

PRESIDENTS MIGUEL GARCIA GRANADOS AND JUSTO RUFINO BARRIOS IN
REFORM GUATEMALA: 1871-1885

by

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ABSTRACT

This investigation establishes a political and economic narrative of the *La Reforma* using documents detailing the rhetoric, executive action, and specific legislation that shaped *La Reforma* Guatemala. In addition to outlining the coming of late nineteenth-century Guatemalan Liberalism, it has presented the obstacles confronting Presidents Granados and Barrios and examined how the Revolutions' leaders employed rhetoric and executive action to achieve their similar but distinct brands of Liberalism. In detailing Presidents Granados' and Barrios' combined energies and examining some of their often overlooked efforts in an era of extensive economic and political reform, the study hopes to establish a revised, more accurate narrative of the Guatemalan Reform.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Facing enormous obstacles, two key presidents following the Guatemalan Liberal Revolution of 1871 tirelessly pursued an ambitious vision of national progress which would thrust Guatemala into a period of political, economic, and social transformation. This study examines the passionate efforts of Presidents Miguel García Granados (1871-1873) and Justo Rufino Barrios (1873-1885) who dedicated personal and national energies to the cause of bringing about revolutionary change to late nineteenth-century Guatemala. This research project emphasizes the objectives and actions of Presidents Granados and Barrios in a fifteen-year post-revolutionary period known as *La Reforma* (The Reform, 1871-1885) in order to adjust possible misconceptions concerning the Presidents' individual styles and elemental roles in the development and overall direction of the reform era. In this effort to more accurately detail the narrative of the epoch's political and economic development, the research supports the argument that *both* Presidents played a central role in designing the conditions that typify *La Reforma's* revolutionary character. The project seeks to reestablish Granados not as a hesitant or incompetent president exclusively concerned with political change, but as a proactive leader who contributed to the era's radical essence in economically (and politically) restructuring the Republic. In addition to exploring rhetoric the Presidents used to illustrate the Liberal vision and communicate objectives and obstacles facing their respective agendas, the investigation attempts to readjust misconceptions concerning Barrios' political ingenuity and personal efforts to develop Guatemala's national economy. The intent is not to study the Revolution itself; rather, it is to examine under what conditions and to what degree Presidents Granados and Barrios shaped the character of the historically significant era following the Revolution.

La Reforma gave the Guatemalan landscape a new face, brought the economy new opportunities, and changed every day life for many of its citizens. Capital investments from Western Europe brought telegraphs and steam engine locomotives to towns of the countryside, massive wharf structures to the coast, and shiny, industrial coffee processing plants to the quiet highlands. Contracts with American companies brought citizens of Guatemala City electricity and connected Guatemala's "second capital" of Quetzaltenango by telephone.¹ New roads and ports linked Guatemala's agricultural industry to an expanding world economy, and developments of Liberal-endorsed coffee cash crops brought significant national revenue to the Republic for the first time in decades.² Though Guatemala experienced far more radical adjustments—too many to list here, many outcomes during the post-revolutionary period were less than positive, as this project later reveals.

Stone monuments of the revolutionary generals now adorning Guatemalan City serve as a testament to the significance of *La Reforma* in Guatemala's enduring transformations. Barrios, atop a grandiose eighteen-foot equestrian statue in the plaza bearing his name, reminds passers-by that his revolution was not a era of squabbling caudillos jockeying for political dominance but a time for economic progress and societal advancement. Blocks away on *Avenida La Reforma*, Granados, stoically clutching a book amongst his limestone daughters of justice, history, liberty, and the Republic of Guatemala—declares this era one of revolutionary beginning, one of lasting consequence. Guatemalan historian Jorge García Laguardia asserts that the Independence Movement of 1821 and the October Revolution of 1944 only begin to approach the magnitude of

¹Miguel Urrutia. "Índice de las Leyes Emitidas por el Gobierno Democrático de la Republica de Guatemala desde el 3 de Junio de 1871 hasta el 30 de Junio 1881" CIRMA. Taracena Arriola Archive, no. 427. 1882. *Convenio de Sociedades de Alumbramiento Eléctrico de Guatemala*, (CIRMA: Handwritten and Paleographic Achives, no 114, 1880).

² William Roseberry et al. *Coffee, Society, and Power in Latin America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, 10. The staple agricultural export for Guatemala preceding coffee was cochineal which sharply declined in sales in the late 1850's.

the *La Reforma* in terms of lasting influence.³ When considering the revolutionary generation of Liberals, Laguardia further explains that the political themes of “patriotism, the desire for change, efficiency, and modernism” borne of the Revolution, are still very much alive today in Guatemala.⁴ Other scholars evoke an era of more substantial consequence. Carol Smith maintains that (delicate) modern ethnic and class relations were decidedly forged during the reform period, while James Dunkerly concludes that the economic model of the Liberal era resulted in the “withering immiseration” for the mass of the region’s population.⁵

Generals Justo Rufino Barrios and Miguel García Granados delivered the Liberal party to the head of the Guatemalan national government by defeating Conservative armed forces on June 30, 1871.⁶ Though the Revolution was rather brief—only about three months in duration, the transformations it delivered lasted well into the twentieth century.⁷ Political scientist James Mahoney claims that state transformations during the reform period set the foundation for a history of military authoritarianism, while Frank Griffith Dawson argues that the era’s policies are responsible for the social imbalances which imperiled political stability throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.⁸ For the fifteen years following the Revolution—during the period of *La Reforma*, Generals García Granados (1871-1873) and Rufino Barrios (1873-1885) came to dominate national politics in the name of the Liberal party. Following similar but distinct agendas, these Liberal administrations championed policies which would develop infrastructure

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, 12.

⁵ Carol Smith. *Guatemalan Indians and the State, 1540 to 1988*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990. James Dunkerly. *Power in the Isthmus: A political History of Modern Central America*. London: Verso, 1988.

⁶ The armed forces to which I refer is a militia; a regular standing Guatemalan Army was not established until after 1871.

⁷ Wayne Clegern. *Origins of Liberal Dictatorship in Central America and Guatemala, 1865-1873* Boulder, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1994, XI.

⁸ James Mahoney. “Radical, Reformist, and Aborted Liberalism: Origins of National Regimes in Central America,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 33 (May 2001): 227. Frank Griffith Dawson, “Labor Legislation and Social Integration in Guatemala: 1871-1944,” *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 14 (Winter 1965): 124.

to support export agriculture, mobilize a large percentage of the indigenous population to work in the coffee industry, and separate the State from an influential Catholic Church.⁹ Embracing an eclectic mix of ideals and values including positivism, social Darwinism, and Protestantism, Liberals sought to create a modern nation exemplified by developed nations of Western Europe and The United States.

Granados and Barrios nominally carried the title of “president,” but actually continued the Central American political tradition of authoritarian rule. In *caudillo*, or political-military style, Granados and Barrios paralleled the concurrent developments of Western Europe, particularly in Spain, in which officers emerged from a highly politicized officer corps to singularly represent national interests and rule by decree—usually until a Constitution could be drafted.¹⁰ Although this research labels Granados’ and Barrios’ authoritarian regimes as “administrations” and “presidencies,” their Constitutional Republic existed solely in name. Government documents titled presidencies “Constitutional Dictatorships,” and despite enthusiasm for respecting Democratic processes in rhetoric, circulars distributed throughout Guatemala proclaimed Barrios “the only candidate possible” for the 1873 national elections.¹¹ The *New York Times* described Barrios as “an autocrat who [did] as he [pleased] and whose word [was] law,” and at another occasion, noted that ruling over “an obsequious press and a cowering people...he ruled in great part by his own will and often with a cruelty that made him more dreaded than a European monarch.”¹² Regardless of their official titles, Granados and Barrios

⁹ David McCreery. *Rural Guatemala, 1760-1940*. Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 1994, 173.

¹⁰ Carolyn P. Boyd. *Praetorian Politics in Liberal Spain*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979, ix, 3-4.

¹¹ Justo Rufino Barrios. “Proclama del J. Rufino Barrios, Barrios Aceptando la Dictadura Constitucional.” October 30, 1876. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 410. *Circular*. “Único Candidato Posible para la Presidencia de la Republica de Guatemala, J. R. Barrios.” 1873. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 446.

¹² *New York Times*. “An Eccentric Autocrat: The Peculiarities of President Barrios of Guatemala.” November 7, 1880. *New York Times*. “Guatemala’s Dictators.” July 18, 1887

continued the authoritarian model and began the long line of Liberal dictatorships which extended into the middle of the twentieth century.¹³

Nineteenth-century Guatemalan politics developed around the Liberal and the Conservative parties following independence from Spain in 1821. Conservative politics, dominated under Rafael Carrera's Dictatorship of Thirty Years (1844-1865), intended to maintain an intimate relationship with the Catholic Church and allow *modest* industry, and to a lesser extent, preserve the political and economic power wielded by the traditional aristocracy of the capital.¹⁴ The Liberal party in Guatemala, while embracing positivism in an effort to emulate the most advanced nations of the western world, advocated modernization through rapid expansion of the export economy and a thorough secularization of the State. Like in nineteenth century Europe, the realization of the liberal vision depended on the political, social, and religious conditions in Guatemala (i.e. the strength of the conservative political support base, the ethnic and cultural unity of the population, and the power and authority of the Catholic Church). Nationalistic liberals in Guatemala, like their European counterparts, intended to secure constitutional liberties and create a unified, independent constitutional state in attacking a authoritarianism. However, Guatemalan liberals, in effect—only reestablished another authoritarian order while continuing to maintain an ethnically divided populace of economically privileged and non-privileged. Although Guatemalan liberals failed to create and carve out a distinguishable middle class from the populace or increase the wealth of the common society like

¹³ Walter LeFeber. *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*, 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993, 76.

¹⁴ It is important to note that although Carrera served two presidential terms spanning two decades (1844-1848, then another from 1850-1865) he was temporarily exiled in 1847, then forced by Liberals to resign after returning in 1848 before once again serving as President in 1850. McCreery, *Rural Guatemala*, 13. Ralph Lee Woodward. *Central America, A Nation Divided*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, 111.

European liberals, it did come to modernize an economy of decrepit institutions in a transformative process of moderate industrialization.

Guatemala collectively experienced the first wave of Liberal reforms with the rest of Central America as a member of the United Provinces of Central America, under Presidents of the federation, Generals José Arce (1825-1829) and Francisco Morazán (1827-1842).¹⁵ These early Liberals limited the influence of the Church, carried out fiscal reforms, liberated markets by lightening trade tariffs and limiting monopolies, and encouraged the development of public education projects.¹⁶ Under the direction of Governor Mariano Gálvez within the federation (1831-1838), Guatemala ushered in British investment to develop infrastructure needed to support the expansion of an export economy as well as bring modern skills and technology from an advanced nation of the North Atlantic.¹⁷ Gálvez later enacted a series of unpopular reforms (unpopular to the impoverished indigenous) which privatized indigenous communal lands, introduced new labor demands on the rural citizenry, reinstated the head tax, and greatly limited the influence of the Catholic Church and its clergy.¹⁸ The Liberals soon thereafter met Conservative opposition backed by the majority indigenous population and a large community of slighted clergy.

While Arce, Morazán, and Gálvez carried out the first wave of unpopular Liberal reforms, a young, politically conservative, ladino officer from humble origins scaled the ranks of the Guatemalan army. As popular opposition mounted against Liberals, the officer, José Rafael Carrera, coordinated a mass rebellion during the War of the Mountain (1837-1840) to carry out a

¹⁵ Also known as the Federal Republic of Central America, Guatemala belonged to this regional federation formerly known as the Captaincy General of Guatemala from 1823-1840. Arce buckles under mounting Conservative pressures and deserts the Liberal cause to join Conservatives in 1826 to leave Guatemala in the hands of a Conservative government. A three-year civil war ensues; the Liberals regain power in 1829.

¹⁶ Woodward, *Central America*, 93-94.

¹⁷ Griffith, William. *Empires in the Wilderness Foreign Colonization and Development in Guatemala, 1834-1844*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965.

¹⁸ The head tax was a tax on individual citizens. Woodward, *Central America*, 94-101.

coup which later successfully ousted Liberal leadership from national politics. As a Conservative president, Carrera found his support base in rural indigenous communities who under Galvez's Liberal reforms, had been taxed and forced to labor on state projects while at the same time (in some cases), found their communal lands privatized by the same Liberal legislation. Meanwhile, the clergy, angered by Liberal anticlerical policies, encouraged the often dispossessed rural indigenous population to actively support the Conservative Carrera during the three-year war. Following the Conservative victory of the War of the Mountain, and for the next three decades—during a period known as the “Thirty Year Dictatorship,” Carrera reversed much of the work of the first Liberals. He restored Church authority and property, eliminated burdensome work obligations and taxes on the indigenous population, and remained at the head of his Conservative party until his death in 1865.¹⁹

Following Carrera's death, Guatemala entered a period of political transition under the moderate-Conservative administration of Vicente Cerna. Although Cerna was Conservative in the religious sense—maintaining close ties with the Catholic Church, he did undertake some economically progressive projects that former Conservatives did not, or would not.²⁰ Cerna exhibited the *Conservative* tendency to preserve the Church's political influence in national affairs, but in terms of economic policy, he proposed *Liberal* objectives such as the development of railway, telegraph, and port projects, while even completing the construction of a large, modern market in the capital.²¹ Although Cerna encouraged discussion of national concerns between Conservatives and Liberals and adopted economically Liberal policies, Cerna's compromising leadership ultimately did not satisfy Liberal demands and was said to have “lost

¹⁹ Ibid, 98-115.

²⁰ Clegern, *Origins of Liberal Dictatorship*, 153.

²¹ Ibid, 147-49

the respect and adhesion of the people.”²² Cerna’s six-year presidency ended with the decisive defeat of the Conservative army by Generals Granados and Barrios in the summer of 1871.

Barrios and Granados would begin a newly defined, second wave of Liberalism in nineteenth century Guatemala. Although they both sought to suppress the conservative support base and bring life to a fading economy, the two leaders further distinguished the new era through personally distinct perceptions of liberalism. While Barrios focused almost exclusively on the economic dimensions of liberalism and the rapid expansion of the coffee industry, Granados favored a balanced approach which politically implemented classical liberal themes of liberty, reason, and morality while also working hard to cure Guatemala of its economic ills.

Socially, nineteenth-century Guatemala was very much an ethnically divided nation. Three major divisions existed; the powerful Guatemalan-born citizens of Iberian heritage known as *criollos* (creoles), the *indígenas* (the native Guatemalans who maintained their traditional culture and customs), and the *ladinos* (of pure indigenous or mixed European and indigenous descent who had adopted Spanish cultural characteristics).²³ The creole ethnic minority in Guatemala geographically occupied the capital for the most part, dominated national and regional politics with few exceptions, monopolized commerce through a merchant guild known as the *Consulado de Comercio*, and mostly composed the small community of the land-holding oligarchy.²⁴ Creoles were divided politically; the urban creoles of the merchant guild supported Conservatives who preserved their commercial privileges while coffee-planting creoles of the Western Highlands and the Upper Verapaz regions presumably supported Liberals who sought to

²² Ibid, 148. *New York Times*. Success of the Revolution, Downfall of President Cerna. August 13, 1871.

²³ The term “Ladino” loosely designates a class of Guatemalan society of which its indigenous members have cast off expressions of indigenous culture often by abandoning native dress, adopting the Spanish language, and leaving their indigenous communities.

²⁴ Conservative President Rafael Carrera was a *ladino*. Ralph Lee Woodward. *Class Privilege and Economic Development: the Consulado of Guatemala, 1793-1871*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966. 124.

accommodate coffee producers. The indigenous and the *ladinos*, occupying the bottom rungs of the social stratum, were “separated by an enormous cultural and social gulf,” and to some extent, were separated geographically as well.²⁵ As the population majority, the indigenous were generally subsistence farming rural peoples of the Western Highlands and upper Verapaz region characterized by Eric Wolf’s “closed, peasant societies” and focused communal interests on preserving their traditional culture and political autonomy.²⁶ Considering the forged alliance between many rural indigenous communities and the Catholic Church, and given that Carrera and Cerna allowed the communities to maintain a large degree of political autonomy, most indigenous supported Conservatives, or at the very least, opposed Liberals.²⁷ The *ladinos*, a group encompassing a broader ethnic classification, were distinctively divided into urban and rural categories, and wielded some but limited economic and political powers at local and regional levels.²⁸ Although concentrated in the lower lying regions of eastern Guatemala, *ladinos* inhabited rural and urban locales of Guatemala, held key positions in local level political administrations, and controlled some commerce within national borders. Carol Smith explains the loosely-defined economic, political, and social status of the *ladino* as: “*ladinos* never had the clout of the (creole) plantation oligarchy, they did hold considerable sway over Indian communities...and were important in controlling peasant areas,” but because their political bases were local, they were unable to strongly influence politics on a national scale.²⁹ *Ladinos* were

²⁵ Carol Smith. “Local History in Global Context: Social and Economic Transitions in Western Guatemala,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26, (April 1984): 208.

²⁶ Eric Wolf. “Closed Corporate Peasant Communities in Mesoamerica and Central Java,” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 13, (Spring 1957):1-18. Wolf describes impoverished and exclusively indigenous communities which remain focused on communal activity and willingly remains disconnected from the affairs of the larger society. Smith, *Local History in Global Context*, 216.

²⁷ Douglass Sullivan-Gonzalez. *Piety, Power, and Politics: Religion and Nation-Formation in Guatemala, 1821-1871*. Pittsburgh, PA: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998.

²⁸ Smith, *Local History in Global Context*, 216.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 207.

also divided politically; some supported the Conservatives for its strong affiliation with the Church, while some of the rural population who hoped for relief of heavy taxes, supported Liberals.³⁰

Economically, nineteenth-century Guatemala continued to be agriculturally based, export oriented, and dependent on external markets. Monocrop export dependency persisted through the nineteenth century in Guatemala, and as agriculture had been during the late colonial period, functioned as a subsistence base for the rural indigenous and a means of acquiring wealth for the land-owning oligarchy.³¹ At the turn of the century through the 1850's, Guatemala harnessed the potential of the cochineal market which brought brief economic prosperity until the discovery of synthetic (aniline) dyes led to a sharp decline in demand.³² Although modest efforts of coffee cultivation began in the mid-century, full-scale efforts did not begin until the 1860's. Following Costa Rica's example which first developed coffee as a major export decades earlier, Guatemala maintained an "outwardly focused" model of development as regional and local authorities struggled to gain and develop the human and material infrastructure to support the demands of coffee cultivation for export.³³

Given the political, social, and economic realities of nineteenth-century Guatemala leading up to the Revolution, many obstacles blocked projects for national advancements (according to the Liberal perspective). Violence and extended periods of political instability because of a weak state had plagued Guatemala since independence; the entire region of Los

³⁰ McCreery, *Rural Guatemala*, 172-3.

