

GUATEMALA: A BABY FACTORY?

By

SARA J. TANKERSLEY

A Thesis Submitted to The Honors College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Bachelor's degree
With Honors in

Anthropology

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

May 2009

Approved by:

Dr. Laura Briggs
Associate Professor and Department Head, Women's Studies

Abstract

After spending a year in Antigua Guatemala learning the history, language and existence of ethnic/cultural conflicts, I became sensitive to the impact of the western world in a country smaller than the state of New York. A grassroots activist living in the country came to speak in our class about the different organizations within the country that need monetary and volunteer assistance. During her lecture, she brought up the problem of adoption within the country and how local communities are fighting to end international adoptions—especially between Guatemala and the United States. Little did I know that intercountry adoptions within this small country were common, yet un-monitored by the government. Not only had the system been abused by international lawyers, but many of the reasons for the corruption in what ideally should be an honorable social institution had a lot to do with the policies of my own country. If this was not enough of a shock to hear, the history of the country from the perspective of a Guatemalan was even more enlightening. All of this came together through my own personal interactions with foreign couples adopting Guatemalan children and sharing these stories with other people who were just as disturbed by this reality.

While on the plane heading back to the United States, climbing into the atmosphere high above the environmental wonder and culturally unique country of Guatemala, I overheard a very large Texan telling his newly adopted Guatemalan son, whom had been renamed Patrick: “say good bye to your country, you are headed toward a better life.” This comment was offensive to me, especially after learning about the colonial history of the country, the imperial nature of U.S. businesses and the CIA trained officers who commanded the civil war. It was obvious that this new adoptive parent had not done his Guatemalan homework, because one needs only scratch the surface to uncover the horrible truth.

Nancy Purdin, a travel agent for SAS airlines speaks of the realities of white skinned mothers with brown skinned babies who show up by the hundreds in the swanky hotels of downtown Guatemala City. In an interview with her on April 10, 2009, nearly one year after her experience, she discusses her experiences in a 4-star hotel in the tourist district of Guatemala City:

“I had a 9:30 am pickup time for a city tour and decided to go to breakfast at the hotel around 7:30 am. I was immediately struck by the number of 30 to 40-year-old couples who were at the hotel with babies or small children. The couples were all white, and I presume from the United States due to their accents. The babies and toddlers were all brown and looked to be Guatemalan. The couples did not appear to know each other but as they passed by another table, they would stop and have rather long conversations. I finally realized that what they had in common was that they were all adopting Guatemalan children. It was a bit creepy, as if I had just happened upon the “hotel where all the [U.S.] American adoptive parents go” as there were so many of them. During the rest of my trip, I came upon similar situations all over. In Antigua, I was entering a historical building and right behind me was a blonde-haired 30-something woman with

two children, one about 5 and another just a baby; I overheard her say to the older child that she was ‘showing him his heritage.’ Later, when I was the airport to leave, there were numerous families waiting to board the plane, all the same kind of age-group for the parents with one or more small Guatemalan children.”

Dozens of foreign couples carrying Guatemalan babies can be seen every day at the posh hotels in downtown Guatemala City. In fact, some establishments even have entire floors of rooms dedicated to adoptive couples, with specific facilities for families. This is a heart-warming scene until the truth about international adoptions is uncovered. The adoption process in Guatemala is laden with corruption, ranging from mothers being bribed in hospitals to sell their infants, to light-skinned children being snatched from their mother's arms in parks. This frightening reality that treats living, breathing infants as another commodity on the international market exists in large quantities today in Guatemala. However, as with any spiraling destructive disease, there is a cause and therefore a cure. Adopting parents in the United States need to understand the influence 20,000 US dollars per child has in an impoverished country. This influence creates a breeding ground for profiteers who manipulate corrupt systems to take children from their birthmothers and sell them to well-intentioned but unsuspecting couples desperate for children. Coming to terms with this reality means that prospective parents need to change their perception of the motives behind birth parents giving their child up for adoption. It is necessary to understand that this situation is not always a symptom of bad parenting, but rather of socio-economic inequalities caused by the spread of capitalism with neoliberal policies and a destructive civil war in which the United States was anything but innocent.

The backdoor imperial influence of the United States is revealed in the politics, economy and culture in Guatemala. The United States’ assumed supremacy regarding these issues is

realized in the relationship that the U.S. has maintained with the Guatemalan government for decades and filters down to take root in the minds of U.S. citizens. The long-standing political and economic paternal influence transcends the social understanding U.S. citizens have of Guatemalans, specifically in the realm of child adoptions. It begins with the fact that U.S. policy toward Central America during the Cold War was to "protect" Guatemalan citizens from the evil empire of the Soviet Union and economic aid policies for the Guatemalan army during the 1980s would "civilize" the security forces, as suggested by U.S. policy makers. Transversely, U.S. citizens believed that they had the ability to "save" children from the backward life they were born to. Rather than learning the truth of the role of the United States in the origins of poverty and corruption in Guatemala, U.S. citizens unknowingly perpetuate the vicious cycle of imperialist demands that shape Guatemala's reality.

After thirty-six years of a destructive civil war which tore the country apart morally, politically and economically, Guatemala today is fighting to pull itself out of poverty. Since the peace accords were signed in 1996, Guatemala has found itself at the center of a competitive international market where businesses now feel comfortable to open negotiations—adoptions not excluded. In the aftermath of war, money has filtered into the country and the doors have opened for the possibility to triumph over poverty through cut-throat capitalism, turning the battle for survival into a dirty game which devalues human life. Adoptions in significant numbers began in the early 1980s, during the worst violence of the civil war, and then ballooned in the mid-1990s, when lawyers realized the potential for profits and opened their own orphanages. Alan Zarembo, a respected journalist for the *Los Angeles Times*, states that “at an average fee of \$20,000 per adoption, the Guatemalan adoption industry brings in more than \$50 million a year, which is slightly less than the country’s growing textile-export industry”

(2002:27). It is common for people to think, “Isn’t it great that those children are going to have a better life” but they have no idea how the system is working and that it quickly became a business instead of a social service.

Casa Alianza, an organization that claims to focus on children’s rights, tells of the alarming story of Sandra Hernandez’s experience of losing her child to a baby broker. When Sandra’s infant Karla fell ill, she took her to the hospital where they discovered she was having lung problems and would need to have a procedure that Sandra could not afford. While at the hospital, Sandra was approached by Susana Duarte who provided her with a number of lawyers who could help. At a meeting with Mireya Gonzales and Susana Duarte, Sandra signed a number of blank papers after being told by Mrs. Gonzales that they were not necessary in order to admit Karla into a medical clinic where she would receive treatment. After Sandra was given a false identification card, Karla was taken by Susana with the assurance that she would be admitted to a medical clinic. Instead she was taken to a foster home where they obtained a falsified certification of Karla’s birth. Later, when Sandra wanted to see how the treatment was going, Mrs. Gonzales told her she could not see her because she had given up the rights to her daughter. Casa Alianza’s attorneys petitioned the court to prosecute Susana Duarte and Mireya de Gonzales for the crimes of child kidnapping and falsification of documents. November 11, 2005, the judge granted the petition and initiated prosecution. Bruce Harris points out that “North American couples think they’re helping kids; what they don’t know is that birth parents are brokenhearted because their babies have been stolen” (Scanlan 1994:36).

History

Adoptions between Guatemala and the United States became a popular practice in the 1980s, the same time that the Reagan administration made Central America a proving ground for Cold War anticommunist military intervention. The 1980s marked a time in which the Reagan administration pursued an aggressive policy of intervention in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, despite the fact that there was an outright ban on such activities by Congress. The Guatemalan civil war was the longest and deadliest in Central America, taking the lives of over 200,000 unarmed civilians, primarily indigenous people in the highlands. Interestingly, the most intense and brutal military repression in the long history of political violence occurred during a massive campaign in the 1980s which displaced over one million Indian peasants and destroyed their homes and gardens. Many of the villages and its inhabitants were selected as targets to demonstrate the lengths to which the military would go to take control of the area and combat anything perceived to be Communism. From the beginning of the war in 1960 until the signing of the peace accords in 1996, the U.S. Embassy recorded the massacres and violence that took place. Despite the massive human rights violations that were known and recorded by the US Embassy, Guatemala continued to receive economic assistance from the United States that totaled over \$60 million from 1979 through 1981 (Booth 2006:124). From 1977 through the mid-1980s, the United States officially cut off military aid to the Guatemalan regime because of human rights abuses. However, under the Reagan administration, economic support funds maintained U.S. training of the Guatemalan Special Forces and material aid was utilized under the classification of being “non-military.”

The aggressive U.S. internationalism throughout Central America preserved the U.S. military role in the region while economic interests were promoted through free-trade

agreements and neo-liberalism, which became the heart of globalization. State policies related to free trade turned U.S. citizen-consumers into participants, thus rallying their consent for intervention abroad and allowing the fluidity of money and people to move between borders. International adoption fit in with these policies, producing a renewed sense of American responsibility for those outside its borders. However, households in the United States hear little about the reality of genocidal campaigns that used brutal methods to terrorize the entire population because the military state that controls the social and political life was created with the help of the United States in the 1960s.

Militarization

Throughout Latin American history, violence has been used as a form of control over non-elite. The Iberian colonial legacy in Guatemala has left many of the indigenous peoples and poorer classes marginalized due to the unequal access to land and wealth. In a response to this marginalization, social organizations have attempted to find alternatives to the economic system that was imposed by the Iberian crown and continues to manifest and be developed by western powers. This world economic system promotes extreme wealth and gives off the sense of freedom through material gain. These groups that are searching for alternatives often get labeled as guerrillas regardless of their political affiliation. It is the controlling elites and the military that adamantly opposed resistance to the political system and the businesses that tend to be affiliated with a capitalist economic system.

