



FORMAL DISPLACEMENT

Savannah Dixon

*For my parents, Gretchen, and Eduardo -
uno de los desaparecidos.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgment	3
Abstract	4
List of Figures	5
Map of Guatemala	7
Framing	9 - 49
Culture of Development	10
Culture of Colonization	20
Culture of Imperialism	24
Culture of War	34
Culture of Growth	44
Analysis - Guatemala City	50 - 61
Design	62 - 69
Conclusion	70
Glossary	72
Bibliography	74
Images	78

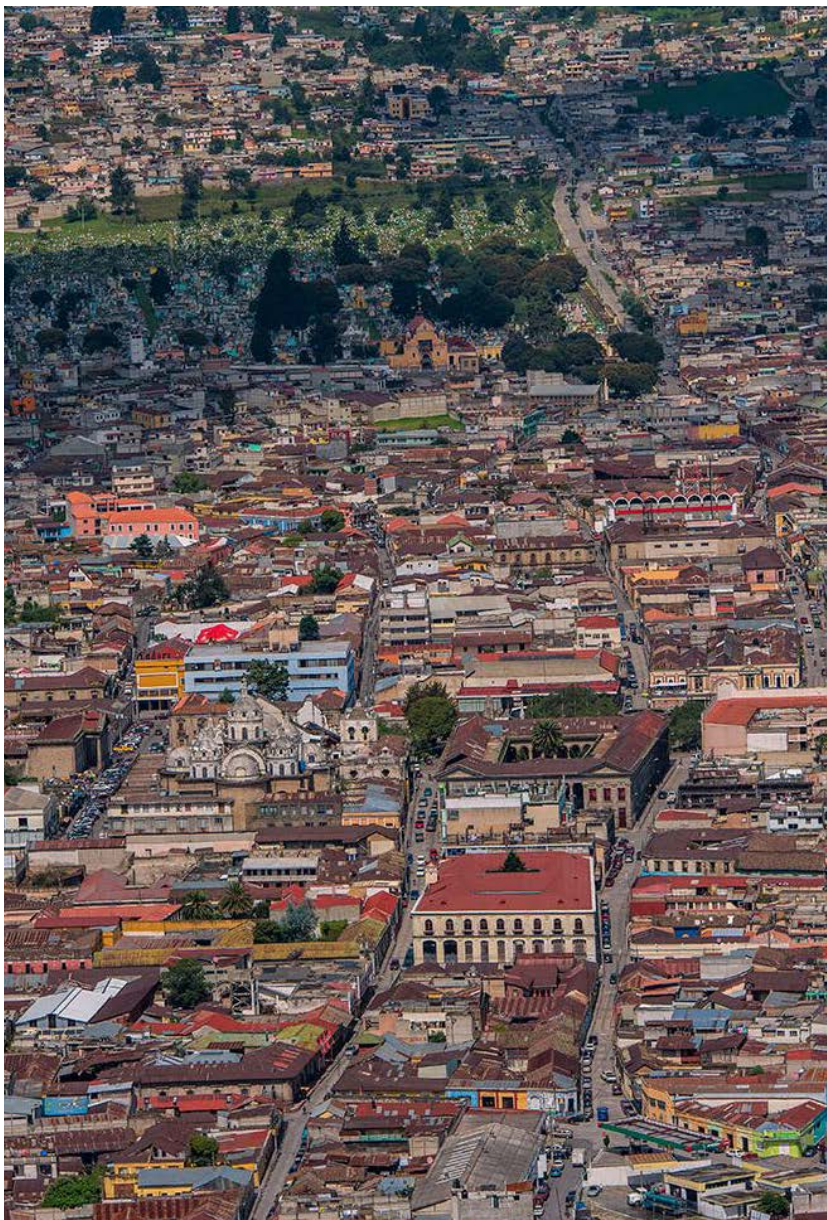


Image 1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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do and say because they may never know about this study, but what I have learned about resilience, culture, the definition of wealth, and the definition of poverty to the Guatemalan people has given me a deep perspective of roots and the identities of the people who inhabited the land in the Americas centuries before Europe arrived. I have gleaned so much beauty from their culture, and yet I have equally gleaned so much tension, disdain, and sorrow. Finding the line between solving "problems" and accepting those "problems" as existing differences has been a constant struggle throughout this project, but my personal experiences with the Guatemalan people makes this project so exceptionally real to me.

To the Guatemalan people,
Maltyox,
Chjonte,
Muchas Gracias.

ABSTRACT

Civilizations rise and fall, develop and evolve, or quietly disappear from the annals history. It is the burden of the present to protect the legacy of those who have come before.

Unfortunately, many of the civilizations of the Western Hemisphere have been neglected or forgotten. Submerged because those who came to inhabit the Americas assumed lordship instead of relationship. While this happened in all of the Americas, the focus of this narrative is about the cultural and architectural consequences of European colonization on Guatemala. This country occupies the fertile rain forests and plains between Mexico and Honduras. Its physical geography contains mountains, volcanoes, and rivers; and its cultural geography contains over twenty-eight different people groups making up the largest population of indigenous Mayan peoples in Central America.

This history of occupation of the land by force, the mass removal and relocation of indigenous peoples, forced labor on stolen land, civil war and rebellion, created long-term patterns of population migration. The direct consequence of this fluidity of population movement among the lower classes has created an architectural culture based on the mobility of the nomadic. This nomadic system of community, housing, and infrastructure leads to a lack of stability and consistency in the lives of people who already live in this world of inconsistency and flux.

By examining this history of nomadism and its manifestation in Guatemala City, architectural elements begin to present themselves as interesting potential alternatives to a traditional fixed architecture in a non-fixed world.

Civilizaciones suben y caen, desarrollan y evolucionar, o desaparecen silenciosamente de los anales de historia. Es la carga del presente proteger el legado de esos quienes han venido anteriormente.

Desafortunadamente, muchas de las civilizaciones en el hemisferio occidental han estado pasadas por alto u olvidado. Ellas han sido sumergidas a causa de esos quienes vinieron para habitar las Américas asumieron el señorío en lugar de la relación. Aunque este pasó en todos las Américas, el foco de esta narrativa es sobre las consecuencias culturales y arquitecturales de la colonización europea de Guatemala. Esto país está en los bosques pluviales y campos fértiles entre México y Honduras. La geografía física contiene las montañas, los volcanes, y los ríos; y la geografía cultural contiene más de veinte grupos de diferente gente maya los que constituyen la población más grande de gente indígena en los Américas.

La historia de la ocupación de la tierra por fuerza, el quitar de masas de los indígenas, el trabajo forzado en tierras robadas y una guerra civil y rebelión crearon patrones duraderos de la migración de la población. Las consecuencias directas de esta fluidez del movimiento de la población por las clases bajas han creado una cultura arquitectural basado en la movilidad de nomadismo. El sistema errante de comunidad, vivienda e infraestructura conduce una falta de estabilidad y consistencia en las vidas de la gente quien ya vive en esto mundo de inestabilidad y flujo.

Por examinar la historia de nomadismo y su manifestacion en la Ciudad de Guatemala, la representación arquitectural se cuestiona como una manera de explicar una geografía fija en un mundo nómada y mal documentado.

FIGURES



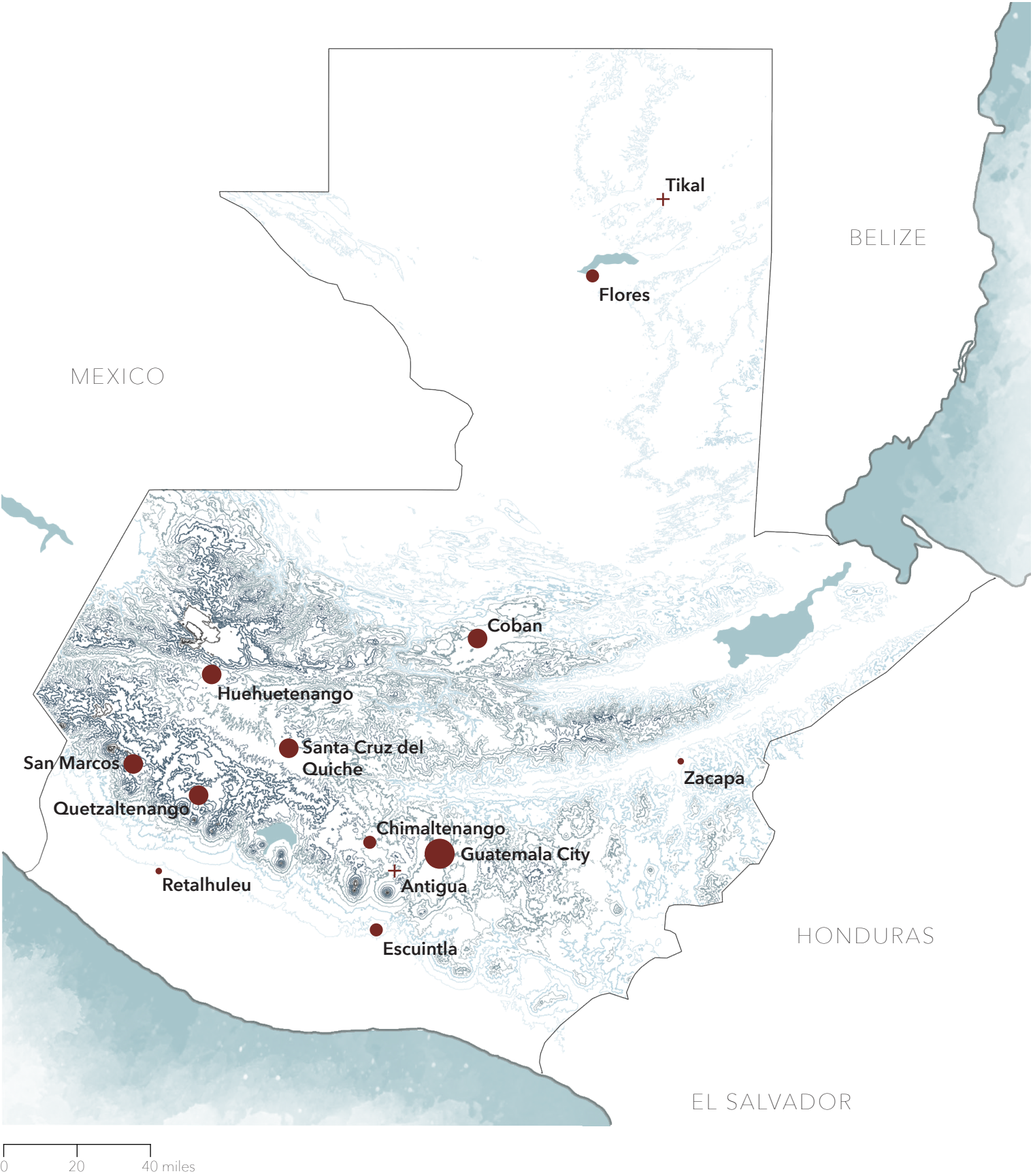
Image 2

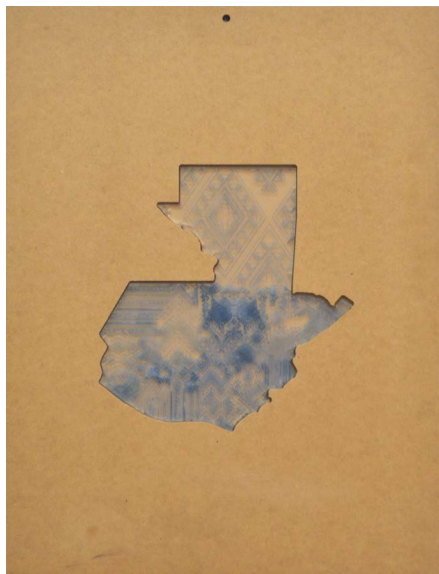
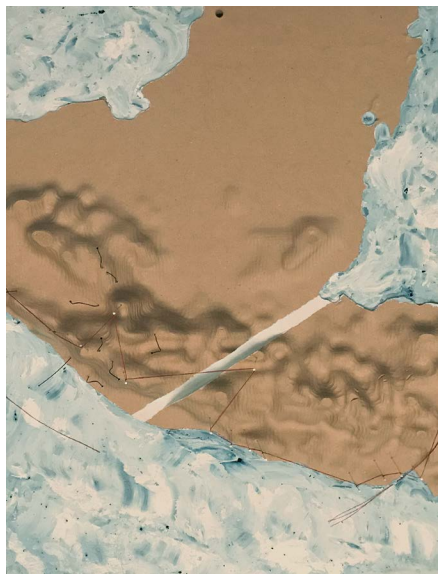
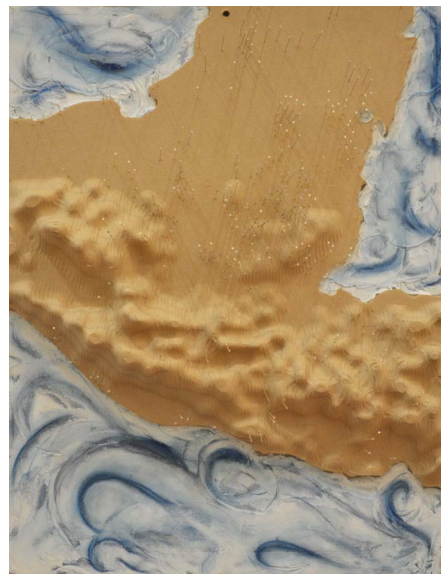
- 1.1 Indigenous Population
- 1.2 Mayan Civilization
- 1.3 K'iche' Language and Culture Map
- 1.4 Technological Comparison
- 1.5 Evolution of Guatemalan Border
- 1.6 Tikal Axes
- 1.7 Kaminlajuyu within Inner Guatemala City
- 1.8 Mayan Cultural Overlap
- 2.1 Colonization Path of de Alvarado
- 3.1 Agrarian Use
- 3.2 Human Habitation
- 4.1 Prayers for the Fallen
- 4.2 In the Midst of Chaos
- 4.3 Massacre Sites
- 4.4 Inter-Country Migration Due to Violence
- 5.1 Population of Mayans Worldwide
- 5.2 Wealth Disparity
- 5.3 Percentage of Those Under the Poverty Line
- 5.4 Ethnic Diversity
- 5.5 Housing Conditions
- 5.6 Percentage of Indigenous Population
- 5.7 Inter-Country Migration
- 5.8 Cycle of Violence
- 6.1 Earthquake of '76
- 6.2 Evolution of Guatemala City
- 6.3 Proposed City Growth
- 6.4 Department Division
- 6.5 Electric Infrastructure
- 6.6 Interstate System
- 6.7 Fault Lines

[FIGURES CONT'D]

- 6.8 Zones of Guatemala City
- 6.9 Department of Guatemala
- 6.10 Zones of the Department of Guatemala
- 6.11 Guatemala City Cityscape
- 6.12 Guatemala City
- 6.13 Population per Acre
- 6.14 Square Footage per Person
- 6.15 People per Home
- 6.16 Nomadism

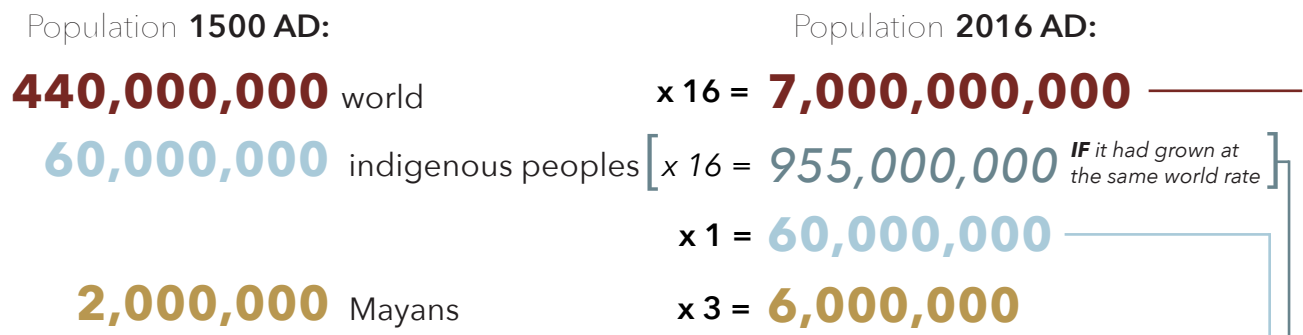
- 7.1 Formal Displacement
- 7.2 Site Location
- 7.3 Site Plan
- 7.4 Materials Exploded Axon
- 7.5 Stove Exploded Axon
- 7.6 Stove Elevations
- 7.7 Stove Plan and Sections
- 7.8 Roof Plan
- 7.9 Plan
- 7.10 Axon
- 7.11 Elevation
- 7.12 Ection
- 7.13 Exploded Axon





FRAMING

CULTURE OF DEVELOPMENT



[Figure 1.1 - Population Growth]

Civilization is defined by urbanism. Urban center, urban trade, and urban life are all necessary for a civilization to be deemed respectable of such a title. The Greeks evoke thoughts of the agora and the acropolis – centers of religion and intellectual thought. The Romans conjure visions of the forum and coliseum – centers of justice and entertainment. These are prominent, renowned, and undisputed examples of civilization because their existence and architectural significance is undeniable. While most of the civilizations in the European area are historically easily charted, the civilizations of the Americas are more anthropologically ambiguous.

From modern day Alaska to Argentina, there existed a rough estimate of 60 million people before Columbus landed in what is now the Bahamas. Scholars estimate a population anywhere from 54 million to 112.5 million pre-Columbian people.¹ Of this number, roughly 2,000,000 people lived in the zone between the Aztecs in North-Central Mexico and the Incans on the Pacific coast of what is now South America. This group, making up a tiny 3% of the indigenous pre-Columbian people, were the Mayans. Today, the 60 million people who existed in the Americas before the disease, exploitation, and massacres of colonization, have not grown in over 500 years.² Today there are still only around 60 million indigenous people in the Americas. However, the Mayan people have grown from a pre-Columbian population of two to over six million people – most likely the only group to far surpass their pre-Columbian

numbers [Fig. 1.1].

This incredible civilization now forms the largest group of indigenous people in the Western Hemisphere. Yet, after years of discovering and documenting new finds in all of Mesoamerica starting in the 1920's, there remains no significant explanation for the rise or fall of the Mayan empire.³ Theories range from ecological, external context, and a rise of a hierarchical chiefdom system. Because of the lack of a clear theory, the Mayan civilization has come under scrutiny as a complex culture. The definition of complex culture – while similarly defined by urbanism as is civilization – also includes the factors of growth in religion, trade, and moral ideology.⁴ These factors allow the Mayans to be considered a strong complex culture with evolving customs and feudalistic classes.

The Mayan Empire stretched from southern Mexico to northern Honduras [Fig. 1.2]. Much of the Mayan land was on the Yucatan peninsula and all throughout the country of Guatemala. Over the last 500 years, the Mayan population has grown substantially and currently 5 million of the 6 million Mayan people worldwide live in Guatemala. Beginning in the 2000's BCE, the Mayan civilization flourished creating centers of control lead by self-identified noble families who utilized the farming class to produce and refine the natural resources of the area. While this created a moderately successful civilization, the organization and dependence on the farming class probably led to the downfall of the Mayans in 900 CE. Comparable to the lack of theory as to the

beginnings of the Mayan civilization, their fall is likewise disputed. Most historians believe that the dispersal of Mayan centers was connected to overuse of resources or an environmental disaster like drought or famine. This reflects the lack of civil stability connected to the feudal system of Mayan leadership. While the land and identity was wholly Mayan, the people did not have a control over their lives as part of the Mayan empire.

