

City Streets in Rural Places: Emerging Cities, Youth Cultures, and the Neoliberalization of Guatemala

Abstract

This article traces the emergence of “agro-urban” cities in rural Guatemala from the genocide of 1981–83 to the end of the millennium, paying special attention to the multilingual Mayan highlands. It weaves together a study of changes in the political economy and the built environment with an examination of the cultural transformations associated with urbanization, ethnic politics, and youth counter-cultures, including an outbreak of small Maya street gangs in the highlands in the late 1990s. It argues that one of the most “rural” regions on earth became home to a new, agrarian modality of the global city as the result of a stepwise process of neoliberalization and that, as part of this process, youth street cultures moved to the fore as a site of contested cultural production. Behind this surprising urbanization and cultural cosmopolitanism was massive public investment that worked to neoliberalize military structures of counterinsurgency and change the nation’s agricultural portfolio in the midst of a war that lasted until 1996. Organizations such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, USAID, scores of NGOs, and the United Nations all played roles in these processes, just as they promoted a burgeoning Mayan Movement and helped to foment “neoliberal multiculturalism” as the politics of race came to overshadow the politics of class. In neoliberalizing Guatemala, the globally inflected city “street,” once a territory almost exclusively restricted to the capital city, took on national dimensions. It became a national commons, a social space in which youth negotiated the terms of their belonging.

The teenagers in a Mayan rock fusion band called *Sobrevivencia* (Survival) founded their group in 1998 to turn “the street” in their Guatemalan town into a space of celebration. The reporter who recorded this memory years later did so with urbane internet slang: the street was “*la KY*,” letters pronounced *kah-yay*, or “*calle*,” meaning “street” in Spanish. “*La KY* was about theater, music, friendship, ‘feeling’ [in English], stories, creativity, nicknames, and every possible celebration,” a band member said.¹ All around the mountainous provinces—including in *Sobrevivencia*’s hometown, where Mam, one of Guatemala’s

twenty-two Mayan languages, is spoken—there was much to celebrate in 1998. Two years earlier, the government and the Marxist guerrillas had ended a thirty-six-year-long war. A Mayan Movement was making political gains, and a United Nations mission was helping to enforce the 1996 Peace Accords. The army was finally closing some bases in the countryside, which it had occupied from the time of its genocidal campaigns in the Mayan highlands in the early 1980s, remaining after military rule gave way to civilian democracy in 1986. The future looked better than the past, and *Sobrevivencia* was one of the first provincial bands to add a Maya voice to a new and historic genre of *ladino* (non-Maya) national rock that was blossoming in the capital, Guatemala City. The band was a harbinger of effusive cultural production to come.²

The creative youngsters of the first and second generations of a baby-boom that began in the 1980s, however, have garnered less attention than other denizens of la KY—impoverished street children and violent gang members. As *Sobrevivencia* was getting started, newspapers were reporting a plague of street gangs in the highlands. With names like Los Simpson, after the Matt Groening series, Los Dragones, and Los Pokemones, after the Nintendo game, these teenage gangs joined a growing assemblage of organized and common criminal networks that were terrorizing communities. Towns formed security patrols to protect themselves not just from crime rings but also from their own children. The same KY that was a space of celebration was also shot through with ambiguities and pains. Urbane countercultures and urban gangs and shantytowns were no longer just found predominantly in Guatemala City but also throughout the hinterlands. In Guatemala, by the turn of the millennium, there were city streets in rural places.

This essay traces the emerging “KY” as the physical territory of burgeoning urban-agrarian networks, as a terrain of contested identity, and as a site both real and imagined of urbane youth cultures and countercultures.³ Many factors, beyond baby-boom population growth, accelerated and inflected rural urbanization from 1983 to the new millennium. Development morphed from “military-led” to “neoliberal,” building on counterinsurgency structures to open up new regimes of capital accumulation. Public-private investment and remittances from migrant-refugees financialized the economy, underwrote a sea-change in agriculture, and funded urbanization. That urbanization was not just physical. In the wake of genocide, and later, when Marxist revolution waned, questions of identity and power took on new valences. It was in this context, as mass media and consumer culture spread, that cosmopolitan street cultures arced from Guatemala City and abroad to the hinterlands through the 1990s, congealing in a nascent national commons—la KY—by decade’s end. Examining the dialogue between changes in transnational systems of power and those in ground-level Guatemala, this essay maps dialectics of “maturation-and-transformation” and “incorporation-and-exclusion” through which apparatuses of development, urban/rural relationships, and race, class, and caste remained embedded in social space even as they profoundly transformed. In so doing, it makes a series of interrelated arguments. First, it argues that Guatemala’s neoliberalization drew on older developmentalism and militarism, and that, as part of its process of neoliberalization, one of Earth’s most “rural” regions, without losing its agrarian backbone, in fact urbanized. Building on these points, it deepens the argument to maintain that as identity struggles reconfigured and systems of power failed to

reflect people's will and address structural poverty, youth cultures—encapsulated by the moral-panic-causing, creative-and-destructive space that youth dubbed “la KY”—became the nation's most productive field of sociocultural contestation, at once tied-to and free-from “the system.” La KY, a poetic heuristic provided by youth themselves, was a space in which young people contested and recreated who got to be “*chapín*” (*chapín/a* is slang for “Guatemalan”). La KY would remain poor and full of perils, but in a country where since the 1500s the indigenous and mestizo underclasses were at the bottom of a system of *castas* (castes), it was also the urban and urbane stage on which Guatemalans reworked age-old distinctions in historic ways.

The physical, cultural, and subjective conditions summed up by “la KY” came into being as a modality of what the Colombian urban theorist Emilio Pradilla Cobos calls “city-regions”—urban systems that include and integrate peripheral and rural areas. City-regions can be “uni- or multi-centric, in a dense but not continuous weave,” and their emergence implies a process of change that is “not just demographic or physical, but fundamentally structural, including all the spheres of economic, social, and cultural life,” Pradilla writes.⁴ After decades of development plans based on definitions of “urban” and “rural” that counted the vast majority of the national territory as the latter, based on the assumption that head-counts separated small “urban centers” from surrounding villages, such that one could stand, as if straddling the equator, with one foot in the city and the other in the country, the government did an about-face in 2014. Its new national development plan recognized a mushrooming web of urban conglomerations much like Pradilla's city-regions. It envisioned a national megalopolis by 2032 and dated the nation's rural-to-urban transition to 2009–10.⁵

While Guatemala's urbanization has been remarkable since 2000, I believe that the city-region and what would be remembered in hip slang as its KY had become recognizable by the end of the 1990s. These city-regions bedevil and complicate the picture of the neoliberal city that emerged in scholarly literature early in the 2000s, a picture that had *size* as its quintessence. Both the deindustrialized cities reinventing themselves in the Global North and the Global South's megacities were enormous, far bigger than Guatemala City, Central America's largest metropolis. Relating them were sets of phenomena linked to neoliberal globalization: urbanization, financialization, privatization, securitization, deregulation, and immiseration. By 2002, the first of Richard Florida's books on cities and the creative class appeared, and, not long after, Mike Davis announced the arrival of a *Planet of Slums*.⁶ Detailing new, unnoticed dots in the Guatemalan highlands on the map of the planet's “slums,” places that were a very different kind of “creative city,” this essay joins recent scholarship on “planetary urbanization” that asks us to discard the epistemology of an urban/rural divide altogether, insisting, in Neil Brenner's words, that “the meaning of the urban itself must be fundamentally reimagined.”⁷ Few places lend themselves more to this reimagining than do Guatemala's small and still-agrarian population centers in its web of city-regions, dense and culturally cosmopolitan centers in a landscape I dub *agrotropolis*, countryside if squinted at through one eye, cityscape if through the other.⁸

Just as Guatemala's agro-urban landscape asks us to rethink old rural-urban binaries, the processes that structured its emergence and evolution militate for a

study not of neoliberalism as a bounded set of policies and initiatives but for what the geographer Jamie Peck calls “neoliberalization,” consisting of “open-ended and contradictory process[es]” that involved a “messy hybrid” of institutions, plans, and policies.⁹ Guatemala’s most overt moves toward a neoliberal economy came *after* its agro-urban landscape emerged; the government privatized the energy and telecommunications sectors in 1998, and CAFTA-DR—a free trade agreement with Central American nations, the Dominican Republic, and the United States—did not enter into force until mid-2006.¹⁰ The nation’s turns toward greater private-sector penetration of development, however, date to the early 1980s. The World Bank, the IMF, international cooperation agencies, the state, and right-wing NGOs all built on military structures of counterinsurgency and used public funds to commercialize the landscape and open it to private capital. The same constellation of institutions also promoted what came to be known as “neoliberal multiculturalism,” an aesthetic embrace of ethnic identity politics as the state bureaucracy absorbed some segments of the Mayan Movement in the late 1990s and 2000s. The attempted defanging of the grassroots movement was one factor that helped to make youth street cultures, such as that expressed by bands like *Sobrevivencia* and gangs like *Los Simpson*, outstrip politics as a vibrant field of contestation and change.¹¹

Sobrevivencia’s first album, *Twi’Witz* (On the Mountaintop), came out in 2001. Its track “*La Juventud*” (Youth) asks, “Why isn’t it possible to build / A world without hate / . . . A world without conflicts / A world in liberty?”¹² A world in liberty did not exist, but it was not for lack of trying or suffering. *Sobrevivencia*’s hometown of San Idelfonso Ixtahuacán, Huehuetenango, had made history when its miners led a huge protest march in 1977. In the 1980s, Huehuetenango department suffered massacres and intense repression, only to be torn up by social conflict and crime by the time *Sobrevivencia* emerged. Within just a few years, the town would be embroiled in mining conflicts once again, fighting both the state and private capital. By that time, it was also enmeshed in a new network of city-regions, a place with not just streets but with *la KY*.

To trace the neoliberalizing changes that gave rise to agro-urban city-regions and the national *KY* from the early 1980s to the turn of the millennium, this essay deploys a Lefebvrian analysis of social space as perceived, conceived, and lived.¹³ Its first section explores perceived, or physical, space through an examination of the political economy, showing how transnational public investment built on a base of military structures in ways that benefitted private capital and failed to mitigate poverty. Profits from new crops and migrants’ remittances helped to trigger an historic change in agrarian labor patterns and rural urbanization. By the late 1990s, agro-urban city-regions were emerging. The second section, on conceived or cognitively framed space, retraces the same time period to explore discourses of identity and power struggles as they evolved in an age of increasing mediatization.¹⁴ A landscape structured by Cold-War security turned into one securitized by its divided citizenry. Maya politicians won municipal power, and activists made “Maya” a new identity, even as, after nearly four decades, class-war-fighting “guerrilla” ceased to be an identity. Maya youth, however—first-generation baby-boomers—showed Maya pride but also adopted foreign media and youth cultures in ways that horrified their elders. As social

divisions intensified, common and organized crime spread, and panic about perverse youth culture was ripe to be entwined with panic about insecurity.

Such was the backdrop to the era in which *Sobrevivencia*, Los Simpson, and la KY arose. The third section of this piece, on lived space, or the space of representation that embeds perceived and conceived space, zooms in on national youth countercultures.¹⁵ In Guatemala City in the 1980s and early 1990s, youthful apathy and gang-related race-and-caste wars had militarism and generational change in common with events in the warring countryside. In the mid-1990s, a new, more hopeful crop of city *rock chapín* bands composed what became a national soundtrack and began to tour in the provinces, where they were amazed to find avid fans in towns and villages, *Sobrevivencia*'s founders among them. They also could have found agro-urban street gangs modeled after the ones in the capital. La KY had gone national.¹⁶ Situating la KY's creative and destructive elements in a single frame opens the way for a subaltern reading of the informal agro-urban street gangs. Like other elements of la KY, the gangs both reflected and protested the system and were a space of freedom from it as much as they were bound to it. Neoliberalization pushed urban and urbane youth street culture to the fore as an important field of production and contestation on which major issues of identity and belonging, of class and caste, were negotiated. The fact that the street came to have such an outsized role is tragic, and la KY, like the impoverished agro-urban landscape that contains it, is in many ways a monument to neoliberalism's depravity. Still, street cultures arise from life. The lives and the efforts, both creative and destructive, of these young people deserve to be remembered.