Some indigenous populations began to collaborate in active military operations in order to fight for their own survival. This response was due to the government's lack of action toward

assisting poor communities after natural disasters or because of the increased military repression. One of the initial factors that lead to organization was the 1976 earthquake that left thousands of indigenous and poor people without any means for survival. Practically overnight they were forced by circumstance to assume political and social responsibilities and address the enormous needs generated by the catastrophe; due to the fact that they had few resources available to them, in addition to being cut off from their department capitals and/or Guatemala City. The communities began to individually elect new leaders with concrete job descriptions, virtually transforming themselves into local authorities that negotiated directly with international assistance agencies channeling relief.

The Guatemalan government used the army (many of whose officers had been trained at the School of Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia) and its counterinsurgency force to begin a systematic campaign of repression against the indigenous populations accused of working toward a communist coup. However, the army's perception of indigenous communities as natural allies of the guerrillas contributed to rampant human rights violations that demonstrated an overtly racist component of the civil war. The Report of the Commission for Historical Clarification published *Guatemala: Memory of Silence* in 1999 which outlined the components of a genocidal war and revealed the Guatemalan government's policy of genocide during the civil war. Article II of the document defined the crime of genocide in the terms: "Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a) Killing members of the group;
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

- e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group”¹

The Guatemalan civil war which lasted for thirty-six years was the longest and most gruesome war in all of Latin America. The influence of the CIA and their assistance in the strengthening of the Guatemalan military forces have been credited with causing the horrific events that began to take place after the overthrow of Colonel Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán in 1954. In 1944, General Jorge Ubico’s dictatorship was overthrown by the “October Revolutionaries,” a group of dissident military officers, students, and liberal professionals. This led to the election of a civilian president named Juan Jose Arevalo in 1945 who instituted social reforms that included land redistribution, a labor code, a Social Security Institute and women’s suffrage. In 1951 Colonel Jacobo Arbenz, a surviving military hero from the 1944 overthrow of Ubico, was elected president. He continued many of the social reforms implemented by Arevalo and allowed the Communist Guatemalan Labor Party access to politics by granting them legal status in 1952. Eventually, members of the Communist Labor Party had participants in key peasant organizations, labor unions, and some government positions. The existence of communist influence in Guatemala threatened U.S. economic interest due to the fact that “it was American companies that held a stranglehold over the country’s economy” (Gleijeses 1991:86). Arbenz’s implementation of land reform had a major affect on the land controlled and owned by United States.

The balance in the power of the military had changed since the election of Arbenz, yet the army’s position in the country was unaffected. The military had become more powerful than before because it had united and it also retained a monopoly on the country’s weapons. Despite

¹ Guatemala Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH). “Article II: Human rights violations, acts of violence and assignment of responsibility.” Guatemala: Memory of Silence (ONLINE). Maintained by Sience and Humand Rights Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Accessed online 25 April 2009 < <http://shr.aaas.org/guatemala/ceh/report/english/toc.html>>.

most of Guatemalan citizen's attachments to the original ideas of the 1944 uprising, private sector leaders and the elite-supported military viewed Arbenz's policies as a threat. In 1954 when the U.S. backed insurgence group led by Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas invaded the country from Honduras, the army refused to defend the Arbenz government.²

Although there was initial resentment of U.S. intervention among the Guatemalan officer corps in the late 1950s, their model of special warfare and pacification were taken directly from Vietnam and established in Guatemala during the civilian regime of President Mendez Montenegro (1966-1970). Government death squads inflicted massive repression throughout the country, primarily in the highland countryside. A brutal pacification program in Zacapa and Chiquimula directed by an estimated 1000 green Berets, took the lives of between 5000 and 10,000 civilians³. At the same time under the direction of a U.S. Army colonel and with \$5 million emergency USAID funding, the Guatemalan Army began to establish small civil action projects in the highlands entitled Operation Honesty, with the slogan "security and progress" to facilitate the pacification process and win over the population through social works.⁴

Efrain Rios Montt was a lay pastor in the evangelical protestant "Church of the Word," and became de facto President of Guatemala on March 23, 1982. In his inaugural address, he stated that his presidency was the result of the will of God. Interestingly, he considered the principal enemies of the system the revolutionary catholic priests and their catechists, and intended on countering them with the use of evangelicalism. He formed a three-member military junta that annulled the constitution, dissolved congress, suspended political parties and canceled the electoral law. After a few months, he dismissed the junta and assumed the de facto

² Gleijeses, Piero. *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991.

³ Schirmer, Jennifer. "Anatomy of the Counterinsurgency." *The Guatemala Military Project: A violence called democracy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998. p.36.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

title of “President of the Republic.” Montt’s assumption of Presidency was denounced by many political parties throughout the country. The government responded to this by creating Civilian Self-defense patrols (PACs) on April 1, 1982 under the National Plan for Security and Development, which were intended to defeat Guerrilla organizations and keep the population in check. Although the PACs were created in late 1981 under the presidency of Gen. Romeo Lucas, Montt had them legally established as a means of involving communities in the army’s anti-guerrilla offensive. In effect, the PACs were intended to seal off communities from potential guerrilla penetration as well as remove the guerrillas from areas where they had already established a presence, mainly because the army realized that the insurgency gained significant support from the civilian population.⁵ From the government’s perspective, the civil patrols were a cost-effective system for sentry duty because they were unpaid and they did not create a threat since they were poorly armed. They also became a source of forced labor supply for military communities that required infrastructure building as well as a means for redistributing troops to different areas.

Participation in the civil patrols was in theory voluntary, but in practice, many Guatemalans had no choice but to join, lest they be accused of guerrilla activity. For instance, Rios Montt implemented his “rifles and beans” campaign which asserted “if you are with us, we will feed you; if not, we will kill you” (Schirmer 1998:23). The PACs shattered community life because a military organization was forced onto the people and the implementation of rule by fear caused the civil patrols to use violence against their own people. The hierarchal military structure imposed new forms of authority, as well as a new set of rules and values based upon the possession of weapons and the use of force. Witness testimonies recorded by the Recovery of Historical Memory Project (REHMI) assert that the civil patrols murdered many people in their

⁵ REHMI. Guatemala Never Again! Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999., P:118.

own communities without prior indications that the victims were involved in guerrilla military operations.⁶ Although there are no official figures on the number of men who belonged to the civil patrols, REHMI states that by 1982-1983, they comprised approximately 900,000 peasants between the ages of fifteen to sixty years—roughly 80 percent of the male population in indigenous rural areas.

Military intelligence personnel were a huge factor in the violence that spread throughout the country because they permeated the social fabric, maintained their own hierarchies, had near autonomy of action and were deeply involved in the systematic violations of human rights. The hierarchy of the civil patrols followed a military model of patrol chiefs and then a platoon of patrollers, who sometimes reported directly to army commanders depending on the local conditions. In order to effectively organize the civil patrols, the army incorporated previously existing community networks or structures that facilitated the recruitment and control of the population. Military commissioners were often responsible for organizing the civil patrols and supervising their activities, this gave them power to intimidate and control that was not previously afforded to them—opening the doors to act with impunity. REHMI claims that “following periods of massacres and mass murders, the commissioners’ role was to maintain military control in communities by imposing their authority through the civil patrols, personal intimidation, and threats against social or political groups” (1999:120). Guatemalan intelligence was comprised of both military and police corps and had played a key role in directing military operations, massacres, extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, and torture.

Rios Montt’s brief presidency, which ended on August 8, 1983 when he was deposed by his own minister of defense General Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores, was the most violent period of the thirty-six year internal conflict resulting in about 200,000 deaths of mostly unarmed

⁶ Ibid., P:123.

indigenous civilians. Although leftist guerrillas and right-wing death squads also engaged in executions, forced disappearances, and torture of noncombatants, REHMI confirms that 90% of the time the perpetrators were members of the Armed Forces or the army-commissioned Civil Defense Patrols—all of which are detailed in the reports of the Historical Clarification Commission (CEH), the Archbishop's Office for Human Rights (ODHAG) and Recovery of the Historic Memory (REMHI). Bishop Juan Gerardi, along with REMHI, released *Guatemala Never Again!* which reported that 150,000 civilians had been killed, another 50,000 disappeared and more than 400 villages were erased from the landscape as homes were burned, crops destroyed and the inhabitants cruelly massacred. The victims, for the most part, were Mayan peasant farmers from poor and isolated villages throughout the western highlands.

Abandoned, Abducted, and Adopted

The Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese in Guatemala argues that the military attempted to “destroy the seed” of resistance within the country. This was accomplished through the elimination of children by any means possible—adoptions, death, and/or relocations. One of the testimonies (case 4017) that is documented in *Guatemala Never Again!* states that “The army’s plan was to get rid of the seeds, even if it was a little one- or two-year-old child, they are all bad seeds, so they say; this was the army’s plan; this is what I have seen” (1999:29). Another testimony, from an ex-patroller (case 1944) claimed that one of the soldiers who spoke Quiche told his sister that they “had to finish off all the men and all the male children in order to eliminate the guerrillas...[the children] because those wretches are going to come some day and screw us over” (1999:31). This sentiment of “get them before they get us” ravaged the

countryside and assisted with the shamelessness of the tortures and killings. A former soldier and intelligence officer shares with REHMI that when it was time to patrol, the commander told them: “okay guys, we’re going to an area where there are only guerrillas. Everyone is a Guerrilla there. Children there have killed soldiers, and supposedly pregnant women have just come and thrown a bomb and killed; they have killed soldiers. And so you all must distrust everyone. No one is a friend where we are going. So, they are all guerrillas and all of them must be killed” (1999:31). During the civil war, lies and propaganda were common amongst soldiers as a means of ensuring compliance. Violence during war periods is often used by political actors against civilians in order to shape their political behavior.

