be so powerfully evocative? What was it about these brutal images, described so calmly, that inspired such profound emotional responses?

I answer these questions by arguing that the narrative logic of the tales of the *robaniños* presented a tension between what was hidden and revealed in a manner expressive of the challenges of representation, truth-telling, and accountability in Guatemala, with a special link to the legacy of state terror and the country’s political transition. I show how the stories’ structure and mode of signification – brief, imagistic, evasive – mirrored core elements of the lived experience of brutal political violence, thereby contributing to anthropology’s engagement with the exploration of narrative and human rights discourse and analysis.

I present the argument in several steps. First, the chapter provides an overview of the severe

nature of state terror in Guatemala and the complex impact of brutal, systematic repression on the possibilities of representation, truth-telling, and testimony. It then presents the complex political landscape of 1993-1994, a defining moment of uncertainty and promise in the nation's transition towards the formal end of the conflict and associated policies of democracy and development. Human rights issues, especially those of documenting abuses and seeking accountability, played a central role in this transition. The chapter then engages the imagery and narrative logic of the tales – discovery, mutilation, money, and notes – as linked to two iconic repressive practices of Guatemalan state repression, forced disappearance, and what I term “public presentational torture.” The chapter concludes by reviewing the tales’ power as the expression of a narrative logic that mirrors the signifying practices of state terror while expressing deep-rooted uncertainties about the possibility for change and substantive challenges to institutionalized impunity.

This argument reflects on the core role played by international human rights within Guatemala at the time of the panic. As the legal anthropologist Richard Wilson noted, human rights are “the archetypal language of democratic transition” (Wilson 2001:1). This was clearly true in Guatemala where the legal commitments and moral claims of human rights provided the language and analytic lens for addressing the legacy of state terror and for constructing the foundation for a vision of legitimate post-conflict governance. This chapter seeks to contribute to an element of anthropology’s engagement with human rights that has received limited attention – the role of fantastic stories to express qualities of the lived experience of trauma that provide insight into the ways that systematic repression reconfigures representation. To make sense of the significance of this point for

anthropology, it is useful to briefly review the field's complex relation to international human rights.¹²³

The creation of the modern human rights system in the wake of the Second World War was met with an initially critical response from the field (AAA 1947). This was largely based on concerns that the emerging human rights movement was overtly Western, committed to a vision of society as composed of individual rights-bearers, and inadequately respectful of the significance and value of cultural difference.¹²⁴ These issues were echoed and expanded upon through multiple critiques regarding foundational claims of rights universality (Geertz 1984; Morsink 1999), the focus of rights claims on individuals (Cohen 1989), the system's state-centric vision of legitimate authority (Schweder 1991), and a general failure of to engage the complexity of multi-cultural perspectives on justice and social order (An-Na'im 1992, 2002; Renteln 1988, 1990).

Anthropology remained largely disengaged from human rights until, in the late 1970s and 1980s, it became an increasingly important element of community and civil society engagement (Nelson 2008; Welch 2000) with the rise of new forms of public activism and substantive shifts in the institutional growth of rights-based advocacy (Moyn 2010). As Mark Goodale wrote, "anthropology was ready for human rights, and human rights was, more or less, ready for anthropology" (Goodale 2009: 2).

The shift is important for contextualizing the insight of this study in part because anthropologists in the field were increasingly encountering the ravages of systematic state repression,

¹²³ Terence Turner wrote, "Human rights pose fundamental problems of both theory and practice for anthropology" (Turner 1997: 273); and Mark Goodale commented, "The relationship between anthropology and human rights has been marked by confusion and ethical clarity, passion and reticence, historiographical debate and methodological creativity, and, above all, a sense that anthropology's most important contributions to human rights theory and practice are yet to come" (Goodale 2009: 1).

¹²⁴ "The problem is thus to formulate a statement of human rights that will do more than just phrase respect for the individual as an individual. It must also take into full account the individual as a member of the social group to which he is a part, whose sanctioned modes of life shape his behavior, and with whose fate his own is this inextricably bound . . . How can the proposed Declaration be applicable to all human beings, and not be a statement of rights conceived only in terms of the values prevalent in the countries of Western Europe and America?" American Anthropological Association, "Statement on Human Rights," 1947.

especially those working in Latin America and scholars of Guatemala (Carmack, et. al. 1988a; Green 1999; Lovell 1988). This shift was linked to the growing salience, if not dominance, of human rights as a critical lens through to make sense of systematic brutality on the part of military and paramilitary forces in multiple regions around the world. Anthropologists working closely with victimized populations were drawn to the explanatory power and overtly political and legal demands of human rights as a means of making senses of what they observed while also seeking ways to empower suffering communities. This was particularly true in Guatemala where several generations of anthropologists openly engaged human rights discourse and practice to respond to their encounter with systematic torture, forced disappearance, extrajudicial killing, and broad-based mechanisms of state terror (Falla 1983, 1988; Speed 2006). Scholars of Guatemala were some of the most significant early voices for documenting human rights violations (Mack 1990; Manz 1988) through detailed ethnographies of victims (Green 1994; Zur 1995), and pioneering links between ethnography and the technical forensic labor of unearthing some of the thousands of mass graves (EAFG 1995; FAFG 2001; Sanford 2003). The significance of this response is central to this study because a number of anthropologists became key voices for necessity of using the internationally accepted standards, language, and political commitments of human rights as bound to ethnography as a means of documenting and analyzing the lived experience of Guatemalans. Anthropologists were often at the forefront of human rights activism in Guatemala, substantially contributing to understanding the severity and impact of repression at a time when these issues were only beginning to be publicly acknowledged.

On a global scale, these actions resonated with the elevation of human rights to become a ubiquitous influence within virtually all discussions of global politics; a foundational element in how the world is known and analyzed in what Arjun Appadurai termed a global “ideoscape” (Appadurai 1996). As human rights discourse gained in power, breadth, and impact in multiple contexts, a new

critical discourse emerged. Some anthropologists questioned the field's reliance on "the pervasive instrumentalism of legal knowledge" (Riles 2006: 52), in which complex social reality was read through a limiting interpretive lens focused on compiling data to make claims grounded in universalizing categorization. The inadequacies of human rights discourse have not only been questioned in relation to focused legal actions such as court cases or legalistic practices such as detailed reports on violations, but also for complex and integrated social practices, such as truth commissions, in which globally defined concepts were applied to local reality in complex and often troubling ways (Wilson 1997, 2000). Woven into this process was the growth of human rights advocacy as a transnational practice which has been justly critiqued as often producing profound misunderstandings of local reality, often with grievous consequences (Merry 1992a, 1992b, 1992c). Unlike prior disciplinary rejections of human rights, more recent work grapples with its status as a discourse controlled and managed by empowered players, often related to elite interests, and structured to serve the interests and international institutions and local entities that played by the larger rules of a global system with its own organizational and political demands (Merry 2006a, 2006b, 2016; Merry, Davis and Kingsbury 2015).

In fact, the discourse of international human rights defined a foundational element of the Guatemalan political transition and expressed multiple elements open to just these critiques. The United Nations and the Group of Friends (Byrne 1997a, 1997b; Garst 1995; Sieder 2001) required that Guatemala formally accept a series of human rights commitments. These included an open acceptance of human rights principles and obligations as a core component of the nation's multifaceted transition process, the integration of human rights training into security sector reform, and multiple formal mechanism for addressing past violations as grounded in established principles of international law.

This study builds on the two interrelated insights of the anthropological encounter with human

rights briefly outlined above. First, an embrace of human rights principles as read through an ethnographic engagement with the impact of systematic repression on communication and representation; and, second, a critique of its operation as a global discourse which tends to flatten the complexity of local reality through a reliance on legal formalism and control by international institutions.

Understanding the ways in which the panic of the *robaniños* reflects on the experience of brutal state repression reveals a largely unacknowledged element of anthropology's engagement with human rights. That is, "fantastic tales" provide a means of grappling with systematic violations and engaging the demands of the global institutions involved in human rights protection and advocacy in complexly creative ways. This provides insight into both the power of human rights discourse on the ground and its profound limitations. Despite their wide circulation and the heightened concern they evoked, these tales played no explicit role in reflecting on any of the policy discussions related to nation's democratic transition or moves to support accountability for those who responsible for brutal human rights violations. They were, instead, a reaction to what was occurring at the time and powerfully positioned as a deeply emotive response to an overwhelming sense of mistrust that included all the political machinations of the transition process. The tales and the resulting panic illustrated the complex iconography and often hidden confusion, rage, uncertainty, and fear that defined the victimized population's experience of the broad promises of political reform, including those bound to human rights discourse and practice.

2. The Legacy of *La Violencia* and the Impact of State Terror on Representation

The panic of the *robaniños* occurred during a time when Guatemala was beginning to reckon with its violent past and new social forces were questioning the repressive mechanisms of the state. In this environment, there was significant contestation about basic claims regarding the social truth of

issues of violence and responsibility, especially regarding state responsibility for systematic human rights violations. Information about social reality – including essential political facts – circulated within a context of deep-rooted mistrust, uncertainty, and risk. Understanding the panic, then, requires a consideration of the impact of decades of brutal, systematic human rights violations as justified through Cold War-inspired authoritarian rule and the process of democratic transition. *La violencia* was totalizing in its impact and reconfigured many elements of social life.¹²⁵ The scope and severity of the repression were such that they raised key questions about the long-term impact of severe political violence, the way in which such experiences affect modes of representation, and how narratives operate both directly and indirectly to address power relations.

During *la violencia*, brutal acts of physical violence were a component of a dominant and domineering mode of expressing state power, including the systematic use of massacres, extrajudicial executions, rape, and torture. State-sponsored violence tended to be targeted in urban areas and indiscriminate in rural areas, especially the majority indigenous *altiplano*. There, the government engaged in a “scorched earth” campaign that destroyed thousands of villages and produced hundreds of thousands of internal and external refugees (Manz 1988, Gleijeses 1997; Sanford 2003; Wilkinson 2002, Wilson 1999). In the mid to late 1980s and early 1990s, local and international civil society groups and intergovernmental agencies gathered data that revealed the brutality of state repression. In fact, human rights reporting linking local NGOs with multiple INGOs during this time produced one of the world’s most extensive and compelling cases for the value and impact of human rights reporting and the development of a set of emerging global practices. That is, the courageous work of local activists and groups (CERJ, CONAVIGUA, GAM, etc.) coupled with the publicizing power of

¹²⁵ In fact the use of the term “*la violencia*” signified an important shift in how the repression was popularly discussed. Before the opening of possibilities to speak about state terror and political violence more generally in the early 1990s, the preferred term was “*la situación*” (the situation), suggesting an even greater fear of reference to any element of the specifics of systematic repression.

international organizations (Americas Watch, Amnesty International, the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights) highlighted rights violations in multiple political arenas within the U.S. government, the United Nations, the Inter-American Human Rights system and throughout Europe in a way that deeply impacted local and international politics and ensured the privileged role of human rights discourse within the transition process.

In late 1998, the Catholic Church completed the Recovery of Historical Memory Project (REMHI), which gathered evidence from around the country using local teams and Church networks. The report detailed the brutality of decades of violence with a focus on the social, cultural, and spiritual impact of systematic repression. In 1999, the final report of the Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH), commonly known as the Guatemalan Truth Commission, was released. The CEH was created through one of the negotiated peace accords, enabled through the support of a UN entity (UNOPS) and opened offices around the country staffed by international and Guatemalan professionals. It was, by far, the most authoritative study of human rights violations during the conflict.¹²⁶ The CEH determined that over 200,000 people were killed in a country with a population, at the time, of around eight million; there were over 600 documented massacres, and tens of thousands of people were displaced. (CEH 1999: 17)

Beginning in the mid-1960s, a number of armed leftist insurgencies began operating in Guatemala. Over time the movement coalesced around four groups who banded together as the

¹²⁶ The Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH) was created through one of a series of peace accords that were part of the internationally mediated peace process that lasted from the early 1990s through the end of 1996. I was one of the first staff hired to work at the CEH. I was the Assistant to the Commissioners, generally supporting the work of the Head Commissioner, Professor Christian Tomuschat, in 1997 when the commission created its research methodology and began conducting fieldwork. In 1999, the CEH presented its final report. The CEH conducted the most authoritative investigation of *la violencia* to date and became the primary reference document. The CEH citations reference the Commission's short publication in English from 1999 (CEH 1999), as well as a one-volume English version that I edited (Rothenberg 2012), which presented the only such published work (and often the only published version of CEH text in English, other than the executive summary and recommendations) and was vetted by the Lead Commissioner of the CEH and a team of respected Guatemalan and foreign scholars.

Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity or, URNG). While there is significant debate as to popular support for these groups, they never gained significant weapons or tactical capacities and their actual operations were too minimal to substantively threaten the state (unlike in Nicaragua and El Salvador). While there were some firefights and small battles between the Guatemalan military and the URNG, the CEH concluded that the overwhelming majority of violations – 93 percent – were committed by the state or by actors operating under the control of the state, while only 3 percent were attributed to the guerrillas (CEH 1999: 44).

The systematic nature of the violence, its cruelty and expression of the most brutal approach to managing power, was so severe and domineering that it took decades to accurately document.¹²⁷ Violence against indigenous people – who represented the majority of rural Guatemalans – was so severe that the CEH determined that the government committed genocide against the country’s Maya population. The brutality was not a collection of isolated cases of military excess, but rather a central element of a policy of mass violence directed from the highest levels of government. “The majority of human rights violations occurred with the knowledge or by order of the highest authorities of the State” (Rothenberg 2012: 180); and, “The responsibility for a large part of these violations, with respect to the chain of military command as well as the political and administrative responsibility, reaches the highest levels of the Army and successive governments” (Rothenberg 2012: 179).

The systematic abuses defined the daily reality for Guatemalans for decades. From a 1954 CIA-supported military coup that overthrew a democratically elected government on through the

¹²⁷ A Guatemalan writer living in the United States described the impact of the violence in this fashion: “One comes back always to the violence. It is as if, to try another analogy, the C.I.A. and the F.B.I., in response to accelerated terrorist activity by black nationalists and a revived Weatherman underground, were secretly to enlist and equip the white supremacist and Nazi factions as well as the Ku Klux Klan. They would fill out their ranks with Green Berets and mercenaries recruited by *Soldier of Fortune* magazine and set them loose, leaving 41,000 dead in six weeks...Stretch the analogy back to 1970, and the equivalent would be half a million U.S. citizens murdered, another half million ‘disappeared,’ and no less than 15 million forced into exile or held in secret detention centers where they would be subjected to systematic torture and mutilation. This is a rough idea of the scale of the war that has raged for over a quarter century in this picturesque, Tennessee-sized republic of 9 million.” (Perera 1995: 51).

1980s, the military and military leaders played a significant and, often dominant role in state affairs, including several periods of formal military rule. The CEH concluded that the state's counterinsurgency policies were justified and enabled through a collection of ideas known as National Security Doctrine (sometimes known as National Security Ideology) which defined combatting communism and "subversion" as the primary focus of government policy (Hey 1995). This Cold War-era ideology envisioned Guatemalan society as facing constant internal threats. The conception of national security was so broad that virtually any act that questioned the dominant social and economic system – union organizing, student movements, church activities, community development projects – was viewed as subversive. As a result, those participating in these activities were considered enemies of the state and subjected to arrest, detention, and interrogation, as well as possible torture and extrajudicial execution. From the last 1970s through the mid-1980s, local life in much of Guatemala was defined by systematic practices of violent state repression, which were generally targeted operations in urban areas and indiscriminant throughout much of the countryside.

Military repression came to define state power as thousands of Guatemalans were arrested in their homes, at checkpoints along roads, on market days in town, and during patrols. Many were detained based on reports by spies, some of whom used their power to settle personal disputes. Others were selected based on statements from torture victims. Those detained were commonly beaten and abused and then brought to military bases to be interrogated (by intelligence agents, generally from the G-2, known as the "Dos")¹²⁸, tortured, and often killed. The CEH determined that 50,000 people were victims of forced disappearances, their whereabouts unknown and their corpses abandoned in the mountains or buried in one of hundreds of clandestine cemeteries throughout the country.

¹²⁸ Actually, the "G-2" refers to the centralized command structure of the intelligence service, which coordinated the operation of other branches of the extremely complex intelligence gathering mechanisms.

To undermine support for the guerrillas and to control the population, the military forced all men living in rural Guatemala to participate in the *patrulleros civiles* (civil patrols or PAC). Its members, *patrulleros*, were required to engage in patrols in and around their communities. At their height, the army estimated that there were over one million *patrulleros*, which, according to the CEH, represented almost half of all adult Guatemalan men. Some *patrulleros* were unarmed and tasked with manning roadside guardhouses or overseeing their own *aldeas*. Others participated directly in killings, torture, rapes, and massacres against their neighbors or residents of nearby communities. The CEH determined that 18 percent of serious violations were committed by the PAC, representing a key mechanism through which the civilian population was forced to become complicit in systematic, brutal repression.

Through scorched earth policies that destroyed villages, makeshift homes, and crops, and ongoing army and PAC actions, the state made survival difficult for internally displaced populations. By combining this ongoing repression with a series of amnesties, the army convinced thousands of Guatemalans to come down from the mountains and live under military control; they were processed, subjected to “re-education” programs, forced to join PAC, and resettled in *aldeas modelos* (model villages) and other communities under the constant army surveillance and the supervision of military intelligence and its network of informants (Americas Watch 1986, 1988, 1989; Americas Watch and Physicians for Human Rights 1991; Amnesty International 1982, 1991, 1993). The military’s policies linked formal mechanisms of control, including restrictions on movement, with various forms of social assistance. These programs included food aid, and employment and development policies, some of which were financed by the U.S. government and various international assistance agencies. Social relations among the nation’s rural, largely indigenous, population were radically transformed through constant surveillance, forced complicity in violations, and a domineering ideology of silence and

submission; a process that led to Amnesty International describing the country as “a nation of prisoners” (Americas Watch 1984).

The G-2 placed and/or recruited *orejas* and *confidenciales* (spies) in every community. Spies would report suspicious activity, real or invented, to the local military commanders. Since it was usually unclear who the *orejas* and *confidenciales* were, the system created a situation of enormous mistrust and fear within local communities, as people could be denounced for virtually any reason and were often subsequently killed. The creation of vast networks of surveillance and intelligence gathering coupled with the fact that state security agents could abduct, torture, and kill with complete impunity created a social environment of enormous fear and profound insecurity. Extraordinary acts of violence could occur without clear justification, based on information – true, invented, or some combination of the two – gathered through denunciations, the statements of torture victims, idle gossip, or direct surveillance.

The Guatemalan government used its power to threaten its citizens and sow fear among its people such that the objective was radical and total dominance, “terror has been the goal of . . . [the] counterinsurgency policy” (CEH 1999: 62). What occurred in Guatemala during *la violencia* was an iconic case of what is known as “state terror.” This term was created as an analytic frame to address cases where governments rely on systematic violence and institutionalized human rights violations against civilians as a basic mechanism of governance.

While there are substantive distinctions between these understandings of the concept of state terror, there are a few unifying ideas. First, the use of the term “terror” in this way destabilizes the classic distinction between state and anti-state violence: “state violence is often construed as law enforcement and anti-state violence as terrorism” (Nagengast 2001: 452). State terror questions the idea of state power as legitimate and builds on the lessons of international human rights discourse and practice in assessing state action against a set of universal normative standards. Second, the term

highlights a set of systematic and strategic actions. Pion-Berlin and Lopez have described the term as follows, “State terror is a premeditated, patterned, and instrumental form of government violence. It is planned, inflicted regularly, and intended to induce fear . . .” (Pion-Berlin and Lopez 1991: 63). That is, the concept does not reference atypical excesses in the use of force associated with the ordinary governance, such as isolated cases of police brutality, nor does it reference excesses during traditional wars. Rather, the concept suggests a wholly illegitimate management of power that is “instrumental” and oriented towards creating a climate of uncertainty, fear, and distress.

Another key component of state terror is the purposeful targeting of civilians. For this reason, Nordstrom and Martin prefer the term “state-sponsored terrorism,” which they define as a situation where the government “deliberately carried out [violence] against suspected civilian populations” (Nordstrom and Martin 1992: 261). As with more conventional understandings of “terrorism,” the term highlights the illegality of the use of force and its predatory focus on directing violence against civilians for political gain and as part of a broad communicative process.

It is within this theoretical framework that many Latin American governments have been understood to engage in state terror, which some view as analogous to directing the mechanisms and focus of war towards an internal enemy:

From Guatemala to Argentina, the dictatorships declared war on their populations in the name of freedom and the preservation of western-Christian civilization. This violence was based on clear doctrinal guidelines and strategic notions, as in a genuine war, but its perverse effects were inevitable in the sense that internalization of warfare led to state terrorism (Torres-Rivas 1999: 290).

La violencia represents a particularly disturbing case of the broad use of state terror throughout the region. The Guatemalan state killed far more people than in other countries (in total numbers and as a percentage of the population), and it engaged in a totalizing form of repression that was a terrifying example of the capacity of a state to devastate its civilian population by “declaring war” on its own people.

The value of the term state terror as an explanatory mechanism lies in its conceptualization of a mode of governance that runs counter to the accepted modern understanding, both legal and moral, of the legitimate exercise of state power. Rather than operating as the guarantor of basic conditions of order and security, the state becomes a predatory entity, strategically oriented towards creating a situation of terror among its citizens. The concept of state terror was created to make sense of a recurring pattern within post-Second World War conflicts where governments systematically engaged in brutal repression of their own people, often in cases with limited challenges to state control where those targeted appeared to present little to no threat to the state. As Pion-Berlin and Lopez suggested, the term was created to answer the question: “Why are the worst forms of state terror often reserved for those who engage in no form of protest or hostile action against the regime?” (Pion-Berlin and Lopez 1991: 64). This is precisely why the term state terror is so useful for understanding the situation in Guatemala, where the state engages in decades of focused, brutal political violence purposefully directed against civilians, the majority of whom were not engaging in any form of open hostility towards the government. And, in contrast to many other internal armed conflicts in Latin America, in Guatemala there were relatively few casualties on the part of either the military or the guerillas, such that the “war” was largely focused on massive state repression against the rural indigenous majority.

Violence of this scope is resistant to representation, not only because it is difficult to gather data on the severity of abuse, but because the depth of its impact, its totalizing nature, is difficult to adequately document or describe. State terror – in Guatemala and elsewhere – is about the brutal imposition of power on civilians, not only to engage in physical harm, but also to close off the very possibilities of expression. The fear experienced by many Guatemalans was so intense that many people avoided discussing politics, political themes, or issues that could be understood as remotely linked to politics. This included public recognition of social injustice, community organizing, complaints about labor conditions, or core failures of social services. In many cases, individuals

involved in political activities would hide their involvement, and the names and activities of others involved, from friends and family – including spouses. This was a means of protecting themselves and protecting loved ones. The threat of repression and the existence of a comprehensive surveillance system, especially in the countryside, served to militarize daily life and subject the civilian population to a sense of profound uncertainty and looming, ever-present danger.

Intense political repression destroyed relationships of trust. State terror dismantled traditional structures of community order. Forced participation in civil patrols, forced recruitment into the army, and the general dominance of the military over local institutions of social order restructured rural life. Surveillance, interrogations, torture and the ever-present threat of violence impacted even the most intimate relationships. Neighbors were pressured to inform on each other. Family members were threatened, brutalized, and forced to reveal information. And, in the most extreme cases, people were forced to commit extraordinary acts of brutality upon their neighbors and even their own families.¹²⁹

In Guatemala, longstanding mechanisms of enabling order, ensuring the constancy of rural life, and reaffirming the meaning and solidity of social relations (all well documented in the extensive ethnographies conducted prior to *la violencia*) were replaced with overwhelming sense of fear and uncertainty – of terror. Locals felt that anything could happen at any moment that the military and other empowered forces, such as non-uniformed intelligence agents, PAC leaders, death squads, etc., could do whatever they desired with the certitude that no one would be held accountable, regardless

¹²⁹ “As children, we used to sneak out of town. Sure, we were afraid, but we would get together with two or three friends and we’d start talking and together, we would go out into the countryside to hunt small birds. One morning, we came upon a house. The army was there with the PAC. We were well hidden. We saw everything. We heard everything. We saw as the patrol arrive at the house. A man there tried to run away and they shot him. There were many others, women, children, even a little baby. The whole family was screaming. They were asking if everyone was there. Then they tied up the family. They blindfolded them and set them against a wall. They said that they had been working with the guerrillas. Then they called out a man. They ordered him to kill the family. All of them. The army officer said even the children had to die because they were bad seeds and it was best to take care of them while they were still young. The man who was forced to kill the family was sad. It was his own family he was forced to kill. He had to do it. If he didn’t do it they would have killed him there on the spot. The woman was his aunt, his mother’s sister. And the children were all his cousins. He killed them, one by one.” Anonymous fieldwork interview, Quiché, 1997.

of the brutality of their actions. For many years, not a single member of the military was prosecuted for acts of political repression. And, in those rare instances where legal cases were filed, the petitioners, supporting organizations, lawyers, prosecutors, and judges involved were harassed, threatened, attacked, and assassinated.

By openly communicating their willingness to engage in severe human rights violations, the Guatemalan state severely damaged the order and stability of social life, profoundly impacting every aspect of community relations. The possibility that anyone could be a spy who might pass information, real or invented, to authorities changed the nature of even the simplest conversations. Otherwise normal activities, such as going to the market, attending Mass, or walking to school opened one up to suspicion. Virtually every encounter with another was considered potentially threatening as social life became inherently uncertain and infused with sudden acts of violence. The strategies used by the military not only repressed dissent but did so in a manner that made it impossible to determine which actions were permitted and which would be met with vicious, often lethal violence.

These vicious acts were constantly repeated and became an ever-present threat. The REMHI report found that the Guatemalan state created “an atmosphere of constant danger [that] totally disrupted the daily life of many families” (REMHI 1998: 6). In Guatemala, there were two main features of the counterinsurgency strategies that merit special attention. First, the uncertain nature of state terror, or what has been called “the institutionalization of arbitrary violence within the state” (Kruijt and Koonings 1999: 4). And, second, the overwhelming severity of repression in which acts of violence were systematic and openly brutal where “the horror was so massive and flagrant that it defied the imagination” (REMHI 1998: 9). The arbitrariness of violence meant that anyone could be targeted regardless of their disengagement from the political. And, the severity of repression indicated a willingness on the part of the state to engage in extreme brutality, including torture, rape, mutilation, the murder of the elderly, children, and babies – the complete eradication of entire communities.

In these ways, state terror in Guatemala went far beyond the violent repression of extrajudicial executions and related acts and served to reconfigure the very nature of social reality. Through violence and the militarization of daily life, the state established a culture of fear and intimidation. Those listening to simple conversations could be *orejas*, passing information, whether real or invented, to state authorities or paramilitary groups. An ordinary trip to the market in a nearby town or to visit family members might lead to an abduction by security forces and subsequent torture and disappearance. Social relations became inherently uncertain as it became difficult, if not impossible, to protect oneself and one's family from sudden and often inexplicable acts of brutality.

State terror in Guatemala made the “world-destroying” practice of torture – which converts “absolute pain into the fiction of absolute power” (Scarry 1985: 27) – into a routine element of social life. That is, the powerfully destabilizing nature of torture as a mode of brutal political domination was extended broadly by the state, creating a climate of overwhelming fear and predation. Jean Franco has noted that violence of this type is more than a political struggle involving force, but is, in fact, a war over meaning (Franco 1985). State terror operated by undermining the solidity of social relations by embedding mistrust into previously coherent and orderly social systems. The conditions of Guatemalan society's basic functioning, including unifying narratives of purpose and common practices and beliefs, were profoundly threatened. Within this context, the “militarization of social life” (Torres-Rivera 1999) through ongoing surveillance by state agents and community members, coupled with accusations, cycles of punishment, and the intense and arbitrary exercise of physical repression, created a “militarization of the mind” (Martin-Baro 1990) as Guatemalans were forced to internalize the practices of state terror.

It is this sense of *la violencia* that is most difficult to grasp, yet essential for understanding the impact of the negotiated “end” of the “war” and the lengthy peace process that began in the 1990s. The link between domineering intelligence gathering, a generalized climate of threat, and the constancy

of uncertainty reconfigured social relations in Guatemala. This was similar to what Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman have identified in other cases of state terror:

People have to ‘unlearn’ normal reactions – for instance, they learn how *not* to respond to a cry from a neighboring house in case their reactions are being watched by the security police or one of the terrorist organizations and are interpreted as sympathy for one or the other political cause” (Das and Kleinman 2000: 8).

Violence of this nature shifts social bonds, communicative strategies, interpersonal relations, and the experience of a community because of its profoundly destabilizing nature. As many theorists have noted, this sort of violence tests the “limits of representation” (Cubilié 2005: 3), making it difficult to provide a means of accurate description and discuss the nature of systematic terror.

This aspect of state terror reflects complexly and critically on human rights discourse and practice. On the one hand, the severity of what occurred in Guatemala highlights the importance of documenting with specificity, rigor, and accuracy the facts of systematic repression. On the other hand, documentary and analytic efforts – important as they may be for establishing the historical record, enabling legal action, and combating impunity – always fail to engage the totalizing nature of trauma. The human rights movement was born within this tension and it remains a core element of its practice. That is, as a product of the moral and legal response to the Holocaust and the devastation of the Second World War, modern human rights has always been defined by a conflict between the demand for rigorous accounting of severe repression and the impossibility of adequately voicing the complexity and breadth of victims’ experiences.

Making sense of state terror in Guatemala requires an engagement with this tension, linking focused documentary projects – such as REMHI and the CEH, to say nothing of hundreds of NGO and INGO reports – with the “unknowability” of atrocity. This tension has been described as “the impossibility of speaking and, in fact of listening” within the “black hole of knowledge and of words [that] corresponds to the impossibility of remembering and of forgetting...” (Felman and Laub 2013:

65). The point here is that the logic of state terror both requires attempts at documenting and analyzing – that is, representing – systematic human rights violations, even as it reveals the limits of representation.

There is a substantial anthropological literature on the documentation of human rights violations during *la violencia* and extensive evidence of the breadth and severity of political repression (Carmack 1988a; Manz 1988; Falla 1994; Perera 1993; Stoll 1993; Wilkinson 2002). Many of the mechanisms of state terror are known and significant information exists regarding the institutions (and at times, the individuals) responsible for these crimes (Ball, Kobrak and Spierer 1999; EAFG 1995; FAFG 2001, REMHI 1999; Sanford 2003). Similarly, there is substantial research on the psychological impact of *la violencia* on individual survivors of abuse, and on the families and community members whose children, parents, relatives, neighbors, and others were tortured, killed, disappeared, and otherwise brutalized (Lovell 2001; Little and Smith 2009; Manz 2005; Nelson 2009).

The CEH determined that state terror had a broad and far-reaching impact on Guatemalans, especially those living in the rural areas devastated by *la violencia*, including “. . . sadness, depression, physical and psychosomatic illnesses, altered mourning, distrust, silence, inhibition, and powerlessness . . . alcoholism, recurring nightmares, serious mental illnesses, apathy, suicides, and feelings of anger and loneliness . . .” (Rothenberg 2012: 142). However, there remains much uncertainty regarding the impact of state terror on modes of communication within Guatemalan society and on how political questions are processed. Of special interest for understanding the panic of the *robaniños* is the question of how representation – broadly understood – may have been impacted by decades of systematic violence.

Edelberto Torres Rivas, Guatemala’s foremost social scientist, suggested that state terror in Guatemala involved the “search for order via the use of violence” (Torres Rivas 1999: 290). This perspective provides a focus for understanding the impact of *la violencia* and the link between decades

of repression and the panic of the *robaniños*. *La violencia* not only operated through severe physical brutality, but used violence as a mechanism of creating modes of representation, imagery, symbolism, and communicative logic that extended beyond the immediacy of the acts to a larger social impact. It is within this context that the panic of the *robaniños* must be understood, both as a reflection of the complex conditions of representation of the early 1990s, and as a mode of creatively expressing a critical perspective – a core lack of trust – in the broad promises of post-conflict democratic transition and in its grounding in human rights documentation and open claims of accountability.

3. Tensions within Transition: Truth-telling and Accountability in the Period Preceding the Panic

The panic of the *robaniños* occurred at a time of significant political tension within Guatemala. Following an unsuccessful 1993 *auto-golpe* (self-coup) by the elected President, there was a renewed interest in peace and reform leading to significant advances in the internationally mediated peace process, including a specific accord on human rights and an agreement to create a truth commission to document and analyze past violations. These issues focused attention on demands for truth-telling, transparency, and accountability, which were tempered by the threat of renewed violence. To contextualize the panic, it is useful to outline a set of key issues and contestations that define the historical moment within which the panic occurred. The goal here is not to establish a unifying tale of causality between the political situation and the panic, but rather to draw attention to a set of relevant issues and debates.

As outlined in the prior section, the most intense period of brutal state repression occurred at the end of the 1970s and continued through the early 1980s, especially from 1979-1983 (Black 1984; Ball, Kobrak and Spierer 1999). After years of early reporting about the scope and impact of *la violencia*, the international community had defined Guatemala as a pariah state known best as a gross violator of fundamental human rights (Jonas 1991, 2000a, 2000b). This led to substantial international pressure

on the country, and to multiple efforts to address repressive state practices, institutionalized violence, and ongoing conflicts throughout Central America (Arnson 1999; Azpuru, Blanco, Córdova-Macías, Loya-Marín, Ramos and Zapata 2007; Brysk 2003). In addition, even within the repressive domestic context, there were multiple demands from nascent civil society groups such as *Centro Internacional para Investigaciones en Derechos Humanos* and *Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo* (CIIDH and GAM 1996, 1998, 1999), *Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala* (CONAVIGUA 1992, 1994, 1998), the Catholic Church (*Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala* 1998), and, at times, a professional community eager to improve the country's reputation and commercial prospects.

In 1985, a new Constitution was drafted. It went into effect in 1986 and included provisions designed to encourage democracy and restrict the possibility of a return to military rule (such as a provision that prevented anyone from becoming president who had previously come to power through a coup or other undemocratic means). In 1985, elections were held, allowing the country's first popularly chosen civilian leader in decades, Vinicio Cerezo, to become the president of Guatemala. He won over 68 percent of the vote and a broad popular mandate to encourage and enable democratization (Jonas 2000a). President Cerezo made establishing the rule of law and improved human rights a major priority for his government. His administration passed new laws to improve access to courts and support human rights. For example, Cerezo created the National Commission for Reconciliation in 1987 to encourage peace negotiations between the government and the URNG, as well as the country's first Human Rights Ombudsman.

Despite widespread popular support for democracy, there were two failed attempts at a coup by dissatisfied military officers in 1988 and 1989. While these efforts were held in check by the military, they revealed the fragility of civilian rule, especially regarding issues of substantive human rights and indications of possible mechanisms of accountability (which remained among the most contentious political questions). And, while the government presented itself as a defender of fundamental human

rights, it made no effort to prosecute perpetrators, and the military engaged in continued and widespread violations. Repression at the time was far less severe and systematic than in the early 1980s. Nevertheless, extrajudicial executions, torture, and other abuses continued. In 1986, it was estimated that 100 people were killed each month; and in 1989 over 1,600 people were assassinated, including key figures within civil society groups and politicians.

Despite ongoing repression from the mid-1980s on, various popular groups organized themselves in opposition to military dominance and harsh repression, aligning themselves with the international moral discourse of human rights. The first groups were modeled on popular movements in other nations that had suffered through state terror and comprised of families of the disappeared who sought information about their relatives. Many of these groups – such as the GAM and CONAVIGUA – were organized by women (widows, mothers, sisters of direct victims) who engaged in public actions such as marching in front of the National Palace to draw attention to their claims (Americas Watch 1985c; Paz y Paz 2006; Crosby and Lykes 2011). Other groups, such as *Comunidades Étnicas Runujel Junam* (CERJ), emerged protesting the civil patrols and the forced recruitment of indigenous boys and men into the military (Americas Watch 1986a, 1989a; Americas Watch and Physicians for Human Rights 1991). Despite ongoing threats and violence against human rights activists, these groups continued their work and gained increasing international support. With substantive political and financial backing, local human rights organizations increased in size, number, and political influence, and spurred a nascent civil society movement pressing for accurate documentation of violations and efforts to address decades of institutionalized impunity. The period also saw a rise in student organizations, labor unions, and religious groups that continued to pressure the state for change, with the protection of fundamental human rights widely viewed as the foundation for all other democratic and social reforms.

Jorge Antonio Serrano Elias won the 1990 election. His presidency marked the first peaceful transfer of power from one democratically-elected leader to another in decades. Soon after gaining power, Serrano opened direct negotiations with the URNG, although the process remained tentative and highly contested. Still, by this time the Cold War had ended, and there was limited legitimacy and vibrancy of National Security Ideology, particularly as the U.S. government and the international community pressed the nation to restrict the political power of the armed forces, advance formal processes of democratization, and bring the conflict to a formal end.

On May 25, 1993, President Serrano attempted to disband Congress and take control of the Guatemalan state in what became known as an “auto-coup” (since Serrano was already the head of state). This effort, one of many in a series of coups in Guatemala’s post-Second World War history, was prevented by a historically significant coalition of different forces, including the members of the ruling economic elite, representatives of popular movements, and elements of the armed forces (Jonas 2000a, 2000b). The underlying reasons for the coup were complex and linked to power struggles between the president and Congress, as well as a sense that the democratic processes and institutional protections were weak and easily challenged. However, the coup was resisted by a coalition of forces, linking the right and left, and Serrano was forced into exile. The defeat of the coup was widely seen as a defining moment in an evolving democratic process, an important sign that the powerful political actors supported a civilian controlled democratic state.

Following the failed coup, Ramiro de León Carpio was named as interim president by the Guatemalan Congress to hold power until the previously scheduled 1995 elections. De León Carpio had been the nation’s Human Rights Ombudsman, a role specifically created by the 1986 Constitution to ensure that fundamental human rights would be upheld in Guatemala. De León Carpio’s selection was widely applauded by an international community eager to see the nation consolidate its fragile economic gains, improve its human rights record, and push the stalled peace process forward.

From the moment he took office, de León Carpio's government faced severe problems running the country. Since he had no party affiliation, the president had an exceedingly difficult time working with the Congress and the high courts. The government was in a state of chaos, crippled by corruption, mismanagement, an ineffective tax collection structure, and a history of anti-democratic practices. De León Carpio sought to institute a series of broad-based plans for substantive governmental reform but was quickly mired in conflicts with the country's Congress.¹³⁰ At issue were fundamental reforms to the constitution as well as opposition to preliminary efforts to take actions against politicians accused of corruption.¹³¹ During this time, human rights organizations occupied Congress and subsequently had their offices ransacked. As pressure built, there were numerous rumors of a military coup. By mid-November, the crisis was temporarily resolved by an agreement to hold a referendum on whether Congress and the Supreme Court would be disbanded and reconstituted.¹³²

Central to this crisis were issues of severe violations of fundamental human rights. Although the worst years of the violence were in the early to mid-1980s, the nation had yet to seriously confront its past. As outlined in the prior section, the militarization of Guatemalan society, especially in rural areas, as well as state responsibility for severe and widespread human rights violations were key social

¹³⁰ De León Carpio started his interim presidency with the "180 Plan," a blueprint for democratic consolidation which was intended to be put into place in half a year's time. The plan called for a crusade against poverty, the improvement of the rule of law, sustained economic growth, and the creation of a more modern, efficient state. Soon after, the de León Carpio administration presented the "1994-1995 agenda," another grand social plan designed to encourage social reform. The plan stressed improved law enforcement, better healthcare, anti-crime measures, and a commitment to fighting corruption and enforcing fundamental human rights.

¹³¹ Although the referendum had been initiated as an attempt to shore up confidence for the transitional government, the high abstention revealed a profound lack of interest on the part of the Guatemalan electorate. Guatemalans were understandably cynical about their government, siding with the president yet generally apathetic about the significance of elections and the possibility of democracy. Soon after the referendum, de León Carpio announced the "Great National Agreement," a new plan for national transformation.

¹³² The referendum was set for January 30, 1994 and presented Guatemalans with a choice between "yes" and "no." "Yes" meant that the Congress and the Supreme Court would be temporarily disbanded with a new provisional Congress and a new court appointed. A "yes" vote also allowed those who might have been punished for corruption to leave governmental office without facing prosecution. A "no" vote simply meant that the situation would remain as it was. The "yes" votes won, although the election was marked by the highest abstention figures in the nation's history. Only 15 percent of the eligible voters went to the polls, and electoral support for de León Carpio involved only slightly more than 10 percent of the nation's voting population. New interim congressional elections were set for August 14th in which 80 seats would be disputed: 64 departmental seats and 16 nationally chosen seats.

and political issues that were dangerous to discuss openly. While actual armed encounters with the URNG were sporadic and relatively minor, Guatemalans were still being forcibly recruited into the army and tens of thousands of rural men were still required to participate in the PACs. As the nation moved closer to a negotiated peace agreement, public engagement with international human rights was central to both the peace process and larger questions of domestic politics and the possibilities of national reconciliation.

Increasingly, local groups pressed for accountability for human rights violations. For example, the *Equipo de Arqueología Forense de Guatemala* (EAFG), the Guatemalan forensic team (which had been trained by members of an Argentine team who played a key role in gathering evidence of brutal repression during that country's "dirty war," inaugurating the development of a powerful new field of anthropological human rights advocacy), began the first exhumation of mass graves linked to one of thousands of army massacres in the early 1980s.¹³³ The exhumations played a key role in presenting verifiable, forensic evidence of state complicity in the purposeful murder of entire communities, including large numbers of women, children, and the elderly. This was central to a complex process through which Guatemalan society was forced to reckon with the reality of brutal state repression.¹³⁴ At the same time, human rights advocates were pressing for state action on more recent political

¹³³ The exhumation took place in Río Negro, Baja Verapaz, which was destroyed when civil patrollers, under army orders, killed almost everyone in the community.

¹³⁴ The exhumations were central to redefining the national narrative of *la violencia*. Many Guatemalans, especially urban residents, knew little about the brutal, indiscriminate state repression in the countryside. Often the response to claims of massacres, systematic rape, and institutionalized torture were openly denied as guerrilla propaganda. Those presenting testimonies, often indigenous men and women, were viewed with suspicion by urban *ladino* residents, revealing elements of the deep-rooted racism that defined the brutal logic of *la violencia*. In fact, it was common to hear Guatemalans describe how all the massacres were committed by the URNG who "dressed up as soldiers" to make the military and the government look bad. The point here is that the nature of truth-claims and verifiability lay at the heart of contestations over human rights issues. The exhumations added elements of factual certainty to the debate as the corpses of murdered children were unearthed, clearly killed by weaponry only used by the Guatemalan military.

assassinations as part of a process of engaging the complex domain of truth-claims within the context of *la violencia*.¹³⁵

During this time, the peace process advanced.¹³⁶ In January 1994, negotiations restarted involving URNG leaders, Guatemalan military, and government officials, supported by the Group of Friends (Colombia, Mexico, Norway, Spain, United States and Venezuela) and moderated by the United Nations. These initial meetings led to a January 10th agreement on a timetable for negotiating “a firm and lasting peace in Guatemala” (Padilla 1997; Sieder 2001). Together, the negotiators agreed to a set of basic conditions and future meetings which led to the next substantive element of the peace process. Linked to this process was ongoing international monitoring and pressure, largely focused on international human rights issues. In March, the United Nations Human Rights Commission unanimously voted to keep Guatemala under observation as a human rights violator, rather than lowering the nation’s status to severe violator of human rights. The Commission also voted to renew the tenure of the human rights expert investigating the situation in Guatemala.

Then, in late March, the peace process advanced with the signing of the “Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights.” This agreement laid out a set of principles beginning with the affirmation of a formal commitment on the part of the Guatemalan government to respect “the

¹³⁵ Various groups, in particular CERJ, organized marches and both national and international campaigns to try to pressure the armed forces to end their policies of forced army recruitment and mandatory civil patrols. In October, members of CUC and CONAVIGUA occupied the local Organization of American States offices demanding that the Guatemalan government arrest civil patrollers involved in the assassination of human rights activists, while also demanding a popular referendum on the civil patrols. In characteristic style, the Defense Minister claimed that the actions were planned by the URNG to destabilize the country.

¹³⁶ The formal process can be understood as involving three phases an initial stage from 1983-1987 which led to the Esquipulas II accord, in which the presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua agreed to end their respective conflict, engage in national reconciliation, formalize democratic processes, end support for irregular forces, and accept a timetable for implementation alongside international mechanisms of verification. The second stage ran from 1988-1993 and involved the end of the Cold War, the defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaraguan elections, formal peace between the FMLN and the government in El Salvador, and substantive pressure on Guatemala to advance its peace process. This led to the third stage, from 1994 to 1996, in which a set of six peace accords were negotiated leading to the formal end of the conflict in Guatemala (Sieder and Wilson 1997).

principles and norms designed to guarantee and protect the full observance of human rights.”¹³⁷ The agreement mandated the creation of a specific mechanism to enable this commitment, including supporting domestic human rights institutions, amending domestic laws to define forced disappearance and extrajudicial executions as serious crimes, cooperating with the United Nations and international bodies, ending the use of clandestine security forces, guaranteeing freedom of expression and association, and ending forced military conscription. The agreement also included a focused commitment to challenging impunity through state action and the recognition that victims of human rights violations had the right to receive compensation and formal assistance. Also central to the document was the formal acceptance of a UN human rights verification mission (Byrne 1997a 1997b; Garst 1995).

Then, in June 1994, the same parties agreed to a peace accord that established a truth commission to investigate past human rights violations associated with the armed conflict. The preamble of the agreement highlighted that “the present-day history of our country is marked by great acts of violence, disregard for the fundamental rights of the individual” and that “the people of Guatemala have a right to know the whole truth concerning these events” in order to lay the foundations “for peaceful coexistence and respect for human rights among Guatemalans.”¹³⁸ The idea of a truth commission for Guatemala was quite extraordinary, particularly given the record of similar bodies in other Latin American countries to substantively reveal the facts of past abuses (Chapman and Ball 2001; Popkin and Roht-Arriaza 1995; Quinn and Freeman 2003), most notably Argentina in which a related body radically shifted social engagement with state abuses and led directly to the

¹³⁷ “Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights.” March 29, 1994, available at www.usip.org/publications/peace-agreements-guatemala

¹³⁸ “Agreement on the Establishment of the Commission to Clarify Past Human Rights Violations and Acts of Violence that have Caused the Guatemalan People to Suffer.” June 23, 1994, available at www.usip.org/publications/peace-agreements-guatemala

domestic prosecutions of all of the leaders of the three military regime juntas (Santiago Nino 1998). While the Guatemalan agreement was criticized by many, it highlighted the central role of memory, truth-telling, and verification of human rights violations for the country's complex transition (Beristain 1998a, 1998b; Wilson 1997a, 1998).

Nevertheless, human rights violations, including killings and torture, continued, especially in relation to challenges to institutionalized impunity. On April 1st, the President of the Constitutional Court was assassinated, possibly in retaliation for his willingness to move forward on several key human rights investigations, even as government officials claimed the killing was a common crime. Just as the panic of the *robaniños* swept the country, another wave of military coup rumors swept through the country, along with tales of conspiracies and plots intended to discredit the de León Carpio government.

As the peace process grew more robust and multiple domestic and international efforts to document human rights violations advanced, military pressure on the democratic government intensified. The Human Rights Ombudsman's office (that de León Carpio had directed the previous year) reported that human rights violations had increased from over 6,700 in 1992 to more than 13,000 in 1993, with figures increasing in 1994 as well. The president responded in part by filling several key government posts with high-level military personnel, including a former director of military intelligence. Still, virtually there were no prosecutions against violators of human rights.

Early 1994 was a time of significant uncertainty, yet it was also a moment of possibility; a moment in which a more open conversation about the gross violations of human rights was beginning in earnest.¹³⁹ The multiple, overlapping, and interconnected elements of the moment allowed for new

¹³⁹ Still President de León Carpio retained a relatively high approval rating by mid-1994, in part because three-quarters of the population were opposed to another military coup. At the same time, surveys showed that an equal percentage of the population felt that things would stay the same or worsen in the future. In fact, eight out of every ten Guatemalans believed that the situation would not improve regardless of any change in government.

public discussions of the country's brutal history. I saw this quite clearly in the interviews I conducted with an array of Guatemalans about this period, especially those engaged in social justice issues such as activists, priests, and community leaders:

The people have spent years under harsh control. It was impossible even to speak the truth about things that everyone knew to be real. The army knew exactly what was going on. They watched you. They had spies everywhere. People were afraid to speak. Only now people are beginning to talk about the truth of what went on here. The stories of the *robaniños* and the organ stealing developed out of a situation of years of repression, years of pressure that needs to escape.¹⁴⁰

Sadly, the violence has created for so many a subculture of death that is so strong. What we call the culture of death that covers the nation of Guatemala comes from many distinct sources. It is difficult for someone who knew Guatemala thirty or forty years ago to believe how things are now. Guatemala was a calm nation, very calm. When the violence began it was something incredible. There were many times when finding twenty corpses a day was perfectly normal. The violence has left this nation deeply wounded.¹⁴¹

Now we can talk about the noun *desaparecidos*, but before you couldn't discuss such things publicly out of fear of army retaliation.¹⁴²

The point of reflecting on these voices is that they reveal a general sense of an *apertura* (opening) in which the reality of *la violencia* could be discussed (Hale 1997a). For many Guatemalans, the shifting social and cultural environment provided people with a chance to speak the truth about the most traumatic elements of their lived experience, even as these changes occurred amidst a mood of profound uncertainty about the potential for substantive change.

The country was changing and human rights discourse, demands for accountability, and an end, or at least a reduction, of impunity were all central elements of the historical moment:

One begins to discover the latent explosive character of the Guatemalan. Living for such a long time in a society with an underlying culture of terror, where respect for life and the minimal conditions for humanity are utopias, has forged in part our personality as Guatemalans . . . There exists perhaps a chance that the real causes from which the

¹⁴⁰ Interview with a priest, Rabinal, Alta Verapaz, June 1994.

¹⁴¹ Interview with Archbishop of Cobán, Alta Verapaz, June 1994

¹⁴² Interview with community organizer, Santa Cruz del Quiché, June 1994.

violence originates in our country will disappear, and we will become a civilized society. Guatemala deserves a better future.¹⁴³

At the time of the panic of the *robaniños*, human rights issues represented one of the core domains in which questions of verifiability and truth were debated and discussed. After years of denial coupled with systematic repression, there was an emerging public acknowledgment of the brutality of state terror.

4. Discovered and Mutilated Corpses: The Communicative Logic of Brutalized Bodies

While the tales themselves were generally brief, focused, and included minimal detail or contextual references, they consistently referenced bodies as a site of violence and as the basis for the narrative's communicative logic. As mentioned earlier, virtually all of the tales included two linked elements: first, the discovery of a child's corpse; and second, the description of a mutilated body, typically with reference to missing organs. In this way, the tales' power rested on a story of revelation through the process of finding a dead child coupled with an indication of prior acts of violence through the mutilated state of the corpse. The reasons for the violence – extracting organs to make money and preserve the lives of distant *gringos* – was not evident in what was reported in the tales, but rather served to explain the tales' content, providing what was presented as the only logical justification. Often added to these elements were references to money and notes, generally attached to the corpse which, while vague and even taunting, were read as further proof of the vicious and immoral nature of the predatory *robaniños*.

While the social context of the panic of the *robaniños* was marked by the impact of human rights claims alongside an internationally supported peace process, the panic's reference of predatory forces and vicious imagery made no overt reference to *la violencia*. The stories presented no explicit

¹⁴³ Jairo Alarcón, "Psicosis colectivo o resabios de la cultura del terror," *La República*. April 14, 1994.

engagement with the country's legacy of army massacres, "scorched earth" tactics, systematic torture or the world-transforming nature of state terror. Furthermore, those presented as responsible for the mutilated children were *gringos* involved in a brutal commercial enterprise who were not described as linked to the intelligence services, the armed forces, or the country's various death squads. Yet, while they were not overtly political, I argue that these stories gave voice to core elements of the Guatemalan political imagination, embodying core tensions which could only be openly expressed as they were through a "fantastic" tale. The stories motivated acts of public, popular violence because of *how* they engaged the domain of the political and the legacy of *la violencia*, a process intimately bound to the specific imagery of brutalized bodies.

To explain this idea, this section provides a detailed review of the core elements of the tales' structure: the process of discovering children's bodies; the mutilation of these bodies; and the common reference to notes and money left at the scene, and often attached to the bodies. The section then reviews two representative aspects of the practice of state terror in Guatemala, forced disappearance and public presentational torture. These mechanisms each involve the use of bodies as a signifying element, in their presence and display (public presentational torture) and in the implications of their absence (forced disappearance).

Discovered corpses – The tales consistently referenced children's cadavers as having been *encontrado* (found) ("There was a child found" and "They found the body of a child") or *descubierto* (discovered) ("They discovered a child"). The tales referenced brutal acts, crimes of kidnapping and murder (and likely torture), through the sign(s) of a discarded body or bodies. The implication was that it was only possible to learn of the fate of disappeared children through signs of their victimization – through the discovery of their murdered bodies.

The imagery speaks of victimization that has already occurred, of an after-the-fact understanding of a terrible occurrence, and the empathy and fear that something similar could happen

to one's own children or the children of loved ones. The discovery of corpses in the stories operated in a certain manner, suggesting a looming, predatory threat. As the tales multiplied, that sensibility was heightened. The more these stories circulated, the more credible and immediate the threat appeared to be.

I never heard an example or found reference to a case where the person telling the tale actually discovered the corpses of a mutilated child. Nevertheless, in some tales, a teller suggested privileged access to what occurred by referencing "my cousin's friend" or "a neighbor of the woman who sells produce at the market." The link to people who are "known" played a bridging role in emphasizing the veracity of the tale and linking the teller directly to the story, thereby suggesting a greater degree of validity. Interestingly, this same role was sometimes picked up by media reports, which my informants often referenced as proof of the veracity. Yet, as reviewed above, even where there was an indication of an actual source, verification was impossible. The woman in the market could not be found. The cousin's friend could not be traced.

Most versions of the tales indicated significant uncertainty, lack of clarity, or simply no indication of who made the discovery. Some versions credited a general source ("the people say," "neighbors have said," etc.) and many tales referenced an anonymous "they" who had found the bodies ("Around March 3rd, people said *they* had found a child's corpse . . ." ¹⁴⁴). This factor was significant for assessing the tales and processing their management of factual veracity. The absence of a known person who found a mutilated corpse distanced the tale from clear authentication, making it impossible to return to the source for verification, certainty, and additional information. The lack of capacity to review the tales' specifics heightened the menacing nature of the information and suggested that such things were widely known and understood to be outside of the ordinary system of factual

¹⁴⁴ Interview with local judge, Escuintla, August 1994.

review. Still, the process of discovery was always highlighted, suggesting the core impact and narrative salience of the revelation of children's corpses.

The places of discovery were another key element of the tales. Children's mutilated bodies were described as being found in a variety of sites, generally characterized as set aside from places where people were usually present, thereby allowing mysterious actors to leave the corpses without being seen. As a young woman from Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa explained:

You see they found four children without their organs in Cana Verales del Sur which is a *finca*. It is one of those quiet places (*lugares de silencio*).¹⁴⁵

Where a specific site is mentioned, or even the hint of an actual place is presented, the narratives play with a sense of veracity that deepens the logic of the tales' narrative power. Added to the specific place was the suggestion that it was "one of those quiet places," making it plausible that no one could be sure who was responsible.

In fact, most of the sites mentioned were either vague or shared the characteristic of isolation – a place where an action could occur outside the watchful eyes of community members. Yet, the sites were often common and well-traveled – "on a *finca*" or "by the side of the highway" – suggesting that the placement was such that the corpse would be found. And, further suggesting that there were other, similar places where more bodies would be found or where one's children might fall victim to the predatory organ-stealing *gringos*.

The cities evoked a similar sense of anonymity and the masking of perpetrators' identities. Victims of the *robaniños* were found "in garbage dumps, and urban hotels," and "the cadavers of minors subjected to this type of medical procedure" were discovered.¹⁴⁶ The reference to "garbage dumps" heightened the cruelty of the tales as the bodies of children were discarded like trash – an

¹⁴⁵ Interview with young woman, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

¹⁴⁶ "Policía alerta sobre psicosis por robo de menores," *Siglo Veintiuno*, March 24, 1994.

overt act of disrespect. Woven into this imagery was a sense of cruel disdain, the bodies of loved ones abandoned, tossed aside, left outside like something worthless (not even meriting proper burial) to be found by whoever noticed their corpses. These were tales of victimization, presenting the imagery of powerlessness among the poor, a clear sign of the incapacity of parents, relatives, friends and communities to protect their children.

Mutilated bodies/stolen organs – The primary image of horror was the mutilated body of a child. The stories described a vicious environment where the children of the majority poor were treated as objects, things whose murder and dismemberment revealed great commercial potential. The tales, short and compact as they were, usually linked the discovery of children’s bodies to the terrifying revelation that the organs were removed (“missing his eyes” and “the body missing eyes, with no heart, no kidneys”).

Many tales referenced a single organ that had been removed, such as eyes or kidneys. Others presented a list of organs that had been extracted from the body.

They said that they had found the body of a child by the side of the highway. The body had no eyes, no liver, no kidneys . . .¹⁴⁷

Other tales were more general, stating simply that “the organs were removed.” Within the panic of the *robaniños* there does not appear to be any special significance to single or multiple organ references. If anything, the specific organs references seemed of little import in seeking to understand the tales’ power and appeal.

The missing organs provided the justification for murder. Unlike stolen children who were believed to be sold for adoptions or even spirited away for various forms of abuse and forced labor, these stories were about murder – viewing a vulnerable human being as little more than an anonymous living being to be killed and used. The missing organs were a sign of the motivating purpose of these

¹⁴⁷ Interview with middle-aged woman, Quiché, April 1996.

vicious acts and a signal of the complete disdain and profound disrespect that the perpetrators held towards their victims. The value of the children something that could be accessed only by murder and dismemberment, by cutting open their bodies and removing their organs.

The extraction of children's organs indicated an unknown and exotic market whose operation made sense in the distant world of *gringos* but appeared mysterious, if not magical, within the lives of those who told these tales. While some sense of organ transplantation may have resonated with poor Guatemalans, the specifics and life-saving potential of these actions remained largely outside of their social reality. Many of the nation's poor lacked access to basic healthcare services and children raised in poverty faced the devastating impact of malnutrition, diarrheal disease, and chronic infections. The extraction of organs in the tales signaled the enormous gap of experience between the worlds of the rich and poor.

Interestingly, few tales engaged the complexity or expected medical demands of organ extraction. Some accounts highlighted the professionalism of these actions, indicating that they involved a "medical procedure" or "surgical operation." "Those making these claims have found minors, whose ages are between 3 to 5 years old, with signs of having suffered some type of surgical operation . . ." ¹⁴⁸ Still, most descriptions referencing any scientific aspect of the *robaniños* were from outside commentators or educated elites. The tales themselves rarely examined the medical aspects of what was described. Just as the tales never indicated actual witnesses to the acts of abduction, killing, and organ extraction, they provided no specifics as to what took place. No tales suggested the involvement of hospitals, doctors, sterile environments, clinics, etc. This was an issue that many Guatemalan physicians found to be outrageous, proof of either the ridiculousness of the tales or the hopeless ignorance of the country's majority poor population.

¹⁴⁸ "Policía alerta sobre psicosis por robo de menores," *Siglo Veintiuno*, March 24, 1994.

The display of mutilated corpses served as the only means of indicating what occurred. Some tales referenced openly mutilated corpses, perhaps suggesting a rapid process of tearing out internal organs or a disregard for any post-operative actions. Others indicated that the bodies were sutured up or presented in some other “clean” manner. All versions of the tales expressed a crass brutality and painful disregard for the integrity and humanity of the victims, and all suggested that the sole interest of the perpetrators was the organs, the means to an end.

The tales made no mention of the identity of the perpetrators. Instead, those responsible were known only by their actions, by the display of murdered and mutilated corpses. If the stories discussed perpetrators, then a general form of “they” was used, indicating that responsibility for the *robaniños* lay in some shadowy force, both dangerous and organized. The narratives’ mode of suggestion linked the tales with a deep-rooted narrative construction for how to talk about brutal repression. The use of an anonymous yet threatening “they” was a common cultural mode of communication in Guatemala and a characteristic of discussing *la violencia*. As Kay Warren suggested in her analysis of decades of human rights violations on the nature of local discourse, this form of expression was common:

Trixanos speak with carefully crafted ambiguity when referring to the perpetrators of violence: “*They* burned buses and shot the drivers and their assistants;” “*They* killed the teacher;” “*They* kidnapped people in a nearby town” (Warren 1993: 49).

The tales’ reliance on the distanced and vague reference of “they” resonated with my own human rights research and the work of many colleagues.¹⁴⁹ By using the term “they” two different mechanisms of communication were suggested. First, there was the indication of the danger involved in naming perpetrators (it was safer and more prudent to leave the issue unclear). Or, as Warren

¹⁴⁹ Warren conducted extensive fieldwork in San Andres Semetabaj, an indigenous community in the Department of Quiché that was profoundly impacted by *la violencia*. While conducting fieldwork, I spent considerable time in this community, accompanying forensic anthropologists who were exhuming mass graves and conducting detailed interviews of victims of past repression. Like Warren, I found victims constant use of “they” in the same manner she described, which was common throughout the country.

explained, “The language is often veiled or oblique, often condensed into cryptic observations with unspecified agents. The listener is expected to fill in the obvious” (Warren 1993: 33). In Guatemala, the “they” responsible for severe human rights violations was the state. While it is true that many locals were unaware of the actual names of individual officers, soldiers, and intelligence operatives, there was little doubt as to institutional responsibility.

Money and notes – Many tales mentioned that money was found along with the children’s bodies. Often the money was described as U.S. dollars although Guatemalan *quetzals* were also referenced.

An Aguateca [someone from Aguacatán] told us that a child had been found stuffed with cotton. There was a \$5 bill attached to the corpse.¹⁵⁰

At times, the money was described as wrapped up or in an envelope, a child’s corpse found with “an envelope in his pocket stuffed full of dollars,”¹⁵¹ suggesting some level of pre-planning and formality, like payment for legitimate labor. And, in other versions of the tales the money was found inside the body of the victims, defining an especially cruel vision of the process of exchange where money took the place of the stolen organs.

The reference to money linked those telling these stories with powerful and humiliating images of both impotence and desire. Providing money for organs played into a longstanding debate on organ transplantation and linked the body to commercialization and a market economy. Leaving money with the corpses of these children implied a formal process of economic exchange. By providing money to an expected party that would find the bodies, there was a sense that the brutal actions of the *robaniños* were understood, at least to those engaged in organ removal, as part of a rational market system.

The common reference to U.S. dollars highlighted the role of *gringos* in the process, as either

¹⁵⁰ Interview with American expatriate couple, Antigua, April 1996.

¹⁵¹ Interview with Mario M. in Sololá, August 1994.

those who committed these acts of violence, those who controlled the process, or both. In fact, dollars were used in Guatemala for expensive items, such as land, homes, and cars. Yet, while dollars were widely used, they were also a complex signifier. Relying on dollars highlighted the relative weakness of Guatemala's national currency and by extension its economy and the sense among locals that the social order was dependent on the U.S. and the world of *gringos*. The claim of U.S. dollars being found alongside the corpses of child victims referenced the ongoing political, cultural, and social dominance of the U.S. and a global system "out there" that was run by *gringos*.

In addition, the payment of money to those who found the bodies suggested a recognition of the legitimacy of the exchange with little regard as to who should be paid, perhaps suggesting that any poor person was as good a recipient as any other. The amounts of money mentioned were fascinating in their wide divergence from large, almost fantastical sums by Guatemalan standards to payments that were paltry and insignificant. Both large sums and small sums presented different narratives of victimization and humiliation, playing off an awareness of relative powerlessness and poverty. In some versions, the amounts of money were specific, large and fantastic, especially in a nation as poor as Guatemala. They suggested that children's corpses were found with "a \$1000 bill" or a "pocket stuffed full of dollars," implying that those finding the bodies might be able to profit significantly.

Large amounts of money suggested that those stealing the organs were making fantastic sums through their brutal acts. This highlighted the existence of a complex, predatory economy whose crass market logic affirmed the idea that murdering poor children to sell their organs yielded massive profits. That is, if the *robaniños* could leave large amounts of dollars to whoever found the body, they must be making ten or maybe a hundred times that amount. Similarly, large sums reinforced a sense of lack and impotence in the face of a world of far-off riches, referencing the very real inequality of daily life in Guatemala.

In other cases, the amounts described were small ("twenty dollars" or "a \$5 bill"), expressing

several interpretations of victimization. Leaving a small amount of foreign currency suggested the perpetrators did not value the dead child, presenting a profound disregard for Guatemala's poor. Or, one might imagine that such small payments expressed a gap of understanding, a sense among the *robaniños* that poor Guatemalans were so desperate that a few dollars would represent meaningful compensation. Additionally, these payments expressed a vicious act of mockery. A few dollars pinned to the body of a murdered child drove home the overarching power of the *robaniños*; the fact that not only did they kill for profit, but they celebrated their capacity to do so with impunity. The payments were a harsh sign of the inability of the parents to protect their children and, by extension, the inability of all other poor parents to provide the most basic guarantees of security.

Many tales also mentioned notes, sometimes in English, pinned to the body or left on the scene. Sometimes a note was mentioned with no detail as to the content. Other times, the text of the notes included a specific message:

Around March 3rd or 4th, people said that they'd found a child's corpse, with a \$1000 bill attached to it and a note saying, "This is for the funeral."¹⁵²

[They found] a child's body with the organs taken out and a note that said, "Thanks for the organs" along with twenty dollars.¹⁵³

A foreign aid worker who worked in Guatemala for years visited some friends in the northern department of Ixil:

We drove up to Chajul to visit friends and they told us all about the *robaniños*. "Sure," they said, "a woman lost her baby down in Sacapulas. They found the baby's body behind a sign. It was dead. The body had been opened up and then sewn back together. When the people opened up the baby, they found that all its organs had been taken out and in their place was a note that read, "Thanks for the donation."¹⁵⁴

The notes adopted the calm, cheery tone of a benign and ordinary commercial transaction. In fact,

¹⁵² Interview with older indigenous man in Cobán, July 1994.

¹⁵³ Interview with woman in Quiché, March 1996.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Ken Ward, American development worker, Guatemala City, February 1996

the notes were complex in their suggestion and impact. They implied an interest on the part of the perpetrators to communicate some sort of reasonableness of purpose, an act of exchange that suggested reciprocity. The notes expressed an acknowledgment of service, a window into a system so cold in its operation that its perpetrators saw the notes and payment as an appropriate means of offsetting the inconvenience and harm of their brutal acts.

Of special significance for understanding the panic of the *robaniños* was the state's reliance on severe violence enacted upon the bodies of Guatemalan people, especially the rural indigenous population and the marginalized poor. Furthermore, the state's action upon the bodies of its victims was structured to affect others – relatives of the victims, community members, and the public at large. The mechanisms and strategies of repression in Guatemala were not only designed to harm victims, but they were also created to communicate domination.

State terror brutalized individuals and often did so through modes of communicative action. The logic of state terror in Guatemala involved processes of spectacle and absence, the public display of signs of violence coupled with a broad-based denial of responsibility for actual acts of violence. These practices used victims' bodies in two distinct yet mutually reinforcing communicative strategies: the purposeful public display of mutilated corpses which I have termed “public presentational torture” (Rothenberg 2004) and the purposeful hiding of the corpses of those killed through the widespread use of forced disappearance.

Public presentational torture – During *la violencia*, the discovery of corpses was not an odd or an occasional occurrence. In rural Guatemala, government forces displayed the mutilated bodies of victims, showing clear signs of their suffering as a key strategy of state terror. What was compelling and disturbing about the public presentation of mutilated bodies was not only the terrible quality of the suffering evoked but the use of such brutality to influence others.

Encountering these bodies was often a painful, overwhelming experience; their skin would be torn and burnt, their faces cut and swollen, their eyes gouged out, their fingernails removed, their hands severed:

Leaving bodies exposed on posts, displaying the severed heads of victims on poles or hanging from trees, cutting off their tongues or their hands, mutilating their breasts or genitals, these were practices that became common and were committed either before or after a victim's death ... (Rothenberg 2012: 13).

The repetition and similarity of these public presentations, managed by state security forces in multiple places, provided insight into the state strategy of openly expressing its capacity and willingness to commit acts of great and overwhelming cruelty.