Neoliberalizing Counterinsurgency: Maturation, Transformation, and Agro-urban Space

A dialectic of maturation-and-transformation in the political economy triggered the physical emergence of city-regions, and with them, la KY, from the end of the genocide in 1983 to the end of the 1990s. Already-existing networks linking departmental and municipal *cabeceras* (capitals) to towns, villages, and hamlets matured and evolved, and as they did, a transformation from a predominantly rural to an increasingly urban and urbane landscape unfolded. The power-players and policy-makers helping to spur this process built on decades of modernist development schemes, which by the mid-1980s had been intimately entwined with the project of counterinsurgency. The gradual retooling of the apparatus (*dispositif*, in Foucault's sense) of development from a high-modernist/counterinsurgency orientation to one more aligned with the neoliberal Washington Consensus, however, dovetailed with wholesale transformation of the regime of economic accumulation, both from above and from below. The discursive KY that by the late 1990s was linking "urban" and "rural" youth in a cultural commons, was underpinned by a history of evolving-yet-transforming militarism, continued-yet-retooled development in infrastructure and agriculture, and "foreign assistance" both from governments and humble migrants.

In 1983, Guatemala City was a place still prowled by death squads, where the national university was a favored dumping-ground for corpses mutilated by torture. In that year, *Sangre Humana* (Human Blood), one of the city's new

death-metal bands, released a track called “Power’s Destiny:” “*The sky is turning dark / It’s the fault of the man / with all his crazed desire, desire for power,*” the song begins. “*Nothing matters to him / Only getting his damned power / Who will be the next one he wants to kill? / It could be that it’s you.*”¹⁷ At the time, the countryside, littered with mass graves, was under military occupation. I, Rigoberta Menchú, published in 1983, gave a K’iche’-Maya woman’s testimony of genocide to a stunned world and portrayed a nation as divided into rural and urban—and Maya and ladino—spheres as possibly imaginable. Besides detailing military depredations in the countryside, Menchú described the brutal exploitation of Maya villagers as seasonal plantation laborers.¹⁸ By the late 1990s, a new generation of rural youth was coming of age, many of whom would *not* work in agriculture and would *not* migrate as debt-peons to the great plantations. Their life stories coincided with the urbanization of the countryside. A 2015 USAID highland survey captured the change dramatically. “While the youth and adults unanimously recognized that virtually everyone of the older generation had been (mainly subsistence) farmers,” the report said, “no one mentioned farming as work to pursue. . . . The young people described their grandparents with phrases such as: ‘they were barefoot’; ‘they were illiterate’; ‘they suffered terrible discrimination.’ Virtually every young person . . . was intent on becoming ‘a professional.’”¹⁹

The stunning generational shift was underpinned as much by the persistence of military structures as it was by their supposed end under civilian rule. Having increasingly penetrated the countryside over the previous decades, the military fully occupied the highlands in the first half of the 1980s, gang-raping women and girls and kidnapping boys in “forced recruitment” that would not end until 1997. Systems of surveillance and control penetrated the social and political fabric. Thousands of civilian commissioners served as the army’s hingen and spies and were often members or leaders of the anticommunist Civilian Self-Defense Patrols (PACs) that the military ran from 1981 to late 1996, grouping fighting-age males into guerrilla-hunting squads. Soon ubiquitous, many PACs used their power to abuse their neighbors and steal resources. By the 1986 return to democracy, the state had also put in place overlapping layers of military-led bureaucratic oversight in a countryside dotted with so-called “Development Poles” and concentration-camp-like “Model Villages,” where refugees were settled. The system was called Inter-Institutional Coordination (IIC). Its goal was to integrate regional governmental outposts—the offices of the Ministries of Education, Agriculture, and Labor, for example, along with the officers of the growing state-sponsored cooperatives—into the counterinsurgency mission, in effect “totalizing” the occupation of the countryside. The institutional structures of the IIC are embedded in Guatemala’s body politic even in the present day, and the local social and political structures and power-players that they entailed, such as the one-time PACs, remain powerful.²⁰

Even as the military ceded control of the state, then, it left significant infrastructure in its wake. As growing numbers of NGOs initiated projects in the highlands—a phenomenon so huge in the thirty years after the genocide that Guatemalans would come to speak of the “NGO-ification” of the body politic—numerous mechanisms linked them with military structures, with international cooperation agencies, with the branches of state, and most of all, with private capital. A sort of “sneaky” neoliberalization ensued, in which what appeared

solely to be a flurry of public spending for social investment in fact subsidized capital expansion. The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) played major roles in this process.²¹ The IDB saw the Esquipulas I and II agreements (the 1986 and 1987 blueprints for peace negotiations in Central American nations—the latter dedicated to the region’s “*juventudes*,” or “youths”) as marking the moment when “the broad thrust of the Washington Consensus was adopted in Central America.” In Guatemala, adopting the Washington Consensus significantly involved dressing the old “wolf” of the counterinsurgent IIC in the clothes of a new, neoliberal “sheep.” The IDB noted that Guatemala’s new democracy began to liberalize trade and finance and that it “increased private sector participation in infrastructure development.”²² It failed to note, however, that entwined in the resulting alphabet soup of agencies, initiatives, and funds, were structures initially designed to murder, surveil, and control a rebellious population so poor that many of its members spoke (and still speak) of eating weeds to stay alive and of spiraling into suicidal despair for lack of simple table salt.

“He’s a gray-skinned boy / With nobody, no home, sleeping on the sidewalks / Waking up without having dreamed,” begins the second verse of 1987 rock song about a street child—a Guatemala City waif who may well have been a rural war orphan. “*Como un duende*” (Like an Elf) was the most popular track on the band Alux Nahual’s fifth album, *Alto al fuego* (Cease Fire).²³ The group was urban, ladino, and generally apolitical, but the song became a lasting anthem. “He’s like a duende, seems a dueennnnndeeeee / Child with no childhood or birthday cake,” its chorus chants.²⁴ Poetically speaking, “no cake” was the common factor in the “before” and “after” of this transformational period in which public investment was working in ways old and new to spread private enterprise. On one hand, development represented a continuation and maturation of already-underway and decades-old processes in which the World Bank, the IDB, and cooperation agencies like USAID worked with military governments to modernize infrastructure, promote cooperatives over unions, and commercialize agriculture.²⁵ On the other hand, innovations abounded. Into the 1990s, World-Bank-born “Social Investment Funds” channeled aid funds in flows that bypassed the central government to get them directly to private contractors and NGOs, an important step in the neoliberal project of reducing the role of the state.²⁶ In the same decade, the IDB and the World Bank began a multistep “Financial Sector Modernization Project” that, among other things, helped to spur an explosion of private banks.²⁷ New 1994 banking laws, writes economist Alfredo Guerra-Borges, “privatized the financing of the state” by reducing the role of the central bank and opening the door to private finance. In 1989, Guatemala had eight private banks; by 1998, there were thirty-four.²⁸

The same power-players and similar complex public-private alliances fueled tectonic changes in agriculture, the mainstay of the nation’s economy and the heart of the maize-growing Maya culture. The rise of nontraditional agro-exports, or NTAs, related to growing demand for fresh foods in the Global North, was a critical factor in commercializing land, changing agrarian labor patterns, and laying the groundwork for emerging city-regions.²⁹ NTAs included broccoli, snow peas, French beans, cardamom, nuts, and flowers. These new crops were first financed in the 1970s by ALCOSA, the privately owned subsidiary of a “private investment and development company.” ALCOSA and its

parent company were founded with USAID seed money and assisted by the military's agricultural programs—counterinsurgency-oriented programs that would later be bound up in the IIC and that, in the 1970s, were taking control of the maize harvest and herding villagers into food-for-work programs. In 1980, after a severe financial loss, ALCOSA changed its business model. In the midst of the genocide, the company turned from reliance on the large plantations to a system of contracting Maya smallholders, on one hand, displacing the risk downward and, on the other, opening up new opportunities for humble farmers.³⁰

Significantly, over the 1980s and beyond, NTAs helped to transform agrarian life and labor even in areas where domestic-use crops (corn and beans but also onions and garlic, for example) still predominated. They raised land values, provided work to landless laborers, and were soon a factor in diminishing subsistence farmers' seasonal migration to the plantations. Among Maya smallholders, over several decades, they helped to create a tenuous "lower-middle class," whose children aspired to be "professionals" in the new agro-urban Guatemala.³¹

As "El Norte," one of the most popular songs of the 1990s, reminds us, however, NTAs were far from the only funding source that sparked urbanization. "How many nights have I cried / Remembering your voice," a woman sings to her lost migrant lover, ". . . If only one could live here."³² Remittances were critical in funding Guatemala's agro-urban transition and in forming the shaky lower-middle class. In the early 1980s, tens of thousands of Guatemalans filled refugee camps in Mexico. Though many were repatriated in the 1990s—a process that sparked conflicts over land and politics in emerging agro-urban territory—many fled north, soon to be followed by waves of migrant-refugees. *Remesas* (remittances) paid for families to move from outlying villages to cabeceiras, where education, goods, and services were available. Many such families also founded businesses, often in the already-booming informal sector, contributing to the creation of the vast hives of grassroots commerce that characterize these small cities today.³³

Remesas also helped to fund construction. Concrete-block dwellings began to outnumber traditional mud-brick huts in central areas, which were already swelling as poor internal migrants built shantytowns on their peripheries. New local elites arose, and class differentiation sharpened.³⁴ The look of agro-urban centers changed as well. Exuberant structures mixed vernacular folk idioms with styles reinterpreted from the north; Arabesque arches adorned terraces beside rounded window bays blazoned with multicolored tiles, for example. Years later, Spain funded a photo exhibition of the "Architecture of *Remesas*," calling it a new "baroque style" that expressed the "random transits of the emigrant experience." Above all else, one exhibition flyer said, the "contradictory and paradoxical" styles bespoke a "desire to enter the world of the market and of consumption," to "leave poverty behind."³⁵ Even as migrants from Latin America were remaking urban space in the United States—Mike Davis published *Magical Urbanism* on this topic in 2000—their remittances were contributing to the creation of a different sort of "magical urbanism" in their countries of origin.³⁶ The real magic at hand, however, was that by which a face of progress was laid over a foundation of poverty. The emergence of agro-urban space bespoke economic activity and expansion, but the bulk of the population remained poor, underemployed, and not eating "cake."

The groundwork for la KY's emergence was already largely laid by early 1997, when governments from around the world pledged just short of US\$2 billion by the end of the decade to help Guatemala fulfill the Peace Accords. This money tipped the balance, accelerating urbanization through infrastructure projects, giving rise to a generation of middle-class program administrators, and funding thousands of projects (in microcredit, for example) designed to make so-called "entrepreneurs" competitive. It also alleviated the need for the state to impose more progressive taxation in order to provide essential services.

The agro-urban landscape evolved rapidly, and the metabolism between "city," "town," and "village" changed. Secondary cities grew, chief among them Quetzaltenango, Guatemala's fast-expanding second city, where national franchises set up shop and local developers built housing developments, mini-malls, and chain stores.³⁷ Tertiary centers—small cities like Chimaltenango, Escuintla, and Huehuetenango—also evolved as the nuclei of growing city-regions. In 1998, Huehuetenango was hanging stop-lights and opening its first malls.³⁸ "Huehuetenango is undoubtedly a city like many others," wrote a local columnist; it was no longer a little place "trafficked by horses, carts, and people on foot."³⁹ Similar changes were underway in far more rustic municipal cabeceras. In Aguacatán, a town high in Huehuetenango department's mountains, a local newspaper founded in 1998 painted the picture of a rapidly growing and commercializing agro-urban center with a marbled mix of old and new. Traditional artisans hawked handcrafts in sidewalk stalls around an expanding "slew of *tiendas*" that sold imported bicycles, electronics, and appliances, the paper reported.⁴⁰ In Chimaltenango department, the Kaqchikel-speaking town of Tecpán, an NTA epicenter where broccoli took root, also became home to new cottage industries where tailors produced counterfeit brand-name clothes destined for municipal and informal street markets around the nation.⁴¹ While remaining the quintessence of "rural" Guatemala, indigenous towns like Aguacatán and Tecpán, still spangled with and surrounded by farmland, increasingly became nexuses of mass-merchandise retail, education, banking, and medical services (such as they were).⁴²

In agro-urban Guatemala—a product of top-down and bottom-up initiatives—long-standing territorial networks matured into city-regions and thus transformed, even as military developmentalism matured and remained in the body politic as its related neoliberal measures transformed regimes of accumulation. Physically, the map was drawn on which la KY would emerge. That map was overlaid, however, with multiple others of social space as it was conceived—and this in a nation fresh from a genocide, with a multilingual Maya majority in much of its territory, a system of *castas* some five hundred years in the making, and class differentiation that was more accentuated by the day. As with what Lefebvre called "perceived space," the evolution of conceived space was both creative and destructive and marked by the dialectics of maturation-and-transformation, of incorporation-and-exclusion that played out in the emerging KY through the end of war.