³¹ Monocrop export dependency rested on cacao during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries before transitioning into indigo cultivation through the eighteenth century. The indigenous depended on the cultivation of maize while cochineal and coffee became the primary exports of the nineteenth century national economy. McCreery, *Rural Guatemala*, 18.

³² Carol Smith. "Beyond dependency theory: national and regional patterns of underdevelopment in Guatemala." *American Ethnologist* 5 (March 1978): 588. Griffith 1965, 125. David McCreery, "Coffee and Class: The Structure of Development in Liberal Guatemala," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 56, (August 1976): 440.

³³ Roseberry et al., *Coffee, Society, and Power*, 10-15.

Altos of Western Guatemala seceded from the Republic, violence frequently broke out in San Antonio of Suchitepéquez for decades over land disputes, a conflict in San Sebastián of lower Verapaz resulted sixty imprisoned and seven dead in January 1864 (again over land disputes), and various riots outside the capital in Santa Catarina produced in several dead in April 1865.³⁴ Societal ills such as drunkenness and vagrancy hindered economic growth, and the lack of capital, credit, land, and willing laborers obstructed the potential expansion of an export economy.³⁵

National progress faced many obstructions, but late nineteenth-century Liberals like Generals Granados and Barrios designed ambitious solutions for these obstructions and just as important, provided a clearly defined vision of progress—*mostly manifested in material terms*. These Presidents of *La Reforma*, inspired by this vision and dedicated to achieve it, used language to promote it, legislation to realize it, and state institutions such as the military to enforce it. The ambitions they embraced during the reform period yielded waves of decrees and the rhetoric the Liberal vision inspired flooded the print media throughout the era.

In exploring the ambitions of the Liberal agenda during *La Reforma*, it is an intention of this investigation to define the Liberal vision of progress while also considering exactly who and what obstructed efforts to carry out that vision. Not only does the study endeavor to examine Liberal ambitions and obstacles facing reform Presidents Granados and Barrios, it is also the purpose to examine the key tools Liberals used (rhetoric and legislation) to carry out their respective agendas. In addressing these ambitions, obstacles, and realities, the investigatory agenda considers some of the questions remaining under-researched by historians to this point. What were the goals of the Liberals when they came to power in 1871, what obstacles did they

³⁴ McCreery, *Rural Guatemala*, 140, 154.

³⁵ Miguel García Granados. *La Ley Orgánica*. November 13, 1871. CIRMA. Fondo Leyes y Decretos Collection, Document Series, No. 252.

face, and how did those obstacles affect their rhetoric, legislation, and the overall direction of *La Reforma*? How did Presidents Granados' and Barrios' goals, projects, and vision for Guatemala overlap or differ? How clearly did the Presidents communicate these goals, projects, and visions? And finally, were the Presidents successful in implementing their agendas and if so—to what degree did their actions determine the economic and political character of the Guatemalan reform era? In considering the conditions and realities of *La Reforma*, it is the hope that scholars can better understand Granados' and Barrios' individual and complimentary roles in carrying out the Liberal vision in post-revolutionary Guatemala.

The research employs a combination of primary and secondary sources. I use a collection of monographs and broad historical narratives to create the historical backdrop necessary to contextualize my research while I use primary sources such as original legislation, public announcements, personal correspondence, speeches, newspaper articles, and photographs from the era to fulfill my research objectives. The Center for Mesoamerican Research (CIRMA) in Antigua, Guatemala maintains extensive document and photographic archives from which I use traditional print sources and imagery to develop and support my arguments. In addition, I utilize a University of San Carlos of Guatemala publication from the University of Arizona library which indexes over seventy printed and hand-written documents dating from the period of study. Because this study examines documents primarily generated by the upper echelons of Guatemalan and North American society (all authors but one are government officials, clergymen, or reporters), the imagery collection from CIRMA serves to balance the sources by providing snapshots of Guatemalan realities during the late nineteenth century. These snapshots

provide valuable detailed insight depicting physical conditions and social divisions otherwise excluded from official documents and publications.³⁶

The archives at CIRMA and the New York Times online database provide the bulk of my primary source documents. A collection of public notices and legislative decrees from CIRMA contains information concerning failed assassination attempts and expulsions of religious orders which identify specific opposition to the Liberal party and provide rhetoric demonizing religious communities and individuals as enemies of the State. Additional addresses to the public outline Liberal economic objectives while another document authored by President Barrios speaks to the moral dimensions of Liberal governance in reprimanding authorities for abuse of authority in their respective regions. Containing glimpses of Guatemalan realities during *La Reforma* era, a collection of photos provide evidence to support my argument concerning the need for infrastructural development to aid the expanding economy. The online database of *New York Times* publications provides insight about the international perceptions and reputations of the key Guatemalan political actors of *La Reforma* (in addition to offering accounts of the Revolution's events).

The unique publication from the University of San Carlos also provides a range of documents used to fulfill research objectives. This collection captures ambitions, anxieties of obstacles to the Liberal vision of progress, and commitments to the citizens of Guatemala in public announcements and speeches from the Guatemalan General Assembly. A newspaper article in the collection speaks of various subversive activities while correspondence from an exiled archbishop provides an alternate perspective of accusations made against perceived communities of opposition. The university publication as well contains a letter to the editor of a

³⁶ Labor and living conditions, ethnic divisions reflect the realities of the reform era.

newspaper addressing the injustices, excessive violence, and shortcomings of Liberal policy from a rural farmer's perspective.

The study examines a period consistent with the years of *La Reforma* (1871-1885), although it considers events and trends in the decades preceding the Liberal Revolution. Chapter two charts political and economic trends spanning the Conservative-Liberal struggles following Independence (1821-1871) in order to orient the audience with a thorough prehistory to the Revolution. Chapter three corresponds to the Granados Presidency (1871-1873) and argues that his agenda strongly favored a politically and economically balanced approach to reform and offers that he and Liberal supporters published rhetoric with an end to defeat opposition, promote the Liberal cause, and defend state projects and policies. Chapter four examines Barrios' anti-clerical and economically focused approach to reform, and argues that during the years of his administration (1873-1885), he reduced the national standing of the Church and brought about material evidence of progress.

CHAPTER TWO: THE LIBERAL REVOLUTION OF 1871

The intent of this chapter is to provide not only the economic and political precedents to *La Reforma*, but also to provide an abbreviated narrative of the Guatemalan Liberal Revolution itself. Evolving political philosophies, economic strains, and shifts in the region's political paradigm combined to hasten revolutionary warfare in the late spring and early summer of 1871. Liberals decided it was time to deliver the economic and political relief Guatemala needed to achieve their modernizing vision.

By the time Generals Granados and Barrios resolved to forcefully overthrow Cerna's conservative Administration, the slow transition to political liberalism had begun decades before—not only in the region, but within Guatemala itself. As the demand for traditional Central American exports decreased on the global market during the 1850's, the desire for political readjustments within Guatemala escalated as the Carrera and Cerna Administrations responded with some, but limited-to-inadequate economic reform. Beyond the culminating economic stresses within Guatemala's borders during the late nineteenth century were the evolving standards and conditions for political liberalism at a global and regional scale. Across the waters of the North Atlantic, the traditional rights-based Liberalism of the eighteenth century began to fade as a modern Liberalism better suited for the growing industrial economies of the nineteenth century took its place. The transforming nature of Liberalism in Europe would influence early reform Liberals in Mexico and El Salvador in a way that would in the end, affect influence Guatemalan Liberals' political design and shape the entire region's political character.

Decades before Granados' and Barrios' unsheathed swords ever pointed to the new political horizon, the Carrera and Cerna Administrations witnessed a distinct change in economic

trend. On the North Atlantic market, the plummeting value of cochineal dyes and increasing demand for coffee encouraged adjustments in Guatemalan agricultural industries. Elsewhere in the isthmus, new transportation facilities and the recent successes in coffee cultivation swayed political interest in favor of economic reform. Potentially key economic actors like coffee cultivators and a newly developed university political climate contributed to what Woodward called the “larger phenomenon occurring in the western world.” This phenomenon would send Guatemala in the direction of a modernizing nation primarily concerned with achieving economic progress.³⁷

The opening of the Panama Railroad, the falling prices of cochineal, and Costa Rica’s profitable model of coffee cultivation invited moderate support for economic reform during the Conservative years. In 1856, the completion of the Panama Railroad introduced the potential for economic expansion in providing a second, nearer coast for exporting agricultural products grown in the fertile soils of the Pacific Piedmont.³⁸ Following the discovery of aniline dyes in Western Europe that same year, the demand for the insect-produced cochineal dye sharply declined, guiding Guatemala into to a serious economic crisis in 1863.³⁹ Turning to Presidents Carrera and Cerna, farmers who needed better transport infrastructure to maximize the returns of their diminishingly profitable crops found the Conservative leadership “unable or unwilling to respond.”⁴⁰ However, as Gudmundson and Lovell point out, upon recognizing the advantages of exporting key agricultural products (i.e. coffee), Carrera and Cerna did begin to accommodate growers by parceling and privatizing lands for the development of the new crop throughout the

³⁷ Woodward, *Central America*, 151.

³⁸ The geographic region of the Pacific Piedmont, also known as the Boca Costa, is the foothills of the Pacific Slope that sharply descends to open Pacific Coast Lowlands on Guatemala’s southern coast.

³⁹ Dawson, *Labor Legislation and Social Integration*, 127.

⁴⁰ McCreery, *Development and the State*, 6-7.

1850's and 1860's.⁴¹ Examining the successful economic mold of Costa Rica's coffee-based export economy established in the preceding decades, the Conservative Presidents also endorsed experimental cultivation of coffee. By 1855, coffee farms appeared in Antigua, Cobán, and Amatlán, and the value of coffee exports climbed steadily from *one* percent in 1860 to *forty-four* percent in 1870.⁴² Although it occurred slowly, economic expansion based on coffee exports indeed began during the Conservative years.

Perhaps as equally important in advancing support for political liberalism in the decades preceding the Revolution were the constraints the economic elites placed on the national economy. The Conservative regime favored a small but influential class of Guatemala City elite who operated through an exclusive and monopolizing merchant's guild known as the *Consulado de Comercio*.⁴³ In an effort to maintain its long history of monopoly on foreign trade, the *Consulado de Comercio* greatly limited the availability of credit for farmers and entrepreneurs, opposed any efforts to diversify, and rejected the possibility of free trade.⁴⁴ Although the strangled and failing state of industry during the Carrera and Cerna regimes did not threaten the majority of Guatemala's population who directed their economic efforts in subsistence farming, it did threaten failure for agriculturists. The Conservatives' lack of pointed efforts to expand the export economy jeopardized the livelihood of struggling finca owners who normally lacked the capital and labor critical for converting farms into productive coffee enterprises. Establishing a coffee farm (after clearing the lands or converting from another crop) took five or six years of

⁴¹ Lowell Gudmundson and Hector Lindo-Fuentes. *Central America, 1821-1871: Liberalism before Liberal Reform*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995.

⁴² Woodward, *Central America*, 150.

⁴³ McCreery, *Development and the State*, 6. Ralph Lee Woodward. *Class Privilege and Economic Development: The Consulado de Comercio de Guatemala, 1793-1871*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966, 124.

⁴⁴ McCreery, *Development and the State*, 7. Woodward, *Class Privilege and Economic Development*, 124-25.

labor intensive activity and returned no profits.⁴⁵ Credit, capital, and labor were in short supply to aid fledgling fincas. Woodward explains that it was during this period in Central America—Guatemala included, that “planters had become disillusioned with governments which had been unable to find adequate solution to the problems of declining markets for their commodities or to changing world trade conditions. The outlying districts were alienated by tendency of Conservative governments to operate principally for the benefit of a select group in the capital.”⁴⁶

Liberal politics arrived to Mexico and the isthmus beginning in the mid-1850’s. National leadership prioritized economic progress and order and weak politicians gave way to stronger personalities who then served prolonged administrations and extended an era of vast economic and political reform into the early twentieth century. To the North, Mexico’s liberal period began in 1855, to the South—El Salvador in 1860, and Costa Rica in 1870. Although Costa Rica began its reform era under liberal-minded Tomas Guardia only fourteen months before the start of the Guatemalan reform period, Mexico’s Benito Juárez and El Salvador’s Gerardo Barrios had been curbing ecclesiastical power, reforming the education system, the economy, and national policies for more than a decade before Guatemala experienced the Revolution (beginning in 1855 and 1858, respectively).⁴⁷

Positivism was the driving intellectual force behind the change in the region’s political tide. The distinct brand of late nineteenth-century Latin American Liberalism (the *modern Liberalism*) embraced the European-sourced philosophy that suggested economic development could and would bring about social progress to the often ethnically polarized societies of the

⁴⁵ Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 105-06.

⁴⁶ Woodward, *Central America*, 152.

⁴⁷ Thomas Skidmore and Peter Smith. *Modern Latin America, 5th Ed.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, 322. Woodward, *Central America*, 152.

region. According to Charles Hale, positivism effectively changed the direction and meaning of Liberalism for Latin American nations during the last half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁸ In fact, the fashionable philosophy precipitated a political refinement of earlier liberal styles, better aligning it with nineteenth-century ideas of scientific progress. Reformist politicians in the region often coupled pseudoscientific doctrines, like Social Darwinism, with economic ambition to justify policies which forced *naturally lazy* and *racially inferior* indigenous populations to work in the expanding and labor-intensive export economies.⁴⁹ As Hale explains, the “refined” late nineteenth-century Liberalism eventually functioned to rationalize authoritarian-style rule which economically benefitted the agrarian elite while forfeiting the egalitarian essence behind the decades-old style of *classical liberalism*.⁵⁰

Although adopting a more science-oriented approach to politics, late nineteenth-century Liberals of Mexico and Central America did also selectively borrow policies employed by Liberals earlier that century. Politicians adopted reforms employed by prominent earlier Liberals like José Arce and Francisco Morazán while contradicting some of their basic tenets.⁵¹ These new breed Liberals still sought to limit the Church’s status, carry out education reform, and modernize the economy, but now under the philosophical guidance of positivism, national leaders wanted economic development—regardless of the social cost. Despite accepting many of the same goals of earlier classical Liberals, modern Liberals in effect discarded democratic principles through unconstitutional re-elections and violated egalitarian standards in the application of certain economic policies. Encouraged by Social Darwinism, presidents

⁴⁸ Hale, Charles. *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico*. Princeton University Press, 1990.

⁴⁹ David McCreery. “Debt Servitude in Rural Guatemala, 1876, 1936.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 63, no. 4 (November 1983): 738.

⁵⁰ Hale, Charles, *Transformation of Liberalism*, 1990.

⁵¹ McCreery, *Development and the State*, 14.

implemented policies, which to varying degrees, forced the poor and indigenous off their lands and into the servitude of a debt-slavery system.⁵² Leaders like Gerardo Barrios, Tomas Guardia, Justo R. Barrios, and Porfirio Díaz pursued not only expansion of their economies, but the resulting prosperity that would deliver the electricity, telegraphs lines, steel structures, and steam locomotives of the modern age to Latin America.

Mexico's Liberal reform era, occurring before any other in the region, served as a template for Guatemala's liberal governments in the following decades. Despite the considerable delay in time and differences in political environment, Reform Guatemala in many ways paralleled the style and structure of its liberalizing neighbor to the North. Mexico's reform politicians, embraced the in-vogue philosophies and doctrines of the era (especially Porfirio Diaz and his advising staff of *científicos*), discerningly borrowed principals from earlier Liberals (especially Benito Juárez), and desired strong central authority.⁵³ Unlike Guatemala, however, Mexico faced mounted domestic opposition of the clergy, military, and the landowning class in a three-year civil war (War of the Reform, 1858-1861), and also five years of foreign occupation under Napoleon III's protégé, Archduke Maximilian who allied with Conservative supporters from 1862 until 1867. Despite the higher intensity of political tumult in national politics, Mexican liberal reform addressed the significant issues Guatemalan Liberals would address in the following decades.⁵⁴ Upon calling for the removal of Conservative Antonio López de Santa Anna in the 1854 Plan of Ayutla (and replacing him in 1855), Benito Juárez ushered in an era of reforms which within five years, transformed Mexico's political, economic, and social landscape. Together, the 1857 Constitution and the 1859 Laws of La Reforma eliminated special

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid, 14. Charles Hale. *Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora, 1821-1853*. Yale University Press, 1968. 220-21.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 220-21.

courts for the clergy, established a regular standing Army under civilian control, confiscated Church property not used for worship, implemented land reform, and instituted civil marriage. Juárez incorporated reform laws into the Constitution in 1873, and Díaz developed a professionalized, modern army while seeking to advance establishments of higher education.⁵⁵ Like Guatemala, the indigenous of Mexico often lost communal landholdings to large landholders under reform laws which eliminated corporate landholdings. Similarly, Reforma Mexico looked to Western Europe and North America to provide the expertise and capital to develop the infrastructure needed to support the expanding economy.⁵⁶

As Liberalism gained momentum in Central America and Mexico, Liberal thinkers in Western Europe began to find rights-based Liberalism of the eighteenth century in need of modifications to accommodate modernizing goals. According to Richard Bellamy, the Enlightenment-borne *ethical Liberalism* of guaranteed rights for all citizens proved inadequate for the modernizing, ethnically pluralistic societies of Western Europe starting in the last three decades of the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ Triggered by the rise of modern industrial society, he explains that from 1870-1930, Europe's developing capitalist economies led to the intensification of class conflict.⁵⁸ As a consequence of the class conflict, economic progress at a national scale seemed unattainable without forfeiting guarantees of individual liberties for some citizens (for the working classes). In other words, economic productivity took precedence over the citizenry's natural right of individual autonomy. *Modern Liberalism*—what Bellamy identifies as the alternative model of Liberalism, came to replace the *ethical Liberalism* that modernizing,

⁵⁵ Ibid, 221. Hale, *Transformation of Liberalism*, 205.

⁵⁶ Skidmore, *Modern Latin America*, 224-26.

⁵⁷ Richard Bellamy. *Liberalism and Modern Society: A Historical Argument*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992, 2-3.