The discovery of corpses in garbage dumps, fields, or pits, and the public display of bodies along streets and town squares, were key elements of the most brutal years of *la violencia*. The display of bodies and the use of bodies as a sign of power were key components of the operation of state terror in Guatemala:

People began to disappear, one by one. The army would kidnap people and kill them and we'd find their bodies. People would come to me at the school and tell me that their husband had been taken at night. Then his body would appear somewhere. They used to throw the corpses into a big river nearby and sometimes when you were bathing, you'd see dozens of dead bodies floating by. Sometimes, they left corpses shot up along the side of the road. It got to the point where you had seen so many dead bodies and heard so many terrible stories that these things became normal . . . How could anyone live through these experiences? Most of my friends were killed. I couldn't even tell you all their names, because there were so many . . . Once, I found the corpse of a friend of mine. He was our supervisor, the secretary of the literacy program. The army abducted him right out of the school, in front of all the teachers. They accused him of having collaborated with the guerrillas. They killed him and cut off his head . . . Out of the thirty-two teachers in our area only five are still alive. They're all here in the United States . . . The situation was so difficult that your nervous system changed. You became afraid of everyone you saw and everyone you spoke to. You never knew if the person you were speaking with was an informant. During that time, the majority of Guatemalans lived with so much nervous tension that it was difficult to endure, especially for those of us in the countryside. The army was watching me. I couldn't live in peace. If I went to a store, they knew. I couldn't rest. I could hardly sleep...One night when I was in hiding, the army came in, beat up my father, and took three people from within our house and killed them. In the morning, their

dead bodies were found in the street. Then, we began seeing more and more corpses in town (Rothenberg 2000: 48).

Discovered bodies were talked about, reported in newspapers, and central to the discourse of state terror in Guatemala. “The retrieval of bodies was so enormous – sometimes three dozen in one trip – that they were referred to as *leña* (firewood)” (Simon 1987: 77). The bodies found and displayed not only represented victims of political violence, but they also commented on the many thousands of victims whose bodies were never found, the tens of thousands of *desaparecidos* who were taken – largely by the military or other agents of state terror – and never seen again. The bodies that were displayed stood for, in their presence, the absence of thousands.

Many of the bodies discovered and displayed were severely mutilated. Like the children’s corpses from the tales, this mutilation was a sign of callous disregard for human dignity and the vicious brutality of the perpetrators:

They had shaved her private parts. The nipple of one of her breasts was missing and her other breast was cut off. She had the marks of bites on different parts of her body. She was bitten all over, that *compañera*. She had no ears. All of them were missing part of their tongue or had their tongues split apart. (Menchú 2010: 208)

The bodies of victims of human rights violations were often left in fields and along well-used paths and roads. “In rural areas, it was also common to abandon bodies along roads so that neighbors would later find them” (Rothenberg 2012: 13). The more this occurred, the more generalized the sense of terror became. Other times, the bodies were placed in highly public places, such as parks, the steps of churches:

. . . another common practice was the public exposition of corpses in strategic points and in places that held clear social significance or symbolism, such as by the doors of public institutions, in parks, churches, or schools . . . (Rothenberg 2012: 13).

In rural Guatemala, the village squares were generally the sites for weekly market days where locals came from the surrounding *aldeas* to sell agricultural products, buy things, gossip, and pass information on any number of issues. Most squares were also the site of the main church and government offices.

Openly presenting corpses, bearing signs of torture and mutilation, was an element of the state's counterinsurgency strategy. It communicated directly to those who found the corpses, and indirectly to those who heard about their discovery, the physical proof of the state's willingness to commit violence upon the bodies of those under its control. One soldier recalled the abduction of four women, their rape, murder, and subsequent display:

That night we found four women and the officer said that we would sleep with them on a hill. After making use of them, the officer gave the order to make some stakes and plant them there. The women were placed there and their bodies lined up along the mountain. (Rothenberg 2012: 13)

In such cases, significant effort was directed towards the mechanisms of public display of victims, highlighting the performative nature of these violations.

While the specifics of the mutilation ranged from one case to another, the practice became routinized. Hundreds, likely thousands, of bodies were purposefully left in places where they would be found by people going about their daily activities: on their way to tend to their fields, taking animals out to pasture, visiting family, or en route to the market. The display of mutilated corpses "became common."

Sometimes, the victims were locals who were known to those who discovered the corpses:

We found José in the center [of town]. His body was badly beaten. We could see him well because the soldiers had left him naked and tied to a post in the very center [of town]. (Rothenberg 2012: 13)

When the bodies of known victims were found, stories about what occurred spread rapidly through the area, with attendant uncertainties, accusations, and gossip about who might have given the person's name to the authorities, what personal conflict was settled through the act, or the degree to which the person was involved in *babosadas* (foolishness), one of many terms suggesting involvement with the guerillas or other movements.

Many of those targeted, especially in the early stages of the military domination of an area, were well known to the community, including important local leaders, indigenous religious authorities, and others. The CEH described the killing of a Maya authority and activist who first received threats, followed by the detention of his wife and daughter, and later his own capture, which was viewed by several witnesses. His corpse was discovered in a ravine with signs of torture:

They crowned him with a blackberry bush. They gave him a crown of thorns and left him with a Bible. They pulled down his pants. They nailed him like on the cross (Rothenberg 2012: 13).

In these cases, the display of bodies was complex, brutal, and ritualistic. Not only did the corpse show signs of torture and mutilation, but he was costumed with “a crown of thorns,” left with a Bible, and crucified in a highly performative, if bizarre, display. Additionally, in this case, the military refused to let the community bury the body, a powerful affront to Maya society, although eventually he was secretly interred.¹⁵⁵

During *la violencia*, bodies were commonly disposed of in places where they would be found. “There was great fear. People frequently appeared along the highways dead, dumped. You didn’t know what town they were from” (Warren 1993: 31). In these cases, the discovery of the victims spurred many questions. Who were the victims? Where were they from? Why were they left in this place and in this community? Was the display a specific threat? Or, was it a general warning? Unlike with known victims, it was unclear who should take possession of the corpses and bury them correctly. The display of the mutilated bodies of unknown victims heightened a sense of generalized menace. “The immediacy of the horror is evoked by tortured and abandoned bodies . . . violence was inscribed on

¹⁵⁵ This story continues, “Neighbors pulled him out of the ravine and a wake was held in Xesic. The Army arrived at the wake and those that were there ran away, leaving the corpse. His relatives returned at around three in the morning. The burial was on January 22 and almost five thousand people attended from Chimaltenango, Chichicastenango, and Totonicapán. The Army was on alert and was there watching. After the burial, once night had fallen, the Army took the body out of the grave. For eight days, they left him unburied. After the soldiers went away, the community reburied him” (Rothenberg 2012: 13).

the bodies of strangers, foretelling what might happen to one's own people" (Warren 1993: 31). Sometimes messages, generally warnings, accompanied the display of bodies. These were presented as placards tied to the bodies or hung around their necks, or in phrases etched into victim's bodies or painted in blood on the corpses. The messages included statements such as, "This is what happens to guerrilla sympathizers."

These forms of violence were designed to be overtly disrespectful to the integrity and dignity of the victims. They used bodies to present a message of excess and cruelty reminding the populace that the state was willing to do almost anything to defeat its enemies and achieve its political goals.

Forced disappearance – During *la violencia*, it was estimated that over 50,000 people were "disappeared" (CEH 1998). The crime of disappearance (also called forced disappearance within the international human rights literature) describes a specific violation in which a collection of illegal and abusive practices – from illegal arrest, to detention, torture and extrajudicial execution – are bound to a denial of knowledge or responsibility. While some victims eventually reappeared and returned home, most were killed and their bodies were disposed of in ways that masked their fate. Interestingly, it was in references to the repressive practices of the Guatemalan state in the late 1960s, in an early wave of *la violencia*, that the term *desaparación* (disappearance) was first used to name this particular crime. Later, disappearance (or "force disappearance" as it is often known) became an iconic human rights violations of repressive Latin American regimes implementing a mode of state terror that linked brutal repression with deniability, a lack of closure, and a constancy of threat.

The CEH found that forced disappearance was conducted exclusively by state forces and related repressive units operating under state control. As such, it was a core element of the country's counterinsurgency strategy and its practice of state terror. It is worth noting that there was a marked distinction between the ways in which disappearances were practiced in urban and rural areas. As with other violations, state repression in and around major cities was largely targeted, focusing on specific

individuals and their families, such as labor leaders, student activists, members of popular movements, and others. In rural Guatemala, however, disappearances were often arbitrary, and the army, PACs, military commissioners, and others would provide names of suspects who would then be arrested and taken to military bases, virtually all of which had holding cells and torture rooms; they would never be heard from again.

Forced disappearance linked abduction with torture that was used to gather information and to generate names of others to be arrested and interrogated. This was true for those targeted individually for their “subversive” activities, as well as those who were rounded up in an indiscriminate manner. Through direct torture and threats to family members and others, as well as various enticements, victims would provide all sorts of information on other people, many of whom would also be disappeared. This process created cycles of violence and abuse, which reinforced its own logic, proving the legitimacy of the state’s abusive policies as disappearance and torture yielded confirmation of networks of other subversives.

Many cases of disappearance began with abductions that were witnessed. These occurred during patrols and raids as well as through multiple encounters with members of the military or PACs in markets or on the street. Victims were often picked up at the many checkpoints set up on roads, at bridges, or at the entrance to towns and villages. Soldiers would commonly stop buses, and often, using lists obtained through *orejas* and *confidenciales* (as well as through torture), they would grab civilians, pulling them away from the rest of the people, no one ever learning what happened to them:

It was nine when the Army soldiers stopped the bus that has lots of people and forced them to come down. They reviewed them to see if they had arms or secret papers and they took only one man. On Monday, his wife went to look for him at the army base near the cemetery in the municipality of Patzún because the people had said that on Sunday soldiers had taken four men to the base, prisoners who had their hands tied behind their backs ... after that the man never appeared (Rothenberg 2012: 16).

In urban areas, the perpetrators were generally members of the intelligence services who presented no identification and drove anonymous cars:

After six in the evening cars with polarized windows and Jeeps with armed men arrived. They knocked on the door, entered and then one heard a lot of noise as if they were breaking things. [The victim] was raped in front of her relatives and then they took her from the house in one of the vehicles and that was the last we heard of her (Rothenberg 2012: 15).

In these cases, the state masked its responsibility for the abductions and subsequent disappearance by using non-uniformed agents and civilian-style vehicles.

Accounts of disappearances varied widely as to the mode of abduction, arrest, and the conditions and context in which the state took physical custody of a victim. However, they ended in a similar fashion, with the ultimate whereabouts of the victim unknown:

On the night of June 27, 1982, the soldiers took Alberto from his house and he never reappeared (Rothenberg 2012: 16).

It was in 1964 when my *compañero*, a union organizer in Escuintla, active member of the union at the *finca* Torolita, member of FASGUA and supporter of many worker struggles in rural areas and in factories in Escuintla, was taken in the middle of the night by the Judicial Police. They took him and he never reappeared (Rothenberg 2012: 17).

In countless cases of forced disappearance, the family members of those abducted would turn to state authorities to find out more information on the whereabouts of their loved ones. When an individual was taken by members of the PAC or soldiers, they would follow the chain of command, often seeking entry to local military bases. The police, military, judicial authorities, and other state security forces “actively supported the process by providing false information, confusing relatives regarding the whereabouts of those detained and threatening victims’ families so that they would give up their search” (Rothenberg 2012: 18).

Efforts to follow up on information about a missing person were met with denials, misinformation, and a refusal to provide any form of substantive assistance. The message

communicated by these responses was clear. Whether through a dismissive attitude or open threats, state agents acted with complete impunity. One moment they might laugh and taunt victims' families and the next they might arrest them. Clearly, "fear was a common denominator in rural areas as well as in the capital" (Rothenberg 2012: 19).

The crime of forced disappearance has been legally recognized as distinct from its constituent parts – illegal detention, torture, extrajudicial execution – because of its particular harm and specific communicative nature. It is not only a crime of violence enacted upon the bodies of victims (generally civilians), but it is also a crime premised on the denial of action and responsibility. By hiding the many corpses of those brutalized, the crime links a refusal to acknowledge responsibility with the profound uncertainty as to the fate of the victim(s). It is this uncertainty, the impossibility of determining what happened to one's father, mother, brother, sister, or friend, that defines the crime. "The impact of forced disappearance was the persistence of doubt, fear, and insecurity resulting from the uncertainty generated by concealing the fate of the disappeared detainee" (Rothenberg 2012: 15).

The systematic use of public presentational torture and forced disappearance are intertwined crimes of state terror in Guatemala. One uses the display of brutalized bodies as a means of communicating proof of the state's willingness to abuse civilians, both known and unknown. In some cases, the presentations are ritualistic and performative, highlighting their cruelty and purposefully communicative nature. These acts include notes and messages, which take on a mocking, vicious quality. In other cases, the bodies appear tossed aside, discarded, and left like refuse in places where people commonly pass. In all cases of public presentational torture, victims' bodies are displayed to create and maintain terror.

Forced disappearance, on the other hand, uses the opposite semiotic structure. Here, the victims' bodies are hidden, producing a different impact: a long-term sense of uncertainty and the hope that the victim might still be alive and one day reappear. Yet, both uses of bodies – those

disappeared and those performatively displayed – employ a logic of terror, which links acts of cruelty with the overwhelming assumption of impunity. These acts communicate to broad populations their profound impotence in the face of state repression; they link the brutal exercise of power and the avoidance of responsibility, a devastating ethical calculus.

5. What is Hidden and Revealed: The Narrative Logic of the Tales of the *Robaniños*

Through their brutal, vicious imagery, the tales of the *robaniños* played off the very real practices of state terror, recapitulating and reinforcing an environment of enormous fear and uncertainty. Linda Green, in her important work on Guatemala, focuses on the broad, transformative impact of fear as expressed in the title of one of her books, *Fear as a Way of Life*. She highlights the way in which deeply internalized fear restructured social reality in rural communities, with a broad impact founded on a profound sense of uncertainty:

Fear thrives on ambiguities. Denunciations, gossip, innuendos, and rumors of death lists create a climate of suspicion. No one can be sure of who is who. The spectacle of torture and death and of massacres and disappearances in the recent past have become more deeply inscribed into individual bodies and the collective imagination through a constant sense of threat. In the *altiplano*, fear has become a way of life. Fear is the arbiter of power: invisible, indeterminate, and silent (Green 1999: 57).

These mechanisms of state terror established a culture of fear and intimidation characterized by enormous mistrust and backed up by a guarantee of impunity that shielded perpetrators from any accountability. One of the goals of these brutal practices was to use physical violence – in its open performative display and its menacing obfuscation – as a means of repressing expression; “its objective was to...silence society” (CEH 1999: 65). Broad, overwhelming silencing impacted the possibilities of representation, shifting the degree to which many of the most important issues could be directly discussed. This was especially true for reflections on any issue associated with politics or any questions about power or the structure of social relations.

For decades, the Guatemalan state relied on institutionalized human rights violations as a central mechanism of governance and an essential way in which the state interacted with its citizens, especially in the rural highlands. The use of extreme violence radically reconstituted life for rural indigenous residents and bound the idea of governance to brutal, impulsive, and unpredictable repression. Central to this effort was a strategy of communication that used victims' bodies, either openly displayed in sites where people gathered or brutalized and hidden from view. These processes were clearly seen in the use of public presentational torture and forced disappearance. Public presentational torture operated through the cruel excess of displaying mutilated corpses and forced disappearance functioned by hiding the bodies (sometimes in secret mass graves, other times by dropping bodies into the ocean or otherwise disposing of the victims).

Both mechanisms of terror inspired and enabled fear through bodies, by overt marking and cruel display and by obfuscation and the removal of evidence. While the use of bodies was distinct – one focused on spectacle and overt display, the other on obfuscation and the ongoing pain of uncertainty – they were similar in their desired impact of communicating terror. Both sets of brutalized bodies – the visible and the hidden – expressed to those who encountered them, directly or indirectly, that the same could happen to them and their loved ones. They utilized the possibility of looming, inevitable threat; they relied on a currency of fear; the communicative logic of brutalized bodies.

Table 2 Communicative Logic of Brutalized Bodies

Victims' bodies	Body status narrated	Body status seen/found	Acts implied	Acts known	Perpetrators hidden	Perpetrators known
Tales' child victims	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
<i>La violencia</i> publicly displayed victims	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
<i>La violencia</i> disappeared victims	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

The tales built on an evolving discourse within which the repression mapped its power onto the bodies of victims, thereby highlighting the nature of victimization while defining power through cruelty and domination. The excess and rigidity of this imagery provides insight into the motivating power of these tales, but only as read through a context overdetermined by *la violencia* and bound to the specifics of place and time.

The tales' reliance on "discovery" suggested a process of revelation, hinting at the existence of deep-rooted corruption and cruelty defining the structure and operation of the social order. The specific acts of violence committed upon children's bodies, then, served as a window into a society permeated by rapacious violence, a place where brutal actions of this nature could occur with a level of impunity that allowed perpetrators to act with such confidence that they could celebrate their crimes.

Of course, there were key differences in the display of bodies by the state and the imagery of discovered bodies through the tales of the *robaniños*. The bodies of victims of *la violencia* were actual and, beginning in the early 1990s, claims about quantity and severity of these acts were increasing

backed up by evidence from human rights documentation, forensic exhumations, and related investigations. On the other hand, the bodies of the *robaniños* were not actual and could not be verified.

The tales themselves were inadequate for resolving the pressing issues of who or what was behind a vicious industry that preyed upon children for a distant and shadowy market. The open insult of notes and money further defined an exaggerated display of domination, a mocking exercise of power over the poor, especially the children of the poor that mimicked the gross imbalances of economic relations within a global world. The repetition, constancy, simplicity, and focus of the imagery, in what was publicly revealed and what was evocative in its commitment to obfuscation, defined the narrative logic of these stories.

In this way, the tales of the *robaniños* were bound a link between bodies and visibility; their logic played off a tension between what was seen and unseen, what was hidden and revealed. The tales operated in a manner that employed ambiguity and uncertainty, utilizing imagery that both excited and terrified, while playing off deep-rooted understandings of how bodies have been used as signs of systematic repression and profound suffering. Fear and uncertainty, the known and the unknown; these are mutual imprints of each other and are read through a logic of what is rendered visible and hidden from view. The tales expressed themselves in revelation and obfuscation, in overt demonstrations of overdetermined meaning, as well as masked suggestions of what occurred far from view, controlled by forces that were free to do what they wanted.

Chapter 3 – Riot in Santa Lucía: Guatemala’s Justice Crisis and Critique of the Country’s Democratic Transition

1. Popular Violence in Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa

The first major act of popular violence in the panic of the *robamiños* occurred in March 1994 in Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa. The riot occurred in response to accusations against a female American tourist believed to be stealing children to extract their organs.¹⁵⁶ Santa Lucía is a mid-size town southwest of the capital located in the flat lowlands that stretch from the mountains to the Pacific Ocean.¹⁵⁷ The community is surrounded by large sugar cane and cattle plantations, many owned by the nation’s elites, and is rarely visited by tourists even though it sits on a major highway linking Guatemala City to Mexico.¹⁵⁸

Before the riot, stories of organ-stealing *gringos* circulated widely in and around the community. Virtually everyone I interviewed in Santa Lucía in the months following the panic explained that the tales created a generalized sense of uncertainty:

“We were all frightened!”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ The description of the events that preceded the riot, occurred during the riot, and took place after the riot in Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa are based on over thirty interviews with residents, conducted between 1994 and 1997, as well as press reports and multiple interviews with U.S. Embassy officials, Guatemalan journalists and Guatemalan officials. I also used video footage obtained from local camera operators, portions of which were included in reports by *Noti Siete*. Where a direct quote from a source is mentioned, I use a specific citation.

¹⁵⁷ Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa is in the department of Escuintla, about 20 miles from the department capital, also named Escuintla, and is approximately 60 miles from Guatemala City. The community is both a small city and a *municipio*, an administrative-political unit similar to a “county.” The permanent population (not considering migrant workers) of the city is approximately 24,000 and the *municipio*’s total population is about 52,000 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística. 1996).

¹⁵⁸ Santa Lucía is located in the Guatemalan lowlands in what is known as “*tierra caliente*,” a tropical climate ecologically distinct from the highlands. Santa Lucía is in the center of the country’s sugar industry and is surrounded by enormous plantations of many thousands of acres of flat cane fields. The local economy also involves cattle production, and to some degree tropical fruits, particularly pineapples and bananas. While the town is founded upon agricultural production, most of the farming is controlled by large landowners. It is located along one of the nation’s major highways that connects to communities on the Pacific Ocean and serves as a key route to and from Mexico. Santa Lucía is a largely *ladino* town.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Manuel, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

“The situation was very serious.”¹⁶⁰

“We lived under tremendous pressure.”¹⁶¹

Informants explained that they felt “under siege” and “worried”: “All of Santa Lucía felt stress about what might happen.”¹⁶²

As reports of stolen children and the discovery of organ-less corpses passed through the community, parents, especially mothers, were unsure of how to protect their children from the *robaniños*. Some began escorting them to and from school. Others kept them at home, behind locked doors. Many refused to allow them to play in the street or run errands.

It was within this context that Melissa Larson, an American woman in her 30s, arrived in Santa Lucía. The town had no significant sites of interest for most tourists and there were few decent hotels. Nevertheless, as a key site for migrant labor during the cane season, the town’s economy depended on a steady stream of non-residents, so outside visitors were an essential component of social life in Santa Lucía.¹⁶³

On March 7th, Larson went to visit one the area’s few attractions, the ruins of Baúl, a pre-Columbian ruin located on a sugar plantation, a short hike from the town’s main square. She returned to the center of town sometime in the afternoon, possibly greeting children and taking photographs as she walked. When she arrived in the plaza, she sat down in the shade to have a cool drink.

By that time, stories were passing through the community that the *gringa* – Ms. Larson – was

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Susana B, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, July 1994.

¹⁶¹ Interview with Gisela M., Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

¹⁶² Interview with Axel, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

¹⁶³ The highly seasonal nature of the sugar industry determines the mood and pace of life in Santa Lucía. During the harvest season, the economy is in full gear. Enormous trucks hauling tons of cane travel up and down the areas narrow highways, traveling from the fields to the enormous processing plants. The community itself is flooded with many thousands of migrant workers, generally indigenous people who come down from the highlands, sometimes with entire families, and sometimes in male work crews. Many elements of the local economy depend upon the migrant workers. Stores sell to migrants in Santa Lucía, who often buy products to take home to their families in the highlands. There are entire streets filled with bars and brothels that operate during the cane season. There are also many hotels, restaurants, and gas stations whose business depends upon the truckers and merchants who pass through town both during the sugar season and throughout the year.

a *robaniña*.¹⁶⁴ Some said that she had enticed children to come with her by offering them candy and pocket change. Others mentioned that she was taking a lot of pictures of children, a practice believed to be a means of selecting who would be targeted for abduction, murder, and mutilation.

Then, a woman claimed that Larson had tried to steal her child. By some accounts, the woman began yelling in the main square, drawing attention. Others suggested her story gained force in a subtler fashion, as tales of the attempted child-theft passed from one resident to another in a whispered chain of allegations.¹⁶⁵

While Larson spoke Spanish, she later claimed that she was unaware of the wildly circulating tales of organ-stealing *gringos*. This was not surprising since, at the time, the stories were mainly presented in the domestic Spanish-language media and had yet to receive international attention.

Still, Larson reported that she noticed people staring at her. She was uncomfortable. She stood up and walked away from the plaza. People noticed her departure. They pointed and whispered. A small crowd followed her. She grew nervous and walked faster, heading down a street. By chance, Larson walked past the local police station which was located, as in most Guatemalan communities, only a few blocks from the main plaza.

Almost immediately she was taken into custody, suspected of stealing children.

While this might have appeared as a positive development for those in the community who believed Larson to be a *robaniño*, the police action was widely viewed with suspicion. Many community members believed that the police were unlikely to seriously investigate the case and were, in fact, key collaborators of the *robaniños*. Some assumed that, like so many illegal yet lucrative businesses (logging,

¹⁶⁴ The term “*robaniña*” is used here to refer to the feminine of *robaniño*. Interestingly, despite the fact that a number of women were accused of this practice the feminine version of the Spanish term was rarely used in interviews, press reports and other references, despite being grammatically more accurate. That said, some informants did use this term. For this reason, I only use the feminine, *robaniña*, where this was used in quotations or, occasionally to designate the gendered nature of claims against specific individuals.

¹⁶⁵ Despite my efforts, I was unable to verify the identity of this woman or to gain clarity as to specifically which claim sparked the growing community interest in Larson’s presence.

drug trafficking, etc.), state security agents were essential partners of unscrupulous foreign forces, allowing these businesses to operate with impunity. Others assumed that, whether or not the police were formal partners in the murder of children for their organs, the arrest was little more than a means for them to extract a bribe.

The police decided to take Larson to the office of the local *Juez de Paz* (Justice of the Peace) on the other side of town. The police and Larson arrived at his office around 3:30 in the afternoon. According to the Justice of the Peace, within a short period of time, three to four hundred enraged residents had gathered outside his small office. As he looked out at the angry crowd – something he’d never previously witnessed – he was extremely worried. “By that time, the people wanted to kill her.”¹⁶⁶

Concerned about possible violence, the Justice of the Peace had Larson taken to the central jail in Escuintla, the departmental capital, about fifteen miles away. He then invited a small group of locals into his office. He explained that the American woman was being taken to the larger facility because she could be safely held there while her case was investigated and appropriately processed under Guatemalan law.

The police then assured the crowd that Larson would be brought back to town the following day. The residents of Santa Lucía remained suspicious. As the Justice of the Peace explained, “The people were tense. There were even some who slept outside the police station.”¹⁶⁷

The next morning, a crowd gathered in the central square. They were waiting for Larson to be brought back to Santa Lucía. Questions circulated wildly. Where was the suspicious woman? When would she return to Santa Lucía? How could the community have allowed her to slip away so easily? A story passed through the community that Larson had been freed after paying a bribe believed to be

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Justice of the Peace Carlos Humberto Darden Reyes, August 1994.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

between \$10,000 and \$35,000 (eight to twenty-seven times the GDP per capita).¹⁶⁸

By nine in the morning, residents appeared, waiting to see Larson:

People gathered around the police station and yelled, “Bring the *gringa* outside so we can have justice.” People here thought the *gringa* was going to get away. They thought that the police would let her go. I thought that too.¹⁶⁹

They shouted out accusations that the Police Chief and the five agents had collaborated with the *robaniños*. Soon, it was clear that Larson was not going to be brought back from Escuintla. To many in the community, it appeared that the only *robaniño* ever identified had escaped justice. People were furious that a *gringa* – assumed to be wealthy and well-connected – had avoided justice and that the community’s children would remain at risk.

The crowd began throwing rocks at the police station. They yelled and taunted the officers. A group of young men set fire to a police car and then burned a pick-up truck parked in front of the station. The crowd pushed their way inside and ransacked the station, breaking furniture and burning files.

Some officers ran out the door and others escaped by going up onto the roof, climbing over to an adjacent building and then descending to the street, where they were beaten by local youth:

The ones who attacked the cops were young, fourteen to twenty-four years old. They almost killed two or three of the policemen.¹⁷⁰

As the police station burned, rioters turned their attentions to stores, breaking windows and stealing things. “It was totally surprising. There was vandalism. People stole corn, beans, everything.”¹⁷¹

Around noon, police reinforcements, including anti-riot squads with plastic shields and batons arrived in town. As many as two hundred and fifty police were reported to have entered the town.

¹⁶⁸ The World Bank states that the GDP per capita, or gross domestic product per person, for Guatemala in 1994 was \$1,285 (World Bank).

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Gabriella M, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, July 1994.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Susana B, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, July 1994.

¹⁷¹ Interview with Aurelio S. Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

Still, the riot continued for several hours. According to some reports, a few people in the crowd had guns.¹⁷² Despite their large numbers, the police were unable to control the situation, as M. Lee McClenny, First Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala explained in a letter after the event:

The crowd . . . engaged in rock throwing and a see-saw street fight with several hundred police officers, including a unit of riot police for much of the day.¹⁷³

Outside of Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, there was a military base. Shortly before 3:00 in the afternoon, roughly twenty-four hours after Larson was taken into custody, the Guatemalan Army entered the town. The army sent approximately five hundred soldiers accompanied by four armored personnel carriers to face the rioters.

Immediately, the crowd dissipated, “In three minutes, everything stopped.”¹⁷⁴

At the end of the day, fifteen police were injured, some quite seriously. Thirty-four residents were also injured. Fifty-two people were arrested and taken to the prison in Escuintla.

The riot was widely reported in the media (newspapers, radio and television). It was a major news story throughout the country. Video images of the riot were repeatedly broadcast and commentators reflected on the meaning of this surprising outburst of popular violence. The riot was important enough – in part because a U.S. citizen had been targeted – that it was picked up by Univision and CNN.

The riot’s significance was related to the complex, transitional context of Guatemala in 1994. At the time, violent popular action in direct opposition to state security forces was a dangerous and highly uncommon action. The state retained an extraordinarily repressive apparatus involved in

¹⁷² There appears to be no confirmation of this. My review of videos of the events didn’t reveal anyone with guns or even people displaying machetes or other commonly accessible weapons. Where armed members of the crowd were referenced this appeared to support the government’s assertion that the group represented a genuine danger to trained and armed state agents.

¹⁷³ Letter from M. Lee McClenny, First Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala to Professor Hiram Caton, July 25, 1994.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Justice of the Peace Carlos Humberto Darden Reyes, August 1994.

systematic human rights violations. And, even though the National Police were among the least feared of state security agents (as compared to the military and intelligence services, a key reason why the arrival of soldiers ended the riot in minutes), a sustained attack against police officers and the burning and looting of a police station represented an exceptionally risky act for those involved

So, what was it about these stories that outraged the locals of Santa Lucía to the degree that they attacked institutions of state authority and beat state agents? Why did the panic of the *robaniños* serve as a catalyst for popular violence when well-documented and widely known abuses of power – from institutionalized corruption to severe human rights violations such as torture, massacres, and extrajudicial execution – failed to similarly motivate such acts? How can we understand the complex challenges posed by these tales and their capacity to incite and enable popular violence?

The riot in Santa Lucía was an example of a process described in social science terms as “collective violence,” “civil violence,” “collective civil violence,” or “popular violence.” Such acts have been described as so central to efforts to understand the foundation of social systems that they have been called the “problem of order” and described as “the most fundamental on the agenda of social science” (Rule 1988: xi). Some anthropologists have used the term to interpret “the unimaginable suffering and systematic devastation” of large scale collective violence and the complex wide-ranging impact of trauma (Robben and Suarez-Orozco 2000: xi). Others have outlined an “anthropology of collective violence” related to riots and similar disturbances of public order to understand the “organization and dynamics of these crowds” (Tambiah 1996: 27). And, still others have explored the links between such violence and the generalized modes of experience and expression (Kapferer 1988) examining weaknesses in the historically constructed nature of the nation-state, and questioning the ethics of ethnographic inquiry into such acts (Das 1985).

In many ways, the field’s wide-ranging engagement with “popular violence” and “collective violence” coincided with the “discovery” (or “re-discovery”) of violence as a core research subject. In

the same way that defining violence presents enormous challenges for anthropologists¹⁷⁵, ascertaining the meaning of “collective violence” is similarly vexing. In part this is because the term names a diverse set of actions involving multiple factors and issues from low-level resistance by a neighbourhood or community to the commission of mass atrocities. Despite the term’s lack of analytic specificity, it remains resonant because the practices it references name important ways in which physical force is displayed to challenge the state or otherwise question the management of power by socially dominant authorities. I use the term “popular violence” to highlight the link between acts of unexpected physical force and a broadly-held set of concerns and generalized anger that defined the mood and lived experience of the community of Santa Lucía.

This study builds on the core insights of Charles Tilly who argued that while acts of collective violence often appear deeply disturbing to locals and seem to challenge elements of established society (seen as “a shock,” “unprecedented,” etc.), they often express more ordinary elements of social order. In this way, they are a form of “contentious politics” in which “participants are making claims that affect each other’s interests” and where “relations of participants to governments are always at stake” (Tilly 2003: 26). This point here is to frame the “newness” and “surprise” of acts like the riot in Santa Lucía – as revealed in my ethnographic data – as a means of critically reflecting on a set of complex relations among social actors in Guatemala within the specific social context in which the popular violence occurred.

What elements of “contentious politics,” then, best explain the riot? The issue is particularly significant given the fact that the popular violence unleashed by the tales was not an overt questioning of longstanding state abuse, but rather a reaction to the “fantastic” tales of foreigners attacking and dismembering local children and then selling their organs. I argue that the salience and motivating

¹⁷⁵ “Violence is a slippery concept – nonlinear, productive, destructive, *and* reproductive . . . in the end we cannot say that we ‘know’ exactly what violence is” (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004: 1-2.)

power of the tales as the catalyst for the panic was bound to the way the stories encoded a focused and compelling counter-narrative to the promises of peace and the democratic transition in Guatemala. My claim is not that this mode of critique was the express goal of the rioters. Rather, the stories expressed a resonant response to the broad promises of positive political change associated with the country's democratic transition, coupled with a related sense of uncertainty, fear, and deep-rooted mistrust.

The chapter proceeds in several stages. First, the chapter reviews local conceptions of the police in Santa Lucía with a focus on the frustration and anger produced by institutionalized corruption. Residents of the community, like virtually all Guatemalans (particularly those lacking social power), distrusted the police and other formal rule of law institutions (Justices of the Peace, judges, courts, etc.). In this way, the riot expressed what I term a "justice crisis," in which the domain of law and issues of formal accountability came to define key sites of contestation within Guatemalan society.

The chapter then contextualizes the panic within a debate regarding whether Guatemala's democratic transition represented either a substantive political transformation or little more than a façade that enabled ongoing military domination. Rather than resolve this issue, I situate the country within the "third wave of democratization" in Latin America (and its discourse of elation at the "triumph" of democracy followed by a critical engagement with the meaning of these changes) as read in conversation with a growing interest within anthropology for engaging democracy.

The chapter examines these tensions in relation to how the metanarrative of democracy structured public discourse and the limited accepted understandings of the political. The chapter also reviews public responses to the riots, particularly the role that the events in Santa Lucía played in highlighting the potential for vast political failure or a "social explosion," a significant claim given the country's repressive response to popular organizing and mass public critique. This analysis focuses attention on the central role of "trust" for understanding the conditions of a democratic social order

and for engaging the larger meaning of the riot. The chapter concludes by reviewing the next stages of the evolution of the panic of the *robaniños* as a means of arguing that the profound motivating power that enabled the riot in Santa Lucía expressed a unique form of “contentious politics,” which was expressly apolitical, at least in its outward appearance and stated purpose. Yet, it is just this tension that defines the panic’s importance as a mode of expressing the Guatemalan political imagination.

2. The Riot as an Expression of Guatemala’s Justice Crisis

Shortly before Melissa Larson arrived in Santa Lucía, a gruesome story passed through the community. According to locals, the city morgue was holding nine bodies of victims of the *robaniños*. The children’s corpses were believed to be missing organs, proof that organ-stealing *gringos* operated in and around the community.

Many locals were enraged. They were eager to encounter proof of the tales, which had been widely reported by local television and radio.¹⁷⁶ Authorities in Santa Lucía explained to local leaders that the allegations were false. These statements were met suspicion, as were many claims made by state agents, and the community demanded access to the morgue. As one local explained, “We needed to see for ourselves!”¹⁷⁷

So, on March 4th, hoping to quell public anger and help restore a sense of calm to Santa Lucía, the Justice of the Peace (the same one who played a key role in the Larson case), the Police Chief, and the local coroner allowed a group of locals to enter the morgue. As the Justice of the Peace explained, “We invited the people in . . . There were no bodies of children.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ “I asked one of the people who came in, ‘Who told you there were children here?’ He said, ‘I saw it on *Noti-Siete*.’ Another one said, ‘I heard it on the radio.’” Interview with Justice of the Peace Carlos Humberto Darden Reyes, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Maria P, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa. June 1996.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Justice of the Peace Carlos Humberto Darden Reyes, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

This was confirmed by a woman I interviewed who was a member of the group that visited the morgue:

People said that there were nine bodies in the morgue missing organs . . . We went to the morgue to check and see if what people were saying was, in fact, true. When we got to the morgue, we discovered that there was nothing there. There were no children.¹⁷⁹

After the visit to the morgue, word spread through Santa Lucía that the story that authorities had been hiding the evidence of organ-less bodies was false. The image of rows of mutilated dead children under state control was powerful, but apparently untrue.¹⁸⁰

Yet, this did little to ease the community's concern. In Santa Lucía, as in the rest of Guatemala, the panic of the *robaniños* continued to gain force. There was a steady stream of reports of stolen children and the discovery of organ-less corpses. And, the more the tales circulated, the more the panic grew.

Many in the community wondered that if the stories were false, why did they appear so regularly on television, in the newspapers, and on the radio. The fact that so many people were discussing the *robaniños* lent credence to the reality of the threat. As one young man told me, "These things had never happened here before. I mean, something must have been going on. People here are not crazy."¹⁸¹

In fact, for many residents the act of opening the morgue to the public was little more than a ruse, an act of apparent transparency designed to fool the community. Some suggested the bodies

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Rosa Elvira Pisada, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

¹⁸⁰ Some members of the same group of concerned citizens sought to follow up (as I did) on specific allegations within the community of stolen children. For example, Rosa Elvira Pisada told me, "Later we visited some parents who had supposedly lost children. They told us that nothing had happened." This attempt at local verification was quite atypical for the panic of the *robaniños* and suggests that, in Santa Lucía, there were tales including enough specifics to engage in a process of verification, which was not common for the stories as outlined in earlier chapters. I am not sure why this was the case, but it is instructive that local attempts at verification that suggested no factual basis for the tales had limited impact on the salience of these stories. Interview with Rosa Elvira Pisada, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Armando R., Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

were no longer of use since the organs were taken. They claimed that the corpses had been removed, perhaps tossed in a mass grave somewhere, just prior to the visit.¹⁸² These interpretations made sense to a community that had come to see the police as profoundly corrupt, deeply ineffectual, and a force more predatory than protective. After all, this was a country in which mass graves were just beginning to be exhumed, proving that claims of atrocities that had long been denied were, in fact, true. And, as those bodies were unearthed and rendered visible, there was a possibility that other brutalized bodies that had been hidden over the years might also be found.

In general, there was a sense that the police were either directly involved with the crimes of the *robaniños* or easily paid off. One local explained that a few weeks before the morgue visit, there “was a child who was stolen by someone in a black car” from a school.¹⁸³ Concerned residents went to the authorities but “the police didn’t do a thing.”¹⁸⁴ This was in line with a general anger and frustration at the state’s role as a force for. “We all know what the police are like here. They always let people go in exchange for money.”¹⁸⁵

In fact, everyone I spoke with in Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa described the police in this way and many could recount specific episodes of corruption and abuse. As a middle-aged man working in an auto repair shop in town explained:

If the police catch you it doesn’t matter if you’re innocent or guilty you have to pay them money. They always let criminals go free. The only people in jail are those who can’t pay – poor people.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Around this time, teams of forensic anthropologist were conducting some of the first major exhumations of mass graves of victims of systematic political repression. Over time, these widely-covered, factually-grounded reviews of the impact of state terror redefined local understandings of the recent past and played a key role in the determination by the Guatemalan Truth Commission that government forces committed genocide against the country’s indigenous people. That is, claims of mass graves in Guatemala at the time had a special resonance among many locals.

¹⁸³ Interview with Alejandra, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Axel, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, July 1994.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Amilcar S., Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, August 1994.

Some recounted specific cases outlining police corruption, often suggesting complicity in the commission of crimes. As a young man who knew several of those arrested in the riot explained:

I know of a woman whose car was stolen and she went to the police and they told her that they didn't have any time to deal with stolen cars. Why? Because they're probably the ones who stole the car.¹⁸⁷

Many prefaced comments with claims such as “We all know...” or “Everyone here knows...” suggesting a common sentiment and linking individual statements with the idea of a community unified in its assessment of widespread police and judicial corruption. It was this sort of common experience – a binding sense of victimization – that served as a key element of the power of the panic of the *robaniños*.

In this sense, Santa Lucía was no different than the rest of Guatemala. Throughout the country, the public expectation of the police was that they were unlikely to provide basic security, would not or could not conduct reasonable investigations of alleged crimes, and represented among the least helpful social actors for ensuring the equitable management of the rule of law.¹⁸⁸

Certainly, this was the position taken by the multiple international investigative bodies working in Guatemala at the time of the panic. Human Rights Watch described the police in 1994 as a largely compromised body “whose corruption and subservience to the army had long crippled its ability to

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Axel, Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, July 1994.

¹⁸⁸ While living in Guatemala, I had multiple encounters with the police that reinforced these ideas. In fact, on my first day in the country, as I completed the last leg of my drive from Chicago to Guatemala City, an enormous truck with a heavy load of sugar cane hit my Honda Accord at a stoplight, crushing a front panel. The truck driver and I pulled over to the side of the road. When he saw that I was a *gringo* he grew very nervous, claiming that it was absolutely not his responsibility. I quickly learned that almost no one had car insurance in Guatemala so the only way to resolve the situation was for money to change hands at the accident site. He was a driver for a company and had no real resources. I was tired and annoyed. Perhaps half an hour passed and a police car approached us. He said, “We have to go now.” I responded, “Why, let’s let the police help sort this out.” He replied, “You don’t understand. One of two things will happen. They’ll make us pay them. Or, they’ll take our vehicles, haul them off to a lot for months while we deal with the paperwork. And, when we finally get the issue resolved, our vehicles will be stripped. And, there’s nothing we can do.” I later learned that he was right. That was exactly what happened time and again to drivers involved in accidents, including minor ones, when the police arrived. Interestingly, the accident occurred just a few miles from Santa Lucía.

investigate crimes” (Human Rights Watch 1993). The U.S. Department of State’s annual review of human rights practices covering 1994 stated:

Police are very poorly paid, relatively few in number, and lack adequate resources and training . . . Corruption continues to plague the proper functioning of the police force (U.S. Department of State 1995).

The annual report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights set aside a special section on Guatemala focusing on multiple elements of the country’s poor record of good governance and “the persistent violation of human rights being committed in a climate of impunity” (Inter-American Commission of Human Rights 1995). The Commission highlighted the degree to which the national police and other state agents acted with near complete lack of accountability, creating conditions in which corruption was the norm and citizens had little to no confidence in the state’s ability to uphold and respect the law. The delegation heard these complaints from citizens’ groups and civil society organizations which were later confirmed by government representatives:

Impunity has consequences that go even beyond the rights of the victims by creating a climate that affects civic security, promotes corruption, and is incompatible with a government of law. Numerous individuals complained to the Commission that any police or civil officer could abuse authority with minimal risk of being punished. Many Government officials conceded to the IACHR’s delegation that this was true (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 1995).

My conversations with Guatemalans revealed case after case of individual experiences with police corruption. These included mismanagement of cases, failure to investigate claims, corruption, and even allegations of direct collaboration with those responsible for serious crimes. A U.S. retiree living in Antigua, a major tourist destination, among the wealthiest of Guatemalan communities and a community known for its substantial *gringo* population, described an encounter with local police:

I had a problem with a guy and I went to complain to the police and they told me, “You give us some money and we’ll kill the guy for you.” First, they asked for Q 3,000. Then, when I told them I wasn’t interested, they offered to kill him for Q 2,000. They said, “We can do it because we’re the police.”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Barry S., Antigua, July 1994.

Despite having lived in Guatemala for years, the man was shocked that the police would offer to murder someone for money (interestingly, many of the expatriates living in communities such as Antigua were largely unaffected by *la violencia* and only minimally aware of its devastating impact).¹⁹⁰ He was particularly amazed that state agents would kill someone for somewhere around \$300.

Every state agency and all elements of the legal system were widely criticized for their corruption and inability to operate effectively. “The judicial system is ineffective and often unable to ensure a fair trial” (U.S. Department of State 1995). Based on data from the Secretariat of the Supreme Court, judges could not review *habeas corpus* (widely viewed as cornerstone of a functioning judiciary and a key marker for basic rule of law functionality) in over 80 percent of cases (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 1995). These failures were viewed as the result of limited resources, general dysfunction, and “because of threats or intimidations or the impossibility of determining possible secret places of detention of ‘clandestine jails’” (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 1995).

As with every other aspect of governance, institutionalized corruption was bound to the legacy of *la violencia*. In the early 1990s, there had been very limited progress in addressing the systematic abuses of state terror, “Tens of thousands of past human rights violations remained uninvestigated while those involved in inquiries suffered threats and abuses” (Amnesty International 1994). Systematic impunity and a weak and often corrupt judiciary were outcomes of institutionalized state violence. Even as most elements of the internal armed conflict had ended by the mid to late-1980s, the state repressive apparatus remained largely intact. Military bases operated around the country, the intelligence services continued to surveil ordinary Guatemalans, and, according to the U.S.

¹⁹⁰ While I never sought to corroborate this story, it was certainly plausible given multiple cases of police and other security agent involvement in extrajudicial executions.

government, around 430,000 PAC members were still active (U.S. Department of State 1995). That was an enormous number of government affiliated militia members for any society, especially one that faced essentially no substantive threat to national security. And, within this context, the state continued to commit serious human rights violations (even as the peace process advanced).¹⁹¹

The experience of injustice in the form of daily humiliation and disrespect – harassment, refusal to acknowledge basic needs, etc. – to deeply impactful trauma – disappearances, massacres, torture, etc. – created a situation of profound and ill-addressed demands for justice. The factual basis for these claims was constant, overwhelming, and unavoidable, even as the avenues for expression had long been closed by the violent repression for all but the most committed advocates.

However, while impunity was clearly the norm, around the time of the panic, the nation witnessed the first efforts towards achieving accountability for past political violence. In 1994, there were advances in several cases against state agents accused of extrajudicial execution, torture, and other violations. The Guatemalan Supreme Court confirmed a 25-year sentence against Noel De Jesús Beteta for the 1990 killing of anthropologist Myrna Mack who had worked extensively among victimized indigenous populations in the highlands. Authorities charged six PAC members for the murder of two community activists, one in Colotenango and the other in Santa Cruz del Quiché. And a joint-military police operation in San Pedro Jocopilas arrested four PAC members and military commissioners for the murder of Jorge Carpio, a newspaper publisher and former presidential candidate.

¹⁹¹ “During the eight-month delay between the signing of the human rights accord and the establishment of the U.N. mission, human rights violations surged, yet the government showed no sign of undertaking serious efforts to investigate and prosecute those responsible” (Human Rights Watch 1995); “Government forces and unknown perpetrators increased attacks on labor union leaders and members, involving killings, death threats, physical abuse, and other forms of mistreatment and harassment” (U.S. Department of State 1995).

Yet, alongside these advances, there were multiple examples of the deeply-rooted corruption within the Guatemalan judiciary and the dangers faced by those who challenged institutionalized impunity. For example, in the cases against the PACs and military commissioners, all of those arrested were released after the charges were dismissed under questionable circumstances. And, additional warrants for the other alleged perpetrators were never issued, “At the end of the year, no one was in jail awaiting trial” (U.S. Department of State 1995). The previous year Captain Hugo Contreras was convicted and sentenced to 20 years in prison for the extrajudicial execution of Michael Devine, a U.S. citizen following extensive pressure from the American government. Yet, he escaped from prison, likely with assistance from someone within the system. In response, a soldier was arrested for having left his post at the prison, allegedly allowing for the escape. He was given a suspended sentence and a small fine. In September, the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights reported that the leading witness and survivor of the “*panel blanco*” case, alleging illegal detention, torture, and extrajudicial killing during *la violencia*, was murdered along with his son by unknown assailants. A Guatemalan judge involved in the case was subsequently killed.

In April, armed men in plain clothes shot and killed Eduardo Epaminondas González Dubón, the President of the Constitutional Court. At the time, the court was reviewing significant and politically-charged cases against members of the security forces. One investigation involved senior military officers responsible for the killing of Myrna Mack (the successful prosecution mentioned above was for Beteta, a relatively low-level actor who committed the actual murder), and another case concerned the possible extradition of a commanding army officer to the U.S. for drug trafficking charges. The state investigation of the case suggested it was a common crime as the Attorney General claimed, “the magistrate was killed by a gang who wanted to steal his car, but had no explanation for why the gang made no attempt to steal the car after killing the judge” (Human Rights Watch 1995).

The complex tensions between the dysfunction of formal legal mechanisms and the possibilities and promises of change, coupled with a brewing sense of insecurity and the looming threat of the *robaniños*, created a “justice crisis” in Guatemala. By “justice crisis” I am not simply referencing the fact that Guatemalans lived within an official legal system that was largely dysfunctional. Rather, the crises resulted from the interrelation of a political context overdetermined by systematic and structural impunity within which demands for accountability, and the emerging potential for change were bound to the rapidly advancing democratic transition and the formal peace process.

The panic occurred at a moment when the potential for change became increasingly possible. As such, new forms of expression – such as popular violence – served to voice fears and interests while also testing the waters of what society might allow. At the time, the domain of justice, its discursive demands and practical frustrations, became a core focal point of social engagement, a site of action and reaction, within which larger social issues were processed and performed.

Institutions of formal law served as concrete representations of a core failure of governance at the level of lived experience. This issue, the “(un)rule of law,” has been identified by scholars working in Latin America as a characteristic element of the experience of political change (Méndez, O’Donnell and Pinheiro 1999). Alongside the regional shift of governance from authoritarian rule to civilian democratic control, new expectations were created among citizens. The state professed its commitment to foundational rule of law principles at the same time as, in many countries in the region, crime increased and, with it, a growing sense of insecurity. In this way, the possibilities of a freer social order and a potentially more representative and responsive government were read through the dysfunction and disorder of state legal institutions. Holston and Caldeira have referenced this phenomenon as a core, defining element of social reality for most citizens:

Among all social classes, the everyday experience of violence and of the institutions of law leads to a pervasive and comprehensive delegitimation of the rule of law. Poorer people are victims of arbitrariness, violence, and injustices committed by law institutions. As a result, they feel that they are left without alternatives inside the law (Holston and Caldeira 1998: 278).

This sensibility – a deep-rooted frustration with the impossibility of basic rights protection and the equitable application of law – was felt in every encounter with the state. While there was no singular means of tracking these reactions among Guatemalans and others in the region, from the 1990s on, there was a marked rise in concerns about crime and threats to ordinary daily social order.

Understanding the justice crisis in Guatemala, then, involves acknowledging the fact that state corruption and dysfunction were accepted elements of ordinary life, experienced by virtually every citizen seeking to obtain state services, licenses, permissions, and formal authorizations for any number of activities. As Angelina Snodgrass Godoy explained, “law – and particularly criminal law – becomes a central staging ground for struggles to define citizenship, justice, and order” (Snodgrass Godoy 2006: 11).

The justice crisis in Guatemala expressed the daily experience of institutionalized corruption that was connected to people’s expectations and encounters with state authorities such that imagining a respectful and responsive mode of governance was nearly impossible. It not only named a dysfunctional legal and judicial apparatus, but gave voice to the profound, longstanding sense of harm and vulnerability experienced by so many Guatemalans within which claims of fairness and accountability resonated broadly and complexly, linking multiple elements of marginalization, victimization and suffering.

3. Questioning the Open Promises of Political Transition: Democracy as a Metanarrative

As described earlier, 1994 was a key year in Guatemala’s political transition from an autocratic military-controlled government to a constitutionally-based civilian-controlled electoral democracy.

Around the time of the panic (several months before, during, and several months after these events) the internationally mediated peace process advanced significantly. Multiple key accords were drafted and signed into law, an in-country U.N. monitoring presence (MINUGUA) was approved, and a series of institutional reforms were part of the response to the brutal legacy of *la violencia*.

Mitchell Seligson suggested that 1994 represented the start of the final stage of a three-stage process within the interlinked peace process/democratic transition which lasted over a decade and culminating in the formal end of the 36-year internal armed conflict at the end of 1996. For Seligson and other scholars, the period in which the panic of the *robaniños* occurred represented a turning point in which the shift to democracy was substantively institutionalized. Seligson described these changes as a “stunning advance in democracy in a country where few scholars would have predicted them” (Seligson 2005: 202). He further stated:

The transformation of Guatemala from an authoritarian, war-wracked society into an electoral democracy in which the guerrilla war is a fading memory has been nothing short of miraculous (Seligson 2005: 205).

For Seligson (and other scholars of politics and democracy in the Americas), Guatemala’s democratic transition was significant and surprising and, despite its many flaws, evidence of a meaningful political transformation of the country. And, his work highlights the moment in which the panic of the *robaniños* occurred as a symbolically significant and substantive stage within this process; a defining moment that sealed the transformation.

Jennifer Schirmer, on the other hand, termed the country’s shift as “a violence called democracy” (Schirmer 1998). She argued that while the formal governing mechanisms of Guatemala clearly shifted from express authoritarian military control (particularly during the early 1980s when generals in uniform controlled the country following a series of coups) to a government officially run by a President and Congress that were popularly elected, these institutional changes were insubstantial and something of a ruse. For Schirmer, the democratic transition in Guatemala of the 1980s-1990s

represented little more than a shift in appearances that enabled the continuation of traditional modes of control:

After decades of naked military rule, the Guatemalan military have crafted a unique Counterinsurgent Constitutional State in which State violence has been reincarnated as democracy. Not intended to be transformative, but only “eminently transformational” . . . leaving unchanged the structures of military autonomy and power. (Schirmer 1998: 258)

Central to this process was the use and management of key terms and concepts, particularly those central to legitimizing democracy. Schirmer suggested that the Guatemalan military “has learned to loot the vocabulary of human rights and democracy for the purpose of crafting a unique state of civil-military convergence” (Schirmer 1998: 93). From Schirmer’s perspective, then, the period of the panic of the *robaniños* was not a time of political transformation, but just the opposite. She believed the military co-opted the discourse of democracy and accepted a set of minimal institutional reforms while retaining actual control within society and undercutting efforts to challenge their authority.

While these two scholars acknowledge the formal shifts within the country’s political system – a negotiated peace, the advance of formal and informal modes of truth-telling, official institutional reform, etc. – they disagree strongly on the implications and substance of these issues and their overall conclusions about democracy in Guatemala. So, which one is right? Was Guatemala’s political shift “nothing short of miraculous” or was it state violence “reincarnated as democracy?”

Rather than take a side on this debate – and there have been many other voices arguing for and against the success and substance of Guatemala’s engagement with democracy – a more telling inquiry lies in an examination of the tension presented within by the divergent positions of Seligson and Schirmer. The issue here is not solely a dispute between two scholars, but rather a reflection on core tensions regarding how to best understand the meaning and substance of democracy and its broad social reverberations. The debate between Seligson and Schirmer is evocative of a set of larger issues surrounding the study of democracy, a critical engagement with societies involved in

“democratic transitions,” and, most importantly for this study, how “democracy” functions to structure political discourse and practice within Guatemalan and, more generally, throughout Latin America. And it is within this tension that the panic of the *robaniños* provides substantive insight into the lived experience of the process of democratization in the country.

Guatemala’s political transformation is bound to what has come to be known as the “third wave” of democratization.¹⁹² From the late 1970s through the early 1990s, dozens of nations around the world shifted from authoritarian to democratic systems of governance (Diamond 1999; Diamond and Plattner 1996; Huntington 1991). The transition to democracy in this period was especially significant in Latin America where democracy became the defining feature of political analysis in the region. A large literature developed, especially within political science, focusing on state institutions, regime change, and comparative country studies (Diamond and Plattner 1996; Diamond, Plattner and Abente Brun 2008; Diamond, Plattner and Chu 1997; O’Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead 1986; Linz and Stepan 1996). The issue of democracy dominated both public discussions of politics as well as scholarship of the region, a shift described by two prominent theorists as, “A sea change has occurred in Latin American politics” (Mainwaring and Hagopian 2005: 1).

This “sea change” involved a historically significant region-wide shift. In the late 1970s, only 3 of 20 major Latin American nations were democracies while the other 17, where the majority of the region’s population lived, had “patently authoritarian regimes.” By the early 1990s, 18 of those 20 nations had democratic governments that were popularly elected.¹⁹³

¹⁹² The term “third wave” was coined by Samuel Huntington (Huntington 1991) and has become a commonly referenced term within the literature. The ‘first wave’ references the early 19th century through the early 20th century (a rather long “wave”) beginning with the extension of voting rights to the majority of white males in the U.S. and leading to 29 democracies throughout the world. The “second wave” began after the end of World War II and peaked in the early 1960s with 36 democracies. During the “third wave” an unprecedented number of governments became democracies.

¹⁹³ The countries typically listed are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Mainwaring, Brinks and Pérez-Liñán 2001).

It is important to note that this shift was not foreseen, even by expert analysts focusing on the region. In fact, prior to this shift, dominant visions of governance within the region largely focused on explanations for why democracy had failed to flourish, including viewing the situation as bound to the legacy of Iberian political culture (Wiarda 1973, 1974, 1981; Pike and Stritch 1974)¹⁹⁴, suggesting a peculiarly Latin American link between corporatism and authoritarian rule (Chalmers 1972; Malloy 1977; Schmitter 1969, 1971, 1974) and defining the region as dominated by an profoundly anti-democratic “bureaucratic authoritarianism” (Collier 1979; O’Donnell 1973, 1978; Linz and Stepan 1978).¹⁹⁵

At the same time, the possibility of progressive politics among Latin American social scientists was often viewed as something unlikely given that existing repressive systems were so deeply entrenched. Many felt that substantive institutional reform could only be achieved through systematic popular resistance to the state, a point echoed by many Latin American social scientists of the time. This position was especially true in Central America where (apart from Belize and Costa Rica) structural violence, a history of authoritarianism, agrarian economies premised on disempowered majorities, elite/military strategic convergences, and U.S. hegemony defined the region as a place where representative democracy was largely viewed as impossible. For many experts seeking to understand politics in the region in the 1970s and 1980s, violent insurgencies (whether successfully liberational or not) seemed a foregone conclusion, a position echoed in the title of one of the most influential books on Central America, *Inevitable Revolutions* (LeFeber 1993).

¹⁹⁴ The link made by scholars to trace antidemocratic rule in Latin America to the social impact of Spanish colonialization, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, and related class structures has been described by some as “blaming the Iberians” (Black 1998: 4).

¹⁹⁵ Key scholars, including those who were later engaged in the democracy theory debate, presented a revised corporatist position suggesting that Latin America governance embodied “bureaucratic authoritarianism,” which defined the centralized state as impacted by domestic social issues as well as international economic and political factors.

Nevertheless, during this time (and with a steadily increasing pace), governments in the Americas shifted from authoritarian, often military, rule to civilian controlled electoral democracies. With the end of the Cold War, this was true even in Central America, the most openly contested region in terms of active armed insurgencies and the area within the region widely viewed as unlikely to engage in a process of substantive democratization. Despite a successful revolution in Nicaragua, an armed insurgency that was never militarily defeated in El Salvador, various movements in Honduras, and the complex situation in Guatemala (where a brutal counterinsurgency campaign defeated a small but popularly supported armed insurgency), by the early 1990s every country in the region had adopted a formal democratic structure. This shift was viewed as more than just surprising among scholars with decades of experience working in Central American and Latin American politics:

In 1980, if someone had said that...El Salvador and Guatemala would be democracies two decades hence...one might have suspected delirium” (Mainwaring and Hagopian 2005: 11).

While each country’s story is distinct and the region’s political shifts were heavily influenced by continued U.S. hegemony and other international pressure, the shift in formal governing mechanisms from authoritarian rule to representative democracy was striking.

Perhaps, due to these factors, the literature on democracy during and immediately after the wave of transitions (especially the earlier transitions) presented a confident tone, suggesting that democracy had not only become the dominant mode of organizing society¹⁹⁶ but, in fact, had prevailed over all other political models:

¹⁹⁶ The title of one of the more famous books chronicling that time, Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History*, embodied that certitude, confidence and even hubris. Fukuyama presented the dominance of liberal democracy after the Cold War as a teleological completion of modernity such that history itself was entering a new stage based on the assumption that democracy was the only legitimate mode of rule. The focus of politics would no longer be an ideological battle over distinct approaches to governance but rather a more practical engagement with how to best manage the modern administrative state. While the book’s content is more complex, self-critical, and subtle than the eye-catching title suggests, the clarity of democracy’s self-assuredness remains an element of its status as a metanarrative (Fukuyama 1992).

During the last half of the twentieth century the world witnessed an extraordinary and unprecedented political change. All the main alternatives to democracy either disappeared, turned into eccentric survivals, or retreated from the field (Dahl 2000: 1).

This shift of governing systems to democracy was viewed by many as one of the most significant and transformative advances in global politics. As the Nobel-winning economist Amartya Sen wrote, “the triumph of democracy as a system of government was the most important development of the twentieth century” (Sen 1999: 3).

Yet, as actual democratic transitions advanced with all their attendant complexities and confusions, the exuberant mood associated with analysis of the “third wave of democratization” gave way to a set of clarifications and reconsiderations. This change reflected a critical reflection on the ways in which the democratic transitions often failed to produce substantial improvements in the protection of basic rights and the overall quality of life for large portions of the citizens living in newly democratized countries.

That is, the actual practice of democracy throughout Latin America revealed multiple obstacles, challenges, and outright failures, many of which scholars had not foreseen. It became increasingly clear that analysts and experts had presented “unrealistically high expectations for democratic advance” (Shifter 2003: 4). In part, this was a function of an institutional, minimalist approach to democracy focusing on elections and elite negotiated transitions as constitutive of profound and progressive change. Over time, scholars came to criticize this orientation as a sign of their inadequate consideration of the meaning and practice of democracy for the majority as “...transformations at the societal level attracted relatively little attention during the initial stages of Latin American transitions to democratic regimes” (Jelin and Hershberg 1996: 1). This shift advanced to a point where Guillermo O’Donnell, one of the most prolific and thoughtful scholars of democracy, wrote:

I am afraid that, in terms of human development and human rights, little progress has been achieved in Latin America under the existing democratic regimes (O'Donnell 2004: 51).

And, other scholars could crisply describe a “normal Latin American democracy” as:

beset by a weak rule of law, glaring social inequalities, dizzying levels of societal violence, a complacent political class, an ineffectual policy-making process, and deep political disenchantment (Schedler 2007: 88).

Not surprisingly, the failures of democracy on the ground were reflected in attitudes of Latin Americans.¹⁹⁷ Overall, this led both scholars and policy makers to continue to embrace democracy, but to recognize that the idea of a democratic system alone was inadequate for realizing the promises of equality and representation embodied by the concept, leading to claims such as “...a democratic regime...is a fundamental component of democracy, but insufficient for adequately conceptualizing what democracy is” (O'Donnell 2004: 9).

In general, anthropologists in the 1980s and 1990s (a key period in the third wave of democratization) did not focus directly on democracy.¹⁹⁸ As Julia Paley stated in an influential article in the *Annual Review of Anthropology*:

More often than not, anthropological observations on democracy are couched in other frameworks and embedded in other discussions” (Paley 2002: 470).

Anthropologists were generally suspicious of the broad historical claims of a “triumph” of democracy. They and questioned the totalizing and often unreflective vision of the domain of the political as defined largely by the state and the adoption of various procedural mechanisms of formally managing

¹⁹⁷ “The relationship between faltering government performance and the erosion of the Third Wave of democratization is expressed in declining public support for democracy” (Hagopian 2005: 362). Overall, annual surveys across the region from 1996 through 2009 showed support that over half of respondents support democracy (“Democracy is preferable to any other form of government”) dropped from a high of 63% in 1997 to a low of 48% in 2001. However, there existed wide variation within the region, with the average support between 1995 and 2009 ranging from a low of 40% in Guatemala (in line with ethnographic findings) to a high of 79% in Uruguay (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2009: 15-25).

¹⁹⁸ Julia Paley conducted an informal survey at the 2001 AAA meeting which “revealed little work on the topic of democracy specifically (Paley 2002: 470). Paley’s piece includes material gathered from a survey of 70 anthropologists and other social scientists with over 50 replying. She based portions of her review essay on these responses and the piece is one of the few works providing a review of anthropological approaches to democracy.

power relations. The more exuberant perspectives on democratization presented reified visions of the state and tended to impose ideal forms of managing political power that contradicted detailed ethnographic accounts of the experience of these institutional reforms. In fact, in many ways the failures of democratic transition theory might have been minimized with greater sensitivity and engagement with the social meaning of politics on the ground.

Gradually, anthropologists responded to these issues.¹⁹⁹ This work highlights not only the limitations of the term (eventually acknowledged by nearly all scholars, including democracy scholars who once embraced the ideas with little critical reflection) but also the contingent, contextually grounded and thereby multiple nature of the concept, in theory and practice, best referred to as “democracies.”²⁰⁰ This approach has special resonance in Latin America where scholars build on the multiplicity of meanings of democracy by focusing on local practices within societies that link long-standing formal democratic traditions coupled with substantive mechanisms of disempowerment for the majority (Coronil 1997). And, others ground discussions of the rise of formal democratic practices

¹⁹⁹ Some studies focused on how democratic political processes functioned in ways that undermined their stated values as regards transparency and accountability (Darian-Smith 1999; Povinelli 1998, 2002; Schirmer 1998). Others reviewed how various components of formal democratic politics, such as political campaigns (Herzfeld 1985; Lomnitz 1993), elections (Borneman 1992; Herzog 1987, McLeod 1991, 1999), and referendums (Warren 2002) were interpreted through local practice in ways that revealed disjunctures in the dominant vision of democracy. Still other work has looked critically at the roles of outside experts, observers, and the international community by focusing on the temporary significance of elections and enabling complex dichotomies of the visible and invisible (Coles 2004) elements of politics that express vastly unequal global power relations. Furthermore, the embrace of “democracy” by scholars and political actors has been read by anthropologists as imposing abstract categories and ideas onto local contexts, often with limited engagement with their specific impact and meaning (Verdery 1998). It has similarly been analyzed as operating to legitimize mechanisms for enabling domineering economic practices (Cruikshank 1999; Leve 2001). Still other scholars have considered how local communities manage, interpret, and use core words and terms of democracy in ways that are distinct from international and top-down deployments of the terms, highlight the significance of silence and passivity (Coles 2008). These critiques are often linked through a general questioning of democracy’s universalist conception of citizens as distinct and equal individual and disengaged from local ties which often structure social reality with far greater meaning and influence than the operation of the state (Mamdani 1996). Furthermore, democracy and democratic practices are commonly understood, processed, interpreted, and managed through local actions that are not expressly engaged with formal politics, such as embedded rituals in Nigeria (Apter 1999) and witchcraft in Mozambique (West 1998). A significant and evolving literature has focused attention away from politics of the state and towards community-based activities, artistic expression, and other practices that embody representative values (Isbell 1998; Lemon 2000), suggesting the domain of formal politics is not the best realm for liberational actions.

²⁰⁰ This tendency within the field is echoed in theoretical work that discusses “deep democracy” (Appadurai 2002) or a focus on community-based bottom-up democratic approaches or “alternative” democracies (Nugent 2002).

with a critical reflection on the impact of decades of brutal authoritarian rule by focusing on the empty promises of political change as opposed to substantive social transformation (Nelson 1999; Warren 2000; Poole and Rebique 1992).

Many of the anthropological analyses of democracy engage the mode of governance as a particular type of failure between what could be and what is. For example, in his ethnography of politics and democratic transition in Mozambique, Harry West argued that the divide between modes of expression and “languages of power” (building on the work of Achille Mbembe, another piercing critic of top-down democracy and the promises of the administrative liberal state), writing, “So long as policymakers and citizens speak mutually unintelligible languages of power, the project of democracy is impossible” (West 2005: 3). Here West suggests that the “impossibility” of democracy is revealed in a profound gap between different modes of defining and speaking about this mode of politics. Elizabeth Povinelli expressed a similar analysis of the “project” of democracy as critically positioned amidst conditions of systematic violence and economic deprivation citing “democratization as an ongoing failed or semi-successful or imaginary project. . .” (Paley 2002: 470). Julia Paley wrote that “the meanings attributed to democracy in various contexts and struggles do not necessarily match hegemonic definitions in actually-existing systems. . .” drawing attention to a divide between idealized visions of democracy and the reality of governance on the ground (Paley 2002: 485). What is interesting here is the entwined sense of democracy’s failure and a tension between a set of core claims about democracy’s vision and promise and the reality of lived experience in multiple distinct sites around the world.

While anthropology was slow to engage democracy, the field has been consistent in its critique. And, these advances have occurred just as other fields have grown to be unified in their multifaceted analysis of the essential flaws of conceptualizing “democracy” in relation to an idealized form. That is, a common reference point for critique is an interpretation of democracy that exists in close relation

to an abstract, aspirational vision of the term. So, beyond an operational critique of the multiple ways that democratic practices are flawed, inconsistent, and serve to reinforce non-representational modes of dominance, there exists a complexly resonant claim (yet, not always explicitly presented) about the power of democracy as an “imaginary project” – a vision of possibility whose grandiose language permeates democratic transitions. It is at this level – democracy as a component of the political imagination – that the idea is especially significant for making sense of the panic of the *robaniños* and the riot in Santa Lucía.