To discuss the cultural development of building within the Mayan empire, there are significant archaeological principles to note. Adams et. all discuss at length the history of Mayan civilization through ceramic quantity at different sites. Through a study in Tikal, they discovered that the majority of developing ceramic evidence is linked to large and medium urban centers.⁵ This demonstrates the beginning of larger more organized city structures especially during the Chuen era circa 300 BCE. While many studied Mayan sites are in the Mayan Lowlands – northern Guatemala and the Yucatan Peninsula, there is also significant evidence that their forefathers came from the south, through the Guatemalan highlands, in order to settle on better farm land ca. 1000 BCE.⁶

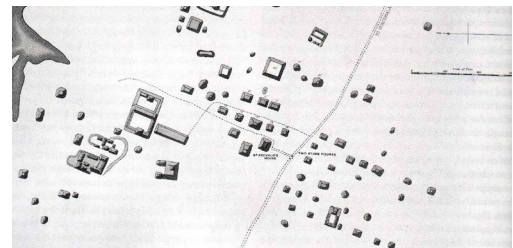
From their arrival to the lowlands in the Middle Preclassic Period, these small settlements of farmers slowly began to grow. By the Late Preclassic Period ca. 250 BCE, these subgroups had centralized and began to show signs of organization. This organization, subsequently, led to infighting and competition amongst the families for

the best land for growing maize. During this period, there is substantial proof that the beginnings of the noble families and elite class began to rise out of warfare and land ownership. With the rise of an elite, ruling class also came cultural ideological shift amongst the Lowland Maya allowing centers of nobility to engage in art, trade, craft, and study.⁷ The Protoclassic period spanned from 50 BCE to 250 CE. This time was essential to the preparation for the Classic Era; the time where the majority of Mayan culture we know today appeared. The Protoclassic age was defined by turmoil, disorganization, crumbling political structure and crisis. Because of this, the people began to consolidate geographically, ideologically, and architecturally.⁸

By the Classic Era, the largest Mesoamerican cities established trade routes – the majority between Tikal, the Aztec center of Teotihuacan, and the southern Mayan center of Kaminaljuyu – and the sharing of language, tradition, and cultural artifacts. Between 250 CE and 900 CE, the Mayan people flourished becoming a center of scientific innovation, artistic expression, and agricultural revolution. However, by 800 CE, the tension between the regional ruling classes arose turning the Mayan urban centers into military states pitted against each other. Because of their zeal for control, power, and resources, the Mayan nobility had exhausted the soil to the point of infertility. The food shortage and lack of governmental stability is the best guess for the decline of the Mayan civilization by 900 CE.⁹



Figure 1.2



The city of Kaminaljuyu was a center of Mayan rule from 1500 BC to 1200 AD.

Image 3

Technological Comparison 1524



Multiple cities over **250,000**

Genetically modifying plants

Written language

Advanced communication system

Shallow, river canoes



Largest city is Paris with **225,000**

Learning that grain is better ground

Large, sea-faring vessels

Figure 1.4



In 2000 BC, the Mayan Pre-Classic period marked the beginning of artistic and technological advances like pyramid building, art and writing.

Between 1250 and 1450, the Quiche subgroup from the north to create the most powerful Mayan empire after the collapse.

This marks the arrival of Pedro de Alvarado and the Spanish conquest of Guatemala.

El Quiche province

K'iche' language



Figure 1.3

1600



1821



2016



Figure 1.5



Image 4

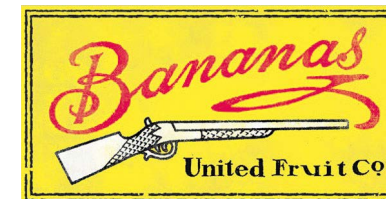


Image 5

The ten years between Ubico and the coup of 1954 were known as "The Spring" due to the first agrarian reform and labor laws.

Liberation from Spain

United Fruit Company



The United Fruit Co. was founded in the United States in 1899 and used the indigenous people as a labor force for almost a century.

Image 6

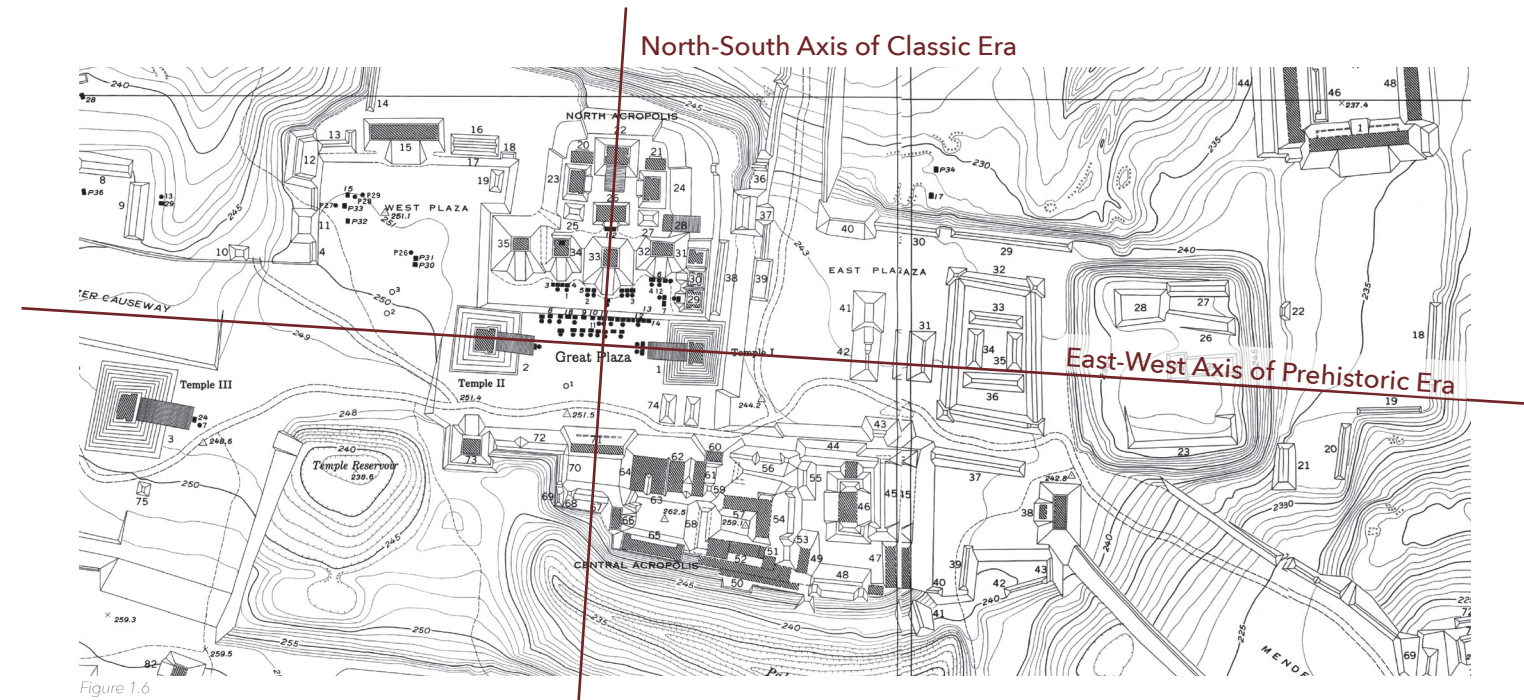
In 1954, the CIA backed a coup to oust President Arbenz who was seen as a socialist threat because of his redistribution of land and possible arms deals.

For the next 36 years, Guatemala was torn by a civil war between the Guerrilla, civilian armies and the state military. During this war, over 200,000 civilians were either brutally murdered or simply disappeared. After the war, many mass graves were found of rural, mayan people who had been killed for being in the way. Thus, this time is known as La Violencia and also the Mayan Genocide.

After the decline of the civilization, the urban centers, rife with architectural innovation, were abandoned. More than likely, the Mayan people did not become extinct, they simply dispersed into the land forming smaller communities of farming units. For six generations of moderately undocumented history, the people lived in seeming isolation with only a small group forming a new nation of the Quiche people – descendants of the proto-maya. The groups that came together after the dispersal of the Mayan Lowlands are the ancestors of today’s Guatemalan and Yucatan indigenous people. The Quiche people not only continue to exist today, but are the largest indigenous group in Guatemala with over 1 million self-identifying indigenous people – over 10% of the overall Guatemalan population. Therefore, it is important to note that despite the phrasing of the “collapse” of a civilization, the Mayan people very much survived the fall of 900 CE and continued growing until and after the Spanish arrival in 1524.

Two of the main Mayan urban centers within the modern borders of Guatemala are Tikal and Kaminaljuyu – currently ruins under Guatemala City urban sprawl. Both cities shared similar linguistic, ethnic, and cultural identities. Today, Tikal is one of the main motivations for tourism because of the well protected and preserved ruins in the flat, Guatemalan lowlands. On the other hand, the site – or more accurately sites – of Kaminaljuyu stretches from the northwest corner of Guatemala City past its eastern border. While they are of very similar sizes,

Kaminaljuyu is virtually nonexistent. Because the Spaniards stayed near the Pacific coast of Guatemala during colonization, the land around and above Kaminaljuyu was established before Tikal being 350 miles south and quickly Guatemalans began developing the land for housing, agriculture, and urban centralization. Today, Tikal National Park is a 143,000 acre UNESCO World Heritage site, roughly the same size as Chicago.¹⁰ Kaminaljuyu, contrastingly, is ill-defined, ill-preserved, and has less than 30 acres of protected land. Each of these cities represented multiple Mayan, urban characteristics important to the development of urban centers.



TIKAL

As the most known site in Guatemala, Tikal is plastered on every sign in the La Aurora International Airport in Guatemala City, seen in the background of Star Wars: Return of the Jedi, and visited by hundreds of thousands every year.¹¹ Protected by national and international entities for its archaeological and ecological wealth, there is something strange about Tikal and its complex. While many Mayan sites throughout the Yucatan follow similar, clear principles of civic organization, Tikal “as a whole is a complicated assemblage of many city-planning principles”.¹²

Architecturally, the Mayans have been studied intently because of their city planning. The shift from hunter-gatherer to rural trade created a need for civic space for the newly developing elite class. This not only was an ideological shift, but many archaeologists believe this also reflected an architectural shift.¹³ During the Preclassic period, the Mayans designed their cities based on an east-west axis. This demonstrated the overarching control of the solar system as the dominant power source of their cities and society. Many of their cities that reflect an east-west orientation seem to trace solar movements and those of the milky way.¹⁴ Scholars believe that this tracing of the heavens was a way of reenacting the creation of the universe which is also well-documented in various indigenous texts as well.^{15 16} During the ideological shift between the Preclassic and Classic era, the shift from religious-based design to civic-based design introduced a new planning axis. With the north-south city

axis, the elite class was dictating where they would be in the afterlife. “North” and “south” were not necessarily cardinal directions, but represented the heavens and underworld, up and down. If a ruler placed his tomb or stele on the north side of the city, he was ready for his journey to the underworld.

While Tikal’s Temple I and II [Fig. 1.6] represent a perfect east-west axis of cosmological order, the rest of the city plan is less organized. Tikal did, however, continue with the north-south shift during the Classic era, but for some reason Temples I and II retained their religious and civic importance post shift. Most cities saw less use or reuse with the more religious structures – reformatting them to be civic structures or funerary structures. However, Tikal is unique in that the two most important religious structures retained their importance as a center of the entire city and an entrance to the acropolis. Tikal is designed outside of the norm, but holds great significance in city development during pre-Columbian Guatemala.

KAMINALJUYU

Starting in the 1920's, archaeologists Alfred Kidder and Edwin Shook became interested in the Mayan ruins hidden in picturesque jungles with their cascading steps, strange creatures, and towering pyramids. Uncovered from years of earthquakes and heavy rains carving grooves in the landscape, Kaminaljuyú - which means "hills of the dead (or ancestors depending on the translation)"¹⁷ in the k'iche' indigenous language - peaked the attention of Kidder, Shook, and others for the better part of thirty years.¹⁸ Unfortunately, once they rediscovered the ancient city - situated slightly northwest of what was then the outskirts of Guatemala City - the land was being developed for building.¹⁹ Owned by a ladino who controlled the finca that was being developed, the archaeologists had a difficult time gathering data because the workers were recycling the stone and brick of the ruins to use as building materials. Over the next twenty years, the archaeologists came and went because of World War II and other stateside issues, yet continued trying to find more information about this ancient city.

Thankfully, pottery pieces, roofing, and other ancient containers were not seen as useful for brick making or building, so most of these pieces were discarded allowing for the archaeologists to collect the pieces to store at the Guatemala National Museum. From their excavations, the archaeologists discovered layers of cities built on top of each other demonstrating a long history on the site.²⁰ This is not an unknown concept, but what struck Kidder

as strange how the Guatemalans reacted to it. In his archaeological investigation of Kaminaljuyú, he commented "We did not realize, as clearly as we do today, in how little respect the Maya, or for that matter most Mesoamericans, held their ceremonial buildings, abandoning them, looting them for building materials, or burying them under new construction."²¹ Essentially, he was noting how little the Guatemalans seemed to care about the preservation of their ancient people, letting it become overgrown and looted. For example, a modern archaeologist examining Kaminaljuyú - Dr. Bárbara Arroyo - had similar issues when trying to examine the ancient city. Roger Atwood, an editor for the Archaeological Institute of America, wrote about her struggle saying, "One ancient pyramid, today a nondescript mound, sits in the garden of a private mansion. The owners of the house won't let Arroyo look at the site, much less excavate it, so she hopes to inspect it with a drone."²²

Unfortunately, the majority of this city is lost under parking lots, housing slabs, and developed buildings [Fig. 1.7]. Because of this, the best way to spatially study the city has been through ceramic study.²³ According to the dissertation of Joseph J. Lischka, there are three levels of settlement analysis pertaining to Kaminaljuyú: (1) individual structures and their typologies, (2) the relationship between those structures, and (3) the distribution of those structures over the landscape.²⁴ However, it is impossible to analyze the true extent of the settlement at Kaminaljuyú due to the urban

sprawl of Guatemala City. While this is the reality, studies like that of Lischka, Kidder, and Shook demonstrate that the only way to study this overgrown city is through shards of ceramics. This study is ongoing and many groups are more conscious of the protection and promotion of Kaminaljuyú.



Figure 1.7



Notes

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Figure 1.8

CULTURE OF COLONIZATION

In 1521, the Aztec empire fell at the hands of Cortez's vast Spanish army. An integral captain to this endeavor who made a name for himself in his cruelty and avarice was Don Pedro de Alvarado. This man would become the malicious villain of the Mayans and the hero of the Spanish. Over the next three years, de Alvarado would wander over the Guatemalan highlands slaughtering, massacring, and conquering the Mayan people. Many different events helped him in this quest. Firstly, the Guatemalan people groups were at great odds against each other - especially the Kaqchikels and the Quiches. Upon the arrival of de Alvarado, there was already existing tensions and injury due to infighting. In addition, something travelled even faster than the Spaniards: plague. Smallpox and other European sicknesses ravaged the Mesoamericans faster than the Spaniards could kill - more than likely decimating around 40% of the Mayan population. While the history of the colonization in Guatemala is important to the framing of the current trends of architectural practice, the lingering results of colonization in Guatemala today are of more pressing importance.

After the Aztecs fell, Cortez ordered de Alvarado to go south and continue conquering the indigenous people and the lands for the Holy Catholic Church - or Spain - because of evidence in Teotihuacán of commercial trade between the Mayans and the Aztecs.²⁵ On July 25, 1524, de Alvarado stood outside of the capital city of the Quiche empire - Utatlan. After killing the head chief of the four leaders in

the city, the city and its empire fell to the Spanish. The day following this slaughter, de Alvarado travelled to Quetzaltenango and commented on the city saying, "...after yesterday's punishment I found it empty - not even a single person there."²⁶ This pattern continued as de Alvarado challenged every group he encountered leaving death in his wake. He traveled from the modern department of Retalhuleu, through the crumbling Quiche empire, to the founding of Antigua, Quetzaltenango, and Guatemala City [Fig. 2.1]. De Alvarado's men trekked across the highlands without passing north leaving most of the Guatemalan lowlands essentially untouched.²⁷

In 1526, the Kaqchikel people group - who had been loyal to the Spaniards helping them conquer their fellow Mayans - rebelled against the Spaniards and joined the remaining Mayans in their resistance against the oppressive invaders. Thus began five centuries of resistance. Even though their resistance was strong, the European culture that seemingly appeared in thin air created a sort of culture shock. For a people who had never seen a gun, horses, or men of European color and clothing, the psychological impact of this vision did not help the Mayans in their resistance.²⁸ In order to control these brave and resilient people, the Spaniards designed new systems and input their own systems to round up and centralize the people. Primarily, and this is a common theme in all colonization, their mandate was directly from God himself, so they could always justify their actions. The use of missionaries and Catholicism aided

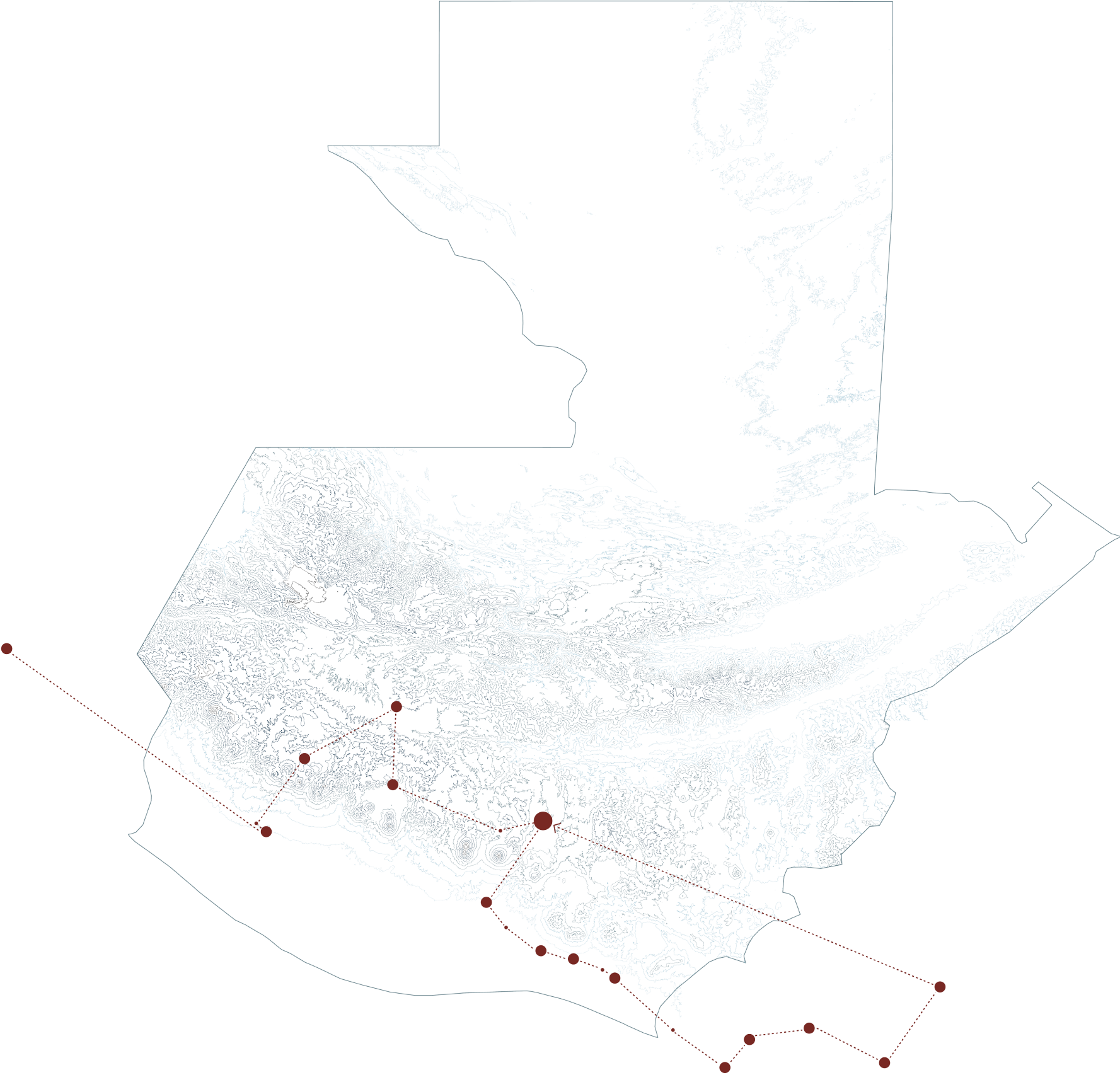


Figure 2.1

in the control and forced conversion of the Mayan people.

Physically, the Spaniards maintained control of the indigenous people under the policy of congregación which forced thousands of native families from their homes. These congregaciones were usually situated near a church and helped the Spaniards with civil organization and by creating a centralized workforce for building these new colonial cities.²⁹ Within the congregaciones, the people worked within the confines of encomiendas or repartimientos, ways for the Spaniards to take tribute from the indigenous population without any documented power titles. However, this did not work long-term because of how unpredictable the Mayans were in producing and delivering tribute to sustain them. In 1591, seventy years into their occupation, the Spaniards received a royal order known as the composición de tierras. Essentially, this allowed for the Spaniards to begin building a treasury of funds from other Spaniards buying the land they occupied in the new district of Guatemala.³⁰ In other words, if a Spaniard occupied land where an indigenous family had been forcibly removed, he could sell that land to another Spaniard in order to form a rural estate with the original family unbeknownst to the loss of their lands and homes.