Neoliberalizing Identity: Conflict, Mediatization, and New Divisions

To come of age in turn-of-the-millennium Guatemala was to grow up in a nation at once intensely rural and intensely urbanizing, a nation that was

incorporating the Maya even as it matured the systems underpinning their exclusion, a nation devolving into new forms of violence as it celebrated peace. Exhumations of mass graves began in 1988 and accelerated through the 1990s, as Guatemalans fought their way to peace and negotiated its terms, including an accord that defined the nation as “multiethnic, pluri-cultural, and multilingual” and promised to address discrimination.⁴³ In 1999, a referendum to put the same language in the constitution was resoundingly defeated, but hopes for justice were buoyed when a U.N. truth commission declared that the army had committed acts of genocide.⁴⁴ The United Nations Mission in Guatemala, on the ground from 1994 to 2004, bolstered civil society, documented abuses, and held the government to the Peace Accords, but none of its efforts could change the fact that structural conditions of poverty and marginalization remained or the cruel reality that genocide and oppression had torn Guatemala’s already pained social fabric completely asunder and larded the body politic with criminal rings. From the 1980s to the new millennium, Maya activism made astounding gains, and guerrillas turned from militants to politicians, but none of this incorporation undid exclusion. In 1996, the year when peace was declared, Guatemalans started burning each other alive in vigilante lynchings. A counterinsurgency state morphed into a security state on embattled agro-urban streets. Unearthing skeletons promised memory, justice, and healing; writhing victims screaming as they charred told a very different story.

The brutality that tore Guatemala’s social fabric apart also fueled Maya activism to repair that fabric and reweave it so as to end five hundred years of subordination. After the genocide, outraged Maya groups debated their role in a ladino-led revolution, in local and national politics, and in the national fabric.⁴⁵ One group even called for a separate Maya republic, claiming that “the formation of a *chapín* national identity” was impossible. Others disagreed.⁴⁶ The Mayan Movement was a complex mix of groups, goals, viewpoints. In broad terms, *clasistas* (class-oriented thinkers) supported armed revolution and worked with the revivifying leftist social movement webs, while less militant *culturalista* (culture-oriented) groups worked to foment Maya education, arts, and cultural revival.⁴⁷ This still-ongoing cultural process began to unfold in the late 1980s, and in the 1990s, winning support from the international cooperation agencies, the World Bank, the IDB, and the other development power players. Activists put the rarely-used-before word “Maya” and Maya cultural consciousness on the map and helped to give rise to the discourses of identity later iterated by groups like *Sobrevivencia*.⁴⁸

None of the discourse about the nation’s new inclusiveness undid its underlying racism, poverty, and exclusion. The Maya never won a role in national politics proportional to their numbers. They did, however, win the municipality. Over the course of the 1990s, grassroots Maya political actors waged a massive campaign for “local power,” wresting mayoralties around the highlands from the ladino minority.⁴⁹ This was an historic feat, but the Maya’s winning of municipal power unfolded in a neoliberalizing political economy in such a way as to pit local polities against one another and to exclude their representatives from having any real say at a level where structural change might be effected.⁵⁰ “The problem,” concluded anthropologist Stener Ekern some years later, was “to construct a legitimate Mayan authority at the apex of a system designed to share the burdens of subordination.”⁵¹

Within just a few years, the celebrated new inclusion of the Maya would be seen as emblematic of neoliberal multiculturalism. Still, Maya teenagers in the 1990s came of age in towns with mayors who spoke their language and promoted ethnic pride, helping make possible the imaginary of a KY peopled by Maya and ladinos alike. Those teens were likely to have a newly minted “Maya” identity and, unlike their parents, were less and less likely to self-identify as a revolutionary or believe in revolutionary change. With the end of the Cold War came the death of dreams that had motivated generations of Guatemalans. For the first time in thirty-six years, “guerrilla” was no longer an identity. After peace was signed and the militants handed in their guns, the government helped to resettle and reincorporate them, as promised in the Peace Accords.⁵² In late 1998, the guerrilla groups’ umbrella organization became a registered political party, an event that marked the end of “socialism as an historical project.”⁵³ Party members had poor showings in the polls and were soon mired in the byzantine world of Guatemalan politics.

Not all militants could make the transition. One, Santiago Santa Cruz Mendoza, a field *comandante* of the 1980s and 1990s, tried to make a go of this new life, but in 2001 he quit, bitter and disgusted with political infighting.⁵⁴ The end of his career bespeaks the fate of a shattered left; his earlier trajectory gives evidence as to how guerrilla activism both affected and reflected the transformations underway in agro-urban Guatemala in the final battles of the 1990s. The guerrillas had changed strategies in 1991, coming out of remote hideaways and bringing the fight to economically important areas—that is, to agro-urbanizing centers—to strengthen their hand at the negotiating table.⁵⁵ Commanders like Santa Cruz unleashed operations that became more like media events than battles to win a war. In hit-and-run take-overs of important economic centers, combatants would surround the area, give a political talk (often broadcast on the radio), and then fight their way out. By 1995, firefights were no longer necessary. The rebels would inform the authorities and the media in advance of their plans. Generals kept the troops in check, and news crews scuttled out of the capital to catch the action. Under these circumstances, Santa Cruz remembers, the guerrillas “risked becoming part of national folklore and being exploited for tourism.”⁵⁶ Few people wanted to join the resistance any more, he added, and the precious few new recruits hailed from a very different generation. Back in the glory days, Santa Cruz noted, young guerrillas had picked *noms de guerre*, such as Fidel, that harkened to Cuba. During the genocidal 1980s, Biblical names like Aarón and Abraham became popular. By the 1990s, kids were choosing names like Antonio Banderas and Mike Tyson.⁵⁷

Young people in the hinterlands were increasingly exposed to foreign media giants like Banderas and Tyson as the result of rapid infrastructure development, funded through the alphabet soup of agencies tied into the IIC and thus intimately related to the still-omnipresent PACs (civil patrols), military commissioners, and other counterinsurgency structures.⁵⁸ Hundreds of villages and hamlets got their first electric service (and often their first paved road), larger towns got their first public telephone, and, in growing cabeceras, informal cable TV companies appeared. Foreigners who traveled in the highlands in the early 1990s (your author among them) remember informal businesses that screened VHS movies for packed rooms of villagers: *Rambo* and Bruce Lee kick-boxing films were popular. When a local newspaper called *El Regional* began publishing

in the municipality of Jacaltenango (in Huehuetenango, near the Mexican border) in 1991, its first editorial bemoaned such influences. The region, the editors wrote, was under “continual bombardment from huge media like radio, newspapers, and television, that little by little are inculcating [our youth] with foreign values and replacing our own elements of local culture.” Youth were “enslaved” to foreign styles in a “cruel reality” of “alienation,” wearing “gringo getups” and using “words that don’t belong to the Spanish language.” The consequences of foreign cultural invasion, the author continued, “have caused mistrust that makes communication between the *urban and rural populations* impossible.”⁵⁹

El Regional itself bears evidence to the changes bound up in the process of agro-urbanization that unfolded in neoliberalizing Guatemala at the end of the twentieth century. Born as a kind of kitchen-table grassroots paper that published in Spanish and Jacalteco-Maya, it soon had multiple and multilingual regional supplements, and its masthead later featured giants such as Rigoberta Menchú, the K’iche’ activist who won the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize. Though its pages regularly decried the corruption of youth, its articles also documented youthful participation in demonstrations against the army, in local cultural projects, in all-new *schools* and school projects, and in the cultural efforts of the Mayan Movement. When the Peace Accords were signed, *El Regional’s* headline marked the moment’s multiculturalism by using the movement’s name for the nation—“*Paz en Iximuleu*,” Peace in the Land of Maize.⁶⁰ In youthful parlance, whether what was to come would be a remade “Guate-mala,” a reimagined “Guate-buena” (*mala* is bad, *buena* is good), “Guate-maya,” “Iximuleu” (pr. Ee-sheem-oo-lay-oo), or “Chapinlandia” remained to be sorted out. Given the ebullient Maya nationalism of the day, it is telling that the government would not first think to produce a video of children singing the national anthem in Mayan languages until 2001.⁶¹

The government had, however, commissioned a song for peace. When Guatemalans celebrated “A Firm and Lasting Peace” on December 29, 1996, its composer, the popular ladino musician Fernando Scheel (who incidentally would later work with many Maya artists when their music took off in the late 2000s and 2010s), performed it as a duet. The lyrics to “*Hablemos de paz*” (Let’s Speak of Peace) said that “it looks like we can love one another again” and that “hell is behind us.” The iconography in the accompanying multicultural music video was full of joyous children, and represented the Maya as rural, in mountain fields surrounded by corn and sheep.⁶² Such sylvan sites indeed existed, as they do today, but, as the geographer George Lovell reminds us, Guatemala has “a beauty that hurts.”⁶³ Many memories of mid-1990s highland Guatemala are decidedly less bucolic. “I’m from the interior of the Republic and as a child I lived through those days when the army took the town surrounding it with armed personnel carriers and everything,” a provincial heavy-metal fan posted years later on a blog called Rock Republik (Republik with “kah” as in KY). He remembered seeing a 1994 music video on a military-run TV station: “Megadeth, ‘Train of Consequences,’ the one where these babies are hung all along the road, and then, exactly, right, all these images of the army that you saw that made you want to be part of it, and I remember that when the *militares* came I ran to be able to see them . . . what a head trip, right?”⁶⁴ The disjuncture between the “Reach out your hand / We’re brothers” strains of “*Hablemos de paz*” and the title “Train of Consequences” with the image of hanging babies

speaks to the complex forces and subjectivities at play in the zone of capital expansion that was agro-urban Guatemala, in an era when crime and sharpened social divisions occasioned the transformation of the nation from a top-down counterinsurgency state to a decentered security state, both with violence—bones and burning bodies—in their gene pool.

Organized and common crime exploded around Guatemala in the 1990s. Beyond a torn social fabric, reasons for spreading crime, in brief, included rising narcotraffic and other mafias, a corrupt and inefficient police force, and ongoing proletarianization. Poverty, fear, and insecurity shaped everyday life. Lynching-by-burning was first widely noted in 1996 and remains a commonplace event to this day. Far from burning drug lords, vigilante mobs tended to kill petty thieves and miscreants. They also murdered accused members of kidnapping rings, which began to proliferate in the mid- to late 1990s, primarily targeting middle-class members of the “new bourgeoisie” in agro-urban centers. The police did little to stop this. Local mafias arose, many associated with what in the late 1990s became the “ex-PAC,” the disbanded civil patrollers. A country putatively at peace was still torn apart by wars.⁶⁵

Exacerbated social divisions underpinned these problems. Money was one divisive factor; literacy was another. In 1997, the first ads relating to the internet appeared in *El Regional*.⁶⁶ Over the next few years, it became possible to surf the web, as low-cost internet cafés opened, but doing so required being able to read and write. More significantly, many of the new jobs that came to urbanizing areas, in banks, government offices, NGOs, and retail centers, were only available to those with schooling. Growing class distinctions were seen around the nation. Such distinctions were geographically conditioned; youth in towns and villages that had primary schools and that were closer to areas where secondary education was available did better. Internal transhumance and migration accelerated, changing the relationships between hamlet, village, and urbanizing town. Even as adults traveled to sell goods or work, youth whose families had some means began commuting to study beyond the sixth-grade level.⁶⁷ Demographic change occasioned a dialectic of social integration and social division—of a newly imagined *chapín* identity that had the space to include multiple ethnic others on one hand and of a society even more divided into *castas* on the other. People from different regions, backgrounds, and language groups came into increased contact, and the diminution of small-town, “everybody-knows-everybody” insularity was an integral element of agro-urbanization. At the same time, however, new arrivals exacerbated conflict in areas already riven with the divisions of war.⁶⁸ Many youth who had no access to education, along with those who made it through junior high but still could find no work, joined a bitter and growing agro-urban proletariat, one linked with rising rates of alcoholism and a proliferation of brothels and other insalubrious gathering places. A youthful urban underclass spat upon in slang as *cholos* and *choleros* (epithets that have the ring of “brown trash” and also evoke lowbrow youth counterculture and street styles) arose in growing towns as city streets appeared in rural places.⁶⁹

The reaction to increasing pauperization and illegality was the “securitization” of Guatemalan society. Huehuetenango residents, for example, organized a “citizen security plan” in 1997, not just for the central *cabecera* but for the department as a whole. The area, they said, was plagued by organized

and common crime and riddled with gangs. Kidnapping and extortion were noted, and no sooner did bank agencies and national chain stores open—a key element of agro-urbanization—than they were set upon by organized bands of thieves. Vigilante lynching was on the rise, and youth were showing the influence of foreign imports including “violent films and pornography.”⁷⁰ Organized crime, juvenile delinquency, and spreading urban youth street cultures were blurred together in these narratives. While local teenagers were unlikely to have been responsible for bank robberies, for example, the stage was still set for *cholos* to become the “internal enemy.” Even if they were not in crime rings or gangs, public discourse held, youth were too involved in sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll.