Children were not only put up for adoption as a means of separating them from families that were accused of guerrilla activity, but also because their entire family was massacred. Many children would flee because they were told to do so by their mothers or fathers when the army entered their villages, but then would have nowhere to go. They would often meet up with other children or families that were hiding. Many children were abandoned or given up for adoption because they were the result of rape by a soldier. One woman from Baja Verapaz (case 5281) claimed that “some of those responsible from Baja Verapaz raped the women, even though the women were carrying their children on their backs. They grabbed the children and threw them on the ground, and the men lined up to take their turn with the women. Some of those women became pregnant. The ones who became pregnant had their babies and went to give the children to the nuns. I went to register a child in Guatemala City since the Sister asked me to do it. This child was abandoned by the mother because he was from the patrollers; he was fifteen days old when the mother left him” (REHMI 1999:37).

Stathis N. Kalyvas translates from Jacques Semelin’s work when she states that there is a

difference between two aims of violence during civil war periods: extermination and compliance. She states that “Violence can be used by the ruling class to exterminate an entire group, rather than place it under control; however, when the finality of violence is not exhausted in the mass killing of a group of people, it becomes instrumental to the attainment of some other goal—namely the establishment of control through compliance” (2004:98). Many of the testimonies from survivors of the armed conflict include incidents of children being kidnapped or murdered and they were frequently killed or wounded during the attacks on the civilian population, particularly between 1980 and 1983. REHMI claims that this is a factor of many different circumstances, including the difficulty of fleeing, ignorance to the reality and its risks, and the inability to grasp the mechanisms of violence.⁷ Torture of children is a way of torturing their families which is a means of forcing people to collaborate and extract information about guerrilla movements or sympathizers.

Due to the fact that children are usually found with their parents, specifically their mothers, many of the murder cases against children often include the death of their mothers and brothers or sisters as well. In some instances recorded by REHMI, there are heinous accounts of fetuses being ripped from their wombs, illuminating the fact that the blood bath had no limits. An anonymous witness from Chimaltenango recalls when the army entered their hamlet: “The threw bombs, grenades...they approached through a ravine—that was when most children died—and they captured the pregnant women alive, sliced them open and removed the baby” (1999:30). An eye witness from Buena Vista in Huehuetenango states that “they took the baby out of the women; she was alive and they took out the child she was expecting, in front of her husband and her children. The woman died and her children died too; they killed the others, the only one who remained was the one who escaped” (1999:32). Post traumatic stress acts as

⁷ Ibid., P:29.

another form of terror and the memories that people have of the way children were killed exemplify the impact that fear had on individuals. For instance, a witness from Alta Verapaz (case 2052) claims: “I still dream; I still see it; because my heart is still afflicted by the persecution; because they have pointed their guns at us; because the patrol has gone after us, and this means that I am still deeply distressed by everything we have suffered. What do they do to the children? They cut them into pieces. I mean, they cut them up with machetes; they cut them into pieces” (1999:32). While another witness (case 1367) from Quiche stated that “they buried the ones that the army killed, they were decapitated with a tourniquet around the throat; they crumpled them up, they handled them like little balls. They were three year old children. We went to see, we saw them, three kids, they were hanging there without any head, there little dolls were behind them” (1999:33). Torture and killing is one way that they army destroyed the seed of potential guerrillas while the other was massive displacement of the population. The separation of families posed even greater risks for children.

The book *I, Rigoberta Menchu* also gives an interesting account of the tragedies of the armed conflict and the effects it had on children and their families (for the purpose of this paper I will not be including the debates about a true testimony). Whether they are her personal experiences or not, her story is powerful and walks the reader through the difficulties indigenous people face in Guatemala and the way in which they were targeted during the civil war. She discusses the death of her mother, father and brother as well as other members of the community. Her response to the massacres was that “we all must give our lives, I know—but not all together; let it be one at a time so that someone is left, even if it is only one of our family” (1984:185). She claims that the atrocities were unbearable and if the people did not have hatred for the government before, they surely did after the massacres. After discussing the fire at the Spanish

Embassy in which her father was a victim, she claims that “never in all [Guatemalan] history have the people been so militant, on every level” (1984:186). However, this militancy was met with resistance and increased violence, causing the people to feel even more powerless.

Many of the soldiers that have been identified as committing these heinous acts of murder and torture are not held accountable for their actions due to the hierarchy of the military structure that keeps them protected because they “were just following orders.” The commanding officers who should rightly be held accountable for these atrocious acts that were unleashed onto the population have been granted impunity by the government. The government has protected these individuals under the pretext that the human rights abuses were committed during wartime and therefore are not crimes they are accountable for. So, the point remains that these soldiers who committed unthinkable human rights abuses against the population are still loose in society.

The Recovery of Historical Memory project (REHMI) has sought justice for the people who were directly involved and lost family or friends, yet they have been met with resistance by the government. After Bishop Juan Gerardi of Quiche released *Guatemala Never Again!* On April 24, 1988, he was violently murdered on his property after being beaten with a concrete slab. Although human rights organizations and individuals have been met with resistance, truth and justice still continues to be fought for because the process of healing and national reconciliation cannot even be talked about until the truth of what happened during the civil war is brought to light and recognized by all.

The War's Aftermath

Individual and communal experiences with the armed conflict were widespread and had devastating effects. From 1978 to 1983, persecution in the form of military incursions, bombing raids, and massacres was particularly widespread in communities located in what the army viewed as “red areas,” which was primarily Ixcán, Alta and Baja Verapaz, the Ixil region, and the Central Highlands.⁸ Soldiers claimed that their purpose in the highlands was to search for Guerrillas, however, the military operations were used as a strategy of terror and successfully spread fear throughout the country. REHMI claims that “Human rights violations have [historically] been used as a strategy of social control in Guatemala... [and] terror has been the goal of counterinsurgency policies that utilize different means at different times” (1999:4). The “climate of terror” that swept through the country was characterized by extreme violence against communities and organized movements which left the people defenseless. Whether in the form of mass killings or the appearance of tortured corpses, the horror was so massive and so flagrant that it defied the imagination. REHMI points out that during this time there was no possibility of recourse to judicial or other civilian authorities capable of stopping the assaults on the population because these authorities had either been eliminated or were under military control. This created a space in which the military and the police behaved in an outrageously violent fashion, creating an atmosphere of constant danger that totally disrupted the daily life of many families.

The individual effects of fear went far beyond the acute reaction to the atmosphere of violence and had long lasting effects on the people who were involved. The Archbishops Office for Human Rights lists five long term effects of living in fear and outlines them in *Guatemala Never Again!* The first one is a blurred reality from living in such a threatening climate which can essentially eliminate boundaries between right and wrong. The second is the feeling of

⁸ REHMI. *Guatemala Never Again!* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999. P: 7.

powerlessness which diminishes the capacity to take control of one's life and creates a state of constant vulnerability. The third is the long term psychological effects from living in a state of constant alert. The fourth effect of fear on an individual is behavioral disorders that range from paralysis and panic attacks to alcoholism. The final effect is the health problems that are associated with chronic tension and in many of the testimonies that were compiled by the Recovery of Historical Memory Project; shock (*susto*) is portrayed as an illness that affects various organs, psychosomatic disorders, immunological dysfunctions, and pain. This is due primarily to the fact that within the Mayan culture, shock is perceived as an illness that occurs following a violent incident or when a person is in a vulnerable state and must be removed from the body with specific cures.⁹

As a means of combating the aftermath of the war and rebuilding communities, *Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental* (Guatemalan League of Mental Health), an organization that is committed to reuniting families that were victimized during the war, began to search for children that had disappeared during the armed conflict and reunite them with their families. They opened in 1999 along with *Todos Por el Reencuentro* (All for Reunion) and together have been responsible for investigating over 600 cases of children that were stolen from their families during the war and reuniting them with their parents living in Guatemala; sadly, many have been adopted out to parents in foreign countries under different names and are virtually invisible to the reunion process.¹⁰ For those who continued to live within the country, under a different name and identity, their reunion with their families allowed them to understand who they were and piece together the mysteries of the past.

⁹ Ibid., P:12.

¹⁰ Programa Todos Por El Reencuentro. Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental. 14 April 2009.
<[http:// ligatpr.org/](http://ligatpr.org/)>

The main concern of Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental is the psychological experience of individuals in the aftermath of the civil war. War has profound effects on the mind even without including the heinous behaviors of torture and child theft. In an attempt to create a space of trust and solidarity that allows community members to disclose their experiences, La Liga has recorded and published the individual stories. Making the experiences public allows the unbelievable truth to come to light for the purpose of prevention and reunion. The stories revolve in two different tiers; one is among Guatemalan support groups and the other is in the international community. The local distribution of these stories makes the collective conscious a reality and gets the word out about potential separated children who continue to reside within the country. The international distribution counteracts the lack of attention being given to the reality of the genocidal campaign that was waged against the indigenous populations of Guatemala.

The personal accounts of those Guatemalans who experienced the civil war on a very real and intimate level have been published in a trilogy of books—making their voices palpable and permanent. All three of the books are compilations of personal testimonies of people who have been reunited with their families through the outlets that have been provided by LGHM. The first of the three books is called *De Barro y De Hierro* and focuses more on outlining the mission of the league, the psychological effects of war and the methodology used to reunite the families. LGHM claims that Barro y Hierro (Clay and Iron) are “the characterizations of the families of disappeared children” in that the clay represents fragility and vulnerability that the government and the military took advantage of during the conflict in order to fulfill the operations of the genocidal campaign. On the other hand, Iron represents the fortitude of the families to resist the physical and psychological implications of the war by developing unique mechanisms of

resiliency.¹¹ The second book is called *A Voz en Grito: Contra el Olvido y el Silencio* and focusing primarily on the various accounts of separated families and how they eventually found each other with the help of the League. As the title makes clear, this book is fighting back against the silence that surrounded the war period because of fear. After the armed conflict, an eerie silence lingered over the heads of many Guatemalans and because of it, accusations and investigations were scant. The lack of communication regarding the issue and the whereabouts of the many children that disappeared make the situation worse and exacerbate its consequences. The third book is called *Corazones in Fiestas* and is a compilation of stories of families that were reunited after the armed conflict and paints a picture of the successes of Todos Por El Reencuentro in their active process to search for children that disappeared during the war; hopefully it is the start of a long procession of stories regarding reunited families.