One useful way to understand how the panic of the *robaniños* reflected critically on Guatemala’s “democratic transition” is by considering the ways in which democracy operates as a metanarrative, rather than as a set of institutional structures and governing practices. To say that democracy is a metanarrative in Guatemala and Latin America draws attention to the way in which the term defines the social space and possibilities of accepted discourse within which governance is discussed and understood:

Like a paradigm, a metanarrative not only provides the range of acceptable answers but also defines both the questions to be asked and the rules of procedure by which they can be rationally answered” (Somers 1995: 234).

Viewing democracy as a metanarrative for Latin America, then, highlights the concept’s power for defining

A metanarrative is a type of story, a mode of narration that establishes the conditions for discussion, debate, and meaning. A metanarrative naturalizes the relations of its constituent parts such that it cannot be tested against countervailing facts. It determines the conditions under which questions are asked and narratives formed. In claiming that democracy is a metanarrative in this sense, it is necessary to describe its constituent parts and the sequence that binds them. The metanarrative of democracy links a foundational assumption of the existence of fundamental universal human rights with the certitude that only representative democracy can provide the mechanism for their protection.

The vision of human rights that lies at the core of this metanarrative involves a claim that these rights issue from a naturalistic position of certitude and, as such, their existence is beyond question since it is essential to the very definition of human being.²⁰¹ These naturalistic, ahistorical claims about human beings serve to undergird the specifics of a political/legal vision of democracy. They are presented as essential truths that operate as if they have always existed and are only contextual in their recognition through declarations and their role within interconnected institutions. The acknowledgment and engagement with these core commitments are presented in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as “the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” (United Nations 1948). Not a possible grounding for the establishment of beneficial social practices – *a* foundation – but the only ground for these goals, “*the* foundation.”

The metanarrative defines democracy as the only answer to the challenge of respecting these rights through the existence of the modern administrative state. Consider the language of the Organization of American States Charter, which does not simply affirm democracy but places a commitment to democracy at the very center of any understanding of legitimate social order, defining “representative democracy” as “an indispensable condition for the stability, peace and development of the region” (OAS 1948), an idea repeated by core documents of the U.N. from its formation on through the present.²⁰² Democracy is not simply presented as a viable mode of governance but rather as the only legitimate mode of organizing power.

²⁰¹ In this way, human rights are presented as universal and ahistorical. This is seen in Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), which defines its claims as based upon the “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” (United Nations 1948). It goes on to state, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” (United Nations 1948), linking universal rights with essential human capacities in a fundamentally unifying vision. The American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, which was approved in May 1948 by the Organization of American States five months before the UDHR, states, “All men are born free and equal, in dignity and in rights, and, being endowed by nature with reason and conscience, they should conduct themselves as brothers one to another” (Organization of American States 1948).

²⁰² The OAS defines its very purpose as bound to the defense of democracy. “The Organization of American States, in order to put into practice the principles on which it is founded and to fulfill its regional obligations under the Charter of

The metanarrative of democracy operates by hiding what is essential and given – human rights – with what is created – democracy – and binds these in a sequence such that the two are mutually reinforcing. The narrative takes on a power of its own and becomes public, defining the degree to which political discourse can operate, creating the boundaries of acceptable voicing. As stated by the United Nations Development Program:

Democracy is a vast human experience. It is linked to the historical search for freedom, justice and material and spiritual progress. Thus, it is an experience that never ends . . . Democracy has become synonymous with freedom and justice. It is both an end and a means to that end (UNDP 2003: 35).

Democracy is a metanarrative in the sense that it provides an explanatory framework for processes of structuring meaning and defining the terms of debate, discussion, and understanding of legitimate political practice. As Somers explained, “Metanarratives overdetermine data through the quasi-automatic self-activation of these *a priori* boundaries, classifications, distinctions, and metanarrative assumptions” (Somers 1995: 264). In other words, understanding democracy as a metanarrative in Guatemala helps explain how the term serves to define core, structuring categories of thought and action regarding politics.

The peace process and related political transition in Guatemala institutionalized and discursively embraced the metanarrative of democracy. It is not that political ideas and reforms embodied these idealized, ahistorical claims about and for democracy, but that the term “democracy” was continually deployed and reverberated with these meanings. As stated in the one of the key accords, the Agreement on Strengthening of Civilian Power and on the Role of the Armed Forces in a Democratic Society:

Peace rests upon democratization and the creation of structures and practices which will, in the future, prevent political exclusion, ideological intolerance and the polarization of Guatemalan society (SEPAZ 1999).

the United Nations, proclaims the following essential purposes...b) To promote and consolidate representative democracy...” (OAS 1948).

The goal of that agreement was to define a core commitment to civilian control of the military and the elements of state security as a central element of institutionalizing democracy. The language of this and other accords may be less triumphalist than some elements of the metanarrative of democracy, but what is identical is the sense of certitude about democracy as the only means to facilitate peace.

It is worth noting that the peace accords highlighted a participatory and deeply representative vision of democracy. In the Agreement on Social and Economic Aspects and Agrarian Situation, which outlined a series of substantive social and economic reforms, the parties agreed that democracy was a means – really *the* means – to enable substantive political participation. In the metanarrative’s core vision, the mechanism of these achievements is the modern, bureaucratic administrative state. As the accord specifies, “it is of crucial importance to enhance, modernize and reinforce the State,” (SEPAZ 1999) a process which required democracy as it expressed democratic values:

The State should pursue democratization in order to expand those possibilities for participation and strengthen its role as a leader of national development, as a legislator, as a source of public investment and a provider of services and as a promoter of consensus-building and conflict resolution . . . (SEPAZ 1999)

The state, then, was the guarantor of social order and the peace process fully embraced democracy as the means of achieving a comprehensive restructuring of society through rational, modernizing and administrative means. The accord also highlighted that these shifts were not simply “democratic” in form, but that they engaged the deeper commitments of an aspirational representative political vision, “a true, functional and participatory democracy” that enabled a “process of social and economic development [that] should be democratic and participatory” (SEPAZ 1999).

As mentioned, as the process of democratization advanced, Guatemalans experienced an *apertura* (opening) of political space and possibility. After decades of domineering state repression, there were increased opportunities for documenting state terror and for voicing criticisms of the state. Yet, all of this occurred within an environment characterized by sustained repression and the

continuance (some would argue continued dominance) of a counter-insurgency ideology and related institutions of terror and control. The public discourse of democratic transition was profoundly evocative of broad promises of freedom of expression and representative modes of governance, even as daily reality – especially regarding the rule of law and justice institutions – was much as it always had been. There is no easy way to document and analyze the full array of contestations and actions – substantive and inconsequential – that defined the moment. Yet, the panic of the *robaniños* must be understood as bound to this richly evocative moment of uncertainty and as powerfully expressive of its specific social and cultural challenge.

4. The Context of Mistrust and Social Uncertainty in Guatemala's Justice Crisis

The riot in Santa Lucía served as a focal point for engaging the promises of democracy as seen in the tenor and tone of many commentators. An editorial in *Siglo Veintiuno* entitled “The Sparks of a Social Upheaval” stated:

What happened in Santa Lucía could occur in any place in the Republic and any simple motive could lead to an uprising against those that violate rights and against the discredited security forces . . . What is clear from this tragic incident is that the citizens do not believe in the Police, nor in any other entity of the State, and that they consider the security forces to be corrupt, and that they do not trust them, to the contrary, one must oppose them with whatever means are available . . . the time of the tragic social upheaval, has been delayed, but still advances . . . Don't screw around, do something, the government should not be putting out fires but planting hope and harvesting results with real actions . . . Otherwise, well, *la misma mica, con diferente montera*. [A colloquial expression that means something like “two sides of the same coin”].²⁰³

What is important here is the analysis of the moment as one of significance, a moment of crisis, or more accurately, a potential crisis shot through the spirit of uncertainty. The moment in which the panic occurred and the sudden violence the tales of organ-stealing *gringos* inspired created a sense of urgency in the indictment of the state (“the citizens do not believe in the Police, nor in any other entity

²⁰³ “Las chispas de un estallido social,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, March 10, 1994.

of the State”). It is in this sense that the country’s justice crisis (whose structural conditions were longstanding) became a subject for a profound process of social questioning. Alongside the various shifts in formal politics was the possibility that the incapacity of the state to ensure the most basic elements of equitable social order might come to mean something new – “the sparks of a social upheaval.”

The significance of the riot was not a function of its importance as a formal political act, but rather as a sign of what was possible. This was echoed by many key civil society figures and human rights advocates. The head of the Archbishop’s Office for Human Rights claimed the riot was a “symptom of a popular explosion.”²⁰⁴ Nineth Montenegro, a founder of GAM and one of the most prominent and courageous Guatemalan human rights activists, published a piece claiming that “Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa is an example for the entire nation:”

. . . it was the demand for justice and [the need] to put an end to impunity that forced the people to act in this manner, which even if we do not agree with the violence, should stand as an example of what an angry population is capable of doing if they are not listened to.²⁰⁵

And, Marta Altoguirre, a lawyer, member of the Presidential Commission on Human Rights (COPREDEH), Vice Minister of Foreign Relations, and President of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, suggested that what occurred in Santa Lucía was a sign of a “serious illness” within Guatemalan politics:

Our country needs to recommit to the pathway of progress and institutionality and those who get impede [this process] must bear the consequences of what they could provoke when the patience of a population tired of waiting for responses come to an end.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ The article states that Carlos Aldana, head of the Archbishop’s Office of Human Rights, said that the events were a “symptom of a popular explosion” in “ODHA: Sintoma de explosion popular,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, March 10, 1994.

²⁰⁵ Nineth Montenegro, “Santa Lucía Cotz. ejemplo para toda la nacion,” *La República*, March 10, 1994.

²⁰⁶ Marta Altoguirre “Sintoma de una grave enfermedad,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, March 11, 1994.

Mario Roberto Morales, a writer and staff member at FLACSO (*Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales*) described the riot as an “alarm bell” signifying the core demands of a genuine democratic transition:

Peace in Guatemala is not only the signing of an agreement between the guerilla and the government. It is, right now, the transparent empire of the law. That’s it.²⁰⁷

What should be clear from these responses from human rights advocates, writers, and government officials is that the riot in Santa Lucía served as a powerful signal for Guatemalan society and even suggested the looming possibility of a popular uprising.

One theme that ran through all of these commentaries, and which bound the democratic transition and its reliance on democracy as a metanarrative to the country’s justice crisis, was the issue of trust. The brutal legacy of *la violencia* and its reliance on a predatory state that enacted repression upon the bodies of Guatemalan civilians, coupled with the deep-rooted nature of institutionalized corruption, created a context of mistrust regarding the state in its role as the guarantor of security and protection. Within this context, the broad promises of the peace process and the radical reforms envisioned by the democratic transition appeared empty in contrast to daily lived experience. It was trust – or the lack thereof, mistrust – that lay at the heart of the social moment in which the panic occurred.

Trust, in one form or another, has always been a major issue within social theory. J.S. Mill, de Tocqueville, Simmel and others recognized that trust served as a key concept in gaining membership in communities and the value of reciprocity, solidarity, and understanding. As Simmel explained, “trust is one of the most important synthetic forces within society” (Simmel 1950: 326). Trust is essential to strands associated with Durkheim’s work on social solidarity (Durkheim 1997; Rueschemeyer 1994),

²⁰⁷ Mario Roberto Morales, “Santa Lucía: campanada de alarma,” *Prensa Libre*, March 13, 1994.

as well as with the classic understanding of how social orders protect against a Hobbesian state of nature and enables cooperative relations.²⁰⁸

Some accounts of trust (Seligman 1997) link the term's basic role in creating social relations with mechanisms of exchange and reciprocity as bound to classic anthropological works on gift-giving ("...there is no middle path; there is either trust or mistrust" Mauss 1967: 79). Trust has been understood as bound to mechanisms that elevate symbolic credit in the place of material objects (Sahlins 1972). Trust has also been analyzed as a key element of rational choice which allows people to maximize "the rational pursuit of interests" (Dunn 1993: 641). Some studies openly engage the concept as related to fieldwork, as connected to a wide variety of themes (Harris 2003; Palmer 2005; Rabinowitz 1992).²⁰⁹ Still, many scholars suggest that the role of trust in social theory has been inadequately recognized and that its import is defined by its "silent presence" (Misztal 1996).

In recent years, alongside the rise in the study of democracy, there has been an increasing interest in the concept of trust (Barber 1983; Baier 1986; Fukuyama 1999; Gambetta 1988; Hardin 1991; Misztal 1996; Seligman 1997; Warren 1999) as related to contemporary politics, especially the complex nature of social order under democratic rule. The recognition of trust as a useful term for making sense of social order is widely recognized:

Trust is a – probably *the* – main component of social capital, and social capital is a necessary condition of social integration, economic efficiency and democratic stability" (Newton 2001: 202).

²⁰⁸ Trust is commonly referenced as an essential part of social order. "Without trust only very simple forms of human cooperation which can be transacted on the spot are possible" (Luhmann 1979 88). "Trustworthiness, the capacity to commit oneself to fulfilling the legitimate expectations of others, is both the constitutive virtue of, and the key causal precondition for the existence of, any society" (Dunn 1984: 287). "Trust is the Chicken soup of social life" (Uslaner 2000: 569).

²⁰⁹ These studies include research on social relations between Palestinian Arabs and Jews in Israel (Rabinowitz 1992), Indian business practices (Harriss 2003), and dance traditions in Newfoundland (Palmer 2005), proof of the term's flexibility and multiple valences.

A substantial amount of this work views trust as key to understanding politics in that it focuses attention on the aspects of social order that exist beyond the relationship between the state and those living under its control. Some see trust as a crucial element for the operation of networks that produce social order and define relational rules through family and culture and therefore produce social “self-government” outside of the domain of the liberal state (Fukuyama 1996)²¹⁰. This work is partly bound to attempts to make sense of the wave of democratic transitions while also accounting for the limitations of the state in successfully meeting the needs of people.²¹¹

My interest in trust, here, lies in its core role for motivating, legitimizing and enabling the metanarrative of democracy. Trust provides the connecting link between the people as citizens and the modern democratic administrative state. For democracy to serve as the mode of realizing rights, the state must be “trusted” by citizens. In this sense, trust involves a set of expectations regarding the state’s overt practices that enable a reasonable expectation of a regular and equitable response; a sense of the probability of the state’s action before it occurs such that an individual can take action to bind him/herself to the authority of the state.²¹² Theorizing about trust engages the state’s ability to encourage and enable those living under its power to abide by its rules, to internalize them and thereby

²¹⁰ This is one of the key points of one of Francis Fukuyama’s *Trust*, one of the most influential books on the subject, which suggests that social and cultural factors, rather than those of formal governance, are essential to economic productivity and a highly functioning democratic society. “A liberal state is ultimately a limited state, with government activities strictly bounded by a sphere of individual liberty. If such a society is not to become anarchic or otherwise ungovernable, then it must be capable of self-government at levels of social organization below the state. Such a system depends ultimately not just on law but on the self-restraint of individuals...” (Fukuyama 1996: 357).

²¹¹ “The recent increase in the visibility of the issue of trust can be attributed to the emergence of a widespread consciousness that existing bases for social cooperation, solidarity, and consensus have been eroded and that there is a need to search for new alternatives” (Misztal 1996: 3).

²¹² Many theories on trust point out the linked issues of probability, expectation, and a means of managing risk through the reasonable understanding of outcomes. Gambetta wrote, “Trust... is a certain level of subjective probability with which an agent assesses that another agent or group of agents will perform a particular action, both *before* he can monitor such action (or independently of his capacity ever to be able to monitor it) *and* in the context in which it affects *his own* action” (Gambetta 1988: 217 emphasis in original). Tilly claimed, “Trust consists of placing valued outcomes at risk to others’ malfeasance, mistakes, or failures. Trust relationships include those in which people regularly take risks. Although some trust relationships remain purely dyadic, for the most part they operate within larger networks of similar relationships. Trust networks, then, consist of *ramified interpersonal connections, consisting mainly of strong ties, within which people set valued, consequential, long-term resources and enterprises at risk to the malfeasance, mistakes, or failures of other*” (Tilly 2005: 12 emphasis in the original).

support the larger process of managing power and authority. A key element of democracy's legitimacy, then, lies in its mode of managing a modern administrative state through trust. This is especially significant as regards issues of the rule of law and the establishment of a functional domain within which a populace accepts the conditions of governance and elements of "noncontentious politics." As Tilly noted, this is a major area where trust operates and where a lack of trust serves to delegitimize the state and its mode of rule.²¹³

This is another way of pointing out that the metanarrative of democracy does not simply require trust, it demands a mode of trust that is specific to an administrative system and imbues it with legitimacy. An administrative state requires that one engage with individuals who occupy a place within a structure such that whoever is in that place – whether a judge, an inspector, a teacher or police officer – is expected (or trusted) to act with a sense of regularity and predictability.²¹⁴ That regularity is the mode through which individuals access the protection of their rights through democracy; and where the system functions, there are administrative means of addressing failures of protection through complaints, investigations, cases, and a resulting repair of harm.

Among Guatemalans, and especially the majority poor and marginalized population, there was a radical lack of trust regarding the state, its agents, and its institutions. And, these tensions were particularly heightened at the time of the panic of the *robaniños*. This mistrust profoundly impacted

²¹³ "Noncontentious politics still makes up the bulk of all political interaction, since it includes tax collection, census taking, military service, diffusion of political information, processing of government-mediated benefits, internal organization activity of constituted political actors, and related processes that go on most of the time without discontinuous, public, collective claim making. Trust networks and their segments get involved in noncontentious politics more regularly – and usually more consequentially – than in contentious politics" (Tilly 2005: 5).

²¹⁴ The essential relationship of trust as bound to the administrative democratic state is echoed in related work on trust and the nature of modernity (Giddens 1990, Luhman 1979, 1988). Trust is of extreme importance within social conditions defined by uncertainty and is of special significance given modernity's focus on the relationship between the social reality and control. Trust is "related to absence in time and in space" (Giddens 1990: 33) and, as such, represents a mechanism to bridge and interpret these absences. In this way, trust is particularly necessary for interpretation and action on multiple levels since modern society – technology, professions, and formal mechanisms – require confidence in the reliability and good intentions of numerous individuals and institutions with which citizens have no personal relations. That is, no reason to trust them other than their role within a larger administrative system.

relations between individuals and the government. Yet, formal political practices provided limited means of substantively addressing this mistrust, partly because its causes were so deeply grounded in lived experience, especially the systematic practices of state terror during *la violencia*. Instead of offering the public mechanisms to engage their mistrust (a significant challenge for any political order), the political system demanded that citizens channel their concerns towards actions that accepted rules of the game. If a Guatemalan was worried about crime in their neighborhood, they were supposed to go to the police. If they experienced a violation of human rights, they were supposed to go contact the newly created state authority on the subject. Yet, individuals and communities remained justifiably afraid and uncertain of the value of presenting themselves to the state for protection.

For these reasons, understanding the panic of the *robaniños* requires an anthropological engagement with democracy in its motivating status as a metanarrative – that is, as a certain cultural form whose operation structures the domain of the political, defining key elements of the political imagination – as well as a comprehension of how the tales reflected upon Guatemalan politics in 1994. In the end, the metanarrative of democracy is about a vision of citizenship that is bound to the respect of basic rights and demands a state grounded in equality where power is a function of the representation of all.

The tales, and the subsequent riots and public actions, responded to a vision of the world that was predatory; a system in which social power was structured such that forces preyed upon the most vulnerable members of society. It is a story about a world where the basic institutions of social order, the police and the judiciary, cannot be trusted. Instead of providing protection, they were part of an abusive system that placed profit, service to empowered interests, and domination above their official tasks as the guarantors of social order.

5. After the Riot: the Political Significance of an Expressly Apolitical Threat

The panic continued to grow after the riot of Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa which was widely covered in the media and broadly discussed across the country. Virtually every day, Guatemalan newspapers, radio, and television reported on new incidents involving the *robaniños*. Interestingly, many of these claims departed from the standard story of the organ-stealing *gringos* and appeared linked to generalized fears about kidnapping and crime.

On March 13th, in San Miguel Dueñas in the department of Sacatepéquez, two men were captured by police when they tried to steal an 11-month-old baby from the arms of its mother. An article on the event stated, “It is believed that they were paid by people involved in the ‘export’ of children out of the country.”²¹⁵

Several days later a young woman tried to steal a baby from the arms of another woman, only 150 feet from the National Police headquarters. The mother screamed, and police arrived and arrested the woman.²¹⁶ On March 26th, an article reported that three men tried to kidnap a nine-year-old girl outside of her school. Women interviewed by reporters stated that, “they had seen inside the gray car and there were three underage women screaming to be let out, and held by two men who carried automatic weapons.”²¹⁷

The next day in San José Pinula, a crowd caught a man who tried to grab a seven-month-old baby from its mother’s arms.²¹⁸ A day later, an article described the multiple arrests of various child stealers – four in the central park in Escuintla, two caught in another neighborhood in the same city,

²¹⁵ “Autoridades: ‘Robachicos capturados en localidad de Sacatepequez,’” *Gráfico*, March 13, 1994.

²¹⁶ “Arrebatan niño de los brazos de la madre cerca de la Policia,” *La República*, March 16, 1994.

²¹⁷ “Desconocidos intentan robar a una menor en la zona seis,” *La República*, March 26, 1994.

²¹⁸ “Capturan a presuntos robaniños,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, March 27, 1994.

and another arrested in Quiriguá while suspiciously carrying a baby in his arms.²¹⁹ The next day, another *robaniño* was caught, this time in the capital.²²⁰

Government officials responded to these reports with a formal recognition of the problem:

According to the Attorney General of the Nation, a powerful network of international child traffickers expanded its tentacles and operations to Guatemala such that now it is believed that there are 20 local gangs dedicated to this dark and lucrative business.²²¹

By the end of March, the Public Ministry reported that sixty-six children had been stolen in 1994 – twenty-six in January, twenty in February, and twenty more in March.²²²

Around this time, and possibly inspired by the events of Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa, people around the country began to engage in various types of popular action. Several of these actions were planned protests. For example, an estimated three hundred residents of Santa Lucía marched through the streets four days after the riot demanding the freedom of the residents who were arrested and imprisoned for attacking the police station.²²³ Another planned public protest took place in Escuintla on March 16th, where a group of thirty to fifty women “threw rocks at, and beat with sticks upon, the police car that carried Ms. Larson” when she was transferred to the women’s prison in Guatemala City at the request of the United States Embassy.²²⁴

However, most of the public actions were spontaneous and many involved vigilante acts against suspected *robaniños*. In various cases around the country, people acted to protect children from alleged child stealers by taking justice into their own hands through a variety of vigilante actions. For example, on March 27th, three major newspapers reported an incident in which angry neighbors

²¹⁹ “Policia captura a 7 supuestos roba niños,” *Prensa Libre*, March 28, 1994.

²²⁰ “la Policia Nacional capturo a robachicos en zona 6 y Escuintla,” *La República*, March 29, 1994.

²²¹ “Guatemala surte de niños a EUA,” *La Hora*, March 18, 1994.

²²² “MP reporta 66 niños robados,” *Prensa Libre*, March 30, 1994.

²²³ “Vecinos de Santa Lucía exigen libertad de detenidos,” *Prensa Libre*, March 12, 1994.

²²⁴ Letter from M. Lee McClenny, First Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala to Professor Hiram Caton, July 25, 1994.

prevented a woman from stealing an infant from its mother's arms.²²⁵ And, in Colonia Hunapú in Escuintla, a crowd captured two men who had tried to kidnap a young student. The men were nearly killed by the crowd. It took three hours before agents from the National Police arrived. The police found another mother there who claimed a different group of strangers had tried to kidnap her daughter only three days prior:

As a result of the continued presence of unknown men in various neighborhoods in Escuintla and the lack of vigilance on the part of the security forces, the neighborhood decided to band together to face to the bands of criminals.²²⁶

The tales of the *robaniños* brought the community together to defend itself.

Several days later, in Santa Catarina Pinula, a crowd gathered outside the local police station where they sought to lynch three men accused of stealing children.²²⁷ The people claimed that the men had been seen "driving in vehicles with polarized windows, accompanied by a woman of U.S. nationality."²²⁸ The men were believed to have been circling local schools, and one young woman who barely escaped claimed that there were two other girls from the same school inside the car with their hands and feet tied.

In Guatemala City, a group of around fifty women marched to the local police station to demand more patrols.²²⁹ The women were frightened and angry and some publicly discussed burning the police station down and taking justice into their own hands. Again, the fear was the product of the disturbing appearance of unknown people driving through the neighborhood in a red pickup truck with no license plates allegedly in search of children.

²²⁵ "Capturan a presunta roba niños," *Prensa Libre*, March 30, 1994; "Vecinos evitan secuestro de menor," *Siglo Veintiuno*, March 30, 1994; "Capturan a mujer cuando robaba niña," *La República*, March 30, 1994.

²²⁶ "A punto de ser linchados dos hombres por intentar secuestrar a una escolar," *Prensa Libre*, March 17, 1994.

²²⁷ "Tres acusados de secuestrar niños estuvieron a punto de ser linchados," *La República*, March 20, 1994.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ "Robaniños causan alarma en zona 18," *La Hora*, March 22, 1994; "Padres temen secuestro de niños en zona 18," *Prensa Libre*, March 23, 1994.

Several days later, a group of volcanologists were taken into custody by *campesinos* who believed that they had come into the community to steal children.²³⁰ Four researchers from the Institute of Volcanology, including a Swiss man, were captured by over a dozen *campesinos* from two communities (Acatenango, Chimaltenango). The residents were armed with machetes and sticks and arrived when a local woman claimed the scientists were trying to steal her child. In the end, the situation was resolved without violence and the scientists left unharmed.

Consider the events above: tales of predatory foreigners, angry crowds, government acknowledgment of “a powerful network of international child traffickers,” and vigilante acts. These stories all referenced a sense of uncertainty and fear as read through a “justice crisis,” in which the state was unable to protect citizens facing the threat of brutal attacks against children. Yet, the critique of the state presented in the panic remained, in many ways, indirect. In these stories, the state was not presented as a direct perpetrator of the murder and mutilation of children, even as the imagery and its impact seemed closely linked to the widespread exercise of state power onto the bodies of victims.

The stories provided the capacity for a form of politics and protest whose coherence and secure nature lay in its overtly apolitical nature. The tales, then, were a form of “anti-politics;” they engaged the political through a presentation that was difficult to repress because it stood outside the commonly understood mechanisms of politicized action. They presented a threat whose looming, pervasive cruelty appeared similar to the acts of very real state predation, yet remained adequately fantastic to make it impossible for the government to respond. The tales did not evoke the language and symbolism of subversion even as they operated through the imagery of violence and the experience of overwhelming fear and vulnerability.

²³⁰ “Atacan a tecnicos de INSIVUMEH,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, March 28, 1994; “Agreden a dos vulcanologos en Acatenango,” *La República*, March 28, 1994; “Robo de niños mantiene en vilo a la población,” *Prensa Libre*, March 28, 1994.

In fact, it was because the tales did not identify state actors as perpetrators that they could safely motivate and enable acts of violence against government institutions. Those arrested for the panic in Santa Lucía Cotzamalguapa were all released. None appeared to be subjected to beatings or torture even though they burned a police station and engaged in a riot unlike any that had ever occurred in that community before.

In the end, the narratives of the *robaniños*, while presented as tales of victimization, were in many ways empowering. They were tales of abuse, but also stories that had the capacity to channel energy towards action, including attacks on the police and others as well as vigilante activities. The tales neither overtly challenged the state nor raised specific questions about significant political actors, except to the degree they associated police and others as protecting a vicious yet ultimately evasive threat. While they targeted the police, they did so not out of protest for their involvement in well-documented violations, but rather because they shielded organ-stealing *gringos*. The stories as motivating narratives presented a form of political action that avoided responsibility for political action.

The panic of the *robaniños* was about democracy's painful failure, not in the sense of an act that addressed the government's inability to implement effective policies, but rather as a deep-rooted contestation of truth as related to social authority. The stories' motivating capacity lay not in their factual veracity but in their communicative power as narratives. These tales enabled a focused reflection and critique of the socio-cultural moment in which the panic swept the nation through the metanarrative of democracy; an "anti-politics" whose coherence and value were bound to how narrative expression gave voice to lived experience.

As much of the fieldwork-based evidence shows, Guatemalans reflecting on 1994 echoed this sensibility. In many ways, the panic of the *robaniños* gave voice to a complex set of concerns bound to the multiple political changes of that time. It was a phenomenon that openly engaged the question of

agency, a central issue at the heart of the contested meanings of democracy theory and practice and as a formal project in Guatemala and a series of shifts in governing mechanisms experienced with great uncertainty by the majority. The tales both expressed a profound impotence on the part of the disempowered, who were subjected to multiple forms of victimization at the hands of those wielding authority, and used violence as a tool of overt and covert oppression.

Yet, the riot was an expression of clear agency, a moment in which the public took justice into its own hands, acting openly in a challenging manner rather than adopting a stance of acceptance and passivity. The act of popular violence gave voice to a “collective imaginary” unified through the pressing threat of the *robaniños*:

Yet not only the possible action but the very idea of being the subject of action are anchored in the imaginary. Both popular sovereignty and the principle of equality are part of a ‘social imaginary.’ Agency only exists if there is a collective imaginary in which people can recognize themselves as subjects” (Lechner 2004: 205).

In Santa Lucía, the elements of Guatemalan political imagination expressed a certain desperation, acts of violence that evoked protest and a form of lashing out, disconnected from formal political claims and unlikely to impact any of the core issues that produced and reproduced the community’s disempowered status. The riot named Guatemala’s justice crisis, even as it did little to address the institutionalized corruption and impunity that characterized daily life. It expressed a sense of prevailing uncertainty, but did not address the structure or substance of the country’s democratic transition. In this way, the riot gave voice to a deeply held sense of mistrust which forged a particular type of social and political critique. The tales served to reject the metanarrative of democracy through an embrace of heightened emotions and deeply rooted fears that were enabled and encouraged by an especially salient story – a narrative of mistrust – that concentrated popular fear and anger at a context of grave uncertainty.

Chapter 4 – Riot in San Cristóbal: The Signifying Power of *Gringo* and Other Bodies

1. Incident in San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz: Violence against *Gringo* Bodies

On March 29th, June Diane Weinstock, a tourist from Alaska, tried to board a bus from the small, somewhat isolated indigenous community of San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz to the departmental capital of Cobán.²³¹ Several locals claimed that she had expressed suspicious interest in local children, touching some and taking pictures of others. One woman reported losing her child and accused the foreign woman of kidnapping. Residents wondered what she was hiding inside her backpack and refused to let her leave the town. Many people were yelling. Someone grabbed at her and pulled her hair. She stepped back and a woman slapped her as a scene ensued. A policeman arrived, as did Michael Lewis, an American missionary who lived near the center of town.

Quickly, Lewis, the police officer, and a long-time resident of San Cristóbal escorted Weinstock to the office of the local Justice of the Peace. They hoped that the presence of a government official might help minimize tensions by formally addressing the crowd's concerns. Some locals followed, and soon the news spread through the town that a *robaniña* was in custody. A crowd gathered outside the Justice of the Peace's office as allegations about Weinstock's actions circulated wildly.

Over the course of the day, state officials and influential leaders arrived in town to help calm the situation, including the head of the National Police in Cobán along with armed officers, the departmental governor, and the Catholic Bishop responsible for the region. The recent riot in Santa

²³¹ While her full name is June Diane Weinstock, multiple sources reference her as “June Diane Weinstock,” “June Weinstock,” “June D. Weinstock,” and “Diane Weinstock.” I will reference her as “June Diane Weinstock” or “Weinstock.”

Lucía Cotzamalguapa heightened their concern and motivated their decision to travel to San Cristóbal. Those inside the building contacted the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala City where a team was assembled to help manage the potential risk to a U.S. citizen. Local radio and television journalists arrived and reported live throughout the day.

By the afternoon, the crowd had grown to as many as a thousand people. Some among the group, mainly younger men, began throwing rocks at the building. Then, a group of thirty to fifty people broke through the fence, kicked in the door, set fires, and made their way to Weinstock who was hiding in a back room. Some carried clubs, tools, and machetes. They savagely beat and stabbed her. Later, there were claims that she had been raped with sticks and other objects. The group dragged Weinstock's body outside.

Shortly after the attack, the Guatemalan military arrived. By then, Weinstock was in a coma. Her brutalized body lay on the ground, motionless, in full view of a large crowd that was present for the entire event. The national media broadcast the incident, repeatedly airing images that evening and for days afterward. The attack was picked up by the international press, from articles in major U.S. newspapers (the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, etc.) to coverage by a variety of television programs (CNN, ABC's 20/20, etc.).

Media coverage of the incident in San Cristóbal was dominated by images and descriptions of Weinstock's body:

Weinstock was stripped, stoned, stabbed repeatedly and beaten unconscious by her assailants.²³²

She suffered fractures to both arms, serious head injuries and is breathing with the aid of an artificial respirator. Doctors said they must wait until she regains consciousness before they can assess whether she has suffered permanent brain damage.²³³

²³² Victor Perera, "Behind the Kidnapping of Children for Their Organs," *Los Angeles Times*, May 1 1994.

²³³ Edward Orlebar, "Child Kidnaping Rumors Fuel Attacks on Americans: Guatemala: Military may be fomenting fear of foreigners. Hysteria may invite hard-liner backlash," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1994.

The Alaska woman, June D. Weinstock, was set upon by a mob . . . stabbed eight times and suffered two broken arms and a fractured skull.²³⁴

The siege ended with Weinstock's body being dragged outside and beaten unconscious with sticks and metal pipes.²³⁵

The riot came to be defined by Weinstock's brutalized body. Images of her, splayed out on the ground, bleeding and unconscious, were evidence of the severity of what occurred, proof of the seriousness of the panic of the *robaniños* and the reality of the dangers it posed.

Alongside a fascination with Weinstock's body, international reports on the attack were set against three key issues. First, her *innocence* (she had done nothing wrong, as one article explained, "June Diane Weinstock's big mistake, apparently, was that she said hello to some small children"²³⁶). Second, the brooding, unstoppable *violence of the crowd* ("They wanted the blood of the *gringa*"²³⁷). And, lastly, the fact that the motivation for the incident – the idea that *gringos* were abducting children, killing them and exporting their organs – was not only factually incorrect but was an absurd descent into a realm of *irrationality* ("Magical realism on acid" as the local Reuters correspondent explained²³⁸). Weinstock's body provided a powerful reference point for a reflection on the panic of the *robaniños*, Guatemalan society, and the idea that the country (and potentially all of the developing world) presented an exotic, hidden, and looming danger. "This was the other Guatemala, the one travel guides do not speak of, the violent, unknowable Guatemala."²³⁹ The attack, and no doubt these ideas, set the stage for a focused response on the part of the U.S. government, shifting the panic – which had been largely a domestic affair – into a crisis with international implications.

Immediately following the attack, the U.S. government issued a Travel Advisory that warned

²³⁴ "Foreigners Attacked in Guatemala," *New York Times*, April 5, 1994.

²³⁵ Elizabeth Gleick, "Rumor and Rage: Stories that Foreigners Are Stealing babies Lead to An American Woman's Brutal Beating in Guatemala," *People*, April 25, 1994.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ William Booth, "Witch Hunt," *Washington Post*, May 17, 1994.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

“all U.S. citizens to defer nonessential travel to Guatemala at this time,” adding, “We urge that U.S. citizens who remain in Guatemala avoid crowds, avoid traveling alone, and exercise utmost caution.”²⁴⁰

It was the first act of this kind in response to the tales of organ-stealing *gringos*, which the U.S. had tracked closely for nearly a decade, having invested considerable resources on following these stories throughout the region.

The Embassy provided U.S. citizens living in the country with support and assistance and warned them to stay at home, steer clear of crowds, and avoid local children. In some large expatriate communities, such as Guatemala City and Antigua, Consular authorities held special security meetings with American residents where they provided warnings, updates, and advice. All Peace Corps volunteers (Guatemala had a large Peace Corps program with volunteers placed all over the country) were ordered to leave their communities and travel to the capital for their safety. The U.S. government responded to the panic of the *robaniños* as a crisis that presented genuine threats to its citizens.

The Travel Warning and other protective emergency measures were surprising acts, especially given the fact that no similar warnings were made during coups or other dangerous episodes in the country’s recent history.²⁴¹ Brutal violence was (and remains) a key element of Guatemalan society, which consistently ranks among the most dangerous in the world. As discussed in previous chapters, the acts depicted in the tales – kidnapping, murder, torture, violence against children and other innocents, and the public display of mutilated corpses – were widely practiced during *la violencia*. And, at the time, criminal violence was commonly directed against foreigners. In fact, U.S. Consular Information Sheets²⁴² on Guatemala detailed multiple attacks, armed robberies, rapes, and murders

²⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, “Guatemala - Travel Warning,” March 30, 1994.

²⁴¹ For example, Bruno Mertins, president of CAMTUR, a national tourism organization drew attention to the fact “[t]hat it [the Travel Warning] didn’t even happen during the auto-coup of Serrano Elias.” See “Camtur: Embajada de EU es irresponsable,” *La República*, April 6, 1994.

²⁴² The U.S. government issues these to assist U.S. citizens and others in understanding issues related to foreign travel to the country. In the case of Guatemala, the Consular Information Sheets reviewed the general security situation as well as criminal acts committed against visiting U.S. citizens and foreigners more generally.

against U.S. citizens (and other foreign visitors).²⁴³ As serious as some of these cases were, they were not viewed as reasons to limit travel, or close formal programs like the Peace Corps, and were considered as part of an overall determination that travel in Guatemala was safe, as the U.S. State Department noted, “Most visitors experience no problems in visiting Guatemala.”²⁴⁴

The attack on June Diane Weinstock marked a major escalation of the impact of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* and created a shift in the meaning of the panic within Guatemala and beyond its borders. The events in San Cristóbal *crossed a line*. And, the defining feature marking the shift from a panic to a crisis was a single, public act of popular violence committed upon the *body of a gringa*.

What is it, then, about the *body of a gringo/gringa* that was so important? What does this stage in the evolution of the panic of the *robaniños* reveal about the tales and the ways in which bodies resonate, evoke, encode, and enable complex moral demands in an especially salient manner within Guatemala? To what degree was the panic’s engagement revealed with special clarity through the incident in San Cristóbal? How does an inquiry into the attack lead to a more substantive engagement with the panic’s reliance on bodies as a core element of its mode of social critique? And, how can an inquiry into the specific meaning of *gringo bodies* help explain the power of the tales and the communicative logic of narratives of mistrust?

While reflections on the body have long been a core element of sociocultural anthropology, a major review article from 1993 argued that “the body’s explicit appearance has been sporadic throughout the history of the discipline” (Lock 1993: 133). However, over the past two and a half

²⁴³ For example, the Guatemala Consular Information Sheet from October 27, 1992 stated, “Most visitors experience no problems in visiting Guatemala.” Yet, it goes on to claim “. . . crime is a serious problem in Guatemala City. The colonial city of Antigua is usually considered safe, but there has been a recent increase in violent crime against tourists, including two rapes and two murders on the outskirts of the city. . . Pickpockets are prevalent in the towns of Panajachel on Lake Atitlan and Chichicastenango . . . Armed car thefts are common . . . There are frequent incidents in which entire busloads of passengers are robbed of all their belongings . . . It is dangerous to climb Guatemala’s volcanoes . . . Several female tourists were also raped. . .” (U.S. Department of State 1992).

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

decades, there was a substantial expansion in the depth, sophistication, and complexity of “the significance of the body within anthropology” (Sharp 2000: 287). This includes a rich body of work on issues as diverse as how the body is subjected to structural violence (Farmer 1997 2003, 2009, 2013; Kleinman 1995; Kleinman, Das and Lock 1997), emerging biotechnologies (Haraway 1989, 1991; Lock 1993; Martin 1992), enhancement technologies (Davis 1995; Haiken 1999; Hogle 2005), and the politics of reproduction (Ginsburg and Rapp 1991, Rapp 2000; Strathern 1992). In addition, much of the expanding anthropological literature on violence reviewed earlier rests on and engages the body. This includes interpretations of the body as a ground for the experience of pain (Kleinman 1988; Scarry 1985), as a site for the operations of state power (Comaroff 1985, 1993; Arnold 1993; Scheper-Hughes 1992), and as a symbolic space for spectacles of repression (Feldman 1991; Foucault 1970, 1979; Pedersen 1991).

At the core of these efforts is a commitment to engaging “the intrinsically social character of the human body” (Turner 1995: 145). This critical perspective has been often presented through the concept of “embodiment,” which highlights the ways in which sociocultural issues, ideas, structures and practices influence, impact, and interpret the physical body (Krieger 2005; Lock and Farquhar 2007). Embodiment has been used by many anthropologists, especially within medical anthropology, as a means of moving beyond classic mind/body dualisms, suggesting instead that “mind and belief are literally embodied and, conversely, the bodies of persons literally mindful” (Hahn and Kleinman 1983: 16). Embodiment highlights both the experiential ground of “the body” and its complex social construction, referencing multiple aspects of the physical, engaging “the ways that socio-cultural factors influence the form, behavior and subjective experience of human bodies” (Seligman and Brown 2009: 2). In fact, some theorists have gone as far as to argue that, despite its limited role in the field for decades, embodiment should be seen as a “paradigm” of anthropology whose significance cuts to the heart of the discipline. Suggesting “the body is not an *object* to be studied in relation to

culture, but is to be considered as the *subject* of culture, or in other words as the existential ground of culture” (Csordas 1990: 5).

A significant element of the work on embodiment engages the issue of experience or the ways in which bodies are phenomenologically bound to a social situation (Csordas 1994). Tapias suggests that it is through bodies that one can engage and understand the complex impact of profound inequality in rural Bolivia. “Embodiment” is the starting point of an analysis of poverty, domestic violence and repressive social structures since “one knows, feels, and thinks about the social world through the body” as “people experience and carry out their daily activities from within their bodies and an examination of how one’s body relates to other bodies” (Tapias 2006). The complexity of the body as a site of experience, interpretation, and meaning is reinforced by the influential work of Pierre Bourdieu, whose scholarship highlights the fundamentally social nature of embodiment and the importance of mapping its empirical and observable impact (Bourdieu 1984). Overall, the field has benefitted from multiple critical studies, often with diverse ethnographic grounding, defining a sophisticated anthropological engagement with “the body” (Comaroff 1985, Weiss 1996; Farquhar 2002; Wacquant 2004).

Of special significance for engaging “the body” are the myriad ways in which bodies are bound to power, serving as sites for signifying social relations, as Foucault explained:

. . . the body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs (Foucault 1995: 25).

It is this point – how bodies engage power, express power, serve to define power in their circulation and signification – that helps explain the vibrancy of the salience of bodies within the complex narratives of the organ-stealing *gringos*. And, it is the ways in which bodies operate to evoke and encode meaning as read through power relations and as a mode of representing power that helps explain the multiple bodies referenced in these tales and their relations with each other.

Within this space, Lock and Farquhar have drawn attention to “lived bodies,” the idea that bodies are profoundly situated in relation to webs of social meaning, experience, and practice (Lock and Farquhar 2007). The core value of this idea involves the interplay between the construction of bodies through social action and the way bodies inform, engage, and enable interpretation and understanding:

Bodies are far from inert or passive slaves to the intentions of minds: they are inhabited by language and history and ever-responsive to specific built environments. They also make and are made by the local forces and temporal rhythms belonging to particular lifeways (Farquhar 2002: 7).

Here, we see an important expansion of the theoretical engagement with bodies; within which the body is understood not only as a site or marker of meaning and power, but also as an active element that is constantly shifting – both expressive and productive of social practice. This move binds the critically engaged literature on “the body” with a commitment to ethnographic understandings of how bodies’ signifying capacities and experiential elements are entwined. The idea highlights the contingent and shifting valences of bodies that engage, speak of and speak through distinct practices. This move defines “the body” as fundamentally multiple and profoundly contextually.

The panic cannot be fully understood without recognizing the interplay and engagement of multiple bodies that were structured in relation to one another. It was the interplay of bodies that lay at the heart of stories’ ability to capture and express elements of the popular imagination thereby underwriting the logic of these narratives of mistrust. The panic operated by engaging the profound motivating power and multiple meanings of a set of bodies placed in relation to one another. It was the act of harming the *gringo body* that defined the crisis, not so much for what it was but for what it revealed.

In this chapter, I use the idea of the “lived body” and a reflection on the role of “bodies” as bound to power, such that they “emit signs” to elucidate a series of intersecting bodies. This

constellation of ideas provides theoretical grounding for making sense of the meaning of *gringo bodies* and the complex ways in which locals responded to the panic through links between identity and the larger body politic.

I argue that making sense of the tales requires a complex engagement with how the narratives communicate the ways in which “the body” expresses multiple valences and meanings as situated within competing claims of value and morality that encode and express relations of power. The tales themselves were rich in their ability to evoke different meanings for different social actors, and they were unified through a story form whose vibrancy was bound to a common axis of social proof and resistance to questions of factual veracity. The tales used bodies – especially the *gringo body* – to reaffirm core visions of social order as linked to competing regimes of value and morality as read through an understanding of social positioning. These social positions – especially how the *gringo body* operated in relation to other bodies, as bound to the flexible, context-sensitive interpretive schema of the lived body – illustrated and encoded conflicts, distances, gaps, and misunderstandings, such that the bodies described served as powerful signifiers of the lived experiences of those who told and consumed the tales. Much of the power of the panic and the logic of the tales lay in these processes. The tales operated to affirm and reify social understandings of mistrust, and they did this through the powerful signifying status of bodies deployed, interpreted, and discussed.

The chapter proceeds in several steps. First, it presents a detailed account of the incident at San Cristóbal based on interviews with witnesses and participants conducted over several months, as well as an archival review of local and international reporting, opinion pieces, and analysis.²⁴⁵ The

²⁴⁵ This account of the attack on June Diane Weinstock includes information gathered from multiple sources including dozens of interviews with residents, witnesses of the events, and individuals who played a key role in what occurred, including local leaders, foreigners living in the community, the regional governor, the head of police, U.S. embassy officials, local journalists, and locals jailed after the event. Generally, direct quotations are cited in the text, but some quotations not attributed are taken from multiple sources, referencing things said by those in the crowd and later told to me.

account is supported by significant video footage of the event that I was able to obtain, much of which was recorded live throughout the day (with significant moments broadcast on local television).²⁴⁶ The chapter then engages the role of multiple and complexly reinforcing bodies within the tales and the panic, including: the local bodies of child victims (revealed in the narrative claims, but markedly absent); the foreign bodies of those benefitting from transplanted stolen organs (an imagined, looming presence, discussed and incapable of being seen); and the *gringo* bodies (seen and also imagined, while long understood to be protected in a special manner adhering to their foreign embodied status). I then review the idea that the *gringo body* is constructed in relation to *non-gringo bodies*, as defined by expectations and assumptions of power which are ever-present and unavoidable in Guatemala. I discuss this in relation to my experience of *gringo* identity while also reviewing two interesting examples: the activism of *acompañamiento* and the U.S. government's review of CIA links to acts of violence committed against *gringo bodies* as part of a truth-telling process bound to the international peace negotiation. The chapter also explores notable local responses to the panic which link the bodies represented in the tales – children's bodies in general and indigenous children's bodies more specifically – as modes of engaging the larger body politic, a metaphorical body that encodes the core political issues expressed in the panic and evoked by its violence against bodies. This violence, both narrative and actual, is a mode of reflecting on *gringo* dominance and responsibility for various aspects of the political and ethical crisis. The chapter concludes by observing that the tales, their motivating power, and the larger phenomenon of the panic and political crisis, are ultimately about bodies, both

²⁴⁶ Most of the incident was captured on video by journalists from Zeta Vision in Cobán and other stations. I gained access to over a dozen video cassettes of footage from various sources (many hours of material). The video footage mentioned here was compiled from multiple sources and while it did not clearly indicate the time that the images were captured, it was possible to piece together a fairly detailed review of the incident when linked to the data I gathered from interviews and other sources. The video included hand-held camera shots that moved in and around the crowds, as well as multiple interviews with community members, officials and others. The journalists were able to move freely throughout the town, weaving back and forth from the building to the surrounding streets. They also managed to enter the building where June Diane Weinstock, Mike Lewis, the judicial officials, some police and others were hiding, even when small groups of men entered and vandalized the premises.

lived and imagined, and about the semiotic spaces and engagements that bind the lived body with political imagination.

2. Another Riot: The Motivating Power of Bodies Present and Absent

Before the attack on June Diane Weinstock, the local population in San Cristóbal had already heard many stories of organ-stealing *gringos*. These tales were repeated, told and retold, and mirrored the same basic narrative form heard around the country.

A young woman told me:

Two months or so before the incident is when I started hearing lots of stories . . . Yes, they stole a child not far from here. Its body was found, missing organs with a note of some kind.²⁴⁷

Another woman explained:

There are foreigners who come to the small towns to kill children, extract their organs and taken them away with special tools to carry them off to foreign places . . . There was one found in Paniste without organs. The people were talking about this in town and a lot of people saw it. They buried him the same day. He was from Santa Cruz, but the body was found in Paniste which is an *aldea* of San Cristóbal.²⁴⁸

Michael Lewis described his experience of these growing concerns in this way:

There had been two weeks or so of missing kid stories. They found this lady over here, beat up, dead, with her organs gone and there was a \$100 bill left on her. Over there they found a child and, in Chiuk, there were a few dead children, organs gone and \$50 bills on them with a note stating, "Thanks. This is for the expenses." I mean it was ridiculous. There were so many stories circulating. You'd hear them every day. I told people in the church to stop with the stories. Everybody believed them. I told them, "Look I'm just like you. I almost believed them, but there is not a bit of evidence. You've got to stop repeating them. There's no reason why we should be propagators of lies if we love the truth."²⁴⁹

Boris and Beth Ramirez, a missionary couple that lived in San Cristóbal for years remembered

²⁴⁷ Interview with Alejandra S., San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

²⁴⁸ Interview with Juanita I., San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

²⁴⁹ Interview with Michael Lewis, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

hearing multiple stories:

A woman told us that a child had been found with the organs removed and the body stuffed with cotton and with a five-dollar bill attached to the corpse . . . We heard that a child's body was found near Jocotán with the organs taken out and a note that said, "Thanks for the organs" along with twenty dollars.²⁵⁰

At first, they weren't concerned. "We've been here for ten years and the stories have been floating around for some time."²⁵¹ Yet, as the panic grew, they felt a shift in the tone of the tales told in San Cristóbal. They grew concerned not so much by the content of the tales (with which they were familiar and which they saw as linked to local Pokomchi beliefs), but rather the way the tales were repeated and the intensity of the responses they engendered among locals.

In addition, they noticed that the tales were more prevalent than in the past and stories told in San Cristóbal often referenced incidents from all over the country. Furthermore, many locals described versions of the stories told by relatives from different parts of Guatemala. "News is often carried here by relatives who travel from one part of the country to another part of the country. And, what relatives say carries a lot of weight."²⁵² The repetition of the tales, especially when told from trusted sources, added to the sense of urgency and legitimacy of the stories of organ-stealing *gringos*.

The riot in Santa Lucía was also widely discussed in San Cristóbal and heightened local tensions. The fact that a *gringa* was captured and jailed and was later let go raised suspicions. The country's justice crisis was widely felt, and locals assumed that anyone with power – and all *gringos* were assumed to have power in the form of money, connections, the support of the U.S. or European governments, etc. – was a threat. Also, according to my research, locals were largely sympathetic to the crowd in Santa Lucía. They believed the tales and they didn't trust state agents. They assumed that the people had a good reason to riot and that the captured *gringa* was guilty. As Boris and Beth Ramirez

²⁵⁰ Interview with Beth and Boris Ramirez, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

explained, “After what happened in Santa Lucía, it was suddenly more than just a story.”²⁵³

The general circulation of these tales throughout Guatemala, and their growing legitimacy as trusted sources repeated the tales and the media broadcast the riot in Santa Lucía, contributed to the increased tension of the panic of the *robaniños*. All of this impacted the mood in and around San Cristóbal, and the population grew increasingly concerned:

Before mothers were less worried about their children. They left them alone. But then women started taking their children to school instead of letting them go alone. Children were kept inside a lot. They had less freedom.²⁵⁴

For two weeks, or maybe a month before the incident we were frightened. We’d walk our children to school each day. Some women kept their children at home for fear that they’d be stolen. Some wouldn’t let their children out of their sight. Whatever *gringo* the people saw they thought that’s the one who’s stealing children.²⁵⁵

The tales referenced the *bodies* of children that were subjected to cruel violence, mutilated, and then abandoned. The children’s bodies in the tales were defined by their profound vulnerability: poor and unable to protect themselves when lured away from parents, adults, and community. Their brutalized bodies were signs of their structural weakness within a predatory world. And the children depicted in the narratives were anonymous; they were known only through the imagery of their small corpses. They were presented without specific identifying features (looks, estimated age, description of their clothing, gender, etc.), so the narrative logic of the tales was to engage the children as generalized victims. This is significant, especially when the stories involved discoveries in rural communities like San Cristóbal where tight social networks made it difficult for anyone to be anonymous. An anonymous body in such contexts was something openly disruptive; disconnected from common defining links of identity and thereby free to represent the operation of larger forces and unclear, hidden processes. The children referenced in the tales were reduced to their physical

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Interview with Angela G., San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Maria V., an indigenous woman, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

status, to the signification of their bodies as signs of direct violence (their voiceless corpses proof of kidnapping and mutilation) and a series of indirect elements of force and oppression (their valueless status when alive to the complex medical, commercial, and political networks of organ traffickers).

The tales resonate with important research on the iconography of children and their bodies, a powerful and complex terrain for reflections on uncertainty and insecurity. For example, Jean Comaroff explained that children are “archetypal victims” that have come to play a special role in the ethical discourses of contemporary societies. “They have become *the* plausible innocents in whose name moral claims can be made . . . the pristine rights-bearing citizen of the new world order” (Comaroff 1997: 15). She draws attention to the role of children in reproduction – physical, social, cultural, economic – such that dangerous tales of predation on the youth play into concerns about the future and the possibility that social systems can endure over time.

Children are, quite obviously, the actual means of social reproduction as it is through children that families, communities, and nations ensure the continuation of identities and ways of life.²⁵⁶ Claudia Castañeda argued that “the child is an adult in the making” (Castañeda 2002: 1), a powerful image of potentiality:

. . . a child is by definition not yet that which it alone has the capacity to become. It is in this unique capacity, in its potential, I suggest, that the child’s availability – and so too its value as a cultural resource – lies (Castañeda 2002: 1).

A violation of the integrity of a child, especially a murder, is a means of concretely challenging the continuation of a way of life, a culture, and a set of beliefs. Threats to children are at their core threats to not only the specific body and person of the child, but also to their family and to broader collectivities of community and society at large.

²⁵⁶ It is for this reason that one of the four enumerated actions that constitute genocide, the destruction “in whole or in part” of “a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such” is “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” (Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide 1948).

This sensibility is echoed in the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* in several ways, all of which reflect on the power dynamics evoked in the stories. The child, before being acted upon by predatory forces, is of profound value to his/her family and community. S/he is full of potentiality and possibility, poised to grow up and serve as the vehicle for the reproduction of society as it is, and as read through the metanarratives of development and democracy, as it might be. A child embodies potentiality in every sense. Literally, s/he will grow up to be an adult and ensure the continuation of a social order. As a “cultural resource” within which multiple contestations of value are imprinted, read, expressed, and experienced, the child embodies the promise of the future, in all its potentiality and in all its uncertainty and indeterminacy.

A child is also a vulnerable being, and a child’s body is a site of great risk. The iconography of their bodies has special resonance as Comaroff argued, “It is *young* bodies that are held to be most productive, and most at risk” (Comaroff 1997: 13). As “an adult in the making,” a promise of the future, and the only means of social reproduction, the reality and imagery of violence against children’s bodies enervates concern, fear, and outrage. The specifics of the claims and narratives that played off the child’s body as a site of risk and potential threat ranged widely depending on the social context.

The children depicted in the tales were not powerful in their direct narrative role as specific victims of a crime, but rather for what they represented in relation to other children. For each child victim represented in these stories, those hearing the tales – telling them, repeating them, listening and reflecting – considered the very real and present children in their lives. The vague quality and elusive identity of the child victims (especially in sites where such anonymity is rare) allowed them to “stand in” for the possibility that the same things might well happen to one’s own children. However remote and uncertain the actual possibility of the threat (after all, it was always situated somewhere just far enough “away” to avoid factual verification), the tales evoked a danger that loomed ever-present in its mystery and terror.

One issue that was widely remembered and viewed as significant by many residents was the posting of a copy of a full-page newspaper article in the main square of San Cristóbal. The piece was published in *Prensa Libre*, the most widely read newspaper in the country, and was entitled “The black market for human organs flourishes.”²⁵⁷ It was a provocative, if not incendiary piece.²⁵⁸ It read:

There exists important evidence that up to the present, in our country, the search by any means, for human organs, is common. Dozens of foreigners, Europeans, North Americans and Canadians, who in local registries appear as “tourists,” have been detected in activities that could be linked to the black market in human organs that stretches from the purchase of children to their abduction. These types of despicable merchants, from Europe or North America, act with incredible impunity, with the obvious consent of Guatemalan authorities . . . Since the beginning of the year, although little of this information has been published in local media, a certain number of cases have appeared particularly in medical circles. Children who were kidnapped appeared without an eye or a without a kidney; foreigners were seen in prisons in the Departments, trying to negotiate the purchase of the children of prisoners with economic necessities, the discovery of *casas cunas* for the export of children, supposedly to be placed in adoption . . . The growing demand for human parts, in rich nations, has allowed unscrupulous traffickers to establish immense organizations that include laboratories, *casas cunas*, medical and paramedical personnel, those who look for children and transport them, lawyers and administrators in charge of maintaining the secrecy of these activities, in poor countries. Presumably, the scope of the traffic in human organs in Guatemala could be significant since impunity, illegality and corruption are the best guarantees that the beneficiaries of the business, the intermediaries, operate without fear of punishment or apprehension.²⁵⁹

The article suggested that the demand for children’s organs was currently quite substantial and was likely to increase considerably by the end of the century. “According to medical predictions by the year 2,000 more than half of all operations will involve human implants.”²⁶⁰

At the bottom of the page, there were a series of cartoon-like images of different human organs with text that stated, “The ten most frequent transplants (prices of the transplants in the

²⁵⁷ “Florece el mercado negro de organos humanos,” *Prensa Libre*, March 13, 1994.

²⁵⁸ In fact, it was later referenced by some as a key example of the irresponsibility and lack of professional standards of Guatemalan journalists and by others as a planted story, a type of psychological operation and a clear sign that the panic was the result of political manipulation. Given the widespread use of the media for overt psychological operations during *la violencia* (and likely afterward), this claim is certainly reasonable, yet that space of uncertainty also played into the impact of mistrust in undermining the very possibility of verification and, by extension, truth-claims of almost any type.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

international market).²⁶¹ Attached to each organ was a price tag with organ prices reported in U.S. dollars as: lungs – \$100,000; liver – \$150,000; kidney – \$65,000; heart – \$100,000; valve – \$3,500; cornea – \$2,500; heart-lungs – \$125,000; pancreas – \$90,000; bone marrow – \$125,000; bones – \$1,500.²⁶² These were staggering amounts in Guatemala where, at the time, per capita income was around \$1,300/year, with those in rural, indigenous majority areas earning far less (World Bank 2015). The imagery suggested that the organs could be bought and sold at these prices more or less like any other commodity. With prices at those levels and within the context of the country’s justice crisis, endemic corruption, and institutionalized impunity, it was entirely reasonable to assume that this industry would flourish in Guatemala.

The article was published in mid-March, a week or so after the riot in Santa Lucía. Several locals remember the impact of the piece as a resonant element of the panic:

After they found the child without organs, there was that incident in Santa Lucía and then there was that article from *Prensa Libre*. The effect of these things together was very serious.²⁶³

There was this article published in *Prensa Libre* explaining what each body part was worth and that’s when it really started up here. People would ask us, “Do they really do that in the U.S.? Do they really pay \$50,000 for a heart?” People kept asking us that. They’d say, “Is it really possible?” And I’d respond, “Yes, transplants are possible. They do it all the time.” They would respond with wonder and surprise, “Really?” But, what could I tell them. I had no idea what would happen. I still don’t understand what took place.²⁶⁴

Each of these elements – the tales’ wide circulation, the legitimacy accruing through repetition by trusted sources, the riot in Santa Lucía, the “escape” of the accused *gringa*, multiple newspaper and radio reports, and the full-page article posted in the central square – contributed to a general sense of

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Interview with Erika, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994

²⁶⁴ Interview with Michael Lewis, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

outrage, anger, and uncertainty. As Boris and Beth Ramirez explained, “You could just feel the sense of fear. The fear was tangible.”²⁶⁵

This was the situation in San Cristóbal when June Diane Weinstock visited. According to people who spoke with Weinstock, she was eager to leave the town because she felt uncomfortable. She noticed that townspeople had been staring at her in a menacing way and she claimed to have been followed as she walked through town. Although she spoke little Spanish, she was an experienced and informed traveler who was aware of the panic of the *robaniños*.

Around ten in the morning, as Weinstock tried to board the bus to Cobán several local residents accused her of stealing children. Weinstock did not understand exactly what was going on. A policeman who arrived to find out what was going on was unable to speak with her. A few minutes later, Michael Lewis arrived at the scene and the local policeman asked him to help interpret. As soon as he heard that Weinstock was being accused of stealing children, he became worried. Weinstock was clearly frightened and confused.

She asked Lewis why people were angry at her, “Who do they think I am?” Later asking, “Are they saying what I think they’re saying?”²⁶⁶

The situation calmed a bit as the policeman and Lewis walked Weinstock to the Justice of the Peace, whose office was only a few blocks away. Word spread quickly that a *robaniño* had been captured while trying to escape the town. Many described a variety of suspicious items believed to be inside her backpack:

The people said they saw a scalpel in her backpack.²⁶⁷

They said that the inside of her pack was red with blood and that there were bags inside.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Interview with Beth and Boris Ramirez, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

²⁶⁶ Interview with Michael Lewis, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

²⁶⁷ Anonymous fieldwork interview, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

²⁶⁸ Anonymous fieldwork interview, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994

The Justice of the Peace offered to go through the backpack publicly to show the residents that had gathered outside his office that Weinstock was not carrying children's organs or, in fact, anything suspicious. By that time, between fifty and a hundred people were in front of the building, milling around, talking, no doubt repeating various allegations. Then, the justice and his assistants began to pull Weinstock's possessions out of her backpack and display them to the crowd. They took out her clothes, piece by piece, along with various personal items, showing local residents that she had nothing to hide. The Justice of the Peace addressed the crowd and said, "See there's nothing in her bags. You've seen that there's nothing there."²⁶⁹

The idea underlying these actions seemed reasonable. After all, if the issue motivating the accusations was the looming danger of what was unseen, absent and imagined – whether medical instruments or bags filled with stolen organs – then a process of public revelation might well have addressed the community's concerns. Yet, perhaps no evidence could be adequate to engage and question the narrative logic of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*. If a key element of the power of what was not present/invisible/unseen/unknown served as proof of the conspiracy and corruption named by these tales, then they might well be resistant to the revelation of information contradicting underlying assumptions. As demonstrated earlier, this was true in other communities where the tales were widely told. And, not only did the actions of the Justice of the Peace not allay the concerns of the crowd, they deepened their sense that something was amiss. The removal of objects from the pack was viewed as some type of trick. What was visible/seen/known was the *gringa* herself; her very presence and the dynamic of her strangeness (foreign, temporary, and unknown) served as the indictment and proof of her guilt.

By around 11:00 a.m., the crowd had grown in size and several young men came to the front

²⁶⁹ Interview with Michael Lewis, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

and began loudly accusing Weinstock of stealing children. By then, everyone in town had heard about the *gringa* and larger numbers of people gathered at the Justice of the Peace's office to see what was happening. Some stayed for only a few minutes, others spent all afternoon there, watching.

At one point, a local woman claimed that her seven-year-old boy had just been abducted. The crowd bristled. The justice asked the crowd, "Where's the mother?" and immediately the mother was sent for. The woman arrived in tears, hysterical. She pointed at Weinstock and screamed, "That lady stole my child. She grabbed my little boy and threw him into a gray truck."

"Did you see her?" asked the Justice of the Peace.

"No."

"Well, how do you know she did anything?"

"They told me."

"Who told you?"

"Well, they did."

"Who's they?"

"The people."

"You didn't see her take your son and throw him into the back of a truck?"

"No, but she did."

"Are you sure your son is not just out playing? How long has it been since you last saw him?"

"About a half hour."

"And she's the one that did it?"

"Oh, yes."

The woman was sobbing and the crowd was moved by her pain. One of the local policeman was the woman's neighbor and knew her son well. The Justice of the Peace sent the policeman to look

for the boy. The man returned soon after with the woman's son, who had been watching a religious procession.

The Justice of the Peace asked her, "Is this your little boy?"

The woman nodded and then the Justice of the Peace said, "Would you mind going out there and telling the people that it isn't true that this woman stole your son?"

So, the woman addressed the crowd saying that her son wasn't stolen and that it had been a mistake.

The Justice of the Peace addressed the crowd again, "Look here is the mother and here is her son. It's all over. It's not true. You can all go home now."

The crowd watched in silence, standing in their places. They seemed unconvinced and stood their ground. Then, a voice yelled out, "*Señora*, how much did they pay you?"

Here, as in the case in Santa Lucía, the claims of officials were met with complete disregard, a sign of the profound lack of trust in the state and its operations. And, the crowd also refused to accept the account of a local mother, known to many, who explained that the child she believed that had been stolen was, in fact, fine. This is because by the time the panic had reached this level of intensity – through repetition, multiple cases, reporting, circulating rumors, and the powerful deployment of specific imagery of bodies – its legitimacy and motivating significance could not easily be offset. How did the bodies presented in the tales enable such intense reactions?

Claudia Castañeda suggested that one way to understand this process is through the idea of "figuration" (Castañeda 2002). By this she argued that bodies signified complex constellations of meaning whose social power was heightened, reinforced, and constituted through its use, creating a "double force:"

A figure from this point of view, is the simultaneously material and semiotic effect of specific practices. Understood as figures, furthermore, particular categories of existence can also be considered in terms of their uses – what they "body forth" in turn.

Figuration is thus understood here to incorporate a double force: constitutive effect and generative circulation (Castañeda 2002: 3).

As the bodies of children operated through figuration, they entered and came to inhabit and define a specific cultural space that resonated with existing ideas, understandings and especially deep-rooted resentment regarding inequality and repression. It is useful to understand the “figuration” of bodies in the panic as structured along two interrelated oppositions – seen/unseen and local/distant – which operate to define ethical claims about identity and power, linking the immediacy, physicality, and experience of specific bodies with a set of claims about their implications. The child victims’ bodies as presented in the tales were unseen yet local. The tales’ power arose from the shock and believability of claims of the discovery of their mutilated, brutalized, and organ-less corpses which could not be verified and existed outside the intimately connected social networks. However, these bodies resonated as significant because they were local; they encoded the possibilities of local social reproduction. The harm done to these children was an act of violence against the social world in which those who told these tales lived. It was an attack on their way of life and the open disregard for the children’s bodily integrity was an attack on their dignity.

My argument is that the power of these tales lies, to a large degree, in the complexity of the child’s body – whole and dismembered – as a signifying mechanism that resonates profoundly with multiple audiences. It is important to note that the child victims’ bodies do not exist in isolation. Rather, their significance lies in the way the tales evoke multiple bodies, directly and indirectly. Most analyses of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* consider only the bodies of the victims, but in fact the tales engage at least three distinct bodies: the child victims’ bodies; the bodies of the beneficiaries of the extracted organs; and the bodies of *gringo* perpetrators. The power of bodies in these tales, then, is born of the interrelationship between these bodies, narratively evoked and, in the case of the *gringo* perpetrators directly, physically encountered. It is the interplay of these bodies that enabled the panic

and defined it as more than just the circulation of rumors. And, it was through the incident in San Cristóbal that acts of violence committed against a *gringo* body created a crisis which then imprinted on the society the significance of these claims, enabling a cascade of moral judgements and reflections that served to heighten identity claims situated in relation (and often in opposition) to other social actors.

The tales also engaged the bodies of beneficiaries – those children and/or adults who received the stolen organs and were thereby allowed to continue living, live better and/or longer, and generally move from a state of illness to health. These bodies were unseen, as the tales presented them as living somewhere else, in the land of *gringos*. The beneficiaries' role in the tales' logic was bound to their bodies, to their physical needs, and even to their desperation. This is read through an imagined sense of these bodies and the worlds they inhabit. As unseen bodies, they were abstract and rendered sensible only in relation to the action outlined in the tales – as connected to the local, unseen child victims' bodies. Not only were these bodies unseen, they could not possibly be seen (unlike the local child victims' bodies). They were physically distant, foreign, existing in a place whose qualities and characteristics were unknown to those who told the tales, even as the imagery and visions of the world of *gringos* was known through multiple claims. This transaction – the murder of local children for organs exported abroad for the benefit of distant *gringos* – defined the ways these distant worlds were imagined; places where the empowered prey upon the weak, where the rich are comfortable sacrificing the innocent poor for their benefit.