⁵⁸ Bellamy, *Liberalism and Modern Society*, 252.

industrial societies had “undermined.”⁵⁹ As Ruggiero suggests, in modern form of Liberalism, the state became an “instrument of economic exploitation” as economic interests in the name of national progress came into conflict with guarantees of civil liberties.⁶⁰ As Ruggiero points out, a second fundamental change in the evolving concept of Liberalism was the greatly diminished role of the Catholic Church in national politics. He suggests that Liberals did not lose their faith, but instead emphasized the freedom to interpret the Holy Scriptures without the guiding force of the Catholic Church.⁶¹

Combined with pressing economic conditions, the evolving concept of Liberalism in Europe and Mexico merged to politically charge a “new generation of liberal leaders” including the future leaders of the Revolution.⁶² As Carrera’s Presidency rolled into its final decade under a stagnating economy, Liberals within Guatemala considered the implications of Mexico’s seminal liberal reforms and welcomed European intellect to light a path of revolutionary vigor. When the sheer force behind the currents of military leadership eventually cracked the dam of Conservative Guatemalan politics in May of 1871 with initial skirmishes, it wasn’t long before the leading Liberals of the quickly developing Revolution crumbled the supporting structure of national politics completely.

The Events of the Liberal Revolution:

In May and June of 1871, the events of a budding Revolution developed quickly. Relatively few combatants battled and even fewer spilled their blood. Cerna’s Army crumbled laughably within weeks of attacks, and by the first week of July, Granados was promptly and

⁵⁹ Ibid, 252.

⁶⁰ Guido Ruggiero. *The History of European Liberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1927, 423.

⁶¹ Ruggiero, *History of European Liberalism*, 14-5.

⁶² Woodward, *Central America*, 152.

confidently executing his agenda. By the first half of August, the Revolution was recorded to be “entirely successful in overturning the Administration of President Cerna.”⁶³

By May of 1871, Liberal troops had already routed Cerna’s forces at least two times. On June 7, President Cerna deserted the capital with 1,000 men, placing the care of the Republic under his ministers. The craven commander was reportedly “very unwilling to fight against the superior arms of the revolutionary party.” By this time, and speaking to the lack of political support by Cerna’s field commanders, at least one officer by the name of Viteri decidedly abandoned conservative forces to join Granados’ command.⁶⁴

A *New York Times* publishing, datelined 19 June 1871 from the *Panama Star & Herald* described the last key battle which took place before the fall of the capital. By the end of May, the Revolution was said to be “making serious headway against the Government” under Granados’ leadership. Entertainingly, the article posted that on the 29th of the previous month, “a battle or what in these countries is called by that name” took place near a village called Chiché in the Department Totonicapán, in which the Government forces of 800 men were defeated by the revolutionists.⁶⁵ Of the “disaster,” a comical account of the chaos accredited:

“The troops (Cerna’s federal troops) were in good spirits and courageously sustained the first fire of the enemy which did no damage. Suddenly an inexplicable panic took possession of the two or three companies occupying the centre, which broke and ran...the panic soon became general...The government troops only fired one volley in the direction of the rebels, and then broke ranks, threw away their arms, and scattered in all directions—two or three hundred going over to the side of the rebels. It seems they are in the ranks of the rebel forces. The officers (of Cerna’s forces) retired without serious molestation from the enemy, and in the road succeeded in reuniting some of the scattered force, while many others sought safety in the direction of their homes. Five or six were killed and about the same number wounded...”⁶⁶

⁶³ *New York Times*. “Success of the Revolution Downfall of President Cerna.” August 13, 1871.

⁶⁴ *New York Times*. “Central and South America, Miscellaneous Intelligence from Guatemala, Honduras, Chili, and Peru.” July 14, 1871.

⁶⁵ *New York Times*. “Guatemala Revolution: Progress of the Revolution—The Government Losing Ground—Rout of the Regulars.” July 2, 1871.

⁶⁶ *New York Times*, “Guatemala Revolution,” July 2, 1871.

Following the battle, Granados reportedly marched to the highlands and issued a proclamation announcing himself liberator of the country. The article concluded: “It is difficult to say what will be the result of this revolutionary movement. One thing, however, seems quite certain, and that is, that no revolution for the past twenty years against the government of Guatemala has ever reached a point so full of promise of success.”⁶⁷

On June 30, Granados’ forces secured the capital. The authority of the provisional Government was said to have been instantly respected, and everything went on “in the most orderly manner.” Mercifully, Granados’ mandated that none of the members of the ousted administration were to be “molested or persecuted.” Presumably as planned, Granados presented his immediate agenda in the clearest and most purposeful style the very day of the capital’s capture: “The monopoly of *aguardiente* was to be abolished, and freedom of the press established, with every measure necessary to preserve order, and the sale and planting of tobacco to be free.”⁶⁸

The events of the 1871 Liberal Revolution in Guatemala lasted but three months and involved a small amount of fighting. Considering the lack of civilian and military support for Cerna and the speed at which Granados and Barrios achieved success may indicate Guatemala’s receptiveness to a new administration. An era of Liberal politics had been born.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ *New York Times*. “Success of the Revolution,” August 13, 1871.

CHAPTER THREE: MIGUEL GARCIA GRANADOS AS PROVISIONARY PRESIDENT, 1871-1873

This chapter examines the early years of *La Reforma* during the Miguel García Granados Administration (June 1871-June 1873). The objectives of this section extend beyond the political narrative of the Granados Administration in order to consider how ambitions, obstacles, and rhetoric framed the first presidential Administration of *La Reforma*. The chapter identifies the ambitions that Liberals pursued during the Granados presidency and the obstacles which confronted his Administration. I argue that Granados strongly favored a thorough and very balanced approach to economic and political reform and suggest that Granados and his supporters utilized published rhetoric to demonize opposition, elevate the Liberal cause, and promote state projects and policies. The final section analyzes the degree to which the Granados Administration achieved the visionary aspirations of constructing transport and communications infrastructure, expanding the economy, and creating the modeled Democratic Republic of the modern world.

Historians specializing in Reform Guatemala portray Granados as an overly cautious or failed president. Central American historian Ralph Lee Woodward succinctly described President Granados as “well-meaning and democratic, but inept.”⁶⁹ In Jorge García Laguardia’s *La Reforma Liberal en Guatemala* (1972), the Guatemalan historian’s estimation of the Granados Presidency is less severe, asserting that Granados avoided the radical reforms typical of the Reform era. Laguardia explains that Granados followed a “prudent path” in effort to not only maintain the politically conservative republic he desired, but also to avoid possibly

⁶⁹ Woodward, *Central America*, 154.

compromising domestic peace.⁷⁰ In *Development and the State in Reforma Guatemala* (1983), David McCreery asserts that the Administration failed to “extend beyond the political”—though in his more recent publication, *Rural Guatemala* (1994), he adds that Granados and his supporters had at least “anticipated” developing agricultural and industrial sectors of the economy (but failed to deliver).⁷¹ McCreery went on to emphasize that “the State during the reform period”—referring to the development and historic character of the period, had little to do with the Granados Presidency, but was instead, “to a very great extent, President Justo Rufino Barrios.”⁷²

In arguing that Granados carried out a thorough and balanced approach to economic and political reform, I hope to establish that the undervalued or often overlooked Administration was indeed an important and integral part of *La Reforma*. Historians cast Granados into Barrios’ shadow and seemingly miscalculate the importance of his national leadership and political achievements. Granados certainly “extended beyond the political” although even *specialists* of the reform era rarely give Granados more than an acknowledgement for his role in economically reordering the Republic. He carried out fiscal reform, broke monopolies, and brought infrastructure to support a growing export economy. And between introducing new property taxes for rural *and* urban citizens, creating an elected assembly for drafting a fresh Constitution, instituting a military draft, and contracting modernizing projects, it’s difficult to echo Laguardia’s evaluation of Granados’ timidity about radical reform. Considering the type and amount of rhetoric generated during the Administration and the extent to which Granados’ executive actions reordered the Republic, it is also difficult to deny that the State’s development

⁷⁰ Laguardia, *La Reforma Liberal*, 173-4, 204.

⁷¹ David McCreery. *Development and the State in Reforma Guatemala, 1871-1885*. Athens Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1983, 1. McCreery, *Rural Guatemala*, 172.

⁷² McCreery, *Development and the State*, 15.

and historic character during the reform period was also “to a very great extent,” *President Miguel García Granados*.

The Spanish-born Miguel García Granados Zavala (1809-1878), rose from a family of wealthy merchants who were instrumental in the initial developments of the coffee industry of Western Guatemala.⁷³ Granados gained provisory presidential status upon defeating the Cerna’s armed forces on June 30, 1871 and remained in said post until Liberals could establish the terms for democratically electing a President for the Republic.⁷⁴ Until leaving office on June 4, 1873, Granados maintained the political reputation of a moderate reformist who sought to diversify the economy while building a modern republic based on liberty and respect for democratic procedures.⁷⁵ Although Granados found political support in the highest social orders of Guatemala City as a well-educated, multilingual intellectual, his role as a General in the Guatemalan Army and the leading General of the Revolution acquainted him to the hardships of life in the field and bridged him personally to the common soldiers of the countryside.⁷⁶ Despite his political categorization as a moderate, Granados aggressively promoted Liberal ideals through rhetoric, military action, and decisive executive action during the initial years of *La Reforma*. Ultimately, the “well-meaning, but inept” President lost support and short of twenty four months after assuming the role of provisory president, he respectfully and dutifully yielded to the more radically reformist General Barrios.⁷⁷

⁷³ Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 171. Woodward, *Central America*, 153-4.

⁷⁴ When the Liberal Revolution of 1871 ended, General Granados was placed at the head of the Republic as “provisory president” until Guatemala established a system for the democratic election of a national president.

⁷⁵ James Mahoney. “Radical, Reformist and Aborted Liberalism: Origins of National Regimes in Central America.” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 33, no. 2 (May 2001): 227. McCreery, *Rural Guatemala*, 172.

⁷⁶ Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 172. *New York Times*. “Central America: Affairs in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.” August 20, 1870. The article critically labels Granados “criminal and rebellious.”

⁷⁷ In a formal address to the Constituent Assembly in December of 1872, Granados selflessly declares that under recommendations of the men by his side, it would be “in the best interests of the Revolution to separate himself from the Presidential post.” Jorge Mario García Laguardia. *La Reforma Liberal en Guatemala: Vida Política y Orden Constitucional*. Guatemala City: Universidad de San Carlos, 1972, 334

Liberal Ambitions during the Granados Administration

President Granados favored implementing a broad range of reforms in envisioning modernization for Guatemala. Popularly known as *El Viejo*, or “the old one,” Granados envisioned a modern republic characterized by a secularized politics and an infrastructurally renewed economy. However, possibly fearing political instability in a vulnerable post-revolutionary period, Granados was reputedly timid to execute the radical reforms Barrios would later carry out later in *La Reforma*.⁷⁸ As a political favor or as an intended security measure against an occasionally rebellious citizenry, Granados placed the Revolution’s second-in-command, General Barrios as Governor and Military Commander of the particularly unruly western departments. For his politically cautious measures during such a revolutionary period, some Liberal supporters would later accuse him of being an enemy to the Revolution (despite his commanding role in the movement).⁷⁹ However revolutionary his political reputation, Granados made imperative the drafting of a Liberal national constitution to promote concern for human dignity and create the basis for social justice. As President, Granados’ extensive economic and political goals centered on ensuring fiscal responsibility, creating educational opportunities in rural locations, balancing agricultural and industrial development, and creating the complimenting infrastructure to support the export economy.

President Granados’ ambitions and vision of progress shaped the language and influenced the language of Liberal rhetoric used to support and defend official decrees and other executive decisions. A firm believer in the Enlightenment principles which guided earlier Guatemalan Liberals, Granados and his supporters founded their defense and promotion of Liberal policies

⁷⁸ Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 180.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 175.

engendered during his Administration in reason, perceptions of morality, and talk of absolute liberty. Playing a particularly strong role in Liberal rhetoric and used as models for rationale, science, and perhaps examples of moral philosophy were what McCreery calls the countries of the “North Atlantic core” in an established new world order.⁸⁰ France, Germany, and Britain represented to Guatemalan Liberals of the reform era not only advanced modern nations, but societies of enlightened status. Thus, during the first years of *La Reforma*, an enlightened political perspective served as a basis for Liberal rhetoric.

An 1872 newspaper article to the editor of Jocotenango’s *El Crepúsculo* captures exactly the essence of Granados’ political character described above. In the length article, several anonymous supporters of President Granados defined the significance of state action and legislation drafted during the first twelve months of the President’s Administration. During the course of supporting and defending the some thirty-two official state actions including military actions, national decrees, and banishments of Church authorities, the authors reminded the audience four times that the *países más cultos*—“the most developed nations,” had taken the same or similar measures in founding their modern, democratic nations.⁸¹ In response to the protest against taxes for all property owners (including the urban dwellers of his support base), the article points to the example of unspecified developed nations who had carried out similar fiscal reforms in order to achieve modernizing state projects.⁸² In other cases including obligatory military service, the loss of life through revolutionary violence, and the distancing of the Church from the State (which I will later address in the section concerning obstacles

⁸⁰ McCreery, *Development and the State*, 3.

⁸¹ *El Crepúsculo*. “Administración Provisoria del Comandante General Miguel García Granados: Resumen de los Actos Administrativos Realizados Durante su Gestión.” July 20, 1872. Centro de Investigaciones de Mesoamérica (CIRMA). Arturo Taracena Arriola Collection, Document 1729.

⁸² The defense of the taxes cast guilt on the newly taxed and protesting urban property owners for not wishing to contribute to the “pecuniary resources” of a state which needed to carry out the reforms.

confronting the State), the authors indicated that developed countries had taken the same practical measures to achieve such “high levels of liberty and progress.”⁸³

Enlightenment themes of liberty, reason, and moral philosophy also appeared in published rhetoric. In the newspaper article published by *El Crepúsculo* and mentioned above, the authors credited President Granados for “giving liberty to thought without limitation” in freeing the press, and in this particular article, gave rhetoric a personal dimension in extending compliment to the literate readers whom they label as “cultured.” The article welcomed the reforms as a release from an era of ignorance and when referring to recent higher education proposals, Liberal defended motives are in reckoning that “it will be necessary in the coming century to succumb to the force of reason.”⁸⁴

The legislation Granados implemented during his Administration embodied the goals of the vision he desired for the Guatemalan nation. In striving to lay the foundation for an economically expansive, orderly and modern republic, Granados executed an extensive series of reforms. Granados focused on encouraging the growth of a diversified economy, creating transport and telecommunications infrastructure, coordinating a system for public education, enhancing fiscal efficiency, and creating a national constitution.

The economic reforms Granados carried out during his Administration encouraged the development of the coffee, sugar cane, and tobacco industries. Granados supported coffee cultivation (as a member of the coffee growing community himself) as total coffee exports steadily raised to fifty percent of total exports the year he took office.⁸⁵ Granados broke the liquor monopoly (previously controlled by sugarcane cultivators and limited by the government

⁸³ *El Crepúsculo*, “Administración Provisoria,” 22.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 24.

⁸⁵ Woodward, *Central America*, 131, 154.

which remained the sole producer), then swiftly moved to then break the state monopolized tobacco industry.⁸⁶

Granados began contracting transport and communications projects. In desperate need of deep water ports, Granados declared Champerico a second national port on October 6, 1871, roughly one-hundred miles west of the original Pacific port at San José.⁸⁷ A steel wharf would be constructed several years later under the Barrios Administration and become instrumental as a second loading site for coffee exports. To be connected by the Central Railroad, Granados first contracted technicians which set the project in motion and again, although historians credit President Barrios for the successes of the Central Railroad (under which it was finally completed). Under the transportation requirements of the intended expansion of the coffee, sugar cane, and tobacco industries, a “Mr. Randall” was contracted to provide the technology and capital for the construction of a railway from the Guatemala City to the newly constructed Pacific port of San José.⁸⁸ Although Mr. Randall died shortly after the signing of the contract,⁸⁹ Granados secured a second contract when his Ministry of Development commissioned a William Kelly in April of 1872 for one million and a half pesos to carry out the construction of what would become the Central Railroad.⁹⁰ Although records documenting Granados’ efforts to carry out telegraph communications projects are scarce if not absent, a *New York Times* article

⁸⁶ The liquors monopoly included strong alcoholic beverages derived from sugarcane and maize known as *aguardiente* and *chicha*, respectively. *El Crepúsculo*. Administración Provisoria, 3, 12, 15.

⁸⁷ Laguardia, *La Reforma Liberal*, 47.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 20.

⁸⁹ No further information available concerning the full name or nationality of Mr. Randall. The San José port was completed just over two years before Granados took office. David McCreery. “Coffee and Class: The Structure of Development in Liberal Guatemala.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 56, no.3 (August 1976): 438-460.

⁹⁰ No further information available concerning the full name or nationality of Mr. Randall. The San José port was completed just over two years before Granados took office. David McCreery. “Coffee and Class: The Structure of Development in Liberal Guatemala.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 56, no.3 (August 1976): 438-460.

commented on the progress of multiple lines at the completion of his presidential duties in 1873.⁹¹

Granados drafted various policies to execute innovations meant to develop a general system of public instruction. Revenues from urban property taxes were directed to programs of higher education while the edifices of confiscated Jesuit lands were converted into schools for rural citizens.⁹² A special position was created in the rapidly modernizing western highland city of Quetzaltenango to establish high schools and stipends were granted to “those dedicated to literary careers” who could not “depend on (good) financial fortune.”⁹³

In order to finance modernizing national projects, Granados implemented fiscal reform to generate the much needed revenues. The President created a key fiscal and administrative organization known as the Ministry of Development (or *El Fomento*) in 1872 and began new approaches in taxing.⁹⁴ “For those who were used to paying nothing,” Granados created a tax for property owners of the city (known as *la contribución urbana*) which substituted the former land tax on rural citizens.⁹⁵ The tax on rural citizens was in turn, accommodatingly modified to allow impoverished rural citizens the opportunity to substitute agricultural products for cash payments (given the fact that most rural citizens participated in subsistence plot agriculture), and to “more justly distribute (solicit) taxes.”⁹⁶ Taxes were uniformly applied to wheat produce and meats (which before had varied depending on location), some revenues were redirected to specific

⁹¹ *New York Times*. “Central America: The Rebellion in Guatemala, Honduras in the Hands of Filibusters.” July 4, 1873.

⁹² *El Crepúsculo*, “Administración Provisoria,” 13, 23. To my knowledge, the only existing university at this time was the public University of San Carlos founded in 1676.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 24-5.

⁹⁴ McCreery, *Development and the State*, 104.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 13.