Neoliberalization and Countercultures: City Streets in Rural Places

Despite elder Guatemalans’ disdain, youth cultures and countercultures became a critical arena for expressing and negotiating issues of identity and belonging. Lived experience on la KY shows all the dialectical tensions we have explored thus far. La KY was a sphere of maturation-and-transformation; long-standing cultural hybridity amplified and became integral to social change, and on la KY, in dialogue with the political economy, social actors simultaneously reproduced and broke down age-old, caste-like hierarchies. The dynamic of incorporation-and-exclusion that unfolded on la KY engendered a potentially inclusive *chapinismo* but also comprised gangs, delinquency, and interclass rivalry. La KY was a bottom-up space of belonging but also a ground of panic and site of intervention by powerful institutions. It showed authenticity but also mediatization and commercialization. La KY maps onto the neoliberalizing political economy (by which I mean, as I have traced, first, the new *dispositif* of aesthetically multicultural politics and the generation and simultaneous corporate dispossession of transformed and/or created regimes of accumulation; and second, the associated struggles over identity, power, resources, and security) *not just* as its (tragic, ludic, commercial, creative) reflection-and-or-byproduct, or as its proto-political, resisting Other *but also* as the sublation of these two valences. It is a completely unfree yet freedom-seeking field of production, one inexorably linked to the system of power but which seeks nothing more than to create life-worlds alternative to it—a space at the point where dream meets rage in which youthful being and becoming give rise to semiotic expressions that are immediately enframed as (sometimes wanted, sometimes unwanted) cultural elements of the “system” and that, in a repeating and ongoing metabolic process, thus transform and reinforce the system as it bends to engage them.

KY cultures came to have exceptional force because, unlike neoliberal politics or economics, they draw their power from people’s will,⁷¹ both their will to create and to destroy. At the dawn of the new millennium, the Guatemalan columnist Gerardo Guinea Diez published an essay that excoriated “the market in its most radical and absolute expression” and “the absurdity . . . of reducing the size of the state in a country still under construction.” A new generation was coming up, one born in a neoliberal time of “unbelief, cloning, fast food, forgettable loves and made-to-order ideas.” So what, he asked, was left? “Culture, above all culture. When politics fail,” he wrote, “people only have

culture left. . . . That inveterate vocation of humans to invent beauty and not to cry before their own defeat.”⁷²

Sometimes, however, culture invents ugliness, not beauty, as the history of countercultures in Guatemala City makes clear.⁷³ In the early 1980s, as the countryside was reeling from genocide, a subculture of capital-city ladino hard-rock and heavy-metal fans (fans of bands like Sangre Humana, who sang “Power’s Destiny” amid the genocide) embraced the esoteric and the occult, drug use, and free sex. They displayed an attitude that came to be known as “*valeverguismo*,” from “*me vale verga*” or “*me pela la verga*,” phrases that mean “I don’t give a fuck.”⁷⁴ The anthropologist Manuela Camus writes that the new urban generation displayed “militant anti-conformism.” Over the course of the 1980s, as the “new [neoliberal] economy” congealed, she argues, and as education was gradually becoming “mercantitized” through a growing welter of private institutions, class and caste antagonisms sharpened.⁷⁵ At the same time, the famous street gangs, or *maras*, appeared, becoming increasingly violent over time. These included the notorious MS-13 and Calle Dieciocho (Eighteenth Street) gangs.⁷⁶

Using the gangs as an excuse to attack brown-skinned, working-class youth (the *castas*)—and in a parallel chapter to the struggles over identity underway in the provinces—middle-class hard-rockers formed vigilante groups and started a series of street wars that raged in the late 1980s and early 1990s. They called themselves the “anti-breaks” because they targeted *choleros* who dared to experiment with foreign counterculture, specifically break dance and early rap, in public space.⁷⁷ These events bespeak the deadly seriousness of transnational youth cultures and “distinction” (in Bourdieu’s sense) as Guatemalan youth continued to contest age-old divisions of class, caste, and race. The anthropologist Jorge Ramón González relates such inter-class battles to struggles over “imperial whiteness” and who gets to appropriate and perform foreign styles.⁷⁸ The break wars also highlight the interpenetrating levels of violence in this society. They erupted at a time when press reports were telling of children—the “*duendes*” of the Alux Nahual song—vanishing into worlds of adoption, backroom organ-harvesting, prostitution, and child pornography.⁷⁹ The anti-breaks (some reputed to be the children of members of paramilitary death squads and military officers) were linked to a growing phenomenon of “social cleansing” in which police and shadowy forces attacked poor children on the streets.⁸⁰ By the late 1980s, the government had drawn on preexisting structures of counterinsurgency to create a special military/police wing to “protect” the citizenry. Besides going after delinquents, it also attacked social movement activists and guerrillas.⁸¹

By the time the break wars died down, circa 1993, a new, more peaceful generation of urban ladino rockers was coming of age.⁸² Arising from the capital’s private high schools and universities, they developed a new idiom of *rock nacional*. With a rough yet lyrical “grunge sound,” bands like Viernes Verde, La Tona, and, most famously, Bohemia Suburbana composed what would soon become a peace-era national youth soundtrack. They first stepped onto the national stage in a huge 1994 capital-city concert called “*Libertad de Expresión ¡Ya!*” (Freedom of Expression, Now!), astonished that they could play music they had written themselves in front of thousands of moshing fans. A new label, aptly named Primera Generación (First Generation) Records, promoted their

work and produced a CD of the concert that circulated nationally. Soon, these groups started to tour around the nation.⁸³

The new bands giggered in places already deeply colored by foreign invaders such as “Superman, Rambo, [and the Teenage Mutant] Ninja Turtles.”⁸⁴ In agro-urban Guatemala, TV shows and styles from the Global North mixed in popular culture with capital-city slang, street identities, and music. Aguacatán’s local paper, for example, reported that satellite cable TV was spreading and noted that youth gathered to watch it, eat pizza, and shoot pool at a new hang-out in the town center. These local boys were losing their customs, the report said (typically overlooking girls and women entirely). The groups who were “shouting to the four winds for the rescue of Maya tradition” had yet to organize youth activities or a cultural festival. Thus male teens, wearing “outlandish sneakers, baseball caps . . . and earrings” had nothing to do but listen to “boring” Guatemalan rock and cause trouble.⁸⁵ Sobrevivencia’s guitarist Alex Job Sis explained in an interview that kids in the *pueblos* were listening to national rock in the mid-1990s, tellingly using words like *inquietud* (restlessness, worry) and *ansiedad* (anxiousness) to capture their emotions about engaging with this new expression of *chapín* youth identity. They were desperate for any band to arrive; he met Viernes Verde and other touring groups in the highlands before Sobrevivencia was born. The touring rockers, meanwhile, were amazed to find “*chapines locales*” in the highlands who knew the lyrics to their songs.⁸⁶ One remembers taking the stage after a marimba band in the tiny K’iche’ village of Sac Mixit, Totonicapán; suddenly the youngsters came to life and made a mosh pit.⁸⁷ The Sac Mixit mosh pit sums up the dynamic of city streets in rural places. Adults could not understand these kids, and even used English to dub them “Generation X.”⁸⁸

In San Idelfonso Ixtahuacán, the “Generation X” (really baby-boom) teens of Sobrevivencia founded their group to turn “la KY” into a space of celebration. They melded the Maya pride of the era with new cultural forms and gave it a living face. Many such hybrid forms would follow, and on la KY, “*chapines locales*” would claim, remake, and expand the once-racist term “*chapín*” that had specifically excluded them.⁸⁹ Over time, in the age of neoliberal multiculturalism, la KY was the field on which the class and caste represented by the capital city’s break-dancers, the “breaks”—once joined in the common social imaginary of la KY by provincial Maya youth—ultimately won out over that embodied by their middle-class “anti-break” attackers. Today, *rock nacional* includes many Maya artists, ranging from lyrical vocalists to rappers, and break dancing is a national craze. Surprisingly, given the florescence of youthful cultural production that followed, the productive aspect of street cultures in the late 1990s is barely remembered. More remembered are crime and gangs.

The plague of agro-urban street *maras* broke out just as the new *rock chapín* was going national. These informal gangs symbolize the slippages, surprises, ambiguities, and changing subjectivities wrapped up in the lived experience of neoliberalization and urbanization in Guatemala. According to contemporary accounts, some local gangs were offshoots of the major, transnational gangs. Others were cat’s-paws for local adult criminals. Most, however, appear to have been the spontaneous creations of local youth who were growing up in a time when it was completely unclear what the future had in store for them.

Many of the new wave of “barrio gangs” were named after cartoon and video-game characters from global media. Los Simpson was the first teenage *mara* (gang) to make trouble in the Maya pueblo of San Antonio Huista, claimed a letter to the editor of *El Regional*. Then came younger imitators, the “*patojos*” (little squirts) in “Los Raiders,” who “don’t even know where they’re peeing but sure know how to screw around.” Perhaps taking its name from the kick-boxing films, another *mara* called “Los Dragones” soon appeared, painting skulls all over town.⁹⁰ In Aldea San Lorenzo, Huehuetenango, a fruit-and-maize-growing village full of cottage-industry tailors, a teenage gang so terrorized the 10 percent minority of Catholics left in the population (the rest had converted to Evangelical Christianity) that they hid the statue of the patron saint lest it be stolen. There were at least eight teen gangs with fewer than twenty members operating in greater Huehuetenango in late 1997, *El Regional* reported, but that number was dwarfed by those found in the surrounding rural areas. All around Huehuetenango department, as elsewhere in the securitizing nation, residents formed neighborhood-watch committees.⁹¹

What are we to make of these small gangs, the trouble-making youth groups that formed part of the fabric of an emerging national street culture? They arose in the same era as more “productive” associations did—not just bands such as *Sobrevivencia* but also scores of everyday sports teams and church groups and the like that flourished as military surveillance waned. If we contextualize these cultural expressions in the greater rubric of forces that gave rise to agro-urban Guatemala and its KY and view them through a from-below lens, as scholars such as James Scott and Ranajit Guha urge us to do, we can discern a kind of (inchoate but recognizable) social commentary.⁹² Some of the gang names, such as “Los Simpson,” had a comic element, suggesting a burlesque imitation of “serious” gangs and criminal rings. Others were overtly political, such as “Los Kaibiles,” after the Green Beret–like and murderous special forces of the Guatemalan army, and “El INDE,” after the much-hated state electric company, which was fast on its way to being privatized. While they are remembered for robbing, painting graffiti, and disrupting fiestas, it is still possible to read them as a form of satire and their activities as expressing protest through street art.⁹³ Such a reading, however, must be approached cautiously. To call the antics of the street overtly political would be both to overstate the case and, more importantly, to miss entirely the ambiguity that they expressed. The product, and perhaps in part the cry of a new generation, the turn-of-the-millennium informal street gangs arose in dialogue with and in reaction to unsatisfying politics and spreading organized crime. They reflected underemployment and frustration at a time when politics and peace seemed to promise hope but when economic advancement largely failed to materialize. In a nation with a broken body politic, in an age of urbanization and neoliberal reform, street theatrics came to the fore.

At the most quotidian level, youth culture—especially but not exclusively informal street gangs—in emerging agro-urban Guatemala reflected simple boredom among young men who could not find work in either the agricultural or the informal economy (which sustained roughly eighty percent of the population at the time). As such, they tended to arise not from the ranks of the poorest-of-the-poor, who *had* to work, but from society’s middle sectors.⁹⁴ Even as they expressed the anger of that demographic over the lack of opportunity, they also reflected grassroots, youthful commentary on spreading criminality.