Then, there were the *gringo* bodies against whom locals reacted within the context of the panic. The most extreme cases are those of Melissa Larson and Diane Weinstock, whose presence in these communities led to riots and, in the case of Weinstock, brutal violence directed against her body. These bodies were both seen and distant. The encounters between locals and these *gringos* were premised on physical presence within various cities and towns in the country. Yet, the ways these

bodies were read and reacted to implied distance, a link to the very same imagined places where the beneficiaries lived, far off worlds that viewed locals through a predatory lens (see Table 3).

Table 3 Bodies Seen/Unseen and Local/Distant

Body	Seen	Unseen	Local	Distant
Child Victim(s)		X	X	
Beneficiaries		X		X
<i>Gringo(s)</i>	X			X

The accusations against June Diane Weinstock should be understood as operating within this dynamic. The acts of popular, public violence in the panic operated in relation to intersecting claims of what was seen/unseen and local/distant, in a way that played off the claims made via the narrative logic of the stories. The presence of a *gringa* within the community bound the tensions outlined in the tales of organ-stealing *gringos* to a present, physical, and *embodied* threat. Suddenly, the powerful demands of the immorality and impunity of predatory outsiders who kidnapped, killed, and mutilated local children, for the benefit of those both distant and empowered, was rendered immediate and local.

After the woman acknowledged that that her son was fine and this did little to calm the crowd, the Justice of the Peace continued to advocate for the need for evidence and a reasoned process of review saying, “Look if there’s really a problem we’ll deal with it, but we need proof.”

Among the crowd, people were angry saying, “She’s given the authorities a pile of money!” And claiming the only fair act was to do something, “We need to take her out of there and take justice into our own hands!”²⁷⁰

²⁷⁰ “That day, I remember a young girl running by to say that the North American woman had snatched a child. Other people came by to say that she had stuffed a child into a passing car. At first, I didn’t take it seriously, but then I went down to where they were holding her and there were lots of people there, almost the whole town. Some people were saying, ‘She’s given the authorities a pile of money!’ and ‘We need to take her out of there and take justice into our own hands!’ The people were angry and resentful.” Anonymous fieldwork interview, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

Sometime before noon, the Justice of the Peace called the National Police office in Cobán. Soon after, the police chief arrived with a group of officers.

Weinstock was inside the building, sitting alone, frightened. Also inside the building was the Justice of the Peace, his assistants, Michael Lewis, the local police, the chief of police from Cobán, and the officers he brought with him. Those present said that there were thirteen armed police officers.

At around noon, the Justice of the Peace called the United States Embassy and the local army base. Embassy officials immediately formed an emergency committee made up of around a dozen people, including a working group in charge of assessing the situation and making recommendations.²⁷¹ The Embassy remained in constant contact with the authorities through repeated phone calls. According to one of the consular officials, the Embassy called about every fifteen minutes throughout the entire incident.

Soon, the event was being covered by local radio stations and videos were being shot by the camera crews from local cable television stations. Hours of footage were shot by multiple camera operators, portions of which were widely rebroadcast on national news and, later, on international news programs.

Around 1:00 p.m., the governor of the department of Alta Verapaz arrived in San Cristóbal.

Later, the bishop of Alta Verapaz arrived. The bishop tried to calm the crowd, to assure them that if there was any truth to the accusations, things would be dealt with in the appropriate manner. Although he was widely respected in the region, the crowd refused to listen to him. They screamed, “We don’t want blessings, and we want blood.”²⁷²

Later, the bishop looked back on the situation with great sadness.

²⁷¹ “We were predicting that something like this would happen . . . I remember sending a cable to the State Department telling them that we were concerned that something violent would happen.” Interview with Lee McLenny, August 1994.

²⁷² Interview with Monseñor Flores, Cobán, August 1994.

I couldn't do anything to help that poor woman . . . In the seventeen years that I've been here, I have never seen of anything like this. It was something truly new."²⁷³

Sometime in the afternoon, between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m., a group of as many as thirty state road workers arrived in their trucks. They were angry because they hadn't been paid. Like many others in the crowd, they had been drinking. Many locals blamed the escalation of the violence on the arrival of these workers, who were widely described as loud and unruly.

The situation grew more heated around 3:00 p.m.

The crowd began throwing rocks at the justice's office. By then, the Embassy officials assured the people holed up in the building that the Guatemalan army had been informed of the situation and would arrive soon. During the final conversation with the Embassy officials, Lewis expressed his concerns that the situation was edging towards certain violence.²⁷⁴

At one point, the police managed to force the crowd away from the building and then shut the outside gate. The crowd was held back briefly, but then they broke through the fence and began to assault the building.

By 3:30 p.m., the situation had spun out of control and the office was under siege.

Inside the justice's offices, the justice, his assistants, the police officers, Lewis, and Weinstock retreated from the main room. The crowd broke down the front door. Filing cabinets and chairs were placed against the inside door.

Outside the crowd was hurling rocks and yelling:

"We want to see the *gringal*!"

"Get the *gringal*!"

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ "Then I took the phone and I held it up. I mean this place was crazy, glass was shattering, they were breaking through the roof, screaming and hollering, rocks were hitting everything. It was wild. I said, 'Does that sound like control?' She said, 'No, sir, it sure doesn't. But, I was told it was under control.' I said, 'Ma'am it is *not* under control. We are in trouble.'" Interview with Michael Lewis, San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, August 1994.

Weinstock was taken to the room at the back of the building. She sat on the floor in a corner, her face in her hands.

The inside door was set on fire. Then, the police decided to abandon the building. They left through the back door. Then, the Justice of the Peace left along with his assistants, all of whom exited over the back fence to safety.

By then, only Weinstock and Lewis were left inside.

Then, he left as well.²⁷⁵

The crowd broke through the final door and found Weinstock. They were carrying sticks and machetes and began to savagely beat her. They later dragged her outside as the beatings continued. The room was covered in blood.

Her body was left lying on the ground outside; the image that was later presented in multiple accounts of the riot.

Soon after, the army arrived. Weinstock and Lewis were rushed to the hospital. Lewis' injuries were minor, but his whole family was evacuated to the capital for their safety.

Weinstock was in a coma. She would never fully recover.

3. *Gringo* Status and *Gringo* Bodies

An American woman who moved to Guatemala in the 1970s told me, “The *robaniños* affected me personally more than any other event here in the past twenty-five years.”²⁷⁶ She lived in the beautiful colonial capital city of Antigua, a popular tourist destination and a large expatriate community

²⁷⁵ “I was the last one to walk out. There were two guys with clubs and they started running at me and my next-door neighbor stepped in and grabbed the club from the first guy. I looked around and there were no police. They just ran away. The guys all had handkerchiefs over their faces, like cowboys. My neighbor got hit by the second guy. At that point, I jumped over the fence. I had no idea what happened after that because people started hitting me. They hit me on the head. They beat my legs. Later, I had bruises all over me. I was black and blue from head to foot.” Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Anonymous Interview with a woman expatriate from the U.S., Antigua, June 1996.

an hour or so west of Guatemala City.

That statement stuck with me. I wondered how to make sense of her claim. How could someone who had lived through multiple coups, brutal, systematic political violence, and institutionalized repression so severe as to have met the legal definition of genocide (to say nothing of daily encounters with the cruelty of endemic poverty and suffering), view the tales of organ-stealing *gringos* and the popular violence they inspired as the most disturbing event in two and a half decades?

At first the claim made me think that the woman must have lived an extraordinarily insulated life, somehow cut off from the reality of Guatemala. Perhaps she knew little about the country where she lived. Or, maybe she chose to ignore its harsh reality.

Yet, over time, I found that her position was echoed by many U.S. citizens as well as other foreigners that I interviewed. In fact, it was, in many ways, the dominant sentiment among expatriates living in Guatemala. While there were significant differences in how foreigners engaged the panic of the *robaniños*, it was widely perceived as something deeply impactful and a moment that shifted the quality of lived experience in fascinating ways.

I found this to be true when I spoke with dozens of people who had spent years in expatriate communities, whether running businesses, running away from past lives (a common expatriate story), or living as retirees, taking advantage of the low cost of living in Central America (where otherwise middle class people could reside in large houses with live-in maids, cooks, and assistants). While this group created and sustained lives largely protected from the country's overwhelming brutality – often living in gated communities, socializing with other expatriates or elite Guatemalans, and reveling in the benefits of relative wealth within one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere – many followed the news closely and were well aware of the nation's poverty, institutionalized racism, and systematic corruption. While it was true that they were generally able to avoid any personal impact of the country's profound inequality and injustice (like most wealthy Guatemalans), they were often thoughtful

commentators of the country and its challenges. Even the wealthiest members of this group, those with large fenced-in mansions, armed guards, and bullet-proofed vehicles, described the panic of the *robaniños* as touching them deeply and piercing their sense of personal well-being.

The same perspective was echoed by foreigners who worked closely with the Guatemalan population and openly engaged the country's poverty and cycles of political crises. A former U.N. human rights worker with years of fieldwork experience in the country described the panic of the *robaniños* as something "really big," which for the first time in many years of living and working in the country made him "wary of the people [of Guatemala]."²⁷⁷ Again, I was surprised. Here was someone who had devoted years to conducting detailed research into torture, extrajudicial execution, massacres, and other severe violations, who had traveled widely to some of the most remote *aldeas* and dealt directly with complex and politically tense situations, facing off against security forces, gathering and managing sensitive information. Yet, like so many other foreigners, whether American or European or from somewhere else, he experienced these stories as deeply troubling. For him, living through the panic of the *robaniños* was the most profound event for bringing home (rendering personally threatening) the risks and dangers of Guatemalan social reality.

I also found that this position was common among foreign-born development and human rights workers I interviewed (a diverse selection of the many thousands working in Guatemala whose daily lives and professional activities linked them directly and personally to the country's profound inequity, violence, and deep-rooted, constant human suffering). In fact, in the early- to mid-1990s Guatemala was filled with international workers, many of whom spent years directly on the front lines of efforts to research, analyze, and expose the most brutal aspects of state repression. Some worked for local and international human rights organizations documenting abuses, exhuming mass graves,

²⁷⁷ Interview with Ken Ward, Guatemala City, February 1996.

and supporting the many significant civil society groups operating in the country. Others worked in healthcare, education, micro-lending, gender justice, and other areas that directly addressed the country's profoundly inequitable social structure. While these *gringos* were deeply engaged with the harsh realities of Guatemala's past and present, and well-aware of the systematic use of violence to support the social structure and enable modes of governance, many told me that they felt different and notably threatened after the attack on June Diane Weinstock. Not only were they surprised by the fervor of the panic of the *robaniños* and outraged by the public violence of the incidents in Santa Lucía and San Cristóbal, they often felt offended. They felt personally hurt that residents from the very communities they sought to help held such vicious ideas about people who looked and in some ways acted a lot like them.

In light of the Guatemala's crushing tragedies and overwhelming suffering, what was it about the panic of the *robaniños* that signaled such a profound shift in their sense of security, comfort, and capacity to live and work? And, why was this true for foreign expatriates relatively disengaged with the country's socio-economic reality, as well as for those who worked day-to-day in indigenous majority rural *aldeas* on community health projects and rights-based advocacy? What was it about *gringo* identity that so powerfully resonated with so many Guatemalans?

Gringo identity is complex and encompasses multiple elements, realities, and experiences. *Gringo* is a term used throughout Latin America, although its meanings vary widely based on who deploys the term, where it is used, and how it is used. However, this analysis is not meant to fully explore the term *gringo* in all its complexity, shifting resonance, and moral valence. There is a rich tradition of critique of the core essentialism of identity claims (Spivak 1987, 1988; Bhabha 1994; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Leve 2011), whether referenced through self-reflexive questioning of the politics of representation (Rosaldo 1989, Behar 1993; Zavella 1997), criticisms of the colonialist foundations of these ideas and their operations (Abu-Lughod 1991; Stoler 2002; Mamdani 2002), or as bound to

the responsibility and political commitments of the ethnographer (Garcia 2000; Sanford and Angel-Ajani 2006). The term “identity” is so complex in its multiple meanings that some have suggested that it is too broad to be useful (“identity has been charged with so many different meaning that it has ceased to be meaningful at all” Sokefeld 2001: 527), while others have viewed its expansion and widespread deployment as a sign of the commodification of cultural difference (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009).

However, my engagement with *gringo* identity here is expressive of its link to the *gringo* body. I seek to openly engage the power of its essentializing vision, not to suggest its accuracy in naming the reality of social difference, but as a reference point for core, possibly inescapable, components of the lived body in Guatemala. The point here is not to suggest that *gringo* identity should be unproblematically accepted in its essentialized form, but rather to draw attention to the broad-based deployment of an essentialized *gringo* identity within tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*.

The references to bodies as seen/unseen and local/distant play a semiotic role that maps onto the narrative a shorthand that characterizes these stories. The clipped references to a small number of powerful images addressed in detail earlier defined and encoded the tales’ use of bodies as reference points for a constellation of meanings that reflected on relations of social power and the country’s transitional moment. So, rather than interrogate *gringo* identity, the goal here is to explore essentialized elements of the *gringo body* as a means of better understanding the panic of the *robaniños* as examples of narratives of mistrust.

The word *gringo* has a general descriptive quality used to refer to someone light-skinned and foreign, particularly a North American or European. However, the term in Guatemala does not necessarily refer to foreigners. For example, Guatemalans from urban areas, especially those that present phenotypical traits that differ from the majority indigenous population, such as lighter complexions and taller stature, are often termed *gringos* in rural areas, especially in the indigenous

majority *altiplano*. And, this is true in many other places in the Americas. The term resonates most powerfully as a sort of boundary, a dividing line that separates one group from another, with the word *gringo* generally not used by *gringos* (except ironically), but by those encountering them and reflecting on marked differences.

Some suggest that the term came from a song that U.S. soldiers sang while marching, “Green Grow the Lilacs,” understood by Mexicans as “green grow” or “*gringo*”.²⁷⁸ Others suggest that the term referenced those whose language could not be understood, using the Spanish word for Greek (“*griego*”), as in “it’s all Greek to me.” Others trace the word to *peregrino* (or pilgrim). While there is significant debate as to the origins of the term, all these ideas share an acknowledgment of differences and difficulties communicating and understanding. Certainly, these concepts resonate with the meaning of *gringo* today, which is deployed to name core differences of understanding, and bound to an engagement and imagination of inequitable power relations that structure core misunderstandings.

It is important to note that the term *gringo* is generally negatively coded.²⁷⁹ While it can be deployed in a solely descriptive manner – like *gordo* (fatty), *flaco* (skinny), *canche* (blondie), all terms widely used in contexts of familiarity and as a sign of friendship and social closeness – the general use

²⁷⁸ “The word *gringo*, the term applied to American and English by the Mexicans, is said to have had an amusing origin. A lot of sailors belonging to an English man-of-war in Mazatlán went ashore and got rip-roaring drunk. While parading the streets one of them was singing, ‘Green grow the lilacs,’ etc. The Mexicans only caught the first two words, and dubbed them Grin-go’s, and it has stuck ever since.” See, “The Colorful Origin Stories of ‘*Gringo*,’” Lexicon Valley, *Slate* podcast, August 25, 2015, available at: <https://www.visualthesaurus.com/cm/wordroutes/the-colorful-origin-stories-of-gringo/>

²⁷⁹ As with so many identity terms, the meaning of *gringo*, and its implications, shifts with use, context, speaker, and audience. And, there has been a move in recent years for the term to become less negative and more a mode of reflecting differences that resonate within social situations of love and respect. For example, a Latina NPR commentator explains, “Most people think ‘*gringo*’ is only a derogatory epithet for white Americans, and they incorrectly assume that any use of the word is inherently offensive. That is not the case. *Gringo* can be used to broadly and inoffensively refer to a group of U.S. citizens. I’ve also heard it used as a term for Europeans. I’ve heard the term used as a name for people who don’t speak Spanish. It can also be used to refer to Hispanics who speak very little or no Spanish at all. *Gringo* is also sometimes used as a name for Hispanics who are not in touch with their Latino roots, or for any person who is ignorant of Latin American culture or history. . . Which individuals and groups get labeled *gringo* will evolve as the demographics of the U.S. continue to change. Maybe one day more people will use *gringo* in the way my grandma uses it — as a name for Latinos in the U.S. Maybe the next time somebody asks me, ‘Where are you from?’ I will be able to answer, ‘I am a *gringa*,’ and everybody will understand.” Aida Ramirez, “Who, Exactly, Is A *Gringo*?” National Public Radio, August 7, 2013. <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/08/07/209266300/who-exactly-is-a-gringo>

of the word suggests insult, derision, and critique. So, *gringo* is a term that is inseparable in Guatemala from a complex array of ideas and concepts that depict a dominant and domineering set of values and ideas, closely linked to images and policies of the U.S.:

It seems to mean ‘ugly American’ and imperialist, condensing many highly charged emotions around global inequalities, wealth color, cultural capital, commodity access, military aid, rude tourists, and complex imaginaries of Rambo and Madonna (Nelson 1999: 63).

It is the diversity and overwhelming overlay of images and imagery that makes the term *gringo* and the multiple ideas it evokes so profoundly resonant in Guatemala and throughout Latin America. It connects ideas of political interventions, diplomatic and military, support for various repressive regimes, systems of resource extraction, ideologies of race, international assistance, global investment and a set of powerful products (from Coke to Ford to McDonalds, etc.) and cultural icons (from Mickey Mouse and other Disney characters to “Friends” to Star Wars, etc.). So, even as *gringo* identity and reality is filled with excitement, energy, longing, and pleasures, it is entwined with concepts of dominance, excess, colonialism and Yankee exploitation.

The concept of a *gringo* is also powerfully bound to the body. It connects a certain phenotype (light-skinned, tall, blonde, etc.) with a set of assumptions (wealthy, empowered, connected, etc.) and a set of ethical judgments (domineering, exploitative, selfish, etc.). *Gringo* operates to highlight the dual powers of essentialism (the term flattens subtle claims, individuality, and nuance) and flexibility (by referencing so many broad ideas it is multiply applicable for critical naming of people, ideas, policies, etc.).

In Guatemala, the term *gringo* must be read through the history of the country, which has a long history of being subjected to foreign, especially U.S., dominance, influence, and intervention. Guatemala exists within a region of significant U.S. hegemonic control, and the country has lived through multiple situations in which foreign (*gringo*) power has been deployed economically, politically,

militarily, and culturally in multiple forms that impacted distinct understandings of identity. The constancy of U.S. presence and power is an inescapable element of national identity and the source of great resentment from various political perspectives. And, the era of peace-making and the gradual, flawed democratic transition was deeply influenced by the enormity of continued U.S. power, in almost every form (diplomatic, military, via soft power, culturally, etc.). The period also involved a substantial increase in *gringo bodies* through multiple efforts by foreign governments, non-governmental institutions, and others involved in a myriad of peace-making, human rights, rule of law, and development programs.

Gringo is, above all, a relational status; a concept that has meaning as compared to other identity constructions. Abigail Adams argued that *gringo* identity requires a link and comparative context between the north and Latin America, suggesting that one only becomes a *gringo* by crossing the borders and being placed in relationship to core differences that rely upon and enable this meaning (Adams 1997). Diane Nelson, perhaps the most articulate and complex commentator on these issues, engaged the term as follows:

“*Gringo*” is a category produced through interactions, and as such, it works on a variety of borders including but not limited to national frontiers, stereotypes of phenotypic difference, sartorial codes, and – as “gringa” (marked by the Spanish feminine) – gender boundaries (Nelson 1999: 41).

This perspective is useful in that it highlights the fluid, shifting nature of *gringo* identity, and of identity more generally. The power of the *gringo* – in a specific case like June Diane Weinstock and as a general category – is enormous within the Guatemalan context. Yet, the term is relational in every sense. The meaning of *gringo*, as voiced, is bound to the social position of whomever is making the claim and the situation in which the claim is made. It is a term that can be deployed multiply and critically by a variety of social actors. An urban Guatemalan can look askance at a passing *gringo* tourist, and level vicious critiques (from almost any political perspective) against *gringo* political meddling and *gringo* culture. Yet,

that same urban Guatemalan might be named a *gringo* when traveling in the countryside. The term is as useful for identifying a tourist from the Midwest stepping off a bus to visit an indigenous market as it is an experienced development professional who speaks one of the local indigenous languages.²⁸⁰ As a core term of essentialized identity, it has a vast array of uses – comical, serious, and critical – and is equally expressive of anger, fear, respect, or amazement. However, it is always a relational term of essentializing identity. This is true even as the nature of *gringo* status and its shifting meanings are formed and impacted by the presence and actions of *gringos*, in specific places and in general. “In turn, the *gringa* changes the places she goes” (Nelson 1999: 41). It is precisely this essentializing feature that defines the concept’s power and utility and helps to explain its discursive and enervating role within the tales and the related panic.

Gringo status is intimately connected to the *gringo body*, not only in terms of “appearance,” but rather as a social construction whose vibrancy and significance cannot be separated from the way in which the physicality of this status is experienced. A *gringo* is not a body, but a set of hybrid meanings – a “lived body.” Here, Lock and Farquhar’s analysis is particularly helpful. While many analysts acknowledge the complexity of *gringo* status as physically significant while complexly and diversely resonant, what is often lost in efforts to engage the concept is the way in which the body is experienced and the fact that its meanings cannot be separated from the way physicality is lived within the richness and tragedy of Guatemalan social reality. The meaning of *gringo* must be conceptualized as a “lived body” and understood as “assemblages of practices, discourses, images, institutional arrangements, and specific places and projects” (Lock and Farquhar 2007: 1).

Stated differently, it is impossible to understand the meaning of *gringo* in Guatemala apart from

²⁸⁰ Trusted foreigners – who are phenotypically *gringo* – are often not viewed as such by locals, especially those one knows well. As Nelson explained, “People would often laugh, surprised, if I self-identified as a *gringa*. They might say, ‘Oh no, you’re not really a *gringa*. You’re not like those others,’ which would always please me” (Nelson 1999: 63).

the *gringo body*. And, even with all the complexity and richness of meaning associated with the concept *gringo*, these discussions are no substitute for the experience – however distinct according to differences of person, place, and moment – of moving through daily life as a *gringo* (or perceiving a *gringo* as s/he moves through daily life). To make sense of the meaning of *gringo* for the panic of the *robaniños*, then, requires an acceptance of the complexity of *gringo* status and *gringo* bodies as relational, shifting, interactive, and, above all, as lived. While this is clearly true of most, if not all identities, I argue that this idea is essential to understanding the panic of the *robaniños*. The tales present an imagined, unseen *gringo* that is vicious, predatory, immoral, and exploitative; a vision premised on the deep resonance of the concept as bound to multiple elements of history, discourse, and practice. The concern, fear, outrage, and anger enabled by the broad circulation and repetition of these tales built on this vision, as read through the context of the socio-political moment of the peace process, advancing democratization, and the pressures and actions of multiple foreign powers within and upon Guatemala and its body politic. In the case of the specific enactment of violence on the *gringa* body of June Diane Weinstock, the panic became something distinct and new, a challenge whose relevance is best understood in the way it impacted those in Guatemala and those affected enough to seek interpretations of what occurred. In this way, *gringo* was deployed to reference “not the body but embodied historical life” (Farquhar 2002: 5) of a term with profound social, cultural, and political roots and a particular valence at the time of the panic.

As a foreigner, English speaker, North American, U.S. citizen, and Fulbright scholar who spent years living and working in the country, I know something of what it means to be a *gringo* in Guatemala. While *gringo* identity is multiple and there is a wide range of *gringos* passing through the country and/or living and working there (Levy 2007), there are common elements of the meaning of *gringo* status that are deeply bound to experience and resonant of a core set of presuppositions and an

identity constructed in relation to non-*gringo* status.²⁸¹ Describing the *gringo* experience in a text can only be understood as a form of translation, and yet it is this sensibility – the powerful, inescapable, lived sense of *gringo* status, for both *gringos* and non-*gringos* – that lies at the heart of the intense reactions to the panic of the *robaniños*.

There were many ways in which my *gringo* status existed, was expressed, was experienced, and was known to others, from my formal legal status when I presented identification to complexly protective social networks to financial and other resources. As I quickly learned, and as my foreign colleagues (whether academics, aid workers, journalists or others) knew only too well, *gringo* status was powerfully expressed and experienced through “the body.” My clearly visible phenotype – tall, slim, light-skinned – defined my presence in Guatemala as a *gringo* in a manner that was as inescapable as it was empowering. It was a mode of both distantiation and connection. Like so many field researchers, elements of being a *gringo* were so profoundly bound to daily work that they became key elements of the tools of my efforts. Yet, they were also seductive in their power, even as I believed myself to be intellectually engaged with the overdetermined elements of this core inequality.

As I crossed through conflict zones in Guatemala – first as a tourist, then as a researcher, and later as a human rights advocate – I felt profoundly protected by my body and the special state of being a *gringo*, where the two were inseparable. This knowledge deeply influenced my lived experience and operated as a profound shield to so many of the ravages and tragedies of the country. Yet, this was not my experience alone. It was, and is, a core element of what it means to be a *gringo* in Guatemala.

²⁸¹ While *gringo* status is briefly remarked upon by foreign researchers (its powers are difficult to avoid, even as they may be complex and troubling to acknowledge), there are a few studies that engage the issue with some depth. One particularly interesting project is a dissertation by Joshua Wolfe Levy, “The Making of the *Gringo* World: Expatriates in La Antigua Guatemala” (Stanford 2007), which focuses on young foreigners living in a major tourist city whose identity is complex and contested, fully *gringo* yet defined by “multiple forms of difference and belonging” as structured in relationship to “an imagined Guatemala.” Of special interest to this project, is his acknowledgment of the intricate relational nature of *gringo* identity and the role of imagination and projection on lived experience.

While it may be difficult to disengage all the complex elements of *gringo* identity, the overwhelming experience in Guatemala was one of special protection.

My experiences in the field in Guatemala as a *gringo* were overwhelmingly empowering, especially regarding protections from the dangers, threats, and administrative obstacles that define life for so many locals. I moved throughout the country with limited barriers, even in areas that were contested and sites that were patrolled and policed by the state. Despite the extraordinary pressures and violent repression that defined state action, especially by the intelligence services and military (and to a lesser degree the police), I traveled openly and relatively easily in every region of the country. I was able to interview victims of massacres, torture, and other brutal actions with no sense of threat or danger (although I was constantly concerned about those I spoke with and spent considerable time doing what was possible to maximize their protection). I visited many rural villages and *aldeas*, including those in guerrilla-controlled areas. I would walk up to government offices – such as judges’ chambers, prisons, and police stations – and ask to speak with state agents as well as detainees. I attended meetings and rallies run by various groups, from those on the right to those on the left. I attended trials. I walked calmly through the halls of Congress.

This resonates with the work of Diane Nelson, who presented a complex and sensitive account of her own experience as a *gringa* working in Guatemala as both an activist and a scholar. In discussing her early work as a “*gringa* in solidarity,” she described her ability to travel freely and gather first-hand accounts of political violence as follows, “I felt like I had almost magical power at the time” (Nelson 1999: 45).

The term “magical” resonates because of the profound tension between the materials that Nelson (and I) gathered, which included detailed descriptions of horrific acts of indiscriminate repression, and the relative freedom and sense of protection that we experienced daily. One place where this seemed especially profound was at the multiple government checkpoints I crossed while

conducting fieldwork. At the time, the country was going through security sector reform that involved governmental commitments to improve the capacity of the National Police and limit the military's engagement with issues of domestic social order. These efforts were core elements of the multi-year peace process and were supported by tens of millions of dollars in foreign assistance. One of the ways that these transitional reforms impacted daily life in the country was the countless police checkpoints set up around Guatemala City and in various places across the country. These were meant to deter the rise in criminality, yet they were reminiscent of the situation during *la violencia*. At the peak of the placement of these checkpoints, I would commonly pass through five to ten per day. In some, all cars were pulled over, and in others officers would indicate to drivers which cars had to stop. Given widespread police corruption, these stops were sites where minor infractions were commonly discovered and where the legal implications could be avoided through the payment of a *mordida* ("bite") – a bribe. Often, I was not pulled over when those manning the checkpoints saw that I was a *gringo* and I would be passed through with no questions. Other times, when I was stopped, it was clear that my status as a *gringo* was complex. On the one hand, it might be easy to extract a bribe from me, especially if I was a tourist. On the other hand, I could easily be someone that might pose a problem for those manning the checkpoint. The way I looked and my foreign accent allowed me to move through checkpoints with ease. More than that, I could wield a certain "magic" by virtue of the possibility that almost any claim I made about my closeness to power and ability to utilize *cuello* ("connections") for my benefit and at their peril was viable.

These moments were oddly intimate when the officers looked me over and peered through my documents. The sizing up was immediate and intense and, as a *gringo*, one could feel the judgments and balancing in every question, whether tentative ("It looks like you have a foreign passport, American?"), mildly aggressive ("So, what are you doing here?"), or openly challenging ("How do I

know you don't have a machine gun in your trunk?"). Potentially the *gringo* is "easy prey" for a reasonable pay off. Yet, similarly, the *gringo* is dangerous in that s/he may be powerfully connected.

I was protected by my *gringo* status, which was inextricable from my "body" (in a phenotypical sense). And, over time, these experiences became imprinted on my sense of self and place, and defined my movement through Guatemala – in the city, in rural areas, on the street, etc. – as an experience wholly different than back home.

All *gringos* living and working in Guatemala knew first-hand some aspect of this dynamic. It was deeply empowering, almost seductive. Yet, these exchanges also involved a sense of resentment and anger. *Gringo* status was lived for most foreigners in a way that elevated the importance of even those with relatively limited access to any real power. As a *gringo*, the meaning of one's "body" shifted with the context, setting up a cascading set of relations premised on profound inequalities that played a key role in defining multiple identities and opposing relations. As any foreigner spending time in Guatemala knew, the *gringo body* was something lived in such an intimate and immediate manner, reinforced at every turn (albeit with different meanings and valences depending on context) that its powerful status became an assumed subtext of daily life.

4. *Gringo/Non-Gringo*: The Relative Value of Bodies

Central to *gringo* status and identity is the *gringo* body as a sign, symbol, expression, and medium of several core issues, including gross disparities of power and a complex dynamic of respect and resentment. This is not easy to explain, and my goal here is not to fully engage all the valences and elements of the *gringo body*. Rather, I want to situate the tales' deployment of *gringo* status within the contested political context of the early to mid-1990s and encourage a sense of translation of the idea of the lived *gringo body* so some elements of its meaning can be rendered more sensible. To do this, I illustrate the complexity of *gringo* bodies through a review of the activist strategy of *acompañamiento*

(accompaniment) whose primary tool is the *gringo body*. The point here is not to engage the full “truth” of the ideas and assumptions that accrue to *gringo* status in the country, but rather to suggest that the *gringo body* signifies a set of issues that were revealed, challenged, and reaffirmed in the panic of the *robaniños*.

Accompaniment: the political power of the *gringo* body in Guatemala – Accompaniment (*acompañamiento*) is a mode of political activism in which foreigners provide support to civil society leaders and advocacy organizations primarily through their physical presence. Accompaniment in Guatemala is quite common and has come to define as a specific type of political activity that is increasingly formal. Those who engage in accompaniment are called *acompañantes* (accompaniers). They volunteer to spend significant amounts of time alongside leaders and members of different groups including human rights organizations, labor unions, indigenous rights groups, and others. They are present at group offices, travel with members of these groups, attend meetings, and sometimes live with them. Some *acompañantes* provide basic assistance in organization offices and play minor roles in aiding groups with events and activities, but their main work is to be simply and publicly present.

The power, value, and usefulness of *acompañantes* is not linked to a set of specific skills (although some programs offer training, especially as they have become increasingly professionalized), but is a function of the meaning, influence, and significance of their status; a sign of the protective power of their *gringo* bodies. One of the most prominent of these groups, Peace Brigades International (PBI), describes accompaniment as follows:

The presence of international volunteers protects threatened activists by raising the stakes for potential attackers. It provides moral support and international solidarity for civil society activism by opening space for threatened organisations thereby giving them the confidence to carry out their work . . . The accompaniment volunteer is the embodiment of international human rights concern, a compelling and visible reminder to those using violence that their actions will have repercussions nationally and internationally. When the level of threat is high, accompaniment is sometimes round the clock. In other situations, volunteers stay with threatened communities or remain in the offices of organisations, and accompany threatened activists when they travel .

. . The premise of accompaniment is that there will be an international response to whatever violence or potential violence the volunteer witnesses. Behind such a response lies the implied threat of diplomatic and economic pressure—pressure that the sponsors of such violence prefer to avoid.²⁸²

In fact, accompaniment works. And, it works precisely as PBI explains. The presence of *gringo* bodies plays an inherent protective role, not because of the skills, capacities, and connections of the individuals whose foreign bodies are present, but because of the power that lies in *gringo* status. In Guatemala, an act of violence against a *gringo*, by virtue of the very status of being a *gringo*, is politically significant. And, as PBI suggests, with each *gringo* body lies “the implied threat” of a serious reaction with consequences. So, just as impunity dominates the social response to the common acts of violence committed against local bodies, accountability and cost adheres to any and all *gringo* bodies.

Another accompaniment group Breaking the Silence (BTS) explains this aspect of the work as follows:

The people asking for accompaniment are aware of the great risk that they are taking by speaking out about the truth, not as anonymous victims or witnesses, but as public actors with names and faces. *International accompaniers act as observers, document any intimidations, threats or acts of violence against those being accompanied, and quickly disseminate that information through their networks at an international level.*²⁸³

For PBI, BTS, and other accompaniment organizations the inequality expressed by the gap in protection accorded to *gringo* bodies versus local (non-*gringo*) bodies is symbolically resonant and the foundation of their practice. For some groups, this divide is presented as a structural element of global relations to be leveraged with little engagement with the core irony of its power; that it is the very inequality of these bodies (and the related political inequality and injustice) that enables their work even as this is what they seek to challenge. There are other organizations involved in accompaniment, such as the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA), whose Guatemalan

²⁸² Peace Brigades International. Last accessed May 2016. <http://www.peacebrigades.org/>

²⁸³ Breaking the Silence. Last accessed June 2016 (italics in the original). <http://www.breakingthesilenceblog.com/accompaniment/>

Accompaniment Project (GAP) openly references the core inequality of bodies that enables accompaniment:

In Guatemala, human rights accompaniment is an attempt to leverage privileged Northern citizenship against the active forces of U.S. imperialism, criminalization, and state violence that undermine movements for justice and self-determination. We accompany to hold ourselves accountable to the social privileges we hold, to manifest our commitments to social justice through our physical presence, and to engage in shared learning for stronger movements across borders.²⁸⁴

This perspective ties in with the group's left-leaning political orientation and awareness that the very core of the power of the *gringo* body of the accompanier is bound to global inequality and U.S. hegemony in the region. It presents the experience of accompaniment as a personal act of solidarity that enables mutual understanding, the creation of trust, and "shared learning." There is an almost religious intensity to this statement that suggests accompaniment may well be a form of penance, the individual atoning through his/her body for the sins of the state (whose very actions have created this body-centric empowerment). And, woven into this set of ideas is a sense of redemption, of offsetting one's structurally constructed privilege by powerfully linking the personal and the political, solely through the movement of the *gringo* body from one place (the U.S, or other western country) to another place (contested and dangerous sites in Guatemala such as the offices of human rights and other advocacy groups).

Certainly I, and so many others who have worked in Guatemala, have had the experience of visiting a local organization's office and coming across a notably distinct person – a tall blonde Swede, Canadian, Dutch, American or other *gringo/gringa* – alongside a group of indigenous women in *traje*, a labor leader, or a team of local human rights activists. While the specific *acompañantes* I encountered differed in style, attitude, and engagement with their mission, they often came across as oddly prideful

²⁸⁴ David Imhoff, former GAP accompanier quoted in NISGUA, "Guatemala Accompaniment Project" brochure. Last accessed May 2016. <http://nisgua.org.greenhostpreview.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GAPBrochure.pdf>

and empowered, a quite clear and often non-ironic embrace of the essentialized power and protection of *gringo* status in Guatemala. Perhaps this attitude (and admittedly I am responding to a subset of those doing this work that I came to know) was the strange nature of this mode of political practice in which their presence and value was solely based on the status of their *gringo bodies* and its value when placed in proximity to local leaders and groups. However, the defining logic of this mode of activism – that *gringo bodies* have special value in the context of Guatemala (and elsewhere) – is, in fact, accurate.

Intelligence Oversight Board and accountability for the fate of *gringo bodies* – Not long after the panic of the *robaniños*, several major U.S. newspapers reported that a Guatemalan army colonel who had been a CIA asset was involved in the murder Michael DeVine, a U.S. citizen living in Guatemala. There were also allegations that the same individual played a role in the torture and killing of a guerilla leader, Efraín Bámaca, who was married to a U.S. citizen who worked tirelessly to determine his whereabouts and engage in a process of truth-telling and accountability (Harbury 1997).²⁸⁵

In response to these allegations, and at the urging of an influential congressman, President Clinton ordered the Intelligence Oversight Board (IOB) to conduct a review of these and other cases in which the CIA and the Guatemalan state were involved in severe violations of the basic rights of U.S. citizens, including the compilation and analysis of “all intelligence bearing on the torture, disappearance, or death of U.S. citizens in Guatemala since 1984, and related matters” (White House Office of the Press Secretary 1996).

The report was released in 1996 and confirmed that many Guatemalan military and intelligence officers that were CIA assets had been involved in planning, ordering, and participating in serious human rights violations at the time that they were on the U.S. payroll. The report presented a detailed

²⁸⁵ Jennifer Harbury described her efforts to investigate the case of her husband in *Searching for Everardo: A Story of Love, War, and the CIA in Guatemala* (Harbury 1997).

review of the cases of DeVine and Bámaca. It also covered the disappearance of journalists Nicholas Blake and Griffin Davies, the well-publicized kidnapping and torture of Sister Dianna Ortiz, the killings of an archaeologist and a Peace Corps volunteer, and the cases of Melissa Larson and June Diane Weinstock, among many other incidents.²⁸⁶

Also, as part of this process, the CIA and the DOD released several hundred relevant declassified documents, and the State Department declassified thousands of documents regarding human rights violations suffered by U.S. citizens and their relatives in Guatemala (as well as a small number of cases involving Guatemalan citizens).

The IOB report found that that Guatemalan intelligence and security services “were generally known to have been reprehensible by all who were familiar with Guatemala” (Intelligence Oversight Board 1996).

The report also found that from 1984 to 1995 many CIA assets participated in severe human rights violations and that the CIA knew of these allegations at the time. The IOB concluded that:

. . . several CIA assets were credibly alleged to have ordered, planned, or participated in serious human rights violations such as assassination, extrajudicial execution, torture, or kidnapping while they were assets--and that the CIA’s Directorate of Operations (DO) headquarters was aware at the time of the allegations (Intelligence Oversight Board 1996).

At the same time, they found that no CIA employees were involved in the cases (with the Diana Ortiz case left open). They found that the Guatemalan colonel initially alleged to have been involved in the DeVine and Bámaca cases was not responsible for those killings. However, he was found to have

²⁸⁶ Nicholas Blake and Griffith Davis were journalists who disappeared while trying to interview members of the URNG; Sister Dianna Ortiz’s alleged abduction and torture by Guatemalan authorities occurred in the presence of a U.S. advisor; Peter Wolfe was a Peace Corps volunteer shot to death near his home in Guatemala City; Janey Skinner and Jennifer Roitman were U.S. volunteers working as *acompañantes* for PBI and were present during an armed attack on the human rights group GAM, but were not injured; Meredith Larson, who also worked at PBI, was attacked and stabbed with two colleagues; Josh Zinner, a social worker assisting homeless children in Guatemala City, was assaulted by gunmen who showed military identification when the police arrived; Peter Tiscione was an archaeologist found dead in his hotel room with machete wounds to his neck; Daniel Callahan, who was filming a documentary for a human rights organization, was forced into a car, beaten, and threatened, *Ibid.*

participated in a military cover-up of the incident and most likely participated in some part of Bámaca's interrogation, which the report suggested likely involved torture. The report also provided insight into the killing of Blake and Davis by the government-run PAC.

The IOB report and the unprecedented declassification of documents related to U.S. activities in Guatemala were part of a set of broad-based policies to engage the U.S. government's responsibility for brutal and systematic violations. Much of this was driven by advocacy by U.S. based groups, but it is striking how significant the efforts were to address violence committed against a handful of U.S. bodies. It is clear that calls for formal investigations and the public outrage regarding the assassination of innocent Americans were only minimally connected to the overwhelming brutality of what occurred during *la violencia* with U.S. government knowledge. The point here is that even in light of the widespread and systematic nature of human rights violations in Guatemala, significant outrage and attention was directed not to the hundreds of thousands of local victims, but to a handful of Americans whose *gringo* bodies were brutalized (some by state agents and others perhaps not).

These are illustrations of the special, empowered status of *gringo bodies* in Guatemala, in general and in relation to the complex political transition of the early- to mid-1990s. While these cases were not solely about "bodies" per se, they showed the slippage and interconnections between physical bodies, legal status, social power, economic resources, regional politics, and all the elements of *gringo* status that are so complexly intertwined with one another. Certainly, while conducting fieldwork in Guatemala, one often loses track of the sense in which one inhabits the lived body of a *gringo*, even as elements of this experience are so deeply infused with daily life that it is impossible to imagine a situation outside of this set of complex and overdetermined relations. And this is precisely the point. This is why the term has so much resonance and why an inquiry into the lived body of the *gringo* is so central for understanding the operations of power and the complex interrelationships that enable

identity and structure communication and understanding. As a young woman in the highlands told me, “the *gringos* come and go as they like.”²⁸⁷

The *gringo* body stands for so much, especially in comparison to the non-*gringo* body. As researchers, advocates, expatriates, and others know, the *gringo* body exudes power and confers protection. It “speaks” of money, *cuello*, a world of vivid imagery and ideas, of difference and, above all, of power. The panic of the *robaniños* referenced the *gringo* body in the form of the unseen, distant beneficiaries of the cruel murder and mutilation of local children, as well as in the seen, present form (the well-known cases of Larson and Weinstock and the hundreds of others who were taunted, insulted, stared at, and accused).

5. Children’s Bodies, the Truth of *Gringo* Intentions and the Compromised Body Politic

The panic of the *robaniños* motivated a set of domestic Guatemalan responses and reflections that revealed the complexity and significance of the phenomenon. This may teach us something about the social logic of the stories as they relate to conditions in the country and something of the larger import of the idea of narratives of mistrust. One of the most interesting elements of the diverse responses from Guatemalans regarding the panic was the interpretation and use of bodies as a means of discussing, engaging, critiquing, and depicting elements of a larger “social body” and “body politic.” Making sense of the panic of the *robaniños* requires an engagement with the complex semiotic power of specific bodies as outlined in the tales – engaging the multiple bodies, present and absent, in the narratives as a means of evoking core identity claims that are relational and play off ideas about the larger social order.

²⁸⁷ Interview with indigenous woman, Santa Cruz del Quiché, March 1996.

The link between the bodies referenced in the tales and acted upon through public violence resonates powerfully with a broad literature on the multiple meanings of bodies and understandings of how individual physical “bodies” exist in complex relationships with conceptions of collectivities, identities, and values. Mary Douglas outlines the idea of “two bodies” to indicate a relationship and interrelationship between the physical and the social as a means for understanding culture and meaning (Douglas 1973). John O’Neill suggests the analytic value of “five bodies:” the world’s body (how bodies are used to create cosmologies), the body politic, social bodies, consumer bodies, and medical bodies (O’Neill 1985). This is an effort to engage the way “the body” serves as a reference point and lens for acknowledging the physical ground of human experience alongside multiple uses, scales, and discourses within which bodies are deployed. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock write of “three bodies:” an individual body, a social body, and a body politic (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1997). While the number of distinct “bodies” is surely an open question, the idea that the body operates in multiple ways is useful and helps explain the profound motivating power of these tales, especially as a means of condensing and focusing moral understandings of Guatemalan social reality and the construction of a political imaginary.

Scheper-Hughes and Lock encourage multiple, overlapping, often contested and mutually reinforcing understandings of “the body” as experienced and bound to social structures and political power. This perspective also allows for an acceptance of the body as both “lived” by individuals in unique ways, as well as structured socially in a complexly patterned manner. Their idea is to theorize a means of connecting the phenomenological ground of individual bodily experience, what they term a “body-self,” with the value of the body as “a natural symbol for thinking about relationships among nature, society, and culture,” and a larger “body politic,” which serves as “an artifact of social and political control” (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1997: 6). This vision outlined a theoretical structure for

engaging medical anthropology, although it is as useful for any effort to conceptually engage the body as multiply construed and constructed.

Like other anthropological approaches, Scheper-Hughes and Lock challenge “the biological fallacy” of Cartesian thought, openly expressing the fact that bodies demand a form of analysis that acknowledges social structure and power relations, while also requiring a more hybrid, integrated approach. While they focus on making sense of “sickness” and situating it within a mode of thinking that acknowledged the body as the site of a complex imprint of social meanings in a manner that requires all bodies to be seen as existing within (and impacting) overlapping constructions of meaning.

The idea of multiple bodies draws attention to a pressing need to acknowledge “the body” as lived, experienced and bound to social structures and political power. This perspective also allows for an acceptance of the body as both “lived” by individuals in unique ways and structured socially in a complexly patterned manner. While these ideas differ in application from the concept of the “lived body” discussed above (Farquhar 2007; Lock and Farquhar 2002), these perspectives all provide a language for viewing the body as multiply constructed, interpreted, constituted, and experienced. And, for these reasons, they are useful for situating an analysis of what occurred in San Cristóbal.

The bodies described and evoked through the panic of the *robaniños* mapped powerfully onto the Guatemalan body politic. This relationship remained complex in its interpretive flexibility, yet with the acts of public, popular violence that came to define the panic, the linkages were ever more intense. The ability of the tales to motivate and inspire forms of violence that challenged the state (expressing a “justice crisis,” revealing state incapacity, and targeting state agents and institutions) bound the stories of the mutilation of children’s bodies and the violence enacted on *gringo* bodies with a performative mode of state critique. This revealed core flaws and frailties within the body politic, as Scheper-Hughes and Lock explained, the “stability of the body politic rests on its ability to regulate populations (the social body) and to discipline individual bodies” (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1998:

217). The body/body politic link for victims is especially strong, suggesting a core failure of the system meant to protect valued bodies (children perhaps, above all) as well as some rupture of traditional boundaries, enabling new modes of thought and action. The order, stability, safety, and clarity of different “bodies” within society are constructed in relation to one another, such that dangers and disturbances, including those presented as stories, use the signifying powers of individual bodies to engage and reflect on the body politic and may “represent a kind of ‘somatization’ of pathology in the social order” (Kroeger 2003: 254).

It is important to not only expand a theoretical engagement with the bodies referenced in the tales and the violence they enabled, but also to chart the ways in which these bodies operated to describe, encode, and structure a variety of social understandings. What made the panic of the *robaniños* so interesting was the link between the narratives of bodies – present and absent – and popular violence on *gringo* bodies, whose special status was so overdetermined that the incident spurred both a political crisis and a set of domestic reflections on bodies. One of the most salient interpretations of the meaning of bodies during the panic involved a series of claims linking child victims’ bodies and the larger social and political “body,” often as read through a discourse of health and sickness.

The idea of a “body politic” is complex, varied, and multiple, and one of its valences involves a series of claims related to “health” and “wellness,” in which a society experiencing profound challenges is viewed as “sick,” “ill,” or “unwell.” Central to this interpretive concept is a sense that the underlying state of disorder (sickness, disease, etc.) presents itself through “symptoms” whose painful nature reveals the deeper problem. Things that are observed and experienced widely – like the panic of the *robaniños* – are imbued with a significance that extends far beyond the specifics of what occurred. Like the presentation of a disease through external signs (a cough, a blister, etc.), the real problem may be profound, dangerous, and even deadly. Woven into this idea is also the possibility of a return to health. Just as many diseases and illnesses can be cured through interventions and changes in behavior,

an illness within the “body politic” may be resolved. And, its resolution begins with an identification of the core problem that was presented through various symptoms.

Interestingly, social science literature presents a number of cases where narratives of disorder are viewed in this manner, as symptoms of harm and illness within the body politic. For example, Karen Kroeger investigated this issue in depth in relation to rumors about AIDS in Indonesia, suggesting that tales about disease within individual bodies “are a way for social groups to express concerns about their relationships to the community and state” (Kroeger 2003: 243). The general claim of the resonance of bodies and the link to a “body politic” is broad and there is no singular way to outline its elements. The term operates at multiple levels and is, ultimately, a powerful metaphor linking the coherence, limitation, and experience of “body” with an imagined understanding of a collectivity. In the case of the panic of the *robaniños*, so deeply enmeshed in multiple bodies, one of the interesting modes of reckoning with the tales and their impact was through a variety of connections between the children’s bodies as depicted, and claims made about the larger society, or “body politic.”

For many Guatemalans, the panic of the *robaniños* presented a set of moral and analytic challenges. The brutal accounts of the dismemberment of children for export and profit referenced a world of exceptional cruelty. The acts of mutilation and the possibility that such violence against innocents could occur was presented as a link between outside interests and needs – the world of the *gringos* and their demands – and a domestic situation of corruption that spoke of a culture of depravity. The tales of child victims’ bodies were used to reference profound ethical failures within the body politic. As one commentator explained:

. . . many of these creatures of the Lord are mutilated in order to use their organs for transplants and other medical purposes in foreign lands. And, truthfully, there is nothing strange in this shameless world, given the increased loss of the most basic ethical and moral principles. . . the traffic in children, tragic merchandise at the threshold of the 21st century, reminds us today of horrors that touch the soul.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸ Ofelia Rosales Girón, “El tráfico de niños,” *Diario de Centro America*, March 7, 1994.

The logic of the stories – innocents mutilated for profit – was seen as understandable in relation to a context of general social disintegration and moral collapse. As odd as the stories vicious content might appear it was proof of the broad societal shifts within which the barbaric was becoming accepted practice as “there is nothing strange in this shameless world.”

In fact, this general idea was repeated to me many times by Guatemalans. In published commentaries and in multiple interviews and fieldwork experiences, I heard from locals that the main explanation for the panic of the *robaniños* was a “fall,” a collapse of ethical precepts and ideas that many viewed as providing a powerful moral foundation for social life. And, in each case, the interpretation was similar. The child victims were “innocents,” viewed as the pure expression of potentiality and promise. Their murder and the extraction of their organs enabled a process of transformation, a shift from a human being into a commodity, an act that could only signal a profoundly disturbed and dangerous social world – a sick society.

Child victims’ bodies and the revelation of a network of organ thieves willing to kill and mutilate innocents for profit were interpreted as a sign of the morally damaged nature of *gringo* politics and society. The panic suggested not only that the ultimate beneficiaries of the stolen organs were *gringos* (or more accurately, *gringo bodies*), but that the exchange system was run by and for *gringos*, implying that outsiders were predatory and that their true nature was profoundly immoral.

In fact, throughout these claims there was a consistent reference to the discourse of health and the complex link between different bodies’ health and illness:

And the innocents are used like any object of commercialization . . . cut up so that their vital organs can be utilized in transplant operations and placed in the bodies of those people with serious illnesses . . . To do what they do, they are soulless people, immensely perverted, bestial, lacking in moral, human and Christian principles. It doesn’t matter to them the hurt feelings of the parents and other family members of the kidnapped children that they may never see again because they have been taken to distant places or mutilated for the health and life of those who were born with a silver spoon and in cradles of gold . . . this intensely atrocious social drama, which is the result

of the end times of the current century: its deformed and depraved culture, pointless education, and unchecked population . . . There is no doubt about it; we lack a beacon to guide mankind through the entirety of this battered and deteriorated planet that can provide protection and even the development of a core character which might provide a means of achieving salvation. . . We are a step away from an ominous abyss, at the point of stumbling and falling into its depths.”²⁸⁹

The tone of this piece, echoed by its richly anachronistic, formal, and flowery Spanish, was one of outrage. The kidnapping and murder of children for their organs was viewed as a sign of the moral collapse of a specific age, a dangerous moment at the end of the 20th century that indicated a larger collapse of the nation and the world into a profoundly immoral future.

The piece referenced the child victims’ bodies as “innocents” that were “used like any object of commercialization” whose value came from the fact that young organs were violently extracted and then “placed in the bodies of those people with serious illnesses.” The bodies of the tales (presented here as factually accurate depictions of real acts) were presented along a health/illness divide with local, young bodies seen as healthy and present (in Guatemala), and foreign, ill bodies seen as distant (in the U.S. or wherever they are sent). These bodies were not only far away, they were empowered, “born with a silver spoon and in cradles of gold,” suggesting the predatory powers and complete moral disregard for locals and their families.

Furthermore, this health/illness distinction was not bound to the bodies of those described in the narratives, but mapped onto political bodies as read through moral understandings. The fact such actions could occur revealed the actors (hidden or absent in most accounts, but “discovered” in the cases of Melissa Larson and June Diane Weinstock) as “soulless people” who lacked ethical grounding. The fact the industry could exist was a sign not of corrupt individuals, but rather an “intensely atrocious social drama” revealing a “deformed and depraved culture” and a damaged and sick body politic.

²⁸⁹ Marco Tulio Trejo Paiz, “Robo y comercio de niños,” *Prensa Libre*, April 19, 1994.

The mutilation of children's bodies for profit served as a sign of an illness, a profound moral failing, within the body politic, both in the country where the acts occurred and as a vision of the country's positioning within a vast and cruel global system. The bodies of multiple victims were read through a moral critique of the body politic – national and global – as bound to the commodification of bodies and their parts. This issue has been explored in literature connecting ethnographic and historical research with an exploration of the meanings of bodily integrity, bodily dissolution, commodification, and processes of global exchange.²⁹⁰ The powerful evocation of the commodification of body parts reflects on the body more generally as a signifier. Where the tales break up a body into parts or fragments that are rendered narratively engaging through their transformation and circulation as commodities, there is a core tension between at least two semiotic operations. First, by relying on the mutilation of the child to commodify its parts as the justification of the predatory actions, the tales reference the non-mutilated body, the body that is whole and yet deprived of its commodity power. The fragments serve, therefore, to reflect and interpret the value of the whole, “an analysis of body fragments must inevitably consider what the body is” (Sharp 2000: 288). And, the calculus here is that the moral value of the child – a value realized in the local domain where the child is part of a family, community, and social reality – lies in its whole status, its ordinary state, before the arrival of the organ-stealing *gringos*. Second, the market value – and corresponding moral bankruptcy – of the child is realized through outsider's acts of violence committed against the whole body as it is fragmented and placed into global circulation.

During the political context and contests of early to mid-1990s, as the peace process was being negotiated, many Guatemalans (especially those on the right) expressed significant anger and

²⁹⁰ For a comprehensive review of these issues, see Lesley Sharp's “The Commodification of the Body and its Parts” in the *Annual Review of Anthropology* (Sharp 2000) and Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Loïc Wacquant's *Commodifying Bodies*, a book linked to a special issue of *Body and Society* (Scheper-Hughes and Wacquant 2002).

resentment towards *gringos* and their influence on domestic affairs. At the time, there were a variety of empowered international forces pressing for multiple “outside” systems of review and supervision of domestic politics; these activities were deeply criticized by traditional elites. The multiple challenges of the moment – international supervision of the Guatemalan politics, formal negotiation with leftist insurgents, and the expanding impact of globalization – threatened not only a well-established social system of prominent families, landed estates, and insular governance, but also the legitimacy of the system itself. Certainly, a move towards popular electoral democracy premised on the universalizing discourse of international human rights, the core political demands of the transition, undermined the ideological and structural foundations of the enormously unequal social order that had long benefited members of the Guatemalan elite. There exists some controversy as to whether military rule during *la violencia* served to enable the continuance of traditional elite control or enabled a new set of emerging military elites (drawn from the middle class, yet profoundly empowered politically and economically by their rise to power in the 1970s and 1980s). The shifts of the 1990s with the peace process and globalization presented a significant set of demands on the core structures of gross inequality that had long defined Guatemalan society.

Here, the term *gringo* references the iconic imagery and intertwined meanings of foreign individuals and nations acting upon Guatemalan sovereignty, threatening local order, and denigrating the quality of life. Generally, the reference is to the U.S. – often informally called *gringolandia* (*gringo* land) – given the profound influence of American policies, politics, cultural influence, and economic power on Guatemala. The political transformations of the 1990s were viewed as elements of foreign intervention (even by many who supported the policy goals), the latest chapter in a long history of national humiliation at the hands of *gringos*. At the heart of these critiques was a deep-rooted sense of resentment that those domineering *gringos* who advocated for democracy and human rights in

Guatemala were hypocrites pursuing their own self-interested agendas at the expense of the Guatemalan people and the nation.

Often, the harsh demands of mutilated children, an industry solely created for the benefit of *gringos*, was read as sign of the deep-rooted hypocrisy, the “sickness” of the *gringo* vision of the world. In an article entitled “The black market for human organs flourishes” veteran Guatemalan journalist Mario David Garcia wrote:

The developed nations that constantly talk of “human rights, democracy, public morality and legality” are the main conspirators in this bloody and merciless international business . . . In the developed nations, many people live today with implanted organs. They say that in these countries, transplants have saved many lives which is true enough. What they don’t say, however, is that in order to obtain these human implants they go to the worst extremes: murder, kidnapping and even mutilation . . . There exists important evidence that up to the present, in our country, the search by any means, for human organs, is common. Dozens of foreigners, Europeans, North Americans and Canadians, who in local registries appear as “tourists,” have been detected in activities that could be linked to the black market in human organs that stretches from the purchase of children to their abduction. These types of despicable merchants, from Europe or North America, act with incredible impunity . . .²⁹¹

Here, profound resentment is expressed, and a link is forged between “despicable merchants, from Europe or North America” and those countries that advocate for human rights, the rule of law and democracy. In this interpretation, where the interests of *gringos* are at stake, no moral code exists and the forces that claim to respect core values are shown to be little more than “monsters.”

Another relational meaning of the *gringo body* lies in the way the tales were understood as expressing an essential weakness (a form of ill-health) among foreigners who consequently engaged with indigenous bodies as a means of healing and physical rejuvenation. While the tales depicted vicious acts of predation and brutal violence, the focus on rural Guatemalan bodies was widely seen as a sign of their health and subsequent value. I spoke with many indigenous informants who explained

²⁹¹ Mario David Garcia, “Florece el mercado negro de organos humanos,” *Prensa Libre*, March 13, 1994.

that what motivated the *gringo* interest in Guatemalan children was the special value, power, integrity, and health of the *gringo* body. Some suggested that the indigenous body was so special that the *gringos* needed to experiment on them to enable scientific advances and that this might explain the organ stealing:

Well, speaking of it all, the trafficking in organs, I believe that it might all be for experiments as science needs to advance and they need *conejos de indios* (indian bunnies), experimental rabbits, that they can use to understand human beings.²⁹²

While that was an atypical idea, many people explained assumed that *gringos* traveled all the way to Guatemala to extract organs from indigenous children because of a combination of the essential weakness of the *gringo* body and the strength and vitality of the indigenous body. Some suggested that the difference was essential to the core identities of *gringos* and indigenous Guatemalans. “Our bodies are stronger than yours. The *gringo* is weak, very delicate.”²⁹³ In this sense, key elements of health were viewed as bound to the physicality of identity.

I often heard from indigenous people a fascination with the perceived weakness and vulnerability of *gringos*. While it was assumed that *gringos* had exceptional capacities to manage technology and develop machines of various (often magical) capacities, there was a commonly voiced sensibility that their physical state was one of an essential lack of strength. As one older indigenous man explained, “It is only the indigenous people that can work the land like we do. The *gringos* are not strong enough. Their blood is thin and weak.” This idea, the “thinness” and “weakness” of the *gringo* resonated powerfully with many in Guatemala who reflected on the demand for local organs.

While many saw the weakness as bound to “blood” and core elements of an essential physical weakness of foreigners from the north, others suggested that *gringo* sickness and physical failures (why did they need these organs anyhow?) were not necessarily coded to the *gringo* body per se, but were

²⁹² Interview with indigenous man, Santa Cruz del Quiché, March 1996.

²⁹³ Interview with Mario V. San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, July 1994.

physical manifestations of an unhealthy way of living:

Everything is so different en *el norte*. Things are so fast. People are rich and they have many things, cars and big houses. But, over there they are weak. They are not pure, not healthy. They are always sick because of how they live. They need the organs of our children because we are still healthy and not corrupted.²⁹⁴

Here, the *gringo* body becomes a site for moral review and critique. The need for indigenous organs was not only a cruel expression of brutality and selfish disregard for others, but it was a sign of desperation, an indication of a deep-rooted problem of life in *el norte*. The *gringo* was “unhealthy” because of a mode of living that, while advanced, wealthy, and filled with impressive things (“cars and big houses”), was nevertheless compromised and impure. As a result, the *gringos* were “always sick” and must turn to the bodies of indigenous people for revitalization, redemption, and life. In this vision, the indigenous body was “still healthy and not corrupted” suggesting that if the Guatemalan public were to accept the *gringo* way of life, they might also fall into a state of sickness, both physical and ethical.

The tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* were stories of bodies, real and imagined, that played off the complexly powerful nature of bodies, something we all possess, which “speak” across contexts and cultures, yet are complexly constructed and experienced in ways that demand local understanding. The tension that drove these stories was bound to the evocative power of bodies, but also to the profound indeterminacy of what was being described. This leads to the second core point which is that the stories are about a set of distinct bodies whose significance lies in their relationship to one another, as physically posited through action and exchange, and as morally positioned in a set of hierarchies that map onto conditions of visibility, of being hidden and revealed. A good narrative is, after all, about process of revelation.

The tales themselves were rich in their ability to evoke different meanings for different social

²⁹⁴ Interview with Amilcar I. Santa Cruz del Quiché, March 1996.

actors, even as they were unified along an axis of social proof. The tales used bodies to reaffirm core visions of social order as linked to competing regimes of value and morality as read through an understanding of social positioning. These social positions were about conflict, distance, gaps, and misunderstanding, such that the bodies described operated as powerful signifiers of the meaning, lived experience, and efforts to make sense of these distances, which were imagined and played with through these tales. And much of the power of the panic lay in this process. The tales operated to affirm core understandings of social positioning and did so in a manner that reified mistrust through the signifying status of bodies deployed, interpreted, and discussed.

I am interested in examining the way the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* utilize a discourse of bodies that embraces a core essentialism, that allows for and encourages the reading of certain bodies as stand-ins for a set of complex moral claims that are reflective of the needs and agenda, both overt and hidden, of those who circulate these stories and react to them. The bodies presented lie at the core of these tales – literally in terms of content and referentially in terms of the resonance of the tales’ moral expression. Bodies referenced are excessive in their crisp labeling, but it is this shorthand that underwrites their evocative power. The tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*, the panic and the resulting political crisis are about bodies, multiple, intersecting, and positioned in relation to one another. And, in this way, the tales and the panic gave voice to a harsh element of social reality in Guatemala depicted in something an older indigenous man once told me, “*Las vidas de ustedes vale mas de los de nosotros*” (“Your lives are worth more than ours”).²⁹⁵

²⁹⁵ Interview with indigenous man, Nebaj, June 1996.

Chapter 5 – The Legacies of the Panic: The Logic of Narratives of Mistrust

1. Crisis and Dissolution: The Events of 1994 as a Moral Panic

The incident in San Cristóbal created a crisis with international implications that defined the peak of the panic of the *robaniños*. Officials tried to make sense of why thirteen armed policemen had run away from the building, refusing to face an angry crowd carrying sticks, stones, and knives, but no firearms. U.S. government representatives were furious, especially since they had been aware of the incident for much of the day and their efforts to protect one of their citizens proved inadequate (even their calls for action to the nearby military base went unanswered until after the attack). In response, they placed significant pressure on Guatemalan officials.

Immediately after the attack, police arrested and jailed fifty-six people for their roles in the attack. The authorities claimed that those arrested were identified on the extensive video recordings or were picked up based on tips by residents. On April 5th, a delegation of community leaders gathered, including the mayor who traveled from San Cristóbal to Guatemala City to meet with the U.S. ambassador to ask forgiveness for the actions of the townspeople.²⁹⁶

The U.S. Embassy also pressured the Guatemalan government and media organizations to discredit the stories of *gringo* organ stealers. Medical associations made public statements that they had no knowledge of organ trafficking in Guatemala and that these allegations were completely false.²⁹⁷ The Embassy hosted special programs on transplants explaining that the process was complex and

²⁹⁶ “Alcalde y vecinos de San Cristóbal Verapaz presentaron disculpas a embajadora de EEUU,” *Prensa Libre*, April 6, 1994; “Vecinos de San Cristóbal Verapaz visitaron a la embajadora McAfee,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, April 6, 1994.

²⁹⁷ “Gremio medico no tiene conocimiento de tráfico de organos de el país,” *La Hora*, April 7, 1994.

can only be conducted under special conditions that would make the *robaniño* tales scientifically impossible.²⁹⁸ Newspaper articles and radio reports claimed that the stories of the *robaniños* were the result of a lack of information.²⁹⁹ A press conference with respected physicians was held on April 13th and attended by Guatemalan officials and others, all of whom sought to discredit the tales of the *robaniños* by demonstrating that they were scientifically impossible.³⁰⁰

However, despite these efforts, the tales lost none of their vibrant, motivational power and the stories continued to circulate throughout the nation. News reports from April through July continued to present a steady stream of accounts of child stealing: “Four individuals detained, accused of stealing children;”³⁰¹ “Three children are rescued from a clandestine *casa-cuna*;”³⁰² “Women captured in zone 3 for supposed child stealing;”³⁰³ “Child stealing continues: another illegal *guarderia* discovered;”³⁰⁴ “PN capture three women for attempting to steal minors;”³⁰⁵ “Old woman stole a child;”³⁰⁶ “Five children rescued in *casa-cuna*;”³⁰⁷ and so forth. The Public Ministry claimed that they had recorded the disappearance of seventy-five children in only three months.³⁰⁸

Alongside these reports, there were a growing number of cases in which local residents took justice into their own hands in response to the perceived threat of the *robaniños*. On April 5th, in Malacatán in the department of San Marcos, seven hundred people nearly lynched a Salvadoran man. He and his family were forced to take refuge in a National Police building.³⁰⁹ Around the same time

²⁹⁸ “Trasplante de organos es un proceso muy complejo,” *Prensa Libre*, April 8, 1994.

²⁹⁹ “La falta de informacion provoca rumores de trasplantes de órganos,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, April 8, 1994.

³⁰⁰ “Imposible tráfico y trasplante de organos humanos,” *Prensa Libre*, March 14, 1994.

³⁰¹ “Detienen a cuatro individuos acusados del robo de niños,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, April 4, 1994.

³⁰² “Rescatan a tres menores de casa cuna clandestina,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, April 9, 1994.

³⁰³ “Mujer capturada en zona 3 por supuesto robo de niño,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, May 1, 1994.

³⁰⁴ “Continúa el robo de niños: otra guarderia ilegal descubierta,” *La República*, May 11, 1994.

³⁰⁵ “PN captura a tres mujeres por intentar robar menores,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, May 15, 1994.

³⁰⁶ “Anciana habia robado un niño,” *La República*, May 29, 1994.

³⁰⁷ “Rescatan a cinco menores en casa-cuna,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, July 29, 1994.

³⁰⁸ “Fiscalía denuncia 75 desapariciones de niños durante 1994,” ACAN-EFE, April 5, 1994; “MP denuncia desaparecieron de 75 años,” *Prensa Libre*, April 6, 1994; “MP: 75 niños desaparecido en tres meses,” *La República*, April 6, 1994.

³⁰⁹ “Turba a punto de linchar a salvadoreño,” *La República*, April 5, 1994.

as the panic, the Guatemalan government was conducting a national census and, in many parts of the country, workers found local residents uncooperative and hostile because their invasive questioning was viewed as part of a larger process of identifying possible victims for a band of *robaniños*.³¹⁰ Other stories of attacks and incidents continued to be widely reported,³¹¹ including a case in which it appeared that a *gringa* had been killed.³¹² While the woman was never identified, forensic evidence and a local investigation suggested that she was not, in fact, an American citizen, ending public discussion of the case.³¹³ Reports of *robaniños* continued to sweep through the country and there were likely many incidents and accusations for which no record exists.

