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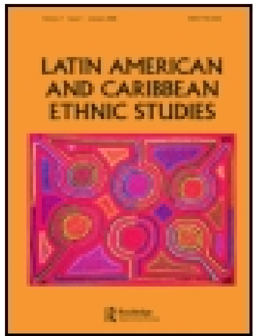

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ARTICLE

# Fighting invisibility: indigenous citizens and history education in El Salvador and Guatemala

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**ABSTRACT**

El Salvador and Guatemala underwent civil wars that severely impacted both countries' most marginalized citizens, including indigenous peoples. Today, teaching and learning the violent past remain challenged in each country, with implications for indigenous and non-indigenous citizens alike. This article examines the impact of democratization in El Salvador and Guatemala in the educational sphere, documenting narrative trends on the topic of the civil wars and indigeneity in formal and informal education settings. We argue that distinct democratization and transitional justice processes have created opportunities and challenges for teaching and learning about indigenous peoples' roles and experiences in the civil wars in each country. Methodologically, the article draws on analyses of educational policy and formal curriculum in both contexts, supplemented by ethnographic data. We situate the study within democratization, transitional justice, and education literatures to document how teaching and learning the violent past is a highly politicized act with long-term implications for democratic quality in each country.

**KEYWORDS**
Education; indigenous; El Salvador; Guatemala; democratization; transitional justice

## Introduction

Teaching and learning the violent past is highly politicized. Yet for education to be credible in the eyes of the public, curriculum should be perceived as neutral and accurate, giving a voice to main themes and historical events that people identify with. How can such thematic resonance be possible in diverse states that include citizens with opposite or highly differentiated memories and rationalizations of past state actions? Can states justly administer public education to pluriethnic citizenries? If such a mission is not possible, should citizens be supported by the state in taking on such a burden at the micro-level or community level? This article explores these issues as they relate to the lived experiences of citizenship for indigenous peoples in El Salvador and Guatemala, which have been shaped by democratization and transitional justice processes. The marginalization of indigenous citizenship continues to be crafted by how the violent past is remembered, institutionalized, and taught to the next generation. These processes have played out very differently across El Salvador and Guatemala, where indigenous citizens continue to navigate a range of challenges when claiming their national identities in educational spheres.

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In El Salvador, procedural democracy has taken root since 2009 in terms of political party competition and power alterations. This liberal opening under two Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) presidencies includes the ratification of an amendment to Constitutional Article 63 in 2014, recognizing for the first time indigenous Salvadorans with rights in need of protection. A slate of other modest reforms within state-sponsored cultural programming has also unfolded throughout the 2010s, but the democratization process has not automatically facilitated indigenous inclusiveness, and indigenous people continue to be considered ancestors of the majority mestizo population rather than contemporary co-citizens.

These tensions are paralleled in Guatemala, where political, social, and economic violence persists, as does indigenous exclusion from the benefits of state membership. Even during times of relative stability, indigenous Guatemalans have experienced 'low intensity citizenship' (O'Donnell in Sieder 1999, 110), in that their identities have remained more strongly rooted in local communities than with the state. Guatemala's democratization process included drafting a new Constitution in 1985 that recognized the multiethnic composition of the country, but this and other reforms targeting greater inclusion of indigenous peoples were authored in the context of weak democracy with links to the authoritarian past. Today's fragile democracy (Isaacs 2010) contains elements of repressive authoritarian tactics of its past, displaying what some consider a 'restoration' of authoritarianism rather than a process of democratization (Torres-Rivas 1999, 294).

In this article, we address the opportunities for teaching and learning the violent past in El Salvador and Guatemala as a means to analyze the relationship between formal education and democratization, particularly for indigenous people. We look to the post-conflict period to explain differences in the educational approaches each state has implemented. Such institutional choices were rooted in transitional justice and democratization mechanisms that have created path dependency, which refers to the trajectory of historical patterns that perpetuate a degree of institutional determinism (Mahoney 2000, 507) and continue to influence education today. We focus on historical portrayals of indigenous peoples, because this population was one of the most vulnerable during and after the wars in both countries. State representation of indigenous Salvadorans and Guatemalans thus serves as a benchmark of democratization quality in the postwar context.

Both El Salvador and Guatemala have taken their place in Latin American history for the violent civil conflicts that led to widespread death and displacement for both countries' marginalized populations, especially *campesinos* (peasants) and indigenous peoples. Though sharing common violent pasts, this article rests on the premise that El Salvador and Guatemala are negotiating distinct arrangements regarding the visibility and invisibility of conflict and indigeneity in each country. While the civil war is an intricate part of the educational and broader public discourse in El Salvador (Gellman 2015, 158), public reckonings with Guatemala's violent past remain polarized (Weld 2012) and are often silenced in educational spaces (Bellino 2014, 2016; Rubin 2016).

At the same time, El Salvador has long silenced the presence of its own indigenous population to the point that many Salvadorans, as well as the scholars who study them, have lost sight that such a population exists and is only recently being documented

(DeLugan 2012, 5; Dubón 2011; Peterson 2006, 164–165; Tilley 2005, 7–8). Meanwhile, in Guatemala, there is widespread legal recognition that national identity is pluricultural, multiethnic, and multilingual (López 2014, 20; World Bank 2015, 18–19, 26). Despite significant challenges to inclusion, indigenous struggles for cultural rights and autonomy remain a strong and visible part of the social fabric (Bastos 2012). We argue that the ongoing presence of war actors and political parties rooted in wartime politics in the public sphere make possible, and limit, consensus about how the violent past should be taught, with consequences for the multicultural democracies both states aimed to shape.

Measuring indigenous populations in both states proves slippery, with different metrics used by scholars and states. Anthropologist Robin DeLugan notes that there is still, as of the 2010s, no accurate census of indigenous citizens in El Salvador (2012, 70). Instead of traditionally recognized attributes like language or dress, DeLugan documents the trend for organizations, particularly aid agencies, to recognize indigeneity in El Salvador as being based on culturally broad indicators such as 'cosmovision, orientation to community, connection to place and environment, and traditional medicines' (ibid.). We utilize this more expansive definition of indigeneity to allow some degree of agency for indigenous peoples through personal identification with a range of attributes, rather than excluding them due to a performative absence of visible cues of ethnic orientation. This definition also facilitates a common vernacular for Salvadoran and Guatemalan indigeneity. While what indigeneity looks like and who gets to count as indigenous varies across these two cases, Guatemalans who are visibly performing their indigenous identity, for example, speaking an indigenous language, or wearing indigenous dress, will likely also identify with more subtle indicators delineating indigeneity in El Salvador.