Sometimes, they emerged in dialogue with more serious criminal rings. Residents of Panajachel, Sololá, for example, remember “Los Pokemones” in this regard. This gang was made up of pot-smoking Kaqchikel teens who couldn’t find jobs despite having made it through junior high school (quite an accomplishment) and who dedicated themselves to petty theft and vandalism. They were seeking to be “somebodies,” to have “street cred,” as it were. They annoyed the townsfolk but also occasioned a sigh of relief. Before this group of hometown hoods emerged, *real* gangs from the capital had started to take root in the region, including MS-13 and Calle Dieciocho. According to local lore, it was only after townspeople drove out the invaders that gangs like Los Pokemones appeared. The real gangs never would have countenanced competitors for turf. “Big-gang imitators,” while a pain in the neck, were still the neighbors’ kids. They could be tolerated.⁹⁵

The informal gangs of the turn of the millennium were an integral element of la KY as it emerged and took on its new dimensions as a nationwide field of cultural production and contestation, but they were far from the only one. In a time of growing insecurity, perhaps as a coping mechanism, popular culture in general developed an increasingly satirical edge. An excellent example is found in Aguacatán, where the youngsters in “outlandish sneakers” not only listened to pop but also donned masks at local political rallies and handed out obscene flyers that defamed the “basest passions” and licentious exploits of local politicians.⁹⁶ Similar satire was seen, mixed with “foreign forms,” in popular culture all around Guatemala; costumed revelers in religious parades called *convites*, for example, dressed not only increasingly as cartoon characters (Winnie-the-Pooh, Mickey Mouse) but also as politicians with devil horns and huge papier-mâché phalluses or as guerrillas in drag.

At all levels, the street and its theatrics show what Achille Mbembe calls “the baroque character of the postcolony: its unusual and grotesque art of representation, its taste for the theatrical, and its violent pursuit of wrongdoing to the point of shamelessness.”⁹⁷ Baroque, contested, and at once a space of danger and of creation, the agro-urban KY joined its capital-city counterpart to emerge as a national commons. The product of a meld of militarism and precocious neoliberalism, of migrants’ and farmers’ and artisans’ sweat, and of “sneaky” weaves of public and private capital from around the world, street culture matured and took on new centrality as a site of cultural production. It became the stage on which, in ways sometimes ludic, sometimes tragic, and sometimes brilliant, youth negotiated the terms of their belonging.

Epilogue: Neoliberalization in the New Millennium

The epilogue to this story is bittersweet. As CAFTA-DR ushered in a wave of foreign capital enterprises, the economy continued to financialize; banks and offshores grew, and consumer credit joined a universe of “microcredit” enterprises. NTAs expanded but not without bumps that caused what some have seen as “re-ruralization,” as some farmers threw in the towel and went back to growing corn and beans alone.⁹⁸ Immigration to the United States increased and even took on the status of a mythic “hero’s journey” among youth, many of whom came to see it as the only possible way one could ever get ahead in life. Politics fared little better than the economy. Four of the eight presidents

popularly elected since the 1986 return to democracy have been arrested, exiled, or driven from power, and no party has ever held the presidency twice. Some strands of ethnic politics have suffered, too. By early in the new millennium, observers agree, various elements of the Mayan Movement became a part of the bureaucracy and official neoliberal multiculturalism. Violence, crime, lynching, and social conflict have all continued unabated.⁹⁹

Unsurprisingly, then, youth culture's centrality as a field of contestation has only grown. Sadly, class and caste warfare have continued, though mostly online, and classist, racist videos posted by ladinos still heaped opprobrium on the brown-skinned poor even in the 2010s. Despite, and to some measure because of, this deep-seated racism, the *castas* have continued to assert themselves in the public cultural sphere and have arguably changed the very meaning of the once-exclusionary term "*chapín*." Even if they have not won social or economic justice, the fact that they are overthrowing a centuries-old caste system is still historic. Drawing from global sources, arising out of very local neighborhoods, and passing back-and-forth between urban and agro-urban territory, the idioms of youth culture—musical forms, fashion, and slang among them—served, like the imaginary of "la KY" itself, as what Emily Calacci calls "street archives" that helped the national street culture congeal and grow.¹⁰⁰ By the mid-2000s, an incredibly historic explosion of the arts was underway, involving musicians, painters, novelists, filmmakers, photographers, and street artists alike. The town of San Juan Comalapa, home of Maya vocalist Sara Curruchich, for example, has become a veritable Kaqchikel-Maya "creative city" and a leader in intellectual and literary production, the plastic arts, and music.¹⁰¹ Happily, popular youth culture has finally stopped being exclusively by, for, and all about boys. To be sure, it remained (and remains) highly gendered, as a viewing of videos by Sara Curruchich side-by-side with those of rapping males will make clear. But the new millennium has seen a vibrant women's movement gain ground, a sexual revolution mature, and an LGBTQ movement arise. Most notably, the social movements in general, and especially those related to the pan-indigenous movement and environmental causes, have sprung once again to life. Sobrevivencia's music can be found in films documenting the heroic struggle of towns like San Idelfonso Ixtahuacán against foreign gold-mining ventures.¹⁰² City streets and city streets in rural places were critical in giving rise to all these developments, and street culture has evolved in tandem with them. Only for so long, however, can the energies of artists and youth stand in alone for progress.

Endnotes

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1. The band developed a rockabilly sound and sang in Mam, Spanish, and English. "Sobrevivencia-Guatemala," January 10, 2009, <https://centroamericanto.net/2009/01/10/sobrevivencia-guatemala/> (cited). See also Marcelo Colussi, "Entrevista al grupo 'Sobrevivencia,' de Guatemala: No deben existir barreras culturales," *Argenpress Cultural*, November 29, 2008, <http://cultural.argenpress.info/2008/11/entrevista-al-grupo-musical>.

html; Emilio del Valle Escalante, "The Discursive Economy of Maya *Culturales* in Guatemala," *Hispanófila* 157 (December 2009): 25–38.

2. In later years, la KY would see the rise of Maya artists ranging from Kaqchikel vocalists to Mam rappers. Readers are urged to enjoy Sara Curruchich Cúmez, "Ch'uti'xtän/Niña," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0E1efv6mLA>; Fernando Scheel and Raquel Pajoc, "Pa' Capital," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4evy_IMFKQ; and the Shat Juárez video, "Rap en Mam Cajolá 2012," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d24AI2swKu4&t=176s>. On Maya rap in the mid-2010s, see Elizabeth R. Bell, "This Isn't Underground; This Is Highlands': Mayan-Language Hip Hop, Cultural Resilience, and Youth Education in Guatemala," *Journal of Folklore Research* 54, no. 2 (2017): 167–97.

3. The spelling of "la KY" in the rock-band story could well have been the reporter's and not the musician's, and, given the rudimentary state of the internet in Guatemala in 1998, it was certainly an anachronism. La KY, however, has a vibrant life in Guatemalan slang, in ways somewhat analogous to "the hood" in English. For example, it is the "university" where people studied in Facebook profiles and often the hometown they identify. The analysis of "contested identity" in this essay follows Frederick Cooper's exhortation to consider "identifications as they emerge, crystallize, and fade away in particular social and political circumstances" instead of positing "an identity, which links past, present, and future in a single word." Emphasis in original. Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, CA, 2005), 85.

4. Emilio Pradilla Cobos, "Presente y futuro de las metrópolis de América Latina," *Territorios* 18–19 (Bogotá, 2008): 147–81. Pradilla focuses on the Latin American megacity and its environs; Guatemala's case is different inasmuch as it entailed the rapid urbanization of smaller population centers. Making the same correction for the proximity of megacities, Guatemala's emerging cities also bear resemblance to what Terry G. McGee has documented in the dense "desakota" regions of Asia, where dense regions "between large city cores" have come to show "an intense mixture of agricultural and non-agricultural activities." Terry G. McGee, "The Emergence of Desakota Regions in Asia: Expanding a Hypothesis," in Neil Brenner, ed., *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization* (Berlin, 2014), 121–37.

5. Gobierno de Guatemala, Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo Urbano y Rural, "Plan Nacional de Desarrollo K'atun: Nuestra Guatemala 2032" (Guatemala, 2014), 95 and *passim*.

6. Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York, 2002); Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class* (London, 2005); Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London, 2006).

7. Neil Brenner, ed., *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization* (Berlin, 2014), 16.

8. See J. T. Way, *Agrotropolis: Urban Space and Youth Culture in Guatemala* (Berkeley, CA, forthcoming). Guatemala has twenty-two departments (analogous to states in the United States), each of which has a *cabecera*, or capital. Departments are further divided into municipalities (340 in all), comprised of a central *cabecera* and a collection of outlying towns, villages, and hamlets, some of which were (and to a lesser extent, still are) only accessible by footpath. Municipalities are (very) roughly equivalent to counties in the United States or parishes in Louisiana. (Place names overlap; "Huehuetenango" is the name of the *cabecera* of the municipality that itself is the *cabecera* of the department by the same name, for example.) *Cabeceras* in the Mayan highlands were typically born in the colonial period as forced concentrations of the indigenous population, and as nucleated settlements in agrarian regions, were always to some extent "urban" in relation to their outlying villages and hamlets. They housed major markets (indigenous markets, in

the highlands) and the Catholic Church. Thus, to give two examples, the cabecera of Quetzaltenango had always been the nation's "second city," and large departmental cabeceras such as Huehuetenango had already been small cities through much of the twentieth century (at least).

9. Jamie Peck, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason* (Oxford, 2010), 7.

10. The government also privatized an airline in which it was a major stakeholder, as well as the post office, in the 1990s. Guatemala had never adequately taxed the rich or developed a social safety net that represented a significant public-sector investment and, thus, did not need the kind of "shock therapy" associated with neoliberalization in other nations. Comparatively speaking, it also never went too deeply into debt. While its economy was bumpy, it never experienced the dramatic effects of neoliberalism seen in nations such as Mexico, Bolivia, and Argentina (to name a few).

11. Ironically, by discursively relating indigenous people to rurality, to the earth, and to maize, such (heavily financed) neoliberal discourses worked to keep the agro-urban landscape invisible long after its first emergence. On neoliberal multiculturalism, see the essays in Santiago Bastos, ed., *Multiculturalismo y futuro en Guatemala* (Guatemala, 2008) and Charles R. Hale, *Más que un Indio: Racial Ambivalence and Neoliberal Multiculturalism in Guatemala* (Santa Fe, NM, 2006). As an entry into the vast literature on globalization and hybrid youth cultures, see Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, expanded ed. (Minneapolis, MN, 2005). The historian and anthropologist Santiago Bastos Amigo writes that by the mid- to late 2000s, "the [Mayan] movement' appeared demobilized" and that "the Maya 'de a pie' [that is, everyday, common Maya citizens], like the majority of Guatemalans, were still suffering the consequences of being inserted into a globalized world without having lost being part of a racist, oligarchic, creole-dominated nation." Santiago Bastos, "La política maya en la Guatemala posconflicto," in Santiago Bastos Amigo and Roddy Brett, eds., *El movimiento maya en la década después de la paz (1997–2007)* (Guatemala, 2010), 3–54, 4 (citation).

12. In full and in Spanish: "Un mundo sin barreras / Un mundo sin odio / Un mundo!! / Más humano / Un mundo sin conflictos / Un mundo inteligente / Un mundo!! / En libertad." Sobrevivencia, "La Juventud," uploaded to YouTube as "grupo-sobrevivencia la juventud letras.wmv" [sic] by c4jol4boy, March 12, 2010, with the tagline, reproduced as written, "este es mayan pride 100% 4 life," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaRHRnKw7Xg>. For more Sobrevivencia songs, see Hermenegildo Pérez Feliciano, "Letras y acordes de canciones emblemáticas de Sobrevivencia: Grupo rock indígena de Huehuetenango," (Guatemala, n.d.), available on <https://edoc.site/letras-y-acordes-sobrevivencia-pdf-free.html>.

13. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Hoboken, NJ, 1992).

14. See Stig Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* (London, 2013).

15. Lefebvre's "spaces of representation" correspond to what Edward Soja calls "thirdspace"; see Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Hoboken, NJ, 1996).

16. Its alternative mappings are, I hope, novel contributions of this analysis to the scholarly literature. An important suggestion of this piece is that creative cultural expressions (like Sobrevivencia) cannot be understood separately from destructive ones (like gangs). It also suggests that that small, agrarian countries like Guatemala need to be included in studies of global urbanization, that "urban" and "rural" cultures (youth or otherwise) should not be relegated to separate analytical realms—a particularly tempting binary in countries like Guatemala with a large indigenous population. It should also be noted that

though not included in this narrative for reasons of space, youth church groups, sports teams, networks of drug-runners, and imaginary communities of “*cholos*” (thugs, loosely), *fresas* (yuppies), and many other groups all formed part of the fabric of la KY. See my forthcoming book, *Agrotropolis*.