My field research revealed that the vast majority of foreigners in Guatemala (at least those who lived, worked, and traveled outside of constrained worlds of the elite and/or urban professionals, thereby engaging with the public, whether in the street, on buses, or in and among communities) had some story to tell:

I was walking through the market and I had a big bag. I was buying vegetables and putting them in the bag . . . A drunk man grabbed a hold of me. I couldn't get him to let go. He was talking to me and wanted to look in my bag. I tried to make light of it. People started to gather around. I let him look in my bag, but then I realized I wouldn't be able to explain anything to anybody. People started gathering around coming up and looking trying to figure out what was going on. I knew what it looked like. It looked like I had something in the bag that wasn't supposed to be in there. If somebody thought that there was a baby in my bag the rumor would have spread through the crowd and there would have been no way that I could have defended myself, nothing I could do. I pushed the man away and ran home.³¹⁴

³¹⁰ "Enpadrones afrontan incidente al ser confundidos como robaniños," *Prensa Libre*, April 28, 1994.

³¹¹ One rather strange story was reported by one of Guatemala's best known journalists who described the death of a photographer. The story said the death was "a result of an accident criminally provoked by throwing stones and coconuts at the car he drove so that he not only lost control but was also severely injured." He had been attacked because, as a light-skinned *ladino*, locals thought he was a foreigner intent on stealing children. Alvaro Contreras Velez, "De cocos asesinos, robos de niños y valiosas imágenes," *Prensa Libre*, May 13, 1994.

³¹² In Malacatán a woman who appeared to be a foreigner had been killed by several men who said that she was stealing children. The woman's body was discovered in early May and for a short period of time it appeared that the situation might have been an incident similar to what occurred in San Cristóbal. "Malacatán: asesinan a supuesta extranjera de robar niños," *Siglo Veintiuno*, May 3, 1994.

³¹³ "Presunta extranjera no fue identificada en exhumación," *Prensa Libre*, May 14, 1994.

³¹⁴ Interview with Helen W., Guatemala City, March 1996.

I lived here through the worst years of the war and it was the most frightening moment of my life. For the first time ever, I felt threatened in Guatemala. Oh, the way people would stare at you.³¹⁵

We were on a trip, riding motorcycles around the highlands at the time when the hysteria about *gringos* stealing babies started up . . . In Sacapulas we had a flat tire. It was very tense there. We were wary and uncomfortable. People were staring at us and giving us nasty looks. Some people would yell at us, “Get out of here, *robaniños*.” People were very tense. We had to go a shop to get the tire fixed. People just kept looking at us. We were very uncomfortable, maybe not scared, but definitely wary. I’ve traveled a lot in Guatemala. I’ve taken buses all around the country, to little villages, everywhere, and I’ve never before felt that kind of hostility. Finally, we made it out of town and as we left people screamed out at us, “*Robaniños!*” After all those years of traveling, that incident stayed with me. It was so unusual. I had never had anything like that happen to me. I never really felt wary of the people before.³¹⁶

I just left McDonald’s with my son and my *compañera*, who is indigenous, had gone off somewhere for a moment. Back then, he was just a baby. I hadn’t walked more than fifteen or twenty meters from the restaurant when an older woman came close to me and said, “*Robaniño!*” “Why did you say that?” I asked. And, in seconds, fifteen to twenty people surrounded us. It was the strangest thing. I had my passport and I had my baby registered. As soon as the word *robaniño* was mentioned, everyone stopped and stared. They began to crowd around me and shout, “What are you doing with that baby?”; “Call the police!”; “Let’s take care of him right here!” Then my *compañera* came along and said, “What’s going on?” Then, everyone just went away. In the end, nothing happened. But anything could have happened with that crowd. They never would have believed my son was really mine. They were ready for violence. For two years, I didn’t leave my house alone with my son.³¹⁷

So, despite multiple efforts by experts to delegitimize the tales, pressure placed on the media to end or at least minimize the salience of their reporting, and various public efforts by officials and others, the stories still circulated widely with continued accusations and threats against *gringos*.

Immediately following the incident in San Cristóbal, all Peace Corps volunteers working in Guatemala were ordered to leave their posts and travel to Guatemala City. One recounted the widespread nature of the threats and “hostile behavior” reported by the volunteers from around the country:

³¹⁵ Interview with Mark H, Guatemala City, August 1994.

³¹⁶ Interview with Ken Ward, April 1996.

³¹⁷ Interview with a U.S. citizen living in Guatemala (who wanted to remain anonymous), May 1996.

We were all gathered at the capital at the ambassador's request. We all got called in and had to listen to the director of Peace Corps talk about how dangerous it was. I was thinking to myself, "I can't believe this. My site is totally safe. How could they possibly think we're all in so much danger?" Then, they asked, "How many people had *not* received any threats and had *not* been subject to hostile behavior?" There were only five of us out of about two hundred who had not been threatened. So many people had felt threatened. They weren't making it up. They really wanted to talk. They needed to tell their stories. Some had rocks thrown at them, some had doors slammed in their face, some were yelled at and called thieves. This happened everywhere, not only in the highlands or in indigenous areas, not only in the villages, but in cities as well.³¹⁸

The large number of Peace Corps volunteers (Guatemala had a major program at the time) were prevented from returning to their work sites until an analysis of the safety of each community was undertaken.³¹⁹ And, in one community, the situation was determined to be so threatening that officials closed the site and permanently transferred the volunteers to different places. United States consular officials also visited communities of U.S. citizens living in Guatemala and briefed them on security issues, warning people to stay in their homes, avoid crowds, and avoid touching or engaging with local, especially indigenous, children.

On May 13th, Janice Marie Vogel, an American who had just adopted a Guatemalan baby, was nearly the victim of an angry mob in Guatemala City. She took a public bus with her newly adopted child to the neighborhood where she was staying. On the way, she noticed that people on the bus were staring at her in a menacing fashion. When she exited the bus, she was followed by a group of people. Soon, the entire neighborhood had heard that a *robaniño* was lurking in their neighborhood and was hiding in an apartment building. The crowd outside the building grew large and increasingly angry. It appeared that they were ready to attack Vogel. She called the United States Embassy who promptly sent a special security detail along with Guatemalan National Police and Public Ministry officials. Vogel was then escorted out of the apartment under armed guard. The event was widely

³¹⁸ Interview with a former Peace Corps volunteer (who wanted to remain anonymous), Guatemala City, May 1996.

³¹⁹ "Embajada de E.U.A. concentro personal del Cuerpo de Paz," *La Hora*, April 6, 1994.

covered by the press, with one headline reading, “They intended to lynch a United States citizen” alongside pictures of Vogel and a little girl with Guatemalan features.³²⁰ In the end, it turned out that all of the adoption papers were in order and Vogel returned to the United States with her daughter unharmed.

The incident in San Cristóbal and the subsequent Travel Warning elevated the panic of the *robaniños* into an international political incident. These actions further impacted the country’s already tarnished international reputation as a result of decades of human rights violations and placed considerable pressure on the Guatemalan government.

The initial reaction from Guatemalan commentators was typically that of anger and resentment that the U.S. government would transform the tragedy of June Diane Weinstock’s near-fatal beating into an indictment of Guatemalan society. Underlying this response was the extraordinary imbalance of power between the two countries; an inequity of almost every type – economic, social, cultural, and political – coupled with a long history of U.S. dominance. Of special significance to many Guatemalans was the representation of Guatemala not only as a country that presented risks to travelers, but as a primitive backward place “where the law of the jungle is the rule...” as one newspaper article explained.³²¹

Almost as soon as the Travel Warning was issued, the Chamber of Tourism (CAMTUR) began a series of highly public protests. CAMTUR claimed that the Travel Warning was “irresponsible,” a clear overreaction especially when other tense moments in recent Guatemalan history had not produced similar warnings.³²² The newspapers repeatedly presented articles documenting the large

³²⁰ “Intentaron linchar a ciudadana estadounidense,” *La Hora*, May 14, 1994; “Nimajuyu: Turba intento linchar a estadounidense,” *Siglo Veintiuno*, May 15, 1994; “Vecinos de Nimajuyu intentaron agredir a mujer estadounidense,” *Prensa Libre*, May 15, 1994; “Policia y Ministerio Publico evitan agresion a una mujer estadounidense,” *La República*, May 15, 1994; “Intentan linchar a norteamericana,” *El Gráfico*, May 15, 1994.

³²¹ Hector Romeo Lucas, “Hacia donde vamos los guatemaltecos?” *La República*, April 6, 1994.

³²² “Camtur: Embajada de EU es irresponsable,” *La República*, April 6, 1994.

decreases in international tourism, one of the nation's most important industries. Early estimates of the possible losses were as high as \$100 million.³²³ Later, the actual loss was calculated as \$36 million dollars and 5,000 layoffs, which still represented a significant economic impact on Guatemala.³²⁴ The number of U.S. tourists visiting Guatemala dropped significantly (although the relationship of the Travel Warning to the low numbers was complicated since there were significant reductions in tourism during the early stages of the panic and before the new policy).³²⁵ This is to say that the panic of the *robaniños* had a negative impact on the country's economy.³²⁶

Still, the crisis did not last long and the tension between the two governments regarding the panic dissipated quickly. By late June, the Department of State modified the Travel Warning. By mid-July, the accusations and incidents of organ-stealing *gringos* had largely disappeared from the local media. And, slowly, almost without notice, the panic of the *robaniños* subsided and then disappeared. It ended more or less as it had started, departing with a certain slow logic and rhythm, losing its dynamism and fading away.

It is unlikely that the panic ended because of any efforts by the U.S. or Guatemalan authorities (although there is really no way to know). Certainly, those formal actions did not end the circulation of the tales of organ-stealing *gringos*. Similarly, in the wake of the panic, foreigners told me that they remained ill at ease in crowds and often changed their behavior for months and even years afterwards. Many avoided crowds. Others no longer spoke with, touched, or took photographs of children. In the

³²³ "Guatemala perdera US \$100 millones por crisis turística," *Prensa Libre*, April 13, 1994.

³²⁴ "El travel warning ha provocado perdidas por US \$36 millones y cinco mil despidos," *Prensa Libre*, May 18, 1994.

³²⁵ Figures presented in "Turismo desde EU se reduce en un 50 por ciento," *La República*, May 19, 1994.

Month	1993	1994
Jan	13,530	9,279
Feb	12,169	11,160
Mar	14,045	11,294
April	12,043	6,930
Total	51,787	38,663

³²⁶ Entire communities in Guatemala are dependent on international tourism and the impact of lost jobs in these areas was likely significant, especially if one considers the effect on families of tourism workers and secondary economic losses related to reduced food sales and support services.

subsequent two years after the panic ended, the vast majority of foreigners I spoke with were able to recount multiple incidents when they were called a “*robaniño*,” threatened, or otherwise made uncomfortable as a result of their *gringo* status. They grew accustomed to being made aware, often in highly public settings, that as *gringos* they were viewed with profound and searing mistrust.³²⁷

How should we understand the panic’s significance in light of its rapid escalation, the intensity of its temporary nature, its link to acts of public and performative violence, its elevation to a domestic and international crisis, and its dissipation and disappearance? What does this process reveal about the meaning of the tales within Guatemalan society and what, if any, was the long-term impact or legacy of the panic?

The sudden rise, intensity, and dissipation are essential to the very idea of a “panic.” A panic is a disruption; it presents heightened concern, fear, an excess of some type. Its meaning and significance lies in the degree to which it is a striking shift away from the norm. The Cambridge English Dictionary defines the term as “a sudden, strong feeling of anxiety or fear that prevents reasonable thought and action and may spread to influence many people” and “any behavior that is sudden, extreme, and results from fear.”³²⁸ Panics involve intense emotions that spread among groups of people and suggest some sense of excess and irrationality or, at least, an obstacle to “reasonable thought and action.” They are, by their very nature, temporary. The term implies, predicts, and demands a relatively short and intense existence followed by an end; panics appear and disappear.

³²⁷ In interviewing foreigners about their experiences of being taunted with charges of *robaniño* (after the panic), it is important to highlight the complicated tension between actual threats, the possible danger of violent acts (as in some of the cases recounted above), and the widespread use of the term in a humorous and taunting fashion – as a form of fun, a language that challenges through play. In this sense, the term expressed its power at connecting a set of presuppositions and elements of *gringo* identity while also largely playing a role in a light-hearted process of mockery. Perhaps most interesting is that the line between the comical, humorous, and wholly entertaining aspect of a group of children following a foreign tourist through the streets and calling out “*Cuidate, robaniño!*” (“Watch out, *robaniño!*”) may not be so far from the looming threat and possibility of harm evidenced in multiple cases. This very tension lies at the heart of the legacy of the panic and of the power of narratives of mistrust to link playfulness, humor, and possibility with actual danger.

³²⁸ Cambridge English Dictionary at <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/panic>

In fact, the disruptive, surprising, and challenging nature of panics have long captured the interest of scholars who have documented and analyzed witch hunts, prophecies, economic booms, riots and related phenomenon. These are commonly analyzed with a focus on the factually contested (if not wholly false) nature of their foundational claims, coupled with an interest in explaining the sudden and surprising qualities of the intense emotions they conveyed and expressed. From the 19th century on, writers have explored: “extraordinary popular delusions” (Mackay 2003) involving acts of surprise and excess, both socially dangerous and of minimal impact³²⁹; the special challenges of “the popular mind” and crowds linked to rapid urbanization (LeBon 2002); and the “the madness of crowds” linked to Cold War uncertainties (Chaplin 1959).³³⁰

These panics are often bound to complexly threatening ideas that sweep through populations. Some examples include: “the Great Fear” in pre-revolutionary France, which affected two-thirds of the nation’s population for around a month (Lefebvre 1947; Ramsay 1992); the mid-18th century “unaccountable mob delusion” of “the Great Negro Plot” in New York City in which people were executed for participating in an imagined mass revolt of freed black slaves against white society (Davis 1985: 254)³³¹; and a short-lived wave of fear in Orleans, France in the late 1960s based on claims that

³²⁹ One famous example chronicled by Mackay was the “tulip mania” of the 17th century Netherlands where speculation and investment in tulip bulbs led to extraordinary valuations that rose rapidly and then collapsed, an example of how communities, “suddenly fix their minds upon one object, and go mad in its pursuit; millions of people become simultaneously impressed with one delusion, and run after it, until their attention is caught by some new folly more captivating than the first.” Here, the issue of the temporality of panics is clear, along with a sense that people are drawn to the excitement and drama of a panic, even as its inevitable end may produce significant harm.

³³⁰ “The question before us now is – can we free ourselves from this emotional-hysterical approach to the world as it is today? Can we recognize what must be done to secure our very existence in the world in the path of spreading Communism?” (Chaplin 1959: 183).

³³¹ In 1741 in New York City, one of the most important slave trade centers in the Colonies, thirty-four people were executed for their participation in the “Great Negro Plot” (thirteen black men were burned to death at the stake, and seventeen black men were hanged, along with two white men and two white women). Those prosecuted were believed to have engaged in a conspiracy to revolt, although no tangible evidence against them existed. As such, the “Great Negro Plot” has traditionally been described as a “popular delusion,” “hysteria,” or “an unaccountable mob delusion” (Davis, 1985, p. 254). More recent work has sought to address the apparent irrationality of the incident as a situation in which people’s fears were acted out publicly. “New York’s officials indulged themselves and the public in acting out their fears. But they played no hoax. They set out to deceive no one. They simply deceived themselves by systematizing real disorders into a single scheme where all the enemies of the English world suddenly surfaced...” (Davis 1983: 262).

Jews were stealing young women for sale to prostitution rings, an event that “shook every leaf and branch of the social tree” (Morin 1971: 16). When panics lead to acts of popular violence, they are commonly referenced through metaphors of a “social contagion” that “infects” the body politic (Blumer 1969; Park 1972). Here, the idea of illness helps explain their sudden appearance, danger, and dissipation, suggesting both ever-present threat and the capacity for the society to heal.

In the 1970s, the sociologist Stanley Cohen coined the term “moral panic” to reference short-term public outrage, grounded in ethical claims of threat, and often relating to groups perceived as dangerous. He defined moral panic as “a condition, episode, person, or group of persons [that] emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests. . . [that] suddenly appears in the limelight” (Cohen 1972: 9). These incidents produce a sense of outrage as “the moral barricades are manned” by empowered interests who respond and engage the issue within a context of heightened emotions. There has been significant scholarship on “moral panics,” regarding social issues in the West, such as HIV-AIDS (Gilligan and Coxon 1985) and sexual predators (Gill and Harrison 2015; Jenkins 1998; Lancaster 2011), and actions directed at children, such as child abduction and ritual satanic abuse (Frankfurter 2008; Victor 1989, 1990, 1993).

The common theme of this work is that these incidents play off social fears with a deep-rooted sense of ethical outrage. They often reference pressing social issues, but do so in a manner that displays an excessive or inflated relation between the problem and the reaction:

In each, evidence suggests, the fear or concern that was generated was all out of proportion to the threat that was, or seemed to be, posed by the behavior, or the supposed behavior, of some (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994: 11).

While the term moral panic is used in various ways and its implications are widely debated, its outline and core elements are useful for reflecting on the panic of the *robaniños*, especially its consequences.³³²

³³² Within the moral panic literature there are several different theoretical stands. Of particular interest here are the tensions between the degree to which the phenomena named are social challenges of a largely moral nature (Becker 1963; Cohen

The moral panic literature arose in part due to concerns about social changes and fears of certain groups. The perpetrators of the threat are often viewed not as wrong or misguided but as evil, as “folk devils” (Cohen 1971) who are profoundly suspect and morally bankrupt. Moral panics involve a marked sense of urgency, a need to respond to an impending danger. “The threat that this evil presumably poses is felt to represent a crisis for that society” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994: 31).

Key to the idea of a “moral panic” is its temporal nature. The panic passes, it exhausts itself as people “lose interest in the issue or threat, often turning their attention to other matters” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994: 4). In fact, some criticism of the moral panic literature questions an excessive analytic focus on the “event” and its “present-centered” quality (Rohloff and Wright 2010), which may fail to engage core structural issues within society (Hall, et al. 1978).

Similarly, the significance of panics remains a question, as some disappear completely and others lead to serious policy responses and significantly impact society.³³³ Some moral panics inspire and enable sweeping legislation and shifts in social policy, often strengthening mechanisms of social control.³³⁴ These commonly include efforts to bolster state power, including increased surveillance, tougher laws, longer sentences, and similar reactions. Other moral panics appear to have minimal policy impact. Goode and Ben-Yehuda argued that what defines a moral panic’s meaning is not the

1972) or situations in which moral issues serve as a means of addressing the interests of competing groups (Dickson 1968; Galliher and Cross 1983). Some argue that this analytic distinction is not useful, suggesting that the content tends toward moral questions while the timing best expresses questions of interests (Ben Yehuda 1986). Others suggest that the term has been used to cover so many issues that it has lost its analytic value (Miller and Kitzinger 1998), that it lacks focused theoretical grounding (Munice 1987), that it relies on an overly simple definition of “morality” (Jewkes 2011), and that it is really a part of larger processes of social regulation which may be misunderstood through use of the concept (Hier 2002), suggesting that it is more of a strategy of control than a process of social change (Hall 2012).

³³³ “Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way the society perceives itself” (Cohen 1972: 9).

³³⁴ The five key indicators of a moral panic have been outlined as: 1) concern, a heightened sense of importance regarding a particular issue; 2) hostility, an interpretation of an issue involving a clear distinction between us and them, where the threatening force or actor is viewed as morally bankrupt, or even evil; 3) consensus, such that a panic exists when there is generalized agreement that the threat is real; 4) disproportionality, where the threatening nature of the concern is out of proportion with the actual threat posed, and; 5) volatility, such that the panic is generally short-lived, even though it may be linked to persistent long-term cultural concerns (Ben-Yehuda and Goode 1994).

express policy shifts it may enable, but rather the way the process serves as a window into deeper questions of social order. “Such episodes . . . can be regarded as a test for theories of human behavior in general” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994: 4). The lack of proportionality between the actions motivated by a moral panic and the actual nature of the threat represents a key element of the term, such that “the fear and concern [have] a social foundation, a dynamic that reveal[s] the inner workings of the society in which it took place” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994: 11). The sudden appearance and disappearance of moral panics suggest that they are “a crucial element of the fabric of social change” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994: 229). The literature on moral panics provides analytic clarity for making sense of intense, temporary periods of perceived threats (“extraordinary popular delusions,” “the madness of crowds,” “unaccountable mob delusion,” “hysteria”) and provides multiple case studies useful for comparison (although these are generally from Europe, the U.S., and “the West”). In this way, the term helps make sense of the meaning and operation of the panic of the *robaniños*, especially for assessing its longer term influence and impact.

This chapter builds on a review of the panic’s dissipation as read through the idea of a moral panic, suggesting that the intense, temporary engagement with the *robaniños* in Guatemala “marked” society in ways that demonstrate the special significance of narratives of mistrust. While there is no certain way to demonstrate causality or even correlations between the panic and what followed, the chapter describes and analyzes three issues that express themes and practices highlighted by the panic.

First, while the panic ended sometime around July 1994, the tales still circulated and continued to motivate acts of public, popular violence, including at least one that led to the murder of a foreign tourist. Despite the continued circulation of identical narratives as well as ongoing violent incidents, these did not occur as a result of another panic nor did they create or inspire another panic. None of the subsequent events related to the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* captured the public imagination in any serious or sustained manner or developed into domestic or international crises. In fact, they

generally did not evoke or enable sustained social reflections on the tales or their significance. Second, significant elements of public discourse about Guatemala among *gringos* changed after the panic. This is evidenced by ongoing references to the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* (almost entirely ignored publicly before) and a fairly constant set of warnings (from the U.S, and other foreign governments, in travel guidebooks and in blog posts by visitors) which defined a new, widely and multiply acknowledged understanding of *gringo* status in Guatemala. These warning and shifting sensibilities continued for many years, even in the absence of a new panic or a series of significant and sustaining incidents of violence against *gringos* related to the tales. Third, after the formal signing of the peace accords and the start of a new, technically “post-conflict” situation, Guatemala experienced a wave of public, performative incidents of violence known as *linchamientos* (lynchings) that were referenced as having “originated” with the attacks in Santa Lucía and San Cristóbal. In the *linchamientos*, large crowds held, beat and sometimes killed alleged criminals believed to have committed crimes (including child stealing) in lengthy public events that often included attacks on agents and institutions of state authority.

These examples reveal continuities and discontinuities between the panic and social practices that followed, raising an interesting set of tensions about the interrelationships and connections between: the broad circulation of tales of organ-stealing *gringos*; attacks on *gringos* believed to be *robaniños*; the meaning and experience of *gringo* status in Guatemala; incidents of public, popular violence; moral outrage and the targeting of “folk devils;” and deep-rooted mistrust of the state and its institutions. This chapter documents and analyzes these three issues to trace the impact and legacy of the panic of the *robaniños* and elucidate the concept of narratives of mistrust.

The panic’s long-term significance lies in its role as a touchstone and reference point; it was a sign of substantive shifts in social and cultural relations. Something happened with the panic that was new, yet its “newness” did not lie in the content of the stories (which had been told for many years)

or the tensions it raised (anger at inequality, complex presentations of identity, resentment towards *gringos*). Instead, it inaugurated new modes of social action through links between the tales and the public, the popular violence they enabled and evoked, multiple aspects of the lived experience, and expressed acts of public outrage at the core failings of governance and social order.

The panic of the *robaniños* “revealed the inner workings of the society in which it took place” and expressed “a crucial element of the fabric of social change,” serving as a moment whose “strangeness” and “surprise” were multiply and continually referenced. Much of this study has involved linking ethnographic and archival research to describe the panic as composed of the interrelationship of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*, their widespread circulation, and their role in inspiring acts of public, popular violence, which produced a political crisis and then dissipated, leaving elements of a lasting impact. Fully engaging this argument and understanding what occurred requires viewing the events as *a narratively driven moral panic* grounded in the specific *narrative form* and *narrative operation* of the organ-stealing *gringos* – one example of the larger phenomenon of narratives of mistrust.

2. Continued Stories: Attacks on *Gringos* and Generalized Threats

The panic of the *robaniños* served as reference point for a number of issues within Guatemalan society and remained present in discussions related to ongoing concerns regarding organ-stealing *gringos*, institutionalized impunity, the country’s justice crisis, and the meaning and experience of *gringo* identity. For many years, the panic remained a touchstone for a variety of discussions about Guatemalan society. It is particularly interesting to review two examples that reveal different elements of the legacy of the panic and, by extension, its particular nature. The first is a link between the tales’ continued circulation and salience as bound to documented attacks on *gringos* accused of being involved in organ stealing. The second is a general shift in the discourse of safety as regards *gringos* traveling to Guatemala and/or living in the country. The ongoing telling and re-telling of the tales is

not surprising, given that they have been told in and around the country from at least since the late 1980s, yet the recurring documented cases of violence (and one might well assume many cases of threats and near-incidents) suggest a direct link to the panic, even as their larger social impact was muted post-1994. And, the shift in *gringo* discourse about safety in relationship to the panic is fascinating because of its consistency and intensity, even in the absence of a renewed panic or heightened social concern.

Attacks on *gringos* accused of being *robaniños* – On April 29, 2000, six years after the attack on June Weinstock in San Cristóbal de Alta Verapaz, a group of twenty-three Japanese tourists along with their Guatemalan driver were accosted by a crowd in the indigenous village of Todos Santos Cuchumatán in the department of Huehuetenango in the northern *altiplano*. The tourists were attacked by villagers carrying sticks and throwing stones. Four Japanese tourists, both men and women, were injured. One forty-year-old male tourist was beaten to death, possibly killed by being hit repeatedly with stones. In addition, a Guatemalan who was driving the tour bus was attacked, covered in gasoline, and lit on fire. After the event, a police spokesperson explained, “The tourists were taking pictures of women and children in the market when someone started to scream that they were stealing children and a crowd of 500 villagers quickly closed in around them.”³³⁵

Prior to the attack, rumors had been circulating throughout the area that *gringos* were abducting children to kill them and steal their organs.³³⁶ The tales were, of course, not new and the fact that they surfaced in Todos Santos Cuchumatán was not surprising given they continued to appear and re-appear throughout the country. Nevertheless, this act of public, popular violence appeared isolated in

³³⁵ “Two stoned to death in Guatemala,” *BBC*, May 1, 2000.

³³⁶ While most reporting noted the widespread circulation of tales of the *robaniños* prior to the attack, some pointed to claims by a local evangelical preacher who warned residents that “Satan would come to steal their children” (Handy 2004: 537). The Japanese tourist who was killed was reported as having been dressed all in black which may have aroused suspicions. Others have linked this issue to ideas on local beliefs about witchcraft, *brujos*, detailed in two classic works of ethnography on Todos Santos (Oakes 1951, 1968).

that it occurred apart from a nationwide panic or any notable increase in the salience of the tales. In addition, the town had long been a major tourist destination. While it is located some distance from the classic “*gringo* trail” and a long ride from the capitol, it was a major point of interest in tourist guides and, unlike Santa Lucía and San Cristóbal, locals were accustomed to seeing groups of foreigners wandering the streets. This was especially true on market days when villagers from the surrounding communities came to the town to buy and sell goods. Many tour operators scheduled visits on those days and tens of thousands of foreigners visited each year. In addition, at the time, Todos Santos Cuchumatán was a common destination for Japanese tourists.³³⁷

The attack was widely covered in Guatemala and received a significant amount international press as it spread around the world through wire services.³³⁸ The reporting on the event referenced the 1994 panic of the *robaniños*, especially the attacks in Santa Lucía and San Cristóbal.³³⁹ The Japanese government called for prosecutions and Guatemalan authorities responded quickly with investigations. Thirteen people were arrested; by mid-August three had been charged with assault and murder, although by the end of the year no trial date had been set (U.S. Department of State 2001).

While some scholars suggested that the incident “received an exceptional amount of attention” from national and international media and the Guatemalan government (Snodgrass-Godoy 2007), it is striking how limited the overall response was given the seriousness of the event.³⁴⁰ International press reports stated, “A persistent myth in some Mayan communities is that foreigners come to steal

³³⁷ “It was not clear why the people in the square turned on the tour group. The square is a popular tourist destination that hosts thousands of visitors, including many Japanese, every year.” “Japan urges Guatemala mob probe,” *UPI*, May 1, 2000.

³³⁸ “Japanese Tourist Killed by Mob in Guatemala Market,” *Reuters*, April 30, 2000. Note the headline which mentions only the killing of the Japanese tourist and not the Guatemalan driver, whose murder is referenced in the text of the article.

³³⁹ For example, “In 1994 an American journalist, June Weinstock, was attacked and severely beaten by hundreds of angry peasants who thought she was trying to steal a baby in the remote village of San Cristóbal Verapaz.” Ibon Villabeitia, “Mayan mob kills two ‘baby stealers,’” *The Guardian*, May 1 2000. The 1994 attacks were also referenced in articles filed by AP, BBC, Reuters, UPI and other news agencies.

³⁴⁰ It is worth noting that Snodgrass-Godoy’s point also references the domestic and international attention directed towards this event as compared to the hundreds of *linchamientos*, which is the subject of her research.

children to sell them or their body parts abroad, although no cases have been documented.” The reports did not deeply engage the core “irrationality” of the tales or provide much in the way of interpretation. In fact, the event came to be described as something odd and deeply troubling, but ultimately insignificant, a “tragic misunderstanding.”³⁴¹

On July 1, 2007, two foreigners, including one U.S. citizen, along with a Guatemalan were detained by a group of as many as five hundred villagers near Chicamán, Quiché. They were kayaking and aroused suspicions when they spoke with a boy who was on the bank of the river. In the end, the locals did not harm the group and eventually handed them over to the police (U.S. Embassy Guatemala City 2007). Two weeks later, an American tried to assist a Guatemalan couple accused of stealing children in Sayaxche, Petén. The husband was beaten and burned to death and the woman was held by the mob. The American was also detained, threatened with the same fate as the Guatemalan man, but was eventually freed unharmed (U.S. Embassy Guatemala City 2007). In 2009, the U.S. Embassy received multiple reports from the northern Petén region “of restless villagers . . . who are suspicious of anyone they believe to be involved in baby kidnapping and organ harvesting.”³⁴² In 2010, the U.S. reported that “rumors of foreigners stealing Guatemalan children have also surfaced in the area surrounding the Tajumulco Volcano in the department of San Marcos.”³⁴³

These incidents demonstrate two interesting aspects of the panic’s impact. First, despite multiple formal efforts to discredit the tales, their vibrancy, appeal, and salience did not end with the

³⁴¹ “Rumours persist locally that some foreigners steal babies and are involved in Satanism and a tragic misunderstanding led to the death of a Japanese tourist in 2000” (Stewart 2009: 204).

³⁴² The Security Website, <http://www.thesecuritywebsite.com/index.php/guatemala-security>.

³⁴³ “Virulent rumors of child stealing and murder for organ harvesting continue to be reported in several different areas of Guatemala frequented by American tourists. Frustration over crime and a lack of appropriate judicial remedies have led to violent incidents of vigilantism. In 2007, numerous Guatemalan citizens were lynched for suspicion of child stealing, and three local women who had allegedly facilitated foreign adoptions were attacked by a mob that accused them of kidnapping and killing a girl whose mutilated remains were found near Camotan, Chiquimula (near the Honduran border on the main road leading to the Copan Mayan ruins). In reaction to unconfirmed reports of babies being kidnapped in the El Golfete area of the Rio Dulce (near Livingston, Izabal), residents of small villages in the area remain alert and suspicious of all outsiders, including foreigners” (U.S. Embassy Guatemala 2010).

panic's dissipation. In fact, they remained powerfully motivating for acts of public violence. Still, it was only after the panic and, in fact, through the panic, that the tales' capacity to inspire popular violence was enabled, suggesting that the panic "opened" a space of social practice that remained resonant for years. Second, the power of these stories and their continued prevalence did not lead to the reappearance of a nationwide panic or even to any form of sustained local concern or heightened public engagement. Even a deadly attack on foreign tourists did not produce broad national responses, other attacks, or the cascading series of stories and responses that defined the situation in 1994.

There is no single way to explain this, although I believe these supports my argument that there was something specific about the particular situation in the spring of 1994 that enabled the panic to occur when and how it did. The logic and rhythm of the panic of the *robaniños* expressed a set of social concerns that – as evidenced by the moral panic literature – was not predetermined or inevitable. The extraordinary salience of the tales was beyond the capacity of empowered forces to control and the interest of multiple populations in telling and re-telling the tales likely arose in an organic manner, even as media figures, government officials, and others acted to heighten tensions. So, while the events of 1994 built on culturally resonant and widely told tales of organ-stealing *gringos* and motivated acts of violence with domestic and international political implications, these issues – the tales and the incidents of popular violence against *gringos* accused of being *robaniños* – were not enough on their own to enervate and enable another panic.

The discourse of danger for visiting *gringos* – While the panic of the *robaniños* ended in the mid-1990s, a key part its legacy appears to be the transformation of the public discourse for and among *gringos* in Guatemala regarding their safety. Prior to the panic, discussions of security for foreigners in the country by the U.S. government, other governments, tour guides, and other sources did not mention the well-known tales of organ-stealing *gringos*. This is interesting given that the tales were

carefully tracked and analyzed by the U.S. government because of concerns of the potential danger and risks they posed (USIA 1988, 1989).

However, after the panic, the discourse on *gringo* safety shifted markedly as references to the panic were common. The U.S. government's Consular Information Sheet in 1997 stated:

Periodically, unfounded rumors that foreigners are involved in the theft of children for the purpose of using their organs in transplants have led to threats and incidents of mob violence in various parts of the country. The last such incidents occurred in 1994. While the threat of further incidents is not currently considered immediate, travelers should be aware that in areas outside of the major tourist and business destinations there exists greater likelihood, albeit small, of such an incident. Travelers also increase their risk if they have contact with Guatemalan children. Adoptive parents, in particular, would be well advised to travel within Guatemala without their adoptive children, or to limit such travel to the extent possible (U.S. Department of State 1997).

While the language contextualized the claim as a “small” danger and noted that such attacks had not occurred for several years, it is striking that any mention is made given that the document does not review many of the other significant risks that foreigners might face in the country (although it engaged some issues of crime and related dangers). Furthermore, the text was not included under the detailed section “Crime Information,” but rather under the heading “Areas of Instability.” So, the dangers posed by the tales of organ-stealing *gringos* were presented alongside references to the peace process, the permanent cease-fire, insurgent demobilization, and the potential risks of “armed groups” that continued to operate in rural areas. The distinction here was significant in that a link was recognized between deep-rooted causes of “instability” and the particular threats posed by these stories.

In multiple documents, reports, and warnings by the U.S. and other governments, the panic's impact had become institutionalized as an element of Guatemalan society and its ongoing potential

dangers for *gringos*. In this way, the tales and their potential security threat became part of what it means to visit and/or work in the country.³⁴⁴ For example, the Canadian government currently states:

Do not approach or photograph children and women, since many people in Guatemala fear that children are being kidnapped for adoption or for theft of vital organs. Violent incidents involving foreigners have occurred.³⁴⁵

And, in its foreign travel advice to UK citizens, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office suggests:

Don't take photographs without permission, especially of children. This is particularly true in remote areas such as Quiché, Petén, San Marcos and Chiquimula provinces. There have been lynchings related to accusations and fears of child kidnapping for adoption or theft of vital organs.³⁴⁶

Online blogs and travel advice websites reveal multiple references to the potential dangers of these stories. A 2013 posting on the popular travel site Trip Advisor reads:

Particularly in more remote areas it is common for locals (especially indigenous Mayans) to strongly believe the “robo niños” (child thief) myth (?). They believe that foreigners steal children to harvest their internal organs . . . Be very cautious about how you interact with local children . . . Misinterpretation of intentions have resulted in a few tourists being killed. I've discussed the “robo niños” myth with locals who are convinced it is true . . .³⁴⁷

Travel guides and tourist assistance sites commonly reference the attacks in San Cristóbal and other incidents. A significant number of postings mention the dangers associated with taking photographs in Guatemala.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁴ The U.S. government website currently makes limited mention of the tales, but highlights the danger and potential for “panic and violence” for U.S. citizens who may engage in “close contact with local children.” “Guatemala is a country with many different and firmly held local beliefs and customs. Particularly in small villages, residents are often wary and suspicious of outsiders . . . we recommend that U.S. citizens keep a distance from local children, and refrain from actions that could fuel such suspicions . . . Avoid close contact with local children, including taking photographs, especially in rural areas. Such contact can be viewed with deep suspicion and may provoke panic and violence” (U.S. Department of State 2015).

³⁴⁵ Government of Canada, “Security” on Guatemala travel page, last updated on June 30, 2016, <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/guatemala>

³⁴⁶ United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, “Foreign Travel Advice – Guatemala,” last updated on May 6, 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/guatemala/local-laws-and-customs>

³⁴⁷ Posting from BZ Sailor, “Guatemala Safe?” January 11, 2015 at https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowTopic-g292006-i1728-k5070656-o10-Guatemala_Safe-Guatemala_City_Guatemala_Department.html

³⁴⁸ For example, here is a posting from 2011 on the Fodor's community website for travelers: “Additionally, be extremely respectful and careful about taking photos of people, especially children. Rarely but frighteningly there have been lynch

The idea that foreigners may prey upon local children to steal them and their organs elicits a certain anger and outrage among those traveling to Guatemala. For example, a Mormon missionary describing his work in Guatemala recounted his successes converting locals, the emotional complexities of confronting poverty, and the excitement of rural life. Yet, while he described the people as “amazingly friendly and kind” he was shocked that “a lot of the people here think that I am going to steal their children because I’m white, but I’m not going to steal their children.”³⁴⁹

On a chat board linked to the popular travel guide Lonely Planet, a number of people posted about this issue in a “conversation” that began with this traveler’s claim:

Some Guatemalans believe that foreigners come to Guatemala to kidnap children for organ selling. Several people have been mobbed in the countryside after talking to children . . . I met a woman who ended up in jail after a group chased her down and tried to beat her after accusing her of trying to take a child. She was only enjoying the company and practicing Spanish with the child.³⁵⁰

What followed was a discussion of the real nature of the risk, the degree to which Guatemalans might be justified in fearing foreigners, debates about the international adoption industry, as well as questions about similarly odd examples of “mass hysteria” in the West, questions about the Catholic Church, a few jokes, and some pieces of general advice. One post summed up the sense that the panic left a lasting impact:

mob sort of events in the highlands when foreigners have paid attention to kids – rumors circulate that Americans steal Guatemala (sic) kids for adoption or organ donation.” Posting from hopefulist on Mexico and Central American Forum on August 8, 2011 at <http://www.fodors.com/community/mexico-central-america/photography-and-culture-trip-to-guatemala.cfm> or “Photographic etiquette is a salient topic in Guatemala . . . This attitude has to do with the widespread rumors in rural Guatemala that foreigners steal indigenous children and sell their organs. Although this isn’t grounded in much concrete evidence, there is a good deal of suspicion towards foreigners in many Maya communities. Exercise extreme caution when photographing Maya children, and do not try to touch them.” Viva Travel Guides, “Central America and Mexico > Guatemala > Guatemala Overview > Photography” at

<http://wp.vivatravelguides.com/central-america-and-mexico/guatemala/guatemala-overview/photography/>

³⁴⁹ Elder Evan Tagg, “I’m Not Going To Steal Their Children,” October 7, 2015, <http://eldertagg2.blogspot.com/2015/10/im-not-going-to-steal-their-children/>

³⁵⁰ Thorn Tree Forum, “Be Careful Talking to Children in Guatemala because . . .”

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree/forums/americas-central-america/guatemala/be-careful-talking-to-children-in-guatemala-because?page=1>

I think that what this thread tells us is that the *gringos* haven't forgotten about this (and other similar incidents), and I would guess that the attitudes of the rural Guatemalans haven't completely changed either.³⁵¹

So, after more than two decades, the panic of the *robaniños* remains a charged and serious issue for foreigners, a reference point whose continued salience is one of its notable features. While the panic came to end, its impact continued, a recognition of the special challenge posed by the tales and the violence they inspired.

3. *Los Linchamientos*: Public Popular Violence against Criminals

Beginning in 1996, Guatemalan citizens began assaulting alleged criminals often beating them to death and mutilating their corpses, generally in public places and often in front of large crowds. These acts are known as *los linchamientos* (the lynchings). The *linchamientos* were covered widely in the press and the earliest cases drew significant public attention, surprise, and reflection. Rather quickly, *los linchamientos* became not only commonly practiced in multiple sites around the country, but also grew into a new social practice associated with the post-conflict era of formal peace in Guatemala. In fact, around the same time, lynchings were reported all over Latin America³⁵² and the phenomenon continues today.³⁵³ The acts of popular violence seen in the panic of the *robaniños* were widely cited as the origins of Guatemala's *linchamientos*.

While fully accurate statistics are not available, the UN mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), with its large staff working around the country, followed the phenomenon as part of its mission in

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² In fact, from the late-1990s on, lynchings have been widely reported throughout Latin America, with high rates reported in Venezuela, Bolivia, Mexico, Ecuador, Peru and elsewhere. For example, in Caracas the rate of lynchings reached on peak in 1999 and there were over 164 lynchings in the country from October 2000 to September 2001 (cited in Snodgrass-Godoy 2006: 5).

³⁵³ For information on ongoing lynchings, see <http://www.infobae.com/temas/linchamientos-a803/>

seeking to protect human rights and promote the rule of law.³⁵⁴ According to their records, from 1996 through 2001, there were 421 verified lynchings in Guatemala directed against 817 people, 602 of whom were injured, some permanently, and 215 of whom were killed (MINUGUA 2002). And, these actions occurred at a fairly steady rate with an average of 70 lynchings and 136 victims per year, which meant that Guatemala experienced well over a lynching per week during this six-year period (MINUGUA 2002).

The *linchamientos* occurred in a highly performative manner. The acts were public, generally occurring during the day in front of crowds that ranged from several dozen to several thousand. After the alleged criminals were apprehended, they were commonly brought to a public place, usually the central plaza of the town. As word passed through the community, crowds quickly gathered. The events often went on for hours. Victims were commonly immobilized, bound with rope, or tied to poles or other fixed structures. They were generally beaten with sticks, fists, and stones (and rarely attacked or killed with knives or machetes despite the fact that these weapons were widely available). Their bodies were often mutilated and their corpses typically doused with gasoline and burned, sometimes while still alive. In a number of cases, lynching victims were forcibly removed from state custody, motivated by the widely held belief that the criminal justice system is both inept and hopelessly corrupt. In these situations, large crowds ransacked police stations, municipal office buildings, and jails, removing suspected criminals and then beating them to death often within sight of state agents. In some cases, lynchings were coupled with the destruction of police stations, police cars, and injuries to police and other state agents.

³⁵⁴ Prior to 1996, no state agency, international body, or local non-governmental organization gathered statistics on collective violence or *los linchamientos*. The statistical category simply did not exist. After 1996, with growing frequency and interest, most agencies and institutions gathering statistics on crime, human rights violations, democratization, and rule of law began keeping tabs on lynchings, often with reference to the special analytic category of *linchamientos*. Institutions that gathered lynching data included the National Police, the Voluntary Fireman, an array of local human rights organizations, and the United States Department of State.

The victims of *los linchamientos* were suspected criminals. Some were caught in the act of committing crimes and others were identified by victims or witnesses after crimes occurred. Others were named through more general claims and a sense of suspicion, heightened by multiple voices and ideas emanating from the large crowds that commonly participated in these acts of public violence. While some lynching victims were accused of acts of brutal violence, such as murder or rape, others were attacked based on allegations of property crimes, even very minor ones, such as the widely cited case of the lynching of a man accused of stealing a chicken (Handy 2004). According to MINUGUA, over half of all lynching victims from 1996 through 2001 were accused of crimes against property, with small numbers attacked for alleged participation in crimes such as rape, murder, and kidnapping.³⁵⁵ The vast majority of these victims were men, generally between the ages of 18 and 40, although some lynchings targeted minors and women (MINUGUA 2002). In addition, some lynchings were committed against those believed to be stealing children, although none were *gringos*.

I was working in Guatemala when *los linchamientos* first began and I visited multiple lynching sites to conduct interviews, assess the phenomenon, and try to understand the link to the panic of the *robaniños* (Rothenberg 1998; 2008). As soon as they appeared, a flurry of interpretations were presented by multiple local actors, again mirroring responses to the acts of violence linked to the tales of organ-stealing *gringos*. While I did not find it difficult to engage in detailed interviews with those present at lynchings (it was far more difficult to ascertain who committed the actual violence), the specifics of what occurred and why these acts occurred were often elusive and shifted with the informant or source.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ Roughly 9 percent of victims were accused of murder, 5 percent of rape, 4 percent of kidnapping and, in an additional 4 percent the motive involved “the simple presumption that the victims were delinquents” (MINUGUA 2002).

³⁵⁶ In describing her field research on *los linchamientos*, Angelina Snodgrass-Godoy wrote, “As with so many other things in Guatemala, the hard facts were elusive, and the answer often simply came down to whose rendering of events one chose to believe” (Snodgrass-Godoy 2006: 2)

There have been many various explanations for *los linchamientos*. In Guatemala, many that the acts were a “vestigial throwback to the premodern period” (Snodgrass-Godoy 2006: 16) or a sign of the inability of locals to understand or engage the country’s formal legal system (Handy 2004). Some have interpreted the phenomenon as a response decades of brutal repression (Torres-Rivas 2003), core failures of governance (Mendoza 2003) and the “complex interplay of causes” that defined “post-war” Guatemala (Handy 2004).³⁵⁷ Lynchings have occurred in other Latin American countries and analyzed as “vivid displays of collective identity” that “revealed the deep tensions and antagonisms underlying the ordinarily placid façade of daily life” (Goldstein 2004: 3-4).

Angelina Snodgrass-Godoy’s analysis of *los linchamientos* in Guatemala suggested that the practice was not really about crime, but rather “more a reaction to fear and insecurity than they [were] to crime per se” (Snodgrass-Godoy 2006: 18). Her point was that the public anger and acts of violence expressed in the lynchings were part of a larger shift in political discourse towards “the rise of penal populism” (Snodgrass-Godoy 206: 152) and a part of a growing interest in *mano dura* (strong hand) actions. Characteristic of this move was the linkage between calls for a more aggressive set of state policies (reminiscent of the period of military rule) alongside the privatization of security concerns, with the poor turning to lynchings just as those with greater resources invested in multiple independent security measures, from the simple gated communities of the middle class to private bodyguards and the use of armored vehicles for the wealthy. Snodgrass-Godoy’s point is not only to highlight different responses to the genuine threats posed by crime, but rather to see crime as a discourse through which community identity is forged, a mode of setting up and then policing moral boundaries. Crime

³⁵⁷ Handy’s argument acknowledged the complexity of the issue in that the article “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” (Handy 2004: 561). While he is no doubt correct, the position left the issue poorly explained in that those factors are at play in virtually every aspect of social interaction in the country. That said, he makes an interesting argument that policies might be developed to minimize *linchamientos* by linking the legitimacy associated with customary law with formal modes of law enforcement and governance.

operates as a mode of understanding social relations, judging those as fit or unfit for inclusion in one's community, and enabling mechanisms of judgment. It "is something for which we seek explanation and accountability – and how we explain it and whom we blame may be highly symptomatic of who we are and how we organize our relations with others" (Sparks, Girling and Loader 2001: 888).

Nevertheless, within Guatemala, the dominant interpretation of *los linchamientos* was that they were an intense, brutal, clearly extra-legal response that was largely "understandable" within the context of the nation's justice crisis. The appearance of the phenomenon was generally connected to two interrelated issues, a significant rise in crime impacting large portions of the population coupled with the clear inability of state agents and institutions to provide basic security or to appropriately manage cases where criminals were caught.³⁵⁸ The lynchings began shortly after the end of the panic of the *robaniños*, and as the nation finalized the formal peace process and embarked on a variety of broad-based reform initiatives concern with crime and domestic disorder became the most important issue and a central topic of discussion. Newspaper editorials and opinion pieces captured the general sensibility:

People are immersed in fear. The simple and inevitable act of leaving one's house constitutes a transcendental decision....reality has become more extravagant than fantasy.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸ As I have written elsewhere (Rothenberg 2008), one interesting way to trace the link between the rise of *los linchamientos* and the complex interpretive challenges posed by this phenomenon, is to review shifts in MINUGUA's interpretation of what occurred and what it meant. First, MINUGUA expressed concern with lynchings as an expression of the threat to social stability posed by rising crime, advocating the development of a human rights culture and a continued commitment to strengthening the state as a guarantor of social order (MINUGUA 2001). Then, as the lynchings continued, the Mission grew increasingly adamant about the need to respond to these acts of public violence as crimes, by arresting and prosecuting perpetrators and punishing those found guilty (MINUGUA 2002). Finally, the MINUGUA began to seriously consider *los linchamientos* as a distinct mode of social practice rooted in the specificity of Guatemalan society, specifically some combination of the legacy of *la violencia* and the country's extreme poverty and structural inequity. MINUGUA's perspective on *los linchamientos* is of great importance because the Mission represents one of the most significant cases of the international community's growing interest in managing political transitions and seeking to influence democratic consolidation following the formal cessation of an internal armed conflict. And, through this shift in understandings, one sees elements of why the issues raised by the panic of the *robaniños* were so central to making sense of popular action. Seeking to understand these acts solely through the lens of a reasoned response to governance fails to grasp the deep-rooted concerns, fears, and experiences of those drawn to these acts. It is through the complexly challenging performative nature of the violence enacted in the *linchamientos* that their power lies.

³⁵⁹ Carolina Vasquez Araya, "El miedo," *Prensa Libre*. March 23, 1996.

We are at the beginning of a threatening and asphyxiating spiral that promises to increasingly deny people's right to live in peace.³⁶⁰

Never before in the history of Guatemala have we lived with so much fear and insecurity as a result of the uncontrollable wave of kidnappings, assaults, robberies, rapes, and so many other crimes.³⁶¹

As such, Guatemala's transitional and "post-conflict" experience was intimately bound to an overwhelming sense of insecurity, such that the open promises of peace appeared illusory and insubstantial. While Guatemala's situation may have been especially serious, the situation mirrored that of many other nations, where the cessation of political conflict was accompanied by a severely heightened concern for crime and internal security; an issue that was (and remains) especially salient in Latin America, and particularly significant throughout Central America.

The appearance of *los linchamientos* in Guatemala was widely linked to the incidents in Santa Lucía and San Cristóbal in that those cases were understood to be antecedents of the subsequent wave of popular, retributive acts. Much reporting and discussion of the acts of violence linked to the panic of the *robaniños* described these incidents as *linchamientos* (or, in the case of Santa Lucía, as an "attempted lynching"), so the term had already gained traction as a concept to name emerging forms of collective action. In addition, there were many key similarities in the structure and logic of what occurred and in the themes expressed and their social significance. This was evidenced in the discourse surrounding these acts and especially the refrain – voiced equally and similarly in the panic of the *robaniños* and in the *linchamientos* – that the community's safety and security required "taking justice into [their] own hands."

The violence inspired by the panic of the *robaniños* and *los linchamientos* occurred in highly popular spaces – the town square, main streets, in front of state institutions – and before hundreds, if

³⁶⁰ Editorial staff, "Violencia para aplacar la violencia," *Prensa Libre*. January 27, 1996.

³⁶¹ Rodrigo Castillo Del Carmen, "El negocio de la violencia, una plaga apocalíptica," *Prensa Libre*, October 18, 1996.

not thousands, of community members. Both cases involved generally lengthy processes, sometimes (as in San Cristóbal) a series of escalating events that took much of the day. And, weaving these issues together was a common process of the performance. The actions brought together large numbers of people, often playing distinct and shifting roles and commonly linking public exhortations of claims (against predatory *gringos*, against criminals, etc.) whose intensity found expression in often ritualistic destruction, including beating, burning, and systematic vandalism.

The violence enabled by the panic and *los linchamientos* was also unified in its operation and communicative logic. Both mobilized mass engagement and action by defining specific agents that represented larger, more systemic threats. In the panic, these were the *gringo* organ-stealers – identified in the incidents as specific foreign visitors – who stood for a whole system of predatory relations premised on global and domestic inequality and the profound disempowerment and vulnerability of the poor. In the lynchings these were the general category of criminals (interestingly with little concern for the severity of their crimes) – either caught while engaged in a crime or accused by locals of a crime – who represented the larger, looming threat of generalized criminality.

In addition, the two cases existed within a larger motivating context and justification grounded in the “justice crisis” discussed in detail earlier in this study. The motivating logic and common explanation for these acts was the inability of a corrupt state structure to act to protect the people within a situation experienced by many as one of steadily increasing insecurity. The people needed to act and to do so publicly in order to draw attention to the state’s dysfunction and to celebrate the meaningful demands for justice and order. Interestingly, the multiple parties involved in these actions and the large crowds that watched what took place created a situation in which there were large numbers of witnesses to criminal acts. Yet, this served as no deterrent. There was an expectation of impunity for those committing the violence. Even as some participants were arrested and convicted (far more so in the attacks against *gringos* than in other cases), the reliance on minimal likelihood of

accountability mirrored the core critique of the larger system of criminal justice and domestic security. These acts suggested that in a context of no accountability for those in power who were charged with ensuring local safety, those acting in defiance of the system were just and should be similarly protected by a sort of impunity from the ground up.

However, it is important to note the differences between the violent incidents of the panic and those of *los linchamientos*. First of all, the phenomena are distinct in their connection to the reality of the threat presented and addressed. While no evidence was ever uncovered that *gringos* were abducting children, killing them, and extracting and selling their organs, the actual dangers posed by crime in post-conflict Guatemala were evident to all. Even acknowledging the difficulty of obtaining accurate crime statistics in the 1990s and onwards, the social and political shifts enabled by the peace process and its aftermath led to a universally accepted understanding that crime of all types was rising markedly. And, given the incapacity and corruption of the state security and legal systems, it was rarely worth the trouble for Guatemalans to report crimes they experienced.³⁶² Still, crime was widely viewed as a core issue throughout the country and, unlike the panic of the *robaniños*, many Guatemalans could detail specific examples of their direct victimization by criminals. So, even as specific instances of lynchings might be based on limited and/or inaccurate information, the generalized rage and resentment in response to crime was based on clear, accurate, and verifiable experiences.

This leads to the most significant difference for the issue at hand. While *los linchamientos* were a generalized set of acts of public, popular violence in response to wide-spread sensibilities of fear in relation to crime, the panic of the *robaniños* was a *narratively based social phenomenon*, a moral panic grounded in the specific motivational power of stories. In many ways, the rise of *los linchamientos* as a

³⁶² “Violent criminal activity has been a problem in Guatemala for years...The police force is young, inexperienced, and under-funded, and the judicial system is weak, overcrowded, and inefficient. Criminals...know that there is little chance they will be caught and punished for their crimes” (U.S. State Department 2002).

core legacy of what occurred in 1994 highlights the special role, meaning, and significance of the tales' narrative form and the narrative operation of the panic.

4. The “Success” of the Panic of the *Robaniños*: Engaging Narrative Form and Narrative Operation

The moral panic of the *robaniños* was strikingly successful. By that, I mean that it provided a powerfully evocative and compelling moment that explained elements of the lived experience of Guatemalan society in a critical manner, capturing the popular imagination in three interrelated ways. First, the panic provided an opportunity and a mechanism for countless Guatemalans to voice their disappointment, fear, anger, and rage at the lived experience of violence, inequality and institutionalized impunity. Second, the panic's rapid spread throughout the country and its ability to motivate acts of public, popular violence created a political crisis that forced empowered entities – the state, domestic elites, the U.S. government, etc. – to pay attention and to take seriously the potential power of those on the margins of formal politics. And, third, the panic left a legacy that impacted Guatemala by opening up new possibilities for popular action, thereby challenging in a variety of ways the safety, certitude, and confidence of empowered actors.

While the events stimulated and enabled by the panic displayed elements of classic, political protest – crowds milling about, clamoring to be heard, and advocating for action before unresponsive authorities – they also defined a space apart from classic state response and repression because they were based on the dangers posed by a threat that lacked factual grounding. The panic raised questions about how we should understand the success of a narratively grounded moral panic. Understanding the panic of the *robaniños* from this perspective requires examining their narrative form and operation and revisiting the complex status of stories as tools and mechanisms through which people explain social relations, social structure, and society in general.

Narrative lies at the center of human existence, society, and culture. Humans are often referred to as “storytelling animals” (MacIntyre 1997; Gottschall 2012), and narrative is viewed as a foundational element of human existence and one of our “primary cognitive instruments” (Mink 1978: 131). Narratives and stories are widely viewed as a central means for engaging, constructing, interpreting, and forging social reality, enabling order and coherence within a flow of complex events and experiences (Ochs and Capps 2001), such that “human beings think, perceive, imagine, and make moral choices according to narrative structure” (Sarbin 1986: 8). The creation, telling, re-telling, and analysis of stories is at the heart of human existence, such that the “all-informing process of *narrative*” is “the central function or instance of the human mind” (Jameson 1982: 13). Narrative is commonly seen as central to human experience and social practice. “We tell ourselves stories in order to live” (Didion 1979:11). And some suggest the process of creating and consuming narratives defines our very sense of existence. “We *are* the stories that we tell (McAdams 1993: 5).³⁶³

As Charles Tilly articulated, stories are an essential means through which members of society understand their world, yet a reliance on narrative for this purpose presents a set of core tensions that he terms “the trouble with stories” (Tilly 2002: 25). For Tilly, stories and storytelling are embedded in the ways people craft and manage dominant explanations of society:

People package arguments in stories, reply to queries by means of stories, challenge each other’s stories, modify or amplify their stories as the flow of conversation dictates, and sometimes even construct collective stories for presentation to third parties (Tilly 2002: 9).

³⁶³ Because narrative is a general term used represent many semiotic mechanisms, it tends towards broad definitions. “As soon as we follow a subject with a verb, there is a good chance we are engaged in narrative discourse” (Abbot 2008: 1). In fact, even for narratologists distinguishing between what is and is not narrative is widely understood as complex. “Not everything ‘is’ narrative, but practically everything in culture has a narrative aspect to it, or at least, can be perceived or interpreted as narrative” (Bal 2009: 223). Narrative is a term so potentially broad that its use may lead us away from analytic clarity, possibly even towards claims that approach explanatory incoherence. After all, if narrative is at the core of everything we know, then it may as well mean little in terms of unpacking complex social behavior.

He views storytelling as powerful and necessary, but also complex in the multiple ways that narratives operate to do the “work of explaining social processes:”

First, in the available evidence about social processes, which commonly arise in the form of stories people tell about themselves or others and therefore requires unpacking;
Second, in the social behavior to be explained, which often features storytelling and responses to it;
Third, in prevailing explanations by participants, observers, and analysts, which likewise borrow the conventions of storytelling (Tilly 2002: x-xi).

Tilly suggests that these processes reveal storytelling as complex, misleading and potentially dangerous, even as they are unavoidable. He explores this tension by outlining a distinction between “standard stories” and “superior stories.” For Tilly, standard stories are dominant social mechanisms composed of a limited number of characters acting in set ways with clear agency and with only minimal engagement with the richness and nuance of context. Standard stories are crisp, focused, and provide an interpretive schema that explains social processes in a simplified manner – they involve “self-motivated actors in delimited time and space, conscious actions that cause most or all of the significant effects” (Tilly 2002: 28). They are useful for many forms of social practice but deeply problematic in terms of understanding society and developing meaningful responses to substantive challenges.³⁶⁴

He suggests that an alternate to these dominant stories is what he terms “superior stories” (Tilly 2002: 40), which serve as a template for “how to confront storytelling” (Tilly 2002: 35). These stories are more accurate and more useful in that they identify “the actual causal structure of social processes” which “usually contradicts the logical and causal structure of standard stories” (Tilly 2002: 39). Tilly’s point is entirely sensible from the perspective of policymakers seeking to craft responses to social issues or challenges that are more likely to address a problem. It is an argument for the

³⁶⁴ His examples include the accounts juries construct to assess defendants’ liabilities, explanations for what happened in a serious accident, and “how bosses and workers reply to the question, ‘Why don’t you folks ever hire any Xs?’” (Tilly 2002: 27).

liberational value not only of policy-making based on clear arguments and good data, but of an enhanced society that internalizes more complex and more accurate understandings of itself.³⁶⁵ While Tilly acknowledges the need for standard stories, his defining analytic approach involves a certain interpretive danger with widely told tales that can oversimplify the complexity of social reality and guide broad-based thought and action.³⁶⁶ The divide between standard stories and superior stories mirrors classically rationalist understandings of storytelling as this relates to complex social problems, highlighting the value of better data and more sophisticated, expert analyses to enable more appropriate and more “true” engagements with complex social challenges.

Tilly’s critique of standard stories and his embrace of superior stories provides a useful reference point for an evaluation of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*. The tales appear more or less as standard stories. They have few characters, are simple in overall structure, are focused, and only minimally engage context while referencing complex social operations (inequality, structural violence, global systems of exchange, etc.). In this sense, while their power and appeal arises from engaging the “work of explaining social processes,” they do so at the expense of detail, nuance, history, and sophisticated analysis. More to the point, they are not only unverifiable and factually inaccurate, but are resistant to precisely the sort of inquiry and rigor provided by superior stories.

Yet, Tilly’s critique – while a powerful defense of the value of social science to improve robust understandings of society – fails to engage the issue at hand. The idea of narratives of mistrust seeks to name a process that Tilly’s dichotomy (and much scholarly analysis) fails to consider. The tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* do not fail in their lack of complex characters and actions or through an

³⁶⁵ Not surprisingly, Tilly suggests that this is a process of societal advance via the social sciences. “Thus, the superior story makes a contribution to the teaching of social science as enlightenment” (Tilly 2002: 40).

³⁶⁶ For example, one can imagine how a “standard story” response to why minorities are not hired would fail to consider key aspects of a complex and contested social context that defines the very categories under question, an example Tilly uses.

inadequate engagement with context; rather, these elements provide a deeper, more emotionally resonant interpretation and a more powerfully evocative naming of social reality. While their narrative form is simple and limited – in fact, they are simpler and more limited than Tilly’s “standard story” – these qualities allow for a mode of focusing, concentration, and narrative structuring. This is the key to their “success” that lies at the heart of the vibrancy of the panic.

The storytelling enabled by narratives of mistrust, such as the tales of the *gringo* organ stealers, creates modes of social interpretation of great complexity and power that exist *in direct tension and contradiction* to the terms of the “superior story” as defined by Tilly. The subject of the tales and their success requires moving beyond a reading of the stories as a presentation of content (the discovery of the mutilated bodies of children missing organs) and towards an embrace of the complex signifying nature of their status as narratives whose simple form encodes and expresses complex elements of lived experience. The true subject of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* – their narrative form and operation – is “mistrust” – a core social relation widely experienced in multiple and diffuse ways – as expressed both in the tales’ narrative form and operation.

To make sense of this process it is useful to explore the core distinction within narrative theory between story (content, the chronological sequence of events and narrative elements) and discourse (or the mode of presenting these events), ideas that correspond to the formalist categories of *fabula* (story material) and *sjuzhet* (plot or telling) (Propp 1968). This distinction draws attention to how narrative operates to organize content into a process of unfolding and/or telling which together comprise what is sometimes termed “narrative discourse” (Culler 1981).³⁶⁷ While there is significant debate as to the complexity of separating or prioritizing elements of a larger, integrated entity (Bakhtin 1981; Bruner 1990; Derrida 1978), identifying the distinction between story and discourse highlights

³⁶⁷ The terminology in narrative theory is complex because while there is significant overlap in core concepts, multiple key terms are used by theorists in distinct and, at times, contradictory ways.

the logic and operation of narrative as not only communicating information, but structuring understanding through processes that enable complex and emotive responses.

The content of a tale involves various elements, including events (or “actions”) and a set of entities (character(s), location(s) and other “existents”).³⁶⁸ In the case of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*, the content was clipped, minimal, and constrained, as outlined earlier. Specifically the tales’ content always involved three core elements: an action/event in which a mutilated child’s corpse with missing organs was discovered; a character in the form of the individual who made the discovery (sometimes identified in general terms, yet always impossible to identify and verify); and another character in the form of the child victim about whom little to nothing was presented (gender, age or descriptors such as type of clothing, hair color, etc.). The tales always implied, but never described the key actions/events that defined the horror and outrage of what was communicated in the stories: the abduction, murder, and mutilation of the child victim. In addition, the tales never described the central characters responsible for these acts of violence whose absence of morality lies at the heart of the stories’ motivating power.

The tales sometimes described other significant elements. These included locations, which were always sites that were public enough that an abandoned corpse would be discovered (a road, bridge, or farm, as opposed to a remote area like the middle of a forest), yet isolated enough that a body could be left with the likelihood that there would be no witnesses (never a town square or a street in a crowded neighborhood). Some tales made specific reference to the child’s particular organs (liver, kidney, eyes, etc.), which were known by their absence and represented a key piece of information that motivated the tales’ emotive power. Many examples of the tales referenced notes in English and/or amounts of money (generally in U.S. dollars) attached to the victims’ bodies. These

³⁶⁸ *Fabula* is “material or content that is worked into a story, has been defined as a series of events” (Bal 2009:7).

were presented as a mode of completing the story (“Thanks for the organs”) or highlighting the business-like quality of the act from the perspective of the perpetrators (“This is for the funeral”).

Table 4 Narrative Form of the Tales of the Organ-Stealing *Gringos*

<u>Material/content</u>	<u>Always described</u>	<u>Sometimes described</u>	<u>Always implied</u>
<u>Events</u>			
Discovery of child’s corpse	X		
Killing/mutilation/extraction of organs			X
<u>Characters</u>			
Discoverer	X		
Child victim	X		
Victimizer(s)			X
<u>Location</u>			
		X	
<u>Other story elements</u>			
Missing organs	X		
Notes attached to child’s corpse, often in English		X	
Money attached to child’s corpse, often in U.S. dollars		X	

The tales’ crisp, minimalist content communicated a sense of moral outrage by presenting the described action – the discovery of the child’s corpse – in a simply stated fashion while not detailing the most emotionally charged elements – the victimizers and the acts of violence.

In other words, the tales, as told, were incomplete. Their elements did not provide enough of the story’s content for it to be rendered sensible as presented. The tales demanded additional explanatory information to enable narrative coherence, raising a series of questions: Who would abduct, kill, and mutilate a child? Why would they do this? How was this possible? What does the existence of this brutal practice say about society? In other words, what was most important within the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* was not only what was said, but what was unsaid. Completing

the tales' content, then, was bound to the process of discourse, the mode of presenting the content, the unfolding and/or telling of the tales. This process can be understood in a variety of ways, bound to specifics of the particular communicative act – that is, who was the “author” engaged in telling/writing (in the case of news) and who was the “audience” involved with listening/reading. And all instances required a process through which those involved played an active role in “filling in” what was missing from the tales' limited content. This type of incomplete or partial narrative could lend itself to misunderstanding, incoherence, and a wide array of interpretations, creating the possibility of confusion. Yet, this is not what happened. Not only were these stories understood coherently by all (or at least large portions of Guatemalan society), the process of telling the tales was highly successful in terms of connecting those who circulated the tales. In fact, it was the creative operation of completing what was suggested by the tales' content that defined the richness of the communicative process, infusing it with value, salience, and meaning.

The telling of the tales (presentation, discourse, *sjuzet*, plot), its narrative operation, required the listener/reader to imagine and re-construct understandings of what was necessary for the tale to be rendered sensible. That is, the key act of criminality, violence, and brutality was always absent from the stories' content, focusing attention on the idea, experience, and narrative processes of revelation and discovery. The telling of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* presented a powerful logic that helped explain the salience and depth of their appeal. They depicted a world of predation premised on profound inequality. A common understanding and acceptance of this vision served to justify and legitimize the underlying mechanism of exchange, which involved the murder of children to extract, sell, and later transplant their organs. Yet, the panic's vibrancy was not based on a single claim of this type. Rather, the moral outrage voiced was bound to the multiple circulation of tales, suggesting that each case of a murdered child was a particular example of a general set of practices; the large-scale, ongoing operation of a social, political, and economic system that devalued the lives of the most

vulnerable members of society to such a degree that it “made sense” that they could be killed and dismembered for profit.

What enabled the narrative form to construct meaning in ways that engendered interest, motivated action, and both expressed and captured the imagination of tellers and listeners alike? As Abbot wrote, “The rhetoric of narrative is its power” (Abbot 2008: 40). The set of processes in narratology is defined by the interrelationship between *agon*, closure, and narrative pleasure. These depend on the stories’ content and mode of telling, but the success of the stories is bound to how they create and resolve tensions in ways that engage and interest an audience. The term *agon* derives from the Greek word for contest and it references the idea that for narratives to work, to be compelling to those circulate them, they must embody and express a tension or set of tensions that are evoked, explored and/or defined by the story. For a story to be interesting, it must engage some type of conflict. Typically, this means that a narrative presents actions and entities that evoke some tension that is explored in the story and whose exploration commonly defines the narrative logic or process. Some tales fully resolve the *agon* they present with complete closure. Others raise multiple tensions, some of which are resolved or partly resolved and others which are not. Much of what makes specific narratives interesting is the way they engage the raising of tensions through the story’s presentation and then resolve these partly or wholly.