Many of the stories regarding the disappearances of children share common themes such as the ages and the situations in which these children were kidnapped. The accounts provided by the Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental are not specific to one group of victims and come from the point of view of parents and/or children who have vivid recollections of the day they were separated. Many of the cases involve hospital theft, in which nurses and doctors were responsible for lying to parents about the status of their child's wellbeing. In one instance, Pedro Santiago and his daughter Rosa were airlifted out of their hamlet Vijolom in Nebaj after both suffering bullet wounds from the same bullet—it went through Pedro's arm and lodged in the leg of Rosa. At the hospital they were both treated and when Pedro was released, he asked to see his daughter when he was informed by a doctor that she as passed away from the blood loss.¹² Years later Pedro continued to question the validity of the doctor's words and filled out a request

¹¹ Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental. *De Barro y De Hierro*. Guatemala City: Delgada Impresos & Cia Ltda, 2002. P:7.

¹² Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental. *Corazones en Fiesta*. Guatemala City: Magna, 2005. P: 39.

form with Todos Por El Reencuentro to find more information about his missing daughter. In 2005 he was contacted by a Liga official who had information regarding the whereabouts of his daughter who was still alive and living in another town with her husband and four children. After 21 years of being separated they were finally able to come together and talk about the events that had taken place and share their accounts of the story. Although Rosa was only three years old when she was relocated to another family, she has vague memory of the situation but remembers the doctors telling her that her parents had died and that she was going to stay with a new family. Rosa, who was renamed Magdalena, and another young boy named Mauricio (also from the Nebaj area) were both picked up by a family from the hospital and taken to live in Aguacatán, Huehuetenango.¹³ Sadly, although these families have been reunited, Rosa's primary language is Spanish and her parents speak Ixil (the primary language of the Ixil Triangle). As much as they would like to catch up on all the years that have passed, they are forced to communicate through translators—all because they were victims of a genocidal war.

The tale of Rosa ends relatively happily when compared to other families that continue to hold hope of finding their lost loved ones. The story of Julian Pop gives an example of the not-so-bright side of the continued reality of Guatemalans who question the truth of their disappeared loved ones. The actual name of Julian Pop is Pedro Caal, but he prefers to take on the name of his father while divulging the facts of his horror story as a means of showing respect for his family and his q'eqchi' heritage. "Julian" discusses the hardships he and his wife faced while living on a finca in Semuc and trying to support their four children during the armed conflict. However, he claims that it was a constant struggle and all four of his children died on the finca due to "hunger and fright" (LGHM 2003:22). When he and his wife moved from the finca to the village Saguachil that his parents lived in, their fifth child Margarita was born. This would have

¹³ Ibid., P: 40.

been the start of a new beginning for Julian; however, their village was raided by the military and bombed by helicopters. Luckily his family survived the raid, although many of their community members did not.

Psychological studies carried out as part of the investigations of survivors of the armed conflict, point out that during the early 1980s when the military was raiding villages throughout the highlands, there was increased fear and suspicion that caused the inhabitants to live in a constant state of panic. Julian points out the reality of this psychological state when he claims that his father and sister both died of fright. He claimed that [translated from Spanish], “one of my sister fell ill to fright, ceased eating and never recovered...my father also died of much sadness, fright and malnutrition” (LGHM 2003:23).

The military raids that tore apart villages and wreaked havoc on the inhabitants were military operations that were ordered by the government. During these raids, soldiers were ordered to find guerrillas living in the highlands—an excuse that was later used to wipe out entire communities regardless of political affiliation. REHMI discusses the military offensive in southern El Quiche in the early 1980s and their attacks on populations that had little means to defend themselves. They claim that “the army was not interested in perusing or destroying the meager guerrilla fighting force active in the region...Instead, [they] razed homes and crops and expelled tens of thousands of peasants, condemning them to wander in the hills and forests struggling to survive” (1999:219). The army offensive caused the phenomenon of internal displacement as people streamed into the hills with nowhere to go and nowhere to plant, subsisting as best they could.

Julian Pop talks about the horrors of the raid that came through their small highland village and its aftermath. Julian claims “what hurts the most to remember from this time, was

the cruel manner in which [the soldiers] killed my sister and her daughter” (LGHM 2003:23). In an attempt to “find guerrillas” a group of soldiers raped Julian’s 15 year old niece and his sister (her mother) and then killed them both. Julian claims that in September 1984, his mother and his remaining sisters were captured by the soldiers and taken to Sana Cruz Acamal along with other members of their community; he remembers this date because his daughter Margarita was only four months old. When Julian turned to the church for help in getting back to their villages, he was told by the archdiocese that they were being held there because they were guerrillas. This name calling was a common problem throughout Guatemala during the time of the armed conflict. It was either a time of intense fear or intense propaganda, but either way, innocent people were tortured and murdered at the command of military officers or those who survived were torn away from their families and forced to relocate.

Forced disappearances were a systematic attempt by the military to not only separate families that were perceived to be guerrillas but also to impose a form of psychological warfare on the people. Specifically used during the late seventies, security forces carried out numerous individual forced disappearances in the course of their operations. Shrouded in secrecy, these actions were never acknowledged, and families were never able to discover the fate of their loved ones. Living with this type of loss is more difficult, even in cases where it is clear that the victim was ultimately killed; according to REHMI, “disappearance creates a sense of ambiguity and heightened distress and anxiety over what actually happened and the whereabouts of the body” (1999:19). This tactic was illustrated in the majority of cases that were documented by Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental, pointing out it’s consist use in rural areas by the military.

Julian illuminated the extent of the government’s actions to separate families, one of the implications of a genocidal campaign, when he discusses the disappearance of his daughter

Margarita. He talks about how he and his family were finally able to return to their village Saguachil to rebuild their community after many of the fields and houses had been destroyed. Aside from the many obvious differences that had taken over their home town, the land was owned by a new “patrón.” The new owner had given all the inhabitants a small plot of land to grow Maiz and Frijoles (corn and beans), as well as opened a school for the children of the community. During the day Julian spent most of his time working for the patron and left his children in the care of one of his sisters and his mother-in-law, who informed him later what happened when Margarita disappeared. He was told that the teacher from a nearby town came by and asked if she could take Margarita (along with other children) to her house for some lessons but Julian’s sister refused to let her go with her. According to the testimony, some time had passed when one day Margarita’s aunt was washing clothes and had left Margarita unattended for a moment, only to come back and find her missing. She was told that the teacher had again been spotted in the town and Margarita’s aunts began questioning the whereabouts of Margarita and confronting the teacher daily and asking her to bring Margarita home. The teacher eventually told to the family to stop bothering her because Margarita had died.¹⁴ Although Julian did not believe her, he claimed that he was left only to question the reality of the situation because there were soldiers in their town accusing them of guerrilla sympathizing and threatening that they were going to find out who the leader was. Due to the fear that hung in the air and the constant threat of violence and abduction, Julian told his family that it was better to remain quiet while there was still war, having hope that when it was over he would be able to find her. In this particular situation, the worst feeling is that of not knowing. Julian claims that it was hard enough to deal with the death of children and having to bury them, but it is even worse

¹⁴ Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental. *A Voz en Grito: Contra el olvido y el silencio*. Guatemala City: Save the Children, 2003. P:25-26.

having no idea what happened. Deep in his heart he feels that his Margarita is still alive but that probably “this teacher baptized her and registered her and now she has another name” (LGHM 2003:29). Julian’s sentiment toward his daughter still being alive is a possibility that is illuminated not only by the history of disappearances in Latin American, but also with the prevalence of falsified documents that enable intercountry adoptions.

Tomás Choc recounts his and his family’s experience with the war in *Corazones en Fiesta*, the most recent manuscript published by Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental. Tomás’ and his wife were living in Guacamayas, Uspantán with their four children in 1982 when the army entered their town firing rounds in the air. He said that the soldiers came so fast that there was no time to hide and all the family could do was flee. At a safe distance from the town when Tomás met up with his wife, he was shocked to find that the children were not with her nor had they followed. He returned to town to find the children—but to no avail, they were gone. He was told by a member of the community that the soldiers had taken them. After many desperate years of questioning his children’s whereabouts, Tomás was relieved to meet a young lady who had been reunited with her family after military forced separation. Unfortunately his wife had died by this point and was unable to celebrate along with him. In 2001 a team of Liga members went to Tomás’ community and recorded his story in hopes of reuniting him with his missing family. On October 28, 2001 Tomás was reunited with his daughters Ana, Julia and Catarina, sadly his two youngest children had fallen ill and died, as reported by the family who was responsible for their care after the kidnapping. Tomás claimed that the moment that he saw his daughters again for the first time in nearly twenty years was like a dream. The only drawback was that they had been placed into families that spoke different languages and they could no longer communicate with their father in the Uspantek language. However, he gives thanks that

he was reunited with his daughters because he understands that there are still families that are questioning the location of their loved ones and whether they are still alive. He also points out an important aspect of the war by stating that his children have different identities: Ana speaks Spanish, Julia speaks q'eqchi and Catarina speaks quiche.¹⁵ This forced separation and placement into a different group is one of the tenets of genocide that were outlined by the Commission for Historical Clarification.