17. Sangre Humana, “Destino del poder,” 1983, uploaded to YouTube by Suchitan08, April 27, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQio7ZgAVoQ>.

18. Elizabeth Burgos, *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia* (Cuba, 1983).

19. The report added that “the one young man who said that he wanted to be a farmer [‘*agricultor*’] was immediately interrupted by a chorus of peers: ‘No, an agronomist!’ they chimed in.” USAID, “Legacies of Exclusion: Social Conflict and Violence in Communities and Homes in Guatemala’s Western Highlands,” Guatemala Conflict Vulnerability Assessment, Final Report, Public Version (October 2015), prepared by Tani Adams, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/Guatemala_Conflict_Vulnerability_Assessment.pdf, 10.

20. A contemporary analysis is found in Comisión Nacional de Reconciliación [CNR], Comisión de Grupos Étnicos, Informe Final, Diálogo Nacional, 25 de mayo 1989–junio 1990, CIRMA-AH-037, cartapacio 8, doc. 82, 15. CIRMA is the Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica, in Antigua, Guatemala. See also Carlota McAllister and Diane M. Nelson, eds., *War by Other Means: Aftermath in Post-genocide Guatemala* (Durham, NC, 2013). In particular, the chapters by Paul Kobrak and Matilde González-Izás give ground-level examples of the persistence of the PACs and other militaristic structures in the conflict-ridden countryside. An excellent, ground-level description of the military in the Kaqchikel towns of Patzún and Tecpán is found in Edward F. Fischer, *Cultural Logics and Global Economies: Maya Identity in Thought and Practice* (Austin, TX, 2001), 57–61. On the IIC and how its structures, though modified, were embedded in the state that emerged from Guatemala’s civil war, see J. T. Way, *The Mayan in the Mall: Globalization, Development, and the Making of Modern Guatemala* (Durham, NC, 2012), 124–51.

21. Elizabeth Oglesby, for example, details how the World Bank, seeking “‘strategic development alliances’” with the private sector, supported a sugar-industry foundation representing elite interests. Elizabeth Oglesby, “Corporate Citizenship? Elites, Labor, and the Geographies of Work in Guatemala,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22, no. 4 (2004): 553–72.

22. Mario Cuevas, Sigfrido Lee, and Bismarck Pineda, “Industrial Policy in Guatemala: A Case of Policy Inertia under Changing Paradigms,” IDB Working Paper Series, no. IDB-WP-169 (Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, November 2010), i (citations), and *passim*.

23. The album was released on the DIDECA label in 1987. Alux Nahual, “Alto al fuego original,” music video, YouTube, Canal AluxNahualTV, dated 1988, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4maslp05zw4>. Versions of this popular song abound on YouTube. See the 2010 concert footage in “Como un duende—Alux Nahual sinfónico,” uploaded by AluxNahualTV, May 4, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4uYa-1ovTc>.

24. Alux Nahual, whose name is a K’iche’ phrase meaning “spirit of the elf (or goblin),” was one of the few survivors of an earlier *rock chapín* genre that had been nearly wiped out by oppression in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The band started in a Guatemala City high school in 1977, took its name in 1979, and released its first album in 1981. Their songs generally avoided politics, but when they did engage, they expressed disdain for the left and the right alike. The song “Hombres de maíz” (Men of Maize), for example, has the lyric, “no me importa el gobierno ni los revolucionarios” (I don’t care about the

government or the revolutionaries). Band member Paulo Alvarado writes that, “I don’t have any qualms about admitting that we were insufficiently class-conscious to leverage our position as musicians into *líderes de opinión*. But at the same time, I believe that it is fair to stress that while none of us pretended to possess an acute social awareness, which, in fact, we did not have, it is also fair to say that Alux Nahual’s music had very little in common with disposable pop songs and attitudes either.” Paulo Alvarado, “Guatemala’s Alux Nahual: A Non-‘Latin American’ Latin American Rock Group?” in Deborah Pacini Hernandez, Héctor Fernández L’Hoeste, and Eric Zolov, eds., *Rockin’ Las Américas: The Global Politics of Rock in Latin/o America* (Pittsburgh, PA, 2004), 220–40, quote from page 230. On Guatemalan rock from the 1950s forward, see Mario Efraín Castañeda Maldonado, “Historia del rock en Guatemala: La música rock como expresión social en la ciudad de Guatemala entre 1960 a 1976,” (undergraduate thesis, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, Escuela de Historia, 2008), <http://www.albedrio.org/html/documentos/tesishistoriadelrockenguatemala.pdf>; and Jorge R. Sierra Marroquín, “La música en Guatemala desde la contrarrevolución,” in Virgilio Álvarez Aragón, Carlos Figuero Ibarra, Arturo Taracena Arriola, Sergio Tischler Visquerra, and Edmundo Urrutia García, eds., *Guatemala: Historia Reciente (1954–1996)*, vol. 5, *Cultura y arte en un país en conflicto* (Guatemala, 2012), 243–352.

25. This history, along with its precedents from the 1920s to the 1940s, is thoroughly treated in Way, *The Mayan in the Mall*. The IDB traces its own history of PDPs—Productive Development Policies—from the 1960s forward in Cuevas et al., “Industrial Policy in Guatemala.”

26. In few words, Social Investment Funds (SIFs) facilitated development projects by bypassing government ministries and providing public money to coordinate the efforts and funds of NGOs, municipalities, communities (who were often forced to contribute free manual labor), international cooperation agencies, and private capital. The World Bank first created this mechanism as a short-term palliative in Bolivia in the mid-1980s, when neoliberal shock therapy immiserated huge sectors of the population virtually overnight. Guatemala’s SIFs aided in the process of slowly and partially privatizing the structures of the IIC. A sample of social investment funds in Guatemala in the 1990s includes the FIS (Social Investment Fund), FONAPAZ (National Fund for Peace), the FDRC (Regional Fund for Community Development), and FODIGUA (Guatemalan Indigenous Development Fund). Philip J. Glaessner, Kye Woo Lee, Anna Maria Sant’Anna, and Jean-Jacques de St. Antoine, *Poverty Alleviation and Social Investment Funds: The Latin American Experience* (Washington, DC: World Bank, September 1994); Pablo Ibarra, Miguel Sarzosa and Yuri Soares, “The Welfare Impacts of Local Investment Projects: Evidence from the Guatemala FIS,” (Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank Office of Evaluation and Oversight Working Paper OVE/WP-02/08, March 2008); World Bank, “Social Investment in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras: Paper prepared for the Technical Consultation on Poverty Alleviation, Basic Social Services and Social Investment Funds, Paris, June 29 and 30, 1990” (Document of the World Bank for Official Use Only: Country Dept. II, Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office, June 1990), housed in CIRMA-AH-019/S96/09-01-06 and available online: <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/abs/10.1596/0-8213-3025-X>.

27. Inter-American Development Bank, Office of Evaluation and Oversight (OVE), “Country Program Evaluation Guatemala, 1993-2003” (IDB: Washington, DC, December 10, 2004), Annex 5, 1.

28. Guerra-Borges writes that instead of selling bonds to the central bank at two percent, the government sold them to private institutions and investors at eight percent (a move which the author says in part necessitated the state’s selling off of its productive resources

in 1998). Alfredo Guerra-Borges, *Guatemala: 60 años de historia económica (1944–2004)* (Guatemala, 2006), 193 (citation), 203, 207.

29. One of the best books on the topic relates the “desire” of Maya farmers to earn a better living to the “desire” of consumers in the United States to have fresh broccoli all year long and also details urbanization in Tecpán, Chimaltenango. See Edward F. Fischer and Peter Benson, *Broccoli and Desire: Global Connections and Maya Struggles in Postwar Guatemala* (Stanford, 2006). On the effects of the growing US market for grapes on Chilean workers, see Heidi Tinsman, *Buying into the Regime: Grapes and Consumption in Cold War Chile and the United States* (Durham, NC, 2014).

30. Some of Richard Hough et al., “Land and Labor in Guatemala: An Assessment,” unpublished report (Washington: AID and Development Associates, 1982); resource identifier oclc-182987662; permanent link <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UJF00080847/00001>; accessed 13 September 2013, 88; Joachim von Braun, David Hotchkiss, and Martin D. C. Immink, “Nontraditional Export Crops in Guatemala: Effects on Production, Consumption, and Nutrition,” research report (Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute [IFPRI], 1989), 44. The company started in 1970 with USAID seed-money was the Latin American Agribusiness Development Corporation (LAAD); by 2016 it was operating around Latin America. On its way to becoming a billion-dollar enterprise, its shareholders included J. P. Morgan, Monsanto, Cargill, Dole Food, Bank of America, and others. In 1971, LAAD used foreign assistance funds to found its Guatemalan subsidiary, ALCOSA (Alimentos Congelados, S.A.), later acquired by US-based Hanover Foods. See the LAAD website, <http://www.laadsa.com/>. On the military’s agricultural and food-for-work programs, see Way, *The Mayan in the Mall*, 124–51.

31. I put “lower middle class” in scare quotes to emphasize its relational nature and its ongoing poverty. IFPRI, “Nontraditional Export Crops in Guatemala.” For more information on NTAs, see Fischer, *Cultural Logics and Global Economies*; Fischer and Benson, *Broccoli and Desire*; and David Carey, Jr., “Guatemala’s Green Revolution: Synthetic Fertilizer, Public Health, and Economic Autonomy in the Mayan Highlands,” *Agricultural History* 83, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 283–322. The military’s programs and institutions, including the Agricultural Science and Technology Institute (ICTA) and the National Agricultural Development Bank (BANDESA), among others, are covered in Way, *The Mayan in the Mall*, 126–28, 143.

32. “El Norte” was written by Ricardo Andrade in the mid-1990s when he was with a band called Stress. He rereleased it later with his band Los Últimos Adictos on the 2001 album *Sobredosis*. “Ricardo Andrade—El Norte (con Stress),” uploaded by Marvin Alvarado to YouTube September 1, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wwg1m_o2Zr0.

33. See Liliana R. Goldin, *Global Maya: Work and Ideology in Rural Guatemala* (Tucson, AZ, 2009), and Kedron Thomas, *Regulating Style: Intellectual Property Law and the Business of Fashion in Guatemala* (Berkeley, CA, 2016).

34. Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas CONGCOOP, “El impacto de las migraciones de guatemaltecos al exterior, reflexiones y datos iniciales: Memoria de un taller,” (Mixco, Guatemala: 1997), CEDFOG HF/304.82/I4/003070, 13. CEDFOG is the Centro de Estudios y Documentación de la Frontera Occidental de Guatemala in Huehuetenango.

35. The brochure also held that amateur architects cared little for academic “distinctions of private-public, individual-collective, tradition and modernity, refined and popular, urban and rural.” Centro Cultural de España en Guatemala, “Arquitectura de remesas: Sueños de retorno, signos de éxito,” flyer for exhibition, June 23–August 21, 2011, http://www.ccemx.org/descargas/files/arquitectura_remasas_folleto_2011.pdf, 12. See also the blog “Arquitectura de remesas,” 2010, <http://arquitecturadelasremesas.blogspot.com/>.

36. Mike Davis, *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City*, updated ed. (London, 2001). For related commentary on US urban space and migration, see the essays in Deepak Narang Sawhney, ed., *Unmasking L.A.: Third Worlds and the City* (New York, 2002).

37. *El Regional*, IV época, año 7, no. 260 (August 1–7, 1997), “Minimercado La Democracia,” advertising insert, 1–5.

38. *El Regional*, IV época, año 8, no. 295 (April 24–30, 1998), *Sección El Regional de Huehue*, no. 61, 2. Huehuetenango’s *Centro Comercial El Triángulo* was constructed between 1996 and 1998. *El Regional*, IV época, año 8, no. 321 (October 23–29, 1998), *Sección El Regional de Xela*, no. 87, 13–15.

39. *Controversia: Revista Huehueteca* (Huehuetenango, Guatemala), año I, no. 5 (December 1997), 28. In fact, signs of a new mode of urbanization had been apparent in Huehuetenango for years. A reporter investigating a cholera outbreak in 1992 documented life in shantytowns with no running water, open sewers, and packs of feral dogs. *El Regional*, año 2, no. 24 (3^a Semana June 1992), 14.