The stories of organ-stealing *gringos* were morality tales that produced a narratively driven moral panic. The tales produced, inflamed, and enabled a series of core narrative tensions that stimulated ethical outrage. The tales encoded a link between violence and impunity, defining relations of responsibility and a crass lack of accountability as some of their core messages. Here, the implied characters were absent from the content of the stories, but essential to their telling and larger coherence. These included: the *gringos* in charge of the system; the medical professionals at various stages in the process (those required for the actual organ removal, the storage and management of the

organs, and their transplantation abroad); state agents (police, officials that oversee exports, etc.); other participants in the industry of extracting, storing, transporting, selling, and exporting the organs; and, finally, the foreign/*gringo* beneficiaries of the stolen organs whose lives were thereby improved and extended. The overall vision presented through the tales was one of vicious exploitation, aided and enabled by institutionalized impunity within which actors' awareness and responsibility varied widely, defining a sense of generalized uncertainty and lack of accountability.

The narrative logic suggested that those closest to the violence would be clearly aware and potentially accountable for their actions. Similarly, those who understood or controlled the process would also be aware and responsible for the system, including those knowingly enabling and establishing the systems that allowed for targeting victims, extracting the organs, transporting and selling them. Yet, others might have no real idea of the nature of what was going on, such as those transporting a box of organs who might assume they were appropriately obtained. Similarly, some medical professionals, particularly those distanced from the murder and mutilation, such as doctors and others working in the U.S. to transplant these organs, might be neither aware nor responsible in any direct way for what was done. Finally, the *gringo* beneficiaries of the transplants might well have no idea of the origin of the organs they received. The table below outlines this aspect of the narrative operation, the ways in which the implied characters/actors were understood to be relatively aware and/or responsible.

Table 5 Narrative Operation - Elements and Accountability in the Tales of the Organ-Stealing *Gringos*

<u>Implied Characters/Actors</u>	<u>Actors always aware and always responsible</u>	<u>Actors possibly aware and possibly responsible</u>	<u>Actors never aware and never responsible</u>
<i>Gringos</i> in charge	X		
Medical professionals		X	
State agents directly implicated	X		
Other state agents		X	
Other participants in commercialization of organs (involved in transportation, export, etc.)		X	
Beneficiaries of transplanted organs			X

The narrative operation was premised on overlapping understandings of multiple, entwined characters’ relative responsibility and potential accountability for the cruel dismemberment of poor children for profit. The true subject of the tales – a vision of the world as predatory within which the disempowered were brutally consumed by the powerful in a monstrous system enabled by institutionalized impunity – was revealed through the logic of the narrative discourse that bound narrative form and operation.

The tales – as narrative discourse defined by the story and its telling – engaged and completed a moral calculus. This process can be understood as bound to a set of codes shared by the teller and listener. Roland Barthes argued that narratives depended on these codes and specified several core operations. A “proairetic code” consisted of a set of expectations that were suggested through the story (potential closures linked to the core tensions presented, as actions presented create expectations of completion); and a “hermeneutic code” in which a narrative raised essential questions whose responses enlivened its telling and circulation (Barthes 1975). The power and appeal of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* can be understood as the result of a particular link between the tales’ content and the tales’ telling. The tales’ discourse or mode of presentation played off a “proairetic code” that

demanded a response to expectations within the content, as well as a “hermeneutic code” that defined the larger meaning as a concentrated example of the predatory operations of power within a context overdetermined by impunity.

The tales were successful because they engaged the imagination of the tellers and listeners through a process that required imagining what was implied. In fact, the narrative operation of these stories was more suggestive than indicative; they demanded completion through the interpretation of those telling and listening. The tales only really operated when there were common conditions of mistrust, such that the key elements of what was missing from the tales’ content could be meaningfully and coherently added. The stories only “made sense” through a general acceptance of a profound structural inequality and a predatory and violent world. The stories rich and evocative possibilities and meanings existed outside of the content, empowering those who circulated the stories. The tales allowed for creativity and required an active, engaged audience that could complete the missing elements in a coherent and consistent manner, thereby enabling the moral calculus they encoded.

The tales – the story (content, *fabula*) and discourse (telling, *sjuzet*) – created a space within which ideas could be presented with a certain freedom from accountability for those who circulated them. They were experiments in social interpretation that played off and inflamed deep-rooted fears and elevated moral claims, yet they did this in a way that was distinct from more direct and therefore more accountable modes of expression because of their narrative nature.

The tales excised the responsibility of the teller and listener from being accountable for the claims made within and through their content. They mapped and expressed their own form and format of protection, creating space for a critical voice and justifying outrage, even as they rendered impotent the more ordinary modes of rejection of challenging claims. Just as institutionalized impunity made it impossible to realize gains through formal politics, the narrative evasions that made these tales so interestingly resistant to challenges, protected those who told these tales from being subjected to

critique. The narrative resistance was therefore a specific operation of power that served to engage mistrust by embedding a logic that evaded accountability within the tales.

These were focusing narratives. Yet, the power they enabled in the panic of the *robaniños* was specific to the moment and not inherent in the tales. As we know, virtually identical stories were told for years in Guatemala and around the region. Yet, the panic occurred only once. After the panic, the reverberations of the power of the narrative logic expressed in the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* continued to influence Guatemalan society and the ways in which foreigners and others conceptualized the place and its people. Yet, it was not the tales themselves that structured what followed, but rather the social phenomenon of the panic.

While the stories built upon and referenced the very real predation, secrecy, cruelty, and institutionalized violence of the recent past (*la violencia*), and reflected on the impunity and corruption of the state, the narrative logic of the tales should be understood as something quite distinct from traditional political critique. The tales *played* with these themes. They enabled a form of outrage that, while real and intense in its focusing power, operated most powerfully within the domain of the imaginary; as a mode of engagement that allowed the expression of rage, yet did so in a manner that was set aside from the demands of more traditional political action. In fact, many organizations struggled, often at great cost, to draw attention to interconnected conditions of poverty, disempowerment, domination, governmental dysfunction, U.S. hegemony, brutally predatory security forces, and other core elements of the great injustices of Guatemalan society. They held marches, organized protests, lobbied for outside financial and political support, engaged in democratic politics (where possible), and advocated in multiple ways over years. And, many of these efforts were essential to the realization of a negotiated peace and the capacity to draw attention and resources to develop and implement reforms. However successful these efforts may have been in challenging dominant political and social structures, they operated at a level of openly stated advocacy. While motivated by

lived experience and deep-rooted anger, resentment, and rage, they explicitly engaged the formal domain of politics. First, they engaged a public space of protest with domestic and international audiences;³⁶⁹ then they participated in formal electoral and other politics as the democratic system expanded in the 1990s.³⁷⁰ These were substantial shifts in Guatemalan society, yet they existed – as with so much of formal politics – outside of the lived experience and day-to-day engagement of the majority of poor and disempowered populations. Even with compulsory voting, turnouts in the 1995 general elections (which saw historic success of leftist parties) were well under fifty percent.³⁷¹

Yet, the lived reality of poverty, structural violence, institutionalized corruption, and other concepts that combined to create conditions of profound disempowerment, operated with such certainty and force to undermine the sensibility that the formal domain of politics was a site for popular engagement. It is not that there were no movements to join, but that many Guatemalans understood their status as one forged by violence and deeply-rooted oppression. In this sense, the broad opportunities and promises of the master narratives of change – democracy and development – appeared as empty as other operations of power.

³⁶⁹ From the 1980s onwards, progressive leaders, thinkers, and organizations dealing with human rights – whether focused on labor issues, indigenous issues, responses to *la violencia*, governmental corruption, gender justice, etc. – directed significant resources to communicating their message to the international human rights community (mainly in the U.S. and Europe, but also at the U.N. and within the region) as a means of enabling political change. And these efforts were central to the delicate balance of legitimacy and protection that these groups needed to continue with their efforts. For example, one of my closest contacts, informants, and friends in the country was Amilcar Mendez, the founder of a majority indigenous human rights group called *Comunidades Étnicas Runujel Junam* (CERJ). They gathered detailed accounts of violent state repression at an early stage in the peace process and were the subject of constant threats, intimidation and attacks, some lethal. His ability to continue to work, in fact, to avoid assassination, was partly the result of winning a major award by the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation for Justice and Human Rights, which signaled to the Guatemalan state a direct link to some of the most powerful U.S. political players.

³⁷⁰ For example, in the 1995 Guatemalan general elections, for the first time in three decades, a leftist party, including candidates that were leaders of major human rights groups (CERJ, GAM, CONAVIGUA), won six seats (over 13%) in Congress. This was a major historical event, although one with ultimately more symbolic significance as the legislative and executive bodies were controlled by center-right parties committed to the peace process, yet largely supportive of the status quo.

³⁷¹ In Guatemala, as in most of Latin America, voting is required (although voters may vote for no candidates, marking “null” on the forms). In the 1995 general elections, voter turnout was 46.8% in the first round and 36.9% in the second round (Nohlen 2005: 323).

It is within this space that the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* and the panic of the *robaniños* flourished. The “success” of these tales did not play out along the lines of traditional politics, which is precisely the special power of narratives of mistrust. As I have demonstrated here, the panic captured the public imagination of Guatemalans for a period of time. While it was a minor incident in the country’s often tragic history, it operated in a way that was distinct from other social events and practices. Therefore, examining what occurred provides insight into what was going on in Guatemala at the time and why these phenomena are so significant. The creation of a monstrous enemy, a “folk devil,” a devious set of *gringo* predators through a specific set of narrative operations created a form of response that was deeply engaging, even if it was impossible to sustain. The panic of the *robaniños* represented a special form of moral panic grounded in the particular operations of narrative, and more specifically, a narrative of mistrust.

5. The Panic and the Idea of Spectacle

Most discussions of the panic of the *robaniños* and the attacks in Santa Lucía and San Cristóbal presented the events solely as surprising moments of public action, focusing on the use of violence. While these violent acts occurred and merited attention, much of what was notable about the events was the fact that these were complex, public encounters involving hundreds or thousands of people who were drawn to the site and voluntarily played a role in what occurred. The presence of so many community members defined what occurred as something broadly participatory, even as the roles played by distinct community members varied widely.

In general, media and scholarly accounts of the incidents have failed to engage the sense of excitement and even entertainment that permeated the crowd. It is not that this sensibility was completely overlooked, but that the reporting and commentary focused on the threats to *gringos*, the relative accuracy of the claims, and the acts of violence. However, when viewing the many hours of

recordings of the events in San Cristóbal (and, to a lesser degree, the limited video footage I was able to obtain from Santa Lucía), two distinct issues emerged. First, the riot took place over an extended period of time that peaked in a fairly quick attack; and second, the day was infused with a complex mood linking celebration, uncertainty, anticipation, threats, laughter and, above all, performance.

The incident in San Cristóbal was an all-day affair that ebbed and flowed with its own rhythm over six or so hours. It began with a small crowd that formed in the late morning around the office of the Justice of the Peace. Then, over the course of the day, word spread in San Cristóbal and the surrounding *aldeas* that a *robaniño* had been caught. And, as more and more people gathered around the building, the crowd grew to well over a thousand people (which, considering the size of the community, was an enormous crowd). For hours, men of various ages – teenagers, young adults, men in their 30s, middle-aged men, etc. – were pressed up against the building. Boys climbed up nearby roofs and to the tops of fences to see what was going on. Groups of girls in indigenous *traje* clustered at the edge of the crowd. People moved in and out of the scene, talking, gesturing, yelling and carrying on.

The mood was festive for much of the day. People yelled and called out, sometimes with threats, but often with chants that rose and fell in waves and were often greeted with smiles and laughter. Then, for lengthy periods of time, the crowd calmed down, periodically starting up again with new rounds of claims and more agitation. Throughout the day, people moved in and out of the area around the main building, often smiling and laughing. There were loud whistles and ongoing jostling. Sometimes a group of young people would push each other and then run off, grinning; more or less what one might see at any public event.

Still, the implications of the crowd's presence and their demands were serious and, throughout the day, there were hints of violence. Some men threw stones at the building. Shortly after, the same men would turn to their friends, smiling, appearing more like youthful vandals than those poised to

beat a woman into a coma. Even as the threat was experienced as real by many, those present seemed as drawn in by the drama of what was unfolding as they were committed to the specific goal of violent retribution. While reports focused on calls for violence by the crowd (which occurred), many of those who were in the area (including those close to the office of the Justice of the Peace) appeared as fascinated, entertained, and curious as they were set on vengeance.

While the situation was tense and expressive of fear and uncertainty, much of what occurred was infused with a sense of play. For example, at one moment, a police cap was tossed out into the crowd. Someone grabbed it and threw it again. Then, another person grabbed it and it was tossed about, much like a balloon at a concert. Then, a man stepped on the cap, smiling, and it passed along to others amidst yelling and laughter. The act was clearly transgressive. After all, under normal circumstances openly disrespecting agents of state authority might have more serious consequences (although the police were far less feared than military or intelligence services). Yet, it was also fun for those present. In fact, watching the video footage as the camera moved in and out of the crowd over hours, there was a general mood of excitement and entertainment in the air. The camera showed images of groups of friends milling around, talking calmly, children running around, and a man resting by his ice cream cart to the side of the crowd.

One of the more striking elements of the video footage was how it illustrated the way the incident unfolded in a highly public and openly accessible space. There were countless witnesses for the acts of violence that later occurred. The riot and key elements of the attacks were videotaped and broadcast live and it was clear from their responses to the camera operator(s) filming them that those committing the crimes did not object to being recorded (although the actual assault on June Diane Weinstock does not appear to have been captured on tape). What is significant here is that the incident in San Cristóbal was an open enactment of illegal behavior in which the participants were well aware of their roles in the public performance.

In fact, the scene was similar to what one would see at one of the many public performative *fiestas* in San Cristóbal (and in fact, all rural Guatemalan communities) associated with local *santos* (saints).³⁷² These events appeared to embody a similar dynamic. They involved large crowds, often including people who came into town from rural areas, and lasted for many hours. There were always core participants, as well as large numbers of people milling around, engaging and disengaging from the formal activities. And, having attended many of these events, the general sense of the responses of those present in San Cristóbal – action and inaction, engagement and distance, seriousness of purpose and lighthearted play – resonated with what one finds at *fiestas*.

In other words, the attack in San Cristóbal was a spectacle. In a useful literature review on anthropological approaches to the subject, William Beeman describes a spectacle as “a public display of a society’s central meaningful elements” (Beeman 1993: 380).³⁷³ Spectacles highlight core social concerns, tensions, and issues. They are “public events” (Handelman 1990) that highlight performativity and a sense of exceptionalism and have a popular appeal. Spectacles are often bound to ritual and evocative of key questions of social relations in that they “engage in the ordering of ideas, peoples, and things” (Handelman 1990: 15-16). They represent performative acts that are public, popular, and openly engage visual symbolic practices. “Spectacles give primacy to visual sensory and symbolic codes; they are things to be seen. Hence, we refer to circuses as ‘spectacles’ but not orchestra performances” (MacAloon 1984: 243). While there is no set number of people required for an event to be a spectacle, the term references something impactful and significant enough to draw attention.

³⁷² Like all other rural Guatemalan communities, San Cristóbal hosted many public events. For example, during *semana santa* (holy week) at the easter holidays, there were major parades in different neighborhoods, often over colored *alfombras* (carpets) made in the streets with flowers and various dyed materials. There was an especially well-known kilometer-long approach from the main church to the “templo del calvario” that has been decorated for over 130 years. There were also over a dozen *cofradías* who were responsible for different preparations and processions. In addition, at various times during the year there were neighborhood *fiestas* which involved processions and other public events. The town also elects a *Señorita San Cristóbal* who then competes at the departmental level as well as in a related contest for young indigenous women.

³⁷³ In the piece, he also claims that “Anthropologists have been slow to take up the study of spectacle” (Beeman 1993: 381).

That said, while a spectacle may be scheduled or improvised, it always implies a performance, a public space, and something exceptional.

There is a rich literature on the role of spectacle as linked to carnivals, fairs, parades, or *fiestas* (as such ritualized public events are known in Guatemala). The term is best understood not only as a description of a certain type of event, but “as both an ingredient and an effect of the festive” (Addo 2009: 218). It is a component of some public acts as well as an outcome, with a true spectacle as something that is enabled by and among those involved in what takes place. Some highlight the role of spectacles for maintaining social order as unifying cultural practices that bind communities together (Dundes and Falassi 1975; Handelman 1990), while others focus on how publicly performed practices are overtly transgressive and commonly overturn, question, or critique established hierarchies and relations of power (Bakhtin 1984; Turner 1984; Immerso 2002).

Some spectacles involve “controlled violence” (Gilmore 1988) and operate to “literally and momentarily disrupt the semblance of order among spectators or an audience” (Addo 2009: 219). These practices are sometimes described as an “escape valve” for social pressures and explorations of social relations of inequality. Often this is evidenced by the elaborate costumes that mask the daily identities of those participating, creating a public space of “play” and transgression (Lindahl 2004; Falassi 2004). These events provide modes of challenging aspects of the established social order, including open expressions of otherwise marginalized sexuality (Cosentino 2004), role reversals, and modes of satire (Beeman 2000; Damatta 1991; Eco 1984). Spectacles are often highly ritualized and involve repetitive narratives that create and address communal expectations. In these contexts, they commonly invoke “controlled violence” (Gilmore 1988) as is seen in multiple carnivals around the world (Falassi 2004).

However, a key element of many spectacles is a process of piercing the dichotomy between active performers and passive audiences (Beeman 2000). Part of the reason for this is that the idea of

a spectacle involves an interplay and active interaction among multiple levels of those engaged in the events. This is part of what defines a spectacle as a process that publicly enacts core issues of social order, identity, and societal structure. The term suggests a high degree of visibility and a “special” quality which heightens engagement and attention. Yet, while spectacles are a “public display” they are not only about seeing, but “also about being seen” (Goldstein 2004: 17). The spectacle is an immersive process, a public performance that encodes meaning through a broad communicative process that impacts all those involved, even as they play multiple roles.

One of the key elements of a spectacle, which resonates with the acts bound to the panic of the *robaniños*, is an engagement of “temporarily accepted forms of aesthetic transgression” (Addo 2009: 226). The mood created in a spectacle allows for actions and experiences that are, under normal non-spectacle conditions, prohibited. Spectacles are temporary, such that whatever transgressions are encouraged are performed in a manner that is only somewhat challenging and may even serve to solidify general social mores, precisely the rules that are questioned and/or played with in the public event. Just as this may strengthen networks of social relations and existing societal structures, it evokes connections that are infused with the potential for lasting challenges and “(t)his indeterminacy is part of what makes . . . spectacle forever intriguing” (Beeman 1993: 386).

The acts of public, performative violence that solidified the larger meaning and enabled the lasting impacts of the panic of the *robaniños* embodied core elements of spectacle. This is especially true as regards their performativity, sense of exceptionalism, popular appeal, open public nature, link of play with social critique, and complexly transgressive challenge. The acts bound those present with those who committed the violence in a relationship that served to justify the tales’ claims, while publicly celebrating a deep-rooted, common sense of mistrust. The attacks were profoundly aesthetic, although the nature of their visual impact was connected to the imagery of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* and the complex overlay of widespread institutionalized political violence. The acts of

violence against *gringo* bodies – publicly evoked and popularly performed – were modes of social critique. They served to imagine a sense of popular power that would and could stand in opposition to the enormous obstacles and barriers to justice and greater equity. The public events – excessive, celebratory, and criminal – sought to right a moral wrong through the form of a spectacle. The idea of a spectacle, then, linked these processes with the evident pleasure seen in the crowd’s exploration and experience of transgression.

Fully engaging the tales and the panic requires seeing beyond the stories as a mode of presenting information and considering the narrative form and operation with an awareness that one of the key issues that drove these stories was narrative pleasure. The tales were told, re-told, whispered, discussed, commented upon many times by countless people with a level of common engagement because they produced and enabled pleasure. And, this pleasure was bound to engaging the clipped, limited content that demanded creative engagement on the part of those processing the tales (listening, reading, etc.) who “filled in the blanks” and completed the narratives. This process revealed and, at times, resolved key tensions within the tales by engaging broad claims and a unifying sense of ethical outrage.

Conclusion – Narratives, Political Imagination and the Meaning of Guatemala’s Transition from “War” to “Peace”

The panic of the *robaniños* occurred at a significant moment in Guatemala’s transition from “war” to “peace.” Just a year earlier, the President suspended the Constitution, dissolved Congress and terminated the authority of the Supreme Court. The *auto golpe* (self-coup) was defeated through the combined efforts of a previously unexpected coalition of elites, civil society actors, and members of the military, signifying multi-party support for newly emerging and still vulnerable democratic institutions. As the panic began, the government and the insurgency, backed by the United Nations and supported by powerful foreign governments, signed a series of substantive peace accords. These agreements set a timetable for finalizing the end of the war, established a core commitment to human rights as the foundation for ending the war, created a plan for resettling groups internally displaced by the conflict, and defined the terms and mandate for an independent commission to examine past political violence as part of a process of national reconstruction premised on truth-telling. Shortly after the panic, a United Nations mission (MINUGUA), began verification activities, monitoring, and institution-building around the country. In the next year and a half, the peace process advanced, with the conflict ending in the final days of 1996, bringing to an official close the country’s 36-year armed conflict. In the years that followed, significant international resources were directed to the Guatemala to support a variety of programs (rule of law reform, economic development, institutional strengthening, indigenous rights, gender justice, and efforts to improve health, education and other social services) that were designed to link the end of the conflict with substantive governance reform and a basic restructuring of the social order. All of this is to say that the panic of the *robaniños* occurred at a crucial, transitional moment linked to an array of formal policies and programs and policies to

achieve the stated objectives of enabling greater equality, popular representation, and opportunity, especially for the disenfranchised and disempowered and those directly impacted by the war.

In terms of the country's complex and troubled history, the nationwide panic brought on by "fantastic" stories of organ-stealing *gringos* was, quite obviously, an event of minimal overall import. The panic was not overtly referenced in official accounts of this period and was hardly mentioned in the scholarly literature on these important transitional years. Where it was referenced by academics and others specializing in Guatemala, the analyses of the tales and their impact largely referenced their lack of factual veracity and their odd, disruptive quality. There were no focused studies that engaged the issue with ethnographic detail or expressed great sensitivity about their larger implications. In fact, efforts to make sense of the panic of the *robaniños* tended to explain what took place by referencing "something else": an act of propaganda by shadowy forces; a vibrant reminder of "the other Guatemala"; or, an exaggeration of the corruption and abuses of the foreign adoption industry.

This study takes a different approach and engages the stories seriously, as told. It grounds the significance of the panic in the intense experiences and responses of those who lived through it and participated in it. It is based on the ethnographic data that I gathered through extended periods of field research in multiple sites around the country. The starting point of the study is the fact that people in the country who lived through the panic were moved, troubled, motivated and surprised by what occurred. It was an event that was remembered far more intensely than many of the more important stages in the country's political transition. Virtually all of the Guatemalans I spoke with shortly after the panic and during a few years after it ended, viewed the events as "surprising" and commonly claimed that it was "unlike anything that had come before." Foreigners living in the country – as retirees, expatriates involved in local businesses, Peace Corps volunteers, human rights advocates, etc. – experienced the panic as personally threatening and disturbing, often describing the events as more individually impactful than living through a a brutal civil war. The point here is not to overstate

the significance of the panic in terms of its larger historic role or greater social relevance for Guatemala, but rather to suggest that by engaging what occurred through detailed ethnography, one can gain an understanding into key elements of the meaning of lived experience during a moment of political transition.

This study builds on two interrelated arguments. The first is that an ethnographically-grounded analysis of these tales – in their strangeness, emotive power, and inspirational quality – reveals the ways in which they voiced key aspects of lived experience of the disempowered majority in a manner that expressed the Guatemalan political imagination in a cogent manner by directing a critique towards an apparently apolitical target, organ-stealing *gringos*. That is, through the particular elements of the tales and their circulation, the stories concentrated and expressed deeply-rooted fears, concerns, and rage linked to the country’s legacy of state terror, its core failures of governance as evidenced by a “justice crisis,” and life within conditions of extreme inequality. Second, the study shows how the panic of the *robaniños* reveals with special clarity how a particular social practice – what I term “narratives of mistrust” – operates, both as bound to the specifics of Guatemala in 1994 and as concept relevant for making sense of other places and situations where “fantastic” tales inspire, motivate, and reveal. The point here is to focus on the ways in which stories serve to create powerfully evocative representations that encode the lived experience of profound mistrust, reflecting conditions of stress, suffering and marginalization, whether bound to systematic repression, structural violence, or other issues.

At the heart of the study is a question about how to understand the domain of the political, especially in moments of great uncertainty and conflict. Rendering the operations of power legible is always a complex question of representation. Core contestations of the political cannot be fully understood at the level of formal actions and policies, whether evidenced in negotiated peace accords or carefully constructed modes of institutional reform. Their meaning, vibrancy, and substance is held

together by webs of reinforcing understandings and expectations that create and enable legitimacy, or the lack thereof.

In terms of the official, formal politics, the panic of the *robaniños* occurred at an important moment in Guatemala's multi-year political transition from "war" to "peace," which involved a series of formal shifts in modes of governance, the creation of new institutions and the reform of many of the state's mechanisms of ensuring social order, defining and enforcing the rule of law, protecting fundamental human rights and managing core social services. The words are placed in parenthesis here to highlight the complex demands of representation where general ideas of this type are used as in Guatemala, where they were the dominant terms for describing the country's political transition. "War" suggests a state of intense conflict, contestation, and the immediacy of danger and politically motivated violence. And, "peace," especially in the aftermath of "war," references a situation in which the violence subsides and new possibilities of safety, security, and order emerge, redefining the basic conditions of social life as less chaotic, uncertain, and threatening. Yet, in Guatemala, the more general understandings of these terms may not apply, and certainly suggest and frame core misunderstandings and misinterpretations of what occurred.

The political violence that defined the 36-year armed conflict was never a "war" in the sense the term is generally used. The insurgency, in its various moments and shifting organization over time, was unable to present a substantive armed threat to the state (unlike neighboring El Salvador, where even significant U.S. military aid never led to state victory over the FMLN or Nicaragua in which a successful multi-party revolution toppled the government). The political violence that defined the "war" in Guatemala was actually a situation of state terror, a circumstance defined above all by systematic state repression of the civilian population. These acts were so severe that the country's truth commission determined that the government committed genocide against its own indigenous

people. In this way, the term “war” in Guatemala operated to define and re-make social reality, suggesting a state of affairs that largely contradicted the lived experiences of the populace.

Yet, the concept of “peace” was similarly complex. By all accounts, the insurgency’s possibility of threatening the state (had it been effectively armed, well-organized, etc.) began in 1980 and ended sometime around 1983, even as small groups of combatants and relatively isolated communities of supporters remained active until the final peace accord at the end of 1996. In other words during the period of the peace negotiations in Guatemala, there was very little “war” (in terms of an open political contest using organized violence between competing forces) and, in fact, the insurgency had very little to negotiate with (no real territory, very small armed forces, no ability to threaten the state, etc.). The point here is that much the formal representation of the political moment was premised on a set of officially-sanctioned claims that suggested great political change – a move from “war” to “peace” – even as this aspects of the transition was much symbolic as it was substantive.

Nevertheless, the promises made through the peace process and enshrined in the peace accords were substantive and significant, especially if taken at face value. The accords defined a vision of serious social and institutional reform in Guatemala including: re-envisioning the security apparatus; requiring the respect for core human rights obligations by state agents and institutions; increasing tax collection to fund social services; expanding the reach and quality of government health and education; providing indigenous peoples with recognition and multiple rights; restructuring governing institutions, including key elements to ensure respect for the rule of law; instituting national property mapping and resolution of land conflicts; committing to significant anti-poverty measures; resettling those internally displaced by violence; and, creating an independent commission to investigate and report on past human rights violations. As one expert in Guatemalan politics explained, the peace accords “mapped out a radical agenda” (Seider 2001: 205).

The shift from “war” to “peace,” then, was rhetorically and politically positioned within a broad-based and comprehensive vision of social change. And, these claims were bound to a larger language and set of practices related to a wave of transitions from authoritarian rule to democracy, thereby grounding the official political position within a widely accepted internationally embraced mode of representing politics, policies, and programs. This shift in modes of governance defined a regional change within Latin America which, by the time the panic occurred, had become institutionalized and buttressed by an influential academic literature, complex post-Cold War international pressures, and a set of presuppositions and expectations that inspired and guided formal elements of Guatemala’s peace process. At the core of this process were a set of claims about how to enable and manage a change in modes of governance that linked deeply-held beliefs and assumptions with a set of formal domestic reforms.

This transformation was justified and legitimized by the entwined master narratives of “democracy” and “development” which promised, respectively, a substantive reconceptualization of the domain of politics and its associated institutions and a reconfiguration of basic social conditions and opportunities. With democracy would come a government that was representative and responsive to the interests and needs of the majority, and with development would come a variety of new modes of social and economic empowerment that would benefit populations that, for decades (and arguably far longer), had been severely disenfranchised. The two concepts were presented by all of the core actors involved in the transition as mutually supporting and mutually constitutive of each other such that, if implemented properly, democracy would lead to development and development would support and enable democracy.

While the terms – democracy and development – have multiple sometimes divergent and even contradictory meanings, they are usefully understood here as metanarratives that define the representation of politics by structuring foundational terms within which political discourse is

described, analyzed, and managed. The solidity of the metanarratives of democracy and development are bound to an array of assumptions, practices, and institutions that guided formal political reform in Guatemala and constructed the unifying and elevating promises of the transition from “war” to “peace.” In fact, the terms define the foundation of the transition itself, such that substantive “peace” was viewed as dependent upon and issuing from achievements in democracy and development, both to mark the shift and as metrics of the larger achievements of Guatemala’s envisioned progress.

However, both ideas were fundamentally threatened by the country’s dominant forms of violence, which similarly undermined the formalist idea that the nation’s peace process represented an actual shift from a state of danger and insecurity and threat (“war”) to one of stability, coherence, and social order (“peace”). Claims of democracy and modes of implementing democratic practice and consolidating democratic gains were threatened – as ideas and practices – by state terror and its brutal impact, aftermath, and implications. The legacies of the experiences of state terror in Guatemala were multiply expressed through deeply-rooted corruption, institutionalized impunity, and a generally experienced “justice crisis” within which the majority doubted the state’s interest and ability in providing basic modes of protection and respect for the rule of law. And, claims of development, as widely expressed by political leaders, embedded in specific negotiated terms of the peace agreements and modes of enabling these goals through multiple programs and policies were undermined by structural violence and its production and reproduction of conditions of devastating inequality. These were expressed through some of the region’s most challenging social statistics (among the highest rates of poverty, illiteracy, negative health data, etc.) as well as through the numbing constancy of the lived experiences of humiliation, disempowerment, and dominance.

This study has engaged how these enormously complex issues – the metanarrative of democracy as read through and critiqued by the experience of state terror and the metanarrative of development as read through and critiqued by the experience of structural violence – were processed

by and through the panic of the *robaniños*. And, it is here that my interpretation of the stories told and the moral panic they inspired rests on an inquiry into general questions about narratives and the specific signifying logic of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos*.

Key to this process is a detailed analysis of how the tales – as narratives – functioned. Briefly, this involves a series of interpretative moves which build on each other and, taken together, help explain the special salience of these tales in Guatemala at the time of the panic as well as the general idea of narratives of mistrust.

First, the panic was premised on a set of stories that appeared markedly resistant to verification and factual challenges. The power of the tales, then, was not minimized by lack of certitude or clarity as regards the veracity of its elements, but in fact gained authority and was intimately bound to these qualities, revealing the stories as motivated by an internal semiotic logic. They functioned as a victimization tale whose compelling and motivating power emerged from its ability to forge a community of common outrage whose qualities were bound to the narrative form and not the possibility of factual challenge. Second, the elements of the stories were simple, repetitive and focused linking a set of core elements: a description of the process of discovering children's corpses in somewhat remote though publicly accessible places (along a road, by the entrance to a farm), accounts of the mutilation, especially the removal of internal organs, and sometimes mentions of notes and packets of money. These elements directly evoked state terror and the overwhelming brutality of *la violencia*, linking directly to how mutilated victims' bodies were purposefully displayed in similarly public sites as well as purposefully hidden through the widespread techniques of "disappearance" believed to have been used against as many as 50,000 Guatemalans. The simple, clipped nature of the tales' core imagery, and the constancy of its repetition evoked the ever-present possibility of threat and cruelty as well as the brutal disregard of perpetrators towards even a semblance of human dignity, in targeting children and leaving thank you notes and small packets of foreign currency. The narrative

logic, then, engaged a dynamic of what was hidden and revealed, with each key element a brutal sign of powerful unseen actors within a context within which accountability was impossible and impunity assured. Third, the tales played off of a set of claims made about distinct bodies – the bodies of child victims, the *gringo* bodies of the distant beneficiaries of the extracted organs, and the bodies of perpetrators whose *gringo* qualities defined them as suspicious and led directly to acts of public violence – which supported and enabled a cascade of moral judgements and reflections regarding identity claims and reflecting on a variety of experiences of disempowerment and distance. In particular, children’s bodies – whole and dismembered – were used as a signifying mechanism for multiple operations of power bound to a dynamic interplay between what was seen/unseen and local/distant, defining a core element of the narrative logic of the tales. Fourth, the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* deployed imagery of bodies and power in a manner that played off of core uncertainties and a sense of indeterminacy that structures them as incomplete and in need of social interpretation to fulfil their coherence and meaning to be rendered sensible as presented. This core tension highlighted the power of the narrative resolution through linkages that connected the tales’ claims with understandings about the larger “social body” and a set of concerns regarding power, politics, identity and suffering. Fifth, as a narratively driven moral panic, the power of the tales is intimately bound to their ability to evoke the pleasures of storytelling. The tales presentation, telling, retelling and wide circulation bound those moved by the tales to a process of shared codes that linked multiple actors to a unifying moral calculus. And, the acts of public, performative violence that elevated the tales into a panic embodied core elements of performance and spectacle. They linked action with a justification of the tales’ claims, publicly celebrating a deep-rooted, common sense of mistrust and binding outrage with an experience of transgression.

The panic was not motivated by a direct response to the political transition, but to a form of communication that engaged the domain of politics in a manner that does not often receive adequate

attention. The power of the tales, then, links a critical engagement with the idea of a “story,” the particular processes of storytelling, and the political imagination. Hannah Arendt has argued that storytelling is about a process of translating and transforming private, lived experiences into public meanings (Arendt 1998). In this sense, stories are among the core tools and mechanisms of politics and they are especially crucial for setting the terms of what matters in making sense of a social order. They are a prime element of rendering operational the political imaginary. The creation, maintenance, management, and use of narrative lies at the core of politics and is of special meaning and use for those who lack power. Michael Jackson has eloquently described this issue arguing that storytelling is “a vital human strategy for sustaining a sense of agency in the face of disempowering circumstances” (Jackson 2006: 15). This is because narratives both create and enable core categories of thought and modes of engaging the world that enshrine and justify the operations of power. These processes are especially salient in contexts where master narratives have lost their vigor and legitimacy; where dominant explanatory narratives continue to serve empowered interests but appear flimsy, false, and insubstantial.³⁷⁴

The power of stories – at least some types of stories – is that they enable and play with “the exemplary and the extraordinary” (Gilsenan 1996: 58), allowing for the presentation of complex contrasts of values and ideas that cannot be otherwise voiced. They are a means of challenge and a mode of defining moral claims, even in the absence of the potential to realize moral demands. Stories,

³⁷⁴ Walter Benjamin suggested that with the rise of modernity, the true storyteller “has already become something remote from us and something that is getting even more distant” (Benjamin 2007: 83); a process he associated with a loss of “wisdom.” With this shift came new forms of narration, including the novel – “The earliest symptom of a process whose end is the decline of storytelling is the rise of the novel at the beginning of modern times” (Benjamin 2007: 87) – which is characterized by a move from rich, communally grounded narratives to that of the “solitary individual” who invents tales that are disconnected from common experience. And, while beautiful and evocative, express a fundamental loss of the classic power of storytelling. Frank Kermode argues that one component of contemporary narratives is their loss of the possibility of creating legitimate stories that bind societies together with a clarity of order, purpose, and certitude (Kermode 1967). These ideas are echoed and expanded upon in much post-structuralist narrative theory, especially within the field of literary criticism.

as they are told, create worlds. Storytelling is intersubjective and allows for the definition and experience of forms of community that are infused with the vibrancy of what narrative enables, which is distinct from other modes of social behavior.

Above all, stories encode, express, structure, and give voice to lived experience. Yet, the process of storytelling does not serve to empower in a classic sense of shifting the balance of access to resources; rather it highlights other modes of control and resistance. The empowerment of storytelling is bound to what narratives enable. As Jackson explains:

To argue that storytelling is crucial to this process of reempowerment does not mean, however that stories themselves have power; rather, it implies that by enabling dialogues that encompass different points of view the act of sharing stories helps us create a world that is more than the sum of its individual parts. While it is true that stories may sanction inequality and division, my interest here is in the ways in which storytelling involves not the assertion of power *over* others, but the vital capacity of people to work together to create share, affirm, and celebrate something held in common (Jackson 2009: 39-40).

For narratives of mistrust – like the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* – the telling, re-telling, circulation, and reaction to specific stories defines a commonality of experience, creating a community of the disempowered whose shared moral outrage is itself a core achievement of political imagination.

Yet, this idea, “political imagination,” is itself fraught with complexity and is best understood here as a concept that helps explain the ways in which Guatemalans processed the contradictions of the transition from “war” to “peace” and the incoherent elements of the promises of the early 1990s. That is, the term here is powerfully resonant as compared with the discourse and practice of formal politics and the essential challenges of representing experience. Compelling narratives link the story form with modes of imagination whose creative interpretation resonates with those who circulate the tales. While this may seem tautological – powerful tales are those that engage those who tell and re-tell them – the claim is substantive when coupled with a process of unpacking the narratives such that

underlying elements of their logic of signification are revealed. This defines the focus and approach of this study.

What allows certain narratives at certain times (after all, the tales of organ-stealing *gringos* circulated in Guatemala for years with minimal societal impact) is always a challenge, a claim whose explanation demands detailed, ethnographically rich analysis. At the core of this process is the social demand to render coherent lived experience, even when it involves the direct encounter with brutality that exists beyond words and threatens the very possibility of representation (Nordstrom 1997; Scarry 1985; Timmerman 1981), as in societies ravaged by terror.³⁷⁵ Yet, people are driven to craft order and meaning. People cannot tolerate profound incoherence in their world, which highlights the ways in which we are “endlessly creative” (Langer 1957). This process is one deeply bound to political imagination and to intricate, context-specific processes of forging coherence, even as these processes are always shifting and fluid.³⁷⁶ In fact, within the context of Guatemala at the time of the panic, the domain of the imagination and its creative deployment of narrative were the essential tools for providing meaning and rendering coherent a world of great suffering and profound uncertainty.

The metanarratives of democracy and development and the grandiose promises of the transition from “war” to “peace” were empty, false, and misleading for so many. The entwined promises of “democracy” and “development” were nothing if not “imagined” understandings of social reality, both as experienced and as visions of what could and would be. While the idea of a more equitable society, a transformed Guatemala, was surely appealing, if not seductive in its possibility, the lived experience of disempowerment, marginalization, and brutality created conditions that demanded

³⁷⁵ As Strathern, Stewart and Whitehead explain, “Terror consists precisely in intrusions into expectations about security, making moot the mundane processes on which social life otherwise depends” (Strathern, Stewart and Whitehead 2001: 6) which places special demands on communities to craft explanations that enable social order, consistency and meaning.

³⁷⁶ “The meaningful world is always fluid and ambiguous, a partially integrated mosaic of narrative, images. And signifying practices” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992: 3).

alternative understandings of the domain of the political. The political imagination, then, was structured through and people's lived experience – state terror, structural violence, corruption, disorder, etc. – yet the intensity of these issues were had no place in the domain of formal politics. The critique of what the majority of Guatemalans lived through was too damning, too systematic, too mired in and expressive of a deeply-rooted mistrust of the state and the country's empowered actors.

This project argues that the panic of the *robaniños* gained authority and captivated members of the Guatemalan public because of how a specific creative narrative focused anger and attention in a manner that gave voice to a resonant political imagination at a key moment in the nation's history. The tales' power and ability to motivate outrage and popular violence was born of their ability to represent political issues in a manner that was expressly and overtly non-political in a formal sense. That is, even when crowds attacked state agents and state institutions, these acts were justified through “fantastic” tales that eluded verification, making it difficult for the state to respond with typical repressive force.

The narratively grounded moral panic of the *robaniños* was a celebration of mistrust. It linked the pleasures of outrage voiced in a critique of power with the transgressive public performance of spectacle. Its particular semiotic logic played off of a set of interrelated issues that resonated profoundly among large numbers of Guatemalans because of how the tales, as narratives, encoded lived experience and enabled the expression of a series of complex, political concerns. The majority of Guatemalans were long accustomed to being denied a voice and experienced multiple forms of disempowerment in their interactions with the state and with socially dominant actors (with *gringos* as an iconic figure of domination). The extraordinary inequality of the country coupled with the constancy of violence – state terror in the time of *la violencia* and disorder and criminality in the “post-conflict” years – defined a social context overdetermined by risk, threat, vulnerability and uncertainty.

Just as trust undergirds the successful operation of a variety of complex social relations, mistrust also structures social practice. It defines and determines expectations, ideas, beliefs, responses, and demands. It is, quite obviously, the source of great pain and both the cause and expression of deeply-rooted disempowerment. Mistrust both defines broad gaps in understanding and experience and is constitutive of uncertainty, frustration, anger and suffering. Yet, mistrust is also the foundation for broad-based and unifying reactions. It can form its own communities, binding those who have common experiences of life in contexts of systematic corruption and abuse. In this way, mistrust can serve as the foundation for intense engagement, and even a joyful embrace of moments that acknowledge the unifying power of living under conditions defined by a commonality of lives experience, as in the panic of the *robaniños*.

The power of the tales of the organ-stealing *gringos* as narratives of mistrust lay in the ways they focused a generalized sense of victimization and its associated anger and resentment into a concentrated story that gave voice to these experiences, which were then elevated into a national moral panic. It was this capacity – what the tales evoked and celebrated through an intensity of focus that only certain narratives structures can enable – that created the signifying space for the panic’s long-term impact. The tales’ importance, then, lay in the evocation of disorder, uncertainty, and fear within the context of disempowerment in a manner that gave voice to the lived experience of victimization. They were narratives of mistrust which evoked and enabled the representation of political needs and interests in creative ways that resonated with a broad population. In this way, the panic of the *robaniños* provides insight and guidance for analyzing other related phenomenon in distinct social contexts while expressing key elements of the Guatemalan political imaginary during an important moment in the country’s turbulent history.

Bibliography

- Abbink, Jon. 2000. "Restoring the Balance: Violence and Culture among the Suri of Southern Ethiopia." In *Meanings of Violence: A Cross Cultural Perspective*, edited by Göran Aijmer and Jon Abbink, 77-100. New York: Berg.
- . 2001. "Violence and Culture: Anthropological and Evolutionary-psychological Reflections on Inter-group Conflict in Southern Ethiopia." In *Anthropology of Violence and Conflict*, edited by Bettina E. Schmidt and Ingo W. Schröder, 123-142. New York: Routledge.
- . 2002. "Violence and State (Re)Formation in the African Context: Global and Local Aspects of Crisis and Change." *Politics and Economics of Africa* 3: 137-149.
- Abbott, H. Porter. 2008. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Abbott, Philip. 2001. Review of *Democracy and Trust*, by Mark E. Warren. *The Journal of Politics* 63 (1): 328-330.
- Adam, Barbara, Ulrich Beck, and Joost Van Loon, eds. 2000. *The Risk Society and Beyond: Critical Issues for Social Theory*. London: Sage Publications.
- Adams, Abigail E. 1998. "Gringas, Ghouls and Guatemala: The 1994 Attacks on North American Women Accused of Body Organ Trafficking." *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 4 (1): 112-133.
- Adams, Richard N. 1975. *Energy and Structure: A Theory of Social Power*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- . 1988. "What Can We Know About the Harvest of Violence?" In *Harvest of Violence. The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*, edited by Robert M. Carmack, 274-292. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- . 1990. "Changing Indian Identity: Guatemala's Violent Transition to Modernity." In *Guatemalan Indians and the State: 1540 to 1988*, edited by Carol Smith, 230-257. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Adams, Richard N., and Bastos, Santiago. 2003. *Las relaciones étnicas en Guatemala, 1944-2000*. La Antigua, Guatemala: CIRMA.
- Addo, Ping-Ang. 2008 "Anthropology, Festival, and Spectacle." *Reviews in Anthropology* 38 (3): 217-236.
- Agüero, Felipe, and Jeffrey Stark, eds. 1998. *Fault Lines of Democracy in Post-transition Latin America*. Miami: North South Center.

- Aguilera Peralta, Gabriel. 1980. "Terror and Violence as Weapons of Counterinsurgency in Guatemala." Translated by John Beverly. *Latin American Perspectives* 7: 91-113.
- Aijmer, Göran. 2000. "Introduction." In *Meanings of Violence*, edited by Göran Aijmer and Jon Abbink, 1-21. New York: Berg.
- Aijmer, Göran, and Jon Abbink, eds. 2000. *Meanings of Violence: A Cross Cultural Perspective*. New York: Berg.
- Albizures, Miguel Angel. 1985. *Tiempo de sudor y lucha*. Guatemala: Edición Local.
- Allison, Anne, and Charles Piot. 2014. "Editors' Note on 'Neoliberal Futures.'" *Cultural Anthropology* 29 (1): 3-7.
- Alvarado, Huberto. 1975 (1994). *Apuntes para la historia del Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo*. 2nd ed. Colección Revolucionaria. Guatemala: Universidad de San Carlos.
- American Anthropological Association. 1947. "Statement on Human Rights." *American Anthropologist* 49 (4): 539-43.
- Americas Watch. 1982. *Human Rights in Guatemala: No Neutrals Allowed*. New York: Americas Watch.
- . 1983. *Creating a Desolation and Calling it Peace*. New York: Americas Watch.
- . 1984. *Guatemala: A Nation of Prisoners*. New York: Americas Watch.
- . 1985a. *Little Hope: Human Rights in Guatemala*. New York: Americas Watch.
- . 1985b. *Guatemala Revised: How the Reagan Administration Finds 'Improvements' in Human Rights in Guatemala*. New York: Americas Watch.
- . 1985c. *Guatemala: The Group for Mutual Support, 1984-1985*. New York: Americas Watch.
- . 1986. *Civil Patrols in Guatemala*. New York: Americas Watch.
- . 1988. *Closing the Space: Human Rights in Guatemala*. New York: Americas Watch.
- . 1989a. *Persecuting Human Rights Monitors: The CERJ in Guatemala*. New York: Americas Watch.
- . 1989b. *Guatemala: Renewed Violence against Students*. New York: Americas Watch.
- . 1990a. *Messengers of Death: Human Rights in Guatemala*. New York: Americas Watch.
- . 1990b. *Guatemala: Rights Abuses Escalate as Elections Near*. New York: Americas Watch.

- . 1991. *Guatemala: Slaying of Rights Activists, Impunity Prevail under New Government*. New York: Americas Watch.
- Americas Watch and Physicians for Human Rights. 1991 *Guatemala: Getting Away with Murder*. Washington, D.C.: Americas Watch.
- Amnesty International. 1978. *Amnesty International Report 1978*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1979. *Repression in the Academic Sector in Guatemala*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1980a. *Los derechos humanos en Guatemala*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1980b. *Guatemala: Recent Killings of Students and Academics*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1981. *Guatemala: A Government Program Of Political Murder*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1982. *Guatemala: Massive Extrajudicial Executions in Rural Areas under the Government of General Efraín Ríos Montt*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1987. *Guatemala: The Human Rights Record*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1989a. *Guatemala: Human Rights Violations under the Civilian Government*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1989b. *Guatemala: Human Rights Violations Directed At Trade Unionists and Trade Union Theater and Music Group Members*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1989c. *Guatemala: Human Rights Violations Directed Against Student Leaders*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1991. *Guatemala: Lack of Investigations into Past Human Rights Abuses: Clandestine Cemeteries*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1992a. *Guatemala: Targeting Displaced People*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1992b. *Guatemala: Children in Fear*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1993. *Guatemala: Impunity: A Question of Political Will*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1995a. *Guatemala: The Right to Know: The Case of Efraín Bámaca*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1995b. *Guatemala: Victims of 1982 Army Massacre at Las Dos Erres Exhumed*. London: Amnesty International.
- . 1997a. *Guatemala: Human Rights Violations and Impunity*. London: Amnesty International.

- An-Na'im, Abdullahi, ed. 1992. *Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspectives: A Quest for Consensus*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- . 2002. *Cultural Transformation and Human Rights in Africa*. London: Zed Books.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso.
- Anderson, Kathryn Anderson. 2003. *Weaving Relationships: Canada-Guatemala Solidarity*. Waterloo, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Anderson, Kenneth. 1989. *Maximizing Deniability: The Justice System and Human Rights in Guatemala*. Washington, D.C.: International Human Rights Law Group.
- Anderson, Kenneth, and Jean-Marie Simon. 1987. "Permanent Counterinsurgency in Guatemala." *Telos* 73: 9-46.
- Andrain, Charles F., and James T. Smith. 2006. *Political Democracy, Trust, and Social Justice*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Andrews, Lori, and Dorothy Nelkin. 2001. *Body Bazaar: The Market for Human Tissue in the Biotechnology Age*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Angel-Ajani, Asale and Victoria Sanford, eds. 2006. *Engaged Observer: Anthropology, Advocacy, and Activism*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Annis, Sheldon. 1988. "Story from a Peaceful Town: San Antonio Aguas Calientes." In *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*, edited by Robert M. Carmack, 155-173. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Ansi3n, Juan, ed. 1989. *Pishtacos: de Vedugos a Sacaajos*. Lima: Tarea.
- Apter, Andrew. 1999. "Nigerian Democracy and the Politics of Illusion." In *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa: Critical Perspectives*, edited by John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, 267-307. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 2006. *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 2013. *The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition*. New York: Verso.
- Arce, Alberto, and Norman Long, eds. 2000. *Anthropology, Development and Modernities: Exploring Discourses, Counter-Tendencies and Violence*. New York: Routledge.

- Arenas Bianchi, Clara, Charles R. Hale, and Gustavo Palma Murga, eds. 2004. *¿Racismo en Guatemala?. Abriendo el debate sobre un tema tabú*. Ciudad de Guatemala: Instituto AVANCSO.
- Arendt, Hannah. 1970. *On Violence*. New York: Harcourt.
- . 1998. *The Human Condition*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Aretxaga, Begoña. 1997. *Shattering the Silence, Women, Nationalism, and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 2000. "A Fictional Reality: Paramilitary Death Squads and the Construction of State Terror in Spain." In *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror*, edited by Jeffrey Sluka, 46-69. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- . 2003. "Maddening States." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32: 393-410.
- Argenti, Nicolas and Katharina Schramm. 2012. *Remembering Violence: Anthropological Perspectives on Intergenerational Transmission*. New York: Berghahn.
- Arias, Arturo. 1983. "Cultura popular, culturas indígenas, genocidio y etnocidio en Guatemala." *Boletín de Antropología Americana* 7: 57-78.
- . 1990. "Changing Indian Identity: Guatemala's Violent Transition to Modernity." In *Guatemalan Indians and the State: 1540 to 1988*, edited by Carol Smith, 230-257. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- . 2001. "Authoring Ethnicized Subjects: Rigoberta Menchu and the Performative Production of the Subaltern Self." *PMLA* 116 (1): 75-88.
- . 2006. "Constructing Ethnic Bodies and Identities in Miguel Angel Asturias and Rigoberta Menchu." *Postmodern Culture* 17 (1).
- Arias, Arturo, ed. 2001. *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Arias, Enrique Desmond, and Daniel M. Goldstein, eds. 2010. *Violent Democracies in Latin America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Arnold, Thomas Clay. 2001. "Rethinking Moral Economy." *The American Political Science Review* 95 (1): 85-95.
- Arnson, Cynthia J. 1999. *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.
- Arzú, Marta Elena Casaús. 2002. *La Metamorfosis del Racismo en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: Cholsamaj.
- . 2008. *Genocidio: La máxima expresión del racismo en Guatemala?* Guatemala City: F y G Editores.

- Ashforth, Adam. 2005. *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ashton, J. W. 1968. Review of *The Fairies in Tradition and Literature*, by K. M. Briggs. *The Journal of American Folklore* 81 (320): 164-165.
- Asociación Centroamericana de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos (ACAFADE). 1988. *La práctica de la desaparición forzada de personas en Guatemala*. San Jose, Costa Rica: ACAFADE.
- Auslander, Mark. 1993. "Black Stomachs, Beautiful Stones: Soul-eating among Hausa in Niger." In *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*, edited by Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, 167-192. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Austen, Ralph A. 1993. "The Moral Economy of Witchcraft: An Essay in Comparative History." In *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*, edited by Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, 89-110. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Auyero, Javier, Philippe Bourgois, and Nancy Scheper-Hughes, eds. 2015. *Violence at the Urban Margins*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Avancso. 2002. *Se cambió el tiempo: Conflicto y poder en territorio K'iche'*. Guatemala City: Instituto AVANCSO.
- Azpuru, Dinorah. 2009. "Perceptions of Democracy in Guatemala: An Ethnic Divide?" *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 34 (67): 105-130.
- Azpuru, Dinorah, Ligia Blanco, Ricardo Córdova Macías, Nayelly Loya Marín, Carlos G. Ramos, and Adrián Zapata. 2007. *Construyendo La Democracia En Sociedades Posconflicto: Guatemala Y El Salvador, Un Enfoque Comparado*. Guatemala City: Centro Internacional de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo/F&G Editores.
- Baier, Annette. 1986. "Trust and Antitrust." *Ethics* 96: 231-260.
- Bakhtin, M. M. 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Bal, Mieke. 1985. *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.
- Balibar, Etienne, and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1991. *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London: Verso.
- Ball, Patrick. 1994. *A Definition of Database Design Standards for Human Rights Agencies*. Washington, D.C.: American Association for the Advancement of Science.
- . 1996. *Who Did What to Whom? Planning and Implementing a Large-Scale Human Rights Data Project*. Washington, D.C.: American Association for the Advancement of Science.

- Ball, Patrick, Paul Kobrak, and Herbert F. Spierer. 1999. *State Violence in Guatemala, 1960-1996: A Quantitative Reflection*. Washington, D.C.: American Association for the Advancement of Science.
- Baker-Cristales, Beth. 2008. "Magical Pursuits: Legitimacy and Representation in a Transnational Political Field." *American Anthropologist* 110 (3): 349-359.
- Bakiner, Onur. 2015. *Truth Commissions: Memory, Power and Legitimacy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bamberger, Joan. 1999. "David Stoll's 'litany of complaints' about Rigoberta Menchú." *Human Rights Review* 1 (1): 85-91.
- Barber, Bernard. 1983. *The Logic and Limits of Trust*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Barthes, Roland. 1957. *Mythologies*. Translated by Annette Lavers, 1972. New York: Hill & Wang.
- . 1964. *Elements of Semiology*. Translated by Annette Lavers & Colin Smith, 1967. London: Jonathan Cape.
- . 1975. *S/Z: An Essay*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barry, Tom. 1989. *Guatemala: A Country Guide*. Albuquerque, NM: The Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center.
- . 1992. *Inside Guatemala: The Essential Guide to its Politics, Economy, Society, and Environment*. Albuquerque, NM: The Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center.
- Bartoszko, Aleksandra. 2011. "The Global Trade With Poor People's Kidneys—Interview With Nancy Scheper-Hughes Part 2/3." *Anthropologi.info*, October 31. Accessed March 13, 2013. <http://www.antropologi.info/blog/anthropology/2011/nancy-scheper-hughes-organ-trade>
- Bashkow, Ira. 2006. *The Meaning of Whitemen: Race and Modernity in the Orokaiva Cultural World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Basso, Keith H. 1970. "'To Give up on Words': Silence in Western Apache Culture." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 26 (3): 213-230.
- Bastian, Misty L. 1993. "'Bloodhounds Who Have No Friends': Witchcraft and Locality in the Nigerian Popular Press." In *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*, edited by Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, 129-166. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bastos, Santiago, and Manuela Camus. 1994. *Sombras de una batalla: los desplazados por la violencia en Ciudad de Guatemala*. Guatemala City: FLACSO.

- . 2013. "Difficult Complementarity: Relations between the Mayan and Revolutionary Movements." In *War By Other Means: Aftermath in Post-Genocide Guatemala*, edited by Carlota McAllister and Diane M. Nelson, 71-92. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Bauman, Richard. 1969. "Towards a Behavioral Theory of Folklore: A Reply to Roger Welsch." *The Journal of American Folklore* 82 (324): 167-170.
- . 1975. "Verbal Art as Performance." *American Anthropologist* 77 (2): 290-311.
- . 1988. *Story, Performance, and Event: Contextual Studies of Oral Narrative*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2002. "Disciplinary, Reflexivity, and Power in Verbal Art as Performance: A Response." *The Journal of American Folklore* 115 (455): 92-98.
- Bauman, Richard, and Charles L. Briggs. 1990. "Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspective on Language and Social Life." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19: 59-88.
- Bauman, Richard, and Joel Sherzer. 1975. "The Ethnography of Speaking." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 4: 95-119.
- Bax, Mart. 1997. "Mass Graves, Stagnating Identification, and Violence: A Case Study in the Local Sources of 'The War' in Bosnia Hercegovina." *Anthropological Quarterly* 70 (1): 11-19.
- Beck, Ulrich. 1986. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage Publications.
- Becker, Gay. 1997. *Disruptive Lives: How People Create Meaning in a Chaotic World*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Becker, Howard S. 1963. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: Free Press.
- Beeman, William O. 1993. "The Anthropology of Theater and Spectacle." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22: 369-393.
- . 2000. "Humor." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 9 (1-2) 103-106.
- Behar, Ruth. 1987. "Sex and Sin, Witchcraft and the Devil in Late-Colonial Mexico." *American Ethnologist* 14 (1): 34-54.
- Beidelman, T.O. 1980. "The Moral Imagination of the Kaguru: Some Thoughts on Tricksters, Translation and Comparative Analysis." *American Ethnologist* 7 (1): 27-39.
- . 1997. Review of *Witches and Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*, by Robin Briggs. *Anthropos* 92 (4/6): 592-593.
- Bellino, Michelle J. 2017. *Youth in Postwar Guatemala: Education and Civic Identity in Transition*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

- Benhabib, Seyla. 1996. *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- Benjamin, Walter. 2007. *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Bennett, Gillian and Paul Smith, Eds. 1996. *Contemporary Legend: A Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Benson, Peter. 2005. Review of *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthropology*, by Nancy Scheper- Hughes and Philippe Bourgois. *Anthropological Quarterly* 78 (1): 289-292.
- . 2008. "El Campo: Faciality and Structural Violence in Farm Labor Camps." *Cultural Anthropology* 23 (4): 589-629.
- Benson, Peter, Kedron Thomas, and Edward F. Fischer. 2011. "Guatemala's New Violence as Structural Violence: Notes from the Highlands." In *Securing the City: Neoliberalism, Space, and Insecurity in Postwar Guatemala*, edited by Kevin Lewis O'Neill and Kedron Thomas, 127-146. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ben-Yehuda, Nachman. 1986. "The Sociology of Moral Panics: Towards a New Synthesis." *The Sociological Quarterly* 27 (4): 495-513.
- Beristain, Carlos Martín. 1998a. "Guatemala: Nunca Mas." *Forced Migration Review* 3: 23-26.
- . 1998b. "The Value of Memory." *Forced Migration Review* 2: 24-26.
- Bernardi, Daniel Leonard, Pauline Hope Cheong, Chris Lundry, and Scott W. Ruston. 2012. *Narrative Landmines: Rumors, Islamic Extremism, and the Struggle for Strategic Influence*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Berry, Nicole. 2012. *Unsafe Motherhood: Mayan Maternal Mortality and Subjectivity in Post-War Guatemala*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- . 2008 "Who's Judging the Quality of Care: Indigenous Maya and the Problem of Not Being Attended" *Medical Anthropology* 27(2): 164-189.
- . 2006 "Kaqchikel Midwives, Homebirths and Emergency Obstetric Referrals: Contextualizing the Choice to Stay at Home" *Social Science & Medicine* 62: 1958-1969.
- Berryman, Phillip. 1984. *The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in the Central American Revolutions*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- . 1994. *Stubborn Hope: Religion, Politics and Revolution in Central America*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Besteman, Catherine. 1996a. "Representing Violence and 'Othering' Somalia." *Cultural Anthropology* 11 (1): 120-133.

- . 1996b. “Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence: The Dissolution of the Somali Nation-State.” *American Ethnologist* 23 (3): 579-596.
- . 1999. *Unraveling Somalia: Race, Violence, and the Legacy of Slavery* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1999.
- . 2000. “A Response to Helander’s Critique of ‘Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence.’” *American Ethnologist* 26 (4): 981-983.
- Beverly, John. 2001. “What Happens When the Subaltern Speaks: Rigoberta Menchú, Multiculturalism, and the Presumption of Equal Worth.” In *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy*, edited by Arturo Arias, 219-236. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.
- . 2004. *Testimonio: On the Politics of Truth*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *Location of Culture* New York: Routledge.
- Bicchieri, Cristina, John Duffy, and Gil Tolle. 2002. “Trust Among Strangers.” *Philosophy of Science* 71 (3): 1-34.
- Binford, Leigh. 1996. *The El Mozote Massacre: Anthropology and Human Rights*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Binford, Leigh, and Nancy Churchhill. 2009. “Lynchings and States of Fear in Urban Mexico.” *Anthropologica* 51 (2): 301-312.
- Black, George. 1984. *Garrison Guatemala*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Black, Jan Knippers. 1998. *Latin America: Its Problems and Its Promise*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Bloch, Maurice, ed. 2010. *Marxism and Anthropology*. New York: Routledge.
- Blumer, Herbert. 1969. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Birch, Anthony H. 1993. *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Democracy*. London: Routledge.
- Bohannan, Paul. 1967. *Law and Warfare: Studies in the Anthropology of Conflict*. New York: Natural History Press.
- Booth, John A. 2000. “Global Forces and Regime Change: Guatemala in the Central American Context.” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 42 (4): 59-87.
- Booth, William. 1994. “Witch Hunt: Babies Are Disappearing. Ugly Rumors Abound, and a Tourist’s Life is at Stake.” *The Washington Post*, May 17.

- Booth, William James. 1994. "On the Idea of the Moral Economy." *The American Political Science Review* 88 (3): 653-667.
- Boraine, Alex, Janet Levy, and Ronel Scheffer. 1997. *Dealing with the Past: Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*. 2nd ed. Johannesburg IDASA Publishers.
- Borneman, John. 1992. *Belonging in the Two Berlins: Kin, State, Nation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1997. *Settling Accounts: Violence, Justice, and Accountability in Postsocialist Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1997.
- Bottici, Chiara, and Benoit Challand, eds. 2011. *The Politics of Imagination*. London: Birbeck Law Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1993. *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- . 1994. "Structures, Habitus, Power: Basis for a Theory of Symbolic Power." In *Culture/Power/History*. Edited by Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner, 155-199. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bourgois, Philippe. 1990. "Confronting Anthropological Ethics: Ethnographic Lessons from Central America." *Journal of Peace Research* 27 (1) 43-54.
- . 1995. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brass, Paul R. 1997. *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Brett, Roddy. 2016. *The Origins and Dynamics of Genocide: Political Violence in Guatemala*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Briggs, Charles L. 2004. "Theorizing Modernity Conspiratorially: Science, Scale, and the Political Economy of Public Discourse in Explanations of a Cholera Epidemic." *American Ethnologist* 31 (2): 164-187.
- . 2007a. "Anthropology, Interviewing, and Communicability in Contemporary Society." *Current Anthropology* 48 (4): 551-580.
- . 2007b. "Mediating Infanticide: Theorizing Relations between Narrative and Violence." *Cultural Anthropology* 22 (3): 315-356.
- . 2012. "Brujeria." In *Celebrating Latino Folklore [3 volumes]: An Encyclopedia of Cultural Traditions*, edited by Maria Herrera-Sobek. 173-175. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

- Briggs, Charles L., and Clara Mantini-Briggs. 2003. *Stories in the Time of Cholera: Racial Profiling During a Medical Nightmare*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Briggs, Jean L. 1970. *Never in anger: Portrait of an Eskimo family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Brown, Michael F. 1996. "On Resisting Resistance." *American Anthropologist* 98 (4): 729-735.
- Bruner, Jerome. 1990. *Acts of Meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- . 2002. *Making Stories: Law, Literature, Life*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.
- . 2004. "Life as Narrative." *Social Research* 71 (3): 691-710.
- Brunvand, Jan Harold. 1981. *The Vanishing Hitchhiker: American Urban Legends and Their Meanings*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- . 1984. *The Choking Doberman and Other "New" Urban Legends*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Brysk, Alison. 2003. "Recovering from State Terror: The Morning After in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 38 (1): 238-247.
- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, and David Lalman. 1992. *War and Reason: Domestic and Imperatives*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Bueno, Eva P., and Terry Caesar, eds. 1998. *Imagination and Beyond: Latin American Popular Culture*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Burgos-Debray, Elisabeth, ed. 1983. *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. New York: Verso.
- Burrell, Jennifer. 2013. "After Lynching." In *War By Other Means: Aftermath in Post-Genocide Guatemala*, edited by Carlota McAllister and Diane M. Nelson, 241-260. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 2014. *Maya After War: Power and Politics in Guatemala*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Byrne, Hugh. 1997a. *The Guatemalan Peace Accords: Assessment and Implications for the Future*. Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin America.
- . 1997b. *The First Nine Months of the Guatemala Peace Process: High Expectations and Daunting Challenges*. Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin America.
- Caldeira, Teresa P. R. 2000. *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Callahan, Kathe, Melvin J. Dubnick, and Dorothy Olshfski. 2006. "War Narratives: Framing Our Understanding of the War on Terror." *Public Administration Review* 66 (4): 554-568.
- Cambranes, Julio Castellanos. 1996. *Café y Campesinos: Los orígenes de la economía de plantación moderna en Guatemala, 1853-1897*. 2nd ed. Madrid: Editorial Catriel.
- Cambridge English Dictionary. <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english>
- Campion-Vincent, Véronique. 1990. "The Baby-Parts Story: A New Latin American Legend." *Western Folklore* 49 (1): 9-25.
- . 1997. "Organ Theft Narratives." *Western Folklore* 56 (1): 1-37.
- . 2002. "Organ Theft Narratives as Medical and Social Critique." *Journal of Folklore Research* 39 (1): 33-50.
- . 2005. *Organ Theft Legends*. Translated by Jacqueline Simpson. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press.
- Campion-Vincent, Véronique, and Chip Heath, eds. 2007. *Rumor Mills: The Social Impact of Rumor and Legend*. New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction.
- Cancian, Francesca M. 1990. *Making War/Making Peace: The Social Foundations of Violent Conflict*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.
- Canetti, Elias. 1984. *Crowds and Power*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.
- Carlsen, Robert S. 1993. "Discontinuous Warps: Textile Production and Ethnicity in Contemporary Highland Guatemala." In *Crafts in the World Market: The Impact of Global Exchange on Middle American Artisans*, edited by June Nash. 199-222. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- . 1997. *The War for the Heart and Soul of a Highland Maya Town*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Carmack, Robert M., ed. 1988a. *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- . 1998b. "The Story of Santa Cruz Quiché." In *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*, edited by Robert M. Carmack, 39-69. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- . 1995. *Rebels of Highland Guatemala: The Quiche Mayas of Momostenango*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- . 2008. "Perspectives on the Politics of Human Rights in Guatemala." In *Human Rights in the Maya Region: Global Politics, Cultural Contentions, and Moral Engagements*, edited by Pedro

- Pitrarch, Shannon Speed, and Xochitl Leyva-Solano, 51-66. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Carey Jr., David. 2005. "Review: Shades of Peace and Democracy: Social Discontent and Reconciliation in Central America." *Latin American Research Review* 40 (1): 251-267.
- Carey-Webb, Allen. 2001. "Teaching, Testimony, and Truth: Rigoberta Menchú's Credibility in the North American Classroom." In *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy*, edited by Arturo Arias, 309-331. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Carlsen, Robert S. 2011. *The War for the Heart and Soul of a Highland Maya Town*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Casaús Arzú, Marta Elena. 2006. "La genealogía del racismo y del discurso racial en las élites de poder en Guatemala (siglos XIX y XX)." *Cuadernos Americanos: Nueva Época* 3 (117): 85-126.
- . 2008. *Genocidio: ¿La máxima expresión del racismo en Guatemala?* Guatemala City: F&G Editores.
- . 2010. *Guatemala: Linaje y racismo* (cuarta edición revisada y ampliada). Guatemala City: F&G Editores.
- Casaus-Arzu, Marta, and Roddy Brett, eds. 2010. "El racismo y la discriminación étnica en Guatemala: una aproximación hacia sus tendencias históricas y el debate actual." *Stockholm Review of Latin American Issues* 6.
- Casteneda, Claudia. 2000. "Child Organ Stealing Stories: Risk, Rumour, and Reproductive Technologies." In *The Risk Society and Beyond: Critical Issues for Social Theory*, edited by Barbara Adam, Ulrich Beck, and Joost van Loon, 136-154. London: SAGE.
- . 2002. *Figurations: Child, Bodies, Worlds*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Castañeda, Manolo E. Vela. 2005. "Guatemala, 1954: Las Ideas De La Contrarrevolución." *Foro Internacional* 45 (1): 89-114.
- Castellano Cambranes, Julio. 1985. *Café y campesinos en Guatemala, 1853-1897*. Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria.
- Castoriadis, Cornelius. 1998. *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Centro Civitas, 2009. "Guatemala, El Silencio De La Memoria: El Informe de la CEH en los medios de comunicacion." In "La Persistencia De La Verdad: A diez años del Informe de la CEH," 23-44. Guatemala City, Guatemala: Impunity Watch y Convergencia por los Derechos Humanos.
- Centro de Estudios Integrados de Desarrollo Comunal (CEIDIC). 1990. *Polos de desarrollo: El caso de la desestructuración de las comunidades indígenas de Guatemala*. Mexico City: Editorial Praxis.