By the 17th century, the Spaniards were not moving further into Guatemala due to the difficulty of the terrain [Fig. 2.x]. This proved to be a form of salvation for many Mayan people. All the Mayans on the

northern side of the mountains were able to preserve their traditions and way of life until the better part of the 19th century. George Lovell noted that the natives that could, “withstood the onslaught of acculturation with more resilience, holding on to much of their land, retaining Maya principles of community organization, and guarding a sense of place that was resolutely their own.”³¹ This sense of place was necessary to the ongoing preservation of the Mayans to this day. Even the Spaniards could see this innate tie to the land. Two friars wrote back to King Charles in the 1550’s:

“...among all these Indians there is not one who wishes to leave behind the hut passed on to him by his father, nor to abandon a pestilential ravine or desert some inaccessible craggy rocks, because that is where the bones of his forefathers rest.”³²

Because of this constant urge to return to their homes, to relive their pre-Columbian lives, and escape the hand of their captors, there was constant movement away from their Spanish-determined city centers. The Spanish called them “indios fugitivos” – the unruly Mayans who would constantly desert their centers and villages for their cornfields.³³ This flightiness and likelihood to run began to affect the architecture of colonial cities. Because the construction of said cities were dependent on the Maya for production, the colonial Mayan communities designed outside of the Spanish definition of the city were

“seldom spatially fixed or static,” and without clear designation or legality.³⁴ In response to these informal communities, the indigenous elite began to lead what came to be known as parcialidades – groups defined by kin, location, or land ownership. These parcialidades, while divisive and weakening to the indigenous people, allowed many of the cities and people to maintain their languages and traditional city names. However hard they tried, the Spaniards could not take away the roots of the indigenous Mayan people.

The results of colonization are visible in multiple forms. However, one of the most significant result of colonization comes from the idea of the “dualization of society.”³⁵ In Lovell’s article on surviving conquest, he paraphrases this idea from Eric Wolf, an anthropologist from the 1960s. The “dualization of society” infers that from the point of colonization – and inevitably until today – the indigenous people of Mesoamerica endured some sense of slavery under the Spaniards creating a sense of “us versus them.” This allowed for control, respect, and wealth on the part of the Spaniards, yet it bred “suspicion, distrust, hatred, and fear,” on the part of the Mayans.³⁶ That sense of fear is what has endured for five hundred years after Pedro de Alvarado arrived in the Americas. That sense of fear has caused the Mayan people to adapt to a life of instability and constant flux.

Notes

- 25. Pedro de Alvarado, *An Account of the Conquest of Guatemala in 1524*, ed. Sedley J. Mackie (New York, NY: The Cortes Society, 1924), 11.
- 26. *Ibid.*, 59.
- 27. W. George Lovell, “Surviving Conquest: The Maya of Guatemala In Historical Perspective,” *Latin American Research Review* 23, no. 2 (1988): 31, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2503234>.
- 28. *Ibid.*, 29-30.
- 29. *Ibid.*, 30.
- 30. *Ibid.*
- 31. *Ibid.*, 31.
- 32. *Ibid.*, 34.
- 33. *Ibid.*
- 34. *Ibid.*, 35.
- 35. *Ibid.*, 36.
- 36. *Ibid.*

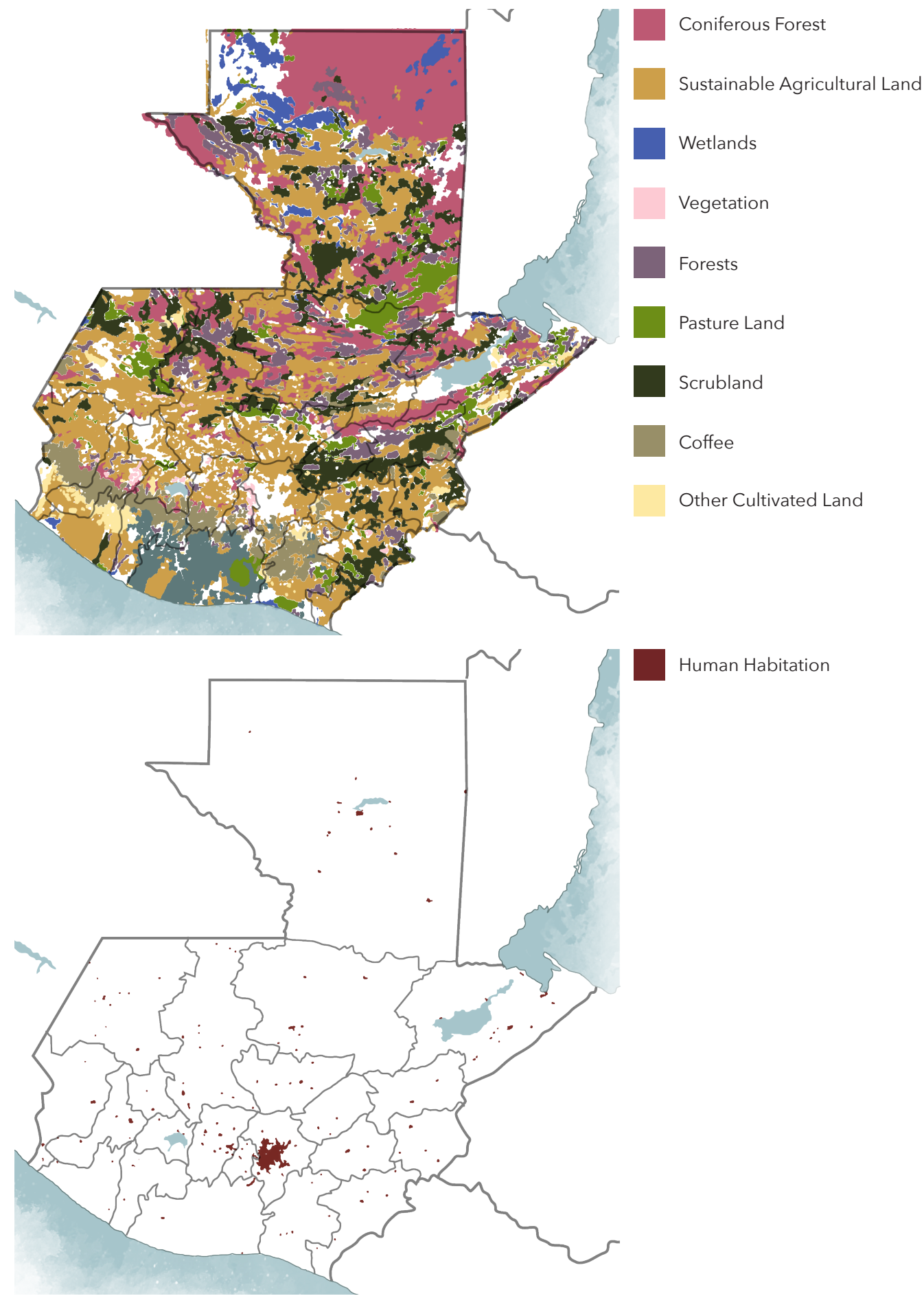
CULTURE OF IMPERIALISM

In 1821, the Spaniards were called home by a pending war in Europe and the defeat of Spanish troops in Mexico. Following the Spanish retreat, the United States passed the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 to warn European nations against colonizing further in the Americas. Even with the Monroe Doctrine, foreign entities – including the United States – maintained control over economic and agricultural powers in Guatemala. According to George Lovell’s article on how the Mayan people survived their conquest, two opinions have formed about native integration after Spain left the Americas. Oliver La Farge, an anthropologist and historian from New York, opined that after the Spaniards’ exit, “Indian life becomes a smooth blend; well-stabilized, it has the individuality and roundness that mark any culture, and its continued evolution is in the form of growth out of itself rather than in response to alien pressure.”³⁷ However, Carol Smith, a scholar of Mayan nationalism, finds no proof of La Farge’s research. During the transition between Spanish rule and an established Guatemalan government, the gap between the wealthy and the poor began to grow wider, and a regional marketing system developed which started moving the peasant class out of agriculture. Essentially, Smith posits that these two transitions funneled the Guatemalan people into a system easily overtaken by a liberal regime.³⁸

From 1823 to the 1870’s, Guatemala had different conservative presidents who worked to maintain the paternalistic Spanish governing system. In 1871, Justo Rufino

Barrios became president and pushed the country into the capitalist world. The first step to this process was expediting land use and government ownership. However, in doing so, Barrios passed a decree that legalized the repossession of indigenous lands by remaining Spanish families or ladinos. In addition, the liberal regimes raised taxes and took control of vast spreads of national land to encourage foreign entities to encourage European immigration.³⁹ Because many of the indigenous land owners and population did not understand the decree, hear the decree, or even remotely know how the new government system worked, they were quickly overtaken and removed from their lands with nowhere else to go but to work their own land in possession of another or travel to seasonal fields for temporary work. This becomes the third distinct time the Mayan people are displaced after the fall of the empiric Mayans and the colonization of the Spaniards.

Pausing historically, it is important to note that the push towards industry created a cultural divide among the Guatemalan people. Before the liberalists came into power within the Guatemalan government, the social divide was between the incredibly wealthy land owners and the peasant, Mayan class – which made up the majority of the population. Rene Reeves, a professor of history and economics, observes an interesting sociocultural separation upon the introduction of liberal government. According to Reeves, when the liberal regime settled, the indigenous population was faced with a choice. They



Figures 3.1 + 3.2



Image 7

could become “ladinos,” thus giving up their biological connection to indigenous history and culture, or they could refuse and continue to hold onto their cultural birthright to the land.⁴⁰ The distinction was no longer biological, it was a cultural choice of acculturation. Ladino nationalism grew so strong that in certain cities, the sentiment, “Ladinos with Ladinos, Indians with Indians,” became the expression of the late 1800’s.

By the twentieth century, the need for industrialization overwhelmed the Guatemalan government which was completely dependent on feudalistic economic systems to exist. Thus, Guatemala entered the “Banana Republic.” This phrase, coined by O. Henry in 1912 ⁴¹, refers to those countries in Central America and the Caribbean that fell prey to the monopolies of American industry, namely the United Fruit Company (UFCO). On the one hand, UFCO developed “plantations, railways, telegraph lines, housing, hospitals and ports in the producing areas.”⁴² On the other, more economically damaging, hand, UFCO enslaved millions of indigenous people, repossessed hundreds of thousands of acres for fractional costs, and, while they were very economically prosperous, hardly a cent returned to the Guatemalan economy.

By 1934, President Ubico, one of the more renowned dictators of Central America in the twentieth century, legalized vagrancy laws requiring those who owned small plots of land to work one hundred to one hundred and fifty days out of the year with a penalty of imprisonment, taxes, debt, or even death. While the Guatemalan government worked

directly with the UFCO and other American multinational business entities, economists and historians like Marcelo Bucheli do not think of this as an alliance, but rather an unbalanced, ill-defined dependency that question Dependency theory of the 1970s itself.⁴³ The issue with this economic system is, first and foremost, not the exploitation, but the strict set of exterior elements that have to fall into place for such a system to succeed. Because the relationship between multinational corporations and the totalitarian government of Guatemala during the 30s required economic stability in both parties, there was very little leeway for mistake.⁴⁴ This would work in many other countries, but Guatemala had different issues coming to light simultaneously.

Firstly, if the UFCO and Guatemala were to work seamlessly, there could be no economic disruption, and yet they were completely dependent on a marginalized community to sustain the economy within the country. Dependency on this lead to many issues with the desire for worker unions, labor reform, and strikes. The more issues that rise, the more likely they are to continue or repeat thus beginning a cycle of economic instability, dependency on foreign entities, and informal dealings within the government in order to profit themselves.

Secondly, the indigenous Mayans of Guatemala were becoming restless and embittered toward this economic system. It is estimated that over 70% of indigenous land was repossessed for industrial purposes between 1880 and 1945. Families,



Image 8



Image 9



Image 10



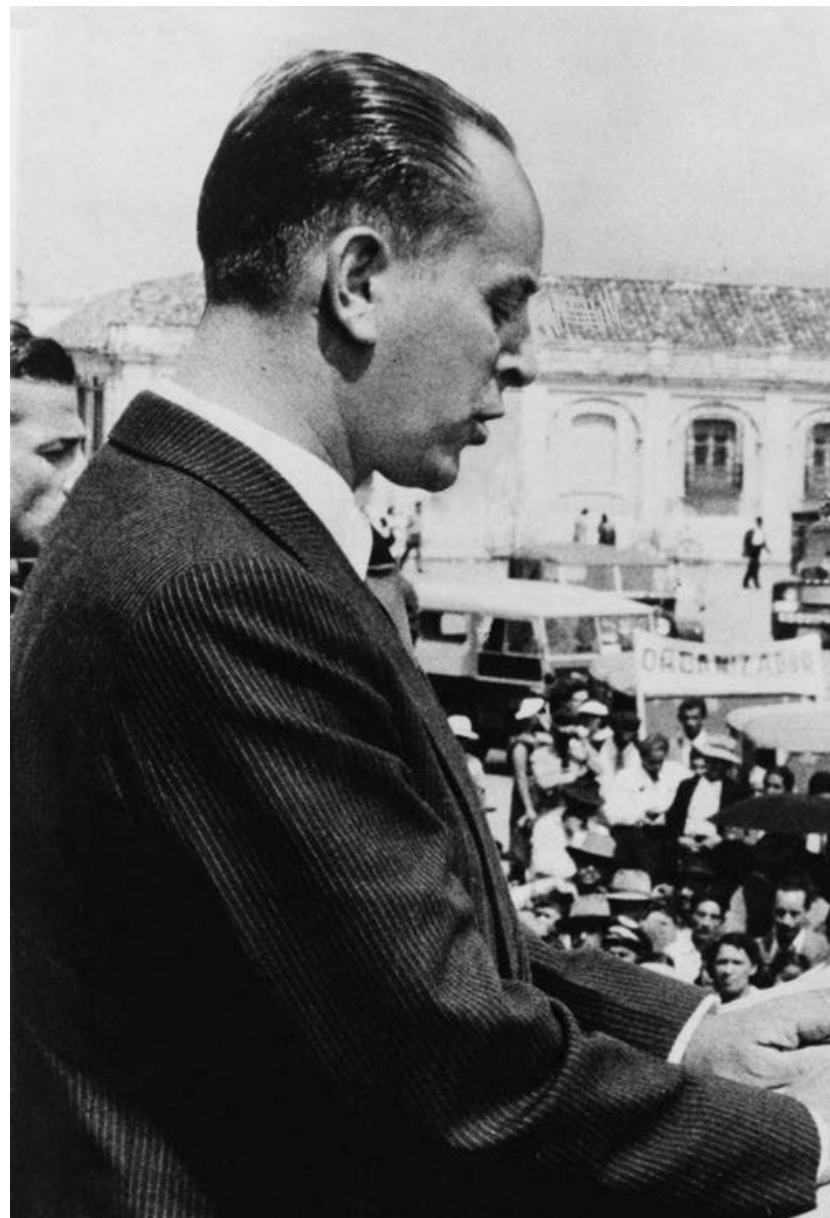


Image 11

like the quote below demonstrates, with documented claims who had bought and rebought their lands had no way of regaining their possessions:

"You have ordered us to leave our lands so that coffee can be grown... In exchange you have offered us 600 caballerías [18,600 acres] on the coast. We know how to grow coffee - we do this for the land-owners on their fincas - but we want our fathers' lands for corn. They have always been ours. We have paid for them three times... We have the money now. How much do you want for our own lands this time?"⁴⁵

If these indigenous citizens spoke out about the imbalance of power and wealth, it became legal for ladinos to kill insurgents. In addition, if ladinos saw this injustice and said anything about it, they were ostracized from economic culture thus making them obsolete on the market.⁴⁶

These patterns of imperialism and industrialism in Guatemala set the third cycle of conquest into motion with displacement and dependency. The industrial focus in Guatemala before 1945 not only displaced the majority of the indigenous population, it also divided the wealth into further disparity. The system put into place forcing indigenous people to work for certain amounts of days was truly oppressive, and it was also a trap. Ladinos and landowners would allow their employees to take loans

for festival days and holidays in order to pay for rum, food, and other celebratory elements. The debt incurred was far more than one-hundred or one-hundred and fifty days could repay. This system of debt is still the norm on fincas today with many indigenous people eternally indebted to the ladinos who own them.⁴⁷

The cycle of conquest controlled by imperialism came to an end during the governmental shift called "The Spring" between 1944 and 1954. In October of 1944, Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán [Img. 11] lead an overhaul of Ubico's government under the slightly misunderstood philosophy that "Guatemala's internal difficulties stemmed chiefly from the ignorance and isolation of its Indian population."⁴⁸ In reality, Lovell says clearly:

"What Arbenz apparently never understood was that capitalism had evolved symbiotically in Guatemala to create a situation wherein highland Maya villages and piedmont fincas existed in varying degrees of interdependence; in this specific setting, capitalistic logic dictated that 'if the former endure, the latter are ensured the labor they need.'"⁴⁹

After Arbenz brought down the liberal presidency, Juan José Arévalo was elected president in 1945. Over the next six years, Arévalo introduced policies to return land indigenous people, to promote Mayan language learning, improve education,

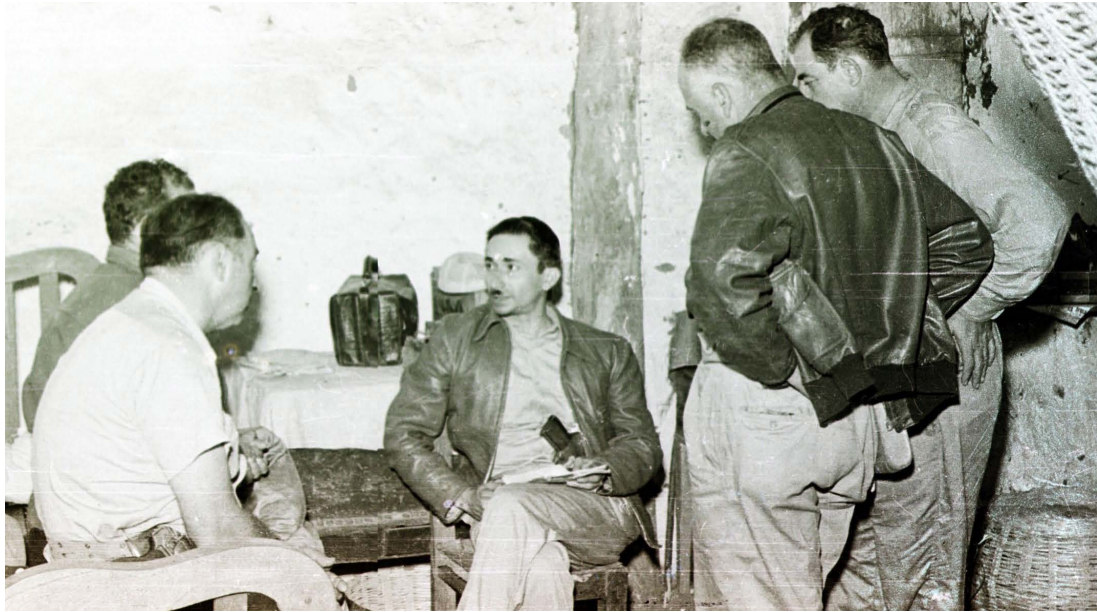


Image 12

and give a voice to the working man. Arévalo was the absolute opposite of his predecessors. He believed in Guatemalan nationalism, a Central American federation, sympathy for the working man and small businesses, and these priorities were translated as communistic. While Arévalo personally referred to himself as a “spiritual socialist,” his enemies did not see it this way. At the end of his term, having been the only president to complete his legal term in the twentieth century, “he closed out his term of office in 1951 without effecting all the meaningful legislation that he had hoped for in the latter field.”⁵⁰

Jacobo Arbenz, the organizer of the coup in 1944, became president in 1951. His presidency was founded on five platforms:

- “(1) first, landowners should convert their properties into remunerative enterprises;
- (2) second, help should be given to peasants so that the land distributed to them would be productive;
- (3) third, small farmers should be protected from the exploitation of usurers;
- (4) fourth, enough credit should be made available at cheap interest rates and at opportune times;
- and (5) fifth, technical assistance should be made available in the fields of education, equipment, seed, fertilizers, and the utilization of credit.”⁵¹

Arbenz became president when many entities began to stir. His presidency ended in a CIA backed coup in 1954, and the effects of this coup continue to dissipate through Guatemalan politics.