40. *Ye’ Qatanum: El Aguacateco* (Aguacatán, Huehuetenango, Guatemala), regional newspaper, housed in CEDFOG, año I, no. 1 (January–February 1998), 1–4; año I, no. 2 (March–April 1998), 4, año I, no. 3 (June 1998), 3, 4, 14. Much of the urbanization in Aguacatán had been and was being paid for by migrants making a living by processing chickens at the Case Farms plant in Morganton, North Carolina. Their activism over the first six years of the 1990s won them both a union and a central role in Leon Fink’s fine-grained labor history, *The Maya of Morganton*. Fink’s work details how Maya workers overcame the fierce regional rivalries and feuds that, like language barriers and a history of civil war, separated them back at home in Guatemala. Leon Fink, *The Maya of Morganton: Work and Community in the Nuevo New South* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003).

41. Thomas, *Regulating Style*.

42. Swati Chattopadhyay discusses similar dynamics, and their cultural dimensions, in *Unlearning the City: Infrastructure in a New Optical Field* (Minneapolis, MN, 2012).

43. Susana Navarro García, Pau Pérez-Sales, and Alberto Fernández-Liria, “Exhumation Processes in Fourteen Countries in Latin America,” *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology* 2, no. 2 (Fall 2010), 48–83, 50; “Acuerdo sobre identidad y derechos de los pueblos indígenas,” (Mexico, D.F.: Gobierno de Guatemala y URNG, March 31, 1995), <http://www.guatemalaun.org/bin/documents/Acuerdo%20Pueblos%20Ind%C3%ADgenas.pdf>. The individual Accords were negotiated over a period of years; see Suzanne Jonas, *Of Centaurs and Doves: Guatemala’s Peace Process* (Boulder, CO, 2000).

44. The referendum would have mandated the use of Mayan languages in the justice, health, and education systems; indigenous issues were one of four areas addressed. Virgilio Álvarez Aragón et al., eds., *Guatemala: Historia Reciente (1954–1996)*, vol. 3, *Pueblos indígenas, actores políticos* (Guatemala, 2012), 138. An abridged, English-language version of the UN Commission’s report is available: Daniel Rothenberg, ed., *Memory of Silence: The Guatemalan Truth Commission Report* (London, 2012). The impact of the truth commission findings is explored in Diane M. Nelson, *Reckoning: The Ends of War in Guatemala* (Durham, NC, 2009).

45. Some Maya leftists felt that the ladino-led guerrillas had drawn them into a conflict and then failed to defend them against slaughter, and many highlanders described themselves as “duped.” A reading of “duping” narratives is found in Nelson, *Reckoning*.

46. Movimiento Indio de Guatemala, “Guatemala: De la república burguesa centralista a la república popular federal,” typewritten manifesto, August 1983, CIRMA-AH-037,

cartapacio 12, doc. 59, (see p.2–3 on *chapín* identity). Contesting replies highlighting the diversity of viewpoints, and relationships armed revolution, are found in Liga de Resistencia Popular Awesh [LRP-Awesh], “Los nuevos movimientos indios,” typewritten document, Guatemala, n.d. [c. 1985–1986], CIRMA-AH-003, Caja No 09, Serie 3, doc. 88; and Movimiento Indio, Nacionalista y Revolucionario, typewritten manifesto, Mayalán, Guatemala, April 1985, CIRMA-AH-003, Caja No 09, Serie 3, doc. 87, 1.

47. This is obviously a very brief summary. See Demetrio Waqi Q’anil Cojtí, *Ri K’ak’a’ Saqamaq’ pa Iximileu: La difícil transición al estado multinacional (el caso del estado monoétnico de Guatemala)* (Guatemala, 2005); Betsy Konefal, *For Every Indio Who Falls: A History of Maya Activism in Guatemala, 1960–1990* (Albuquerque, NM, 2010); Kay Warren, *Indigenous Movements and their Critics: Pan-Mayan Activism in Guatemala* (Princeton, NJ, 1988); and Deborah J. Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge* (Cambridge, 2004). On social movement webs, see the groundbreaking work by Alison Bruey, *Bread, Justice, and Liberty: Grassroots Activism and Human Rights in Pinochet’s Chile* (Madison, WI, 2018). The social movements sprang to life in the mid- to late 1980s, as the regrouped guerrillas were unleashing new offensives to try and win the war. The guerrillas worried that their strategy was being compromised by too much disorganized mass protest. Perhaps the greatest example of popular activism came in 1987, when huge public-sector strikes forced the government to legalize sixteen unions, concede pay raises and other benefits, and to promise, in an early battle over neoliberal measures, not to privatize INDE, the National Electrification Institute (the electric company). Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca [URNG], “Panorama básico sobre la situación militar actual en Guatemala desde 1986 a 1989,” typewritten communiqué, n.d. [c. late 1989–early 1990], CIRMA AH-037, cartapacio 1, doc. 36; URNG, “Hechos y políticas en Guatemala, abril – junio 1987,” CIRMA-AH-037, cartapacio 2, doc. 72, 49–50.

48. It should be noted that not all indigenous citizens accepted the use of the term “Maya.” See Walter E. Little, “Outside of Social Movements: Dilemmas of Indigenous Handicrafts Vendors in Guatemala,” *American Ethnologist* 31, no. 1 (February 2004): 43–59. A fine-grained history of the Maya elite is found in Greg Grandin, *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation* (Durham, NC, 2000).

49. Maya leaders also revitalized (matured-and-transformed) the parallel, unofficial “indigenous mayoralty,” or *alcaldía indígena*, that filled communal cultural functions and that had been created early in the colonial period as mechanism of indirect rule. Coordinación Maya Majawil Q’ij (El Nuevo Amanecer), boletín no. 1, leaflet, September 17, 1991, CIRMA-AH-037, cartapacio 12, doc. 74; Coordinación Maya Majawil Q’ij (El Nuevo Amanecer), “Vida, resistencia y futuro,” booklet, October 12, 1992, CIRMA-AH-037, cartapacio 12, doc. 72, 8, 15 Coordinación Maya Majawil Q’ij, “Que es Majawil Q’ij,” booklet, n.d. [early 1993], CIRMA-AH-037, cartapacio 12, doc. 69.

50. A move toward the decentralization of the government (and thus to rising municipal autonomy) was underway; it accelerated with new legislation in 2002. Through the late 1990s, the World Bank and the IDB joined the NGOs and international cooperation agencies in working on municipal issues; they were particularly involved in streamlining municipal loans and fiscal management and in fomenting a healthy competitive bidding system for private sector contracts. IDB, October 5, 1999, Municipal Development Program Loan Proposal, Project Nos. 1217/OC-GU; GU0134, <http://idbdocs.IDB.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=452338>; DB, June 6, 2006, Guatemala: Public Financial Management Reform Program Loan Proposal, Project Nos. 1747/OC-GU; GU-L1005, <http://idbdocs.IDB.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=766643>. See also Bastos, ed., *Multiculturalismo y futuro*; J. T. Way, “The Movement, the Mine and the

Lake: New Forms of Maya Activism in Neoliberal Guatemala,” *Humanities* 5, no. 56 (2016), doi:10.3390/h5030056.

51. Stener Ekern, “The Production of Autonomy: Leadership and Community in Mayan Guatemala,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 43, no. 1 (February 2011): 93–119, citation 115.

52. “Fundación Guillermo Toriello (FGT): Plan Estratégico 1999–2001,” December 1998, CIRMA-AH-037, cartapacio 2, doc. 17.

53. Mario Sosa, “De la incompetencia y los retos de la izquierda en Guatemala,” *Centro de Medios Independientes* (Guatemala), July 17, 2015, <https://cmiguate.org/de-la-incompetencia-y-los-retos-de-la-izquierda-en-guatemala/>.

54. Santiago Santa Cruz Mendoza, *Insurgentes: Guatemala, la paz arrancada* (Mexico and Chile, 2006 [orig. 2004]), 346–49.

55. URNG, “El proceso de negociación, situación y perspectivas,” Declaración de la Comandancia General de la URNG, October 9, 1991, CIRMA-AH-037, cartapacio 8, doc. 61. The preliminary agreement in 1992 to repatriate the refugees in Mexico—a steady source of guerrilla fighters—was a final blow to the left’s recruitment efforts.

56. Santa Cruz Mendoza, *Insurgentes*, 213.

57. Santa Cruz Mendoza, *Insurgentes*, 308–11, 316. Naming conventions changed not just in the guerrilla population but throughout Guatemalan society in this time period. English names (e.g., Yennifer, Nancy, Shirley, Fredy, Edi, and Bryan) became increasingly popular. So too did names related to the historic conversion of nearly half the population from Roman Catholicism to Evangelical Protestantism; Adonay, for example, is a common boy’s name from the time period. On Evangelicals, see Virginia Garrard, *Terror in the Land of the Holy Spirit: Guatemala under General Efraín Ríos Montt*, reprint ed. (Oxford, 2011); Virginia Garrard, *Protestantism in Guatemala: Living in the New Jerusalem* (Austin, TX, 1998); and Kevin Lewis O’Neill, *City of God: Christian Citizenship in Postwar Guatemala* (Berkeley, CA, 2009).

58. Highlanders had never lived in a bubble and had been exposed to rock-and-roll and foreign media for decades. Besides listening to contemporary music ranging from rock to Mexican *ranchera*, highland Maya also made it; they formed marimba orchestras and also embraced “*música tropical*” styles that were popular in the mid- to late twentieth century. As such, youth’s adoption of “foreign ways” is another example of the dialectic of maturation-and-transformation, as the infrastructure development and media advancements of the day caused wholesale change in hybridizing culture. See Sierra Marroquín, “La música en Guatemala desde la contrarevolución,” 317–19.

59. Emphasis added. *El Regional* (Jacaltenango, Huehuetango, Guatemala: Comunicar S.A.), no. 1 (April 1991), 4–5.

60. *El Regional*, Edición Especial (December 29, 1996), 1.

61. The Afro-Caribbean Garífuna people were also represented. Byron Barrera Ortiz, *Portillo: La democracia en el espejo* (Guatemala, 2014), 49. While the 2001 video was no longer available at the time of this writing, Maya versions of the Himno Nacional have had a long life online. An excellent example is Televisiete, “Himno Nacional de Guatemala—Varias lenguas—Buenos días nuestro mundo,” video from the morning show “Buenos días nuestro mundo” uploaded to YouTube by Teberodx7 Videos, September 20, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36TXSh7UXkl>.

62. See the video on “Hablemos de paz—Fernando Scheel, Anneliese Magermans,” uploaded to YouTube by fasmusic, January 17, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

v=Vhv1WxpTsVs. A full list of Maya musicians with whom Scheel has worked, with videos, is available on Melodlist, “Playist of Ruk’uz qana’ojil (Esencia de nuestra sabiduría),” <http://www.melodlist.com/index.php?a=search&q=Ruk%27ux%20qana%27ojil%20%28Esencia%20de%20nuestra%20sabiduri%CC%81a%29>.

63. W. George Lovell, *A Beauty That Hurts: Life and Death in Guatemala*, 2nd rev. ed. (Austin, TX, 2010). This work traces colonial structures of inequality through the turbulent twentieth century and demonstrates how the weak rule of law under postwar civilian governments has resulted in their tragic persistence in an age of spreading crime.

64. Rock Republik, post by “Gerardo Perez” in blog topic “Música en Guatemala—Rock en la guerra interna de Guatemala,” April 19, 2011, <http://rockrepublik.net/topic/11988/>.

65. MINUGUA, “Los linchamientos: un flagelo contra la dignidad humana,” Misión de Verificación de las Naciones Unidas en Guatemala, December 2000, accessed on Wikisource, https://es.wikisource.org/wiki/Los_linchamientos:_un_flagelo_contra_la_dignidad_humana.

66. *El Regional*, IV época, año 6, no. 240 (March 8–14, 1997), 10.

67. High-school programs were still largely unavailable in the late 1990s except in the very largest cabeceras but privately owned junior-high (*básicos*) programs were beginning to spread.

68. While no statistics are available, my own field work indicates that mixed-language marriages, as well as unions between poor ladinos and Maya, became more common in the provinces in the 1990s. This “togetherness” was accompanied by conflict, however. Residents of medium-sized cabeceras (such as Sololá and its environs, for readers familiar with the nation) routinely speak of “outsiders” as a source of new problems.

69. See, for example, María Eugenia Villarreal and Carlos Peralta Chapetón, *Menores trabajadores en labores de alto riesgo*, tomo II, *Sectores productivos de la construcción y cohertería* (Guatemala: PAMI, January 1996), CIRMA AH-054/C5/104, 13–14, 18–20, 37–43. PAMI stands for *Programa de atención, movilización e incidencia por la niñez y la adolescencia*—Program for Attention, Mobilization, and Activism for Youth and Adolescents.