⁹⁶ *El Crepúsculo*, “Administración Provisoria,” 13-4.

projects (like land tax revenues applied to institutions of higher education mentioned above), and new taxes were applied to tobacco, *aguardiente*, and *chicha*.⁹⁷

Economic advancement and financial order led Granados to develop policies ensuring fiscal responsibility. He established the national Center of Financial Accounting (*La Dirección de Contabilidad Central*) to accurately determine the Nation's financial status and better invest national funds.⁹⁸ Granados also ensured the delivery of hitherto fickle monthly payments to public servants in converting the national debt in efforts to reestablish national credit.⁹⁹

In attempt to lay the structural foundation for a modern, democratic republic, Granados sought to draft another important piece of legislation—the national Constitution. Beyond the policies and legislation developed to provide justice to citizens through increased access to public education, fairer taxing, and indiscriminant military drafting, Granados wanted a guiding document for the Nation which embodied the Liberal vision and incorporated its ideals of justice, liberty, democracy, and fraternity. For this, Granados convened a national assembly to draft such a constitution.¹⁰⁰ In December 1871, Granados summoned the creation of the assembly and in March of the following year, the body convened for the first time to create the supreme governing document.¹⁰¹ Much like Mexico, the guiding principles of the Liberal Revolution would be officially incorporated into the Constitution. However, it would take another eight years until that finally happened.

Obstacles Confronting Liberals during the Granados Administration

⁹⁷ Ibid, 13, 16, 29.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 15.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 26.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 18.

¹⁰¹ Wayne Clegern. *Origins of Liberal Dictatorship in Central America Guatemala, 1865-1873*. Niwot, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1994. 152.

The factors which contributed to political instability and sluggish economic expansion (and thus the prevention of the total fulfillment of the Liberal vision) were many. While the clergy, some aristocratic families, and factions within the Liberal party itself opposed Granados, free press became politically problematic and a largely uncommitted potential workforce slowed the advancement of ambitious economic aims. These actors and actions created hurdles for Granados and supporters whose ambitions intended to send the Nation barreling towards fulfillment of a Liberal vision.

President Granados perceived the Clergy of the Jesuit and Capuchin orders as a significant threat to advancement of the Liberal agenda. Granados accused Archbishop Piñol and Bishop Ortiz of supporting and encouraging rebellion in the towns of Santa Rosa and Chiquimula.¹⁰² These high ranking clergy were two of the seventy two Jesuits later banished from Guatemala. Liberals also accused a Friar Estévan of the Capuchin order of lecturing insurgent sermons to community audiences of San Felipe Neri; he was later one of forty Capuchins exiled by Granados.¹⁰³ Also, closely associated with the Catholic Church, and sometimes as participating members—as the case with the powerful Aycinena family, Liberals targeted families of the Guatemala City aristocracy.¹⁰⁴ In the lengthy articles published in *El Crepúsculo*, the unknown authors cast blame on “four (unspecified) families which advised Carrera and Cerna in order to stupefy and impoverish the population in order to ensure the dominance of the noble and privileged class.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² *El Crepúsculo*, “Administración Provisoria,” 6-8.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 22-3.

¹⁰⁴ The Aycinena family purchased its way into the creole aristocracy in 1780 then became the dominant members Guatemala City’s high society until the mid-nineteenth century, finding prominence within the Church and the merchant oligarchy. Ralph Lee Woodward, “Economic and Social Origins of the Guatemalan Political Parties: 1773-1823,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 67 (August 1987): 546.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 2.

Factions within the Liberal party presented a threat to Liberal goal as it hindered assured consolidation of the party's control. Barrios, as commanding general of the Guatemalan Army during the Granados years, acknowledged the potential danger of Liberal factions although the assured an audience of a Quetzaltenango newspaper, *El Centro-Americano* that he "hadn't the slightest fear that the Liberals would go back to the sad event of 1848 when the Liberals divided amongst themselves."¹⁰⁶ In 1872, six months before stepping down from the presidency, the potential danger of divisions within the party became reality in an address from Granados to the Constituent Assembly. Unselfishly, Granados offered to "separate himself from command (of the presidency) for the convenience of the interests of the Revolution," under suggestion of fellow party members.¹⁰⁷

Freedom of the press presented a perceived threat to political stability. An article in the newspaper *El Imparcial* perfectly illustrates how Liberals perceived freedom of speech as a threat to political stability. Submitted by a Joaquín García Granados, the author responds to a previous article published in *El Imparcial* which criticized the government for having unjustly executed a counterrevolutionary known only as Sandoval by firing squad who's supposed "only crime [was] not thinking like us."¹⁰⁸ The author severely condemns the former article's author for "attacking the government with slander and lies" and accuses him of wanting to "overthrow the government" and feigning "humanitarian concern" for the simple fact that the man wanted the presidential office himself. The articles author then continued at length to demonize the "hostile" man from which "venom spilled from his every pore" and in having discredited and

¹⁰⁶ Justo Rufino Barrios. "Carta de Justo Rufino Barrios a Manuel Fernández Durán." *El Centro Americano*, December 31, 1871. Laguardia. *La Reforma*, 282-284.

¹⁰⁷ Miguel García Granados. "Mensaje del Presidente Miguel García Granados a la Asamblea Constituyente," 28 December 1872. Laguardia. *La Reforma*, 334.

¹⁰⁸ Joaquín García Granados, of probable but not definitive relation to President Granados. Joaquín García Granados. "El Imparcial." Laguardia. *La Reforma*, 319-322. One can only assume that "not thinking like us" refers to *not thinking like a Liberal*.

doubted the newly established Liberal government, his doubt (in Granados) “removed a mask to reveal his ugly features.” The author of the article then proceeded to defend the government’s action as the sole execution of the Sandoval character was justified because he was the “evil boss of a military band (who)...committed crimes...was judged, and confessed to his crimes.”¹⁰⁹

The obstacles discussed above were instrumental in generating Liberal rhetoric contained in public addresses, decrees, and articles in the media of the era. Rhetoric functioned as a primary instrument to place Liberals on a pedestal and cast a negative light on opposition and former Conservative regimes while portraying the Guatemalan citizenry as a confused victim in an era of profound transitions. The rhetoric countering the obstacles—real or perceived, largely adopts an approach appealing to the emotions of the audience. Some passages seem to instill panic in the readers with respect to remaining pockets of Conservative resistance; the below excerpt from a public notice describes the “difficult revolutionary crisis” which Liberals found themselves confronting:

“Anarchy arises, threatening to envelop the entire nation... (it is) the storm that not only threatens, already rages, trying to shred the fibers of our sacred banner of liberty”¹¹⁰

Rhetoric contained in a variety of sources thoroughly demonized the Catholic Church and the clergy of the regular orders. The rhetoric was swift to accuse, and in some cases, outright insult clergy members. This style of derogatory language contributed to Liberal efforts to raise party status to a level respected by Guatemala’s citizens.

¹⁰⁹ The author of the article to which Joaquín García Granados responded had claimed that there were various executions when in fact, as this document asserts, there was only the execution of Sandóval.

¹¹⁰ Manuel Salazar and Hilario Galindo. “Manifiesto de la Junta Patriótica a los Habitantes del Distrito de San Felipe,” September 8, 1871. CIRMA. Arturo Taracena Arriola Collection, Document 1737.

In a proclamation to the public of San Felipe, two public officials portrayed members of the Jesuit community as violently disruptive, uncivilized, and enemies of Liberal principles. According to the document, Jesuits were “unfortunately, the uncultured part of society... and claim that the Liberal order is staining bayonets with the blood of our own brothers and attacks the religion of our forefathers.” The authors defended Liberal actions and explained that they were not attacking Catholicism; they were attacking the “farcical religion into which the Jesuits have converted Catholicism.” The condescension and disapproving language continued; “[the Jesuits live] a sad fantasy of fanaticism...and scorn the civilizing spirit of Evangelism.” The document then asserted an imperative for an open fight against fanaticism and the “enemies of our (Liberal) principles” in order to “reestablish peace.”¹¹¹

In an 1871 proclamation to the Guatemalan citizenry, President Granados defended his actions in expelling a community of Jesuits from the Santa Rosa department. Known as *La Compañía de Jesús de Guatemala*, the community was banished for organizing and encouraging a party of “disloyal and ungrateful men” to rebel on the first day of the month of September “through the use of slander.” Granados accused Jesuit priests of inspiring community residents to “fill the capital with blood” in response to the banishment of ranking Jesuit clergy in a failed rebellion. Granados censured the Jesuits he described as “simple but warlike...children of hatred” for not having dissuaded members of the community from carrying out their “criminal intentions.”¹¹²

The rhetoric during the Granados years dedicated much effort to discrediting the former Conservative regimes. The public addresses and newspaper included below portray the Conservative regimes as thieving, ignorant, deceitful, uncivilized, undemocratic, and under the

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Miguel García Granados. “Proclama del Presidente Miguel García Granados.” September 5, 1871. Laguardia. *La Reforma*, 355.

absolute control of the Catholic Church and the aristocracy. This particular rhetoric extended beyond merely outlining the missteps of past regimes; it attacked the essential character and direction of Conservatism and attributed the social and economic ills of post-revolutionary Guatemala to Conservative negligence.

In an address to the Republic on the day following the Liberal Revolution, an unknown author dishonored Conservative regimes of the past. In celebrating Liberal triumph, the proclamation enthusiastically explained that Guatemala would “no longer be robbed of its public funds” nor would it be represented without consideration for the thoughts of its citizenry. The document further explained (ironically) that “the country would no longer be sold to the foreigners” and declared the end of an era of ignorance to which the aristocrats had condemned the Nation.¹¹³

In an 1871 Justo Rufino Barrios letter reprinted in the *El Centro Americano* newspaper, Barrios attacked the character of former national leaders, Rafael Carrera (1837-1865) and Vicente Cerna (1865-1871). He explained that during the Conservative years, national leadership stood “servile” to the will of the Catholic Church which in turn, “maintained a country of ignorance, fanaticism, and division.”¹¹⁴ In defending the extent anticlerical measures adopted by Liberals, Barrios reminded the audience that the “result of the despotism (under the influence of the Church) achieved the obstruction of progress and the civilization of a nation” and “covered the eyes of its citizens with a veil of fanaticism.” As commanding General of the Army, Barrios

¹¹³ Anonymus. “Aviso a los Conciudadanos de las Ventajas del Gobierno Liberal en Guatemala.” July 1, 1871. CIRMA. Arturo Taracena Arriola Collection, Document 1707. The choice of words is ironic in that Liberals relied heavily on foreign capital investments and sold land cheaply to many Europeans in coffee growing regions in order to increase bulk agricultural exports.

¹¹⁴ Though it is not specified to whom the Conservatives are subservient, with the continued use of the word “serviles” in reference to the Conservative presidents, one can reasonably assume that they are servile to the best organized and politically dominant institution of the era—the Catholic Church.

authoritatively threatened banishment for future clergy instigators of disturbances who may try to misguide members of their respective communities.¹¹⁵

In the 1872 *El Crepúsculo* newspaper publication supporting Granados' reforms, past Conservative regimes are depicted as uncivilized brutes. In acknowledging Granados' goodwill, the authors emphasize that the participants of a reactionary movement were granted amnesty unlike the treatment they would've received in the past. Under Carrera, participants of a revolt would've been "captured, placed in dungeons, and tortured." Yet thanks to the Granados' grace, they were "treated with the utmost consideration."¹¹⁶

After having demonized the Catholic Church, past Conservative regimes and their supporters, rhetoric then praised Liberal actions taken against these political obstacles in order to promote a positive image of the Granados Administration. Although Granados occupied the presidency, much of the rhetoric is directed at General Barrios who was essentially in charge of maintaining domestic order. The rhetoric focused on the Liberal vision fighting for a sacred cause while defending Liberal treatment of opposition for the good of the Guatemalan people.¹¹⁷

In several documents, President Granados and General Barrios assure the Guatemalan population of their dedication to the duty of eliminating obstacles confronting Liberal aims. In an address from President Granados to the public, he proudly proclaimed his "first duty at the head of the country is to conserve peace and tranquility throughout the country," while Barrios assured citizens that he has "sufficient force and energy to repress and apply the severest of

¹¹⁵ Barrios. *Carta a Manuel Fernández Durán*, 1871.

¹¹⁶ Justo Rufino Barrios, *Carta a Manuel Fernández Durán*, 1871.

¹¹⁷ Justo Rufino Barrios. "Proclama de Justo Rufino Barrios a Los Compatriotas y Compañeros de Armas." September 6, 1871. Laguardia. *La Reforma*, 358-360.

penalties (to opposition).”¹¹⁸ In yet another address, Barrios moves to rally his brothers in arms for the Liberal cause: in September of 1871:

“Some men, sworn enemies of humanity...still motivated by fanaticism and ignorance maintained by the fallen administration,...have convinced themselves that the purpose of this Provisory government is to destroy the sacred religion of our fathers,...they feel attacked and have put up arms against their own brothers....I will go back to the battlefields if necessary to save our brothers from the claws of tyranny. We will not be deceived by false prophets! The Liberals are not attacking religion, on the contrary, we want the morality of his Holiness to be the standard for our conduct....these men have launched Guatemala into a fratricidal war, and as a son of the nation, I will not allow the blood of my brothers run for the sophisms of those who want to deceive.”¹¹⁹

Within the rhetoric, Guatemalan citizens were represented as victims rescued by the Liberal regime. In defending anticlerical measures, one publication explained the tithe was “eliminated in order to alleviate the burdensome tax on the poorest of citizens,” adding that Granados removed rural property taxes which to that point had fallen on the “heads of the helpless poor.”¹²⁰ A proclamation by local officials of the San Felipe district justifies anticlerical measures because Jesuits “manipulated the consciences of the weak and timid.”¹²¹ Although somewhat patronizing, citizens are referred to as the “friends of order” in a printed proclamation, and in an official communiqué between General Barrios and the author of a controversial article, “La Guasa,” the author General Barrios explains that the “liberated, industrious population (respecting) order” could obtain “reforms in their best interest...through their sacred right of petition.”¹²²

¹¹⁸ Granados, *Proclama*, 1871. Justo Rufino Barrios. “Teniente General Del Ejercito y Encargado de la Presidencia del Gobierno Provisorio de la Republica.” June 7, 1872. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 346-347.

¹¹⁹ Barrios. *Proclama a Los Compatriotas y Compañeros de Armas*, 1871.

¹²⁰ *El Crepúsculo*, “Administración Provisoria,” 13, 17.

¹²¹ Salazar and Galindo, *Manifiesto*, 1871.

¹²² Justo Rufino Barrios. “Proclama de Justo Rufino Barrios.” February 12, 1873. Laguardia. *La Reforma*, 344-345. “La Guasa” was a published work largely discrediting the Catholic Church and provided reasoning for the separation of Church and State. Barrios, *Carta a Manuel Fernández Durán*, 1871.

Obstacles to Liberal goals shaped the legislation drafted during the Granados years. Legislation, in the form of decrees, sought to eliminate the influence of the religious orders of the Catholic Church while the creation of a modern military provided the means to enforce the legislation. The legislation functioned to weaken Liberal opposition while the military functioned to suppress opponents by force.

President Granados banished seventy-two members of the Jesuit community. In an 1871 presidential proclamation two months after taking office, Granados informs the public that the Jesuit community known as La Compañía de Jesús de Guatemala was removed because it was impossible to preserve domestic order while the (Jesuit order) was still in the country.¹²³ As Granados explains, the community “had a deleterious effect on political order and performed gloomy work under the despotic regimes (of Carrera and Cerna),... and made it impossible to ensure Liberal principles.” He continues in the same document, that “it was an illusion to believe or hope that these notorious enemies of the Liberal regime would rest until they had overthrown the Liberal regime.” Held responsible for an attempted coup four days earlier by reactionaries from Santa Rosa and Chiquimula, Jesuit Archbishop Piñol and Bishop Ortiz were the first to be banished although Granados explains they were not expelled violently, but given several days in advance that they were to leave for Panama by means of the Atlantic port city of San José.¹²⁴

President Granados banished forty Capuchin friars. Granados supporters held the Capuchin order in Antigua responsible for attacks against the government (although the document doesn't specify whether this was physical opposition or slanderous attacks), and stood in the way of progress and liberty because it depended on the support of a 200-member community without contributing anything itself. The text explains that a Friar Estévan, a member

¹²³ Granados, *Proclama*, 1871.

¹²⁴ *El Crepúsculo*, “Administración Provisoria,” 6-8. Granados, *Proclama*, 1871.

of the community, “frequently preached subversive sermons” to the community and stood as an “incendiary torch of fanaticism.” Previously disciplined by officials in Spain, Estévan was banished from Guatemala and sent to Manila along with the rest of the community.¹²⁵

Granados continued his attack against the Church. In addition to eliminating the tithe and therefore eliminating an important source of Church revenue, Granados also exiled an “Archbishop SSS y C” from Guatemala.¹²⁶ In official correspondence to President Granados from León, Nicaragua, the Archbishop explains that he was given a firm notice and only hours to leave Guatemala for having supposedly promoted revolution. The exiled Archbishop further explained that his exile was without justification because he never collaborated with a Father Rafael Contreras who had served in the parish of Mataquesquintla at the center of a rebellious faction.¹²⁷

As an integral part of policy to defeat political opposition, President Granados set up the beginning of a modern regular standing Army. Active recruitment began six months after the Granados took power, and in *Decree 65* of June 1872 obliged males from eighteen to fifty years old to military service (for an unspecified amount of time) regardless of social class, as done in modernized Spain, France, and Prussia the article notes.¹²⁸ In order to better equip the then regular standing national Army, Granados purchased 4,000 Remington rifles, 200 Winchesters rifles, and two machine guns.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ *El Crepúsculo*, “Administración Provisoria,” 22.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 17.

¹²⁷ Archbishop Bernardo. “Carta de Bernardo, Arzobispo de Guatemala, desde su exilio en León, al Presidente Provisorio de Guatemala, Miguel García Granados.” December 1, 1871. Laguardia. *La Reforma*, 372-377.

¹²⁸ Clegern, *Origins of Liberal Dictatorship*, 153. Miguel A. Urrutia. “Índice de las Leyes Emitidas por el Gobierno Democrático de la Republica de Guatemala, desde el 3 de Junio de 1871, hasta el 30 de Junio de 1881.” 1882. CIRMA, Arturo Taracena Arriola Collection, Document 427.

¹²⁹ *El Crepúsculo*, “Administración Provisoria,” 27, 32. Until 1871, Guatemala had no regular standing army.