By February of 1954, the United Fruit Company’s landholding had gone from over 500,000 acres to less than 200,000.⁵² Without their tax-cuts and quasi-free labor, the UFCO was beginning to feel the monetary repercussions of this political change. By June of 1954, over 100,000 families had received land and new cooperative, government-run farms were being utilized by the majority of the population signifying the beginning of the end to fincas run by only the elite. Now, not only was the largest economic entity in Guatemala feeling their power crumble, the 1% of the Guatemalan population was crumbling as well. Soon, grumbles of “communism” and “marxism” began to whisper through the cities sending fear into the minds of the poor who had only heard of the horrors of these regimes in Europe.

During 1953, the United States government attempted to represent the UFCO and demand payment and the return of land from the Guatemalan government. However, the loss of land was now law under the Agrarian Reform Law of 1952 and the payment was completely based on tax forms, which the UFCO had been dishonest on for fifty years. However, in May of 1954, the United States Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, “accused the Guatemalan government of being infiltrated with Communists,” with his most condemning



Image 13

evidence being that Guatemala had recently received a shipment of arms from the USSR.⁵³ However, Dulles did not mention that this shipment from Czechoslovakia was due to the embargo against Guatemala since 1948.⁵⁴

In 1952, the United States government partnered with Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas to begin “Project Success” – the CIA-backed operation to remove the communist government of Guatemala [img. 12]. In the 1990’s, Nick Cullather performed an intensive study within the CIA’s archive to discover what the true involvement of the CIA was. What he discovered was an intensive record of the paranoia of the Cold War. Project Success, “would combine psychological, economic, diplomatic, and paramilitary actions,” to rid Guatemala of communist influence.⁵⁵ The operation, which took two years and multiple attempts, “relied on the State and Defense Departments to isolate Guatemala diplomatically, militarily, and economically.”⁵⁶ During 1952, the CIA was attempting to send contraband arms to Armas who was stationed in Honduras when word started spreading about the operation thus jeopardizing its success. When they began again, Secretary of State, Dulles authorized \$3 million towards the project in December of 1953. Over the following year the insurgency began utilizing radio, propaganda, and word of mouth to plant doubt in the Arbenz regime in the minds of the Guatemalan people.

By January of 1954, rumors spread that Armas’ purpose in this project was the overtake of Guatemala City by means

of violence and chaos. The population of Guatemala, torn in multiple directions, was unable to choose a side, thus allowing Armas and his troops the political freedom to move at will without much counterinsurgency. In mid-May, officers, saboteurs, and communications specialists completed training programs organized by American troops situated in Nicaragua and Honduras. One trainee recalls: “The friendly, taciturn American instructors...were known only by their first names, which were either Pepe or José.”⁵⁷ There were at least 5,000 men in the Guatemalan army at the time, and, even with the elite American training, Armas’ men were no match unless they could convince the army to turn against their president. However, the propaganda that Armas’ regime had spread in the country began to truly warp the political climate:

“Agency propaganda operations succeeded making Guatemala into the type of repressive regime the United States liked to portray it as. By late April, freedoms of speech and assembly had all but been revoked by official decrees and unofficial goon squads, which intimidated independent newspapers and radio stations into silence. Radio Universal, the only openly anti-communist radio station, closed after its offices were raided by goons and its owner placed under arrest.”⁵⁸

Early morning, June 15, 1954, armed guerillas poured over the Honduras-Guatemala border launching an anti-communist political coup. Due to the psychological warfare over the previous two years, the army, being totally demoralized, decided not to defend their country. By June 25, Arbenz announced that the army had abandoned him and by the 27th, he sought political asylum with the Mexican embassy. He left the country a few months later being forced to strip to his underwear at the airport and hand over all his military medals and awards.⁵⁹ Within the year, almost all the land given to the campesinos was returned to the landowners. In 1971, Arbenz drowned in his bathtub under mysterious circumstances and it was not until 1995 that his remains were proudly returned to Guatemala. One man remembered:

“I was seven when the CIA overthrew Arbenz, and I remember my parents, who were very anti-communist, cheering when he gave his farewell speech on the radio and left the country. How shortsighted they were, and how different our lives would have been if he had been permitted to carry out those reforms. How many lives has this cost us?”

In the late 1980’s, Dr. Paul J. Dosal wrote a political history of the industrialization in Guatemala through the story of one of the most prominent concrete companies in the country and its

evolution across the liberal, reformation, and conservative regimes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Dosal notes that Guatemala’s industrialization has been the “product of collaboration and competition among a number of forces, both public and private, national and foreign.”⁶⁰ Over decades of dependence on foreign entities, the Guatemalan government had no way of maintaining economic, cultural, and political balance. The government also, “lacked dynamic mechanisms for self-autochthonous growth,”⁶¹ thus creating a trapped state of imbalance between the economic powers – the UFCO – and the economic providers – the workforce. This sets the stage for the fourth, and most significant, displacement of the Guatemalan people.

Notes

37. W. George Lovell, “Surviving Conquest: The Maya of Guatemala In Historical Perspective,” *Latin American Research Review* 23, no. 2 (1988): 37, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2503234>.

38. Ibid.

39. Rene Reeves, *Ladinos with Ladinos, Indians with Indians: Land, Labor, and Regional Ethnic Conflict in the Making of Guatemala* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 2.

40. Ibid., 10.

41. Marcelo Bucheli, “Multinational Corporations, Totalitarian Regimes and Economic Nationalism: United Fruit Company in Central America, 1899-1975,” *Business History* 50, no. 4 (2008): 433, doi:10.1080/00076790802106315.

42. Ibid., 434.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., 436.

45. Thomas Melville and Marjorie Melville, *Guatemala: The Politics of Land Ownership* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1971), 20-21.

46. Ibid., 24.

47. Lovell, “Surviving Conquest: The Maya of Guatemala In Historical Perspective,” 41.

48. Ibid., 42.

49. Ibid., 43.

50. Melville and Melville, *Guatemala: The Politics of Land Ownership*, 39.

51. Ibid., 44-45.

52. Ibid., 61.

53. Ibid., 75.

54. Ibid., 76.

55. Nick Cullather and Piero Gleijeses, *Secret History: The CIA’s Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 40.

56. Ibid., 44.

57. Ibid., 72.

58. Ibid., 67.

59. Trish O’Kane, *Guatemala: A Guide to the People, Politics and Culture*, 2006th ed. (New York, NY: Interlink Books, 2003), 21.

60. Paul J. Dosal, “The Political Economy of Guatemalan Industrialization , 1871-1948 : The Career of Carlos P . Novella,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 68, no. 2 (1988): 322, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2515517>.

61. Ibid., 325.

CULTURE OF WAR

The coup in 1954 undid virtually everything done in the decades before. The land returned to the indigenous people was removed once again. The feudalist economy returned with a fury. The totalitarian government was reinstated as a military dictatorship with unstable turnover seeing more than sixteen different leaders in forty years. In her third working paper on the political repercussions of violent civil war, Sabine Kurtenbach divides the Guatemalan civil war into four stages beginning in 1962. The first phase (1962-1966) began with rebellion stemming from within the military.⁶² After the assassination of Carlos Castillo Armas in 1958, the soldiers still loyal to him fled the country. By 1962, they had formed a small guerilla armed force that returned to take a stand against the United States involvement in Latin American armies. With the political show in 1962, small factions began forming in the more rural areas of Guatemala. Because of the events of the Cuban revolt, the Latin American population saw that political change through violence was possible. The guerillas who rose up within the Guatemalan non-military population were majority ladino men from the rural, middle class.

The second phase (1966-1978) consisted of a repetitive pattern of guerilla mobilization and military oppression. While this decade was more preparatory than active for the bloodiest phase of the war, an estimated 42,000 Guatemalan citizens were killed or “disappeared” during this time.⁶³ In 1974, the military regime had its first truly

organized elections and elected General Kjell Laugerud. He had a more relaxed view towards political protest which allowed for the guerillas to mobilize and organize before most violent period of the war. In 1976, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.5 took the lives of 23,000 people and left more than a million people without homes.⁶⁴ The military used this event to cement further their power over the people to prove that resistance was futile [Img. 14]. Even the church used theological language to blame the insurgence for the earthquake itself. Even with this anti-uprising language, the Guatemalan people continued to believe that resistance was the only escape from the systematic killings.

The third phase (1979-1985) saw the bloodiest events in the war. In 1982, the guerilla army organized into a singular group called the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG, Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit). Lovell notes that after the earthquake and small indigenous insurgencies in '77 and '78, “the Guatemalan government, at the command and in the service of a powerful few, declared war on its own citizenry, especially the indigenous people.”⁶⁵ During the same year, the Guatemalan army began a scorched earth policy. During the final years of the war, the Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CHRLA) and the Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean (EPICA) wrote a piece about a group that evaded this policy called the Communities of People in Resistance (CPR) [Img. 16-18]. They described the scorched earth regime



Image 14

Right: Guatemalan Military
Below: Ixil woman watches the exhumation of her son in the mass graves continuously being discovered in the Guatemalan countryside.



Image 15



Image 16

saying, “They have bombed, burned, and massacred with impunity, civilians have been captured (and often disappeared) without legal arrest warrants, and there has been no legal recourse for grievances against the authorities.”⁶⁶ It would not be until the early 2000’s that the Guatemalan army would face the repercussions of their actions.

It is difficult to write about the culture of war and evoke the correct outrage, sorrow, and disgust that this era of Guatemalan history warrants. Other than sharing the basic facts and timeline of the war above, I am going to remove myself from the rest of the narrative and only share the testimony of others who witnessed and survived the terrors of this war.



Image 17



Image 18

JULIO CABRERA DOÑA EUGENIA

Guatemalan Catholic bishop

about the Tz'albal massacre with commentary of author, Victoria Sanford

“The Army’s hatred has reached a point that they poison the rivers and wells of these people; they poison the salt left behind in their homes. The Army places grenades beneath the cadavers of their victims so that when one goes to bury the dead the grenades will explode and more people will die.”⁶⁷

J U A N A

Tz’utujil widow in a village on Lake Atitlan

“When those men [Guatemalan soldiers] first killed my husband, I wanted justice. Then, I wanted those men judged and sent to prison for the rest of their lives so they wouldn’t be able to kill more people like that, so the village could live in peace. When they killed my husband, it was a time of great violence and many people were harmed.

“Now, so many years later, I look at my daughters and how difficult their lives are. Even the wood we need for the stove costs so much. It is the fault of these men. What guilt do my daughters have? Why should they suffer like this?”⁶⁸

“We were always asking each other, ‘Where should we go? Where can we go? Is there a place we can go?’ We were always looking for another place, a safe place. Many elderly died because we were climbing up and down steep mountains; the elderly cannot walk that much. They would stay behind resting. The army would find them and kill them. They killed lots of people: the elderly, children, babies, boys and girls, men and women, our youth. There was a señora with us. She had one child, a boy. We were running from the army, she was carrying her son, she was holding him in her arms. A bullet hit her in the back, it came through her stomach, and went through her baby. She died there with her son in her arms. They died together.”

... As Doña Eugenia recounted the story of the señora dying together with her son in the mountains, her body began to shake. She clenched her jaw, stiffened her arms, and crossed them in front of her chest. She looked away from Miriam [her sister who was translating from, most likely, Ixil] and stared out the window. She said:

“The same thing happened to me, except the difference is that I had my baby on my back. I felt the impact of the bullet, but I felt no pain. I touched my back and it was wet. When I looked at my hand, it was covered with blood. I kept waiting to collapse, but I didn’t. I kept running, running from the soldiers shooting at us, I discovered my baby had taken that bullet. I am alive because my baby died on my back. I am always sad because of this. I am always remembering this sadness.”⁶⁹

“When we were ordered to pick up the stray dogs on the street, I thought we were going to learn how to train them, that we would have guard dogs. But when we arrived at camp, we were ordered to kill them with our bare hands. We had to kill some chickens, too. We were ordered to butcher the chickens and dogs and put their meat and blood in a big bowl. Then, we had to eat and drink this dog and chicken meat that was in a bath of blood. Whoever vomited had to vomit into the shared bowl and get back in line to eat and drink more. We had to eat it all, including the vomit, until no one vomited.

“The army kills part of your identity. They want to break you and make you a new man. A savage man. They inspired me to kill. There was a ladino recruit who said that

Tz’utijil who grew up on fincas and in the streets of Guatemala City

G A S P A R

Indians were worthless and that we didn’t go to school because we didn’t want to. I pushed him off a cliff. I would have enjoyed it if he had died. This is how the army creates monsters.”⁷⁰



Figure 4.1

U N N A M E D
S U R V I V O R

at the massacre of the Finca San Francisco corroborated by fellow survivors

“The soldiers took our wives out of the church in groups of ten or twenty. Then twelve or thirteen soldiers went into our houses to rape our wives. After they were finished raping them, they shot our wives and burned the houses down. ... All of our children had been left locked

up in the church. They were crying, our poor children were screaming. They were calling us. Some of the bigger ones were aware that their mothers were being killed and were shouting and calling out to us. ... They took the children outside. The soldiers killed them with knife stabs. We could see them. They killed them in a house in front of the church. They yanked them by the hair and stabbed them in their bellies; then they disemboweled our poor little children. Still they cried. When they finished disemboweling them, they threw them into the house, and then brought out more. ... Then they started with the old people. ... ‘What fault is it of ours,’ the old people said. ... ‘Outside!’ a soldier said. They took the poor old people out and stabbed them as if they were animals. It made the soldiers laugh. Poor old people, they were crying and suffering. They killed them with dull machetes. They took them outside and put them on top of a board; then they started to hack at them with rusty machete. It was pitiful how they broke the poor old people’s necks. ... They began to take out the adults, the grown men of working age. They took us out by groups of ten. Soldiers were standing there waiting to throw the prisoners down in the patio of the courthouse. Then they shot them. When they finished shooting, they piled them up and other soldiers came and carried the bodies into the church.”⁷¹

"Day and night, they put [my brother] through great, great pain. They tied him up, they tied up his testicles, the organs of my brother, behind him with a wire and ordered him to run. Then, not allowing himself, my brother could not bear the great pain and screamed, crying out for help. And they abandon him in a well, I don't know what it is called, a pit where there is water, a little mud, and there, they left him, naked, the entire night. My brother was in there with many dead bodies in the pit where he could not endure the smell of the dead. There were more people there, tortured people. There where he was, he recognized many of the Christian teachers who also had been kidnapped in other small villages and who were suffering as he was. Mi brother was tortured for more than sixteen days.

(personal translation of original Spanish text translated from original K'iche' testimony)

RIGOBERTA MENCHÚ

They cut off his nails, they cut off his fingers, they cut off his skin, burning parts of it. Many injuries, the first injuries were swollen and inflamed, were infected. Yet, he continued living. They shaved his head, they left him at the point of death and, at the same time, they cut the skin from his head and pulled one side and the other side and cut the fat part of the face. My brother bore torture to every part of his body, caring very much for the arteries and veins so as to be able to endure the torture and not die. They gave him food so that he might hold out and not die of his injuries. There, there were twenty tortured men or in the middle of torture. There was also one woman. They had raped her, and after raping her, they had tortured her."⁷²

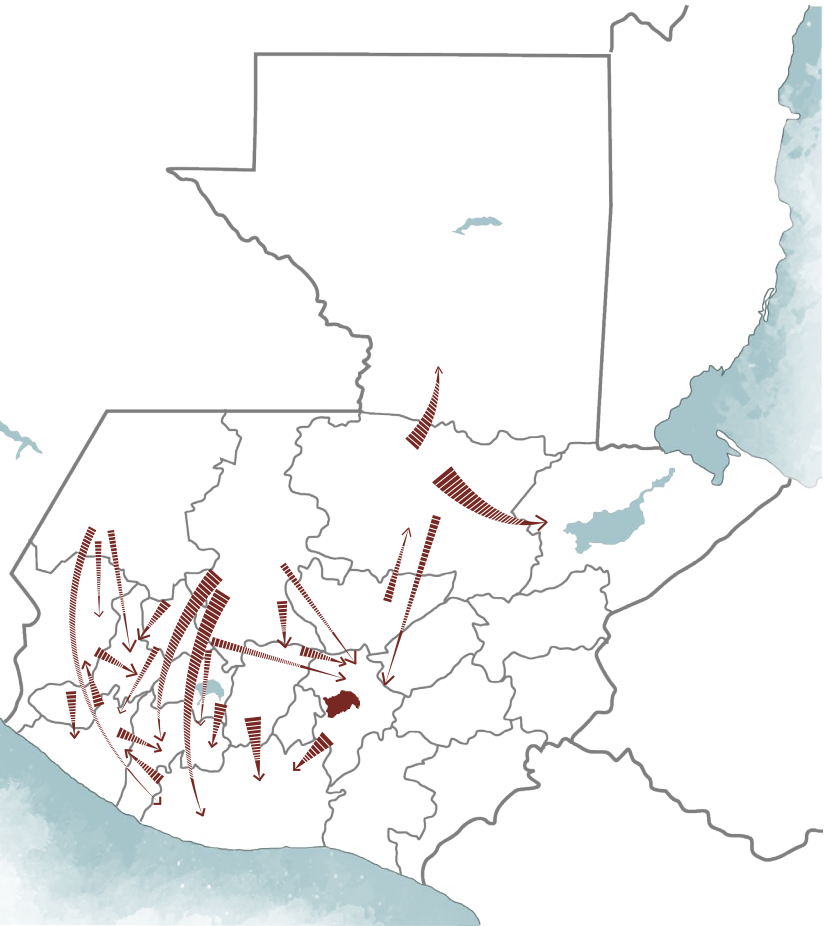
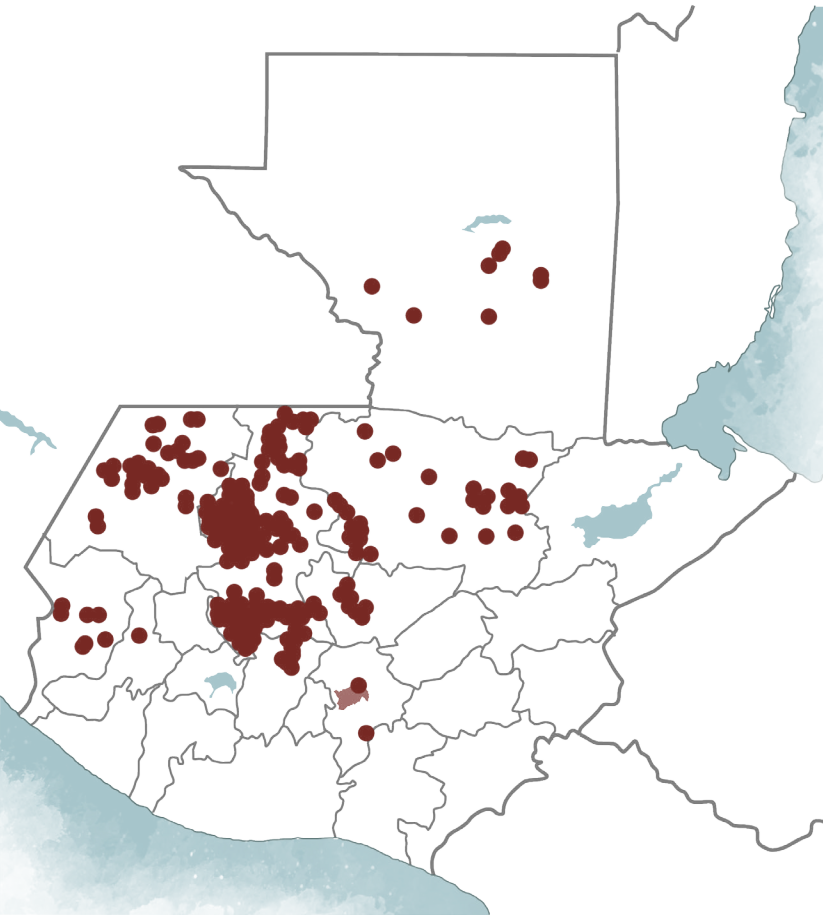
"Día y noche le daban grandes, grandes dolores. Le amarraban, le amarraban los testículos, los órganos de mi hermano, atrás con un hilo y le mandaban a correr. Entonces, eso no permitía, no aguantaba mi hermanito los grandes dolores y gritaba, pedía auxilio. Y lo dejan en un pozo, no sé como le llaman, un hoyo donde hay agua, un poco de lodo y allí lo dejaron desnudo durante toda la noche. Mi hermano estuvo con muchos cadáveres ya muertos en el hoyo donde no aguantaba el olor de todos los muertos. Había más gentes allí, torturadas. Allí donde estubo, él había reconocido muchos catequistas que también habían sido secuestrados en otras aldeas y que estaban en pleno sufrimiento como él estaba. Mi hermano estuvo más de dieciséis días en torturas.