States and communities continue to disagree on the appropriate way to measure indigeneity, given the agendas at stake on both sides. Salvadoranist scholars who work on indigenous issues there have come to take the broader definition above as an alternative to the dominant state-derived myth of *mestizaje* in the country, and thus generally consider approximately 10 per cent of the population of six million people to be indigenous (DeLugan 2012, 70; Gellman 2017, 133; Peterson 2006, 172; Tilley 2005, 34, 171). This contrasts sharply with the 2007 Salvadoran state census, where only 0.2 per cent identified as indigenous, but it is important to point out that in this case there was no option of self-identification as indigenous; census-takers had the authority to decide who was indigenous and who was not (Anaya 2013, 4, DeLugan 2012, 73). In El Salvador, the three largest indigenous groups are Nahua, Kakawira, and Lenca. Though small, these populations, along with their supporters, struggle to gain recognition for indigenous culture writ large (Gellman 2017, 138–169).

Demographic measures are similarly contested in Guatemala, where approximately 40 per cent of the population self-identified as indigenous Maya, Xinca, and Garifuna in the 2012 census (see López 2014, 20). However, scholars (McAllister and Nelson 2013, 6, 9) and advocacy groups (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs) refer to indigenous people as the majority of Guatemala's population. Others critique census data for routinely underestimating the number of Maya (Lovell and Lutz 1996, 400), citing fear of discrimination, poor measurement, migration, or inability to speak one's mother tongue. In Guatemala, indigenous languages are recognized as national languages, whereas in El Salvador, there is no legal language recognition (World Bank 2015,

26). A higher proportion of indigenous citizens might lead us to assume that Guatemala would have more robust educational coverage of the history of violence toward indigenous populations than El Salvador. Yet, demographics alone do not explain the divergent trends in curricular content and other challenges to indigenous inclusion in the formal education sector.

We argue that differences in democratization processes, in addition to distinct experiences with transitional justice in each country, have shaped the educational paths available to Salvadoran and Guatemalan youth, especially indigenous youth, as well as shaped conceptions of multicultural citizenship. Though limited and problematic, Salvadorans now have public opportunities to explore their state's history of conflict in school textbooks (see Ministry of Education of El Salvador 2009, 221–232), while Guatemalans often confront historical silence in classrooms and rarely access primary or secondary historical documents depicting the civil war period (Bellino 2016, 2017; Oglesby 2007a, 2007b; Rubin 2016). By 'historical silence', we do not imply an absence of dialogue, necessarily, but rather the strategic erasure of political dimensions of the armed conflict as well as linkages to colonial and contemporary power structures (Bellino 2014; Levenson 2013; Oglesby 2007b; Weld 2012).

History education serves as the mechanism through which discourse about the violent past, as well as indigenous identity in relation to past conflict, is formed. Educational narratives integrate indigenous issues in divergent ways. There are few mentions of indigenous groups in the Salvadoran curriculum, except as antiquated protagonists of anti-state revolt in the early twentieth century (Ministry of Education of El Salvador 2009, 104, 200). In contrast, in Guatemala's national curriculum, there is significant acknowledgement that indigenous peoples are citizens of the pluricultural democracy. These efforts toward inclusion have been widely critiqued as 'cosmetic' (Bastos 2012, 167) and as limited forms of 'neoliberal multiculturalism' with little intention to reallocate resources or redistribute power (Hale 2002, 487–491). Yet in limited ways, these symbolic gestures at least recognize indigenousness, in contrast to the overt denial that persists in Salvadoran national narratives (Dubón 2011). For learners in both countries, the role of indigenous peoples as historical and contemporary civic actors is profoundly minimized in national curriculum and raises questions about the depth of democratization processes that may include procedural signifiers but not inclusivity of the most marginalized citizens.

## Democratization, transitional justice, and education

The concept of democracy has a rich pedigree of literature critiquing its measurement, definition, and attributes (Bowman, Lehoucq, and Mahoney 2005, 941; Tilly 2007, 7–11). We take procedural democracy to encompass indicators such as clean elections and change in presidential party, while democratization includes a renegotiation of the social contract – the rights and responsibilities that citizens and their states each hold. Democratization generally indicates trending toward more equal participation and consultation for citizens in governance processes, based on Robert Dahl's definition of democracy as entailing both contestation and inclusion (Dahl 1971, 3; Tilly 2007, 13–14).

Too often democracy is taken to mean competitive elections and suffrage, but this definition does little to clarify what democracy is, as who gets to vote and why it matters

remain conceptual and measurement problems (Caraway Teri 2004, 445–449; Doorenspleet 2000, 385–391). In recent years, the expansion of privatization, market-based competition, and individual accountability has contributed to new concepts of neoliberal democracy (Burrell 2014), meaning economic globalization-driven regime change that prioritizes consumer choice over tangible rights protections, and as a result, also creates 'neoliberal rejects' for citizens who do not fit the mold (Moodie 2009, 82–84). Neoliberal democracy is in fact neoliberalism legitimized by procedural democracy and is unsatisfactory for addressing indigenous inclusivity issues. As we problematize the teaching of the violent past in Central America, we join others in insisting that democratic inclusion must extend beyond procedural democracy to include qualitative processes such as inclusion in education and a sense of civic belonging in everyday experiences (B.A.U. Levinson 2011; Rosaldo 1999). As national histories around the world tend to embody elite and victor histories, counter-narratives provide a space for marginalized citizens to contest certain kinds of representation and push back against hegemonic approaches to governance. By including counter-narratives in educational processes and materials, in this case meaning different understandings of indigenous experiences in relation to past violence, regimes have the potential to include previously marginalized citizens more deeply in the polity (Bellino 2015, 2016; Gellman 2017, 22; M. Levinson 2012, 116–137).

Transitional justice, the process through which states seek redress for violations committed during periods of conflict and rights violations, operates as a second background factor in our argument. In essence, the way that post-conflict justice was meted out or subverted by state institutions has a significant effect on the way that history of the conflict is currently relayed through the formal education sector. The link between transitional justice processes and educational reform is increasingly theorized as critical to social reconciliation, building democratic trust, and the acknowledgement of an unjust past (Bellino, Paulson, and Worden 2017; Cole and Murphy 2007; Paulson 2011).