The testimony of Maria Sarat Ordonez truly brings to light the manner in which the military stole the innocence of many individuals and destroyed hope for many families. Maria's family was never able to provide her with the opportunity to attend school because they needed her help at home. In her story she prided herself on the responsibility of taking care of the animals and the other children in the house. At the age of fifteen when she was married to Felipe Sosa; she could not read, write nor speak Spanish. Shortly after her ceremony both of her parents had fallen ill to a fatal malady. She moved in with Felipe's parents in the village of Cuenen in El Quiche where she had her two children and claimed to be very happy because they were able to have a milpa and animals. In 1982 they were forced to flee into the mountains when the military invaded; there they lived for three years, a life that was difficult and boring according to Maria. She claimed that the soldiers had destroyed all of their crops and they were left with nothing to eat but herbs and weeds. There were other families in the mountains and they began to form groups in order to help each other survive. Yet life in the mountains was in constant turmoil and they frequently had to change locations when military planes would fly overhead and drop bombs.¹⁶ Maria remembers one day when the military entered their encampment shooting and they had to disperse in separate directions and meet up at an agreed

¹⁵ LGHMI. *Corazones en Fiesta*. Guatemala City: Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental, 2005. P: 49.

¹⁶ LGHM. *A Voz en Grito: Contra el Olvido y el Silencio*. Guatemala City: Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental, 2003. P:136.

upon location. She points out that this lifestyle is hard on the children and that they suffer the most. The four of them fled while gunshots continued to ring out and the unthinkable happened, their four year old son Miguel Juan was shot through his foot. Felipe carried him on his back as far as he could while Maria toted their infant daughter Juana. When Felipe could no longer carry Miguel, they placed him under a tree and told him not to move while they sought help from one of the other group members. There was no one to be found and they returned to the location where they had left their son, only to find a note that said “if you want your son, look for him in the military zone” (LGHM 2003:137). Although they went to the military zone to find their son, none of the soldiers would help them. Eight years after the incident they continued to question to whereabouts of Miguel when they were given a tip to go to the military zone in Santa Cruz del Quiche. Here they were informed that their son had been taken to La Casa del Niño de Santa Cruz, a home for all of the children who were captured in the area. Much to Maria’s dismay, her son’s name had been changed to Juan Emilio Castro and he had been adopted by a family in the United States.

Luis Curuchiche Gonzales’ testimony is filled with hardships, misery and hope for the future. He walks you through the difficulties that his mother and father had raising nine children in his town San Martin Jilotepeque, Chimaltenango and the struggles they faced fighting for survival. One of his sisters died of malnutrition at a young age and one of his brothers died at the hands of the military during the armed conflict. He struggled through life after only two years of school and being forced to work on a plantation with his father to help the family survive. When he was older he worked with an organization called Liga Campesina that fought for the interests of the farmers in his community, particularly with the issues of land rights and oppression by the land owners. He continued his social work in the Petén after getting married

to Maria Transito Chonoy and having three children. He recounts the events that took place August 14, 1980 when soldiers came into their village looking for members of the local syndicate and murdered many of the inhabitants. He claims that his wife was murdered by the soldiers and his children kidnapped because he was one of the leaders of the group. The army also attacked his brother's family and took his three children. Luis claims that he was later told by some of the village survivors that his wife had been attacked with a machete and raped by some of the soldiers before they shot her.¹⁷ With the help of Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental he was able to find two of his children, Veronica and Lidia, who were under the custody of the adoption agency Casa Alianza. Later he was reunited with his other daughter Aura Marina who was three years old when she was captured by the army and placed in the custody of another Guatemalan household. Nearly twenty-nine years after they were all separated, Luis' children now have their own families and they all get together at various times throughout the year for family reunions.

The testimonies that were collected by the Liga and REHMI projects consisted of many different kinship levels and communal relationships. The majority of the stories from Liga were taken directly from family members who had lost their loved ones while the REMHI accounts ranged from eye witnesses to surviving victims. Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental along with Todos por el Reencuentro is responsible for reuniting families that were separated during the armed conflict or uncovering the truth behind the disappearances. Many of the stories begin with the individual information about the victims and many times they include the information about the family. One sobering reality from all the testimonies is the commonality with which people know a victim of the armed conflict. If there was not a personal account or experience with the

¹⁷Ibid., P:121.

war, or family members who were affected, then they know at least one person who was affected. The research compiled in *De Barro y De Hierro* points out that “within every nuclear family at least one or more members fell victim to the war” (2002:53). However, the destruction that was experienced was not only to the nuclear family but also to the villages that people resided in and their personal property—which included their crops, animals and sometimes their vehicles. For the average Guatemala peasant, these possessions do not come easily and in many cases have been the fruit of years of familial labor.

Petrona Santiago recounts her story to Liga after her son Jacinto Guzmán Santiago contacted the organization to find his family. Jacinto had been renamed Oscar Jacinto Rojas by the Guatemalan family who adopted him in 1982 after he had been kidnapped by the army from his hometown Sumal Grande, Nebaj. He spent the early years of his life brainstorming ways that he could be reunited with his family but received no support from the family that adopted him. He claimed that they treated him terribly and forced him to do all of the housework—speaking to him more like a maid than an adopted child. He escaped the house and was welcomed by another family in Chimaltenango to come live with them, a family who encouraged him to search for his mother and informed him about the organization Todos por el Reencuentro. With the help of the organization, he was taken back to Nebaj and reunited with his mother. She explained that Jacinto was the youngest of her and her late husband’s five children, born before the family lived in Vijolom. She relays the horror of the soldiers entering their town, murdering people and destroying everything in sight. They had set fire to their house, cut down their corn field and killed all of their animals—forcing the family to flee into the mountains and settle in an area known as Sumal Grande. She recounts the dreadful day in which her son disappeared; he had left with his father (Jacinto Guzmán) on a cloudy day to find potatoes in order to feed the family

because they had nothing after fleeing their village. The father relayed the story days later to Petrona, claiming that the soldiers had arrested them both and thinking that his son had escaped like he, Jacinto senior returned to Sumal Grande. The truth was that little Jacinto remained under the soldier's supervision until he was adopted. Sadly, Jacinto senior was not able to celebrate this day with his wife and his children because he had passed away years earlier doing hard labor in the village they had migrated to after the armed conflict had ceased. Jacinto junior was not reunited with his mother and four siblings until 2002, six years after the signing of the peace accords and twenty years after the day that he was kidnapped by the army.

Although many different organizations come forward and denounce the military for the atrocities that were committed during the war, little is done due to the status of impunity that was granted on the part of the government, much to the dismay of the international community and non-profit organizations within the country. One shocking account of the violence that continues to ravage the country is that of the Guatemalan anthropologist Myrna Mack and the outcome of her attempt to bring justice against the military human rights offenders. Mack was one of the first researchers who had done fieldwork in the Guatemalan highlands regarding the destruction of rural indigenous communities during the civil war. The *Human Rights First* website states that she had been stalked two weeks prior to her assassination on September 11, 1990 by a military death squad who had targeted her in retaliation for her pioneering fieldwork.¹⁸ Mack had been one of the founders of the Association for the Advancement of the Social Sciences in Guatemala and prior to her case; few had dared attempt to bring human rights violators to justice in Guatemala. On the day of her murder, she was followed from her office at AVANCSO by two men who attacked her, stabbed her twenty-seven times and stole everything she was

¹⁸ Human Rights First.org. The Case of Myrna Mack Change. 25 April 2009.
< http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/defenders/hrd_guatemala/hrd_mack/hrd_mack.htm>

carrying, included documents about the human rights cases she was working on.

All of the stories from Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental illuminate the psychological effects of war on the people who experienced it. This is no accident but a tactic of control used by the ruling class. Many political actors use violence to achieve multiple, overlapping goals; violence that includes terrorization, intimidation, demoralization, and elimination of opposing forces. The case of the Guatemalan civil war is heinous not only because of the terrorism that was forced onto an entire population but because of the inherent corporate greed that laid the foundation for the violence.

The adoptions during the civil war opened up the orphanages while neoliberalism paved the way for foreign lawyers to enter the country and make a profit off of unsuspecting adoptive parents. Since colonization, Guatemala has been exploited for its resources and natural wonders—while the indigenous inhabitants have been perceived as nothing more than a nuisance to the imperial forces that impose their agendas. The desirable climate of Central America makes it a perfect place for the banana plantations and Guatemala's coupled with its high mountain ranges makes it an ideal location for coffee production. The big businesses of the early twentieth century that were protected by international policies are a form of economic imperialism that has rightly been classified as "neocolonialism."

The Desire for Guatemalan Children

The past twenty years in the United States has marked a period of increased knowledge of pregnancy prevention and more emphasis placed on women's ability to make choices regarding when to raise children. This combination of contraception and choice has led to a

decrease in birthrates and, more importantly, unwanted children raised in orphanages. Guatemala on the other hand, is a Catholic nation which outlaws contraceptives and frowns upon abortions, making it an adoption heaven for U.S. citizens looking to expand their family. This has turned a country of 12 million people into a virtual baby farm supplying infants through “baby brokers” who make it possible for adoptive parents to choose the child’s color, age, race, size and sex (Colindres and Morales 1994:45). Melissa Montana, an adoptive parent from Indiana, was pleased by the simplicity with which she adopted baby LaShay and claimed that, “the only country that met my requirements and that was willing to allow a single woman to adopt was Guatemala” (2004:32). According to the *World Almanac and Book of Facts*, Guatemala comes in third behind Russia and China in terms of foreign adoption, yet in proportion to the population, it is the world’s leading exporter of children per capita. Most adoptive parents have two goals: finding a child young enough not to remember his or her biological parents, and avoiding bureaucratic delays—Guatemala offers both. Ninety percent of the children adopted there are babies, and unlike Russia and China, the government rarely gets involved in the process. Guatemalan adoptions are governed by the civil code rather than the judicial system and are processed under the notary, creating a lack of central regulatory authority for adoptions. Plainly, this equates to a process which takes under a year, unlike the more complex and long drawn out adoption procedures typical of other countries.