Le cortaron las uñas, le cortaron los dedos, le cortaron la piel, quemaron parte de su piel. Muchas heridas, las primeras heridas estaban hinchadas, estaban infectadas. El seguía viviendo. Le raparon la cabeza, le dejaron puro pellejo y, al mismo tiempo, cortaron el pellejo de la cabeza y lo bajaron por un lado y los dos lados y le cortaron la parte gorda de la cara. Mi hermano llevaba torturas de todas partes en su cuerpo, cuidando muy bien las arterias y las venas para que pudiera aguantar las torturas y no se muriera. Le daban comida para que resistiera y no se muriera de los golpes. Allí había veinte hombres torturados o en plena tortura. Había también una mujer. La habían violado y después de violarla, la habían torturado."

As a personal disclaimer to this quote, Rigoberta Menchú, author, Guatemalan presidential candidate, Nobel Peace Prize recipient, and agrarian rights activist, came under high scrutiny by author David Stoll in the 1990's. Essentially, Stoll had fact-checked many of the events in Menchú's book and found significant discrepancies. Many experts have gone back and forth on her facts and stories, but nothing has been determined about the exact accuracy of her testimony. However, Stoll himself discounts many of the verified, first-hand accounts during the Civil War, thus discounting much of his own evidence against Menchú. Due to contradicting evidence, as the reader, I ask you to decide the relevance of her testimony. While these events may not have happened directly to her or her family, they did in fact happen and many of these atrocities that you will read below document similar horrors. Is the validity of her story necessary if it brings to light the extreme crimes against humanity committed by the Guatemalan army? Does this conflict confirm the phrase, "The truth doesn't matter. All that matters are the stories we tell,"⁷³ It is up to the reader to decide.



Figure 4.2



Despite the obvious human rights violations, the United states continued giving economic assistance to the Guatemalan government that totaled over \$60 million until 1981.⁷⁴ Under the regimes of Romeo Lucas García who was deposed by Efraín Ríos Montt who was deposed by his own secretary of defense, Oscar Mejía Víctores, these three men single handedly allowed, planned, and encouraged the deaths of over 150,000 people. The fourth and final phase after 1985 sought peace and movement towards a demilitarized government. By the end of the war, more than 200,000 people had died [Fig. 4.3] – many of whom have not been recovered or were dumped into the Pacific ocean, over one million Guatemalan’s had been displaced [Fig. 4.4], and over 250,000 Guatemalans had migrated outside of the country to Mexico, the United State, and Canada. The Communities of People in Resistance formed camps of thousands of people who moved sometimes fifteen times in a month.⁷⁵ Not only was this period of displacement most significant, it only ended in 1996. Guatemalans are still living who were displaced by the civil war. There are people in Knoxville who have been here since they migrated during the war. This cycle of displacement is much of the reason for intercountry migration today.

Figures 4.3 + 4.4

Notes

62. Sabine Kurtenbach, "Guatemala's Post-War Development," no. 3, Social and Political fractures after Wars: Youth Violence in Cambodia and Guatemala. (2008): 11, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.465.4544&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

63. Paul D. Lopes, The Agrarian Crises in Modern Guatemala (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1985), 48.

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65. Lovell, "Surviving Conquest: The Maya of Guatemala In Historical Perspective," 45.

66. EPICA and CHRLA, "Out of the Shadows: The Communities of Population in Guatemala Resistance in," Social Justice 20, no. 3 (1993): 144.

67. EPICA and CHRLA, "Out of the Shadows: The Communities of Population in Guatemala Resistance in," Social Justice 20, no. 3 (1993): 144.

68. Victoria Sanford, Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 190-191.

69. Ibid., 160-61.

70. Kaibil are the elite fighting forces of the Guatemalan army; Sanford, Buried Secrets, 298.

71. Ibid., 184.

72. Lovell, "Surviving Conquest: The Maya of Guatemala In Historical Perspective," 46.

73. Elizabeth Burgos and Rigoberta Menchú, Me Llamo, Rigoberta Menchu, Y Así Me Nació La Conciencia, vigésima ed. (Mexico, D.F.: Siglo XXI Editores, 1985), 200.

74. Brian Ambroziak, "Lecture" (Knoxville, TN, 2012).

75. John A. Booth, Christine J. Wade, and Thomas W. Walker, Understanding Central America: Global Forces, Rebellion, and Change, 4th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2006), 122.

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CULTURE OF GROWTH

On December 29, 1996, the URNG and the Guatemalan militia signed the final peace accords in Guatemala City thus ending the thirty-six year civil war. Reports released by the Historical Clarification Commission (CEH) in 1999 attributed 93% of the violence during the war – and specifically during 1978-1984 – to the army and governmental control. Because 83% of those killed were Mayan, this qualified as genocide.⁷⁷ This report also made connections between the U.S. military and human rights violations over the course of the war. Soon after this report, President Bill Clinton apologized for the United States involvement in Guatemala.⁷⁸ The following ten years were laden with unrest, violent outbursts, and gang-related murders and rapes.⁸⁰

Today, Guatemala is continuing to work through issues stemming from the war, colonization, and the economic dependence on foreign entities. According to a report on human rights from 2015, round 60% of the population lives under the line of poverty with almost 13% living in extreme poverty [Fig. 5.3].⁷⁹ 3 million out of the almost 16 million person population live without access to safe drinking water, 6 million live without sanitation services, and half the population reportedly lives in inadequate housing [Fig. 5.5].

In 2015, the “La Línea” case broke international headlines as reports of corruption, bribery, smuggling, and fraud sent the country into a frenzy. Guatemalans flooded the streets calling for impeachment of the current president, Otto Pérez Molina,

who was removed from office September 1, 2015. His first hearing is set for September 8, 2018.⁸¹ Jimmy Morales became president in January of 2016 and remains the current president of the country well known for his career as a comedian before running for office. Under the new presidency, the country is supposed to grow in terms of education, healthcare, and safety, but it is yet to be seen how this will come to fruition. In some indigenous communities, the illiteracy rate among women is almost 90%.⁸² In 2012, there were over 1,000 children who died of malnutrition which affects 8 in every 10 Guatemalan children. According to most recent estimates, roughly 106 people are murdered every week, that is roughly 15 people murdered a day.⁸³ This is only country-wide. In Guatemala City specifically, the homicide rate of over 100 people per 100,000 in comparison to Chicago which has a homicide rate of around 27 murders per 100,000. The most common cause of death is complication due to the common cold or pneumonia due to poor ventilation and air quality in the homes.

Not only do these problems persist, the people live in constant fear of repetition of the years of war. During the bloodiest years of the war, groups like the Communities of People in Resistance came to rely on living in nomadic groups for protection; the more people, the increased likelihood for survival. Because of this, economists like Andrew R. Morrison put an economic value to violence as a rationale for inter-country migration. According to Morrison, “if utility in the destination area exceeds

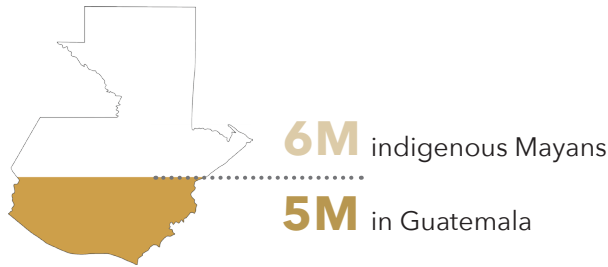


Figure 5.1



Figure 5.2

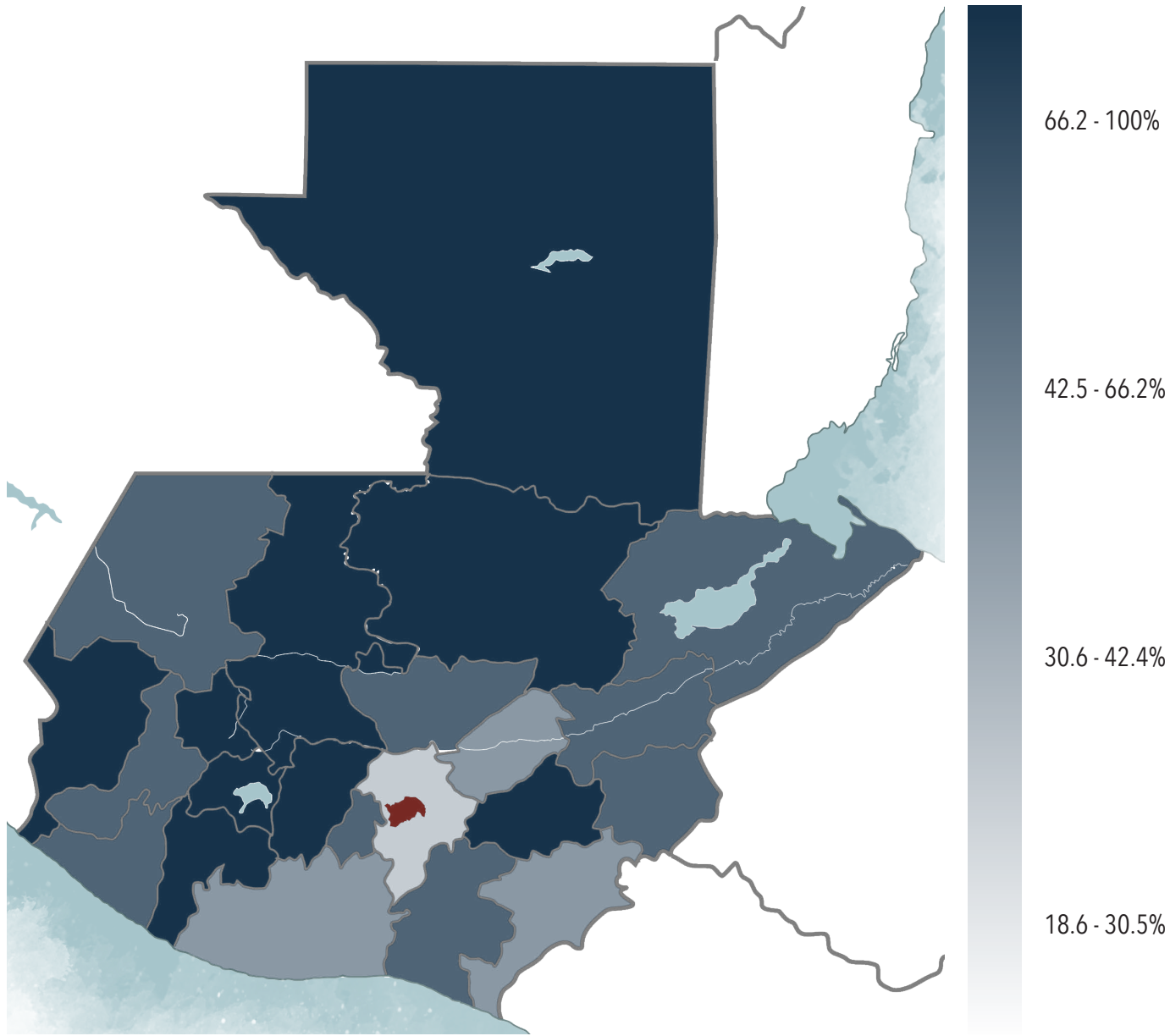


Figure 5.3

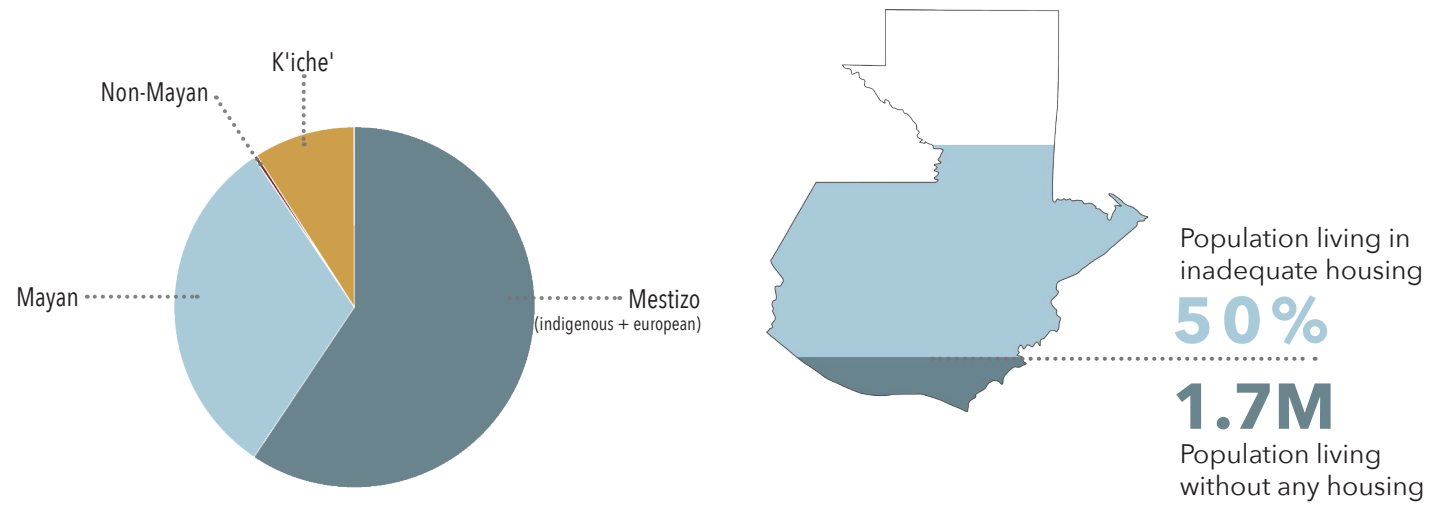


Figure 5.4

Figure 5.5

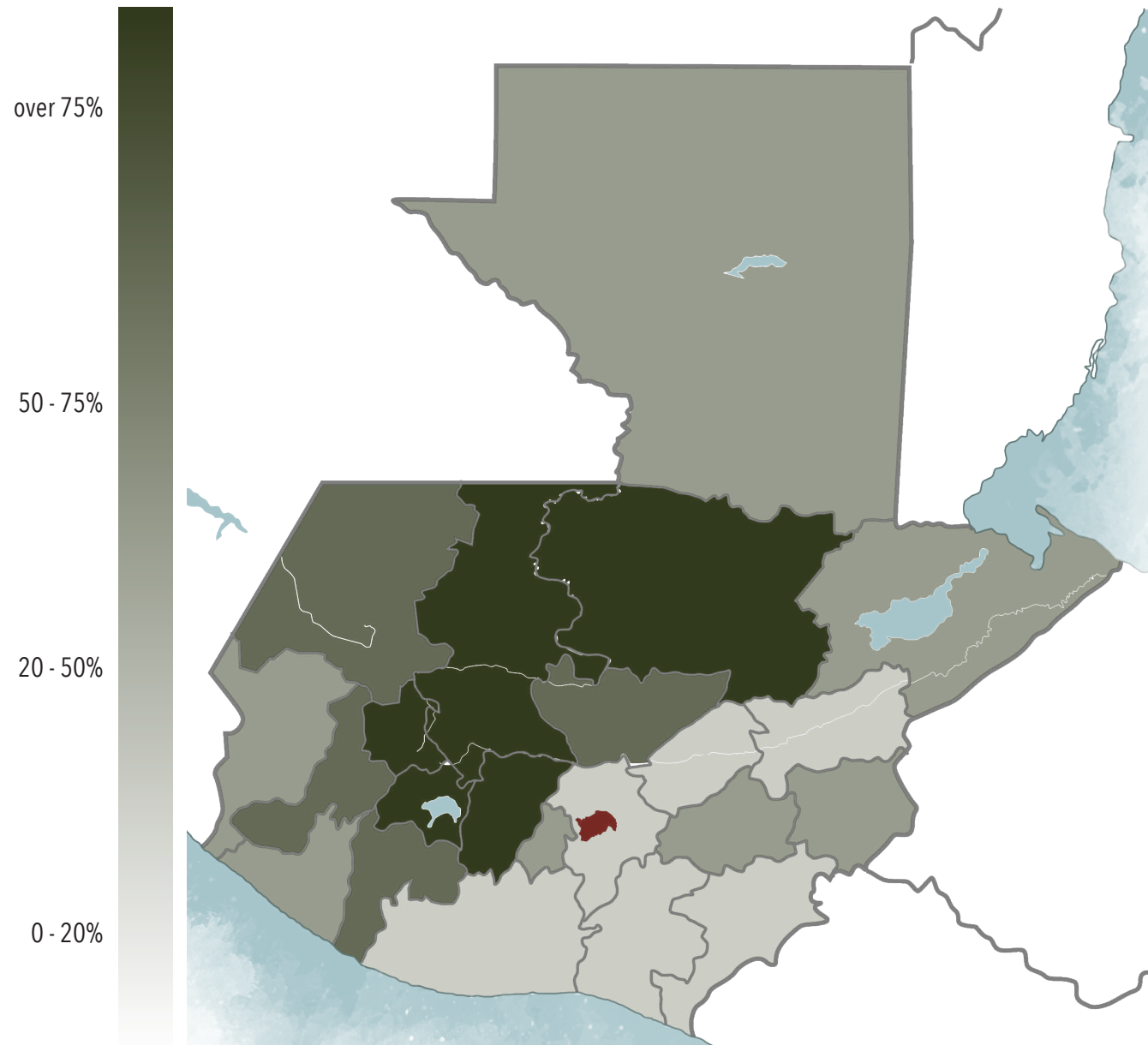


Figure 5.6

that in the origin area (net of the fixed costs of migration), migration occurs.”⁸⁴ In Morrison’s conclusion, he notes: “Migration flows are shaped by violence, and the effect of violence on migration tends to increase as the level of violence escalates.”⁸⁵ In Morrison’s studies, he discusses how we tend to associate migration with monetary reasons: better jobs, better housing, more resources, etc. However, in studying the Cycles of Violence in another economic study by Morrison and Dr. Rachel May a year later, the “utility” mentioned by Morrison previously is directly tied to two goods: economic goods and safety goods [Fig. 5.7]. Consequentially, “individuals ‘buy’ safety in the sense that they take steps to avoid being the target of political violence.”⁸⁶ This analysis that violence is an economic reason for migration is a direct consequence of not only the civil war, but the continuous cycles of colonization, displacement, and overall violence that the Guatemalan people have been plagued with for over 500 years.

Regardless of the attempt, Guatemala is trapped. Those who want to study, aid, or serve the country must accept the cycles of displacement and violence before approaching a solution. Being aware of one’s standpoint is also essential to working within marginalized communities.⁸⁷ Sandra Harding states blatantly: “No amount of empathy, careful listening, or ‘going native,’ valuable as such strategies may be for various reasons, will erase the fact that the Western, white, masculine, university-agency-funded researcher is going to leave the research process with no less than the

economic, political, and cultural resources with which he or she arrived.”⁸⁸ Continuing the colonized relationship between Europeans and Americans – Europeans being those who are not native to the Americas – will only create a deeper fissure between the indigenous Mayans and the land-owning ladinos. This cultural study of displacement serves as the foundation for an analysis of Guatemala City, its growth, history, and potential future. As the largest city in Central America, Guatemala City serves to represent common traits of growing cities in developing nations.