Results of Granados Administration

In all Granados' efforts to generate rhetoric and draft legislation to achieve the Liberal vision of progress, he succeeded in only partially fulfilling his ambitions. Granados produced measurable results central to his economic policy while preventing or suppressing opposition capable of destabilizing Guatemala's political system. Although often either discredited as an ineffective president or later overshadowed by President Barrios' accomplishments, Granados was valuable in realizing some Liberal ambitions during the first twenty-four months of *La Reforma*.

With respect to economic and modernizing advancements, Granados enabled slight growth in industrial production, improved fiscal responsibility in some federal institutions, and secured modernizing technology and infrastructure to assist in the expansion of the export economy. Granados swiftly broke the *aguardiente* and *chicha* monopolies after taking office which resulted not only in the increased production of the alcohols but also in the generation of 3,000 pesos per month in revenue greater than when under state-monopolized conditions.¹³⁰ Although it is probable other state institutions experienced increased efficiency and profit gain, the federalized postal service reported both improved efficiency and higher profits within the first twelve months of Granados taking office.¹³¹ The nation's first steam threshing machine brought Tecpán, Guatemala industrial scale harvesting capabilities during the Administration and though the railway from San José to the capital would not be completed until the last years of the Barrios regime, Granados resolutely sent the great Central Railroad project underway (after at

¹³⁰ *El Crepúsculo*, "Administración Provisoria," 12. The 3,000 peso increase in revenues are reported during the first seven months following the dissolution of the monopolies.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, section 10. It is not noted in the newspaper article by what metric improvements in efficiency were measured by the post office.

least one failed contractual agreement).¹³² And, by the end of June 1873 when Granados left office, he had stretched a web of telegraph lines across the country which the *New York Times* heralded as in vague terms as “being spread over the Republic and doing much good.”¹³³

Through the use of real or threatened force—and perhaps his most significant of accomplishments, Granados successfully secured national and regional stability during the crucial first two years following the Guatemalan Liberal Revolution. Stern legislation backed by a capable regular army ensured the banishment of Liberal opposition while military commanders (like General Barrios in the Western departments) or Granados himself forcefully eliminated armed combative opposition. Although the Granados years were certainly not tranquil, no domestic or regional opponent gravely threatened national political stability during his provisional term.

Granados militarily suppressed opposing factions and their supporters. Granados (presumably via field commanders) militarily suppressed factions allegedly provoked to revolt by Jesuit Archbishop Piñol and Bishop Ortiz in Santa Rosa and Chiquimula while promptly responsive legislation forced the high ranking clergy and the Jesuit community out of the country (and later appropriated their lands).¹³⁴ Further legislation expelled the Capuchin community from Antigua, including Friar Estévan, “the incendiary torch of fanaticism” who allegedly intended to kindle subversive activity and according to a newspaper article authored by General Barrios, “all government orders were respectfully welcomed in all western departments”—undoubtedly due to the presence of Barrios’ firm regional command over the Army.¹³⁵ Granados went so far as to personally command 1,500 Guatemalan troops in Honduras to prevent General-turned-President,

¹³² McCreery, *Development and the State*, 1. Woodward, *Central America*, 161.

¹³³ *New York Times*, “Central America: The Rebellion in Guatemala,” 1873.

¹³⁴ *El Crepúsculo*, “Administración Provisoria,” 7.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 22. Barrios, *Carta a Manuel Fernández Durán*, 1871.

José María Medina from providing further asylum, support, and arms for counterrevolutionaries threatening Guatemalan peace.¹³⁶

Though economic and political reforms under Granados' seemingly well-intentioned direction brought about material indicators of progress on a grander level, some documents capture the unadulterated perspectives of certain malcontents disappointed by unfulfilled Liberal pledges to justice. In a letter to a deputy of the national assembly, a constituent known only as "Petrus" expresses frustration with oppressive local officials and disapproval for the assembly's inadequate attempts to draft a constitution. He humbly admits that "We the poor farmers, inhabitants of the less favored departments of the republic, can barely understand what a constitution is" but explains that he understands the assembly devoted to developing a constitution has failed to create a general law to reach "the most remote villages." He continues in a mildly scolding tone: "It doesn't matter to us if it's full of pompous expressions and declarations of rights if the (State) doesn't have the capacity to exercise them. We've had constitutions (before) and in all of them are copied brilliant expressions that summarize in short (our) liberties...but it has only stayed on paper." Telling of actual conditions, he resumes: "we've felt the force of the government; we've had to suffer the consequences of oppression by our local officials who have made us understand how illusory these liberties were." He concludes in reasoning: "It doesn't matter if you tell us that we're all equal before the law, that freedom is an inalienable right. What we want is that we practice it and that we are governed by honorable men, that we are separated from violence and excess, that we encourage agriculture and give education to a village so ignorant. The constitution has not produced the results of giving us honorable and apt functionaries, we have continued to see these civil positions filled by ignorant

¹³⁶ *El Crepúsculo*, "Administración Provisoria," 21.

(individuals) of bad reputations.”¹³⁷ In another letter, this one addressed to President Granados, and most likely borne of reflexive self-defense, the deported Archbishop Bernardo further complains of failed justice (and ill-reasoned legislation) during the first year of *La Reforma*. The exiled Archbishop of Guatemala complains of not having received a fair trial before his expatriation (no trial at all in fact), of a “press dominated by the government,” and explains that President Granados’ “imprudent” anti-clerical executive decisions are responsible for provoking rebellions in the East (Jutiapa, Chiquimula, and Santa Rosa).¹³⁸

Faithful to preserving the nation, Granados is said during the final months of his Administration to have alienated both radical and moderate Liberals in a politically feeble attempt to avoid open conflict in the post-revolutionary Republic.¹³⁹ He first called for national elections in December 1872, only fittingly to be reassured days later by the National Assembly that he should remain Provisionary President.¹⁴⁰ Granados’ second call for national elections in *Decree 94* of March 1873, led to the election of the Governor and military commander of Quetzaltenango in the following months.¹⁴¹ In June of the same year, Granados passes the presidential post to his partner General of the Revolution, Justo Rufino Barrios. Of roughly one million voters, Granados lost by overwhelming vote of 1,414 to 6, 517.¹⁴²

Though many historians neglect to credit Granados for his presidential contributions to Guatemala during the first twenty-four months of *La Reforma*, his decisions—even if *cautious or*

¹³⁷ Petrus. “Segunda Carta de un Elector a un Diputado.” March 27, 1872. Laguardia: *La Reforma*, 412.

¹³⁸ Bernardo, *Arzobispo de Guatemala*, 1871.

¹³⁹ McCreery, *Development and the State*, 10.

¹⁴⁰ Miguel García Granados. “Mensaje del Presidente Miguel García Granados a la Asamblea Constituyente.” 28 December, 1872. And, José Antonio Salazar. “Contestación de la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, al Mensaje del Sr. Presidente de la Republica.” 31 December, 1872. Laguardia. *La Reforma*, 335.

¹⁴¹ Miguel García Granados. “Decreto de Convocatoria a Elección de Presidente de la Republica.” March 29, 1873. Also through the presumably more widely distributed form of proclamation days later in which he explains the decree stating that he wishes to continue to serve and protect Guatemala, but will step down due to lack of popular support. Granados, *Proclama*, 1871.

¹⁴² McCreery, *Development and the State*, 10.

reputably moderate, did indeed bring Guatemala one step closer to modernization and fulfilling the Liberal vision of progress. Granados' balanced and thorough ambitions for political and economic reform blended with purposeful rhetoric to defeat opposition and propel the Republic towards the recreated Guatemala Liberals imagined. However effective his statecraft or inspiring the potential for national economic progress, the aging Granados, disabled by the lack of popular support, gave way to the spirited former Governor and military commander of Quetzaltenango, Lieutenant General Justo Rufino Barrios. Many more transformations were still to come in the remaining twelve years of *La Reforma*.

CHAPTER FOUR: JUSTO RUFINO BARRIOS AS PRESIDENT, 1873-1885

“Forever the young and the generous patriot, the invincible hero that hangs laurels in forgetting the past order, who thinks only for the good of the people, for the liberty and the salvation of the motherland:--always the same, always consequential and energetic, the just democrat, the Garibaldi of Central America, with which his name honors the pages of our contemporary history.”¹⁴³

-Preceding a published letter written by General Barrios while serving as Governor of the Quetzaltenango-centered western departments, *El Centro-Americano*, 22 January 1872.¹⁴⁴

This chapter examines the latter years of *La Reforma* during the Justo Rufino Barrios Administration (June 1873-April 1885). It considers how ambitions, obstacles, and rhetoric molded the political character of the twelve-year Administration. It argues that Barrios took an anti-clerical and economically focused approach to reform that brought material characteristics of a modern republic to Guatemala while greatly reducing the national standing of the Catholic Church. It additionally submits that Barrios and his supporters used nationalistically-toned rhetorical speech in an effort to publicly glorify the President’s heroic revolutionary character, criminalize and challenge clerical and aristocratic opposition, and to a lesser extent, promote the historically meaningful process of drafting the unfinished Constitution. It concludes the section in addressing the degree to which the Barrios Administration achieved personal and broader Liberal ambitions.

Latin American specialists commonly portray Justo Rufino Barrios as the archetypical Central American Liberal dictator of the nineteenth century. Political historians like James Mahoney credit Barrios as the characteristic radical Liberal who after replacing a more moderate

¹⁴³ Reference to Giuseppe Garibaldi, an Italian politician and commander of insurrectionary campaigns during the Uruguayan Civil War (1839-1851) and Brazil’s War of Farrapos (1835-1845)

¹⁴⁴ Justo Rufino Barrios. “Carta de Justo Rufino Barrios a Manuel Fernández Durán.” December 31, 1871. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 282. *Translation mine*.

Liberal “defined the overall direction of change for the entire period.”¹⁴⁵ Reform specialists David McCreery and Jorge Mario Laguardia match in opinion that Barrios never embraced a specific political doctrine nor was he able to communicate the clear vision of progress driving his political initiatives. David McCreery explains that Barrios was unable to work out an adequate outline or theory of change to define the *development and progress* of which he commonly spoke and Laguardia explains that Barrios’ liberalism had little to do with doctrine and that it was actually based on common sense based on the exploitation of natural resources (especially agriculture).¹⁴⁶ Most narratives of the Guatemalan Reform, including J.C. Cambranes and Carol Smith’s work on the era’s economic histories focus on the continuation of monocrop dependency, although Barrios did invite the development of additional agricultural industry.¹⁴⁷

This chapter argues that although Barrios ultimately receives credit for defining the overall direction of change for the entire period, in many ways, he was really continuing many of Granados’ initiatives. As for the position that Barrios didn’t articulate his vision or doctrine to the public—the rhetoric he and his supporters use seems to not only identify guiding doctrines by name, but also illustrate the clear vision he created for the Republic. And although Barrios’ efforts did seemingly focus much of his efforts on rapidly and extensively expanding the coffee export economy, his efforts to encourage the development of new crops is too often overlooked.

Justo Rufino Barrios (1835-1885) rose from a family of provincial farmers to become one of the boldest and most memorable statesmen in Central American history. Barrios began his professional career at the College of Guatemala, later graduating in 1852 from the University of

¹⁴⁵ James Mahoney. “Radical, Reformist and Aborted Liberalism: Origins of National Regimes in Central America.” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 33, no. 2 (May 2001): 233, 228-9.

¹⁴⁶ McCreery, *Development and the State*, 13. Laguardia, *La Reforma Liberal*, 179.

¹⁴⁷ J.C. Cambranes, *Coffee and Peasants: The Origins of the Modern Plantation Economy in Guatemala 1853-1897*. South Woodstock, VT: Pumssock Mesoamerican Studies, 1985. Carol Smith, *Beyond Dependency Theory*, 588-9.

San Carlos with a degree in law.¹⁴⁸ Barrios then entered the militia to begin his battle-hardened career as an audacious and naturally confident officer, leading his first major assault on Conservative forces quartered in San Marcos in 1867, and a second and third in 1869 and 1871.¹⁴⁹ In his military endeavors many of his soldiers would be executed or exiled, while he would be gravely wounded, then escape to be later falsely declared dead on at least one occasion.¹⁵⁰ Regarded as an aggressive and fierce commanding officer, a Salvadoran General Zadavar concluded before the confirmation of Barrios' death that "when the sword of General Barrios is found on the field of battle, his right hand (assuredly) will be found firmly grasping it."¹⁵¹

Likened once to the Caesar of Rome, Barrios' reputation as a public official was no less distinguished than that while a serving officer in the militia.¹⁵² While Granados preoccupied himself with a wrangling support base of elites, Barrios served as a regional Governor and twice acting President during the Granados Administration, all the while solidifying a power base of military (probably as well as non-military) supporters before permanently taking office in 1873.¹⁵³ In 1876, his term was prolonged as Guatemala's first Constitutional President, and in 1880, he was re-elected for six years—though he would be slain on the battlefield pursuing personal ambitions. Although reputed as "intensely patriotic" and a man who "loved his country, and thought only of advancing her interests and promoting her welfare, and not at all aggrandizing and enriching himself," Barrios was reportedly mocked by contemporaries for

¹⁴⁸ Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 176-77. *New York Times*. "The Probable Result: Telegram Received by Ex-President Soto." April 5 1885.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 178.

¹⁵⁰ *New York Times*, "The Probable Result," 1885.

¹⁵¹ *New York Times*. "The Fate of Barrios: His Death Confirmed-An Incredible Guatemalan." April 6 1885.

¹⁵² Anonymous. "Al Membrillo, Poesía alusiva a las torturas hechas con varejones de esa planta." Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 418. In a poem concerning the sanctity of serving in the constituent assembly, Barrios' political leadership is compared to that of a Roman Caesar.

¹⁵³ Mahoney, *Radical, Reformist and Aborted Liberalism*, 233.

lacking intellect, and maintained a reputation as an occasionally irrational politician.¹⁵⁴

Acknowledging an advertised capacity for irrational decisions, McCreery notes that Barrios once even removed a minister of development in a disagreement over a horse race.¹⁵⁵ Driven by ego or perhaps an impulse to threaten, Barrios was indeed a self-promoter of character as well, praising his worth as a merciful ruler while warning “bad citizens” of his controlled potential for imposing wrath.¹⁵⁶ Despite the consequence of a self-interested and conceivably capricious temperament (which need not define Barrios’ character for current historians), his contemporaries seemingly held the President in high esteem. When speaking of the President’s honor, a fellow General commented that “When General Barrios dies, Guatemala will have a loss to mourn greater than has ever happened to her before. Barrios is a man among men. In any country in the world, he would be noted and conspicuous for ability, coolness, and bravery. He is not perfect—no man is—but there is no better man in Central America.”¹⁵⁷

Liberal Ambitions during the Barrios Administrations

Upon receiving a four-year extension as President, Barrios informed the Guatemalan citizens of his joint commitment to Liberal ambitions, ensuring the betterment of the Republic:

“I offer you during my Administration, peace of the interior, peace with our brothers of Central America...I offer you the guaranties of the rights of all men, and I call solemnly to honorable men, men of science, to those of all talents, to those with abilities to serve our country...for the progress of the Republic is not solely the work of the government, but the result of cooperation between all

¹⁵⁴ *New York Times*. “An Eccentric Autocrat: The Peculiarities of President Barrios of Guatemala.” November 7, 1880. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 178. McCreery, *Development and the State*, 103.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 103.

¹⁵⁶ Justo Rufino Barrios. Proclama del Jeneral [sic] Presidente de la Republica J. Rufino Barrios. October 30, 1876. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 386. After his election as Guatemala’s first constitutional president, he informed that because he has served since 1873 and therefore not “new” to the people, that citizens should recognize his “merciful side for the good, but my other side of severity and intransigence for the bad.”

¹⁵⁷ *New York Times*, “The Fate of Barrios,” 1885. Spoken by General T. B. Bunting, Chief of Artillery of Guatemalan Army.

activities, all lifted aspirations, of the abundance of sentiment held in the heart of the Guatemalans.”¹⁵⁸

As the succeeding of the once coupled commanding Generals of the Liberal Revolution, many of Barrios’ ambitions overlapped with those of his combat contemporary. Although while Granados promoted a balanced and diversified economy, Barrios—perhaps ignorant of the inherent perils of monoculture, focused on the rapid and complete expansion of a coffee-based export economy and paid little to no attention to diversifying Guatemala’s agricultural industry during years in which coffee yielded high profits. Despite this rather considerable difference in economic policy, Barrios—much like his presidential predecessor, sought to limit the influence and power of the Catholic Church, encourage and enable modernizing infrastructural projects, and to a lesser extent, publicly champion fair government and individual liberties. Profiting from nearly twelve years in office, Barrios exceeded Granados’ legislative output in scope and in number. Second to land and labor reforms, Barrios further professionalized the regular standing national army, intensified efforts to ensure domestic and regional tranquility, promoted the growth of a modern unified nation, and assured the drafting of a national constitution.

Although President Barrios reserved most of his rhetoric for fighting discontented clergy, endeavors of ensuring domestic peace and expanding the export economy primed additional layers of beaming nationalistic fervor. As commensurately passionate for idealistic Liberal ambitions as his former brother General in arms, Barrios expressed nationalistic rhetoric with perhaps more eloquence and publicly uniting intention. Public and political supporters equally as emphatic in tone acclaimed the epically courageous commander-in-chief and his agenda set for revolutionary reorganization of the Republic.

¹⁵⁸ Justo Rufino Barrios. “Proclama del J. Rufino Barrios, Barrios Aceptando la Dictadura Constitucional.” October 30, 1876. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 410.

Barrios laced rhetoric promoting Liberal goals with language often sponsoring a sense of national unity or advances in the benefit of public welfare. In clarifying the land reform policy contained in *Decree 103* of August 1873, Barrios explained that underutilized lands taken on the part of the government (Church lands or sometimes communal properties of the indigenous), were put into the hands of productive owners so that they could “contribute to the public wealth.”¹⁵⁹ As interim President while Granados toured districts outlying the Central Guatemala, Barrios spoke of his ability to pacify opposition in “his mother country” to the audience he referred to as “his friends of order.” In accepting four additional years of presidential responsibilities in 1876, Barrios—as in many other addresses, directed his remarks towards his “fellow citizens” and referred to “our common motherland.”¹⁶⁰ A sycophantic and unproductive National Assembly under Barrios’ watchful eye elevated his status to that of an honorable statesman and a “pacifier and regenerator of the Republic” in the preamble to their second decree.¹⁶¹

In the rhetoric of praise, supporters hailed Barrios’ ambitious political enterprises as the blessings of a faithful guardian of the Guatemalan people. Authors of an 1880 article published by *El Pueblo* salute Barrios’ militant willingness to “spill his blood for his people” and tribute his status as a “friend and protector of the people... [for whom he delivers] generosity and guaranties.”¹⁶² As a member of the Constituent assembly, Tomás Mendizábal approvingly

¹⁵⁹ Marco A. Soto. “Decreto 103, Desamortización de los bienes eclesiásticos.” August 27, 1873. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 367.