Laura Briggs, a women’s rights activist proficient in the language of Guatemalan adoptions, claims that “international adoption with the United States has often been characterized as an extension of U.S. economic and military power, and is frequently contextualized in a way that would be incomprehensible to most U.S. Americans” (2006:617), primarily, child kidnapping, prostitution, murder and organ-theft. The truth regarding the corruption of

international adoption is ignored and portrayed in the media by evoking sentimental images of endangered children. Adoptive parents are described as vulnerable, desperate, and fearful while birth parents are seen as cold, indifferent, or happily sending their children off to a land where they will have more material benefits, while ignoring the truth behind adoption practices—such as the case with the Texan guy on the plane. This is evident in a letter written to President George W. Bush by adoptive families of the USA referring to the Manual of Good Practices presented by the Guatemalan Vice President, Mr. Eduardo Stein and the First Lady, Wendy Berger. The manual would derail the current system of adoption, making it impossible for citizens of the United States to adopt in Guatemala. The letter states:

The manual would cause adoptable children to remain in Guatemala longer, or forever, without the love of a permanent family and the chance for a better life. This is NOT in the best interest of the children, and has the potential to cost them their lives. We believe this is not reasonable, and is, in fact criminal. American families are ready to give Guatemala children the permanent, loving home their families of origin cannot provide for them. To deny them that, based only on the place of residence of the adoptive parents, makes no sense, when almost every family in Guatemala has a relative who has migrated to the United States, looking for a better life.

This letter portrays the existence of a disjuncture between the reality of U.S. exploitation in Central America and the Guatemalan mothers who are compelled to participate in unlawful adoption based on economic factors. It assumes the classic U.S. sentiment of what "we" can do abroad and the capacity to rescue "them;" emerging as a microcosm of U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. American families who wrote this letter display their ignorance and cultural naiveté in regards to the truth behind the corruption of the adoption process and the influence of the United

States in Guatemalan policies; not to mention that many households in the United States are unaware of the genocidal campaigns that used CIA methods to terrorize the entire population. More importantly, it reveals their lack of awareness of the fact that U.S. citizens unknowingly induce and facilitate criminal activity on the basis of their monetary influence.

War is notorious for its aftermath, especially in destroying communities and having profound psychological effects on its citizens due to its gruesome violence. Tragically, there is a causal sequence that impacts the population decades after the heinous acts have been committed that are often overlooked. Militarization within the country infiltrated the daily lives of rural communities, forcing them to adjust to new military institutions and paradigms. Communities were influenced by warlike socialization patterns, perverting concepts of morality and causing increased levels of mistrust. The most atrocious psychological impacts manifested themselves in the normalization of aggression, alcoholism and extreme deprivation. Violence as a way of life affected both urban and rural societies and lead to overall devaluation of human life throughout the country.¹⁹ Demoralization became a catalyst for a vicious cycle of hostility which led to the viewing of brutality, repression and terror as a normal way of manipulating others in order to resolve conflicts.

The massacres that took place in highland indigenous villages forced the people to relocate into concentrated military-controlled towns where they were pressed into work on modern, army-owned farms producing vegetables to export to the United States. It is contended that the "war's dislocation of the rural indigenous population contributed to the development of a new supply of cheap labor that would support Guatemala's embrace of the neoliberal economic model" (Booth 2006:123). Today, many indigenous people in highland Guatemala depend on

¹⁹ Green, Linda. *Fear as a Way of Life: Mayan Widows in Rural Guatemala*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

wage labor out of financial necessity and insufficient lands created by economic domination, social discrimination and little socioeconomic power. The absence of men due to seasonal journeys to the southern coastal plains in search of work creates a strain on underprivileged households, leaving the women with the responsibility of taking care of the children without the necessary means to do so. This strain on individual income forces women to turn to desperate means in order to ensure the survival of their families.

Ingredients for Corruption

Guatemala and Haiti share the highest mortality rate for children under five in the hemisphere, at 36 deaths per 1000 births (Lacey 2006:1), but Guatemala has the highest fertility rate in all of Latin America (Elton 2000:1). Non-existent birth control measures and males who view impregnating their wives as confirmation of their masculinity create an environment where mothers and daughters are simultaneously pregnant and the average number of children per females is 5.6 (Guatemala Country Profile 2007). This dangerous cocktail of frequent births mixed with high infant mortality rates creates a reality in which the notions of child rearing are faced with stoicism. In reference to high infant mortality rates, Nancy Scheper-Hughes states that “frequent child death remains a powerful shaper of maternal thinking and practice, in the absence of firm expectation that a child will survive, a mother’s love is attenuated and delayed” (1989:97). Emotional detachment therefore becomes directly linked to survival goals. Women in these communities have had to give birth and nurture children under the conditions of poverty, violence, deprivation, sexism, chronic hunger and economic exploitation—a hostile environment in which to endure. This reality inevitably leads to the pragmatic recognition of the difficulties

of caring for individual children and a focus on the overall enhancement of the family's prosperity.

The demand for Guatemalan children from adoptive parents in the United States presents itself as an alternative; which proves to have a huge sociological effect on communities that once believed it was sinful to sell children (Kitty Brown March 15, 2007). These children become a means of economic assistance based on the value of their sale to an adoption organization. Justification with the family and community comes in the form of monetary relief that can alleviate strains on the fight for survival. Wendy Villatorro's mother threatened to kick her out of the house if she got pregnant again after the birth of her first child. When she discovered she was pregnant for a second time, she sought a lawyer who would compensate her after placing her child with a foreign family. Wendy Villatorro claims that "the lawyer would give [her] \$650 for a girl and \$380 for a boy, underlining that the 'market' can fluctuate depending on the demand" (Elton 2006:1).

Jaladoras were confidants of families dealing with an unwanted pregnancy due to rape or incest. In most cases they were midwives who understood families' wishes to hide the situation from the community in order to prevent social castigation. Today, because of the demoralization in the country as a result of war and the influx of money coming in because of adoptions, the *jaladoras* have new motivations. Kitty Brown, a former adoptions agency organizer and promoter of women's rights, points out that "the desperation in the highland indigenous communities has led to the corruption in the cities" (March 15, 2007) and the potential for profit has tainted once trustworthy people. *Jaladoras* are now the middlemen between mothers and adoptions agencies. They are more commonly known as "baby brokers" to the agencies and "contact people" in the communities. Their new responsibilities require them to find out exactly

what adoptive parents desire and in turn they are contracted for high wages by lawyers.²⁰

Guatemala has become a paradise for illegal adoptions in a devastating situation which begins with desperate adoptive parents. Claudio Porres, chief of criminal investigations for the public-health ministry, claims that as many as six children disappear everyday (Colindres and Morales 1994:45). Given the demand for babies, officials suspect that many of the children who disappear may in fact be illicitly adopted, with the help of unscrupulous professionals who exploit weaknesses in the legal adoption process. Bruce Harris, Latin American director for Covenant House, a child-welfare agency based in New York says that “in Guatemala, it’s easier to buy a baby than to buy a car” (Scanlan 1994:36). Colindres and Morales point out that it is “effortless to find a pediatrician who will sign a birth certificate without seeing the baby, a social worker who will certify the child’s socioeconomic status without even knowing where the parents live, and a notary public who will attest to documents he has not seen” (1994:45). Whether the children are stolen or proffered freely, babies are becoming a big business. Ilsa Diaz, the Honduran ex-president of the Central American Parliament International, states that “adoption has become a million-dollar industry, with babies from Central America fetching up to \$20,000 apiece. Lawyers and adoption agencies get the bulk of the money, with the parents netting as little as \$1,200” (Scanlan 1994:37). Adoption agencies make it their goal to put the adoptive parents’ desires first and provide them with whatever they are seeking, conversely many adoptive parents trust their lawyers and never ask how the child came to them.

Susana Luarca, a U.S. lawyer and founder of the Asociacion de Los Niños de Guatemala, portrays herself as a do-gooder, stating that “we’re rescuing these children from death because here, we don’t live, we survive; which would a child prefer, to grow up in misery or to go to the United States where they have everything?” (Lacey 2006:36). When Kathleen and Richard Borz

²⁰ Brown, Kitty. Personal Interview by Sara Tankersley. 15 March 2007.

contacted Luarca after failing to conceive a second child, Luarca's agency quickly found the little boy and girl they were looking for. Yet, U.S. Embassy officials in Guatemala learned that the little boy had been adopted illegally and denied him his passport. According to embassy officials, the birth mother claimed she and her husband had been paid to give up their son and told they would be able to see him monthly.²¹ Set on finding the Borzes another child, Luarca persuaded a judge to place two boys of seven years and ten months, whose fate was being decided in an abuse case, in the care of her orphanage. When the biological mother was found guilty of neglect, Luarca offered the Borzes seven year old Osmin Ricardo "Rico" Tobar Ramirez at a discounted rate due to his age. After the case against his mother was closed, Rico was declared abandoned and eligible for adoption. According to Casa Alianza, this process was sped up by Luarca who had invoked the name of her husband Ricardo Umana Aragon, chief justice of the Supreme Court. However, Rico's biological father, Gustavo Amilcar Tobar, appeared and stated that he has never been contacted for custody as required under the law. Two days before the court date, two men climbed onto the empty bus that Gustavo was driving and attacked him with a machete. One man claimed, "This is because you keep talking" (Zarembo 2002:27). Luarca denied she had anything to do with the attack and even ignored the scheme which had been proposed to her by a judge, who said "why take him to court? You should have him killed—that is the best way to fix things in this country" (Zarembo 2002:27). Although Gustavo believes he and his new wife can provide a stable home for Rico, the powerful and well-heeled lobby of lawyers and notaries are too strong for him to fight.

According to Zarembo, Susana Luarca scoffs at the notion of baby buying and claims that paying biological parents through "humanitarian assistance" is a common practice in the United

²¹ Zarembo, Alan. "A Place to Call Home: The anger, tears and frustrating runarounds of a Guatemalan adoption case." Newsweek International (2002): 27.