While El Salvador and Guatemala both convened truth commissions, the processes of grievance documentation, trials, amnesty, and reparations played out differently. El Salvador's Truth Commission report named perpetrators in hopes of addressing the national culture of impunity (United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador et al. 1993, 9), a goal quickly shattered by an amnesty law passed in the week following the report's release. The fallout from the Salvadoran Supreme Court overturning the amnesty law in July 2016 has yet to be seen. Guatemala's Historical Clarification Commission (CEH 1999) learned from the outcomes in El Salvador, opting to address larger structural processes rather than naming individual perpetrators. The National Reparations Law in Guatemala similarly ensured protection for a broad range of acts committed during the context of war, impeding legal justice processes and furthering mistrust in indigenous citizen-state relations.

Education has been used in both countries to oppress or empower different segments of the population. Schools are 'privileged sites' where young people are socialized into dominant norms (Bénéï 2008, 21), including standard cultural practices and the capacity for tolerance. When ethnic tension exists, it is common for elites to push ethnic homogenization through curricula and textbooks, demonizing difference as dangerous and a threat to national cohesion (Bush and Saltarelli 2000, 13). Schools in colonial and post-colonial times served as cauldrons of acculturation, where monolingualism and

monoculturalism were enforced through curricula and language of instruction that prioritized white criollo and, later, mestizo values over indigenous ones (Cortina 2014). In Guatemala, indigenous populations are the presumed recipients of Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (EIB), or intercultural bilingual education; however, questions remain about the quality and extent of access. Meanwhile, in El Salvador, the Ministry of Education considers El Salvador's indigenous population too small and dispersed to necessitate EIB (Samour 2012).

Democratization and transitional justice operate side by side as vital components that affect the meta-discursive framework of history education on two levels. First, the robustness of the social contract in each country contributes to perceptions of the legitimacy of schools as social institutions, as well as the validity of school curricula. Second, the transitional justice processes in each country created incentives and disincentives for institutional actors to develop certain historiographical versions of the past for use in formal educational settings.

Our contribution shows the results of the interaction between democratization and transitional justice in the realm of indigenous inclusion in teachings of the violent past in El Salvador and Guatemala. By placing these two cases in conversation with one another, we show that despite similar geopolitical post-conflict contexts, divergent democratization and transitional justice experiences have led to distinct means of addressing conflict and multicultural citizenship. At the same time, education systems in both countries effectively silence indigenous citizens through their absences or limited roles in official curricula.

## Methodology as praxis

As this article places two countries in comparative framework, it also places two disciplines in conversation with each other. Political science is generally less conducive to the kind of feedback loops and multidirectionality that anthropological theory embraces, while the field of education is similarly wary of unidirectional causal arguments. Studies exploring the relationship between conflict and education necessitate explanations that seek multicausality and complexity (Davies 2004). As collaborators, we seek to acknowledge these tensions in our approaches to theory-building. For example, the crisp causal argument outlined above with democratization, transitional justice, and indigenous identity operating as independent variables that influence the teaching of the violent past through the mechanism of institutional reform in fact contains myriad feedback loops that account for the interactions between these processes as enacted on the ground.

Those feedback loops, in addition to being indicative of disciplinary tension, also point to the complexity and multitude of stakeholders involved in implementing policy change, as the praxis of post-conflict education includes many moving parts that states, and researchers, must address simultaneously. For example, teacher training, curricular modifications, and policy reforms combine with political agendas about national narratives, memorialization, and ultimately, political will for change. The gaps and feedback loops that govern policy change in formal and informal settings complexify the relationship between independent variables, the mechanisms, and the outcomes.

Our collective methodologies that inform this article include content analysis of school curricula, textbooks, and Ministry of Education policies and documents, and

ethnographic work through participant observation and interviews in schools and non-formal educational spaces in El Salvador and Guatemala, as well as comparative historical analysis of the country literatures. We have each published separately about related issues in these cases that make full use of these methods, and our baseline knowledge of the cases draws on these experiences. However, in this article, we emphasize data sources in our individual work that best address the common theme we have taken on as a joint project. This means that the data we present here are not always parallel across cases because we engaged the topic through divergent methods while in the field, prior to deciding to collaborate. In deciding to put our case expertise in conversation, we each drew on the methods that best document spaces of the presence and absence about historical violence and indigeneity, and that show the role counter-narratives can play in indigenous inclusion efforts. Thus, the absence of indigenous representation in formal education came through most strongly in textual analysis in El Salvador and school observations in Guatemala. Taken together, our larger array of methodological tools allows us to compare educational patterns in the region that tap into wider agendas we have explored elsewhere.

## Narratives of the violent pasts

Indigenous people have been historic targets of colonial and state violence in both El Salvador and Guatemala, with systematic extermination of indigenous people as part of state agendas (Gould and Lauria-Santiago 2008; Grandin 2000; Lindo-Fuentes, Ching, and Martínez 2007; Sanford 2003). These agendas became explicit during the civil wars in both countries, particularly in Guatemala, as the war encompassed ethnic genocide, which has been clearly documented and recognized by international actors. The civil war also encompassed class struggle and repression of poor and working class Guatemalans.

By contrast, El Salvador's war is generally cast as a class-based conflict, though indigenous people were also explicitly targeted (Lindo-Fuentes, Ching, and Martínez 2007, 9–12). In their important volume addressing the interplay between memory, violence, and historiography in El Salvador, historians Lindo-Fuentes, Ching, and Lara-Martínez speak directly to 'communist causality', or the idea that in the cold war environment, previous explanations for conflict such as ethnicity were trumped by a new focus on communism versus capitalism (ibid., 9). The authors call on readers to imagine a hypothetical 'what if' scenario in which ethnicity had become more salient than economic systems in global conflict patterns to remind us how the historical events shaping the work of historians have been crucial in subverting ethno-causal justifications in favor of economic ones (ibid., 9–11).[1] Meanwhile, the CEH cited racism and anti-communism as intersectional drivers of violence in Guatemala. In the following section, we recount the movement from civil war to the transitional justice and democratization processes in each country. We draw particular attention to official narratives of violence in order to demonstrate how these accounts – which feed into curricular reform – simultaneously remain steeped in the politics of transition from which they arose.

### *El Salvador: war and transition*

El Salvador's intense inequality, historically connected to agricultural production and land ownership, was challenged by indigenous people and the political left in 1932 and again during the civil war. In western El Salvador in 1932, the military massacred between 10,000 and 30,000 people, mainly indigenous *campesinos* or anyone perceived to be leftist (Ching 1998, 206; Lindo-Fuentes, Ching, and Martínez 2007, 2; Tilley 2005, 31). Like 1932, the civil war (1980–1992), ideologically a conflict between the Marxist FMLN and the Salvadoran government, is historically depicted as a contest between a small landowning elite and the exploited working class masses. As in 1932, indigenous people were significant though overlooked protagonists in counteracting state rule (Gellman 2017, 164; Gould and Lauria-Santiago 2008, 285).