INTERSTATE MIGRATION

can be divided into two factors:

Economic Factors Noneconomic Factors

Distance
Wage
Unemployment Rates
Education

Violence
Oppression
Community
Family

and into two economic utilities:



Figure 5.7

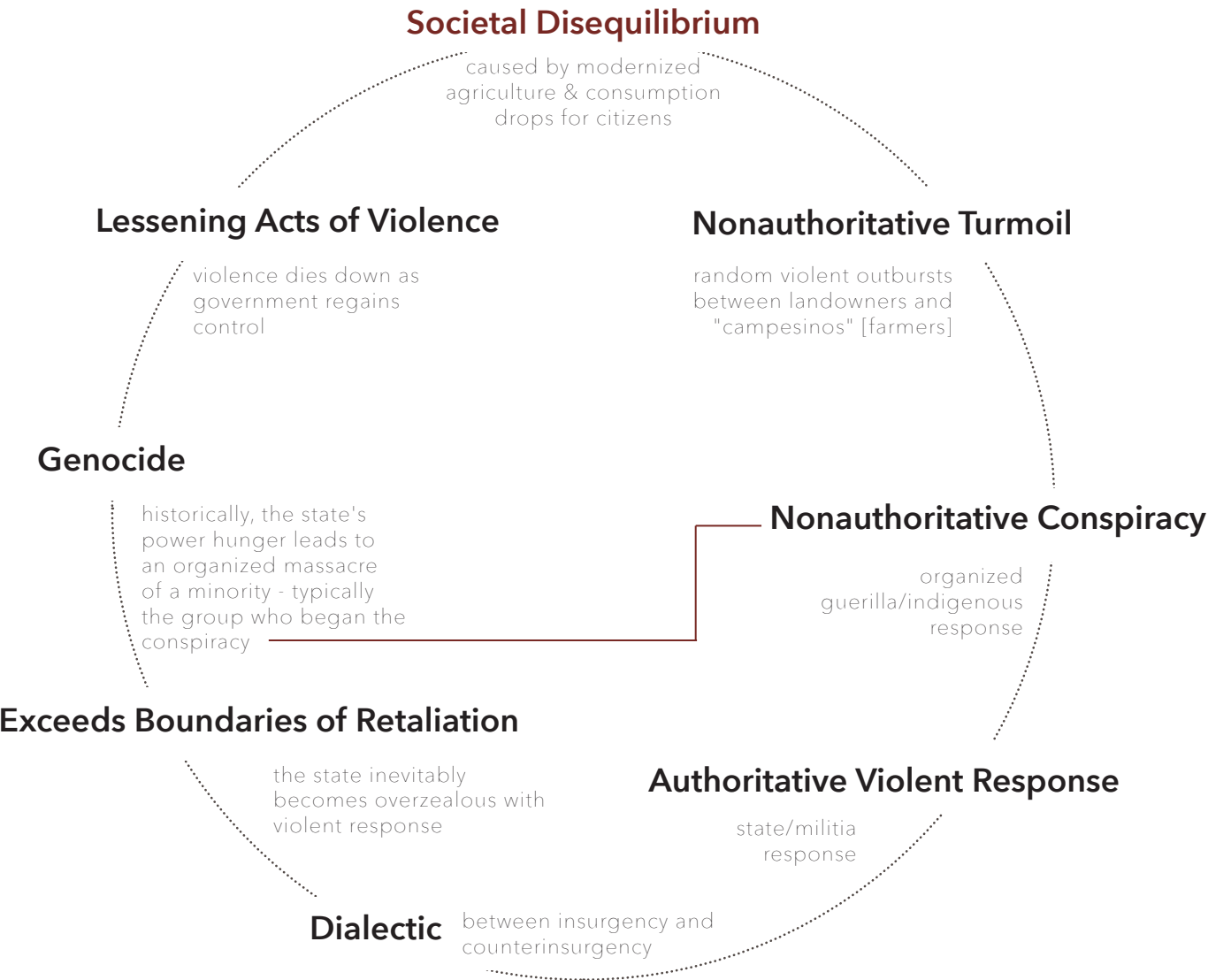
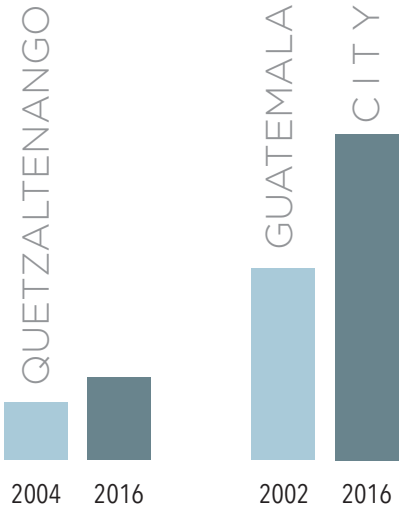


Figure 5.8

Notes

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- 78. Charles Babington, "Clinton: Support for Guatemala Was Wrong," Washington Post, March 11, 1999.
- 79. Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, "Situation of Human Rights in Guatemala: Diversity, Inequality and Exclusion," 2015, 24, <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/Guatemala2016-en.pdf>.
- 80. Ibid., 25.
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- 84. Andrew R. Morrison, "Violence or Economics : What Drives Internal Migration in Guatemala?," Economic Development and Cultural Change (The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 820.
- 85. Ibid., 828.
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- 87. Sandra Harding, "Feminist Standpoints," in Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis, ed. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, 2nd ed. (SAGE Publications, 2011), 46-64.
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ANALYSIS



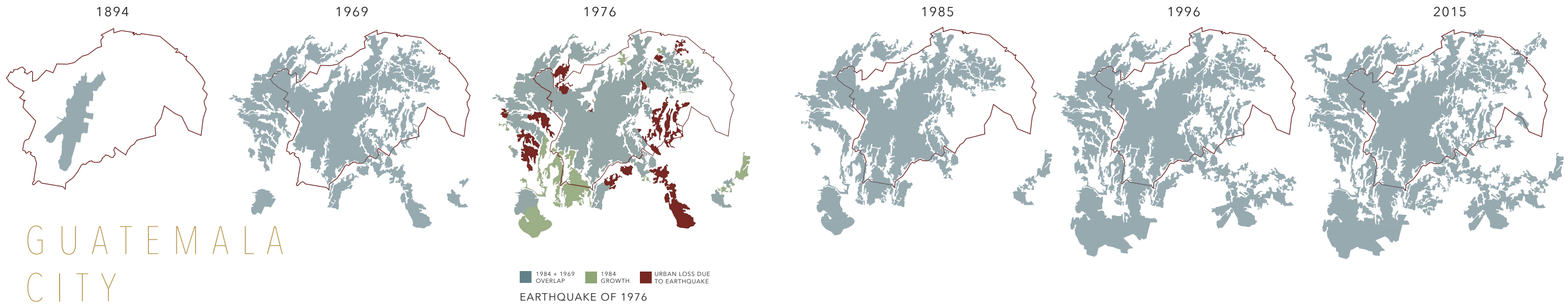


Figure 6.1

The world is urbanizing at a frightening rate. Many of the highest populated cities in the world are in developing nations. Guatemala City is no exception to this international growth. In 2001, Guatemala was just over 1,000,000 people. Today, Guatemala City has a population over 3 million, yet the population difference for the entire country is roughly 2 million people. And yet, it is impossible to assume that the 2 million people added to the Guatemalan population all moved and live in Guatemala City. The inter-country migration is growing at an alarming rate due to many of the issues previously discussed. The easiest way to see this is in the growth of Guatemala City since its founding in the early 1800's [Fig 6.2].

In the first documented cityscape in 1894, Guatemala had a relatively distinct grid. Due to the incredible difficulty of building on the terrain, the grid of the city has shifted and was never a true grid. Over the following half century, Guatemala City urbanized quickly and evaded documentation. By 1969 when the first aerial photographs were taken of the city, the civil war had just begun and there were people fleeing to the cities to escape the violence in indigenous communities. Between 1969 and 1985, a level 7.5 earthquake leveled much of the outskirts of the city [Fig. 6.1]. In the current cityscape, the reaction to this earthquake is seen in the infill built on the newly cleared lands. These lands were essentially free since they were not structurally stable, able to grow food, or in valuable locations. In this refuse

land, huge informal housing communities began to form. Even with the impending threat of mudslides, earthquakes, and flooding, huge populations of Guatemalan inter-country immigrants, poor, and those seeking better access to resources began to pack into the city. Between 1985 and today, there is very little cityscape change due to an increase in density, not land use.

Because land can cost up to \$10 million per acre depending on location and decision of the seller, it is virtually impossible for those below the poverty line (over 50% of the country) to buy land. Yet, their own lands have been taken from them during different cycles of displacement, thus leaving them without their only source of monetary value and unable to buy them back. Informal housing communities - otherwise known as slums, favelas in Brazil, shantytowns in the Caribbean, ghettos, barrios, or many other terms - rise out of these and other circumstances. In Guatemala City, these communities tend to form their own economy and government controlled by gangs or important community members. Regardless of health and safety, these informal housing settlements are first and foremost communities of human beings which carries with it all the aspects of community life.

Before discussing the "problems" within informal housing in Guatemala City, it is absolutely necessary to pause and remember: cultural differences must be put to the side in order to approach issues of health, safety, and identity in housing crises in developing nations. The western definition of safe, clean, healthy, and adequate - while

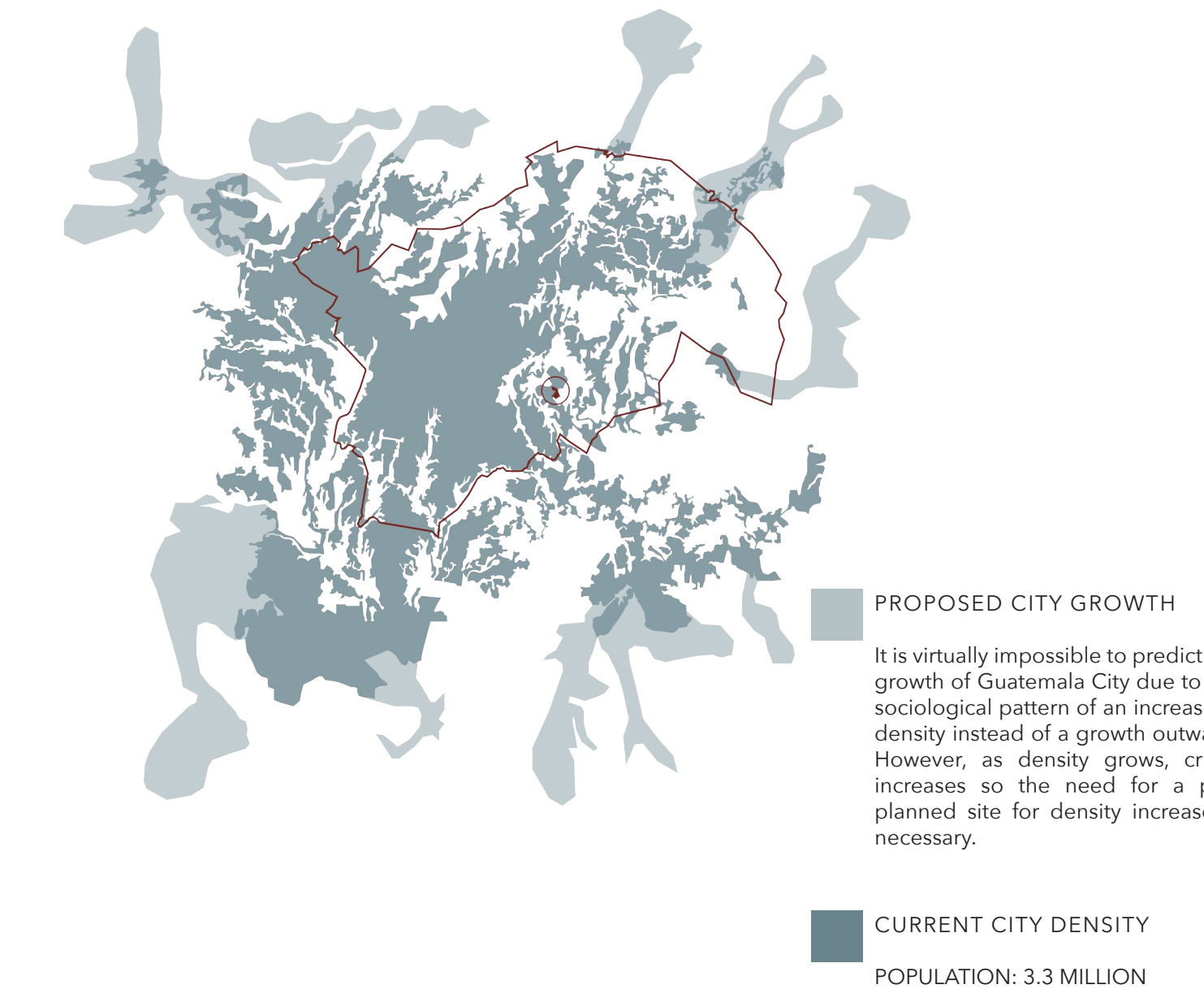


Figure 6.3

Figure 6.2

important to personal standpoint - only divide the marginalized and the solver. In order to truly approach international issues of poverty, hunger, homelessness, and sickness, cultural understand comes before preconceived notion. Thus, this analysis and following design are simply branches from continued research. This is not a solution nor is it identification of a "problem." That which is deemed a "problem" to those in the United States implies a possible solution. However, many of the "problems" in developing nations do not have solutions. This is not to say that the "problems" in developing countries cannot be remedied, but if they are approached as cultural entities instead of "problems," the reaction is hands-on, anthropological, participatory research and development instead of a simple solution and retreat.

Guatemala as a nation sits, at its highest, 13,000 feet above sea level, has mountain ridges riddled with volcanoes, wetlands, highlands, jungles, and rainforests. It is home to over 20 different ethnic groups - not including those of Hispanic origin - and there are over 24 languages spoken by the growing 15 million person population. The largest language spoken is K'iche' which is spoken by over 1 million people, and at least 20% of the population does not speak Spanish at all. There is little documented infrastructure on the city level, but nationally, there is a distinct highway and electrical system laid originally by the United Fruit Company in the early 1900s [Fig. 6.4 + 6.7]. The country sits on two major fault lines: the Polochic and Motagua [Fig. 6.8]. Roughly

the size of Tennessee in terms of area, Guatemala is divided into 22 departments which divide themselves into zones. Most of these departments follow rough ethnic boundaries, but many of the larger ethnic groups like Ixil, K'iche', Kaqchikel, and Tz'utujil branch over multiple disciplines.