States. Yet, Marc Lacey from *The New York Times* reported Luarca saying that the “children she handles come from poor mothers who cannot afford to raise them and who give them up willingly without payment.” Luarca also argues that “someone who is willing to take money for a child is living proof that he or she is an unfit parent” (Zarembo 2002:27). However, these notions overlook the numerous aspects of the adoption system which are so heinous they are difficult to believe. Frighteningly, children have been converted into an object, a piece of merchandise that can be picked up in a clinic, hospital, or a poor village where middlemen look for women willing to sell one or more of their children, offering them between 650 and 1,600 U.S. dollars for their infant. These baby brokers also approach prostitutes and young women who, out of ignorance or need, “rent out their wombs as surrogate mothers” (Colindres and Morales 1994:45). Benitez explains the reality of “fattening houses” where the expenses of the pregnancy and birth are covered and the so-called “kangaroo mothers,” who make a living having babies and giving them up for adoption.

Unfortunately, Luarca’s statement regarding her opinion of unfit parents mirrors that of many adoptive parents and ignores the fact that child buyers take advantage of mothers’ poverty, ignorance and illiteracy while plying the Guatemalan countryside looking for pregnant women and girls in a fix. Baby brokers present adoption as the perfect answer, one that will leave the child with a wealthy family and the mother better off by paying her medical bills and providing her with money surreptitiously. Alas, the majority of the impoverished women who give up their children willingly or as a result of pressure, coercion or deceit are indigenous or of mixed-race heritage. Indigenous people comprise more than 65 percent of the population yet have historically suffered from social discrimination and powerlessness which leaves them living in poverty. Kitty Brown points out that “the effects of war are modern, but the hunger, sickness

and death that Indigenous communities conceal are traditional, deeply rooted in a history of exploitation and institutionalized dependency” (March 15, 2007). The targeting by baby brokers of impoverished, indigenous women is an extension of this mistreatment and an example of the ugly cycle of exploitation that still ravishes the Guatemalan countryside.

Commodification of Children

When globalization has spread as far as it can and exploited vast numbers of resources and people, other methods of capital accumulation must be created. This is where the adoption process in Guatemala comes in. A result of many different causes, the corruption of the adoption process can be linked to the tenets of capitalism. Children have become another commodity on the world market, morality is lost and profit is gained. The emergence of capitalism from the cocoon of feudalism has been ever expanding and has had relatively speedy impact on the development of globalization. In theory, globalization is the desired maximization of capitalism and its achievement as the dominant world system. Capitalism has one known motive—capital. The creation of capital through the Commodification of goods is ever-expanding and has no limits. Marx argues that capitalism has rid society of its morality and stripped every man and woman of their compassion for their fellow human kind. Marx points out that capitalism has shed the humanity from such professions as the doctor, lawyer and teacher—turning them into mere skilled laborers looking to maximize their profits. Globalization has played its role in the expansion of such demoralization by bringing capitalism to the ends of the earth, leaving no space untouched by the corrupted hands of pure greed. It has managed to unify the world into a single mode of production and bring many different countries and regions into the global

economy.

Globalization has been a direct result of the paradigm of development that sprung onto the social, political and economic sphere after World War II. The focus of the United States quickly changed from fascism to the “war on poverty” in post-colonial countries as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were created. These multinational organizations were created in 1948 during the signing of the Bretton Woods agreement as a means for promoting economic growth in the countries that had been considered to be at the poverty level. Arturo Escobar defines the poverty level as “lacking what the rich have in terms of money and material possessions [which can be applied to individual societies as well as poor countries], poor countries came to be similarly defined in relation to the standards of wealth of the more economically advantaged nations” (1999:382).

Behind the humanitarian concern, new forms of power and control, more subtle and refined, were put in operation. People’s ability to define and take care of their own lives was eroded in a deeper manner than ever before. The poor became the target of more sophisticated practices, of a variety of programs that seemed inescapable. From the new institutions of power in the United States and Europe; from the offices of the International Bank for Reconstructions and Development and the United Nations; from North American and European campuses, research centers, and foundations; and from the new planning offices in the major capitals of the underdeveloped world—this was the type of development that was actively promoted and that in a few years was to extend its reach to all aspects of society.

In an article about adoption between the United States and Germany, Karli Knop argues that children are being turned into commodities because the language and photographs agencies use to promote adoption gives the appearance of marketing or advertisement. Using a Marxian

definition of a commodity—“something that is produced for the purpose of exchanging for something else” (<http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/c/o.htm>) —Knop points out that in the international arena, “one can think of a baby or a child as a product that parents or adoption agencies use” (2005:2). From the business aspect of adoption agencies, they are providing a service and acting as the middle man between prospective adopters and the mothers that *produced* the child. The main purpose of an adoption agency is to exchange a child for money, then to determine a qualified and loving family for the child. In accordance with Marx’s explanation of exchange-value, pricing a child means that within the society that the exchange is taking place there is an understanding that the two commodities exchanged are of equal value.²²

While a commodity is something that is produced for a profit, Commodification is the relationship of exchange that surrounds the commodity and is defined as “the transformation of relationships, formerly untainted by commerce, into commercial relationships, relationships of exchange, of buying and selling” ([://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/c/o.htm](http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/c/o.htm)). Marx used the term Commodification into order to describe the basic economic exchanges that are fundamental to capitalism and claimed that it contained an inherent contradiction because the process was dehumanizing and demeaning while at the same time liberating and progressive.²³ This can be applied to the process of adoption in that finding a new home for a child can be liberating, yet putting a price tag on a child is dehumanizing. Knop states that placing monetary value on a child and exchanging them between country borders creates a relationship of buying and selling; the two commodities being a sum of money and a child—humans assigning monetary worth to other humans.²⁴

²² Glossary of Terms. Encyclopedia of Marxism. <http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/c/o.htm>

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Knop, Karli. “The Commodification of Children through International Adoption.” 2005, p. 3.

Since the snowball effect of buying and selling children has gotten out of hand, and the Guatemalan government has not yet tightened regulations, community members have taken it upon themselves to eliminate baby brokers. Marc Lacey, a journalist for the *New York Times*, describes a story of two women and a man who went house to house selling baby slings as a means of finding out who would soon be giving birth. The traveling salespeople talked one young, “single and despondent” woman in the hillside village of Xolnahuola into giving up her baby for \$750. When the three returned as the pregnant women’s term neared its end, her parents, who opposed giving up the child, alerted neighbors, who gathered angrily around at the scene and ran off the “salesmen.” David Scanlan, a journalist for Maclean’s, points out that foreigners are being attacked by unruly mobs because they are afraid that North Americans are stealing their babies. Guatemala City housewife Esperanza Pravia said frankly, “they can’t have their own, so they take ours” (Scanlan 1994:36). June Weinstock, a tourist from Fairbanks, Alaska, survived an attack with metal pipes and machetes after taking pictures of Guatemalan children. The angry mob was convinced she was there to steal a child and was determined to kill her. However, the stories of tourists being attacked by villages are downplayed by the Guatemalan government who states that “there is no evidence of widespread baby trafficking” (Scanlan 1994:36).

Despite efforts to put national and international pressure on the Guatemalan government to institute laws that properly regulate adoptions; the illicit adoption trade continues to thrive. Unscrupulous attorneys are the central players in this trade, and they have converted what should be a noble institution, into a dirty business. Guatemalan children are sent to wealthy parents in the north at the average rate of 1,597 a year (2005), yet the most tragic aspect of the adoption situation in Guatemala is that the children who most need homes are not being adopted. There

are some 300 orphanages in the country that are overflowing, and only 12 percent of the children being adopted come from institutions (Elton 2000:1). The main reason for this is that it takes years for a baby in an orphanage to be declared abandoned and eligible for adoption; by then, they are too old to be wanted by adoptive parents, who prefer infants.

My Analysis

A baby factory? All the elements are there—the country’s main source of income changed from bananas and coffee to textiles and children. At upwards of 15,000 US dollars per child and the height of the international adoptions in the early 1990s there were such things as “fattening houses” (Estudios de Guatemala 1995) or homes sponsored by lawyers of orphanages for women looking to put their child up for adoption. The women were allowed to stay there free of charge, months before giving birth and have all of their medical expenses paid—assuring that children would be healthy for the market. There is a source of production, a middle man, a buyer and a price being set.

Exchange and reciprocity have been explained in three categories by Marshall Sahlins and have an element of personal interactions imbued in each one. The first is generalized reciprocity and happens between friends and family members, it is essentially a form of sharing and/or gift giving. A relationship is established with generalized reciprocity that coincides with the cliché “you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours,” because a return is not expected, however some form of return (either material or non-material) is implied and a bond of trust is a definite. The second form is balanced reciprocity and is a more informal system of exchange in which a

return is assumed but not at a specific time. Although the actors in this form of exchange are not as close as those in generalized reciprocity, there is still a level of trust that will assist in the assurance of a return. Negative reciprocity, or the barter system, is the final form of exchange that Sahlins discussed and it is the form that modern capitalism developed out of. There is no need for any social proximity or trust in this system because the return is immediate and is in the form of goods or labor—this was the precursor to money and the market economy. This is the form of exchange that is commonly understood in a capitalist system because it has given rise to market economies and the use of money.

Outlining the forms of social interactions that are associated with types of exchange are an important basis in the understanding of adoption and the point at which they cease to be a reputable and honorable institution and become another means for the creation of the capital. Negative reciprocity takes the individual out of the object that is being exchanged and creates a middle man who will do the bidding. In the case of adoptions, a child is essentially produced, placed on the market through an orphanage and then sold to enthusiastic parents. As simple as it seems, the point in which the system can essentially become corrupted is when the child is exchanged without the involvement of the biological parent. Whether the child was willingly given up for adoption, the parent persuaded with monetary incentives, or the child stolen—taking the agent of production out of the picture, creates detachment. This detachment easily leads to demoralization and the destructive actions of power with impunity that was witnessed during the Guatemalan civil war. Although bringing the biological parent back into the picture of adoptions can be difficult based on individual circumstances, learning about and/or being sensitive to the factors that played a role in the decision to put a child up for adoption is crucial in eliminating the vicious cycle of profiteering.