State repression by the military and affiliated death squads increased throughout the 1970s, and by 1980, the FMLN subsumed five separate guerilla factions to present one front. The FMLN fought to overturn the social, economic, and political orders dominated by wealthy strongmen and the right wing Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), which was supported by the US government as a Cold War proxy. El Salvador's civil war was characterized by systematic human rights abuses such as disappearances, torture, rape, and assassination, mostly committed by the Salvadoran army or its affiliated paramilitary squads. Approximately 75,000 people were killed during the war (Wood 2008, 541), most of them rural civilians, and many of them from indigenous or mestizo backgrounds. The role of indigenous Salvadoran participation in the civil war is mostly undocumented in the literature due to what Moodie terms the 'unknowning' of race in the country, or the way in which Salvadorans have absorbed the myth of mestizaje and communicate it back in social and material ways (2010, 193–195). Salvadorans, and the scholars who have studied them, focus on class and associated indicators rather than race in explaining war dynamics (Moodie 2010, 195), but such trends are starting to be questioned (Gellman 2017, 155–169). Thus, while the public 'metanarrative' of El Salvador's conflict and its aftermath is a class narrative, recent scholarship connects the resurgence of indigenous activism with calls to rewrite the erasure of indigeneity in the country and acknowledge the long-standing and ongoing role of indigenous people there (Gellman 2017, 150; Lindo-Fuentes, Ching, and Martínez 2007, 11).

The 1992 Peace Accords created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which documented more than 13,000 human rights violations (United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador et al. 1993). The TRC did not specifically document indigenous grievances and was undercut by an amnesty law passed immediately following its publication. After the Peace Accords, the FMLN transformed into a political party but did not break ARENA's hold on the presidency until the election of Mauricio Funes in 2009, and continuing with former schoolteacher and FMLN guerilla Salvador Sánchez Cerén in 2014. Yet, the FMLN's democratic reinvention has only modestly included measures to address indigenous rights. In 2012, the FMLN government facilitated the visit of former United Nations Special Rapporteur for the Rights of Indigenous People, James Anaya, who made a series of recommendations to the government about how to better protect indigenous rights, including their recognition in the national Constitution, which the government has heeded, and El Salvador's

ratification of International Labor Convention 169, which it has not (Anaya 2013, 18–22). In the face of contemporary violence destabilizing the country, indigenous rights have not been a political priority.

### *Guatemala: war and transition*

Guatemala's 'armed conflict' endured from 1960 to 1996 and is considered one of the most brutal civil wars in Latin America's history, with approximately 200,000 people killed or disappeared (CEH 1999). Because state actors committed the vast majority of crimes against innocent civilians, some scholars reject the delineation of civil war, casting this period a 'war against civilians' (Torres-Rivas 2006, 12). More specifically, most of the victims of the kidnappings, torture, murder, sexual violence, forced recruitment into paramilitary, and displacement were indigenous civilians. Indigenous cultural and spiritual leaders suffered extremely brutal and public deaths, and the army systematically destroyed sacred sites and symbols of Christianity and Maya spirituality. The armed conflict moved through various stages, with ladinos and mestizos targeted in greater numbers than indigenous people in the earliest years (CEH 1999). Guerrilla movements organized disenfranchised Guatemalans across ethnic lines, arguing for armed struggle as the only means of social and political transformation in an increasingly repressive state. At its core, this was a struggle about equity and democracy for *all* Guatemalans (Menchú and Burgos-Debray 1984, 1). However, ethnicity played a defining role in the most brutal years of the conflict, as the state's counterinsurgency campaign honed in on rural indigenous populations, a manifestation of 'racism politicized by anticommunism' (Grandin 2005, 65). In this way, Guatemala's entrenched racism intersected with global Cold War politics and was further mobilized by US economic interests.

The Historical Clarification Commission (CEH 1999) that investigated human rights abuses committed during the war documented the disproportionate brutality targeting indigenous peoples, coupled with the systematic destruction of indigenous Maya spaces and cultural symbols. The CEH determined that the war encompassed ethnic genocide of Maya groups, yet their capacity to shape the historical narrative was stemmed by the state's denial of genocide and public attacks lobbied at the Commission's credibility (Weld 2014, 61–63). The Human Rights Office of the Guatemalan Catholic Archdiocese initiated its own truth commission, the Recovery of Historical Memory Project (REMHI). In eerie parallel to the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador for his peace efforts, REMHI's leader, Bishop Gerardi, was assassinated two days following the public release of the report. Though Gerardi's murder was intentionally depoliticized by police investigations (Goldman 2007, 65–66), it served as a clear warning of the limits on counter-narratives that would be tolerated in public spaces, a threat that has not lost relevance nearly two decades later, as human rights advocates continue to endure violent repression (UDEFEGUA 2011).

Like in El Salvador, Guatemala's political parties remain linked to the violent past, while public figures are often characterized by their connections to the war. The 2011 Presidential election of former military General Otto Pérez Molina, the first military affiliate in power since the war, caused public dispute about whether Guatemala remained a democracy or had reverted to authoritarianism, and these debates impacted

classroom discussions about citizenship and democracy in Guatemala (Bellino 2015, 2016, 2017). Following Pérez Molina's removal from office, Jimmy Morales, an inexperienced politician whose party is backed by military hard-liners, was elected president. His election, and the subsequent arrests of 18 ex-military leaders, some of whom were rumored to be his intended Cabinet members, serves as a reminder of 'vertical impunity' in this case (Sanford 2003, 267). Meanwhile, efforts to bring perpetrators to justice are ongoing. In March 2013, former Head of State Efraín Ríos Montt was found guilty of genocide in national courts. As indigenous communities and activist groups celebrated the trial as a victory of belated justice, conservative civil society groups publicly protested the trial's legitimacy. Just days after Ríos Montt's sentencing, the verdict was overturned. Elizabeth Oglesby has described these openings and closures in the public discourse – which persist decades after the peace process – as a 'double movement' that simultaneously creates space for dialogue but limits it to a 'narrowing range of narratives' (2007a, 79). As the parameters of Guatemala's armed conflict have narrowed, the history of ethnic and political violence has become increasingly depoliticized and decontextualized from colonial structures and practices, as well as contemporary racism and authoritarian legacies.