Figure 6.4

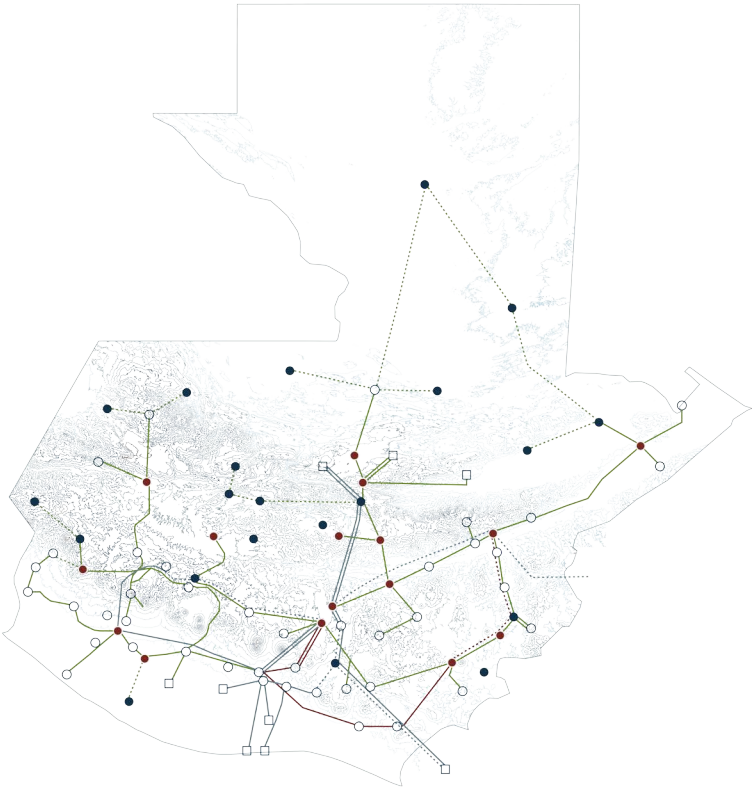


Figure 6.5

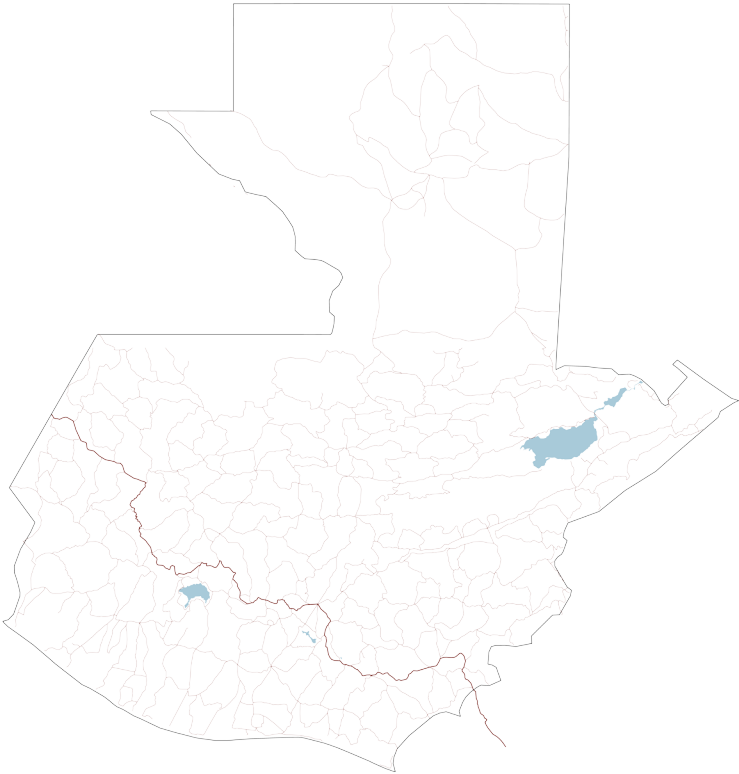


Figure 6.6

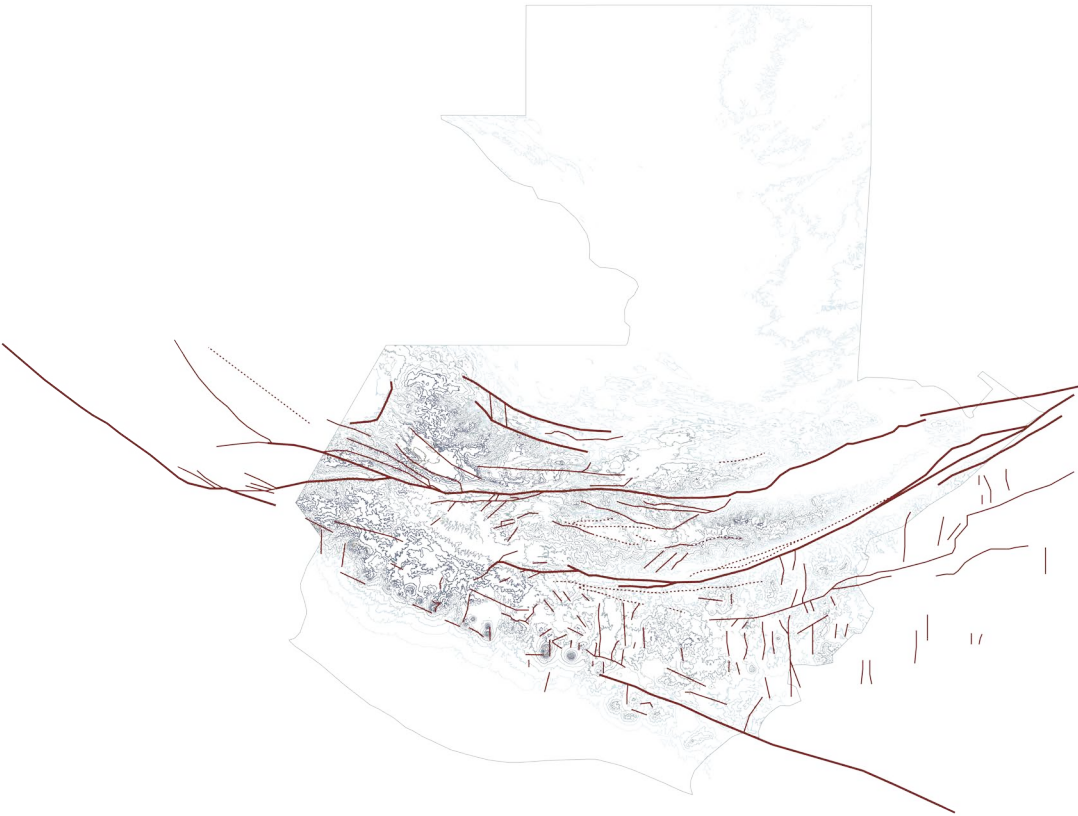


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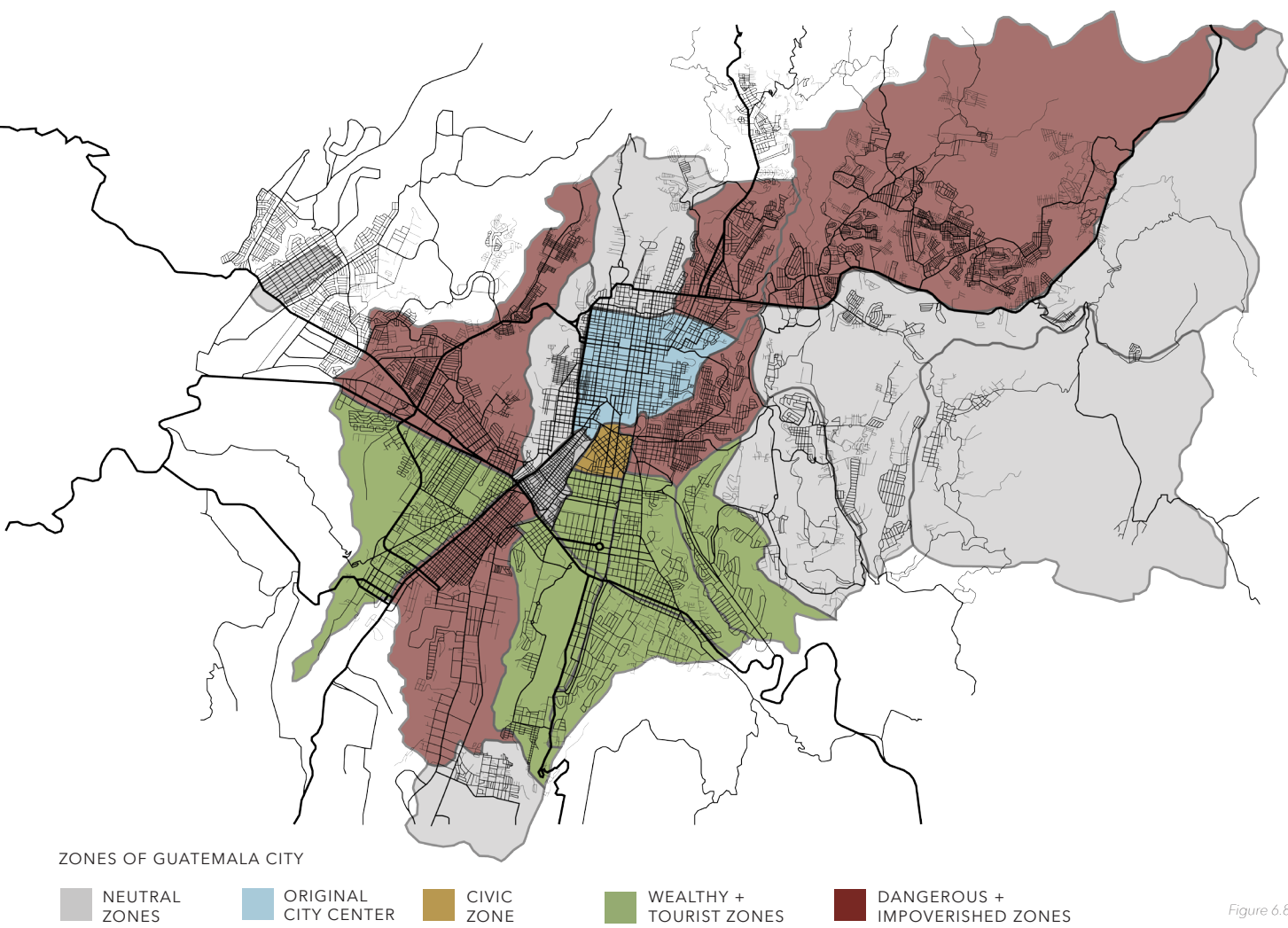


Figure 6.8

Guatemala as a city has over 3 million people over 267 square miles. That is equivalent to roughly 18 people per acre. The city is divided into 25 zones, but zones 20 and 23 are “missing” or not identified in the city plan. The majority of the southern zones are safer and used by tourist groups while the more outlying zones are the areas of the most crime. As you can see in the city plan, the cityscape seems rather lawless. This is a reflection of informal housing development after the earthquake, unmanaged growth, and lack of formal infrastructure. As the density of the city is growing independent of the land use, informal housing is becoming normative. Addressing the cultural and health issues that stem from informal housing is a sensitive issue that requires pure field research which I was unable to conduct. Thus, the design phase of my research is conjecture and addresses only certain elements within informal settlement. I do not identify my research as solution nor do I believe I can propose a solution.

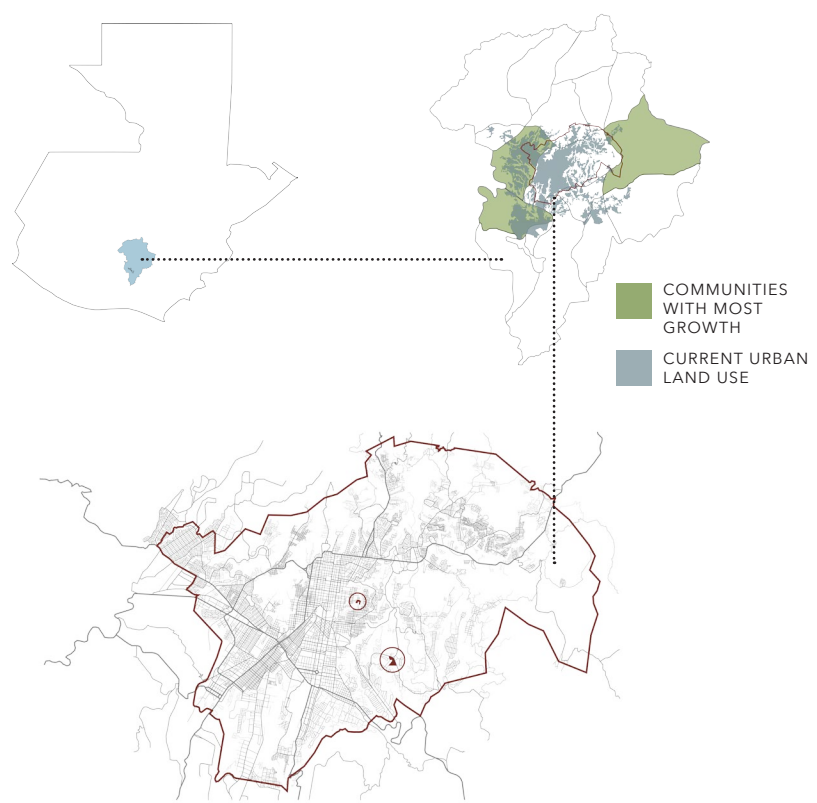


Figure 6.9 + 6.10 + 6.11



Figure 6.12





Image 20

SUSTAINABLE INFORMAL HOUSING PRECEDENT

These scenes represent housing typologies and practices that express different aspects of informal housing that create sustainable communities.

ABOVE RIGHT: This informal housing community situated on a railroad track outside of Mumbai, India, is a clear demonstration of a need for density growth. There is evidence of vertical growth - an essential factor of informal housing - and an increase in density. Another common aspect of informal housing is a lack of apertures. These openings let in both air and light and are almost always missing from informal housing. This not only leads to the necessity to be outside of the home, and therefore typically in communities of high crime, but also leads to many respiratory diseases such as Tuberculosis and Pneumonia.

ABOVE LEFT: In South Africa, there was a competition in 2010 to design the "iShack" (improved shack). A team from India designed a \$300 compartment home defined by the necessary amenities to fulfill basic human need -water filtration, indoor facilities, ventilated living quarters, sustainable energy in the form of solar panelling, and mosquito nets.

RIGHT: Winner of the 2016 Pritzker Prize, Alejandro Aravena gave a new face and name to informal housing design as not only a "vogue" design challenge for modern



Image 21



Image 22



Image 23



Image 24



Image 25

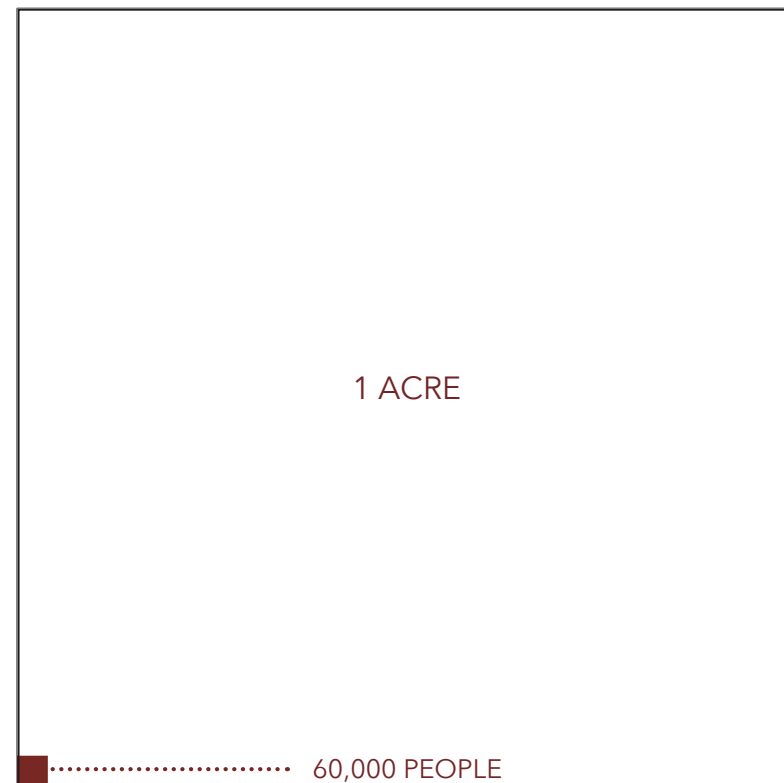


Figure 6.13

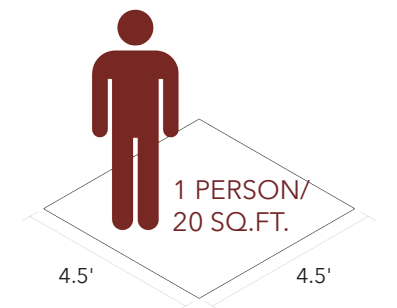


Figure 6.14



Figure 6.15

In one of the many ravines that cut through Guatemala City, quite possibly the largest slum in Central America sits with its own culture, infrastructure, economy, and design [Img. 25]. La Limonada is a 0.04 acre piece of land in the center of Guatemala City that is home to over 60,000 people. It sits between zones 1 and 5 and divides itself into ten districts. Each district is controlled by a different gang which is constantly at war with the other gangs.



Figure 6.16

DESIGN

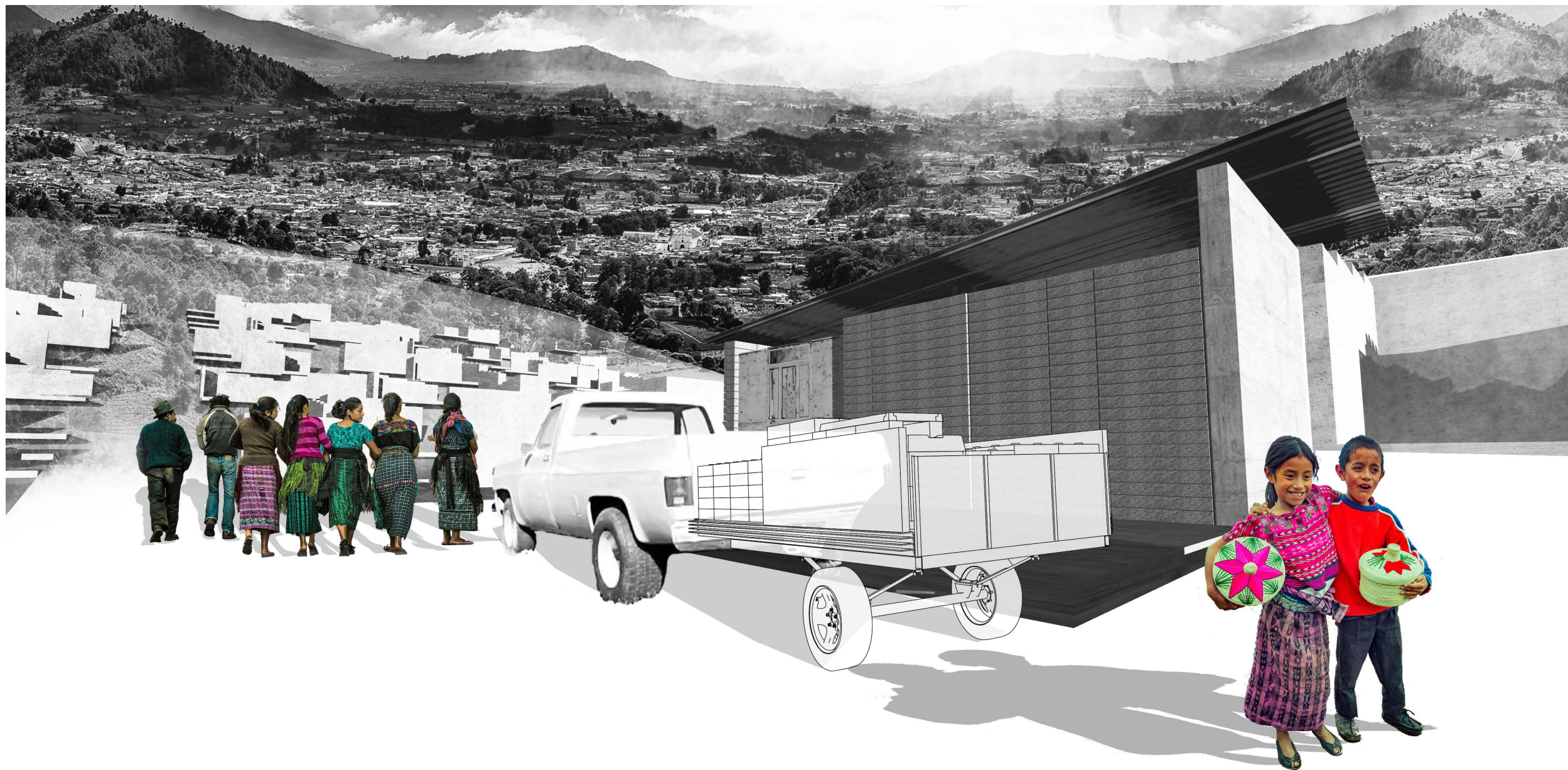


Figure 7.1

FORMAL DISPLACEMENT

Outside of the city center is a growing metropolis for the wealthy as an escape from the reality of the poverty in their city and country. Paseo Cayala exists as a mask to cover the wretchedness of their community. Here, is one of the only empty plots of land in Guatemala city. This land belongs to someone and buying land in the city can cost anywhere between 2 and 100 million dollars per acre. Not only is real estate so expensive, the price changes based on the person. There are no laws, regulations, or codes to stop wage, race, or sexual discrimination in real estate.

On this plot of land edging between the city and farm land, I place a community for the displaced. People come to the city to escape violence, to preemptively protect themselves from a future war, for better jobs, for family, or for education. They have the choice of being enslaved on farms or being densely packed into a city with possibly more freedom. This is obviously a generalization and there are other options, but for the majority of Guatemalans, the options are slim. This is why informal communities appear.

Designing in the realm of the informal, one has to think outside the laws of code, structural soundness, and urban planning. Formal architectural design could and will only work if partnered with displaced people. I, nor anyone, can predict the growth, density, or patterns of informal housing.

The reality is that Guatemalan people scavenge for their homes; build them and make them their own. The needs



Figure 7.2

of Guatemalan shelter are three:

1. A DOOR FOR SECURITY
2. A ROOF FOR SHELTER
3. A HEARTH FOR FOOD

With these three elements in mind, I am exploring a community of half built houses. This would provide displaced families with a location to come to, a concrete floor for health benefits, and two walls for property and density control. With this plot of land and space, the family can bring the remaining materials as needed or as they can pay.

With this site design, I also propose a moveable collection of materials for initial completion. With a typical trailer, a family can fit enough rammed earth blocks, tin roofing, and other materials to supplement the existing design in order to have a lockable home for their first night in the city.



Figure 7.3

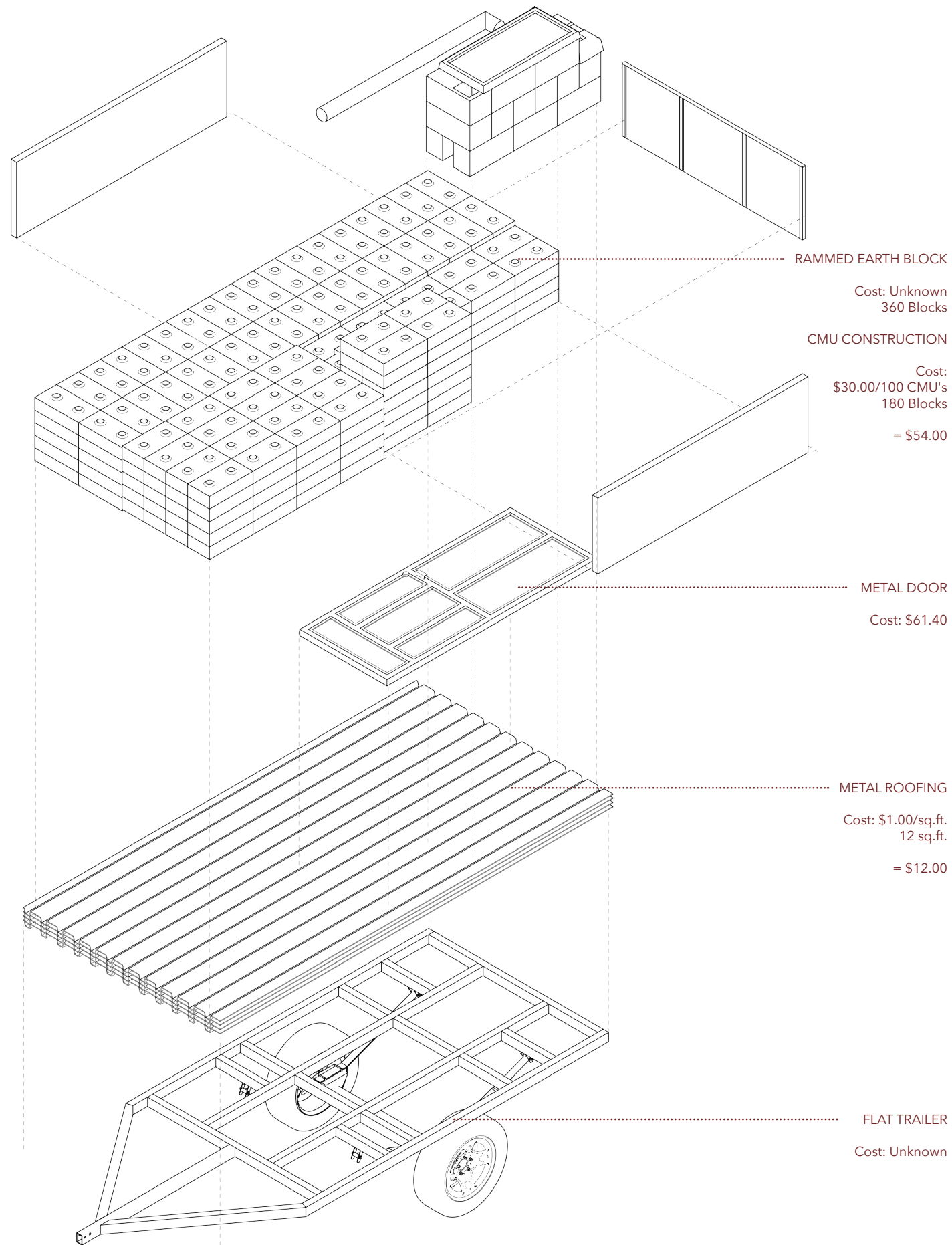
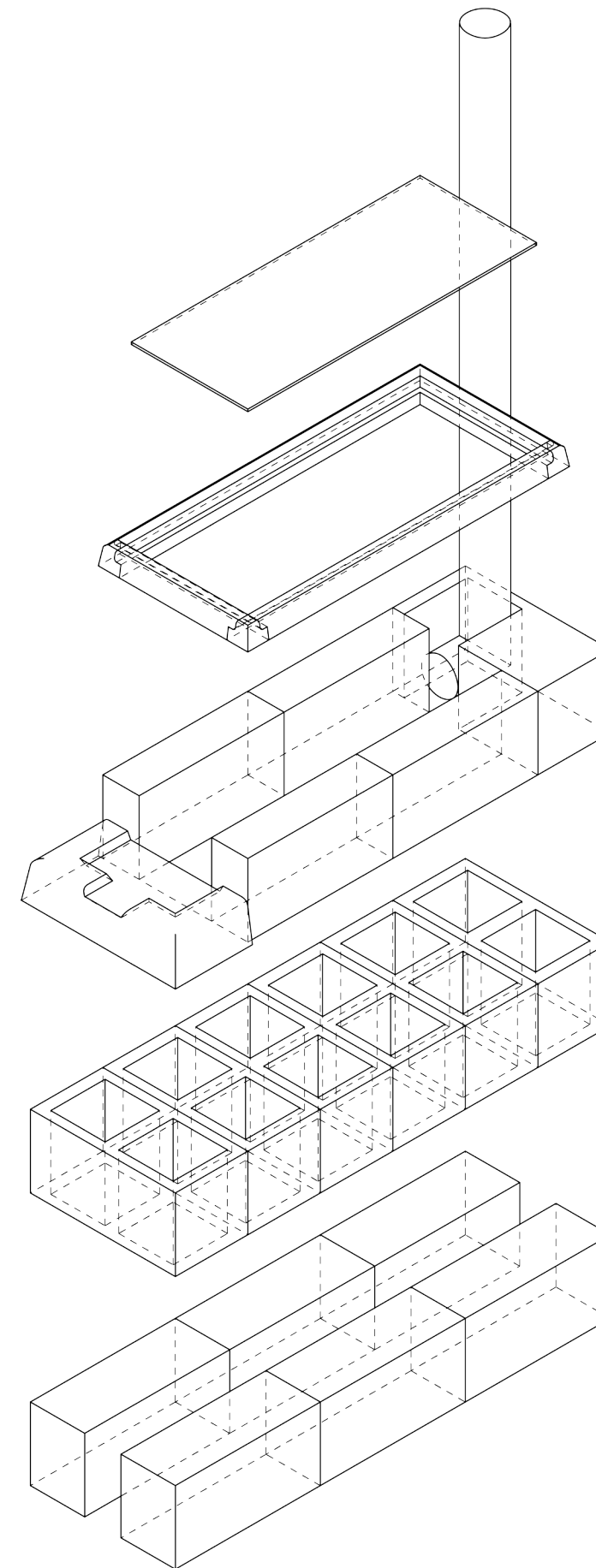