Many of the atrocities that were committed against children were done by civil patrols and the military. Many people called this a civil war because it was ladinos fighting against the indigenous but those ladino military officers who commanded their troops to commit horrible acts of murder and torture were trained at the School of Americas in Fort Benning Georgia—after the initial location in Panama was forced out. This war however was really over the allocation of land, a problem that has existed for centuries; a battle between those with land and those with none, or those who support capitalism fighting those who do not. The Guatemalan civil war was essentially a fight between the capitalists and the non-capitalists, those who support a western method of capital gain and those who continue to operate on traditional methods of land and resource allocation. Indigenous people are a clear threat to agenda of global capitalism because of their constant attempt at cultural sustainability is inherently anti-capitalist. As pointed out by the Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification, genocide was waged upon the indigenous communities and poor farmers throughout Guatemala; the final definition of genocide was “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” (CEH 1999). The popularity of Guatemalan adoptions among United States citizens and their willingness to push the concept of their savior-esque actions from a “backward” nation and “incapable” parents further completes the genocidal agenda of the Guatemalan elites against the poor population.

So, is there hope for adoptions?

Adoptive parents may play an active role in the perpetuation of a vicious cycle that makes lawyers middle men and children a profit in their eyes. Yet they should not be blamed for their perceived goodwill and willingness to open their hearts and homes. Instead, the system that markets children and exploits the emotions of offshore couples should be held accountable and

criticized. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) claims that the transparency of Guatemalan adoptions makes it hard to know which adoptions are legal and which illegal. The implementation of The Hague Convention on intercountry adoption will standardize the process of adoption and eliminate unethical practices such as coerced relinquishment of the children, kidnapping, and payoffs to middlemen. Some corrupt lawyers like Susana Luarca argue that stricter regulations and a central adoption authority would ultimately hurt children by delaying or stopping their adoptions. One stipulation of the convention will give nationals the preference to adopt over internationals. However, aside from the political action that needs to take place in order to bring the honor back to Guatemalan adoptions, the system in which lawyers are provided with the opportunity to make a profit off of a child are still in place. Impunity in the country is still the norm and the criminals are still loose. The soldiers who committed the unthinkable acts of violence and racism against their fellow Guatemalans continue to walk the streets. The lawyers who own the orphanages and hire "baby brokers" to search for available children are not held accountable for their actions because the adoption industry is privatized. Even if the Hague Convention on intercountry adoptions nationalizes the adoption industry, the possibility of making a profit off of any exploitable resource still remains.

Bibliography

- Adoptive Families of the United States of America. "Open Letter to Mr. George W. Bush, President of the United States of America." Prensa Libre [Guatemala City] 11 March. 2007: 51.
- Benítez, Inés. "Parliament Ratifies an International Adoption Treaty; Whitewash for Adoption Paradise." Inter Press Service: Latin America June 2007. Expanded Academic Index. LexisNexis. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 15 July 2007 <://web.lexis-nexis.com>.
- Benítez, Inés. "Guatemala: The Dark Side of Five-Star Adoptions." Inter Press Service: Latin America 16 Feb. 2007. ProQuest. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 12 July 2007 <://www.proquest.com>.
- Birchard, Karen. "Call for DNA Testing for Foreign Adoptions." Lancet 352.9128 (1998): 633. Academic Search Premier. EBSCOhost. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 15 July 2007 <://search.epnet.com>.
- Bittner, Terrie Lynn. "Foreign Adoptions." BellaOnline: The Voice of Women. 15 July 2007 <://www.bellaonline.com>.
- Briggs, Laura. Making "American" Families: Transnational Adoption and U.S. Latin American Policy. Ann Laura Stoler, ed. *Haunted by Empire* (Duke, 2006), 606-642.
- Booth, John A., Christine J. Wade and Thomas W. Walker. Understanding Central America: Global Forces, Rebellion, and Change, 4th Edition. Colorado: Westview Press, 2006.
- Brown, Kitty. Personal Interview. By Sara Tankersley. 15 March 2007.
- Burgos-Debray, Elisabeth. Editor and Introduction. I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Women in Guatemala. By Rigoberta Menchu Tum. Translated by Ann Wright. London: Verso, 1984.
- Casa Alianza. "Guatemalan Attorney Uses Tricks and Deceit to Take Children from Mothers and Offer Them for Adoption." Casa Alianza. 20 July 2007 <://casaalianza.org>.
- Clemetson, Lynette. "Adoptions from Guatemala Face an Uncertain Future." The New York Times (2007): A12. Expanded Academic Index. LexisNexis. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 15 July 2007 <://web.lexis-nexis.com>.
- Colindres, F. and C. Morales. "Guatemala: Babies for Sale." Crónica 41.5 (1994): 45. Expanded Academic Index. InfoTrac. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 15 July 2007 <://infotrac.galegroup.com>.
- Donovan, Gill. "Inadequate Adoption Laws Exploit Families." National Catholic

- Reporter 38.8 (2001): 10. Expanded Academic Index. InfoTrac. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 15 July 2007 <[://infotrac.galegroup.com](http://infotrac.galegroup.com)>.
- Elton, Catherine. "Adoption vs. trafficking in Guatemala." Christian Science Monitor Oct. 2000: 1-3. Academic Search Premier. EBSCOhost. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 18 July 2007 <[://search.epnet.com](http://search.epnet.com)>.
- Escobar, Arturo. "The Invention of Development." Current History Nov. 1999: 382-386.
- Estudios de Guatemala. El Negocio Más Infame. Guatemala: Editorial Nuestra America, 1995.
- Gibbons, Judith L., Samantha L. Wilson and Christine A. Rufener. "Gender Attitudes Mediate Gender Differences in Attitudes Toward Adoption in Guatemala." Sex Roles. 54.1/2 (2006): 139-144. Expanded Academic Index. InfoTrac. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 18 July 2007 <[://infotrac.galegroup.com](http://infotrac.galegroup.com)>.
- Glejjeses, Piero. *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Green, Linda. *Fear as a Way of Life: Mayan Widows in Rural Guatemala*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Guatemala Country Profile. "Country Profile." 24 May 2007 <<http://www.quetzalnet.com>>.
- Guatemala Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH). "Article II: Human rights violations, acts of violence and assignment of responsibility." Guatemala: Memory of Silence (ONLINE). Maintained by Science and Human Rights Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Accessed online 25 April 2009 <<http://shr.aaas.org/guatemala/ceh/report/english/toc.html>>.
- Hasenauer, Heike. "Supporting Adoptive Parents." Soldiers (2004): 43-45. Expanded Academic Index. InfoTrac. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 15 July 2007 <[://infotrac.galegroup.com](http://infotrac.galegroup.com)>.
- Human Rights First.org. The Case of Myrna Mack Change. 25 April 2009. <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/defenders/hrd_guatemala/hrd_mack/hrd_mack.htm>
- Implementation of The Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption. Pub L. 106-110. 20 Oct. 1999.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. "The Paradox of Terrorism in Civil War." The Journal of Ethics 8.1 (2004): 97-138. JSTOR. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson 14 April 2009 <[://www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)>.
- Lacey, Marc. "Guatemala System is Scrutinized as Americans Rush in to Adopt." The New York Times (2006): A1. Expanded Academic Index. LexisNexis. University of Arizona

- Lib., Tucson. 18 July 2007 <[://web.lexis-nexis.com](http://web.lexis-nexis.com)>.
- LGHM (Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental). *A Voz en Grito: Contra el Olvido y el Silencio*. Guatemala City: Liga Guatemalteca de Higiene Mental, 2003.
- MacHarg, Kenneth D. "Breaking Covenant: Latin American director of Casa Alianza has sex with a teen." *Christianity Today* 48.11 (2004): 22. Expanded Academic Index. InfoTrac. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 18 July 2007 <[://infotrac.galegroup.com](http://infotrac.galegroup.com)>.
- Montana, Melissa. "A Dream Fulfilled: I never imagined my dream would come all the way from Guatemala." *Today's Christian Women* 26.6 (2004): 32-36. Expanded Academic Index. InfoTrac. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 15 July 2007 <<http://infotrac.galegroup.com>>.
- Purdin, Nancy. Personal Interview. By Sara Tankersley. 10 April 2009.
- REHMI (Recovery of Historical Memory Project). *Guatemala Never Again! The Official Reports of the Human Rights Office, Archdiocese of Guatemala*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Reproductive Health Matters. "Debate over Extent of Trafficking in Guatemalan Children." *Reproductive Rights, Advocacy and Changing the Law* Nov. 2000: 183. Academic Search Premier. JSTOR. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 15 July 2007 <[://www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)>.
- Scanlan, David. "Stolen Children?" *MacLean's* April 1994: 36-38. Academic Search Premier. EBSCOhost. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 18 July 2007 <[://search.epnet.com](http://search.epnet.com)>.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. "Death Without Weeping: Has poverty ravaged mother love in the shantytowns of Brazil?" *Natural History* Oct. 1989: 8-16.
- Schirmer, Jennifer. *The Guatemalan Military Project: A Violence Called Democracy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998.
- The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption: Treaty Doc. 105-51 and its Implementing Legislation S. 682. Pub. L. 106-257. 5 Oct. 1999.
- Wilson, Samantha L. and Judith L. Gibbons. "Guatemalan Perceptions of Adoption." *International Social Work* 48.6 2005: 742-752. Academic Search Premier. EBSCOhost. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 15 July 2007 <<http://search.epnet.com>>.
- World Almanac & Book of Facts. "Top 20 Countries for U.S. Foreign Adoptions, 1991-2003."

Vital Statistic (2005): 75. Academic Search Premier. EBSCOhost. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 18 July 2007 <://search.epnet.com>.

Zarembo, Alan. "A Place to Call Home: The anger, tears and frustrating runarounds of a Guatemalan adoption case." Newsweek International (2002): 27+. Expanded Academic Index. InfoTrac. University of Arizona Lib., Tucson. 15 July 2007 <://infotrac.galegroup.com>.