- Centro de Investigación, Estudio y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos en Guatemala (CIEPRODH). 1994. *Guatemala: La búsqueda de la verdad*. Guatemala City: CIEPRODH.
- Centro de Investigación y Documentación Centroamericana (CIDC). 1980. *Violencia y contraviolencia: Desarrollo histórico de la violencia institucional en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: Editorial Universitaria de Guatemala.
- Centro Internacional para Investigaciones en Derechos Humanos (CIIDH) and Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM). 1996. *Quitar el agua al pez: Análisis del terror en tres comunidades rurales de Guatemala, 1980-1984*. Guatemala City: CIIDH y GAM.
- . 1998. *Los que siempre estarán en ninguna parte: La desaparición forzada en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: CIIDH y GAM.
- . 1999. *En pie de lucha: Organización y represión en la Universidad de San Carlos, Guatemala, 1944-1996*. Guatemala City: CIIDH y GAM.
- Chagnon, Napoleon. 1968. *Yanomamo: The fierce people*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Chalmers, Douglas A. 1972. "Changing Latin America: New Interpretations of Its Politics and Society." *Academy of Political Science Proceedings* 30: 1-193.
- Chandler, Daniel. 2007. *Semiotics: The Basics*. London: Routledge.
- Chaplin, J. P. 1959. *Rumor, Fear and the Madness of Crowds*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Chapman, Audrey R., and Patrick Ball. 2001. The Truth of Truth Commissions: Comparative Lessons from Haiti, South Africa, and Guatemala. *Human Rights Quarterly* 23 (1): 1-43.
- Chase-Dunn, Christopher, Susanne Jonas, and Nelson Amaro, eds. 2001. *Globalization on the Ground: Postbellum Guatemalan Democracy and Development*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Chaturvedi, Ruchi. 2011. "'Somehow it Happened': Violence, Culpability, and the Hindu Nationalist Community." *Cultural Anthropology* 26 (3): 340-362.
- Cheater, Angela, ed. 1999. *The Anthropology of Power: Empowerment and Disempowerment in Changing Structures*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Cheit, Ross E. 2014. *The Witch-Hunt Narrative: Politics, Psychology, and the Sexual Abuse of Children*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Christie, Daniel J., Richard V. Wagner, and Deborah D. Winter, eds. 2001. *Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology for the 21st Century*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Ciencia y Tecnología Para Guatemala (CITGUA). 1989. *El movimiento sindical en Guatemala, 1975-1985*. Mexico City: CITGUA.

- Cleary, Edward L. 2002. "Examining Guatemalan Processes of Violence and Peace: A Review of Recent Research." *Latin American Research Review* 37 (1): 230-243.
- Cobb, Sarah. 2013. *Speaking of Violence: The Politics and Poetics of Narrative in Conflict Resolution*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, Anthony P., and Nigel Rapport. 1995. *Introduction: Consciousness in Anthropology*. London: Routledge.
- Cohen, Ronald. 1989. "Human Rights and Cultural Relativism: The Need for a New Approach." *American Anthropologist* 91 (4): 1014–1017.
- Cohen, Ronald, and Judith D. Toland, eds. 1988. *State Formations and Political Legitimacy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.
- Cohen, Stanley. 1972. *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*. London: Routledge.
- . 2001. *States of Denial: Knowing About Atrocities and Suffering*. Malden, MA: Polity.
- Cojti Cuxili, Demetrio. 1997. "Unidad del estado mestizo y regiones autonomas mayas." In *Guatemala: oprimida, pobre o princesa embriajada?*, edited by Fridolin Birk, 175-189. Guatemala City: Magna Terra.
- Coles, Kimberley. 2004. "Election Day: The construction of democracy through technique." *Cultural Anthropology* 19 (4): 551-580.
- . 2008. "International Presence: The Passive Work in Democracy Promotion." In *Democracy: Anthropological Approaches*, edited by Julia Paley. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Collier, David, ed. 1979. *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Collins English Dictionary Online at <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english>
- Comaroff, Jean. 1985. *Body of power; Spirit of Resistance: the Culture and History of a South Africa People*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1997. "Consuming Passions: Child Abuse, Fetishism, and "The New World Order."" *Culture* 17 (1-2): 7-19.
- Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff. 1992. *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- . 1997. *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Vol. 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- . 1999a. "Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes From the South African Postcolony." *American Ethnologist* 26 (2): 279-303.
- . 1999b. "Alien-Nation: Zombies, Immigrants, and Millennial Capitalism." *Codesria Bulletin* (3/4): 17-26.
- . 2000. *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2004. "Criminal Justice, Cultural Justice: The Limits of Liberalism and the Pragmatics of Difference in the New South Africa." *American Ethnologist* 31 (2): 188-204.
- Comaroff, Jean, and John Comaroff, eds. 1993. *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2001. *Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 2006. *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2016. *The Truth about Crime: Sovereignty, Knowledge, Social Order*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala (CDHG). 1982. *Cien días de masacre, genocidio y terror en Guatemala (Carta a Ríos Montt)*. Mexico City: CDHG.
- . 1983. *Los tribunales de fuero especial*. Mexico City: CDHG.
- . 1984. "Cantel: Un poblado guatemalteco sometido al asedio del ejército." *Boletín Internacional* 7 (August). Mexico City: CDHG.
- . 1986. *El niño guatemalteco en la coyuntura actual*. Mexico City: CDHG.
- . 1991. *Diez años de impunidad, ejecuciones extrajudiciales en Guatemala, 1981-1991*. Mexico City: CDHG.
- . 1993. "PAC contra el retorno de refugiados." *Boletín Internacional* (September). Mexico City: CDHG.
- Comision Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. 1983. *Informe sobre la situación de los derechos humanos en Guatemala*, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.61, Doc.47. Washington, D.C.: OAS.
- . 1994. "Informe especial sobre la situación de los derechos humanos de las llamadas 'Comunidades de Población en Resistencia' en Guatemala." Washington, D.C.: Organization of American States.
- Comision Para El Esclarecimiento Historico (CEH). 1999. *Guatemala, Memoria del Silencio*, 12 tomos. Guatemala City: CEH.

- Comunidades de Población en Resistencia de la Sierra (CPRs). 1990. "Declaración del la primera asamblea general de las Comunidades de Población en Resistencia de la Sierra ante el gobierno y el pueblo de Guatemala, los gobiernos y los pueblos del mundo." In *Documentos oficiales de las Comunidades de Población en Resistencia de la Sierra*. El Quiché, Guatemala: CPRs.
- Comunidades de Población en Resistencia, Sierra-Ixcán. 1992. *Información y denuncia de las Comunidades de Población en Resistencia*. Guatemala City: Comunidades de Población en Resistencia.
- Concerned Guatemala Scholars. 1982. *Guatemala: Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win*. New York: Concerned Guatemala Scholars.
- Conferencia Episcopal de Guatemala. 1984. *Para construir la paz: Carta colectiva de los obispos de Guatemala con ocasión del momento político en que vive nuestro pueblo*. Guatemala City: Conferencia Episcopal de Guatemala.
- Conley-Zikic, Bridget. 2016. *How Mass Atrocities End: Studies from Guatemala, the Sudans, Bosnia Herzegovina, and Iraq*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the U.N. General Assembly on 9 December 1948, entry into force: 12 January 1951.
- Cook, Garrett W. and Thomas A. Offit. 2013. *Indigenous Religion and Cultural Performance in the New Maya World*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.
- Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala (CONAVIGUA). 1992. *No al reclutamiento forzoso de los jóvenes*. Guatemala City: CONAVIGUA.
- . 1994. *El reclutamiento militar forzoso y el derecho a la resistencia pacífica*. Guatemala City: CONAVIGUA.
- . 1998. *Propuesta de mujeres y jóvenes indígenas, viudas y huérfanos de guerra, para la reparación histórica a los pueblos indígenas*. Guatemala City: CONAVIGUA.
- Copeman, Jacob. 2008. "Violence, Non-Violence, and Blood Donation in India." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14 (2): 278-296.
- Copp, David, Jean Hampton, and John E. Roemer. 1993. *The Idea of Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Coronil, Fernando. 1997. *The Magical State: History and Illusion in the Appearance of Venezuelan Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Corradi, Juan E., Patricia Weiss Fagan, and Manuel Antonio Garretón, eds. 1992. *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Coutin, Susan Bibler, and Susan F. Hirsch. 1998. "Naming Resistance: Ethnographers, Dissidents, and States." *Anthropological Quarterly* 71 (1): 1-17.
- Crais, Clifton. 1998. "Of Men, Magic, and the Law: Popular Justice and the Political Imagination in South Africa." *Journal of Social History* 32 (1): 49-72.
- Crapanzano, Vincent. 1991. "The Postmodern Crisis: Discourse, Parody, Memory." *Cultural Anthropology*. 6 (4): 421-446.
- . 2003. *Imaginative Horizons: An Essay in Literary-Philosophical Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Critcher, Chas. 2008. "Moral Panic Analysis: Past, Present and Future." *Sociology Compass* 2 (4): 1127-1148.
- Crosby, Alison, and M. Brinton Lykes. 2011. "Mayan Women Survivors Speak: The Gendered Relations of Truth Telling in Postwar Guatemala." *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* 5 (3): 456-476.
- Cruikshank, Barbara. 1999. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Culler, Jonathan. 1981. *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Csordas, Thomas J. 1990. "Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology." *Ethos* 18 (1): 5-47.
- . 2000. "The Body's Career in Anthropology." In *Anthropological Theory Today*, edited by Henrietta L. Moore, Henrietta L. New York: Polity Press.
- Csordas, Thomas J., ed. 1994. "Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cubilié, Anne. 2005. *Women Witnessing Terror: Testimony and the Cultural Politics of Human Rights*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Cubilié, Anne, and Carl Good. 2003. "Introduction: The Future of Testimony." *Discourse* 25 (1/2): 4-18.
- Cuellar, Alejandro Castillejo. 2005. "Unraveling Silence: Violence, Memory and the Limits of Anthropology's Craft." *Dialectical Anthropology* 29 (2): 159-180.
- Cullather, Nick. 1999. *Secret History. The CIA's Classified Account of its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Culler, Jonathan. 1975. *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

- Cultural Survival Quarterly. 1983. "Death and Disorder in Guatemala." *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 7 (1). Cambridge: Cultural Survival, Inc.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1963. *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1991. *Democracy and its Critics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- . 2000. *On Democracy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- DaMatta, Roberto. 1991. *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes: An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Daniel, E. Valentine. 1996. *Charred Lullabies: Chapters in an Anthropology of Violence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Dammert, Lucia, and Mary Fran T. Malone. 2006. "Does it Take a Village? Policing Strategies and Fear of Crimes in Latin America." *Latin American Politics and Society* 48 (4): 27-51.
- Darian-Smith, Eve. 1999. *Bridging Divides: the Channel Tunnel and the English Legal Identity in the New Europe*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Das, Veena. 1985. "Anthropological Knowledge and Collective Violence: The Riots in Delhi, November 1984." *Anthropology Today* 1 (3): 4-6.
- . 1987. "The Anthropology of Violence and the Speech of Victims." *Anthropology Today* 3 (4): 11-13.
- . 2002. "Violence and Translation." *Anthropological Quarterly* 75 (1): 105-112.
- . 2007. *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2008. "Violence, Gender, and Subjectivity." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 37: 283-299.
- Das, Veena, and Arthur Kleinman. 2000. "Introduction" in *Violence and Subjectivity*, edited by Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds. 1-18. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Das, Veena, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds, eds. 2000. *Violence and Subjectivity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Davenport, Christian. 2007. *State Repression and the Domestic Democratic Peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davis, Joseph, ed. 2002. *Stories of Change: Narrative and Social Movements*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

- Davis, Lennard J. 1995. *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body*. New York: Verso.
- Davis, Thomas J. 1985. *Rumor of Revolt: The "Great Negro Plot" in Colonial New York*. New York: The Free Press.
- Davis, Shelton H. 1988. "Introduction: Sowing the Seeds of Violence." In *Harvest of Violence: the Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*, edited by Robert M. Carmack, 3-36. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Davis, Shelton H., and Julie Hodson. 1983. *Witness to Political Violence in Guatemala: The Suppression of a Rural Development Movement*. Boston: Oxfam America.
- de Brito, Barahona, Alexandra, Carmen Gonzalez-Enriquez, and Paloma Aguilar, eds. 2001. *The Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- de Rivera, Joseph and Theodore R. Sarbon, eds. 1998. *Believed-In Imaginings: The Narrative Construction of Reality*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Dean, Bartholomew. 2009. "Matches in Our Hands, Blood on Our Faces: Reflections on Violence and Advocacy in the Peruvian Amazon." *Anthropological Quarterly* 82 (4): 1069-1072.
- Denov, Myriam, and Richard MacLure. 2006. "Engaging the Voices of Girls in the Aftermath of Sierra Leone's Conflict: Experiences and Perspectives in a Culture of Violence." *Anthropologica* 48 (1): 73-85.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1978. *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Desjarlais, Robert, and Arthur Kleinman. 1994. "Violence and Demoralization in the New World Disorder." *Anthropology Today* 10 (5): 9-12.
- Diamond, Larry. 1999. *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Diamond, Larry and Marc F. Plattner, eds. 1996. *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*. 2nd ed. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- . 1997. *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Regional Challenges* Vol. 2. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- . 2010. *Debates on Democratization*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Diamond, Larry, Marc F. Plattner and Yun-han Chu, eds. 1997. *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Diamond, Larry, and Richard Gunther. 2001. *Political Parties and Democracy*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press

- Diamond, Larry, and Leonardo Morlino. 2005. *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Diamond, Larry, Marc F. Plattner, and Diego Abente Brun, eds. 2008. *Latin America's Struggle for Democracy*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press.
- Diccionario de la Lengua Española*. 2005. Madrid: Espasa Calpe.
- Dickins de Girón, Avery. 2011. "The Security Guard Industry in Guatemala: Rural Communities and Urban Violence." In *Securing the City: Neoliberalism, Space, and Insecurity in Postwar Guatemala*, edited by Kevin Lewis O'Neill and Kedron Thomas, 103-126. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Dickson, Anna K. 1997. *Development and International Relations*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Dickson, Donald T. 1968. "Bureaucracy and Morality: An Organizational Perspective on a Moral Crusade." *Social Problems* 16: 143-156.
- Dickson-Gomez, Julia. 2002. "The Sound of Braking Dogs: Violence and Terror among Salvadoran Families in the Postwar." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 16 (4): 415-438.
- Didion, Joan. 1979. *The White Album: Essays*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.
- Dirks, Nicholas B., Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner, eds. 1994. *Culture/Power/History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Diskin, Martin. 1983. *Trouble in Our Backyard: Central America and the United States in the Eighties*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Dodson, Michael. 2002. "Review: Assessing Judicial Reform in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 37 (2): 200-220.
- Dodson, Michael, and Donald W. Jackson. 2004. "Horizontal Accountability in Transitional Democracies: The Human Rights Ombudsman in El Salvador and Guatemala." *Latin American Politics and Society* 46 (4): 1-27.
- Domínguez, Jorge I. and Michael Shifter, Eds. 2003. *Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America*. 2nd ed. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press.
- Donham, Donald. 1999. *History, Power, Ideology: Central Issues in Marxism and Anthropology*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Donnelly, Jack. 2003. *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*. 2nd ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- Dosh, Paul. 2002. "Review: Peace after Terror: Reconciling Justice and the Rule of Law in Argentina, El Salvador, and Guatemala." *Latin American Perspectives* 29 (4): 98-104.
- Dougherty, Janet W. D., and James W. Fernandez. 1981. "Introduction." *American Ethnologist* 8 (3): 413-421.
- Douglas, Mary. 1966. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. New York: Routledge and Keegan Paul.
- . 1973. *Natural Symbols*. New York: Pelican.
- Drexler, Elizabeth F. 2007. "The Social Life of Conflict Narratives: Violent Antagonists, Imagined Histories, and Foreclosed Futures in Aceh, Indonesia." *Anthropological Quarterly* 80 (4): 961-995.
- Dubinsky, Karen. 2010. *Babies Without Borders: Adoption and Migration Across the Americas*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press
- Duggan, Colleen, Claudia Paz y Paz Bailey, and Julie Guillerot. 2008. "Reparations for Sexual and Reproductive Violence: Prospects for Achieving Gender Justice in Guatemala and Peru." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 2 (2): 192-213.
- Dundes, Alan and Alessandro Falassi. 1975. *La Terra in Piazza: An Interpretation of the Palio of Siena*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dunkerly, James. 1988. *Power in the Isthmus: A Political History of Modern Central America*. London: Verso.
- Dunn, John. 1984. "The Concept of 'Trust' in the Politics of John Locke." In *Social Theory and Political Practice*, edited by Richard Rorty, Jerome B. Schneewind and Quentin Skinner. 279-301. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . "Trust." In *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, edited by R. E. Goodin and P. Pettit. 638-645. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Durkheim, Emile. 1997. *The Division of Labor in Society*. Trans. New York: Free Press.
- Eagleton, Terry. 1983. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers.
- Earle, Duncan. 1989. "Measuring the Maya Disconnection: Violence and Development in Guatemala." *American Ethnologist* 18 (4): 793-798.
- Eco, Umberto. 1976. *A Theory of Semiotics*. London: Macmillan.
- . 1986 *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

- Ecumenical Program on Central America (EPICA) and Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CHRLA). 1993. *Out of the Shadows: The Communities of Population in Resistance in Guatemala*. Washington, D.C.: EPICA and CHRLA.
- Edelman, Marc. 2005. "Bringing the Moral Economy Back in... to the Study of 21st Century Transnational Peasant Movements." *American Anthropologist* 107 (3): 331-345.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara. 1997. *Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War*. New York: Owl/Holt.
- Eller, Jack David. 1999. *From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict: An Anthropological Perspective on International Ethnic Conflict*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Ellner, Steve. 2001. "Latin American Democracy in 'Post-Consolidation' Literature: Optimism and Pessimism." *Latin American Politics and Society* 43 (1): 127-142.
- Elster, Jon. 1998. *Deliberative Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Engle, Karen. 2001. "From Skepticism to Embrace: Human Rights and the American Anthropological Association." *Human Rights Quarterly* 23: 536-560.
- Englund, Harri, and James Leach. 2000 "Ethnography and the Meta-Narratives of Modernity." *Current Anthropology* 41 (2): 225-248.
- Enwezor, Okwui, Carlos Basualdo, Ute Meta Bauer, Susanne Ghez, Mark Nash and Octavio Zaya. 2002. *Experiments with Truth: Documenta11_Platform2*. Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz Publishers.
- Erlick, June Carolyn. 2001. "The Sorrows of Peace in Guatemala." *World Policy Journal* 18 (2): 65-70.
- Escobar, Arturo. 2011. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Esparza, Marcia. 2005. "Post-war Guatemala: Long-term Effects of Psychological and Ideological Militarization of K'iche Mayans." *Journal of Genocide Research* 7 (3): 377-391.
- Esparza, Marcia, Henry R. Huttenbach, and Daniel Feierstein, eds. 2013. *State Violence and Genocide in Latin America*. New York: Routledge.
- Espeland, Rune Hjalmar. 2011. "Autochthony, Rumor Dynamics, and Communal Violence in Western Uganda." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 55 (3): 18-34.
- Equipo de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. 1995. *Las masacres en Rabinal: Estudio histórico antropológico de las masacres de Plan de Sánchez, Chichupac y Río Negro*. Guatemala City: Equipo de Antropología Forense de Guatemala.

- Equipo de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. 1997. *Las masacres en Rabinal*. Revised Edition. Guatemala City: EAFG.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1976. *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Falassi, Alessandro, ed. 1987. *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.
- Falla, Ricardo. 1983. *Masacre de la Finca San Francisco, Huebuetenango, Guatemala*. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs.
- . 1984. “Genocidio en Guatemala: Visión del pueblo indígena de genocidio que sufre.” In *Tribunal permanente de los pueblos, sesión Guatemala, Madrid 27 al 31 de enero de 1983*. Madrid: Iepala.
- . 1988. “The Struggle for Survival in the Mountains.” In *Harvest of Violence: the Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*, edited by Robert M. Carmack, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- . 1992. *Masacres de la selva: Ixcán, Guatemala, 1975-1982*. Guatemala City: Editorial Universitaria.
- . 1994. *Massacres in the Jungle: Ixcán, Guatemala, 1975-1982*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Farmer, Paul. 2004. “An Anthropology of Structural Violence.” *Current Anthropology* 45 (3): 305-325.
- . 2009. “On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below.” *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 3 (1): 11-28.
- Farquhar, Judith. 2002. *Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-Socialist China*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 2005. “Biopolitical Beijing: Pleasure, Sovereignty, and Self-Cultivation in China’s Capital.” *Cultural Anthropology* 20 (3): 303-327.
- . 2010. “The Park Pass: Peopling and Civilizing a New Old Beijing.” *Public Culture* 21, 3: 551-576
- Farquhar, Judith, and Qicheng Zhang. 2012. *Ten Thousand Things: Nurturing Life in Contemporary Beijing*. New York: Zone Books.
- Fassin, Didier. 2008. “The Humanitarian Politics of Testimony: Subjectification Through Trauma in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.” *Cultural Anthropology* 23 (3): 531-558.
- Fassin, Didier, Frederic Le Marcis, and Todd Lethata. 2008. “Life and Times of Magda A: Telling a Story of Violence in South Africa.” *Current Anthropology* 49 (2): 225-246.

- Faubion, James D. 2003. "Religion, Violence and the Vitalistic Economy." *Anthropological Quarterly* 76 (1): 71-85.
- Feitlowitz, Marguerite. 1998. *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Feldman, Allen. 1991. *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2002. "Strange Fruit: The South African Truth Commission and the Demonic Economics of Violence." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practices* 46 (3): 234-265.
- . 2004. "Deterritorialized Wars of Public Safety." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 48 (1): 73-80.
- Feldman, Allen, and Richard Jenkins. 1992. "On Formations of Violence." *Current Anthropology* 33 (5): 595-597.
- Feldman, Martha S., Kaj Skoldberg, Ruth Nicole Brown, and Debra Horner. 2004. "Making Sense of Stories: A Rhetorical Approach to Narrative Analysis." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 14 (2): 147-170.
- Felman, Shoshana and Dori Laub. 2013. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*. New York: Routledge.
- Ferguson, James, and Larry Lohmann. 1994. "The Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development' and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho." *The Ecologist* 24 (5): 1-6.
- Ferguson, James. 1994. *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 1999. *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2005. "Seeing Like an Oil Company: Space, Security, and Global Capital in Neoliberal Africa." *American Anthropologist* 107 (3): 377-382.
- Ferguson, R. Brian. 1990. "Explaining War," in *The Anthropology of War*, edited by Jonathan Hass. 26-55. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1992. "Tribal Warfare." *Scientific American* (January):108-113.
- . 1997. *Yanomami Warfare: A Political History*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, in association with School of American Research Press.

- Ferguson, R. Brian, ed. 1984. *Warfare, Culture, and Environment*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Fernandez, Dina. 2004. "Lynchings in Guatemala: A New Look." Review of *Lynchings: Barbarism or Popular Justice?*, edited by Carlos Mendoza and Edelberto Torres-Rivas. *Revista*. Accessed July 14, 2016. <http://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/book/lynchings-guatemala-new-look>.
- Fernandez, James W. 1985. "Exploded Worlds—Text As a metaphor for Ethnography (And Vice Versa)." *Dialectical Anthropology* 10 (1): 15-26.
- . 2001. "Mutual Vulnerability." *Anthropological Quarterly* 75 (1): 152-154.
- Field, Les W. 2005. "Review: Beyond Identity? Analytic Crosscurrents in Contemporary Mayanist Social Science." *Latin American Research Review* 40 (3): 283-293.
- Figueroa Ibarra, Carlos. 1980. *El Proletariado Rural en el Agro Guatemalteco*. Guatemala City: Editorial Universitaria Centroamericana (EDUCA).
- . 1991. *El recurso del miedo: Ensayo sobre el Estado y el terror en Guatemala*. San Jose: Editorial Universitaria Centroamericana (EDUCA).
- Fine, Gary Alan, and Bill Ellis. 2010. *The Global Grapevine: Why Rumors of Terrorism, Immigration, and Trade Matter*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fine, Gary Alan, Véronique Champion-Vincent, and Chip Heath, eds. 2007. *Rumor Mills: The Social Impact of Rumor and Legend*. New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction.
- Finnegan, Ruth. 1977. *Oral Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Finnstrom, Sverker. 2012. "KONY 2012, Military Humanitarianism, and the Magic of Occult Economies." *Africa Spectrum* 47 (2-3): 127-135.
- Fischer, Edward F. 1999. "Cultural Logic and Maya Rethinking Constructivism and Essentialism." *Current Anthropology* 40 (4): 473-500.
- . 2001. *Cultural Logics and Global Economies: Maya Identity in Thought and Practice*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Fischer, Edward F., and Peter Benson. 2006. *Broccoli and Desire: Global Connections and Maya Struggles in Postwar Guatemala*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Fischer, Edward F., and R. McKenna Brown, eds. 1996. *Maya Cultural Activism in Guatemala*. Institute of Latin American Studies. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Fisiy, Cyprian, and Peter Geschiere. 1996. "Witchcraft, Violence and Identity: Different Trajectories in Postcolonial Cameroon." In *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*, edited by Richard Werbner and Terence Ranger, 193-221. London: Zed Books.

- Fogelson, R., and R.N. Adams, eds. 1977. *The Anthropology of Power: Ethnographic Studies from Asia, Oceania, and the New World*. New York: Academic Press.
- Fortes, Meyer, and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, eds. 1940. *African Political Systems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fortis, Paolo. 2010. "The birth of design: a Kuna theory of body and personhood" *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 16(3) 480-495.
- Foucault, Michel. 1970. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Science*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- . 1980. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- . 1995. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage.
- Foxen, Patricia. 2008. *In Search of Providence: Transnational Mayan Identities*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Franco, Jean. 2013. *Cruel Modernity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Frank, Andre Gunder. 1967. *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- . 1969. *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- . 1975. *On Capitalist Underdevelopment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 1980. *Crisis: In the World Economy*. New York: Holmes & Meier.
- . 1981. *Crisis: In the Third World*. New York: Holmes & Meier.
- . 1984. *Critique and Anti-Critique*. New York: Praeger.
- Frank, Luisa, and Phillip Wheaton. 1984. *Indian Guatemala, Path to Liberation: The Role of Christians in the Indian Process*. Washington, D.C.: EPICA Task Force.
- Frankfurter, David. 2008. *Evil Incarnate: Rumors of Demonic Conspiracy and Satanic Abuse in History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- French, Brigittine M. 2010. *Maya Ethnolinguistic Identity: Violence, Cultural Rights, and Modernity in Highland Guatemala*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
- Fried, Jonathan, Marvin Gettleman, Deborah Levenson, and Nancy Peckenhams. 1983. *Guatemala in Rebellion: Unfinished History*. New York: Grove Press.

- Fried, Morton, Marvin Harris, and Robert Murphy, eds. 1968. *War: The Anthropology of Armed Conflict and Aggression*. New York: Natural History Press.
- Friedman, Jonathan, ed. 2003. *Globalization, the State, and Violence*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Friedrich, Paul. 1989. "Language, ideology, and political economy." *American Anthropologist* 91 (2): 295-312.
- Fuentes Mohr, Alberto. 1971. *Secuestro y prisión: Las dos caras de la violencia en Guatemala*. San Jose: EDUCA.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.
- . 1995. *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. New York: Free Press.
- Fumerton, Mario, and Simone Remijnse. 2004. "Civil Defense Forces: Peru's Comités de Autodefensa Civil and Guatemala's Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil in comparative perspective." In *Armed Actors: Organized Violence and State Failure in Latin America*, edited by Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt, 52-72. London/New York: Zed Books.
- Fundacion Myrna Mack. 2004. *Apuntes sobre los engranajes de la impunidad : en casos de violaciones a los derechos humanos en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: Fundación Myrna Mack.
- Gal, Susan. 1995. "Language and the 'Arts of Resistance.'" Review of *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, by James Scott. *Cultural Anthropology* 10 (3): 407-424.
- Galeano, Eduardo. 1971. *Guatemala: País ocupado*. Mexico City: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo.
- Galiher, John F. and John R. Cross. 1983. *Moral Legislation Without Morality*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Galtung, Johan. 1969. "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research." *Journal of Peace Research* 6 (3), 167-191.
- Gamallo, Leandro A, María Luisa Torregrosa, and María Luisa Armentia. 2014. *Violencias colectivas: Linchamientos en México*. Mexico City: FLACSO.
- Gambetta, Diego, ed. 1988. *Trust: Making and Breaking Co-operative Relations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Gammeltoft, Tine M. 2014. "Toward an Anthropology of the Imaginary: Specters of Disability in Vietnam." *Ethos* 42 (2): 153-174.
- Garcia, Prudencio. 2005. *El Genocidio de Guatemala a la luz de la sociología military*. Madrid: SEPHA.
- Garcia, Maria Elena. 2000. "Ethnographic Responsibility and the Anthropological Endeavor: Beyond Identity Discourse." *Anthropological Quarterly* 73 (2): 89-101.

- Garrard-Burnett, Virginia. 1998. *Protestantism in Guatemala: Living in the New Jerusalem*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Garst, Rachel. 1995. *Guatemala: United States Policy and the Guatemalan Peace Process*. Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin America.
- . 1997. *The New Guatemalan National Civilian Police: A Problematic Beginning*. Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin America.
- Gaventa, John. 1992. Review of *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, by James C. Scott. *Contemporary Sociology* 21 (3): 344-345.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1984. "Distinguished Lecture: Anti Anti-Relativism." *American Anthropologist*. 86 (2): 263-278.
- . 2000a. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- . 2000b. *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gellately, Robert, and Ben Kiernan, eds. 2003. *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Genette, Gérard. 1980. *Narrative Discourse. An Essay in Method*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Genovese, Elizabeth Fox. 1973. "The Many Faces of Moral Economy: A Contribution to a Debate." *Past & Present* 58 (1): 161-168.
- Geschiere, Peter. 1997. *The Modernity of Witchcraft*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press.
- . 2009. *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2013. *Witchcraft, Intimacy, and Trust: Africa in Comparison*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Geschiere, Peter and Francis Nyamnjoh. 2000. "Capitalism and Autochthony: The Seesaw of Mobility and Belonging." *Public Culture* 12 (2): 291-344.
- Geuss, Raymond. 2009. *Politics and the Imagination*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gibbons, Ann. 1992. "Scientists Search for 'the Disappeared' in Guatemala." *Science* 257: 479.
- Giddens, Anthony. 1985. *The Nation-State and Violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- . 1987. *The Nation-State and Violence: Volume Two of a Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- . 1990. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- . 2003. *Runaway World*. New York: Routledge.
- Gill, Aisha K. and Karen Harrison. 2015. "Child Grooming and Sexual Exploitation: Are South Asian Men the UK Media's New Folk Devils?" *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* 4 (2): 34-49.
- Gill, Lesley. 2004. *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 2009. "The Parastate in Columbia: Political Violence and the Restructuring of Barrancabermeja." *Anthropologica* 51 (2): 313-325.
- Gilligan J H and Coxon A P M, eds. 1985 *AIDS: The Latest Moral Panic, Occasional Paper No 11*, December, The School of Social Studies, University College of Swansea
- Gills, Barry, Joel Rocamora, and Richard Wilson, eds. 1994. *Low Intensity Democracy: Political Power in the New World Order*. Boulder, CO: Pluto Press.
- Gilmore, David D. 1988 *Carnival and Culture: Sex, Symbol, and Status in Spain*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Gilsenan, Michael. 1996. *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: Violence and Narrative in an Arab Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2000. "Signs of Truth: Enchantment, Modernity and the Dreams of Peasant Women." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 6 (4): 597-615.
- Ginsburg, Faye. 1987. "Procreation Stories: Reproduction, Nurturance, and Procreation in Life Narratives of Abortion Activists." *American Ethnologist* 14 (4): 623-636.
- Ginsburg, Faye and Rayna Rapp, eds. 1995. *Conceiving of the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Girard, René. 1977. *The Violence and the Sacred*. Translated by Patrick Gregory. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Girón, Anna Belinda Sandoval. 2007. "Taking Matters Into One's Hands: Lynching And Violence In Post-Civil War Guatemala." *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 36 (4): 357-379.
- Glassner, Barry. 1999. *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things*. New York: Basic Books.
- Glassner, Barry. 2004. "Narrative Techniques of Fear Mongering." *Social Research* 71 (4): 819-826.

- Gleijeses, Piero. 1991. *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 1997. "Grappling with Guatemala's Horror (Review Article)" *Latin American Research Review* 32 (1): 226-235.
- Gluckman, Max. 1955. *Custom and Conflict in Africa*. New York: Barnes and Noble.
- . 1971. *Politics, Law, and Ritual in Tribal Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gobierno de Guatemala. 1985. *Polos de Desarrollo y Servicios: Historiografía Institucional*. Guatemala City: Editorial del Ejército.
- Godelier, Maurice, ed. 1973. *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Godwin Phelps, Teresa. 2004. *Shattered Voices: Language, Violence, and the Work of Truth Commissions*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Goldín, Liliana. 1992. "Work and Ideology in the Maya Highlands of Guatemala: Economic Beliefs in the Context of Occupational Change." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 41:103-124.
- . 2009. *Global Maya. Work and Ideology in Rural Guatemala*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
- Goldman, Francisco. 1992. *The Long Night of White Chickens*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.
- . 1996. "In Guatemala, All is Forgotten." *New York Times*, December 23.
- Goldstein, Daniel M. 2003. "'In Our Own Hands': Lynching, Justice, and the Law in Bolivia." *American Ethnologist* 30 (1): 22-43.
- . 2004. *The Spectacular City: Violence and Performance in Urban Bolivia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Goldstein, Daniel M., and Enrique Desmond Arias, eds. 2010. *Violent Democracies in Latin America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Goldstein, Daniel M., Gloria Acha, Eric Hinojosa, and Theo Roncken. 2007. "'La Mano Dura' and the Violence of Civil Society in Bolivia." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 51 (2): 43-63.
- Goldstone, Brian. 2007. "Social Thought and Commentary: Violence and the Profane: Islamism, Liberal Democracy, and the Limits of Secular Discipline." *Anthropological Quarterly* 80 (1): 207-235.

- Gómez-Barris, Macarena. 2009. *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and State Violence in Chile*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Goodale, Mark. 2006a. "Introduction to 'Anthropology and Human Rights in a New Key.'" *American Anthropologist* 108 (1): 1-8.
- . 2006b. "Toward a Critical Anthropology of Human Rights." *Current Anthropology* 47 (3): 485-511.
- Goodale, Mark, Ed. 2009. *Human Rights: An Anthropological Reader*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Goodale, Mark and Sally Engle Merry. 2006. *The Practice of Human Rights: Tracking Law between the Global and the Local*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Goode, Erich. 2000. "Review: No Need to Panic? A Bumper Crop of Books on Moral Panic." *Sociological Forum* 15 (3): 543-552.
- Goode, Erich, and Nachman Ben-Yehuda. 1994a. "Moral Panic: Culture, Politics, and Social Construction." *Annual Review of Sociology* 20: 149-171.
- . 1994b. *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Goodwin, Michele. 2006. *Black Markets: The Supply and Demand of Body Parts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gorth, Terrie R. 2002. *Theories of the Latin American State and Comparative Democratization Studies*. Prepared for delivery at the 52nd Annual Conference of the Political Science Studies Association "Making Politics Count," University of Aberdeen, April 5-7; Panel 2-11 "Constitutional Systems, Political Reform and Democratic Transition": 1-37.
- Gott, Richard. 1971. *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Gottschall, Jonathan. 2012. *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Gotz, Norbert. 2015. "'Moral Economy': Its Conceptual History and Analytical Prospects." *Journal of Global Ethics* 11 (2): 147-162.
- Gourevitch, Philip. 1998. *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Graff, E. J. 2010. "Anatomy of an Adoption Crisis." *Foreign Policy*, September 12.
- Graham, Douglas H., and Donald E. Schulz. 1984. *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Central America and the Caribbean*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- Gramajo Morales, Hector Alejandro. 1995. *De la Guerra... a la guerra: La difícil transición política en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: Fondo de Cultura Editorial.
- Grandin, Greg. 2000. *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 2000. "Chronicles of a Guatemalan Genocide Foretold." *Nepantla: Views from South* 1 (2): 391-412.
- . 2004. *The Last Colonial Massacre*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2005. "The Instruction of Great Catastrophe: Truth Commissions, National History, and State Formation in Argentina, Chile, and Guatemala." *American Historical Review* 110 (1): 46-67.
- . 2007. *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- . 2011. *Who Is Rigoberta Menchú?* New York: Verso.
- Grandin, Greg, ed. 2001. *Denegado en su totalidad: documentos estadounidenses liberados. Ciudad de Guatemala*: AVANCSO.
- Greenhouse, Carol J. 2005. "Hegemony and Hidden Transcripts: The Discursive Arts of Neoliberal Legitimation." *American Anthropologist* 107 (3): 356-368.
- Green, Linda. 1994. "Fear as a Way of Life." *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (2): 227-256.
- . 1999. *Fear as a Way of Life: Mayan Widows in Rural Guatemala*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Grossman, Dave. 1996. *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. New York: Little, Brown & Company.
- Gubrium, Jaber F., and James A. Holstein. 2000. *The Self We Live By: Narrative Identity in a Postmodern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 2009. *Analyzing Narrative Reality*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- . 2012. *Varieties of Narrative Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gugelberger, Georg M. 1996. *The Real Thing: Testimonial Discourse and Latin America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Guinnane, Timothy W. 2005. "Trust: A Concept Too Many." Yale University Economic Growth Center Discussion paper No. 907.

- Gusterson, Hugh. 1991. "Nuclear War, the Gulf War, and the Disappearing Body." *Journal of Urban and Cultural Studies* 2 (1): 45-55.
- . 1998. *Nuclear Rites: A Nuclear Weapons Laboratory at the End of the Cold War*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gupta, Akhil. 1995. "Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State." *American Ethnologist* 22 (2): 375-402.
- Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson. 1992. "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference." *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1): 6-23.
- Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson, eds. 1997. *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Gutmann, Amy, and Dennis Thompson. 1996. *Democracy and Disagreement*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 2002. *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gutman, Roy, and David Rieff, eds. 1999. *Crimes of War: What the Public Should Know*. New York: Norton.
- Haan, Willem de. 2008. "Violence as an Essentially Contested Concept." In *Violence in Europe*, edited by Sophie Body-Gendrot and Pieter Spierenburg, 27-40. New York: Springer.
- Haas, Jonathan, ed. 1990. *The Anthropology of War*. Cambridge University Press.
- Habermas, Jurgen. 2001. *The Postnational Constellation Political Essays*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. 2013. *Making Human Rights a Reality*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hagopian, Frances. 2005. "Conclusions: Government Performance, Political Representation, and Public Perceptions of Contemporary Democracy in Latin America." In *Third Wave Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks*, edited by Francis Hagopian and Scott P. Mainwaring. 319-361. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hagopian, Frances, and Scott P. Mainwaring, eds. 2005. *Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hague Conference on Private International Law. 2007. "Report of a Fact-Finding Mission to Guatemala in Relation to Inter-country Adoption." The Hague: HCCH.
- Hahn, R. A. and Arthur Kleinman. 1983. "Biomedical Practice and Anthropological Theory: Frameworks and Directions." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 12: 305-333.

- Haiken, Elizabeth. 1999. *Venus Envy: A History of Cosmetic Surgery*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hajjar, Lisa. 2013. *Torture: A Sociology of Violence and Human Rights*. New York: Routledge.
- Hale, Charles R. 1997a. "Consciousness, Violence and the Politics of Memory in Guatemala." *Current Anthropology* 38 (5): 817-838.
- . 1997b. "Cultural Politics of Identity in Latin America." *Annual Review Anthropology* 26: 567-590.
- Haley, Brian D. 1999. "The culture of indigenous rights activism and David Stoll's Rigoberta Menchú." *Human Rights Review* 1 (1): 91-98.
- Hall, Stuart. 2012. *Theorizing Crime and Deviance: A New Perspective*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hall, Stuart, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, John and Brian Roberts. 1978. *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*. London: Macmillan.
- Hall, Thomas D., ed. 2000. *A World-Systems Reader: New Perspectives on Gender, Urbanism, Cultures, Indigenous Peoples, and Ecology*. Boston: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Halperin, M. H., Joseph T. Siegle, and Michael M. Weinstein. 2005. *The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace*. London: Routledge.
- Handelman, Don. 1990. *Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Handy, Jim. 1984. *Gift of the Devil: A History of Guatemala*. Boston: South End Press.
- . 2004. "Chicken Thieves, Witches, and Judge: Vigilante Justice and Customary Law in Guatemala." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 36 (3): 533-561.
- Hanne, Michael, William D. Crano, and Jeffrey Scott Mio, eds. 2015. *Warring With Words: Narrative and Metaphor in Politics*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Hansen, Thomas B., and Finn Stepputat. 2001. *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Haraway, Donna. 1989. "The Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies: Determinations of Self in Immune System." *Differences*. 1: 3-43.
- . 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.
- . 1991. In *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, edited by Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick. 203-214. New York: Taylor & Francis.

- Harbury, Jennifer. 1995. *Bridge of Courage: Life Stories of the Guatemalan Compañeros and Compañeras*.
Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.
- . 1997. *Searching for Everardo: A Story of Love, War, and the CIA in Guatemala*. New York:
Warner Books.
- Hardin, Russell. 1993. "The Street-Level Epistemology of Trust." *Politics and Society* 21: 505-531.
- Harriss, John. 2003. "'Widening the Radius of Trust': Ethnographic of Trust and Indian Business."
The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 9 (4): 755-773.
- Hass, Jonathan. Ed. 1990. *The Anthropology of War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hatzfeld, Jean. 2005. *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak*. Translated by Linda Coverdale. New
York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Hawkins, John P., James H. McDonald, and Walter Randolph Adams, eds. 2013. *Crisis of Governance
in Maya Guatemala*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Hayner, Priscilla B. 2011. *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity*. 2nd ed. New York:
Routledge.
- Heasley, Nathanael, Rodger Hurley, Kara E. Irwin, Andrew H. Kaufman, Nadine Moustafa, and
Alain Personna. 2001. "Impunity in Guatemala: The State's Failure to Provide Justice in the
Massacre Cases." *American University International Law Review* 16 (5): 1115-1194.
- Helander, Bernhard. 1998. "The Emperor's New Clothes Removed: A Critique of Besteman's
'Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence.'" *American Ethnologist* 25 (3): 489-501.
- Held, David. 2006. *Models of Democracy*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hendrickson, Carol. 1995. *Weaving Identities: Constructions of Dress and Self in a Highland Guatemala Town*.
Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Henighan, Stephen. 2008. *A Report on the Afterlife of Culture*. Toronto: Biblioasis.
- Herlinghaus, Hermann. 2009. *Violence Without Guilt: Ethical Narratives from the Global South*. New York:
Palgrave Macmillan.
- Herman, Luc and Bartt Vervaeck. 2005. *Handbook of Narrative Analysis*. Lincoln, NE: University of
Nebraska Press.
- Herrera, Luz Alicia. 1980. "Testimonies of Guatemalan Women." Translated by Maria Alice Jacob.
Latin American Perspectives 7 (2/3): 160-168.
- Herzfeld, Michael. 1985. "Levi-Strauss in the Nation-State." *The Journal of American Folklore* 98 (388):
191-208.

- . 1988. “Embarrassment as Pride: Narrative Resourcefulness and Strategies of Normativity among Cretan Animal-Thieves.” *Anthropological Linguistics* 30 (3/4): 319-344.
- . 1997. “Anthropology and the Politics of Significance.” *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 41 (3): 107-138.
- . 2001. “Performing Comparisons: Ethnography, Globetrotting, and the Spaces of Social Knowledge.” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 57 (3): 259-276.
- . 2005. “Political Optics and the Occlusion of Intimate Knowledge.” *American Anthropologist* 107 (3): 369-376.
- . 2008. “Mere Symbols.” *Anthropologica* 50 (1): 141-155.
- Herzog, Hannah. 1987. “The Election Campaign as a Liminal Stage – Negotiations over Meanings.” *Sociological Review*. 35: 559-574.
- Hess, Peter, and Clark G. Ross. 1997. *Economic Development: Theories, Evidence, and Policies*. New York: Dryden Press.
- Hier, Sean P. 2002. “Conceptualizing Moral Panic through a Moral Economy of Harm.” *Critical Sociology* 28 (3) 311-34.
- Hey, Hilde. 1995. *Gross Human Rights Violations: A Search for Causes: A Study of Guatemala and Costa Rica*. The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Higgott, Richard. 1978. “Competing Theoretical Perspectives on Development and Underdevelopment: A Recent Intellectual History.” *Politics* 8 (1): 26-41.
- Higonnet, Etelle, ed. 2009. *Quiet Genocide: Guatemala, 1981-1983*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Hill, Claire A., and Erin A. O’Hara O’Connor. 2005. “A Cognitive Theory of Trust.” Minnesota Legal Studies Research Paper No. 05-51.
- Hinchman, Lewis P., and Sandra K. Hinchman, eds. 2001. *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Science*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hinojosa, Servando Z. 2015. *In This Body: Kaqchikel Maya and the Grounding of Spirit*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.
- Hinton, Alexander Laban, ed. 2002a. *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader*. London: Blackwell Publishers.
- . 2002b. *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- . 2005. *Why Did They Kill? Cambodia in the Shadow of Genocide*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- . 2010. *Transitional Justice: Global Mechanisms and Local Realities after Genocide and Mass Violence*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Hobbes, Thomas. 1962. *Leviathan or the matter, forme and power of a commonwealth ecclesiastical and civil*, edited by M. Oakeshott. First edition 1651. New York: Collier.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. 1971. *Primitive Rebels*. Manchester: University of Manchester Press.
- Hoffman, Danny. 2005. "West-African Warscapes: Violent Events as Narrative Blocs: The Disarmament at Bo, Sierra Leone." *Anthropological Quarterly* 78 (2): 328-353.
- . 2011. *The War Machines: Young Men and Violence in Sierra Leone and Liberia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Hogle, Linda F. 1995. "Enhancement Technologies and the Body." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34: 695-716
- Horton, Sarah B., and Judith C. Barker. 2010. "Stigmatized Biologies: Examining Oral Health Disparities for Mexican American Farmworker Children and their Cumulative Effects." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 24 (2): 199-219.
- Hough, Mike, Jonathan Jackson, and Ben Bradford. 2013. "The Governance of Criminal Justice, Legitimacy and Trust." In *The Routledge Handbook of European Criminology*, edited by Sophie Body-Gendrot, René Lévy, Mike Hough, Sonja Snacken, and Klara Kerezsi, 243-265. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Howarth, Kirsten, and Jenny H. Peterson, eds. 2016. *Linking Political Violence and Crime in Latin America*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Hubert, Henri, and Marcel Mauss. 1964. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Hutton, Ronald Hutton, "Anthropological and Historical Approaches to Witchcraft: Potential for a New Collaboration?" *The Historical Journal*. 47 (2): 413-434.
- Human Rights Watch. 1993. *La detención clandestina en Guatemala*. Washington, D.C.: Human Rights Watch/Americas Watch (formerly Americas Watch).
- . 1994. *Human Rights in Guatemala during President De León Carpio's First Year*. Washington, D.C.: Human Rights Watch.
- . 1995. *Disappeared in Guatemala*. Washington, D.C.: Human Rights Watch.

- . 1996a. *Return to Violence: Refugees, Civil Patrollers and Impunity*. Washington, D.C.: Human Rights Watch.
- . 1996b. *Human Rights Watch World Report 1995 – Guatemala*. New York: Human Rights Watch.
- . 1997a. *Guatemala's Forgotten Children: Police Violence and Abuses in Detention*. Washington, D.C.: Human Rights Watch.
- . 1997b. *Corporations and Human Rights: Freedom of Association in a Maquila in Guatemala*. Washington, D.C.: Human Rights Watch.
- Humphrey, Michael, and Estela Valverde. 2007. "Human Rights, Victimhood, and Impunity: An Anthropology of Democracy in Argentina." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 51 (1): 179-197.
- Hunt, Lynn. 2008. *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. New York: Norton.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- . 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*. 72(3) 22-49.
- . 1996. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Ifeka, Caroline. 2004. "Market Forces, Political Violence, and War: The End of Nation-States, the Rise of Ethnic and Global Sovereignities?" *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 48 (1): 97-107.
- Ignatieff, Michael. 1998. *The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience*. New York: Henry Holt & Company.
- Immerman, Richard. 1982. *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Immerso, Michael. 2002. *Coney Island: The People's Playground*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002.
- Impunity Watch and Convergencia por los Derechos Humanos. 2009. "*La Persistencia De La Verdad: A diez años del Informe de la CEH*." Guatemala City: Impunity Watch.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística. 1996. "Características Generales de Población y Habitación." Guatemala City: Instituto Nacional de Estadística.
- Intelligence Oversight Board. 1996. "Victims of Violence in Guatemala Reviewed by the IOB." *Report on the Guatemala Review*, June 28.

- Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. 1995. "Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 1994." OEA/Ser.L/V.88. Doc. 9 rev. 1. 17 February 1995.
- International Crisis Group. 2010. "Guatemala: Squeezed Between Crime and Impunity." *Latin America Report* 33, June 22.
- Isaacs, Anita. 2010. "At War with the Past? The Politics of Truth Seeking in Guatemala." *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Isbell, Billie Jean. 1998. "Violence in Peru: Performances and Dialogues." *American Anthropologist*. 100 (2): 282-292.
- Jabine, Thomas B., and Richard P. Claude. 1992. *Human Rights and Statistics: Setting the Record Straight*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Jackson, Jean E., and Kay B. Warren. 2005. "Indigenous Movements in Latin America, 1992-2004: Controversies, Ironies, New Directions." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34: 549-573.
- Jackson, Michael. 2005. "West-African Warscapes: Storytelling Events, Violence, and the Appearance of the Past." *Anthropological Quarterly* 78 (2): 355-375.
- . 2006. *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.
- Jahn, Manfred. 2005. *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*. Cologne, Germany: English Department, University of Cologne.
- Jakobson, Roman. 1971. "On Realism in Art." In *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist*, edited by Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska, 38-46. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- James, Erica Caple. 2012. "Witchcraft, Bureaucracy, and the Social Life of (US)Aid in Haiti." *Cultural Anthropology* 27 (1): 50-75.
- Jameson, Frederic. 1982. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- James, Wendy. 1997. "The Names of Fear: Memory, History, and the Ethnography of Feeling Among Uduk Refugees." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3 (1): 115-131.
- Janes, Craig R., and Kitty K. Corbett. 2009. "Anthropology and Global Health." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 36: 167-183.
- Janvry, Alain de, and Elizabeth Sadoulet. 1995. *Poverty, Equity and Social Welfare in Latin America: Determinants of Change Over Growth Spells*. Geneva: International Labour Organization.
- Jelin, Elizabeth, and Eric Hershberg, eds. 1996. *Constructing Democracy: Human Rights, Citizenship, and Society in Latin America*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- Jenkins, Janis H. 1998. "The Medical Anthropology of Political Violence: A Cultural and Feminist Agenda." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 12 (1): 122-131.
- Jenkins, Philip. 1998. *Moral Panic: Changing Concepts of the Child Molester in Modern America*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Jensen, Steffen, and Henrik Ronsbo, eds. 2014. *Histories of Victimhood*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Jewkes, Yvonne. 2011. "Media and Moral Panics." In *Media & Crime*, 2nd ed., edited by Yvonne Jewkes. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Press.
- Johnson, Andrew Alan. 2013. "Progress and its Ruins: Ghosts, Migrants, and the Uncanny in Thailand." *Cultural Anthropology* 28 (2): 299-319.
- Johnson, George. 1983. *Architects of Fear: Conspiracy Theories and Paranoia in American Politics*. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher.
- Jonas, Susanne. 1981. *Guatemala: Plan piloto para el continente*. San Jose: EDUCA.
- . 1991. *The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels, Death Squads and U.S. Power*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- . 2000a. *Of Centaurs and Doves: Guatemala's Peace Process*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- . 2000b. "Democratization Through Peace: The Difficult Case of Guatemala." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 42 (4): 9-38.
- Jonas, Susanne, and Nestor Rodriguez. 2015. *Guatemala-U.S. Migration: Transforming Regions*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Jowdy, Gregory. 1997. "Truth Commissions in El Salvador and Guatemala: A Proposal for Truth in Guatemala." *Boston College Third World Law Journal* 17 (2): 285-330.
- Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2000. *Terror in the Mind of God. The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kadetsky, Elizabeth. 1994. "Guatemala Inflamed: Accused of Stealing and Murdering Babies, American Women are Attacked by Hysterical Mobs." *Village Voice*, May 31.
- Kahn, Joel S. 2001. "Anthropology and Modernity." *Current Anthropology* 42 (5): 651-664.
- Kahn, Paul W. 2008. *Sacred Violence: Torture, Terror, and Sovereignty*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

- Kahan, Dan M. 2002. "The Logic of Reciprocity: Trust, Collective Action, and Law." *Yale Law School*, Public Law Research Paper No. 31; Yale Law & Economics Research Paper No. 281.
- Kapferer, Bruce. 1988. *Legends of People, Myths of State: Violence, Intolerance and Political Culture in Sri Lanka and Australia*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- . 1997. *The Feast of the Sorcerer: Practices of Consciousness and Power*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2003. *Beyond Rationalism: Rethinking Magic, Witchcraft and Sorcery*. New York: Berghahn Books
- . 2004. "Introduction: Old Permutations, New Formations? War, State, and Global Transgression." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 48 (1): 64-72.
- . 2005. "New formations of power, the oligarchic-corporate state, and anthropological ideological discourse." *Anthropological Theory* 5: 285-298.
- Kapferer, Jean-Noel. 1990. *Rumors: Uses, Interpretations, and Images*. Translated by Bruce Fink. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Karandinos, George, Laurie K. Hart, Fernando M. Castrillo, and Philippe Bourgois. 2014. "The Moral Economy of Violence in the US Inner City." *Current Anthropology* 55 (1): 1-22.
- Karl, Terry Lynn. 1990. "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America." *Comparative Politics* 23 (1): 1-21.
- Kaspin, Deborah. 1993. "Government by Seduction: History and the Tropes of "Mounting" in Oyo-Yoruba Religion." In *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*, edited by Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, 34-57. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Keane, John. 1996. *Reflection on Violence*. London: Verso.
- Keeley, Lawrence. 1997. *War Before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kelly, Raymond C. 2000. *Warless Societies and the Origin of War*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Kearney, Michael. 1995. "The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24:547-65.
- . 2004. *Changing Fields of American Anthropology: From Local to Global* Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Kerby, Anthony Paul. 1991. *Narrative and the Self*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

- Kermode, Frank. 1985. *The Art of Telling: Essays on Fiction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kertzner, David I. 1988. *Ritual, Politics, and Power*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Khan, L. Ali. 2003. *A Theory of Universal Democracy: Beyond the End of History*. The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Kidron, Carol A. 2009. "Toward an Ethnography of Silence: The Livid Presence of the Past in the Everyday Life of Holocaust Trauma Survivors and Their Descendants in Israel." *Current Anthropology* 50 (10): 5-27.
- Kleinman, Arthur. 1988. *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, And The Human Condition*. New York: Basic Books.
- . 1995. *Writing at the Margin: Discourse Between Anthropology and Medicine*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kleinman, Arthur, Veena Das, and Margaret M. Lock, eds. 1997. *Social Suffering*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Knopf, Terry Ann. 1975. *Rumors, Race and Riots*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.
- Kobrak, Paul. 2013. "The Long War in Colotenango: Guerrillas, Army, and Civil Patrols." In *War By Other Means: Aftermath in Post-Genocide Guatemala*, edited by Carlota McAllister and Diane M. Nelson, 218-240. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Konefal, Betsy. 2010. *For Every Indio Who Falls: A History of Maya Activism in Guatemala, 1960-1990*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.
- Koomen, Jonneke. 2013. "'Without These Women, the Tribunal Cannot Do Anything': The Politics of Witness Testimony on Sexual Violence at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda." *Signs* 38 (2): 253-277.
- Korbin, Jill E. 2003. "Children, Childhoods, and Violence." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32 (1): 431-446.
- Korzeniewicz, Roberto Patricio, and William C. Smith. 2000. "Poverty, Inequality, and Growth in Latin America: Searching for the High Road to Globalization." *Latin American Research Review* 35 (3): 7-54.
- Kothari, Uma, and Martin Minogue, eds. 2001. *Development Theory and Practice*. New York: Palgrave.
- Kovats-Bernat, J. Christopher. 2002. "Negotiating Dangerous Field: Pragmatic Strategies for Fieldwork Amid Violence and Terror." *American Anthropologist* 104 (1): 208-222.
- Krieger, Nancy. 2005. "Embodiment: A Conceptual Glossary for Epidemiology." *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*. 59: 350-355.

- Kritz, Neil J., ed. 1995. *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon with Former Regimes*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.
- Kroeger, Karen A. 2003. "AIDS Rumors, Imaginary Enemies, and the Body Politics in Indonesia." *American Ethnologist* 30 (2): 243-257.
- Krohn-Hansen, Christian. 1997. "The Anthropology and Ethnography of Political Violence." *Journal of Peace Research* 34 (2): 233-240.
- Kroonings, Kees, and Dirk Kruijt, eds. 1999. *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*. London: Zed Books.
- . 1999. "Introduction: Violence and Fear in Latin America." In *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*, edited by Kees Kroonings and Dirk Kruijt. London: Zed Books.
- Krueger, Chris, and Kjell Enge. 1985. *Security and Development Conditions in the Guatemalan Highlands*. Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin America.
- Kruijt, Dirk. 1999. "Exercised in State Terrorism: the Counter-insurgency Campaigns in Guatemala and Peru." In *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*, edited by Kees Kroonings and Dirk Kruijt. London: Zed Books.
- Kruijt, Dirk, and Rudi Van Meurs. 2000. *El guerrillero y el general: Rodrigo Asturias y Julio Balconi sobre la guerra y la paz en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: FLACSO.
- Kubiak, Jeffrey J. 2014. *War Narratives and the American National Will in War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kurtz, Donald V. 2001. *Political Anthropology: Paradigms and Power*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- La Fontaine, Jean S. 1998. "Speak of the Devil: Allegations of Satanic Abuse in Britain." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- LaFeber, Walter. 1993. *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 1981. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, George. 1990. *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lambek, Michael. 1997. "Monstrous Desires and Moral Disquiet." Review of *Consuming Passion: Child Abuse, Fetishism, and 'The New World Order'*, by Jean Comaroff. *Culture* 17 (1-2): 19-25.

- Lancaster, Roger N. 2011. *Sex Panic and the Punitive State*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Langer, Susan K. 1957. *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art*. 3rd ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Latin American Institute for Education and Communication. 2000. "Adoption and the Rights of the Child in Guatemala." Guatemala City: ILPEC.
- Latinobarómetro. 1995. "Informe de Prensa". Santiago, Chile: Corporación Latinobarómetro.
- . 2009. "Report 2009". Santiago, Chile: Corporación Latinobarómetro.
- Lazarus-Black, Mindie, and Susan F. Hirsch, eds. 1994. *Contested States: Law, Hegemony, and Resistance*. London: Routledge.
- Le Bon, Gustave. 2002. *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*. Mineola, NY: Dover Books.
- Le Bot, Yvon. 1992. *Guatemala: Violencia, revolución y democracia*. Debate 15. Guatemala City: FLACSO.
- . 1995. *La guerra en tierras mayas: Comunidad, violencia y modernidad en Guatemala 1970-1992*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- . 1999. "Churches, Sects and Communities: Social Cohesion Recovered?" *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 18 (2): 165–174.
- Leach, Edmund R. 1954. *Political Systems of Highland Burma*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- . 1969. *Genesis as myth and other essays*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Lechner, Norbert. 2004. "On the Imaginary of the Citizenry." In *The Quality of Democracy: Theory and Application*, edited by Guillermo O'Donnell, Jorge Vargas Culler and Osvaldo M. Iazzetta, 203-210. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Leiby, Michele L. 2009. "Wartime Sexual Violence in Guatemala and Peru." *International Studies Quarterly* 53 (2): 445-68.
- Leitch, Thomas M. 1986. *What Stories Are: Narrative Theory and Interpretation*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Lemon, Alaina. 2000. *Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romani Memory from Pushkin to Postcolonialism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Lepselter, Susan. 2011. "The Disorder of Things: Hoarding Narratives in Popular Media." *Anthropological Quarterly* 84 (4): 919-947.
- Lessa, Francesca, and Leigh A. Payne, eds. 2012. *Amnesty in the Age of Human Rights Accountability*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Lessa, Francesca, and Vincent Druliolle, eds. 2011. *The Memory of State Terrorism in the Southern Cone*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Leve, Lauren. 2001. "Between Jesse Helms and Ram Bahadur: Women, 'Participation,' and 'Empowerment' in Nepal." *PoLAR: Political Legal Anthropological Review* 24 (1): 108-128.
- . 2011. "Identity." *Current Anthropology* 52 (4): 513-535.
- Levenson-Estrada, Deborah. 1994. *Trade Unionists Against Terror: Guatemala City, 1954-1985*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Leventhal, Todd. 1994. "The Child Organ Trafficking Rumor: A Modern 'Urban Legend.'" A Report submitted to The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography. Washington, D.C.: United States Information Agency.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1962. *The Savage Mind (Nature of Human Society)*. Translated by George Weidenfeld and Nicholson Ltd. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Levy, Joshua Wolfe. 2007. "The Making of the *Gringo* World: Expatriates in La Antigua Guatemala." *Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, ProQuest 3306224*.
- Lewis, I. M. 1998. "Doing Violence to Ethnography: A Response to Catherine Besteman's 'Representing Violence and 'Othering' Somalia.'" *Cultural Anthropology* 13 (1): 100-108.
- Lienhardt, Peter A. 1975. "The Interpretation of Rumor" in *Studies in Anthropology: Essays in Memory of E. E. Evans-Pritchard by His Former Colleagues*, edited by J. H. M. Beattie and R. G. Lienhardt. 105-132. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lindahl, Carl. "Thrills and Miracles: Legends of Lloyd Chandler." *Journal of Folklore Research* 41 (2/3): 133-171.
- Linke, Uli, and Danielle Taana Smith. 2009. *Cultures of Fear: A Critical Reader*. New York: Pluto Press.
- Linz, Juan J., and Alfred Stepan, eds. 1978, eds. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Latin America*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- . 1996. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy." *American Political Science Review* 53 (1): 69-105.
- Little, Walter E. 2004. "Outside of Social Movements: Dilemmas of Indigenous Handicrafts Vendors in Guatemala." *American Ethnologist* 31 (1): 43-59.

- . 2010. *Mayas in the Marketplace: Tourism, Globalization, and Cultural Identity*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Little, Walter E., and Timothy J. Smith. 2009. *Mayas in Postwar Guatemala*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- Lock, Margaret. 1993. "Cultivating the Body: Anthropology and the Epistemologies of Bodily Practice and Knowledge." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 22: 133-155.
- . 2002. *Twice Dead: Organ Transplants and the Reinvention of Death*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lock, Margaret, and Judith Farquhar, eds. 2007. *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Löfving, Staffan. 2004. "Paramilitaries of the Empire: Guatemala, Colombia, and Israel." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 48 (1): 156-160.
- Logan, Michael H. 1973. "Digestive Disorders and Plant Medicinals in Highland Guatemala." *Anthropos* 68 (3/4): 537-547.
- . 1979. "Variations Regarding *Susto* Causality Among the Cakchiquel of Guatemala." *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 3 (2): 153-166.
- Lomnitz-Adler, Claudio. 1993. *Exits from the Labyrinth: Culture and Ideology in the Mexican National Space*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lorey, David E., and William H. Beezley, eds. 2002. *Genocide, Collective Violence, and Popular Memory: The Politics of Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources.
- Lothe, Jakob, Susan Rubin Seleiman, and James Phelan. 2012. *After Testimony: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Holocaust Narrative for the Future*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.
- Lovell, George. 1985. *Conquest and Survival in Colonial Guatemala: A Historical Geography of the Cuchumatán Highlands, 1500-1821*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- . 1988. "Surviving Conquest: The Maya of Guatemala in Historical Perspective." *Latin American Research Review* 23 (2): 25-57.
- . 2001. *A Beauty That Hurts. Life and Death in Guatemala*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Loveman, Brian, and Thomas Davies, eds. 1989. *The Politics of Anti-Politics: The Military in Latin America*. 2nd ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Luhmann, Niklas. 1979. *Trust and Power: Two Works by Niklas Luhmann*. Chichester: John Wiley.

- . 1988. "Familiarity, Confidence, Trust: Problems and Alternatives." In *Trust: Making and Breaking Co-operative Relations*, edited by Diego Gambetta. 95-107. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Lukes, Steven, ed. 1986. *Power*. New York: New York University Press.
- Lukes, Steven, and Andrew Scull, eds. 1983. *Durkheim and the Law*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Lutz, Catherine, and Donald Nonini. 1999. "The Economics of Violence and the Violence of Economics." In *Anthropological Theory Today*, edited by Henrietta Moore, 73-113. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Lykes, M. Brinton. 1994. "Terror, Silencing and Children: International Multidisciplinary Collaboration with the Guatemalan Maya Communities." *Social Science Medicine* 38 (4): 543-552.
- Lyons, Thomas. 2001. "Ambiguous Narratives." *Cultural Anthropology* 16 (2): 183-201.
- MacAdams, Dan P. 1997. *The Stories We Live By: Personal Myths and the Making of the Self*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- MacAloon, John J. 1984. *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.
- MacIntyre, Alistair. 1997. "The Virtues, the Unity of Human Life and the Concept of Tradition." In *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences*, edited by Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman. Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press.
- Mack, Myrna. 1988. "Política Institucional hacia el desplazado interno en Guatemala." *Cuadernos de Investigación* 4. Guatemala City: AVANCSO.
- . 1990. *Política institucional hacia el desplazado interno en Guatemala*. Guatemala: Asociación para el Avance de las Ciencias Sociales en Guatemala. Guatemala City: AVANCSO.
- Mackay, Charles. 2003. *Extraordinary Popular Delusions*. Mineola, NY: Dover Books.
- MacKenzie, C. James 2016. *Indigenous Bodies, Maya Minds: Religion and Modernity in a Transnational K'iché Community*. Albany, NY: Institute for Mesoamerican Studies.
- Mainwaring, Scott, and Anibal Pérez-Liñán. 2014. *Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, Survival, and Fall*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mainwaring, Scott, D. Brinks and Anibal Pérez-Liñán. 2001. "Classifying political regimes in Latin America, 1945-1999." *Dados* 44 (4), 645-687.
- Malkki, Liisa H. 1995. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Malone, Mary Fran T. 2012. *The Rule of Law in Central America: Citizens Reactions to Courts and Punishment*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Malloy, James M., ed. 1977. *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 2002. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Mandelbaum, David G. 1987. "Myths and Myth Maker: Some Anthropological Appraisals of the Mythological Studies of Levi-Strauss." *Ethnology* 26 (1): 31-36.
- Mandel, Ernest. 1999. *Late Capitalism*. London: Verso.
- Mani, Rama. 2002. *Beyond Retribution: Seeking Justice in the Shadows of War*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Manz, Beatriz. 1988. *Refugees of a Hidden War: The Aftermath of Counterinsurgency in Guatemala*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- . 2002. "Terror, Grief, and Recovery: Genocidal Trauma in a Mayan Village in Guatemala." In *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, edited by Alexander Laban Hinton, 292-309. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2004. *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror and Hope*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2008. "The Continuum of Violence in Post-war Guatemala." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 52 (2): 151-164.
- Marcus, George E., ed. 1999. *Paranoia Within Reason: A Casebook on Conspiracy as Explanation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marien, Sofie. 2011. "Measuring Political Trust Across Time and Space." In *Political Trust: Why Context Matters*, edited by Sonja Zmerli and Marc Hooghe, 13-46. Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Marre, Diana, and Laura Briggs, eds. 2009. *Global Inequalities and the Circulation of Children*. New York: New York University Press.
- Marsh, Ian, and Gaynor Melville. 2011. "Moral Panics and the British Media—A Look at Some Contemporary 'Folk Devils'." *Internet Journal of Criminology*: 1-21.
- Martin, Emily. 1992. "The End of the Body?" *American Ethnologist*. 19: 121-140.