## Education for what, whom, and how?

State-sponsored formal education policies and practices tell important stories about how the state envisions its citizens, in what role, and for what purpose. Educational norms and practices shed light on who belongs, which groups are considered worthy of the benefits of citizenship, and the nature of the ideal democratic relationship between the state and citizens (B.A.U. Levinson 2011, 280–282). Schools are one of the most powerful civic institutions in societies, and everyday experiences in school shape and challenge national identity and conceptions of 'good citizenship' (Bellino 2015, 538, 552, 557–558). In this sense, schools do not merely serve citizens, but actively shape them (M. Levinson 2012). The institutional structure of schools, language of instruction, and curricular content are important mediators in these civic experiences, serving as indicators of multicultural citizenship and the role of the violent past in postwar democracies. The following sections show examples of textual and curricular engagement with indigenous identity in formal education in El Salvador and Guatemala. While the sources of data for each case are not identical, this reflects the methodological diversity of the authors and, brought together, offers an analysis of educational trends in the region.

### *Education in El Salvador*

Salvadoran education reform in general has not disrupted the status quo of hierarchical socioeconomic relationships in the country. Prior to the 2009 change of power, ARENA's Ministry of Education maintained the narrative that El Salvador was a country of mestizos, that the civil war was one of communists trying to take down democracy, and that military repression was necessary to preserve order and progress. Before ARENA, in the 1960s and 1970s, the National Conciliation Party's educational agenda was to implement a bureaucratic, technological approach to education reform through

large scale investing in the creation of televised classrooms (Lindo-Fuentes and Ching 2012, 3). Televised classrooms solidified government control over rural teaching content but did not prove to educate students more effectively or efficiently (Lindo-Fuentes and Ching 2012, 249–252).

History is absorbed into a broad packaging of social sciences at the secondary level in El Salvador, as is the case in Guatemala (Oglesby 2007a). Only in the 2000s was a history field added at the tertiary level, and it continues to be a fledgling discipline. In the post-Peace Accord era, ARENA continued to control the Ministry of Education (MINED), and textbooks curricula, and teacher training did not change content dramatically. Under President Funes and subsequently Sánchez Cerén, there have been modest reforms. *Historia Mínima*, a Salvadoran history book, was released by President Funes and the Secretariat of Culture in 2011 to commemorate the bicentennial of El Salvador's independence. The book brings together a range of expert Salvadoran and Salvadoranist historians whose chapters are placed in chronological and thematic order spanning 1808–2011. *Historia Mínima* is written for a general readership rather than specifically for school use. The book was described by one of its authors as an 'expression of historiography rather than a curricular endeavor' (Ching 2016) and was compiled with the intention of making Salvadoran history more available for the Salvadoran population at large.

*Historia Mínima* is macro-level concentrated, meaning that each author focuses on the general theoretical and institutional trends happening within their given time frame, mostly at the expense of particulars about the details within each case. For example, though the chapter on the civil war discusses each of the three main theories about why the war happened from government, FMLN, and academic perspectives (Argueta 2011, 90), major war events such as the assassination of Oscar Romero and the El Mozote massacre are not mentioned. *Historia Mínima's* treatment of indigenous Salvadorans has strengths and weaknesses. Much of Ching's analysis of the 1932 uprising talks about the main actors as *campesinos*, though he mentions toward the end of his chapter that most of the affected municipalities had majority indigenous populations (Ching 2011, 67). While Ching's larger body of work has been a vital component of reinscribing ethnicity into discussions of 1932, in *Historia Mínima*, the macro-level analysis is maintained at the expense of more detailed or biographical avenues into history. As a book that aims to make visible structural reasons for historical inequality without shutting down dialogue with more conservative forces, its tone positions it for success among general Salvadoran readers. Finally, when compared to the only other comprehensive Salvadoran history books available in the country, the tone of *Historia Mínima* is distinctly more progressive.

*Historia 2*, a secondary school-level Salvadoran history book originally published in 1994 by the Ministry of Education served, along with its companion tome *Historia 1*, as national history textbooks in the postwar period. *Historia 2* discusses the Salvadoran civil war as a power struggle between two extremist left and right wing forces that opted for violence as a means to an end. *Historia 2* invokes a tone of strict neutrality about the war, to the extent of casting both the FMLN and the military as equal aggressors and painting civilians as innocents caught in the cross fire. In fact, the Truth Commission documented that more than 85 per cent of all human rights violations were committed

by the military and other affiliated agents of the state, and 5 per cent were committed by the FMLN (Bentancur, Figueredo Planchart, and Buergenthal 1993, 36).

An analysis of war images in *Historia 2* shows a similar attempt at neutrality through presentation of an equal number of images of each side. Despite such parity in numbers of photos of both FMLN and military war participation, the FMLN photos focus on controversial images like buses and buildings destroyed by guerillas and recruited child soldiers, while the military-focused photos show personnel in dialogues and meetings rather than committing some of their more notorious abuses. Textually, the book uses language that creates a sense of passivity and distance from state responsibility, for example, it states 'In general, governments have lacked the sufficient clarity to really see social challenges clearly, and when they have had that clarity, they haven't allowed the necessary to occur' (Ministry of Education of El Salvador, 2009, 203). Casting the government role in the war as based in a lack of clarity about social challenges, rather than a virulent anti-communist agenda tied to maintaining elite privilege, this exemplifies the tone that MINED takes throughout *Historia 2*. The approach of neutrality is a way to minimize the state's role as aggressor, and this is one of the many inaccuracies that *Historia Mínima* gently corrects.

While *Historia Mínima* significantly improves the discourse about the violent past in El Salvador, it does not significantly improve the visibility of indigenous people in the country's history from the version offered by *Historia 2*. In *Historia 2*, indigenous Salvadorans are portrayed in a balanced historical manner, rather than as anachronisms or folklore, but they are shown to have no role in contemporary Salvadoran life. Every mention of indigenous people in *Historia 2* is part of recounting the country's history up through the massacre of 1932. While *Historia Mínima* more accurately acknowledges the structural injustices facing indigenous Salvadorans throughout history, including reference to the fact that they have been cast as folkloric (Gregorio López Bernal 2011, 140), both books miss the opportunity to reinsert indigenous Salvadorans into contemporary history.

### *Education in Guatemala*

While postwar education in El Salvador was envisioned through technocratic, sector-wide reform, Guatemala's transitional actors outlined specific approaches to structural and curricular reform (Marques and Bannon 2003, 8–11). Education is centrally featured in two Peace Accords: the 'Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples' (categorized as 'cultural rights') and the 'Agreement on Social and Economic Aspects and Agrarian Situation' (encompassing 'social development'). The Agreements frame education as an essential mechanism of democratic and economic stability in the postwar period, recognizing it as a space to honor cultural identity, facilitate national unity and a culture of peace, and contribute to the country's 'economic modernization and international competitiveness'. Reforms aimed at educational equity and global competitiveness were imagined to go hand in hand with redressing historical injustice in society. Postwar citizens would shape a new national identity and democratic citizenship based on their understanding that, in the language of the Agreements, '[r]espect for and the exercise of the political, cultural, economic and spiritual rights of all Guatemalans is the foundation for a new coexistence'.