¹⁶⁰ Barrios, *Proclama Aceptando la Dictadura Constitucional*, 1876.

¹⁶¹ Asamblea Nacional Constituyente. “Decreto Numero 2 de la Asamblea Constituyente de la República, Declarando a J. Rufino Barrios, Benemérito de la Patria.” September 13, 1876. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 408.

¹⁶² *El Pueblo*, “Informe sobre la situación política,” 1880.

reported following the 1880 elections that “Guatemala’s son, the champion of liberty” secured 36, 552 of the 36, 627 national votes casted.¹⁶³

Liberals used historical reasoning to guide rationale in determining Guatemala’s political direction. In a series of speeches to the National Constituent Assembly, a leading member called Lorenzo Montufar detailed the imperative for a strong-handed, but sensibly-guided Republic with historically symbolic figures and places. On the 19 of October, 1876, Montufar calls for Liberal action, evoking Napoleon’s political philosophy that “ultra-Conservatives never forget or forgive,” implying that Guatemala’s military needed to continue suppressing the surely conspiring reactionaries by force. Equally as representative of Enlightenment principles, Montufar evokes images of the “July Column at La Place de la Bastille” and explained that France is a better place for having eliminated the powers of the ruling aristocracy.¹⁶⁴ He continued in including regional cases of failed Conservative regimes like Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru where “lots of people die” at the hands of divinely inspired politicians and Church supported military forces.¹⁶⁵

On the 23rd, Montufar again overwhelmed his discourse with historic reasoning. He suggested the Constituent Assembly “use the present-day philosophy and the lessons of history to examine our present-day paradise.” He cautioned the dangers of religious fanaticism as he likened a similar decline to the fractured and forlornly failed Roman Empire. Returning to France, Montufar blended Reform Guatemala into the “regeneration of the world” following the French Revolution of 1789. Montufar suggested to the assembly that the French Republic made

¹⁶³ J. Tomas Mendizábal, et. al. “Felicitando y brindando apoyo a fin de realizar las aspiraciones liberales y progresistas del General J. Rufino Barrios, Primer Presidente Constitucional de La Republica de Guatemala.” January 12, 1880. CIRMA. Arturo Taracena Arriola, Document 61.

¹⁶⁴ The obelisk monument commemorates the Storming of La Bastille, one of the first major events of the French Revolution.

¹⁶⁵ Lorenzo Montufar. “Discurso pronunciado por el Doctor Lorenzo Montufar en la Asamblea Constituyente.” October 19, 1876. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 393.

the mistake of discrediting itself through the use of terror (the shameful employment of the guillotine) instead of exercising democratic principles, implying that not counterrevolutionary resistance but political mismanagement led to a failed national experiment. Montufar continued in intellectual elegance that in during the post-revolutionary period, the “schools of history, theology, and modern philosophy” take precedence in directing political direction.¹⁶⁶

President Barrios’ principal political ambitions concerned economic reform. Mainly focused on the rapid expansion of the coffee-based agricultural industry, the subsequent reform legislation sought to acquire as much land appropriate for cultivating coffee while securing as large a labor force as possible needed for harvesting and processing the product. Despite sharp attention to coffee cultivation, Barrios did in fact attempt to diversify crops meant for export. Noted by historians for not having made an effort to diversify, Barrios drafted legislation or created incentives on at least two occasions to encourage the cultivation of different crops. Barrios noticeably increased the output of legislation specifically aiding the expansion of the coffee industry *during* the years global conditions yielded the highest profits per volume. Conversely, legislation concerning land or labor required for the emerging coffee industry is noticeably absent *following* the six years of peak profitability during the Barrios Administration (1873-1878).

McCreery provides the chart below:¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Lorenzo Montufar. “Discurso pronunciado por el Doctor Lorenzo Montufar, Sobre la Objeción Presentada al Dictamen de la Comisión que propuso se prorrogara a cuatro años el periodo presidencial del General J. Rufino Barrios.” October 23, 1876. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 403.

¹⁶⁷ McCreery, *Development and the State*, 43.

Coffee Exports and World Prices

Year	Quantity in Pounds	Average European-U.S. price per pound in U.S. silver	Gross Value
1871	11,322,900	0.13	\$1,471,977
1872	13,913,700	0.18	\$2,504,466
1873	15,050,600	0.20	\$3,010,120
1874	16,158,300	0.22	\$3,554,826
1875	16,195,900	0.20	\$3,239,180
1876	20,534,600	0.23	\$4,722,958
1877	20,788,500	0.21	\$4,365,585
1878	20,728,500	0.18	\$3,731,130
1879	25,201,600	0.17	\$4,284,272
1880	28,976,200	0.16	\$4,636,192
1881	26,027,200	0.14	\$3,643,800
1882	31,327,100	0.12	\$3,759,252
1883	40,406,900	0.11	\$4,444,759
1884	37,130,600	0.11	\$4,084,366
1885	51,516,700	0.09	\$4,636,503

President Barrios created legislation concerning the acquisition of land and recruitment of labor to fulfill economic ambitions. In the first years of his presidency, the President sought to free land for potential capital-providing farmers (typically Germans). On July 22, 1873 he created a provision to dedicate more land for coffee cultivation by establishing the terms by which potentially useful farmlands could be purchased (the vacant or unfarmed property earned “*baldío*” status if not producing coffee, cacao, or sugar cane).¹⁶⁸ The following year, Barrios promoted *Decree 112* which required land holders to both survey and register holdings and titles for taxing purposes; if sixty days lapsed, lands could be sold to private investors by the State.¹⁶⁹ Known as the *desamortización* (or disentailment) law, Barrios drafted *Decree 170* in January 1877 which terminated the system in which villages could rent village lands (*censo enfiteusis*

¹⁶⁸ Frank Griffith Dawson, “Labor Legislation and Social Integration in Guatemala: 1871-1944.” *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 14, no. 1 (Winter 1965): 129.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

system). In effect, the decree ensured the transfer of previously rented indigenous lands to private ownership (if a party continued to occupy or farm those lands).¹⁷⁰

Later in Barrios' Presidency, he shifted legislative efforts to securing the immense labor force needed to fulfill his ambitions. In April 1877, Barrios drafted the exceptionally long *Decree 177*, the *Reglamento de Jornaleros* (or workbook for laborers), which in essence legalized debt peonage by “financially obliging a worker to his employer” and reinstated a forced style of drafting workers—known as the *mandamiento*, based on the needs of farm owners.¹⁷¹ All rural workers were then required to carry a logbook of work hours and payments (*libreta*) which would be used for financial transactions and finca supply stores and verification of employment.¹⁷² During March of the following year, Barrios issued *Decree 183* which in effect, assisted in ushering workers into the wage economy by requiring citizens pay a twelve-*real*, per annum “contribution” to fund the repair and maintenance of public roads; subsistence farming would not provide the forced donation in currency that the State required to finance public works.¹⁷³ In 1878, Barrios issued a statute outlawing vagrancy. Partnered with mandamientos and relatively high taxes only payable in cash, the anti-vagrancy law forced the mostly indigenous laborers off communal lands and into waging in an agro-based economy.¹⁷⁴

Although a previously mentioned 1873 provision allowed for the planting of cacao and sugar cane (and therefore arguably provided for diversification), Barrios made little effort to promote diversification until coffee prices began a gradual and noticeable descent in 1877.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 129.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 129.

¹⁷² David McCreery. “Debt Servitude in Rural Guatemala, 1876-1936.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 63, no. 4 (November 1983): 745.

¹⁷³ Ramón Asturias. “Bando del Alcalde Primero Municipal de Esta Ciudad: En Que Recuerda sobre el Pago de la Contribución de Caminos.” May 20, 1881. CIRMA. Manuel Rubio Sánchez series, Document 21.

¹⁷⁴ Michaela Schmolz-Haberlein. “Continuity and Change in a Guatemalan Indian Community: San Cristobal-Verapaz, 1870, 1940.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 76, no. 2 (May 1996): 238.

¹⁷⁵ Dawson, *Labor Legislation*, 129

The year coffee prices began falling, a provision promoted cattle raising and the production of rubber and henequen.¹⁷⁶ The following year, the Ministry of Development purchased six purebred bulls for the United States needed to begin breeding for farms in various departments and in November of 1878, Barrios made cheap land available in the Verapaz region to investors committed to producing beef for domestic markets.¹⁷⁷ Consistent with earlier legislation in a coffee market of unsure profits, Barrios provided land incentives to cultivators who grew and later displayed more than 1,000 varieties of produce at the 1884 New Orleans exposition.¹⁷⁸ That same year, Barrios approved the Governor of Baja Verapaz's proposition to cultivate grapes for wine production; the Ministry of Development arranged for the delivery of California grape stems, but the Governor was unable to raise sufficient capital to put the plan in motion.¹⁷⁹

Infrastructural buildup is perhaps the most thorough, noticeable, and lasting of Barrios' political ambitions. Technicians from North America and Western Europe contracted land transport, communication, and electrification projects that would support an expanding economy and bring modernization to a Republic preparing to enter the twentieth century. A series of railway contracts established lines radiating from the capital to principal ports and coffee growing regions while electricity and telecommunications links at a national and international level brought key features of modernity to Guatemala City.

Barrios vigorously sought to continue Granados' successful telecommunications project which had already established a system of telegraphic lines to the provincial regions of Guatemala.¹⁸⁰ In 1874, American James McNider of Stanley Furnace and Land Company signed

¹⁷⁶ David McCreery. "Land, Labor, and Violence in Highland Guatemala: San Juan Ixcay (Huehuetenango), 1893-1945." *The Americas* 45, no 2. (October 1998):237-8.

¹⁷⁷ McCreery, *Development and the State*, 55.

¹⁷⁸ Woodward, *Central America*, 159.

¹⁷⁹ McCreery, *Development and the State*, 61.

¹⁸⁰ *New York Times*. "Central America: The Rebellion in Guatemala, Honduras in the Hands of Filibusters." July 4, 1873.

multiple contracts to spider additional telegraph links throughout Guatemala, and by May of 1875, the Ministry of Development contracted further telegraph construction projects from the capital to the Pacific coastal locales including Santa Lucia and other points in Costa Cuca.¹⁸¹ In 1875, Guatemala City established telegraph lines to historically seditious San Marcos of the distant western highlands and the important commercial port at Champerico.¹⁸² Within the next twelve months, the frenzy to network the capital with major chief municipalities extended telegraph lines east to Chiquimula, Jalapa, and Zacapa, west to Chimaltenango and Totonicapán, and stretched north to Coban and Huehuetenango.¹⁸³

As early as 1874, Guatemala linked internationally via telegraph to El Salvador and established links to the global society by means of marine cable as early as 1880.¹⁸⁴ On October 5, 1880, the director of a newly created Society for Electric Lighting brought electrification to the capital under contract with a New York company, and by 1884, Barrios linked Guatemala's two largest cities (Guatemala City and Quetzaltenango) by telephone.¹⁸⁵

Creating the supporting structures for the emblematic symbol of progress was an integral step in bringing modernizing infrastructure to Guatemala during *La Reforma*. With a heavy reliance on foreign expertise in engineering and supervising the railway projects, imported products would ideally flow in and out of Guatemala City, while the bulky sacks of coffee would no longer have to be lugged on mule-driven carts or on the backs of indigenous laborers. Barrios

¹⁸¹ Miguel A. Urrutia. "Índice de las Leyes Emitidas por el Gobierno Democrático de la Republica de Guatemala, desde el 3 de Junio de 1871, hasta el 30 Junio 1881." 1882. CIRMA. Taracena Arriola Collection, Document 427.

¹⁸² *New York Times*. "The Spanish Republics, The News Generally Favorable Except from Costa Rica Intelligence from Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Other Places." February 12, 1875.

¹⁸³ McCreery, *Rural Guatemala*, 179.

¹⁸⁴ *New York Times*, "The Spanish Republics," 1874. Woodward, *Central America*, 163.

¹⁸⁵ Anonymous. "Convenio de sociedades de alumbramiento eléctrico de Guatemala." October 5, 1880. CIRMA. Paleo-grafiado Collection, Document 114. A Mr. Novella signs a \$10,665.75 contract with the American company in the house of a Pérez Friana. Woodward, *Central America*, 163.

principally sought to complete two major railway projects, one that led from the capital to the Pacific coast, the other from the capital to the Caribbean coast.

Barrios resumed construction of the Central Railroad which created a commercial route from the capital to the Pacific port of San José via Escuintla. In 1874, *Decree 55* stipulated that the American William Kelly see out the completion of the project, possibly as a financier (a project which Granados initially contracted to a Mr. Randall).¹⁸⁶ The railway construction continued under the supervision of the Costa Rican General Guillermo Nanne and the engineering genius of a well-compensated American officer called Colonel Fitzsimmons.¹⁸⁷ As the railway progressed and commissioned new companies (first the Guatemalan Central Railroad, then an American company represented by an American Civil War General, Daniel Butterfield), it demanded more capital. American financiers including a James R. Keene, a William K. Vanderbilt, and the Civil War General and future American President Ulysses Grant provided the capital to see the project to completion.¹⁸⁸

Barrios called his second and most ambitious railway project the Northern Railway. The project sought to bridge the capital over roughly 150 miles of low-lying, densely vegetated and swampy terrain to Santo Tomás on the Caribbean coast. Looking to open the East to foreign commerce, Barrios' grand plan required a lot of capital Guatemala was unable to secure, even with the assistance of the U.S. Minister to Central America, C.A. Logan. Because Guatemala's foreign debt had been in default and ultimately failed to secure a loan, Barrios' Ministry of Development turned first to a wealthy Cuban named Joaquin Jacas y Jacas, then to a Guatemalan

¹⁸⁶ Miguel A. Urrutia. "Índice de las Leyes Emitidas por el Gobierno Democrático de la Republica de Guatemala, desde el 3 de Junio de 1871, hasta el 30 Junio 1881." 1882. CIRMA Taracena Arriola Collection, Document 427.

¹⁸⁷ *New York Times*. "Claiming a Big Commission: The Suit in which General Nanne was Arrested When Starting for Guatemala." December 30, 1883. The Colonel was paid a hefty monthly salary of \$250 to determine the best route from San José to the Capital until completion of the project.

¹⁸⁸ *New York Times*. "Notes of Various Interests." May 25, 1883. *New York Times*, "Claiming a Big Commission," 1883.

family named Larraondo who had access to French capital; both resources failed in securing sufficient funds. In all likelihood frustrated, Barrios turned to legislation to solve the financial block to his railway. *Decree 297* of 1883 forced Guatemalan citizens with at least an eight-peso monthly income to invest in forty-peso shares in a project the under the supervision of American technicians Silvanus Miller, and retired Civil War Generals F.F. Millen and John B. Gordon. By 1884, the Tennessee enterprise Shea and Cornick, contracted to complete the first sixty miles of the railroad, were unable to recruit a sufficient workforce. As historian David McCreery emphatically concluded, the great Northern Railroad was an utter failure.¹⁸⁹

Although neither part of the Central or the Northern Railroad, a final contract prepared construction of a railroad in that linked the western portion of the Southern Piedmont region to the Pacific. In 1881, Barrios' Ministry of Development contracted an F.H. Lyman, D.P. Fenner, and a J.B. Bunting to begin the construction of a railway linking the port of Champerico to Retalhuleu via Caballo Blanco.¹⁹⁰ Although the project was modest—spanning no more than thirty miles, it progressed slowly but “progressed favorably” according to one *New York Times* article, eventually connecting all the way to the capital.¹⁹¹

Barrios shared Granados' enthusiasm for railway construction, but also sought to construct roads, bridges, and ports. The existing transport facilities were inadequate to support the enormous bulk amounts of coffees to be shipped abroad. Throughout the nineteenth century, narrow, dilapidated walking trails and rope foot bridges significantly limited the flow of agricultural produce people and mules were able to carry to the few existing port sites (see photos below). In May of 1876, Barrios ordered the construction of a road in the coffee growing

¹⁸⁹ McCreery. *Development and the State*. 70-82.

¹⁹⁰ Urrutia, *Índice de las Leyes Emitidas*, 1882.

¹⁹¹ *New York Times*. “Notes of Various Interests,” 1883.

region of Alta Verapaz; Coban was linked to the Polochic River and the old port of Teleman.¹⁹²

To fund public works projects such as road and bridge construction, Barrios established an annual twelve-*real* tax for all citizens not enlisted in the military.¹⁹³



Rope and unfinished lumber foot bridge not made transport of agricultural products slow and inefficient.

Anonymous. *Alta Verapaz*. Alta Verapaz. CIRMA, Fototeca Guatemala, Álbum Alcaín collection.

¹⁹² Urrutia, *Índice de las Leyes Emitidas*, 1882.

¹⁹³ Ramón Asturias. “Bando del Alcalde Primero Municipal de esta Ciudad: En que recuerda sobre el pago de la contribución de caminos.” 20 May 1881. CIRMA. Manuel Rubio Sánchez Collection, Document 21.



The photograph illustrates the difficult loading conditions for indigenous carriers at the future site of Port Champerico, circa 1875. Anonymous. *Champerico*. Champerico. CIRMA, Fototeca Guatemala. Álbum Alcaín collection.



Unpaved, steep, and often muddy roads greatly slowed transport of coffee beans. Shoddy living quarters for the laborers line the property. Anonymous. *El Porvenir*. San Marcos, 1886. CIRMA, Fototeca Guatemala, Álbum Alcaín Collection.