- Martín Baró, Ignacio. 1990. "La violencia en Centroamérica: Una visión psicosocial." *Revista de Psicología de El Salvador* 9 (35): 123-146.
- Martínez Peláez, Severo. 1971. *La patria del criollo: Ensayo de interpretación de la realidad colonial guatemalteca*. Guatemala City: Editorial Universitaria.
- . 1994. *La Patria del Criollo: Ensayo de interpretación de la realidad colonial guatemalteca*. 13 ed. Mexico City: Ediciones en Marcha
- Mauss, Marcel. 1967. *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Maybury-Lewis, David. 1996. *Indigenous Peoples, Ethnic Groups, and the State*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Mayer, Frederick W. 2014. *Narrative Politics: Stories and Collective Action*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McAllister, Carlota. 2013. "Testimonial Truths and Revolutionary Mysteries." In *War By Other Means: Aftermath in Post-Genocide Guatemala*, edited by Carlota McAllister and Diane M. Nelson, 93-118. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- McAllister, Carlota, and Diane M. Nelson, eds. 2013. *War By Other Means: Aftermath in Post-Genocide Guatemala*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- McCleary, Rachel M. 1999. *Dictating Democracy: Guatemala and the End of Violent Revolution*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.
- McClintock, Michael. 1985. *The American Connection: State Terror and Popular Resistance in Guatemala*. London: Zed Books.
- McCreery, David. 1990. "State Power, Indigenous Communities, and Land in Nineteenth-Century Guatemala, 1820-1920." In *Guatemalan Indians and the State 1540 to 1988*, edited by Carol A. Smith, 96-115. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- . 1994. *Rural Guatemala, 1760 to 1940*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- McFarlane, Graham. 1986. "Violence in rural Northern Ireland." In *The Anthropology of Violence*, edited by David Riches. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- McKinney, Kelly. 2007. "'Breaking the Conspiracy of Silence': Testimony, Traumatic Memory, and Psychotherapy with Survivors of Political Violence." *Ethos* 35 (3): 265-299.
- McLeod, J. R. 1991. "Ritual and Rhetoric in Presidential Politics." *Central Issues in Anthropology*. 1: 29-46.
- . 1999. "The Sociodrama of Presidential Politics: Rhetoric, Ritual, and Power in the Era of

- Teledemocracy.” *American Anthropologist* 101 (2): 359-373.
- McSherry, J. Patrice, and Raúl Molina Mejía. 1992. “Confronting the Question of Justice in Guatemala.” *Social Justice* 19 (3): 1-28.
- Medina, Laurie Kroshus. 1997. “Development Policies and Identity Politics: Class and Collectivity in Belize.” *American Ethnologist* 24 (1): 148-169.
- Melville, Thomas, and Marjorie Melville. 1971. *Guatemala: The Politics of Land Ownership*. New York: The Free Press.
- Menchú, Rigoberta. 2010. *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. London: Verso Books,
- Méndez, Juan E. 1997. “Accountability for Past Abuses.” *Human Rights Quarterly* 19 (2): 255-282.
- Méndez, Juan E., Guillermo O’Donnell, and Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, eds. 1999. *The (Un)Rule of Law and the Underprivileged in Latin America*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Mendoza, Carlos, and Edelberto Torres-Rivas, eds. 2003. *Linchamientos: barbarie o “justicia popular”?* Guatemala City: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.
- Mendoza, Carlos A. 2007. *Ausencia del Estado y Violencia Colectiva en Tierras Mayas: Una aproximación cuantitativa al fenómeno de los linchamientos en Guatemala, 1996-2002*. Guatemala City: FLACSO.
- Menjívar, Cecilia. 2011. *Enduring Violence: Ladina Women’s Lives in Guatemala*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Merry, Sally Engle. 1992a. “Anthropology, Law and Transnational Processes.” *Annual Reviews in Anthropology* 21: 357-379.
- . 1992b “Popular Justice and the Ideology of Social Transformation.” *Social and Legal Studies* 1 161-76.
- . 1992c “Culture, Power, and the Discourse of Law.” *New York Law School Law Review* 37: 209-229.
- .2003. “Human Rights Law and the Demonization of Culture (And Anthropology Along the Way)” *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 26 (1): 55-77.
- . 2006a. “Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle.” *American Anthropologist* 108 (1): 38-51.
- . 2006b. *Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2016. *The Seductions of Quantification: Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence, and Sex Trafficking*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Merry, Sally Engle, Kevin Davis, and Benedict Kingsbury, eds. 2015. *The Quiet Power of Indicators: Measuring Governance, Corruption, and Rule of Law*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Messer, Ellen. 1993. "Anthropology and Human Rights." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22: 221-249.
- Metz, Brent. 1998. "Without Nation, Without Community: The Growth of Maya Nationalism among Ch'orti's of Eastern Guatemala." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 54 (3): 325-350.
- Metz, Brent, Lorenzo Mariano, and Julian Lopez Garcia. 2010. "The Violence After 'La Violencia' in the Ch'orti' Region of Eastern Guatemala." *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 15 (1): 16-41.
- Myerhoff, Barbara G. 1978. *Number Our Days*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Mezquita, Rocío. 2000. "The Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification: Data Processing." In *Making the Case. Investigating Large Scale Human Rights Violations Using Information Systems and Data Analysis*, edited by Patrick Ball, Herbert F. Spierer, and Louise Spierer, 205-221. Washington, D.C.: AAAS Science and Human Rights Program.
- Michel, Joanna L., Gail B. Mahady, Mario Veliz, Doel D. Soejarto, and Armando Caceres. 2006. "Symptoms, attitudes and treatment choices surrounding menopause among the Q'eqchi Maya of Livingston, Guatemala." *Social Science & Medicine* 63: 732-742.
- Mickolus, Edward F. and Susan L. Simmons. 1997. *Terrorism, 1992-1995: A Chronology of Events and A Selectively Annotated Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Miller, David and Kitzinger, Jenny. 1998. "AIDS, the Policy Process and Moral Panics." In *The Circuit of Mass Communication: Media Strategies, Representation and Audience Reception in the AIDS Crisis*, edited by David Miller, Jenny Kitzinger, Kevin Williams and Peter Beharrell. 213-22. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mink, Louis. 1978. "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument." In *The Writing of History*, edited by R. Canary and H. Kozicki. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Mintz, Sidney W. 1985. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Mishkin, Bernard. 1940 "Rank and warfare among the Plains Indians." Monograph of the American Ethnological Society III. New York.
- Misztal, Barbara A. 1996. *Trust in Modern Societies: The Search for the Bases of Social Order*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Mitchell, W. J. T, ed. 1981. *On Narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Mookherjee, Nayanika. 2006. "‘Remembering to Forget’: Public Secrecy and Memory of Sexual Violence in the Bangladesh War of 1971." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12 (2): 433-450.
- Montejo, Victor D. 1987. *Testimony: Death of a Guatemalan Village*. Willimantic, CT: Curbstone Press.
- . 1999. *Voice from Exile: Violence and Survival in Modern Maya History*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Morales, Gramajo, and Héctor Alejandro. 2003. *Alrededor de la bandera : un análisis praxiológico del enfrentamiento armado en Guatemala 1960-1996*. Ciudad de Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional.
- Morales, Mario Roberto, ed. 2001. *Stoll-Menchú. La invención de la memoria*. Guatemala City: Consucultura.
- Moran, Jon. 2011. *Crime and Corruption in the New Democracies: The Politics of (In)Security*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Morin, Edgar, 1971. *Rumour in Orleans*. New York: Random House.
- Morrison, Andrew, and Rachel May. 1994. "Escape from Terror: Violence and Migration in Post-Revolutionary Guatemala." *Latin American Research Review* 29 (2): 111-132.
- Morsink, Johannes. 1999. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting, and Intent*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Moss, Robert. 1972. *Urban Guerrillas: The New Face of Political Violence*. London: Robert Temple Smith.
- Moyn, Samuel. 2010. *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Mueggler, Erik. 2001. *The Age of Wild Ghosts: Memory, Violence, and Place in Southwest China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Musambachime, Mwelwa C. 1988. "The Impact of Rumor: The Case of the Banyama (Vampire Men) Scare in Northern Rhodesia, 1930-1964." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 21 (2): 201-215.
- Myers, Fred R. 1988. "Accounts of Human Nature." *Anthropology Today* 4 (4): 23-24.
- . 2004. "Ontologies of the Image and Economics of Exchange." *American Ethnologist* 31 (1): 5-20.
- Nagengast, Carole. 1994. "Violence, Terror, and the Crisis of the State." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23: 109-136.
- . 2001. Review of *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror*, Jeffrey A. Sluka, ed. *American*

- Nairn, Alan. 1983. "Guatemala Bleeds." *The New Republic*, April 11.
- . 1986. "Confessions of a Death Squad Officer." *The Progressive*, March.
- Nairn, Alan, and Jean-Marie Simon. 1986. "The Bureaucracy of Death: Guatemala's Civilian Government Faces the Enemy Within." *The New Republic*, June 30.
- Nalepa, Monika. 2010. "Captured Commitments: An Analytic Narrative of Transitions with Transitional Justice." *World Politics* 62 (2): 341-380.
- Narayan, Bhuvan. 2005. "DomiNation: How the Fragments Imagine the Nation: Perspectives from Some North Indian Villages." *Dialectical Anthropology* 29 (1): 123-140.
- Narayan, Kirin. 1995. "The Practice of Oral Literary Criticism: Women's Songs in Kangra, India." *The Journal of American Folklore* 108 (429): 243-264.
- National Academy of Sciences. 1998. *The Myrna Mack Case: An Update*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- National Security Archive. 2000. "The Guatemalan Military: What the U.S. Files Reveal, Volume I: Units and Officers of the Guatemalan Army." In *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 32*. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB32/vol1.html>.
- National Security Archive. 2012. "The Pursuit of Justice in Guatemala." In *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 373*. Accessed October 1, 2015. <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB373/>
- Nazpary, Joma. 2001. *Post-Soviet chaos: violence and dispossession in Kazakhstan*. London: Pluto Press.
- Nelson, Diane M. 1999. *A Finger in the Wound: Body Politics in Quincentennial Guatemala*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2001. "Indian Giver or Nobel Savage: Duping, Assumptions of Identity and Other Double Entendres in Rigoberta Menchu Tum's Stoll/en Past." *American Ethnologist* 28 (2): 303-331.
- . 2009. *Reckoning: The Ends of War in Guatemala*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 2012. "Banal, Familiar, and Enrapturing: Financial Enchantment After Guatemala's Genocide." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 40 (3/4): 205-222.
- . 2015. *Who Counts? The Mathematics of Death and Life after Genocide*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Nelson, Graig W., and Kenneth I. Taylor. 1983. *Witness to Genocide: The Present Situation of Indians in Guatemala*. London: Survival International.

- Nelson, Paul, and Ellen Dorsey. 2008. *New Rights Advocacy: Changing Strategies of Development and Human Rights NGOs*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Newton, Kenneth. 2001. "Trust, Social Capital, Civil Society, and Democracy." *International Political Science Review* 22 (2): 201-214.
- Nohlen, Dieter. 2005. *Elections in America: A Data Handbook*. Vol. 1. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nordstrom, Carolyn. 1997. *A Different Kind of War Story*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- . 2004a. *Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and the International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2004b. "Invisible Empires." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practices* 48 (1): 91-96.
- Nordstrom, Carolyn, and JoAnn Martin, eds. 1992. *The Paths to Terror: Domination, Resistance, and Communal Violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Nordstrom, Carolyn, and Antonius C. Robben, eds. 1995. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Norkunas, Martha. 2004. "Narratives of Resistance and the Consequences of Resistance." *Journal of Folklore Research* 41 (2/3): 105-123.
- North, Lisa, and Alan Simmons, eds. 1999. *Journeys of Fear: Refugee Return and National Transformation in Guatemala*. Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- North American Council on Latin America. 1997. "The Guatemalan Peace Accords." NACLA Report on the Americas, May/June 1997. New York: NACLA.
- Nugent, David. 1996. "From Devil Pacts to Drug Deals: Commerce, Unnatural Accumulation, and Moral Community in 'Modern Peru.'" *American Ethnologist* 23 (2): 258-290.
- . 2002. "Alternative Democracies: The Evolution of the Public Sphere in 20th Century Peru." *PoLAR: Political Legal Anthropology Review* 25 (1): 151-163.
- Nunkoo, Robin, and Stephen L. J. Smith. 2014. *Trust, Tourism Development and Planning*. London: Routledge.
- Nutini, Hugo G., and John M. Roberts. 1993. *Bloodsucking Witchcraft: An Epistemological Study of Anthropomorphic Supernaturalism in Rural Tlaxcala*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
- Oakes, Maud. 1951. *Beyond the Windy Place: Life in the Guatemalan Highlands*. New York: Farrar, Straus

- and Young.
- . 1968. *Two Crosses of Todos Santos: Survivals of Mayan Religious Ritual*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ochs, Elinor and Lisa Capps. 2001. *Living Narratives: Creating Lives in Everyday Storytelling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Oglesby, Elizabeth. 2013. “We’re No Longer Dealing with Fools’: Violence, Labor, and Governance on the South Coast.” In *War By Other Means: Aftermath in Post-Genocide Guatemala*, edited by Carlota McAllister and Diane M. Nelson, 143-169. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- O’Donnell, Guillermo. 1973. *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics*. Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley.
- . 1978. “Reflections on the Patterns of Change in the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State.” *Latin American Research Review* 13: 3-38.
- . 1996. “Illusions About Consolidation.” *Journal of Democracy* 7 (2): 34-51.
- . 2004. “Human Development, Human Rights, and Democracy.” In *The Quality of Democracy: Theory and Application*, edited by Guillermo O’Donnell, Jorge Vargas Cullell and Osvaldo M. Iazzetta, 9-92. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- O’Donnell, Guillermo, Jorge Vargas Cullell, and Osvaldo M. Iazzetta, eds. 2004. *The Quality of Democracy: Theory and Applications*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- O’Donnell, Guillermo, Philippe C. Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead, eds. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHAG). 1998. *Guatemala: Nunca Más*. 3 Vol. Guatemala City: ODHAG.
- Olsen, Tricia D., Leight A. Payne and Andrew G. Reiter. 2010. *Transitional Justice in Balance: Comparing Processes, Weighing Efficacy*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.
- Olujic, Maria B. 1998. “Embodiment of Terror: Gendered Violence in Peacetime and Wartime in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 12 (1): 31-50.
- O’Neill, John 1985. *Five Bodies: The Human Shape of Modern Society*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- O’Neill, Kevin Lewis. 2005. “Writing Guatemala’s Genocide: Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports and Christianity.” *Journal of Genocide Research* 7 (3): 331-349.

- . 2012. Review of *After the Coup: An Ethnographic Reframing of Guatemala 1954*, edited by Timothy J. Smith and Abigail E. Adams. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 17 (1): 142-143.
- . 2015. *Secure the Soul: Christian Piety and Gang Prevention in Guatemala*. Berkeley, University of California Press.
- O’Neill, Kevin Lewis, and Kedron Thomas, eds. 2011. *Securing the City: Neoliberalism, Space, and Insecurity in Postwar Guatemala*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Open Society Justice Initiative. 2013. “Update on Domestic Accountability for International Crimes.” *International Justice – Complementarity Digest*, June: 1-27.
- Organization of American States. 1948. *Charter of the Organization of American States*. April 30, 1948.
- . 1948. “American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man.” OEA/Ser.L./V.II.23, doc. 21, rev. 6.
- Orlove, Benjamin S. 1997. “Meat and Strength: The Moral Economy of a Chilean Food Riot.” *Current Anthropology* 12 (2): 234-268.
- Ortiz, Dianna. 1996. “A Nun Confronts her Torture.” *The Progressive*, June 1.
- Oxford English Dictionary*. 2007. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Padilla, Luis Alberto. 1997. “Peace Making and Conflict Transformation in Guatemala.” *Peace and Security* 29: 24-38.
- Paige, Jeffery M. 1983. “Social Theory and Peasant Revolution in Vietnam and Guatemala.” *Theory and Society* 12 (6): 699-736.
- Paine, Robert. 1967. “What is Gossip About? An Alternative Hypothesis” *Man* 2(2) 272-285.
- Paley, Julia. 2002. “Toward an Anthropology of Democracy.” *Annual Review Anthropology* 31: 469-496.
- Paley, Julia, ed. 2008. *Democracy: Anthropological Approaches*. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.
- Palmer, Craig T. 2005. “Mummers and Moshers: Two Rituals of Trust in Changing Social Environments.” *Ethnology* 44 (2): 147-166.
- Palmer, Gary B., and William R. Jankowiak. 1996. “Performance and Imagination: Toward an Anthropology of the Spectacular and the Mundane.” *Cultural Anthropology* 11 (2): 225-258.
- Palmié, Stephan. 2002. *Wizards & Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- . 2013. *The Cooking of History: How Not to Study Afro-Cuban Religion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Parish, Jane. 2015. "Beyond Occult Economies." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 5 (2): 101-120.
- Park, Robert. 1972. *The Crowd and the Public and Other Essays*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Patai, Daphne. 1999. "Rigoberta Menchú and the Politics of Lying." *Human Rights Review* 1 (1): 78-85.
- Paul, Benjamin, and William Demarest. 1988. "The Operation of Death Squad in San Pedro la Laguna." In *Harvest of Violence: the Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*, edited by Robert M. Carmack, 119-154. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Payeras, Mario. 1983. *Days of the Jungle: The Testimony of a Guatemalan Guerrillero 1972-1976*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- . 1987. *El trueno en la ciudad: Episodios de la lucha armada urbana de 1981 en Guatemala*. Mexico City: Juan Pablo Editores.
- Paz y Paz, Claudia. 2006. "Guatemala: Gender and Reparations for Human Rights Violations." In *What Happened to the Women? Gender and Reparations for Human Rights Violations*, edited by R. Rubio-Marin. New York: Social Science Research Council.
- Pearce, Jenny. 1982. *Under the Eagle: U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean*. Boston: South End Press.
- Pedersen, Susan. 1991. "National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy Making." *Journal of Modern History* 63: 647-680.
- Peeler, John A. 2010. "Review: The Academic Uses of 'Lo Indígena'." *Latin American Research Review* 45 (1): 233-243.
- Peralta, Gabriel Aguilera. 1971. "El proceso del terror en Guatemala." *Estudios Sociales* 4. Guatemala: Universidad Rafael Landívar, Instituto de Ciencias Políticas.
- . 1983. "The Militarization of the Guatemalan State." In *Guatemala in Rebellion: Unfinished History*, edited by Jonathan L. Fried, Marvin E. Gettleman, Deborah T. Levenson, and Nancy Peckenham, 114-121. New York: Grove Press.
- Peralta, Gabriel Aguilera, and John Beverly. 1980. "Terror and violence as weapons of counterinsurgency in Guatemala." *Latin American Perspectives* 7 (2/3): 91-113.
- Perera, Victor. 1995. *Unfinished Conquest: The Guatemalan Tragedy*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Perez, Orlando J. 2003/2004. "Democratic Legitimacy and Public Insecurity: Crime and Democracy in El Salvador and Guatemala." *Political Science Quarterly* 118 (4): 627-644.
- Perlin, Jan. 2000. "The Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission finds Genocide." *ILSA Journal of International and Comparative Law* 6 (2): 389-414.
- Pernau, José. 1973. "Guatemala: Desapariciones sin rastro." *Libro del Año 1973*. Barcelona, España: Salvat.
- Petras, James. 1989. "State Terror and Social Movements in Latin America." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 3 (2): 179-212.
- Phelps, Teresa Godwin. 2004. *Shattered Voices: Language, Violence, and the Work of Truth Commissions*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Philadelphoff-Puren, Nina. 2007. "Genre's Judgment: Discarding Torture Testimony in the War on Terror." *Law and Literature* 19 (2): 229-246.
- Piccato, Pablo. 2006. "The Hidden Story: Violence and the Law in Guatemala." *Law and History Review* 24 (2): 433-439.
- Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. 2001. *Development Theory: Deconstructions/Reconstructions*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Pike, Fredrick B. And Thomas Stritch, eds. 1974. *The New Corporatism Social-Political Structures in the Iberian World*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Pion-Berlin, David, and George A. Lopez. 1991. "Of Victims and Executioners: Argentine State Terror, 1975-1979." *International Studies Quarterly* 35 (1): 63-86.
- Pitarch, Pedro, Shannon Speed, and Xochitl Leyva-Solano. 2008. *Human Rights in the Maya Region: Global Politics, Cultural Contentions, and Moral Engagements*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Plant, Roger. 1978. *Guatemala: Unnatural Disaster*. London: Latin American Bureau.
- Polinghorne, Donald E. 1988. *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Poole, Deborah and Gerardo Rénique. 1992. *Peru: Time of Fear*. London: Latin American Bureau.
- Popkin, Margaret, and Naomi Roht-Arriaza. 1995. "Truth as Justice: Investigatory Commissions in Latin America." *Law and Social Inquiry* 20 (1): 79-116.
- Portocarrero Maisch, Gonzalo, Isidro Valentin, and Soraya Irigoyen. 1991. *Sacajos: Crisis Social y Fantasmas Coloniales*. Lima: Tarea.

- Povinelli, Elizabeth A. 1998. "The State of Shame: Australian Multiculturalism and the Crisis of Indigenous Citizenship." *Critical Inquiry* 24: 575-610.
- . 2002. *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Pradellas de Latour, Charles-Henry. 1995. "Witchcraft and the Avoidance of Physical Violence in Cameroon." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 1 (3): 599-609.
- Price, David H. 2008. *Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Prince, Gerald. 1987. *Dictionary of Narratology*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Propp, Vladimir. 1968. *Morphology of the Folktale*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Procuraduría General de la Nación, Guatemala. 1996. "Adopciones." Guatemala City: PGN.
- Putnam, Robert. 2001. *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Quinn, Joanna R., and Mark Freeman. 2003. "Lessons Learned: Practical Lessons Gleaned from Inside the Truth Commissions of Guatemala and South Africa." *Human Rights Quarterly* 25 (4): 1117-1149.
- Rabinowitz, Dan. 1992. "Trust and the Attribution of Rationality: Inverted Roles Amongst Palestinian Arabs and Jews in Israel." *Man* 27 (3): 517-537.
- Clay Ramsay, Clay. 1992. *The Ideology of the Great Fear: The Soissonais in 1789*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Rapp, Rayna. 2000. *Testing Women, Testing the Fetus: The Social Impact of Amniocentesis in America*. New York: Routledge.
- Rapport, Nigel. 2000. "Criminals by Instinct: On the Tragedy of Social Structure and the Violence of Individual Creativity." In *Meanings of Violence*, edited by Göran Aijmer and Jon Abbink, 39-54. New York: Berg.
- Rasch, Elisabet Dueholm. 2011. "Representing Mayas: Indigenous Authorities and Citizenship Demands in Guatemala." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 55 (3): 54-73.
- Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (REMHI). 1998. *Guatemala: Nunca más. Volume I: Impactos de la violencia*. Guatemala City: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado.
- . 1998. *Guatemala: Nunca más. Volume II: Los mecanismos del horror. Impactos de la Violencia*. Guatemala City: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado.

- . 1998. *Guatemala: Nunca más. Volume III: El entorno histórico*. Guatemala City: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado.
- . 1998. *Guatemala: Nunca más. Volume IV: Víctimas del conflicto*. Guatemala City: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado.
- Reddy, William M. 1992. "Postmodernism and the Public Sphere: Implications for an Historical Ethnography." *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (2): 135-168.
- Renteln, Alison Dundes. 1988. "The Concept of Human Rights." *Anthropos* 83 (4/6): 343-364.
- . 1990. *International Human Rights: Universalism Versus Relativism*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Reyna, Stephen, and S. P. Downs, eds. 1994. *Studying war: Anthropological perspectives*. Langhorne, PA: Gordon & Breach.
- Richards, Michael. 1986. "Cosmopolitan Worldview and Counterinsurgency in Guatemala." *Anthropological Quarterly* 58 (3): 90-107.
- Riches, David. 1991. "Aggression, War, Violence: Space/Time and Paradigm." *MAN New Series* 26 (2): 281-297.
- Riches, David, ed. 1986. *The Anthropology of Violence*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Riles, Annelise. 2006. "Anthropology, Human Rights, and Legal Knowledge: Culture in the Iron Cage." *American Anthropologist* 108 (1): 52-65.
- Risse, Thomas, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds. 1999. *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ritchie, Donald A. 2003. *Doing Oral History*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Robben, Antonius C. 1996. "Ethnographic Seduction, Transference, and Resistance in Dialogues about Terror and Violence in Argentina." *Ethos* 24 (1): 71-106.
- Robben, Antonius C., and Marcelo D. Suárez-Orozco, eds. 2000. *Cultures under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma in Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights. 1993. *Persecution by Proxy: The Civil Patrols in Guatemala*. Washington, D.C.: Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center.
- . 1994. *Institutional Violence: Civil Patrols in Guatemala 1993-1994*, edited by James Silk. Washington, D.C.: Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center.
- . 1996. *Civil Patrols and their Legacy: Overcoming Militarization and Polarization in the Guatemalan Countryside*. Washington, D.C.: Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center.

- . 1999. *After the Civil Patrols: Rural Guatemala and the Legacy of Militarization*. Washington, D.C.: Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center.
- Roberts, Hugh. 2002. "Moral Economy or Moral Polity? The Political Anthropology of Algerian Riots." *Crisis States Research* 1(17): 1-24
- Roberts, Simon. 1979. *Order and Dispute: An Introduction to Legal Anthropology*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Rodríguez, Ana Patricia. 2001. "Refugees of the South: Central Americans in the U.S. Latino Imaginary." *American Literature* 73 (2): 387-412.
- Rohloff, Amanda, and Sarah Wright. 2010. "Moral Panic and Social Theory: Beyond the Heuristic." *Current Sociology* 58 (3): 403-419.
- Roht-Arriaza, Naomi. 2006. "Guatemala Genocide Case. Judgment No. STC 237/2005." *The American Journal of International Law* 100 (1): 207-213.
- Roht-Arriaza, Naomi, and Lauren Gibson. 1998. "The Developing Jurisprudence on Amnesty." *Human Rights Quarterly* 20 (4): 843-885.
- Rojas Rimachi, Emilio. 1989. "Los 'sacajojos': el miedo y la cólera." in *Pishtacos: de verdugos a sacajojos*, edited by Juan Ansión, 141-148. Lima, Tarea.
- Rosaldo, Renato. 1980a. *Ilongot Headhunting, 1883-1974: A Study in Society and History*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- . 1980b. "Doing Oral History." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 4: 89-99.
- . 1989. *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- . 1994 "Whose Cultural Studies?" *American Anthropologist* 96 (3): 524-529.
- Rose-Ackerman, Susan. 2001. "Trust, Honesty, and Corruption: Reflection on the State-Building Process." *European Journal of Sociology* 42: 27-71.
- Roseberry, William. 1988. "Political Economy." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 17: 161-185.
- . 1989. *Anthropologies and Histories: Essays in Culture, History, and Political Economy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Rosnow, Ralph L., and Gary A. Fine. 1976. *Rumor and Gossip: The Social Psychology of Hearsay*. New York: Elsevier.

- Ross, Amy. 1999. "The Body of the Truth: Truth Commissions in Guatemala and South Africa." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley.
- Ross, Daniel. 2004. *Violent Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosser, Emily. 2007. "Depoliticised Speech and Sexed Visibility: Women, Gender and Sexual Violence in the 1999 Guatemalan Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico Report." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1 (3): 391-410.
- Ross, Marc Howard. 1986. "The Limits of Social Structure: Social Structural and Psychocultural Explanations for Political Conflict and Violence." *Anthropological Quarterly* 59 (4): 171-200.
- Rotabi, Karen S., A.W. Morris, and M.O. Weil. 2008. "International Child Adoption in a Post-Conflict Society: A Multi-Systematic Assessment of Guatemala." *Journal of Intergroup Relations* 34 (2): 9-41.
- Rothenberg, Daniel. 1998. "Los Linchamientos – The Meaning of Mob Action in the Wake of State Terror in Guatemala." *Native Americas* 15 (1): 1-7.
- . 2000. *With These Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farmworkers Today*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2002. "‘Let Justice Judge’: An interview with Judge Baltasar Garzón and Critical Synthesis of His Ideas." *Human Rights Quarterly*. 24 (4).
- . 2003. "‘What We Have Seen Has Been Terrible’ Public Presentational Torture and the Communicative Logic of State Terror." *Albany Law Review*. 67 (2): 465-499.
- . 2005. "Genocide." In *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, edited by Dinah L. Shelton, Howard Adelman, Frank Chalk, Alexandre Kiss and William A. Schabas. New York: Macmillan Reference. 2005.
- . 2006. "Genocide." In *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2nd Ed.*, editor in chief William A. Darity. New York: Thompson Gale.
- . 2009. "Los Linchamientos: Crime, Popular Justice and Human Rights Discourse during Guatemala’s Democratic Transition." In *Lugares indígenas de la violencia en Iberoamérica*, edited by Julian López García and Pedro Pitarch Ramón. Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional. 2009.
- . 2012. "Genocide". In *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism, 2nd edition*. Patrick Mason, Editor in Chief. New York: MacMillan Reference.
- Rothenberg, Daniel, ed. 2007. *Testimonies*. Chicago: International Human Rights Law Institute.
- . 2008. *The Chicago Principles on Post-Conflict Justice*. Executive Editor. Chicago: International Human Rights Law Institute.

- . 2012. *Memory of Silence: Report of the Guatemalan Truth Commission*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rothman, Barbara Katz. 1997. Review of: *Expecting Trouble: Surrogacy, Fetal Abuse and New Reproductive Technologies*, by Patricia Bling; *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*, by Faye D. Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp; *Babies in Bottles: Twentieth-Century Visions of Reproductive Technologies*, by Susan Merrill Squier; *Manufacturing Babies and Public Consent: Debating the New Reproductive Technologies*, by Jose Van Dyck. *Signs* 22 (4): 1052-1056.
- Rowlands, Michael, and Jean-Pierre Warnier. 1988. "Sorcery, Power and the Modern State in Cameroon." *MAN* 23 (1): 118-132.
- Roy, Beth. 1994. *Some Trouble with Cows: Making Sense of Social Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Roy, Srila. 2008. "The Grey Zone: The 'Ordinary' Violence of Extraordinary Times." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14 (2): 316-333.
- Rozema, Ralph. 2011. "Forced Disappearance in an Era of Globalization: Biopolitics, Shadow Networks, and Imagined Worlds." *American Anthropologist* 113 (4): 1-12.
- Rueschemeyer, Dietrich. 1994. "Variations on Two Themes in Durkheim's Division du Travail: Power, Solidarity and Meaning in Division of Labor." *Sociological Forum* 9 (1): 59-71.
- Rule, James B. 1988. *Theories of Civil Violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rummel, R. J. 1994. *Death by Government*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.
- Russell, Graham. 1996. *Unearthing the Truth: Exhuming a Decade of Terror in Guatemala*. Washington, D.C.: Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean and the Center for Human Rights Legal Action.
- Sachs, Wolfgang, ed. 1992. *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. London: Zed Books.
- Sack, Kevin. 2014. "Transplant Brokers in Israel Lure Desperate Kidney Patients to Costa Rica." *New York Times*, August 17.
- Sahlins, Marshall. 1972. *Stone Age Economics*. New York: de Gruyter.
- Salazar, Eglá Martínez. 2014. *Global Coloniality of Power in Guatemala: Racism, Genocide, Citizenship*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Salmon, Christian. 2010. *Storytelling: Bewitching the Modern Mind*. New York: Verso.

- Salvado Cardoza, Luis Raúl, and Julia Gonzalez, eds. 1997. *La ciudad y los desplazados por la violencia*. Guatemala City: AVANCSO.
- Samayoa, Claudia Virginia. 2009. "Evaluación Del Cumplimiento: de las recomendaciones de la Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico." In: "La Persistencia De La Verdad: A diez años del Informe de la CEH," 45-66. Guatemala City, Guatemala: Impunity Watch y Convergencia por los Derechos Humanos.
- Samper, David. 2002. "Cannibalizing Kids: Rumor and Resistance in Latin America." *Journal of Folklore Research* 39 (1): 1-32.
- Samson, C. Mathews. 2007. *Re-Enchanting the World: Maya Protestantism in the Guatemalan Highlands*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- Sanford, Victoria. 1999. "Between Rigoberta Menchú and La Violencia: Deconstructing David Stoll's History of Guatemala." *Latin American Perspectives* 26 (6): 38-46.
- . 2001. "From I, Rigoberta to the Commissioning of Truth: Maya Women and the Reshaping of Guatemalan History." *Cultural Critique* 47: 16-53.
- . 2003. *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2004. *Violencia y Genocidio en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: F&G Editores.
- . 2008. "Breaking the Reign of Silence: Ethnography of a Clandestine Cemetery." In *Human Rights in the Maya Region: Global Politics, Cultural Contentions, and Moral Engagements*, edited by Pedro Pitrarch, Shannon Speed, and Xochitl Leyva-Solano, 233-256. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- San Juan, Epifanio. 2002. "Nation-State, Postcolonial Theory, and Global Violence." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 46 (2): 11-32.
- Santiago Nino, Carlos. 1998. *Radical Evil on Trial*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Sarbin, Theodore R. 2001. "Embodiment and the Narrative Structure of Emotional Life." *Narrative Inquiry* 11: 217-225.
- Scarry, Elaine. 1985. *The Body in Pain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schacter, Daniel L., ed. 1995. *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Schaffer, Kay, and Sidonie Smith. 2004. *Human Rights and Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schedler, Andreas. 2007. "The Mobilization of Distrust." *Journal of Democracy*. 18 (1); 88-102.

- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1992. *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1994. “Embodied Knowledge: Thinking with the Body in Critical Medical Anthropology.” In *Assessing Cultural Anthropology*, edited by Rob Borofsky, 229–242. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- . 1995a. “The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology.” *Current Anthropology* 36 (3): 409-420.
- . 1995b. “Organ Stealing: Fact, Fantasy, Conspiracy, or Urban Legend?” Paper presented at Securing Bodily Integrity for the Socially Disadvantaged: Strategies for Controlling the Traffic in Organs for Transplantation Conference, Bellagio, Italy.
- . 1996. “Theft of Life: The Globalization of Organ Stealing Rumors.” *Anthropology Today* 12 (3): 3-11.
- . 1998. “Bodies of Apartheid: Witchcraft, Rumor and Racism Confound South Africa’s Organ.” *Worldview* 11 (4): 47-53.
- . 2000. “The Global Traffic in Human Organs.” *Current Anthropology* 41 (2): 191-211.
- . 2001a. “Organ Theft Narratives – Reply to Campion-Vincent.” *Current Anthropology* 42 (4): 556-558.
- . 2001b. “Commodity Fetishism in Organs Trafficking.” *Body & Society* 7 (2-3): 31-62.
- . 2003a. “A Genealogy of Genocide.” *Modern Psychoanalysis* 28 (2): 167-197.
- . 2003b. “Keeping an Eye on the Global Traffic in Human Organs.” *The Lancet* 361 (9389): 1645-1648.
- . 2004a. “Parts Unknown: Undercover Ethnography of the Organ-Trafficking Underworld.” *Ethnography* 5 (1): 29-73.
- . 2004b. “The Last Commodity: Post-Human Ethics and the Global Traffic in ‘Fresh’ Organs.” In *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, edited by Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier, 145-167. London: Basil Blackwell Publishers.
- . 2006a. “Death Squads and Democracy in Northeast Brazil.” In *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*, edited by Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, 150-187. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2006b. “Portrait of Gaddy Tauber: Organs Trafficker, Holocaust Survivor.” *Berkeley Review of Latin American Studies* (Fall): 44-47.

- . 2007a. “The Tyranny of the Gift: Sacrificial Violence in Living Donor Transplants.” *American Journal of Transplantation* 7 (3): 507-511.
- . 2007b. “Violence and the Politics of Remorse: Lessons from South Africa.” In *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*, edited by João Biehl, Byron Good, and Arthur Kleinman, 179-233. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2010. “Body Parts and Bio-Piracy.” *CounterPunch*, October 28.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, and Loïc Wacquant, eds. 2005. *Commodifying Bodies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, and Margaret Lock. 1987. “The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1 (1): 6-41.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, and Philippe Bourgois, eds. 2004. *Violence in War and Peace: an Anthology*. London: Basil Blackwell Publishers.
- Schirmer, Jennifer. 1997. “Universal and Sustainable Human Rights? Special Tribunals in Guatemala.” In *Human Rights, Culture and Context: Anthropological Perspectives*, edited by Richard A. Wilson, 161-186. London: Pluto Press.
- . 1998. *The Guatemalan Military Project: A Violence Called Democracy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- . 2003. “Whose Testimony? Whose Truth? Where are the Armed Actors in the Stoll-Menchu Controversy?” *Human Rights Quarterly* 25 (1): 60-73.
- . 2012. “From the Horse’s Mouth: Research on Perpetrators in Guatemala.” *State Crime Journal* 1 (1): 27-44.
- Schlesinger, Stephen, and Stephen Kinzer. 1983. *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Schmidt, Bettina E., and Ingo W. Schröder, eds. 2001. *Anthropology of Violence and Conflict*. New York: Routledge.
- Schmitter, Philippe C. 1969. “New Strategies for the Comparative Analysis of Latin American Politics.” *Latin American Research Review*. 4: 83-110.
- . 1971. *Interest Conflict and Political Change in Brazil*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 1974. “Still the Century of Corporatism?” *Review of Politics* 36: 85-131.
- . 1983. “Democratic Theory and Neo-Corporatist Practice.” *Social Research* 50 (4) 885-928.
- Schmitter, Philippe C., ed. 1973. *Military Rule in Latin America*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.

- Schmitter, Philippe C. and Terry Lynn Karl. 1996. "What Democracy Is...And Is Not." In *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, edited by Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner. 49-62. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Scholes, Robert. 1982. *Semiotics and Interpretation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Schroder, Ingo, and Bettina E. Schmidt, eds. 2001. *Anthropology of Violence and Conflict*. London: Routledge.
- Schultz, Nancy Lusignan, ed. 1999. *Fear Itself: Enemies Real and Imagined in American Culture*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.
- Schuster Institute_for Investigative Journalism. 2012. "Corruption in international adoptions: Guatemala Case Study: Adoption." Waltham, MA: Brandeis University at <http://www.brandeis.edu/investigate/adoption/guatemala-sources.html>
- Scott, James C. 1976. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- . 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- . 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- . 1993. "Rituals of Resistance: A Critique of the Theory of Everyday Forms of Resistance: Reply." *Latin American Perspectives* 20 (2): 93-94.
- . 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- . 2005. "Afterword to 'Moral Economies, State Spaces, and Categorical Violence.'" *American Anthropologist* 107 (3): 395-402.
- Secretaría de la Paz, Presidencia de la República. 1999. "Los Acuerdos de Paz en Guatemala." Guatemala: SEPAZ.
- Seils, Paul F. 2002a. "The Limits of Truth Commissions in the Search for Justice: An Analysis of the Truth Commissions of El Salvador and Guatemala and Their Effect in Achieving Post-Conflict Justice." In *Post-Conflict Justice*, edited by M. C. Bassiouni, 775-795. Ardsley, NY: Transnational Publishers.
- . 2002b. "Reconciliation in Guatemala: The Role of Intelligent Justice." *Race and Class* 44 (1): 33-59.
- Seligman, Adam B. 1997. *The Problem of Trust*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Seligman, Rebecca and Ryan A. Brown. 2009. "Theory and Method at the Intersection of Anthropology and Cultural Neuroscience". *Social, Cognitive, and Affective Neuroscience* 5 (2-3): 130-137.
- Seligson, Mitchell A. 2005. "Democracy on Ice: The Multiple Challenges of Guatemala's Peace Process." In *Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks*, edited by Francis Hagopian and Scott P. Mainwaring. 202-233. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sen, Amartya. 1999a. "Democracy as a Universal Value." *Journal of Democracy* 10 (3): 3-17.
- . 1999b. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Sen, Atreyee. 2006. Review of *Violence*, by Neil L. Whitehead. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12 (2): 482-483.
- Senechal De La Roche, Roberta. 2001. "Why is Collective Violence Collective?" *Sociological Theory* 19 (2): 126-144.
- Sharp, Lesley A. 2000. "The Commodification of the Body and its Parts." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29: 287-328
- . 2006. *Strange Harvest: Organ Transplants, Denatured Bodies and the Transformed Self*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Shaw, Rosalind. 1997. "The production of Witchcraft/Witchcraft as Production: Memory, Modernity, and the Slave Trade in Sierra Leone." *American Ethnologist* 24 (4): 856-876.
- . 2007. "Displacing Violence: Making Pentecostal Memory in Postwar Sierra Leone." *Cultural Anthropology* 22 (1): 66-93.
- Shaw, Rosalind, Lars Waldorf, and Pierre Hazan, eds. 2010. *Localizing Transitional Justice: Interventions and Priorities After Mass Violence*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Shenhav, Shaul R. 2006. "Political Narratives and Political Reality." *International Political Science Review* 27 (3): 245-262.
- Sheriff, Robin E. 2000. "Exposing Silence as Cultural Censorship: A Brazilian Case." *American Anthropologist* 102 (1):114-132.
- Sherman, William L. 1979. *Forced Native Labor in Sixteenth-Century Central America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Shibutani, Tamotsu. 1966. *Improvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumor*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing.

- Shifter, Michael. 2003. "Introduction: New Issues in Democratic Governance" in *Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America* (2nd ed.), edited by Jorge I. Domínguez and Michael Shifter, eds. 1-11. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press.
- Short, Nicola. 2014. *The International Politics of Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Guatemala*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sieder, Rachel. 2001. "War, Peace, and Memory Politics in Central America." In *The Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies*, edited by Alexandra Barahona de Brito, Carmen González-Enriquez, and Paloma Aguilar, 161-189. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 2008. "Legal Globalization and Human Rights: Constructing the Rule of Law in Postconflict Guatemala?" In *Human Rights in the Maya Region: Global Politics, Cultural Contentions, and Moral Engagements*, edited by Pedro Pitarch, Shannon Speed, and Xochitl Leyva-Solano, 67-90. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sieder, Rachel, ed. 1997. *Customary Law and Democratic Transition in Guatemala*. London: Institute of Latin American Studies.
- . 1998. *Guatemala After the Peace Accords*. London: Institute of Latin American Studies.
- . 2002. *Multiculturalism in Latin America: Indigenous Rights, Diversity and Democracy*, London: Palgrave Press.
- Sieder, Rachel and Richard Wilson, eds. 1997. "Negotiating rights: The Guatemalan Peace Process." London: Conciliation Resources in association with the Latin American Faculty of Social Science, Guatemala City.
- Siegal, Erin. 2011. *Finding Fernanda: Two Mothers, One Child, and a Cross-Border Search for Truth*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Siegal, Erin, ed. 2011. *The U.S. Embassy Cables: Adoption Fraud in Guatemala, 1987-2010*. Oakland, CA: Cathexis Press.
- Silverstein, Paul A. 2002. "An Excess of Truth: Violence, Conspiracy Theorizing and the Algerian Civil War." *Anthropological Quarterly* 75 (4): 643-674.
- Simmons, P.J., and Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, eds. 2001. *Managing Global Issues: Lessons Learned*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Simon, Jean-Marie. 1987. *Guatemala: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny*. New York and London: W.W. Norton.
- Simmel, Georg. 1950. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. New York: Free Press.

- Sivaramakrishnan, K. 2005. "Introduction to 'Moral Economies, State Spaces, and Categorical Violence.'" *American Anthropologist* 107 (3): 321-330.
- . 2005. "Some Intellectual Genealogies for the Concept of Everyday Resistance." *American Anthropologist* 107 (3): 346-355.
- Skidmore, Monique. 2003. "Darker than Midnight: Fear, Vulnerability, and Terror Making in Urban Burma (Myanmar)." *American Ethnologist* 30 (1): 5-21.
- Sluka, Jeffrey. 1992. "The Anthropology of Conflict." In *The Paths to Domination, Resistance and Terror*, edited by Carolyn Nordstrom and JoAnn Martin, 18-36. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2000. *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Smith, Carol, ed. 1990. *Guatemalan Indians and the State: 1540-1988*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Smith, Carol. 1988. "Destruction of the Material Bases for Indian Culture: Economic Changes in Totonicapán." In *Harvest of Violence: the Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*, edited by Robert M. Carmack, 206-231. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- . 1993. "Local History in Global Context: Social and Economic Transitions in Western Guatemala." *Constructing Culture and Power in Latin America*, edited by Daniel H. Levine, 75-117. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Smith, Daniel Jordan. 2001. "Ritual Killing, 419, and Fast Wealth: Inequality and the Popular Imagination in Southeastern Nigeria." *American Ethnologist* 28 (4): 803-823
- . 2004. "The Bakassi Boys: Vigilantism, Violence, and Political Imagination in Nigeria." *Cultural Anthropology* 19 (3): 429-455.
- Smith, James H. 2005. "Buying a Better Witch Doctor: Witch-finding, Neoliberalism, and the Development Imagination in the Taita Hills, Kenya." *American Ethnologist* 32 (1): 141-158.
- Smith, Neil. 2008. "Afterword: Class, State, Violence." *Anthropologica* 50 (2): 283-286.
- Smith, Patrick L. 2001. "Memory without History: Who Owns Guatemala's Past?" *The Washington Quarterly* 24 (2): 59-72.
- Smith, Peter H. 2000. *Talons of the Eagle. Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, Timothy J. and Thomas A. Offit. 2010. "Confronting Violence in Postwar Guatemala: An Introduction." *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 15(1):1-15.

- Snodgrass-Godoy, Angelina. 2002. "Lynchings and the Democratization of Terror in Postwar Guatemala: Implications for Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 24 (3): 640-661.
- . 2004. "When 'Justice' Is Criminal: Lynchings in Contemporary Latin America." *Theory and Society* 33 (6): 621-651.
- . 2006. *Popular Injustice: Violence, Community, and Law in Latin America*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Snyder, Jack L. 2002. "Anarchy and Culture: Insights from the Anthropology of War." *International Organization*. 56(1) 7-45.
- Sokefeld, Martin. 1999. "Debating Self, Identity, and Culture in Anthropology." *Current Anthropology* 40 (4): 417-448.
- . 2001. "Reconsidering Identity." *Anthropos* 96 (2): 527-544.
- Solway, Jacqueline S. 2003. "In the Eye of the Storm: The State and Non-Violence in Southern Africa (Botswana)." *Anthropological Quarterly* 76 (3): 485-495.
- Somers, Margaret R. 1995. "Narrating and Naturalizing Civil Society and Citizenship Theory: The Place of Popular Culture and the Public Sphere." *Sociological Theory* 13 (3): 229-274.
- Sommer, Barbara W. and Mary Kay Quinlan. 2002. *The Oral History Manual*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Sontag, Susan, ed. 1982. *A Barthes Reader*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Sorabji, Cornelia. 2006. "Managing Memories in Post-War Sarajevo: Individuals, Band Memoires, and New Wars." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12 (1): 1-18.
- Sorel, Georges. 2004. *Reflections on Violence*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.
- Sparks, Richard, Evi Girling, and Ian Loader. 2001. "Fear and Everyday Urban Lives." *Urban Studies*. 38 (5-6): 885-898.
- Speed, Shannon. 2006. "At the Crossroad of Human Rights and Anthropology: Toward a Critically Engaged Activist Research." *American Anthropologist* 108 (1): 66-76.
- Spencer, Jonathan. 1990. "Collective Violence and Everyday Practice in Sri Lanka." *Modern Asian Studies* 24 (3): 603-623.
- . 1997. "Post-Colonialism and the Political Imagination." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3 (1): 1-19.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1987. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Psychology Press.

- . 1988. "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography." In *Selected Subaltern Studies*, edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 3-32. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stanley, William. 2013. *Enabling Peace in Guatemala: The Story of MINUGUA*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Starrett, Gregory. 2003. "Violence and the Rhetoric of Images." *Cultural Anthropology* 18 (3): 398-428.
- Stavenhagen, Rodolfo. 1990. *The Ethnic Question: Conflicts, Development and Human Rights*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
- . 2008. "Cultural Rights and Human Rights: A Social Science Perspective." In *Human Rights in the Maya Region: Global Politics, Cultural Contentions, and Moral Engagements*, edited by Pedro Pitarch, Shannon Speed and Xochitl Leyva-Solano, 27-50. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Steger, Manfred B. 2009. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Steinberg, Michael K., and Matthew J. Taylor. 2003. "Public Memory and Political Power in Guatemala's Postconflict Landscape." *Geographical Review* 93 (4): 449-468.
- Stepputat, Finn. 2012. "State/Violence and 'Fragmented Sovereignties.'" *Etnofoor* 24 (1): 117-121.
- Steward, Julian H. 1948. "Comments on the Statement on Human Rights." *American Anthropologist* 50 (2): 351-352.
- Stewart, Iain. 2009. *The Rough Guide to Guatemala*. New York: Penguin.
- Stewart, Pamela J., and Andrew Strathern. 2002. *Violence: Theory and Ethnography*. New York: Continuum.
- . 2004. *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Rumors and Gossip*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stiglitz, Joseph E. 2002. *Globalization and Its Discontents*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. 2002. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Stoll, David. 1988. "Evangelicals, Guerrillas, and the Army: The Ixil Triangle under Ríos Montt." In *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*, edited by Robert M. Carmack, 90-116. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

- . 1993. *Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 1997. "To Whom Should We Listen? Human Rights Activism in Two Guatemalan Land Disputes." In *Human Rights Culture and Context: Anthropological Perspectives*, edited by Richard Wilson, 187-215. London: Pluto Press.
- . 1999. *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Stover, Eric and Harvey M. Weinstein. 2004. *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Strathern, Andrew J. 1996. *Body Thoughts*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Strathern, Andrew, Pamela J. Stewart, and Neil Whitehead, eds. 2006. *Terror and Violence: Imagination and the Unimaginable*. London: Pluto Press.
- Strathern, Marilyn. 1992. *Reproducing the Future: Anthropology, Kinship and the New Reproductive Technologies*. New York: Routledge.
- Straus, Scott. 2006. *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Streeter, Stephen M. 2000. *Managing the Counterrevolution: The United States and Guatemala, 1954-1961*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies.
- Suhrke, Astri, and Mats Berdal, eds. 2012. *The Peace In Between: Post-War Violence and Peacebuilding*. New York: Routledge.
- Sunstein, Cass R. 2009. *On Rumors: How Falsehoods Spread, Why We Believe Them, What Can Be Done*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Swartz, Marc, Victor Turner, and Arthur Tuden, eds. 1966. *Political Anthropology*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Taft-Morales, Maureen. 2014. "Guatemala: Political, Security, and Socio-Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations." *Congressional Research Service*, 7-5700, August 7.
- Tambiah, Stanley. 1990. *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1996. *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tapias, Maria. 2006. "Emotions and the Intergenerational Embodiment of Social Suffering in Rural Bolivia." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 20 (3): 399-415.

- Taracena Arriola, Arturo. 2000. *Invencción criolla, sueño ladino, pesadilla indígena. Los Altos de Guatemala: de región a Estado, 1740–1871*. La Antigua, Guatemala: CIRMA.
- . 2002. *Etnicidad, estado y nación en Guatemala, 1808-1944, Vol.1*. La Antigua, Guatemala: CIRMA.
- . 2004. *Etnicidad, estado y nación en Guatemala, 1944-1985, Vol. 2*. La Antigua, Guatemala: CIRMA.
- Taussig, Michael T. 1980. *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- . 1984. “Culture of Terror—Space of Death. Roger Casement’s Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (3): 467-497.
- . 1987. *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1991. *The Nervous System*. New York: Routledge.
- Tax, Sol. 1937. “The Municipios of the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala.” *American Anthropologist* 39 (3): 423-444.
- Taylor, Charles. 2004. *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Taylor, Christopher C. 2004. “Kings of Presidents? War and the State in Pre- and Post-Genocidal Rwanda.” *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 48 (1): 136-142.
- Taylor, Steven L. 2002. “Review: Democratization in Latin America.” *Latin American Research Review* 37 (3): 162-175.
- Teune, Henry. 2002. “Global Democracy.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 581: 22-34.
- Thomas, Elizabeth Marshall, 1989, *The Harmless People*. 2nd revised ed. New York: Vintage.
- Thompson, E. P. 1991. “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century.” *Customs in Common*, originally published in *Past & Present* 50 (1): 76-136, 1971.
- Tilly, Charles. 1985. “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.” In *Bringing the State Back*, edited by Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, 169-187. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2002. *Stories, Identities, and Political Change*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- . 2003. *The Politics of Collective Violence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- . 2005. *Trust and Rule*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Timerman, Jacobo. 1981. *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Todaro, Michael P. 1997. *Economic Development*. 6th ed. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Tomuschat, Christian. 2001. "Clarification Commission in Guatemala." *Human Rights Quarterly* 23 (2): 233-258.
- Toriello Garrido, Guillermo. 1979. *Guatemala: Más de 20 años de traición, 1954-1979*. Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria.
- Torres Rivas, Edelberto. 1984. "Presentation by the Prosecutor." In *Guatemala: Tyranny on Trial: Testimony of the Permanent People's Tribunal*, edited by Susanne Jonas, Ed McCaughan, and Elizabeth Sutherland Martinez, 7-23. San Francisco: Synthesis Publications.
- . 1999. "Epilogue: Notes on Terror, Fear and Democracy." In *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*, edited by Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt. London: Zed Books.
- Turner, Patricia A. 1993. *I Heard It Through the Grapevine: Rumor in African-American Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Turner, Paul R., and David Pitt, eds. 1988. *Anthropology of War and Peace: Perspectives on the Nuclear Age*. Portsmouth, NH: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Turner, Terence. 1995. "Social Body and Embodies Subject: Bodiliness, Subjectivity, and Sociality among the Kayapo." *Cultural Anthropology*, 2 143-70.
- . 1997. "Human Rights, Human Difference: Anthropology's Contribution to an Emancipatory Cultural Politics." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 53 (3): 273-291.
- Turner, Victor. 1969. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Ulrich, Katrin. 2011. *Social Accountability in Guatemala: Towards an End of Impunity?* Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller.
- Unidad Nacional Revolucionaria Guatemalteca (URNG). 1982. *Guatemala, the People Unite: Unitary Statement of Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity*. San Francisco: Solidarity Publications.
- United Nations Development Programme. 2001 "Human Development—Past, Present and Future." *Human Development Report 2001*: 9-25. New York: United Nations Development Programme
- . 2002. *Human Development Report 2002*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- . 2003. “The Development of Democracy in Latin America.” New York: UNDP.
- . 2004. “Democracy in Latin America: Towards a Citizens’ Democracy.” New York: UNDP.
- United Nations General Assembly. 1948. “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” December 10, 1948. 217 A (III). Paris.
- United Nations General Assembly. 1997. *The Situation in Central America: Procedures for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace and Progress in Fashioning a Region of Peace, Freedom, Democracy and Development: report of the Security Council, A/51/796* (7 February).
- United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA). 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1996a, 1996b, 1997a, 1997b, 1998 (Reports 1 to 8). *Human Rights Reports of the United Nations Mission in Guatemala*. New York: United Nations General Assembly.
- . 2000. “Los Linchamientos: Un Flagelo Contra La Dignidad Humana.” Guatemala City: Misión de Verificación de las Naciones Unidas en Guatemala.
- . 2002. “Los Linchamientos: Un Flagelo que Persiste.” Guatemala City: Misión de Verificación de las Naciones Unidas en Guatemala.
- United States Department of State. 1992. “Guatemala Consular Information Sheet.” October 27, 1992. Guatemala City: Embassy of the United States.
- . 1995. “Guatemala Human Rights Practices, 1994.” Washington, DC: United States Department of State.
- . 1995. “Human Rights Report: Guatemala - 1994.” Guatemala: United States Embassy.
- . 1996. “Human Rights Report: Guatemala - 1995.” Guatemala: United States Embassy.
- . 1997. “Guatemala – Consular Information Sheet.” September 17, 1997. Guatemala: United States Embassy.
- . 2001. “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2000.” Washington, DC: United States Department of State.
- . 2002. “Consular Information Sheet – Guatemala.” November 21, 2002. Washington, DC: United States State Department.
- . 2015. “Guatemala, Local Laws and Special Circumstances.” Washington, DC: United States Department of State.
<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/guatemala.html>
- United States Embassy Guatemala City. 2007. “Warden Message.” July 18, 2007. Guatemala: United States Embassy.

- . 2010. “Guatemala – Safety and Security.” April 6, 2010. . Guatemala: United States Embassy.
- United States Information Agency. 1988. *Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost*. Washington, D.C.: Report to Congress.
- United States Information Service. 1992. “The ‘Baby Parts’ Myth: An Anatomy of a Rumor.” Guatemala: Embassy of the United States.
- Uslaner, Eric M. 2001. “Producing and Consuming Trust.” *Political Science Quarterly* 115 (4): 569-590.
- van Binsbergen, W.M.J. 1996. “Trajectories of Violence: An Anthropological Perspective: By Way of Introduction.” in *Anthropology on violence: A one-day conference*, edited by W. M. J. van Binsbergen, vii-xvi. Amsterdam: Department of Cultural Anthropology/ Sociology of Development, Free University.
- Velasquez Nimatuj, Irma Alicia. 2002. *La pequeña burguesía indígena comercial de Guatemala: desigualdades de clase, raza y género*. Guatemala City: AVANCSO.
- Verdery, Katherine. 1998. “Transnationalism, Nationalism, Citizenship, and Property: Eastern Europe since 1989.” *American Ethnologist* 25 (2): 291-306.
- Viaene, Lieselotte. 2010a. “Life is Priceless: Mayan Q’eqchi’ Voices on the Guatemalan National Reparations Program.” *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* 4(2): 4-25
- . 2010b. “The internal logic of the cosmos as ‘justice’ and ‘reconciliation’: Micro-level Perceptions in Post-Conflict Guatemala.” *Critique of Anthropology* 30(3): 287–312.
- Victor, Jeffrey S. 1989. “A Rumor-Panic about a Dangerous Satanic Cult in Western New York.” *New York Folklore* 15 (1-2): 23-49.
- . 1990. “Satanic Cult Rumors as Contemporary Legends.” *Western Folklore* 49 (1):51-81.
- . 1993. *Satanic Panic: The Creation of a Contemporary Legend*. Chicago: Open Court.
- Vilas, Carlos M., and Richard Stoller. 2008. “Lynchings and Political Conflict in the Andes.” *Latin American Perspectives* 35 (5): 103-118.
- Vincent, Joan. 1990. *Anthropology and Politics: Visions, Traditions, and Trends*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
- Vleet, Krista E. Van. 2002. “The Intimacies of Power: Rethinking Violence and Affinity in the Bolivian Andes.” *American Ethnologist* 29 (3): 567-601.
- Waal, Alex de. 2003. “Human Rights Organizations and the Political Imagination: How the West and Africa have Diverged.” *Journal of Human Rights* 2 (4): 475-494.

- Wachtel, Nathan. 1994. *Gods and Vampires: Return to Chipaya*. Translated by Carol Volk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wacquant, Loïc. 2005. "Whores, Slaves and Stallions: Languages of Exploitation and Accommodation among Professional Boxers." In *Commodifying Bodies*, edited by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Loïc Wacquant. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Waddington, P. A. J. 1986. "Mugging as a Moral Panic: A Question of Proportion." *The British Journal of Sociology* 37 (2): 245-259.
- Waldby, Catherine, and Robert Mitchell. 2006. *Tissue Economies: Blood, Organs, and Cell Lines in Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1974. *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Academic Press.
- . 1984. *The Politics of the World-Economy: The States, the Movements and the Civilizations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2004. *World-systems Analysis: An Introduction*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Warren, Kay. 1998. *Indigenous Movements and Their Critics: Pan-Maya Activism in Guatemala*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 2002. "Voting Against Indigenous Rights in Guatemala: Lessons from the 1999 Referendum." In *Indigenous Movements, Self-Representation, and the State*, edited by Kay B. Warren and Jean E. Jackson. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Warren, Kay, ed. 1993. *The Violence Within: Cultural & Political Opposition in Divided Nations*. Prospect Heights, IL: Westview Press.
- Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) 1989. *The Administration of Injustice: Military Accountability in Guatemala*. Washington, D.C.: WOLA.
- . 1992. *Habits of Repression: Military Accountability for Human Rights Abuse under the Serrano Government in Guatemala*. Washington, D.C.: WOLA.
- . 1995. *Military Intelligence and Human Rights in Guatemala: The Archivo and the Case for Intelligence Reform*. Washington, D.C.: WOLA.
- Watanabe, John M. 1992. *Maya Saints and Souls in a Changing World*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- . 2000. "Culturing Identities, the State, and National Consciousness in Late Nineteenth-century Western Guatemala." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 19 (3): 321–340.

- Way, J.T. 2012. *The Mayan in the Mall: Globalization, Development and the Making of Modern Guatemala*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Weart, Spencer R. 1997. *Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Weber, Max. 1991. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Abingdon, UK: Psychology Press.
- Welch, Jr., Claude E., ed. 2000. *NGOs and Human Rights Promise and Performance*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Weld, Kirsten. 2014. *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of the Dictatorship in Guatemala*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Weller, S.C., T. K. Ruebush, and R. E. Klein. 1991. "An epidemiological description of a folk illness: a study of empacho in Guatemala." *Medical Anthropology*. 13 (1-2): 19-31.
- West, Harry G. 1998. "Traditional Authorities and the Mozambican Transition to Democratic Governance." In *Africa's Second Wave of Freedom: Development, Democracy and Rights*, edited by L. Graybill and K. W. Thompson, 65-80. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- . 2005. *Kupilikula: Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Weston, Gavin. 2011. "(Un)imagining the State: Guatemalan Lynchings and the Erosion of the State's Monopoly of Violence." *Etnofoor* 23 (2): 79-98.
- White House Office of the Press Secretary. 1996. "Fact Sheet: The Intelligence Oversight Board's Guatemala Review." June 28, 1996 at <http://clinton6.nara.gov/1996/06/1996-06-28-fact-sheet-on-intelligence-board-guatemala-report.html>
- White, Hayden. 1980. "The Value of Narratively in the Representation of Reality." *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1): 5-27.
- White, Luise. 2000. *Speaking With Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- White, Luise, David William Cohen and Stephan Miescher, eds. 2001. *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Whitehead, Neil L. 2004. "Rethinking Anthropology of Violence." *Anthropology Today* 20 (5): 1-2.
- Whitehead, Neil L., ed. 2004. *Violence*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Whitehead, Neil L., and Sverker Finnström, eds. 2013. *Virtual War and Magical Death: Technologies and Imaginaries for Terror and Killing*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- White House Office of the Press Secretary. 1996. "Fact Sheet: The Intelligence Oversight Board's Guatemala Review." *The White House*, June 28.
- Wiarda, Howard. 1973. "Towards a Framework for the Study of Political Change in the Iberic-Latin Tradition: The Corporative Model." *World Politics*. 25: 206-235.
- . 1974. "Corporatism and Development in the Iberic-Latin World: Persistant Strains and New Variations." *Review of Politics*. 36: 3-33.
- . 1981. *Corporatism and National Development in Latin America*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- . 2001. *The Soul of Latin America: The Cultural and Political Tradition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Wilkinson, Daniel. 2002. *Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal, and Forgetting in Guatemala*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Williams, Brackette. 1991. *Stains on My Name, War in My Veins: Guyana and the Politics of Cultural Struggle*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Willis, Deborah. 1998. Review of: *Witches and Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*, by Robin Briggs; *Fearless Wives and Frightened Shrews: The Construction of the Witch in Early Modern Germany*, by Sigrid Brauner and Robert H. Brown. *Signs* 23 (2): 556-558.
- Wilson, Monica Hunter. 1951. "Witch Beliefs and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 56 (4): 307-313.
- Wilson, Richard A. 1991. "Machine Guns and Mountain Spirits: The Cultural Effects of State Repression Among the Q'eqchi' of Guatemala." *Critique of Anthropology* 11 (1): 33-61.
- . 1993. "Anchored Communities: Identity and History of the Maya-Q'eqchi'." *Man* 28 (1): 121-138.
- . 1995. *Maya Resurgence in Guatemala: Q'eqchi' Experiences*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- . 1997a. "Violent Truths: The Politics of Memory in Guatemala." *Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiatives* 2: 18-27.
- . 1997b. *Human Rights, Culture and Context: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.
- . 1998. *The People's Conscience? Civil Groups, Peace and Justice in the South African and Guatemalan Transitions*. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations.
- . 2000. "Reconciliation and Revenge in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Rethinking Legal Pluralism and Human Rights." *Current Anthropology* 41 (1): 75-98.

- . 2001. *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2004. “The Trouble with Truth: Anthropology’s Epistemological Hypochondria.” *Anthropology Today* 20 (5): 14-17.
- . 2006. “Afterword to ‘Anthropology and Human Rights in the New Key’: The Social Life of Human Rights.” *American Anthropologist* 108 (1): 77-83.
- . 2008. “Making Rights Meaningful for Mayas: Reflections on Culture, Rights, and Power.” In *Human Rights in the Maya Region: Global Politics, Cultural Contentions, and Moral Engagements*, edited by Pedro Pitarch, Shannon Speed, and Xochitl Leyva-Solano, 305-322. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Witness for Peace. 1996. *A People Damned*. Washington, D.C.: Witness for Peace.
- Witsoe, Jeffrey. 2011. “Corruption as Power: Caste and the Political Imagination of the Postcolonial State.” *American Ethnologist* 38 (1): 73-85.
- Wittner, Kelly M. 2003. “Curbing Child-Trafficking in Intercountry Adoptions: Will International Treaties and Adoption Moratoriums Accomplish the Job in Cambodia?” *Pacific Rim Law and Policy Journal* 12 (2): 595-629.
- Wolf, Eric R. 1969. *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Harper and Row.
- . 1982. *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1999. *Envisioning Power: Ideologies of Dominance and Crisis*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Wolff, Robert Paul. 1969. “On Violence.” *Journal of Philosophy* 66 (19): 601-616.
- Worby, Paula. 2013. “A Generation after the Refugees’ Return: Are We There Yet?” In *War By Other Means: Aftermath in Post-Genocide Guatemala*, edited by Carlota McAllister and Diane M. Nelson, 330-352. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- World Bank. “GDP per capita (current US\$) – Guatemala” at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=GT>
- Worsley, Peter. 1968. *The Trumpet Shall Sound*. 2nd ed. New York: Schocken.
- Wortman, Miles L. 1982. *Government and Society in Central America, 1680-1840*. New York: Colombia University Press.
- Wright, Lawrence. 1993. “Remembering Satan.” *New Yorker*, May 17.
- Wright, Melissa W. 2001. “Desire and the Prosthetics of Supervision: A Case of Maquiladora Flexibility.” *Cultural Anthropology*. 16 (3): 354–373

- Yamauchi, Paul. 1993. "Patterns of Death: Descriptions of Geographic and Temporal Patterns of Rural State Terror in Guatemala, 1978-1985." *Physicians for Social Responsibility Quarterly* 3 (2): 67-78.
- Yeung, Ophelia M., and John A. Mathieson. 1998. *Global Benchmarks: Comprehensive Measures of Development*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Youngner, Stuart J., Renée C. Fox, and Laurence J. O'Connell, eds. 1996. *Organ Transplantation: Meanings and Realities*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Youngs, Gillian. 2003. "Private Pain/Public Peace: Women's Rights as Human Rights and Amnesty International's Report on Violence against Women." *Signs* 28 (4): 1209-1229.
- Yow, Valerie Raleigh. 2005. *Recording Oral History*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Zimmerman, Marc. 1991. "Testimonio in Guatemala: Payeras, Rigoberta, and Beyond." *Latin American Perspectives* 18 (4): 22-47.
- Žižek, Slavoj. 2008. *Violence*. New York: Picador.
- Zur, Judith. 1994. "The Psychological Impact of Impunity." *Anthropology Today* 10 (3): 12-17.
- . 1995. "The Psychological Effects of Impunity: The Language of Denial." In *Impunity in Latin America*, edited by R. Sieder. London: Institute of Latin American Studies.
- . 1998. *Violent Memories: Mayan Widows in Guatemala*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.