Each Peace Accord charts the path toward achieving a set of stated goals: (1) universal access to education, (2) decentralization of the educational system, (3) increased regional and local participation in school-level decision-making, (4) recruitment and training of indigenous and bilingual teachers, (5) increased national spending, (6) an expanded scholarship program for indigenous students, and (7) support for the establishment of a Maya university. Among the initiatives for systemic reform, two particular instructional approaches are highlighted: EIB for indigenous children and a civic education program that would emphasize human rights and a culture of peace, intended for all Guatemalan children. That these pedagogies target ethnically distinct student populations alone is telling, in that EIB is envisioned as uniquely relevant to indigenous populations rather than to all Guatemalans in the aftermath of ethnic genocide.[2] Curricular reform would complement these new pedagogies, beginning with the removal of cultural and gender stereotypes, then making efforts to integrate indigenous concepts and respect for cultural diversity and gender equality into curriculum (Maxwell 2009).

Given ongoing political contests to control Guatemala's historical narrative, one might expect that school curriculum would reflect and uphold the state's story of the brave and loyal military rescuing the state from an impending fall into communism. Although there are glimmers of this heroic past, the Ministry of Education has come under public attack more often for insufficient coverage of the past than for politicizing it in school curriculum (see Bellino 2014). Silencing divisive pasts is a common strategy of educators and policymakers the world over, given the inherent political and pedagogical challenges, especially in fragile contexts still marked by violence and political instability (Cole and Murphy 2007). Content analyses of Guatemalan social studies textbooks have revealed several recurrent narrative tropes, couching the violent past within a set of familiar storylines (Bellino 2014, 136–139). The first of these tropes accounts for the war as a conflict between 'two devils', a struggle between the state and guerrilla forces, two equally matched parties who are jointly accountable for the violence and destruction that befell the nation. This trope has been identified in other Latin American contexts and critiqued for its deletion of both state accountability and the political agency of insurgent groups resisting an unjust regime, rationalizing rather than discrediting authoritarianism (see Jelin 2003, 53–55). The second trope is a familiar story of historical progress that places the war as a low point from which the Guatemalan nation has recovered. Progress narratives are notoriously critiqued for their historical inaccuracy (Carretero 2011) and for excluding the lives of those who do not conform to the archetype (M. Levinson 2012, 116–137). The third trope is more particular to Guatemala in that the armed conflict is depicted as a struggle over state power, with unclear ethnic dimensions.

Indigenous identity and rights struggles are more often featured as a consequence of the armed conflict, rather than a precursor or driver of violence. Curricular texts routinely note that indigenous peoples suffered in large majority during the conflict, though there is rarely explicit discussion about the role of ethnicity in the conflict's escalation, nor a mention that the CEH determined that the state's actions amounted to genocide on the basis of ethnicity (Bellino 2014, 136–139). Meanwhile, texts frequently emphasize the positive outcomes of the war for indigenous populations and the new prospects for recognizing Guatemala as a multicultural democracy. For example, students learn that the 12 Peace Accords 'focus on different aspects that

favor the Maya people' (Contreras et al. 2008, 187). Cultural pride is one of the war's positive outcomes, uniquely accessed by indigenous Guatemalans: 'The indigenous peoples have had a change in self-esteem, because they have shifted from self-identifying as "Indians" (with all the discrimination wrapped up in that term) as they were known in the past, to self-identifying as Maya, which is what they really are' (ibid., 185). According to these narratives, indigenous rights were an outcome of the war, but their systematic denial and violation had little to do with the historical grievances that contributed to armed conflict, or its escalation.

As in all educational contexts, the formal curriculum can only offer a partial account. Ethnographic research demonstrates that teachers mediate these historical tropes in their instruction, at times resisting them and in other cases reinforcing them (Bellino 2015, 2016, 2017). Despite this diversity across classroom practice, school-based observations support earlier studies (Oglesby 2007a, 2007b) that discussions of postwar peace negotiations in formal educational settings often receive more instructional time than consideration of conflict dynamics, causes, or consequences.

## Community counter-histories

Official histories in both countries are challenged by local, community-driven counter-narratives. Those who participate in public memory projects are teaching and learning about the historical significance of indigenous actors in the violent past. Engaging with these projects better prepares people to critique indigenous absence in a range of curricular spaces, as well as to demand the insertion of indigenous actors into twenty-first century citizenship discourses. However, these counter-narratives often do not reach the majority of the population. For counter-histories to promote even the limited inclusion that democratic, multicultural states are poised to offer, such initiatives need to find ways to reach broader audiences.

### *Counter-narratives in El Salvador*

The reinsertion of indigenous people into conversations about history in El Salvador has been slowly growing over the last decade as indigenous community leaders have found allies in a variety of institutions. This section analyzes three main spaces for counter-narratives: advocacy efforts of The Salvadoran National Indigenous Coordinating Council (CCNIS), educational projects of the Museum of the Word and the Image (MUPI), and bilingual programing enacted in the primary school 'Mario Calvo Marroquín'. Unlike in Guatemala, where counter-narratives have, in some cases, resulted in the production of alternative texts that challenge the dominant paradigm, in El Salvador, counter-narratives take on the role of diversity awareness through reminders of indigenous existence.

The first space for indigenous representation considered here is CCNIS, the leading advocacy organization for indigenous rights in the country. In fact, CCNIS was responsible for organizing the campaign that pushed the Salvadoran Legislative Assembly to insert recognition of indigenous people into Article 63 of the Constitution. CCNIS continues a spectrum of activities, including political petitioning for rights, cultural strengthening, and preservation. For example, CCNIS periodically lobbies the

Salvadoran Assembly to ratify International Labor Organization Convention 169, which protects the rights of indigenous people, as the victory with Article 63 paves the way for that campaign.

Alternative media production has been a tool of CCNIS, which sponsored the production of a striking film by Salvadoran filmmaker Mario Dubón, *Los Herederos de Cushcatan*, or The Heirs of Cushcatan, an indigenous region in El Salvador. Among other documentation about indigenous identity, the film intersperses footage of indigenous Salvadorans speaking about aspects of their culture with footage of Salvadoran youth denying the presence of indigenous people in the country (Dubón 2011). Highlighting the gap between multicultural reality and learned stereotypes about mestizaje as the sole ethnic identity in the country, the film provides a counter-narrative to the negation of indigenous presence in the country. Though it has thus far only been accessible in non-formal educational settings like community screenings and via the internet, the film has been widely shared via Vimeo and Facebook among Salvadorans and has also begun to tour film festivals for Salvadoran diasporas in the United States, but as of this writing does not have English subtitles.