70. “Reflexiones y propuestas iniciales para un plan de seguridad ciudadana en el departamento de Huehuetenango,” unattributed draft report, n.d. [local MINUGUA office?—c. early 1997], CEDFOG HA/363/R4/005615, 1–5, 10–12. On securitization around Guatemala, see McAllister and Nelson, *War by Other Means*; Guatemala City is covered in Kevin Lewis O’Neill and Kedron Thomas, eds., *Securing the City: Neoliberalism, Space, and Insecurity in Postwar Guatemala* (Durham, NC, 2011).

71. Here I deploy, in a slightly different frame, the argument in Enrique Dussel, *Twenty Theses on Politics*, trans. George Ciccariello (Durham, NC, 2008).

72. Gerardo Guinea Diez, *Gramática de un tiempo congelado: Ensayos y obra periodística (1994–2007)* (Guatemala, 2008), 46–47; the January 2000 essay cited was entitled “SalDOS del siglo” (Balances of the Century). See also the analysis of culture as a “direct productive force” in Jesús Martín-Barbero, “From Latin America: Diversity, Globalization, and Convergence,” *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 8, no. 1 (2011), 43, and Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall, 3rd ed. (Berkeley, CA, 2011).

73. An earlier modality of agro-urban space, the capital city was the product of decades of rural-to-urban migration; it had filled with shantytowns, and absorbed country towns around it as it grew. See Bryan R. Roberts, *Cities of Peasants: The Political Economy of Urbanization in the Third World*, reprint ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA, 1979); Way, *The Mayan in the Mall*.

74. Maldonado, "Historia del Rock en Guatemala."

75. Manuela Camus, *La colonia Primero de Julio y la "clase media emergente"* (Guatemala, 2005), 206–7 (quotation), 209–11. Mass media played a role in this process, especially for the lucky few who could afford a satellite dish (and later in the decade, cable) to be able to enjoy MTV's arrival in the 1980s. Jorge R. Sierra Marroquín, "La música en Guatemala desde la contrarevolución," in Virgilio Alvarez Aragón, Carlos Figuero Ibarra, Arturo Taracena Arriola, Sergio Tischler Visquerra, and Edmundo Urrutia García, eds., *Guatemala: Historia Reciente (1954–1996)*, vol. 5, *Cultura y arte en un país en conflicto* (Guatemala, 2012), 295. See also O'Neill, *City of God*.

76. Deborah Levenson, *Adiós Niño: The Gangs of Guatemala City and the Politics of Death* (Durham, NC, 2013).

77. Gabriela Escobar Urrutia, "Enfrentamientos y violencias juveniles en la Ciudad de Guatemala (1985–1993)," (Undergraduate theses, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, Escuela de Historia, Área de Antropología, 2005).

78. Jorge Ramón González Ponciano, "The Shumo Challenge: White Class Privilege and the Post-Race, Post-Genocide Alliances of Cosmopolitanism from Below," in MacAllister and Nelson, *War by Other Means*, 307–29.

79. Fueled by the proliferation of street children and the spike in transnational adoptions, stories of "missing bodies" filled the press. In mid-1987, the leading guerrilla organization added its voice to a growing wave of terror about *robachicos* (child-robbers) and organ traffic. The clandestine rings that had allegedly been selling babies abroad since 1982, the guerrillas held, could not possibly function without the participation of high-ranking military officers. By 1988, the clamor over this topic had gotten so loud that the US Consul in Guatemala promised to personally investigate, even as the European Parliament condemned Guatemala for trafficking in children and bodily organs. URNG, "Hechos y políticas en Guatemala, abril–junio 1987," CIRMA-AH-037, cartapacio 2, doc. 72, 87; *Prensa Libre* (Guatemala), March 2, 1988, 17; November 10, 1988, 4. On transnational adoption, see Laura Briggs, *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption* (Durham, NC, 2012).

80. Amnesty International, "Ill Treatment" reports on street children, January 27, 1992, UA/30–92, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr34/005/1992/en/> and October 1, 1992, UA/306–92, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr34/040/1992/en/>; *Prensa Libre*, February 18, 1991, 6; Camus, *La colonia Primero de Julio*, 211–12, 211 fn. 13; Escobar Urrutia, "Enfrentamientos y violencias," 66–73.

81. An excellent example of how the military's IIC (Inter-Institutional Coordination) morphed into new forms, this organization was called SIPROCI, the Sistema de Protección Ciudadana (System of Citizen Protection). Jennifer Schirmer writes that this initiative of the Presidential General Staff "integrated 26,000 agents" from multiple branches of the military and the state and was active from 1988 to 1991. Jennifer Schirmer, *The Guatemalan Military Project: A Violence Called Democracy* (Philadelphia, PA, 1999), 196–98. Escobar Urrutia, "Enfrentamientos y violencias," 52, 52n87; URNG, "La Comisión de Derechos Humanos de la ONU pide la abolición de las PAC el SIPROCI," Comunicado del Equipo Político Diplomático, March 5, 1992, CIRMA-AH-037, cartapacio 2, doc. 60, 1.

82. Escobar Urrutia, "Enfrentamientos y violencias."

83. *Alternativa: La historia del rock en Guatemala*, documentary film, dir. Vinizzio Rizzo, Rizzo Producciones and Jam Producciones (Guatemala, 2010), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFhrRe0kZsQ>; Néstor Galicia, "A 21 años de Libertad de Expresión ¡Ya!," *Prensa Libre*, December 17, 2015, online, <http://www.prensalibre.com/hemeroteca/a-21->

aos-de-libertad-de-expresion-ya. A first-hand narrative of the period can be found in Sergio Fernández “Taz,” *Si aquí se pudiera vivir: la historia de los Últimos Adictos*, 3rd ed. (Guatemala, 2013 [2004]).

84. *El Regional*, III época, año 3, no. 95 (December 10–16, 1993), 8.

85. *Ye' Qatanum: El Aguacateco*, año I, no. 1 (January–February 1998), 4.

86. *Alternativa*.

87. Fernández, *Si aquí se pudiera vivir*, 72. The posts on the Facebook page of Radiolatina Sacmixit (March 10, 2018) show the still-ongoing effects of militarism in the town: <https://www.facebook.com/Radiolatina-Sacmixit-758327647592866/>.

88. *El Regional*, IV época, año 8, no. 299 (May 22–28, 1998), 1.

89. Guatemalanists will note, correctly, that huge debates still roil about whether or not “chapín/chapina” remains a racist, ladino, exclusionary term. In my own field work on the *clase popular*, the “popular class” of ordinary, poor Guatemalans, I have encountered many Maya youth who unleash eloquent speeches (deeply inflected with Mayan Movement discourse) about the racism of the word “chapín” if specifically asked about it but who also use it regularly to refer to themselves and others in informal settings.

90. *El Regional*, IV época, año 7, no. 256 (July 4–10, 1997), 8.

91. *El Regional*, IV época, año 7, no. 261 (August 8–14, 1997), *Sección El Regional de Huehue* (insert), no. 27, 5, 10; IV época, año 7, no. 272 (October 24–30, 1997), *Sección El Regional de Huehue*, no. 38, 3; no. 43, 3.

92. Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Durham, NC, 1999); James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT, 1992). Martín-Barbero’s 2011 analysis of culture’s “direct productive force” in “From Latin America: Diversity, Globalization, and Convergence” is also applicable.

93. *El Regional*, IV época, año 7, no. 272 (October 24–30, 1997), *Sección El Regional de Huehue*, no. 38, 3; no. 43, 3.

94. In the Mam-speaking town of Todos Santos, writes the anthropologist Jennifer Burrell, who has studied, lived in, and visited the area for years, the first two gangs were the “Cholos” and the “Rockeros,” whose leaders hailed from middle- and upper-middle-class families; only kids with leisure time had the luxury of messing around in gangs. Jennifer Burrell, *Maya after War: Conflict, Power, and Politics in Guatemala* (Austin, 2013), 143–44; Burrell, “Intergenerational Conflict in the Postwar Era,” in Walter E. Little and Timothy J. Smith, eds., *Mayas in Postwar Guatemala: Harvest of Violence Revisited* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2009), 101.

95. The Pokemones, named after the Nintendo game, were active from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. The text is based on dozens of oral history interviews conducted in Panajachel and neighboring Sololá.

96. *Ye' Qatanum: El Aguacateco*, año I, no. 1 (January–February 1998), 1–2; año I, no. 2 (March–April 1998), 4. Guatemalan culture has long been noted for its black humor and satirical edge, but, in a related process of maturation and transformation to those explored in this piece, these took on new valences at the turn of the millennium.

97. The information on *convite* costumes comes from my personal experience. Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, CA, 2001), 114. The chapter is entitled “The Aesthetics of Vulgarity.”

98. Carlota McAllister, "Seeing Like an Indigenous Community: The World Bank's Agriculture for Development Report Read from the Perspective of Postwar Rural Guatemala," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 36 (2009): 645–51.

99. On multiculturalism, see Bastos, ed. *Multiculturalismo y futuro en Guatemala*, and Emilio del Valle Escalante, *Maya Nationalisms and Postcolonial Challenges in Guatemala* (Santa Fe, NM, 2009). On violence and conflictivity, see Manuela Camus, Santiago Bastos, and Julián López García, eds. *Dinosaurio reloaded: Violencias actuales en Guatemala* (Guatemala, 2015). A fine-grained reading of violence, the aftermath of war, and Maya cultural revival is found in Diane M. Nelson, *Who Counts? The Mathematics of Death and Life after Genocide* (Durham, NC, 2015). On changing government policies and projects regarding youth, see Deborah Levenson, et al., *Jóvenes en Guatemala: Imágenes, discursos y contextos* (Guatemala, 2013). The complexities of migration, and the means of financing it, are explored in David Stoll, *El Norte or Bust: How Migration Fever and Microcredit Produced a Financial Crash in a Latin American Town* (Lanham, MD, 2013).

100. Emily Calacci, *Street Archives and City Life: Popular Intellectuals in Postcolonial Tanzania* (Durham, NC, 2017). As street cultures matured, the NGOs and capital began to "glom on" to what youth were doing and try to appropriate, control, and/or make money off of it, strengthening it at the same time. Similar dynamics are seen in youth countercultures around the world. In the 1990s, for example, the leaders of postreunification Berlin co-opted electronic dance music in an attempt to rebrand the city as a neoliberal "cultural capital." Joe Perry, "Berlin Love Parade 1996 and the Techno Scene: Building (a) Cultural Capital," *German Studies Review* 42, no. 3 (2019, forthcoming).

101. Emma Chirix, *Ru rayb'äl ri qach'akul: Los deseos de nuestro cuerpo* (Guatemala, 2010); "Conferencia de prensa de Sara Curruchich presentado su sencillo 'Resistir,'" in Centro Cultural España, Guatemala City, uploaded by Rock Chapín to YouTube March 2, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUSRUBdP-VU>; Edgar Esquit, *Otros poderes, nuevos desafíos: Relaciones interétnicas en Tecpán y su etorno departamental* (Guatemala, 2008); Edgar Esquit, "Movilización política indígena en Comalapa en la era de la paz: Identidades, memorias y autodeterminación indígena en la localidad," in Bastos and Brett, eds., *El movimiento maya*, 233–65; José Antonio Móbil, "Evolución de la plástica y sus vínculos con la historia inmediata del país (1954–2000)," in Álvarez Aragón et al., eds., *Guatemala: Historia Reciente (1954–1996)*, vol. 5, *Cultura y arte en un país en conflicto*, 125–29.

102. *Sipakapa no se vende*, documentary film, Caracol Producciones, dir. Álvaro Revenga (Guatemala, 2005), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfHDgWnBC5s>; *El oro o la vida: Recolonización y resistencia en Centroamérica*, documentary film, Caracol Producciones (Guatemala, 2011), <http://www.caracolproducciones.net/en/documentales/2-uncategorised/15-el-oro-o-la-vida>. Sobrevivencia's music was also featured in a film promoting democracy: *El cuento de la democracia: el pueblo mam ante el circo electoral*, documentary-fictional (docu-ficción) film, Caracol Producciones with support from Asociación CEIBA (Guatemala, 2007), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Tpv6Ccyoc>. Beyond this, it came to play a major role in a community of memory among Maya immigrants in Los Angeles. See Alicia Ivonne Estrada, "Ka Tzij: The Maya Diasporic Voices from *Contacto Ancestral*," *Latino Studies* 11, no. 2 (2013): 208–27.

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