Barrios extended political ambitions into improving the education system to enlighten a largely ignorant population of indigenous citizens. The *Diario de Centroamérica* explained that “Indians must be made to appreciate the advantages of civilization; they should be taught the (proper) behaviors for work, business, industry and agriculture... Little by little, new institutions are dedicated to help them subsist in comfort...it will put them in movement, they will thus

contribute to national progress...”¹⁹⁴ In effort to incorporate the population majority into structured public instruction, Barrios endeavored to expand the educational system and in September of 1879, he established the Ministry of Public Instruction and built schools of varied stages open to the public.¹⁹⁵ However, a small national budget and social realities of the era greatly limited the President’s ambitions.¹⁹⁶ With respect to higher learning however, Quetzaltenango founded its first medical school (I.N.V.O.) in 1876.¹⁹⁷

Though Barrios primarily sought to professionalize the new national army, it was also an integral element of public education. For the professional class of officers, Barrios founded the *Escuela Politécnica* during the first months of his presidency.¹⁹⁸ For enlisted Indigenous soldiers typically marginalized in existing institutions of learning, military training taught reading and writing skills as well as the basics of arithmetic, grammar, and geography.¹⁹⁹

Barrios continued to loosen the stranglehold the Catholic Church once had on national politics. As acting President in March of 1873, Barrios eliminated the institution of *fueros* under the Catholic Church. These special courts subjected members of the clergy to legislation specific to the Church and in effect, protected them from judgment of courts established by the State. Barrios affirmed in *Decree 91* that “clergy should be subject to civil law and penalties of the

¹⁹⁴ *Diario de Centroamérica*. “Más Sobre los Indios.” February 17, 1883.

¹⁹⁵ David E. Wilkins. “Guatemalan Political History: National Indian Policy, 1532-1954.” *Wicazo Sa Review* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 23.

¹⁹⁶ In the following decade (1893), the Guatemalan government organized contests under the Central American Pedagogic Congress to select proposals for the “most efficient means to civilize the indigenous race in teaching them ideas of progress and behaviors of civilized peoples.” Jesús Amurrio. *El Positivismo en Guatemala*. Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1970. Jean Piel. *El departamento del Quiché bajo la dictadura liberal, 1880-1920*. FLASCO Guatemala: Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos, 1995. Piel explains that in addition to budget restrictions, vast cultural differences between the Creole and the indigenous populations resulted in the failure of initial attempts to establish institutions for public instruction in the departments of western Guatemala.

¹⁹⁷ José Luis Leal. “La Hondonada: Quetzaltenango, Ciudad de Cumbres, Homenaje en su 151 Aniversario. Guatemala, 1976.” CIRMA. Taracena Arriola Collection, Document 904. INVO was constructed in 1872, but did not begin instruction until several years later.

¹⁹⁸ McCreery, *Rural Guatemala*, 180.

¹⁹⁹ Edgar Barrillas. *El Problema del Indio durante la Época Liberal*. Guatemala: La Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala y la Escuela de Historia, 1997.

republic under the principle of equality before the law.”²⁰⁰ Three days later, on March 15, 1873, Barrios issued a decree of free worship, therefore publicly eliminating Catholicism as the official religion of the State.²⁰¹ In August of the same year, Barrios determined that Church property would be nationalized in *Decree 103*. He explained that the “anti-economic institution (the Church) slowed the progress of agricultural (development)” and that the “property under the management of dead hands would be passed” to those who could development the land for agricultural return.²⁰²

Barrios publicly touted a strong belief in the Liberal principals of governing justly, and for years before a drafted Constitution officially established the terms of a pervasive justice on paper, President Barrios encouraged citizens to use the appeal process in attempt to administer fair governance.²⁰³ Though Barrios wanted to support the expansion of the export economy, Barrios created a labor code in 1877 which encouraged agricultural laborers to submit appeals to authorities via bureaucratic channels if violations of human rights were in question while under the authority of finca owners.²⁰⁴ Evidently, Barrios took the appeal process seriously even if cases opposed his interests; James Mahoney asserted that he occasionally “sided with peasants in land disputes” despite his policy to commit as many tracts of land possible for the cultivation of

²⁰⁰ Marco A. Soto. “Decreto 91, Supresión del Fuero Eclesiástico.” March 12, 1873. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 365.

²⁰¹ Virginia Garrard-Burnett. “Liberalism, Protestantism, and Indigenous Resistance in Guatemala, 1870-1920.” *Latin American Perspectives* 24, no. 2 (March 1997):35-36. Garrard-Burnett argues that Barrios was essentially inviting Protestant citizens of the developed western world to Guatemala in drafting the decree. She points out that Barrios went so far as to travel to New York in order to personally request missionaries for his Republic.

²⁰² Soto, *Decreto 103*, 1873.

²⁰³ Greg Grandin offers that Barrios promoted the appeal system not solely as a way of effectively and fairly directing the administration, but because the central government benefited in increasing its authority in its role as an arbiter. Greg Grandin. “The Strange Case of La Mancha Negra: Maya-State Relations in Nineteenth-Century Guatemala.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 77, no. 2 (May 1997):215.

²⁰⁴ Robert G. Williams. *States and Social Evolution: Coffee and the Rise of National Governments in Central America*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1994, 121.

coffee.²⁰⁵ In an 1874 document addressed to regional governors (typically military officials), Barrios expressed disgust in having received “repeated complaints from the people” concerning the abuse of authority he had trustingly granted to them. Barrios chastised the governors for “clearing properties unjustly for personal use” and for “unjustly demanding horses and workers...and abusing their power in the name of the President.”²⁰⁶

The National Constituent Assembly fulfilled the projected crowning Liberal ambition in 1879. After seven years of futile toil and deliberation, Barrios called for the formation of a new Constituent Assembly in November 1878.²⁰⁷ Thirteen months later, the Assembly hurriedly completed the Constitution and soon identified the document as “the most important product of the Revolution of 1871.”²⁰⁸ Modeled greatly after the United States’ Constitution, the one hundred-article document outlined the conditions for popular suffrage, established terms for a judicial and unicameral legislative branch, and guaranteed individual rights and liberties.²⁰⁹

In the final months of his Presidency, Barrios embarked on a conquest to achieve his most ambitious political undertaking. In a twisted attempt either to accomplish what he earlier referred to as “peace with our brothers of Central America,” or to outright establish and extend a dictatorial empire, Barrios set out to build the “Central American Union.”²¹⁰ On March 31, 1885, Barrios issued a twelve article-decree from La Libertad, El Salvador which established himself as “Supreme Military Chief of Central America.” In his visionary political-military take-over, the decree outlined that “the chief of the Republic will receive the adhesion of the Governments, people, and officers who upon the terms established in this decree, will join the

²⁰⁵ Mahoney, *Radical, Reformist, and Aborted Liberalism*, 237.

²⁰⁶ Andrés Téllez. “Circular a los jefes políticos y jueces de primera instancia en los departamentos.” December 24, 1874. CIRMA. Arturo Taracena Arriola Collection, Document 1732.

²⁰⁷ Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 255.

²⁰⁸ *El Pueblo*, “Informe sobre la situación política,” 1880.

²⁰⁹ *New York Times*. “Editorial 6—No Title.” July 4, 1887.

²¹⁰ Barrios, *Proclama del Justo Rufino Barrios*, 1876.

cause of the union.” In forceful, concise, militant language, the document detailed at length the essential requirements of his citizens, arranged the order for the delegate assembly, outlined the structure of the military, and even described the dimensions of the future Republic’s flag. From his point of departure, the President of Nicaragua threateningly marched his troops jointly with those of Costa Rica to create the coalition forces with Honduran assistance to combat Barrios’ well-armed federal troops.²¹¹

Obstacles Confronting Liberals during the Barrios Administration

Various hurdles blocked the progress of President Barrios’ Liberal agenda. While armed Conservative factions backed by an angry Catholic Church and neighboring national armies peering across the border put the stability of national politics into question, assassins and ambitious officers placed the President within their sights. Apart from a capital shortage slowing railway construction, another threat—although comparatively less critical, emerged in Guatemala’s resistant indigenous population, compounding into an economic obstacle which also delayed advancements in the national coffee project.

Assassination attempts and coups presented an exceptionally insidious and personal threat to Barrios. Because Barrios was principally responsible for creating the most politically sweeping changes of *La Reforma* and a crucial figure in shaping the nineteenth-century political landscape of Guatemala, Conservative rivals and aspiring politicians aggressively sought to eliminate him. The January 22nd edition of *El Pueblo* accuses “a handful of blue-blooded and aristocratic enemies of the State” of attempting to assassinate not only President Barrios, but for

²¹¹ *New York Times*. “The Central American Union: the Peculiar Decree Issued by President Barrios of Guatemala.” March 31, 1885.

targeting his family as well.²¹² Barrios' determined political nature brought him very close to death by assassin nearer to the end of his term one in the mid-evening hours in April of 1884. Although the details of the attempt on Barrios' life beyond are unspecified, a public announcement disgraced a "treacherous and cowardly edict" which "designed to cut the illustrious General Barrios' precious thread of life."²¹³

Obstacles to Liberal ambitions also came from the indigenous. Forced into the wage economy of poor daily conditions on a coffee farm, Liberal statecraft contained the accumulating embitterment of an indigenous workforce in a pressure cooker of legal mechanisms.²¹⁴ This so-called "proletarianization of the rural" led the disaffected *Indio* population to passively and actively resist Liberal authority.²¹⁵ An 1875 peasant uprising in Momostenango required federal troops to snuff out the rebellious sparks and again in 1884 when indigenous protesters opposed the seizure of village lands in the Western Highlands town of Cantel.²¹⁶ In 1877, violent protestors in the densely coffee-cultivated Alta Verapaz region opposed concessions to *finca* operating foreigners although open confrontations against state authorities became rare.²¹⁷ More passive forms of resistance included the migration of indigenous families into remote areas where they could avoid integration into the wage economy while others resisted in devoting

²¹² *El Pueblo*, "Informe sobre la situación política," 1880.

²¹³ *Anonymous*. "Hoja impresa referida al atentado en contra del Presidente Justo Rufino Barrios." April 14, 1884. CIRMA. Taracena Arriola Collection, Document 1731.

²¹⁴ Severo Martínez Peláez. *Motines de Indios, Segunda Edición*. Guatemala: Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Sociales, Instituto de Ciencias, Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 1991, 11-13. Although this study mainly discusses indigenous rebellions in colonial Guatemala, Peláez argues that poor daily conditions of agro life are to blame for rebellions and that during periods of normalcy, indigenous resentment was only building in pressure cooker-like effect (even throughout *La Reforma*).

²¹⁵ McCreery, *Debt Servitude*, 759.

²¹⁶ Robert G. Williams. *States and Social Evolution: Coffee and the Rise of National Governments in Central America*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994.

²¹⁷ Greg Grandin. *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004, 29.

labor energies to self-provisioning on subsistence plots on the allotted lands of lenient plantation owners.²¹⁸

Liberals during the Barrios Administration employed harsh accusatory language aimed at publicly debasing Conservative enemies while the President blended and applied immodest terms of self-exultation into the prolific rhetoric generated during the latter years of *La Reforma*. Like the rhetoric during the Granados Administration, Liberals harshly criticized the supporters of the former Conservative regimes although unlike his predecessor, he and his supporters often articulated insults through figurative language in shaming his opposition. Although Barrios principally targeted the Catholic Church, he and his supporters zealously censured Guatemalan aristocrats as well.

Temporarily taking command as Provisory President in February 1873, Barrios prefaced his warning to armed factions with a fearless regard for official duties as an enlightened Liberal and proposed to cast his immoral and ignorant enemies into the darkness of defeat. In light of what he considered “the serious attitude” required of a national office, he declared that he and his “military units are ready to combat and defeat the savage reactionaries fighting under the pretexts of religion, who want to destroy the Liberal cause of morality, justice, and progress of the people.” In a sworn public testimony to “end public disorder,” Barrios revealed that “no obstacle will stand in [his] way, nor will any persons or classes” and rationalized in a figure of speech that the people “shouldn’t be surprised by [his] measures—serious sickness require radical and extreme remedies.”²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Michaela Schmolz-Haberlein. “Continuity and Change in a Guatemalan Indian Community: San Cristobal-Verapaz, 1870-1940.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 76, no. 2 (May 1996): 243. William Roseberry et al. *Coffee, Society, and Power in Latin America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, 79.

²¹⁹ Justo Rufino Barrios. “Proclama de Justo Rufino Barrios.” February 12, 1873. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 344-5.

In the 1873 action to consolidate Church property, Barrios cursed not only the Conservative-encouraging ecclesiastic establishment, but the land-owning aristocracy which, according to the decree, opposed full integration into the coffee economy (and therefore obstructed Liberals efforts in realizing their principal ambition).²²⁰ Barrios vindicated his “new conditions for Church-State relations” in asserting that “it is a sacred duty of the government to promote the removal of all obstacles that oppose the complete pacification of the country and harmony of the relations with the Church, so that relations are frank and beneficial for the good of (all) Guatemalans.”²²¹

In an article published by *El Pueblo*, Liberal supporters identified simply as “the voice of the public” aggressively attack the aristocratic class as an enemy of the State. In place of outright insulting the proud patrician population, the article took a crafty approach in turning the readers against the wealthy class alleging that they “believed that the traditional artisan stained (society) while the working man dishonored it.” The authors further insisted on rejecting the “treacherous enemies of the people” in detailing that they refused “to lower themselves to vote...and look on the society with an arrogant pride.”²²² In other words, Barrios supporters implied the aristocracy thought itself socially superior to the now equal and fellow Guatemalan citizen. The attack continued in accusations of a series of arranged assassinations on the life of “the friend and the protector of the people.”

Beyond criticizing the aristocracy’s elitist behaviors, the authors of *El Pueblo*’s January 26th edition warned General Barrios’ “eternal enemies” of their impending doom. “You’re

²²⁰ Soto, *Decreto 103*, 1873.

²²¹ Justo Rufino Barrios. “Decreto 99, Decretando la expulsión del Chantre de la Iglesia, Doctor Espinoza.” July 2, 1873. Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 362-5.

²²² *El Pueblo*, “Informe sobre la situación publica,” 1880.

angering the viper before you,” cautioned the authors, “and he will bite you.” The article concluded, “the aristocratic seed will never grow...the people will destroy the nobility.”²²³

The President officially responded to hostile opposition with a combination of legislation and violent force. Barrios reserved drafting major legislation to combat his unarmed, yet influential oratory opponents of the Catholic Church while he approached a resistant workforce differently than so armed domestic opposition or his military rivalries in the near abroad. Barrios was willing and able to patiently position poised military forces at the border as eagerly as he streamed regular troops into the mountains to eliminate or capture remaining Conservative factions. He dealt with the comparatively dull threat of indigenous worker resistance with an increasingly forceful yet nonviolent coupling of economic legislation outlined earlier (mandamientos and anti-vagrancy rulings) while he responded to critical threats to political instability like coups, with very special consideration.

Within sixty days of assuming the presidential post of the Republic, Barrios drafted three decrees intended to weaken the Church’s opposition to the Liberal agenda. As mentioned before, *Decree 91* first eliminated the special judicial considerations for members of the clergy realized in the *fuero* court structure.²²⁴ *Decree 99* dealt a serious blow to Church leadership in banishing Archbishop Francisco Espinoza y Palacios. The decree detailed the Archbishop’s failure to “maintain the harmony and respect with the government a civil authority should” in mismanaging the diocese delegated by an offending Bishop. Under Archbishop Espinoza y Palacios’ Administration, Bishop Piñol y Aycinena allegedly conspired to overthrow the government in addition to participating in, planning, and encouraging an uprising in the East. Barrios deduced that if left in the capacity of the Archbishop of Guatemala, Espinoza y Palacios

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Barrios, *Decreto 99*, 1873.

would “continue working for Don Enrique Palacios,” a relative of the Archbishop and a political threat to Barrios as a commander of filibustering expeditions in neighboring Honduras and El Salvador.²²⁵ Barrios dealt the final and perhaps the most damaging blow to what he labeled “one of the biggest obstacles to prosperity and greatness for the Republic” in August 1873. *Decree 103* nationalized Church property (and all inherited properties) “whose revenues divert[ed] considerable commercial capital...and forever chain[ed] up lands for certain groups and families, possessing it in an exclusive manner.”²²⁶

For enemies who constituted a direct threat to political stability, Barrios is said to have dealt with them in a personal and particularly spiteful manner. In a *New York Times* article titled “Guatemala’s Dictators,” Barrios was neatly framed in the detailed description of a “typical” Latin American tyrant. Barrios was said to have “taken pride in humiliating those citizens who ventured to oppose his despotic will, sometimes known to whip and brutally kick those who displeased him. He publicly flogged people suspected of contemplating revolution and shot those who were shown to have conspired (against him).”²²⁷ In an earlier attempt on the President’s life, one *New York Times* article published an interview from “an observant and intelligent gentleman resident of Guatemala City” who described a tale illustrating the malicious sense of justice the President reserved for his enemies.²²⁸ After commissioning an impressive young Austrian man into the Guatemalan Army, Barrios discovered the young Lieutenant scheming a coup against his government with the support of eighteen other young Guatemalan officers:

“Barrios pounced upon (the traitor) with the ferocity of a tiger; struck him down to the floor and trampled upon him; then called in the guards and had him dragged away, pale, trembling, and bleeding, to a dungeon. The next day, (the Austrian) and his eighteen conspirators were by the president’s orders, savagely whipped. The succeeding day, they

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Soto, *Decreto 103*, 1873.

²²⁷ *New York Times*. “Guatemala’s Dictators.” July 18, 1887.

²²⁸ *New York Times*, “An Eccentric Autocrat,” 1880.

were brought out in line upon the plaza. With them were brought out and placed on the ground before them, nineteen coffins. One by one, the eighteen young officers who had entered into the conspiracy with the Austrian were marched out, shot one by one, and put in their coffins. All the while that vindictive and deliberate slaughter was going on, Barrios sat on the sill of an open window of his house, closely overlooking the scene, rubbing his hands with satisfaction as one after another of the conspirators writhed in the dust...”²²⁹

The possibility of military invasion by neighboring states also presented a threat to political stability during the Barrios Administration. During the inherently vulnerable period of transition to the presidential post, Barrios confronted his first international political threat in July of 1873, only days after officially taking office. In a *New York Times* article datelined July 4th from Panama, 500 rebels allegedly encouraged by the Jesuit order crossed through the (eastern border) under Honduran General Enrique Palacios. President Barrios dispatched a General Godoy who defeated the invading Honduran-led troops at Cuesta de Guayabos (possibly located near Omoa on the Guatemala-Honduras frontier) but was said to have kindly offered amnesty to the surviving rebels. The article suggested that “if the rebels succeeded in entering, they [were] certain to overthrow the existing government of President Barrios and re-establish the Jesuit or Church party.”²³⁰

As early as December 1881, the possibility of a second military invasion loomed in press headlines. Supplemented with vague background information, a December 3rd *New York Times* article announced the possibility of Mexican military forces invading disputed Guatemalan territory in effort to secure the grounds needed to complete railway construction. Barrios threatened to march his troops across the border and trounce the awaiting Mexican troops.²³¹ However deliberate the apparent détente was, it ostensibly relieved regional tensions until the

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ *New York Times*, “Central America.; The Rebellion in Guatemala,” 1873.