The second Salvadoran space considered here is MUPI. Based in San Salvador, MUPI has been at the forefront of civil society initiatives to construct counter-narratives on a range of topics including representations of the civil war and also of indigenous people. Rather than wait for the formal sector to catch on, MUPI has been developing educational programming on human rights, indigenous culture, and war history education for Salvadorans to access in various formats. MUPI's efforts to recuperate memories of violence and indigenous culture constitute part of the movement to create 'history from below', in the words of MUPI founder and former FMLN militant and radio journalist Carlos Henriquez Consalvi, known by his *nom de guerre*, 'Santiago' (Cañada 2010, 11). This includes the arduous task of integrating subaltern histories into the national discourse where they become legitimate options for understanding the past, rather than a marginalized subset rendered continually silent (ibid.). Organizations like MUPI attempt to create alternatives to state-generated history through educational outreach, school visits to their museum displays, film, literature, and community forums.[3] However, only recently has MUPI secured MINED support for school fieldtrips to the museum, and growing awareness of this new history from below remains a long-term project. Indeed, funding is a constant strain for MUPI, which must respond to the priorities of a range of public and private donors to stay afloat (Becerra 2017, 218), as is the case with many popular education projects.

In addition to conventional mediums such as exhibits and archives, MUPI developed in the 2000s an interactive way for schoolchildren and community members to recognize, utilize, and appreciate indigenous knowledge. Los Izalcos is a board game based on educating players about indigenous culture, and it is named for the Nahua group targeted by the military in the 1932 massacre. The game is played with pieces that are moved based on responses to questions regarding indigenous culture, myths, and relationships with the land (Becerra 2013, 7). The trivia is listed on a stack of cards but also presented in a study guide that players, or their teacher or other adult facilitators, can help read and review before starting the game. By rewarding knowledge about indigenous culture through the scaffolding of game questions, the intention of MUPI in producing Los Izalcos is to make it 'cool' to be informed about Nahua culture, and the

game serves as an informal educational tool that creates a counter-narrative to the state's general deletion of indigenous culture from mainstream curricula. Opportunities provided to children to play the game through visits or games that have been donated to schools further mainstreams knowledge of indigenous historical figures or information. However, there has been no data collection to date about the actual impact on inclusivity or understanding of indigenous culture for people who play the game.

Third, counter-narratives are also slowly being integrated into formal education in a few localities as well. In the town of Izalco, in Sonsonate, El Salvador, the primary school 'Mario Calvo Marroquín' has become a flagship school for regional projects introducing a community-led bilingual intercultural curriculum. Unlike EIB in Guatemala, which is largely aimed at mother tongue instruction, Izalqueños are learning Nahuat as their second language. Better characterized as a heritage language than a mother tongue, the Nahuat language, in addition to indigenous cultural appreciation initiatives in the school such as 'Roots Day', has gained minimal MINED funding and support, but remains mostly community led and funded (Ama de Chile 2010). Initiated by previous school director Juliana Ama de Chile, granddaughter of one of the central indigenous leaders of the 1932 uprising, the Marroquín school serves as a local experiment in re-appropriating formal educational spaces to teach language and other practical cultural skills that will connect local youth to their heritage (Gellman 2017, 138).

### *Guatemalan narratives*

In contrast to El Salvador, there is more visibility and recognition of indigenous peoples in Guatemala. However, the public sphere remains polarized on historical interpretations and demands for justice for past violence, critical dimensions of indigenous identity. In response to the long-standing erasure of the state's history of repression and discrimination toward indigenous peoples, indigenous communities have actively shaped counter-narratives of the past and present, drawing on local memory communities and indigenous epistemologies. These counter-narratives intend to serve a variety of purposes, including local reconciliation and the promotion of a shared cultural identity and pride in indigenous culture and language. In some cases, these initiatives actively aim to expand, or write against, dominant historical narratives and portrayals of indigenous peoples. Importantly, when the civil war is portrayed in these texts – whether written or displayed visually – the ethnic dimensions of the violence are foregrounded.

Rabinal's community museum is a well-known example of a publicly accessible counter-narrative, authored by an indigenous community and giving voice to the massive suffering the Achi Maya experienced during the war (Fromm, Golding, and Rekdal 2014). The community aimed at further dissemination by publishing *Oj K'aslik: Estamos vivos* (*Recuperación de La memoria histórica de Rabinal/Recovery of the historical memory of Rabinal* 2003), a book that recounts the brutal massacre of indigenous peoples in Rabinal.[4] The organization of the text echoes and draws from the Truth Commission report, delineating various human rights abuses, demonstrating state accountability for ethnic genocide, and emphasizing that the experience of indigenous suffering dates back centuries prior to the war.

In a similar community-led memory project, *Nuestra historia, Nuestra Memoria*, a series of texts highlighting the local histories of San Juan Comalapa, San Martín Jilotepéque, and San

José Poaquil, the social and structural factors absent from state-generated narratives are also deemed central to the war: 'The concentrated occupation of land among the few, the exploitation of cheap labor in the plantations on the southern coast, the discrimination, the racism, the complete abandonment of the indigenous populations, clearly demonstrate a state constructed on the foundation of excluding the majority and representing one of the factors that caused the internal armed conflict' (Curruchich Cúmez 2006, 48). There is no doubt among these authors that the war was ethnic in nature, as well as a political struggle, with important historical antecedents in colonialism and post-colonial nation-building.

A number of these community-led projects are accompanied by efforts to remake public spaces with colorful murals and the installation of cultural centers and museums that attract visitors from within and outside the region. In some communities, these cultural texts visually represent a critical stance, such as the mural in San Juan Comalapa, which depicts bloody scenes from the armed conflict and situates these images within a long span of time predating the arrival of Spanish colonialists. The muralists sought to create educative and useful space for formal and informal teaching and learning.[5]

Ethnographic evidence suggests that some community schools and individual educators embrace these counter-narratives, though there are also accounts that these representations are ignored or left open for interpretation so as to avoid addressing sensitive topics in schools and elsewhere (Bellino 2016, 2017). For example, at an indigenous community school in Comalapa, teachers use the mural as a shared resource to narrate the intersections of history and Maya culture to younger generations. One teacher explained that the story of the Maya was one comprised of 'many struggles and conflicts, not only the civil war', and the mural helped to contextualize this as central to the indigenous experience.