Figure 7.4



STOVE DRAWINGS at 1" = 1'-0"

Figure 7.5

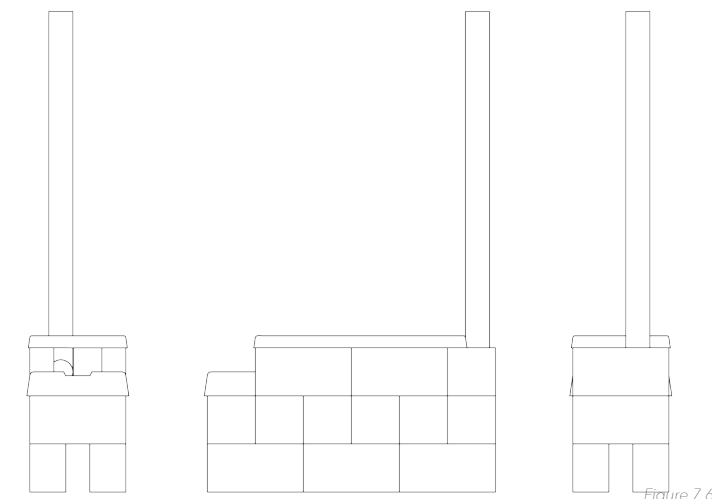


Figure 7.6

THE HEARTH

Every Guatemalan home needs a stove top. The staples of the Guatemalan diet are corn, black beans, eggs if affordable, and bananas along with other tropical fruits. Guatemalans use corn for different meal supplements from porridge to tortillas. The process of grinding corn into meal, regrinding, creating batter and making tortillas is an art form that is only possible with a stove top. Many homes with stoves are poorly ventilated and the smoke can be harmful, but with a simple design with one pipe, the smoke can be controlled and funneled out of the house.

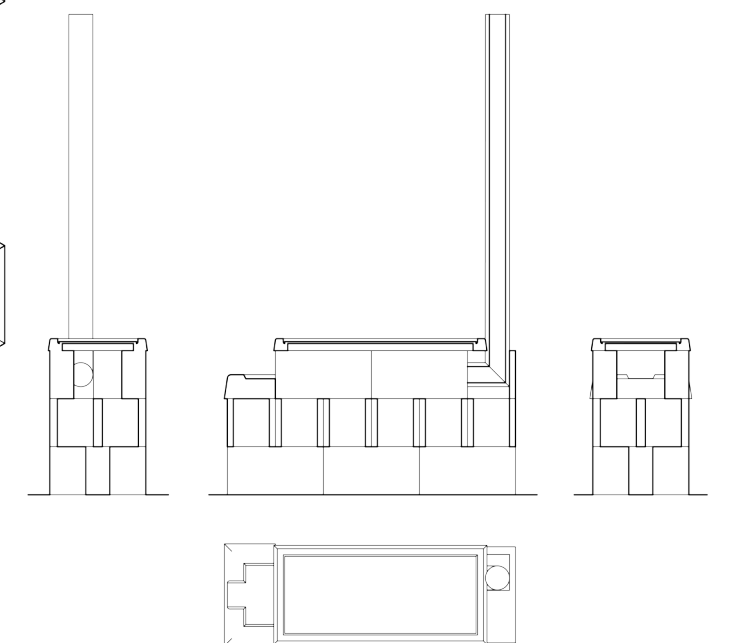
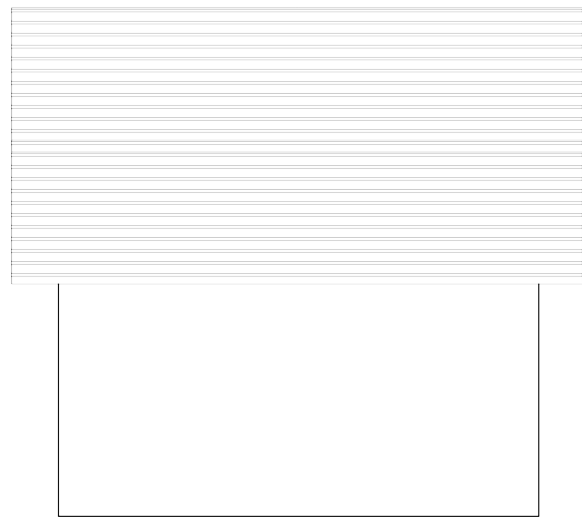
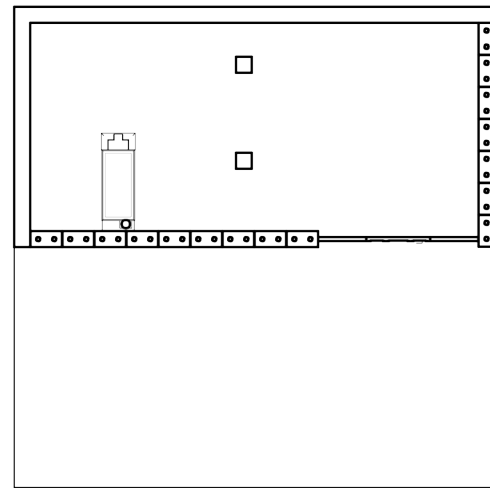


Figure 7.7

STOVE DRAWINGS at 1/2" = 1'-0"



ROOF PLAN at 1/8" = 1'-0"
Figure 7.8



PLAN at 1/8" = 1'-0"
Figure 7.9

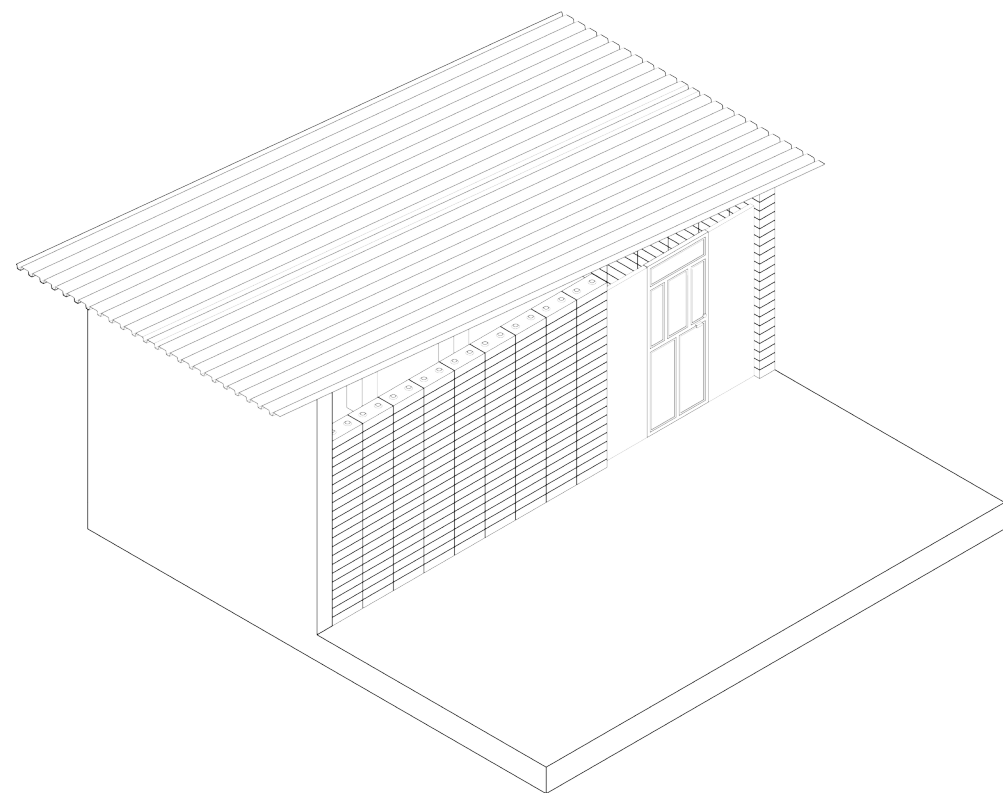
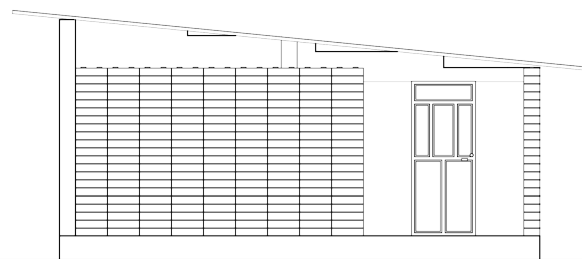
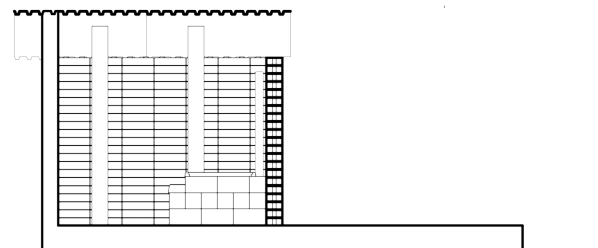


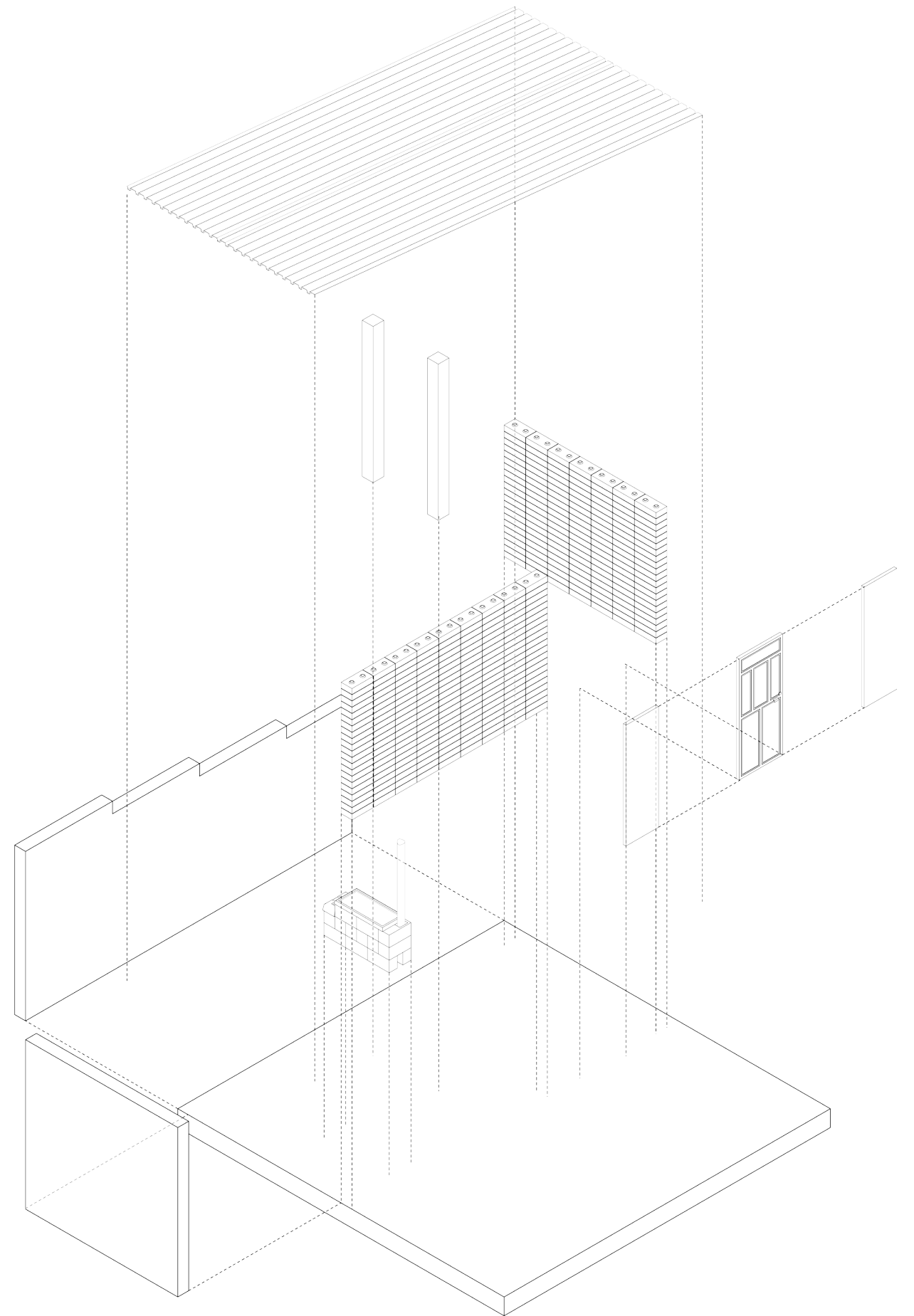
Figure 7.10



FRONT ELEVATION at 1/8" = 1'-0"
Figure 7.11



SECTION at 1/8" = 1'-0"
Figure 7.12



EXPLODED AXON at 1/4" = 1'-0"

Figure 7.13

CONCLUSION

What are the architectural ramifications of this analysis? If it stands to reason that the informal housing of Guatemala – like many others in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia – is the result of years of colonialist power divides and remnants of conquest, where does the solution fall? Is this anthropological? Is it historical? Is it sociopolitical? Is it architectural?

Not only do I find this problem unlimitedly faceted, I also do not find architecture in its solution. After ethnographically floating through my final two years of architectural education, I found the kink in the armor, so to speak. In order to approach informal design, sociopolitical unrest, historically marginalized communities, or otherwise forgotten areas of the world, there is a key attribute architects need that is not taught in school. While the teaching of structures, grandeur, history, and theory is necessary for preparation of the practice, architectural education is lacking in the gravity of reality.

This is not the key attribute mentioned above, but it is the first step in revealing that attribute. However oxymoronic it may seem, working in informal housing – or any type of building – requires a real grasp of the weight of reality. This is contradictory because the solutions proposed for informal housing are, by definition, idealistic. It is necessary to design for the utopian in order to fall into the realm

of reality. However, the idealism crucial to the first steps in design solutions requires an intense base of knowledge which can only be gained through personal experience. Throughout architectural education, there is an emphasis on seeing the world, visiting sites of architectural significance, going to Chicago, New York, UVA, Atlanta, and there is an expectation that you see some of these sites without educational organization. Despite this personal experience, what we see and what we know do not match. In many of the great architects we observe, there is a great lack of sensibility and an excess of grandeur. This is what makes them great. Nevertheless, in the reality of informal housing, sensibility will trump grandeur every time.

If sensibility is the result of understanding the gravity of reality, then what would logically follow is a desire to understand more of the process, background, and rational for existing cultural elements to informal design. In Guatemala, there are roughly ten million people living in substandard housing. Yet, how does one operationalize “substandard housing?” Is this a term you, as the researcher, coin to describe a set of housing variables? Is this a term defined by international poverty organizations? Or, most importantly, is this a term defined by the community? Determining this is the sensibility. You cannot enter into an informal community with the ideals, codes, systems, and

organization of formal building.

Once dedicated to this redefinition of adequate housing, you are accepting that you cannot solve the issue as you cannot even define it. In order to accept this, there has to be a key attribute of humility – something not discussed within architectural education.

The name of this analysis is “Formal Displacement.” Displacement and cycles of displacement in Guatemala have been formal demonstrations of power over indigenous people. Mayan displacement was due to poor leadership and planning from the elite class of Mayan leaders. Colonial displacement introduced a new standard of wealth, leadership, and language. Industrial displacement split the land into pieces controlled by small groups of international entities. Violent displacement sent millions into exile, homelessness, and mass graves.

Yet, this formal displacement caused a completely informal housing crisis. This research begs the question that if we approach informal housing settlements as formally displaced communities, can we begin to look at nomadic elements of housing – rammed earth bricks, sheet roofing, standardized stove construction, etc – to begin not solving the health and safety disparities in Guatemala but working with them. Accepting the cultural difference and working within those parameters is significantly more effective than

approaching with a specific solution.

Ironically, this approach is not the primary choice in architectural problem solving. Architectural education does not encourage questioning the true source of issues. In communities that suffer from gentrification, perhaps the initial reaction is not architectural, but economic. In communities with high poverty, perhaps health practice, women's health rights, and sanitary infrastructure are reactions that should come before architecture. While architecture and architects bring incredible skills to the world of international development, the initial issue with working in informal housing and development is the assumption that architecture can and should be the solution. To assume a solution even exists is insensitive and ignorant; to assume architecture is the starting point disregards the humility necessary to engage in international development.

In sociological theory, we take two variables and try to understand their connection. In this case we assume that poor architectural practice leads to poor quality of life in Guatemala. However, with independent and dependent variables, before one can assume that a connection exists, a prior variable must be eliminated. Perhaps architects should problem solve by engaging humility and eliminate and find prior variables before assuming their role.

GLOSSARY

<i>composición de tierras</i>	(lit.) arrangement of land; Spanish legislation in 1591 for the Spaniards to begin a treasury to sell the land colonized by the conquistadors
<i>congregación</i>	(lit.) congregation; centralized settlements of indigenous people during the 1550's
<i>encomienda</i>	early labor control system utilized by the Spaniards with the Muslims in Spain and the indigenous people in the Americas
<i>finca</i>	a large farm controlled by one group, yet worked by a group of lower-class citizens
<i>indios fugitivos</i>	Mayans escaped from their Spanish dictated cities
<i>Kaqchikel</i>	[kah.chee.kéll] Mayan people group situated east of Guatemala City
<i>ladino</i>	non-indigenous person; typically, a moderately derogatory term for a landowner from Spanish descent
<i>maya</i>	a central american who identifies as one of the 24 different ethnic groups stemming from the precolombian Mayan Empire
<i>Quiché</i>	[key.chéh] Mayan people group situated in the Western Highlands of Guatemala
<i>parcialidad</i>	small indigenous communities divided by families or clans
<i>repartimiento</i>	colonial forced labor system

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Para los guatemaltecos, espero que haya representado a ustedes en una buena luz. Es el puro deseo de mi corazón mostrar el respeto apropiado por la gran resiliencia de los Mayas a través de historia.