²³¹ *New York Times*. “Central America’s Progress: Guatemala Threatened by Mexico—Railroad Construction.” December 3, 1881.

threat of a menacing military movement from Mexico reappeared two years later. In 1883, several railroad companies merged to form the Mexican Southern Railroad which contracted with a Mexican government again seeking to construct a line through Mexico and into Guatemala. With little interest to resolve the boundary issue, Mexico began the construction.²³² Having offered Guatemala diplomatic and military support in 1881, Costa Rica and El Salvador condemned “Mexico’s arrogance.”²³³ Unwilling to face Barrios’ national army or perhaps incapable of funding a railroad unlikely to yield high financial returns (as the article suggested), Mexico anti-climatically issued a declaration of forfeiture in early June of 1885.²³⁴

Results of Barrios Administration

President Barrios competently limited opposition while partially realizing broad Liberal ambitions. Although personal aspirations ultimately interfered with grander objectives of the Liberal Revolution, Barrios realized the expansion of the export economy and continued or completed some of the vital transport and many of the communications infrastructural projects. The national project for public instruction, attempts to agriculturally diversify, and the commitment to the Northern Railroad failed however, and the Constitution of 1879 turned out to be only momentarily meaningful. Though of great economic benefit, legislation during the Barrios years of *La Reforma* would result in a largely negative social consequence and the individual desire for a Central American federation would end a mortal miscalculation.

In an extended twelve-year presidential post, Barrios limited his enemies and capably ensured political stability. However predetermined his intentions may have been, Barrios and his

²³² *New York Times*. “An Unprofitable Scheme: Construction of a Railroad between Mexico and Guatemala Forfeited.” June 11, 1885.

²³³ *New York Times*, “Central America’s Progress,” 1881.

²³⁴ *New York Times*, “An Unprofitable Scheme,” 1885.

supporters integrated clergy and nobility-bashing rhetoric into the political agenda, shaming Conservative enemies and creating a common enemy while legislation limited the common source of the opposition—the Catholic Church. The statutes permanently stripped the Church of its properties and eliminated special courts for clergy while special considerations removed vital members of the clergy.

Barrios achieved the desired economic effects of land and labor reforms central to the Liberal agenda. Land reform legislation freed economically underutilized communal and Church lands intended to gain revenues from the lucrative coffee industry while labor legislation mostly solved the shortage of wage laborers by binding workers to contracts with finca owners.²³⁵ Coffee exports *tripled* during Barrios' Presidency bringing over an estimated fifty-three million dollars worth of coffee revenues to the Republic during the years of his Presidency.²³⁶

Barrios achieved progress in the physical sense communication and transport infrastructure delivered. Coffee revenues, newly imposed taxes, and foreign technicians combined to launch the infrastructural projects which brought modernization to Guatemala. Barrios completed numerous domestic and international telecommunications projects while he contracted and finalized the Central Railroad project for a country which desperately needed transport infrastructure to support an expansive export coffee economy. However, it is important to note that the Northern Railroad, of his own initiative, was an unproductive undertaking.

Although the expansion of the coffee industry yielded high economic returns, Barrios failed to predict or manage negative social and agricultural consequences. In disappointing efforts to diversify agriculture, the full integration into the coffee economy resulted in persistent

²³⁵ Arnold Bauer. "Rural Workers in Spanish America: Problems of Peonage and Oppression." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 59 (February 1979):36.

²³⁶ Mahoney, *Radical, Reformist, and Aborted Liberalism*, 238. McCreery, *Development and the State*, 43.

food scarcity as workers left their subsistence plots to work in commercial farming.²³⁷ Socially, the acquisition of indigenous lands directly threatened communal autonomy while coercive forms of labor and miserable pay economically and culturally impoverished the rural indigenous.²³⁸ By 1880, while as many as 100,000 indigenous workers migrated to the coffee-growing Pacific Piedmont each year, indigenous communities suffered demographic decline as well. Disruptive movements combined with harsh labor conditions, as Lovell and Lutz suggested, led to a decline in indigenous population the years following Barrios' land and labor reforms, perhaps linking labor demands to a decline in indigenous fertility.²³⁹

Although the lengthy Constitution was successfully drafted, its quality of content was quickly questioned. After two failed National Assemblies and eight years of persistent political purpose, in due course, a hurried document required amendments only six years after its creation, under Barrios' predecessor, Manuel Lisandro Barillas.²⁴⁰ Until Guatemala drafted a replacement document in 1945, the Constitution would be modified another eight times.²⁴¹

A more significant failure, at least in consequence, was Barrios' fatally flawed mission to forge a federation of the Central American states. Throughout *La Reforma*, either as the senior General in the Guatemalan Army under Granados or as President himself, Barrios reduced reactionaries, challenged aggressors in near abroad, incapacitated violent Church opponents, negotiated coup attempts, and evaded the assassin's dagger. However, Barrios' grandest personal

²³⁷ Ibid, 106.

²³⁸ David McCreery. "Coffee and Class: The Structure of Development in Liberal Guatemala." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 56, no. 3 (August 1976): 460. Severo Martínez Peláez. *Motines de Indios*, 2nd ed. Guatemala: Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Sociales, Instituto de Ciencias, Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 1991.

²³⁹ Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 117. George W. Lovell and Christopher H. Lutz. "'A Dark Obverse': Maya Survival in Guatemala: 1520-1994." *Geographical Review* 86, no. 3 (July 1996):398-407. Lovell and Lutz describe a population decline in 1880 after five decades of demographic growth. Data manipulation in ethnic classification is considered, but a drop in Mayan fertility due to labor demands during the latter years of *La Reforma* is presumed responsible.

²⁴⁰ *New York Times*, "Guatemala's Dictators," July 18, 1887.

²⁴¹ Laguardia, *La Reforma*, 257.

pursuit—which eclipsed original goals of the Liberal Revolution, ultimately became his guaranteed gateway to the grave.

On March 30, 1885, Barrios crossed Guatemala’s southern frontier and marched into San Salvador with thirty-eight cannons and 20, 000 armed men.²⁴² Five days later, although reported to be 200 miles from the battlefield, the *New York Times* ominously printed that “the General’s sword was found,” but determined that it “didn’t signify that the man himself is dead.”²⁴³ The following day, the headlines unambiguously read: “The Fate of Barrios: His Death Confirmed.”²⁴⁴ *La Reforma* Guatemala evaporated there on the Salvadoran battlegrounds in the mist of the General’s last breath.

²⁴² *New York Times*. “Central American Warfare: A Secretary of War Taken Prisoner—Surrender of a Rebel Camp. March 30, 1885.

²⁴³ *New York Times*, “The Probable Result,” 1885.

²⁴⁴ *New York Times*, “The Fate of Barrios,” 1885.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENT STUDY

This investigation establishes a political and economic narrative of the *La Reforma* using documents detailing the rhetoric, executive action, and specific legislation that shaped *La Reforma* Guatemala. In addition to outlining the coming of late nineteenth-century Guatemalan Liberalism, it has presented the obstacles confronting Presidents Granados and Barrios and examined how the Revolutions' leaders employed rhetoric and executive action to achieve their similar but distinct brands of Liberalism. In detailing Presidents Granados' and Barrios' combined energies and examining some of their often overlooked efforts in an era of extensive economic and political reform, the study hopes to establish a revised, more accurate narrative of the Guatemalan Reform.

Rhetoric and the Liberal Vision

Granados and Barrios used rhetoric as an important tool to encourage popular political support during an intrinsically shaky post-revolutionary era and communicate what Liberals envisioned for the Republic. This research suggests that claims by historians that either President—but namely Barrios, failed to articulate his vision and doctrine to the public needs reconsidered. Granados, Barrios, and their supporters endorsed not only the descriptive rhetoric closely aligned with their respective individual agendas and corresponding visions, but also detailed rhetoric which functioned to communicate the vision and doctrines of the common Liberal agenda. The two reform Presidents and their supporters masterfully combined one-part emotionally stirring language to create common public enemies with one-part rationale to

promote state projects, and blended the final part of inadvertent irony to create the perfect recipe for late nineteenth-century reform rhetoric.

Rhetoric published for the public often served to promote goals shared by the Granados and Barrios Administrations, but just as often served to publicize who opposed those goals. Simple language or dichotomized scenarios served to communicate the Liberal vision to the common public although more colorful rhetoric would often introduce a metaphoric dimension to a two-sided print circular or news column. In an effort to discredit Conservatives and their political support base, typical rhetoric illustrated circumstances of evil state enemies battling the Liberals who defended all that was good and rational for the Nation. In order to win the favor of the citizenry, Liberals likely made use of *good vs. evil* overtones as a practical method to reduce politics to an oversimplified scenario the undereducated masses could process. Emotionally appealing language evoked iconic national symbols like the flag to rouse resistance against Conservative supporters, represented in simple language by a symbolically evil creature such as a serpent. The sentimental approach for political appeal, the use of imagery, and the generation of simple metaphors extended into oratories of the Constituent Assembly, expressions on circulated decrees, and wording on proclamations of national efforts, all in arrangement to promote Liberal strategy and contracted projects for the modernizing Republic.

Granados depicted an image of a secularized Guatemala reconstructed according to the North Atlantic foreign model. Granados principally reserved rhetoric for criminalizing the aristocracy and the clergy while his supporters used published documents as a platform for sponsoring Liberal state projects implemented and endorsed by modernized nations of Western Europe and North America. The President autographed his rhetoric in a direct, unadorned style; he attacked the character of a manipulative privileged class, scorned the disloyal and uncivilized

Catholic clergy, and discredited former Conservative regimes at length for the economic and social ills confronting the reform era. Liberal exponents used language as an opportunity to defend and support Granados' fiscal reform, military drafts, and the common Liberal objective to separate Church and State. Aligned with economic and political standards established by modernized foreign nations, supporters publicly acclaimed the President's broad agenda set in good keeping with the exemplary models of *los países más cultos*.

Barrios communicated a vision of a republic cleared of the Church and in need of both a constitution and his heroic leadership. In routinely demonizing the normal cast of characters, Barrios ostentatiously autographed his rhetoric in bold strokes of self-importance and nationalism while his supporters applied language to honor the significance of a nationally guiding constitution and glorify the President's historically heroic leadership. In sharp contrast to Granados' unpretentious style of communication, Barrios unabashedly and publicly promoted his political standing from regenerator of the Republic to Supreme Military Commander of Central America while supporters stamped the spirited statesman the *champion of liberty* and the *son of Guatemala*. Barrios branded expression in sentimental appeal, encouraging public esteem for a domestic fraternal society as friends and individual citizens within an even broader Central American brotherhood. In addition to further elevating Barrios' superhuman status as the gentleman General *and* laudable leader of the Nation, key supporters within the National Assembly personalized rhetoric with historical examples of failed political Conservatism and the successes of model constitutional republics of the modernized North Atlantic.

However artful and deliberate, Liberals did inadvertently falter in arranging a clear message. As Liberals finely blended ingredients of assorted literary technique into the proprietary mix of published rhetoric, bits of irony and traces of hypocrisy surfaced amid bold

claims. The extensive land reform Barrios carried out freed land often purchased by Germans and the vast majority of contracts for infrastructure projects were sold to North Americans and Western Europeans despite declarations that unlike during the Conservative era, the country *wouldn't be sold to foreigners*. And even though rhetoric presented a utopian fraternal society in the Guatemalan motherland, land and labor reform in effect divided the Nation along ethnic lines as coercive labor and land loss drastically altered the traditional indigenous way of life—often to the economic benefit of the wealthy creole or foreign landowning planter class. Perhaps equally as ironic was the heralding of love for true liberty and respect for democracy; economic and educational restrictions greatly reduced voters to a demographic of educated, upper (or upper-middle) class, and non-indigenous while national leaders continued a contradictory trend of autocratically-designed governance. As for Barrios' intentions to maintain peace and friendly relations with his Central American brothers, he would later violate sovereignty and invade these brothers—forging a fraternal union by un-brotherly military force.

Presidential Action and the Reform Era

If Liberals used rhetoric to sway public political opinion and promote their vision, then it was legislation and executive action that carried out that vision. On the one hand, as reflected in their rhetoric, there were parallels in Granados' and Barrios' presidential agendas. On the other hand, agendas were different enough to mirror the clear distinctions in the political strategies each President pursued. Although Granados by no means acted timidly in his presidential capacities, the effects of Barrios' reforms perhaps proved his Administration to be more radical in nature. However, *both* leading Liberals instrumentally developed the historical character of the period, immediately reordering the Republic both politically and economically. Curbing the

power and reach of the Catholic Church, expanding the coffee-based export economy, encouraging some diversification of industry, and creating much needed infrastructure, Granados initiated many of the projects that Barrios would later finish. Considering Granados' early efforts and Barrios' unwavering commitment to Guatemalan Liberalism, the Presidents' legislation and executive decisions shaped Guatemala into the modernized, late nineteenth-century Republic they had envisioned.

Granados pursued an agenda of thorough and balanced character. Historians routinely reduce Miguel García Granados' Presidency to a mere paragraph, summarize his executive actions as cautious, ineffective, or limited to the purely political. No prominent historians credit him for greatly shaping the overall direction of *La Reforma*. However, the Granados Administration catalogued considerable political *and economic* achievements, initiated various projects Barrios would later continue or complete, and defined an agenda which would set in motion the trend of national readjustment which distinguished the entire era of Guatemalan Liberal reforms.

The research suggests that President Granados' far-reaching agenda significantly influenced the political character of the era and that his official measures were rather bold in nature. His leading role in military conflicts, his efforts to modernize the national Army, his devotion to extensive fiscal reform and economic development, and his determined nature to eliminate the influence of the Catholic Church immediately reshaped the social, economic, and political landscape of the Nation. Granados is not credited in any central publications for his indispensable military leadership in securing domestic and regional stability in a fundamentally unstable post-revolutionary era and is rarely acknowledged for his commanding role in the defeat against Honduras' Conservative military campaign under General Medina. Granados reduced his

clerical opponents absent in the battlefields as well; seventy-two Jesuits and forty Capuchin friars (including high-ranking clergy) fled national borders under orders of banishment.

Granados started many of the projects for which Barrios would receive credit in finalizing. Though Barrios is commonly recognized for creating a modern, regular-standing Army, it was in fact Granados who first implemented the draft and initially armed the troops with modern weaponry. Granados initiated the construction of the Central Railroad Barrios would later finish and also prepared the Champerico port site for the construction of a steel wharf which again, Barrios would later complete. Although ineffective during his Administration, it was also Granados who established the National Constituent Assembly ultimately responsible for drafting the Constitution.

Granados' commitments to economic and fiscal reform also reordered the Republic. He eliminated the tithe, which at once lifted the tax burden on citizens and severed one of the Church's main financial arteries. The President very quickly eliminated two major state monopolies (liquor and tobacco) and swiftly created the Ministry of Development to foster economic development. The Ministry of Development contracted transportation and telecommunications projects while Granados established the Center of Financial Accounting to ensure fiscal responsibility at a national scale. Between the Ministry of Development and the Center of Financial Accounting, Granados' Administration guaranteed monthly payments to public servants, implemented new taxes for urbanites, and applied just and uniform taxes to citizens.

Barrios pursued a very economically-centered agenda but which also continued the fight against the Catholic Church. His delivered the physical proof of economic progress in an effort to both intensify coffee production for export and encourage diversification of industry.

Providing surprisingly less political innovation during his twelve-year post for which he is typically recognized, Barrios continued many of Granados' initiatives and continued on the path of material development.

Barrios' economically-focused and anti-clerical agenda produced somewhat predictable results and direction, given Guatemala's economic and political context. His immediate steps indicated a continued commitment on the part of the Liberals to bring down the Church; legislation nationalized all properties and eliminated special judicial consideration for clergy. Economically, Barrios pursued efforts to boost the coffee economy early in his Administration, though the fall of coffee prices in 1877 certainly stimulated a second wave of amplified legislation which set aside additional land for cultivation and redoubled the work force required for labor-intensive coffee cultivation. Land and labor reform, unparalleled in scope to that point in Guatemalan history, privatized or appropriated economically underutilized lands and forced the vast majority of the indigenous population and rural *ladinos* to labor in a wage economy by means of the anti-vagrancy statute or labor drafts. Foreign technicians contracted electrical, telecommunication, and railway projects through the Ministry of Development—as they had during the Granados Administration, and brought Guatemala the lights, telegraph posts, telephone lines, and steam locomotives of a modernized western nation.

Though Barrios is often criticized for his failure to diversify the economy, he did allow space for diversification. He promoted the cultivation of several crops beyond coffee including henequen, rubber, grapes, and offered land incentives for farmers willing to cultivate new varieties of existing crops. Barrios green-lighted a project for wine production, and actively encouraged cattle raising intended for domestic markets.

However cursed by personal ambition and conceit, Barrios' extended his political agenda into furthering other Granados initiatives. Enthusiasm for professionalizing the military brought the *Escuela Politécnica* for training the officer-class soldier, and advanced Granados' endeavor to establish public schooling upon creating the Ministry of Public Instruction. Despite several failed assemblies, Barrios set the final deadline for a National Assembly that ultimately produced the Constitution of 1879. In the end, Barrios' ego-driven venture to conquer and unify Central America brought an end to his Presidency.

Because this study of *La Reforma* seeks to clarify only some of the political and economic complexities of the era, there is still much research to be completed concerning the social dynamics and political consequences of the period. It would be interesting and important to consider the relationship of the turbulent reform era and the origins of socialist politics in the twentieth century. Examining the sharply divided demographics of the era and those of the leftist movements during the Cold War era would certainly provide some insight into the patterns defining Guatemala's political history. Beyond the study of strictly social dynamics, it would also be important to consider the ethnic composition and general role of the professionalized military in stimulating or delaying political change following the reform period and throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

There were some significant limitations which affected the scope of this study. Considering the volume of physically documented political and economic data at CIRMA and the national archives in Guatemala City, it was only the lack of electronically filed records which put the period of research under great time constraints. In order to better study the era or continue with further research, depth of detail could be added by means of examining documents at

municipal repositories and allowing additional time to systematically log relevant data from the national archives. Censuses, military documents, and court records would provide demographic data, a fuller history of conflicts, and military documents could paint a better picture of the national army's role in influencing political changes. A lengthier study incorporating the influence of the military, demographic variables, and political consequences of the period could be conducted taking some of the above considerations into account.

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