At an indigenous-led community school in the province of Izabal, teachers use other means to invoke counter-narratives. During weeks of participant observation in social studies and human rights classes, teachers repeatedly redirected students from a tendency to offer individual explanations for inequity and poverty to recognizing the power structures within the state that have marginalized and excluded indigenous and rural populations over time, including the state's use of violence. At a school assembly, the principal reminded students that 'We [indigenous] are not poor. We have been impoverished. They have impoverished us'. Though the principal did not articulate *who* the actors are who reduced indigenous peoples to impoverished subjects, his gesture to their collective subjugation reinforced the notion that indigenous peoples were working against dominant, entrenched beliefs in indigenous inferiority.

Despite a policy of IEB, indigenous students are not guaranteed the opportunity to see themselves or their community experience reflected in the national curriculum. Whether students confront critical counter-narratives or indigenous worldviews in their school experience depends significantly on the school mission and the commitments of individual educators, many of whom approach this work with few formal materials and little professional training. Meanwhile, schools serving non-indigenous students are less likely to confront critical historical perspectives, engage with indigenous worldviews, or even learn what was at stake in the civil war. Across these instances of counter-narratives and indigenous self-representations, there is an overreliance on indigenous people's funding, organizing, teaching, and legitimizing their identities amongst themselves, and in isolation from dominant communities. In some cases, these 'memory

projects', as they are often called, receive some technical or financial support from international donors, suggesting the important role of transnational actors and organizations.

Efforts to publish memoirs and facilitate local memory projects exist across indigenous communities in Guatemala. These projects often draw on the discourse of REMHI in that they aim to 'rescue', 'recover', and 'restore' memory, accounting for experiences of marginalization that have been rendered invisible in the public memory. Yet, these texts rarely transcend the communities that produce them and in some cases are not well-known within them. These efforts remain ad hoc and limited in circulation. They are also increasingly dangerous in the current political context, where indigenous solidarity movements are regarded as divisive, exclusionary, and combative, and often met with violence (Bellino 2017; Isaacs 2010). In all of these examples, community members have shown concern for the absence of indigenous people in histories and narratives of national identities. For indigenous citizens, as well as their fellow non-indigenous citizens, these counter-narratives share a heavy burden to advocate for more recognition and inclusion of indigenous peoples.

## Conclusion

In the aftermath of their respective civil wars, El Salvador and Guatemala teach the violent past and work toward the inclusion of indigenous citizens in divergent ways, confronting distinct challenges linked to postwar politics. While the war is discussed in a certain lens within El Salvador's formal education sector, the role of indigenous people remains consigned to the pre-1932 past. In contrast, Guatemala has deeper acknowledgement in legal terms and through narratives of democratic pluriculturalism, but indigenous people remain marginalized figures both in history and in contemporary life. El Salvador's past conflict is public, visible, and deemed a significant element of the national history, while the lack of consensus in Guatemala's conflict tends to result in its silencing in formal educational spaces. Meanwhile, Guatemala's public displays of cultural pluralism visibly celebrate indigenous diversity, but indigeneity continues to be silenced and contested in El Salvador. These differences delineate the challenges facing each country in their pursuits of equitable democratization processes for multicultural citizenries. Not only should these differences be of interest to scholars, but also to regional policy-makers and other actors in fields of politics, education, and development. A one-size-fits-all approach to indigenous inclusion would be most out of place across these two countries. Rather, taking stock of the processes that are going well, in both the formal and informal education sectors, offers insight into the quite divergent needs in each country. In El Salvador, furthering institutional protections for indigenous citizens remains critical, while initial progress on teaching the violent past could be further supported. In Guatemala, addressing the national discourse about the violent past in relation to, rather than as a project separate from, indigenous rights could highlight the intersectionality of historic marginalizations. In both countries, acknowledging this intersection between marginalization as indigenous people, as peasants, and as actors in the violent past would be an important step in dismantling the convenient but troublesome silos that persist in both local rights work and human rights issues more broadly.

As this article has shown, the presences and absences of issues critical to an accurate national history are rooted in dynamics of democratization and transitional justice. The relationship between these processes and contemporary education agendas is deeply political and connected to notions of how Salvadoran and Guatemalan citizenship should be fostered in formal and informal educational spaces. Future research agendas could continue to unpack who benefits from certain representations of the violent past, while empirically exploring the relationship between violent history and civic education. Additionally, more concerted efforts to track the funding streams financing local memory and identity projects would make an interesting angle for future research, adding to an understanding of inclusion and visibility efforts that come from within as well as without states.

For our purposes, we have examined representations of the violent past and indigenous citizens across a range of formal and informal educational spaces. In taking an interdisciplinary approach across our fields of political science, anthropology, and education, we have sought to engage causality through an interpretive lens that documents recursivity between political processes of democratization and transitional justice. In doing so, we recognize the important role these processes play in shaping the educational arena in which national identities are put forth, as well as education's implications for shaping a democratic society. Education in El Salvador and Guatemala, and indeed in any country, is prime terrain through which to promote multicultural democracy. However, until the formal sector engages in both teaching the violent past and promoting multiculturalism as worthy and interrelated goals, community-driven cultural promotion projects remain vital venues to promote counter-narratives. These community-based organizations should not have to shoulder the whole burden of addressing intersectionalities of marginalization, but could rather serve to inspire deeper engagement in formal education settings, creating new discursive spaces that acknowledge indigenous people and the violent pasts that have marginalized them.

## Notes

1. Though the authors are specifically referencing the massacre of 1932, the communist causality lens can also be applied to the Salvadoran civil war, although even less attention has been paid to the ethnic dimension of the war. What evidence there is tends to be observational, as for example, in the memoire of Henríquez Consalvi (2011, 54–56, 60–61), and indigeneity in the war remains an important avenue for future scholarship.
2. For similar critiques of intercultural educational policy in Peru, see Paulson (2017) and Valdiviezo (2009).
3. See MUPI's website for a description of all MUPI's activities: http://museo.com.sv/en/.
4. The text acknowledges the support from the Fondo de Gobernalidad de Guatemala de la Embajada Real de los Países Bajos and the Centro Canadiense de Estudios y Cooperación Internacional. The Rabinal Museum (http://www.museo.rabinal.info/historia.html) describes itself as a community-led endeavor.
5. The mural and text project was jointly sponsored by the Comalapa Youth Group, a community-based organization, along with the United Nations Development Fund, and international partnerships with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Asdi, and Danida.

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