



# MA Thesis

## Controversy in Guatemala's Informal Textile Economy



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MA Latin American Studies – *Public Policies in Latin America*

Academic year 2019/2020

Faculty of Humanities

Leiden University

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26<sup>th</sup> of June 2020

Words: 19.480

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## Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to show which role piracy (or copycat behaviour) plays in the textile industry of Guatemala in a regional context. The role of the influence of the United States is also included in this research, but the focus is on Guatemala's informal economy after its civil war. Textile is a relevant branch due to its contribution to fashion as well as regular clothes in daily life. When it comes to culture, however, textile also carries symbolic significance for a group of people. Latin America, which came into being as the result of Spanish colonisation and the independence wars of Spanish America in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>1</sup> has indigenous peoples that are part of the nation states that emerged after the 1820s.<sup>2</sup> One of those nation-states is the Republic of Guatemala, whose culture has its origins in the (ancient) Mayans as well as European colonisers.

In Guatemala, the indigenous peoples have their own textile economy in which they transfer knowledge from generation to generation. However, the emergence of globalisation – which succeeded British Imperialism – caused a crisis in the economic cycles of indigenous economies due to liberal policies in Latin America.<sup>3</sup> Guatemala, located in Central America, became dependent on the United States and Mexico for its economic survival. The economic hegemony of the United States, and later of the European Union in the Post-Cold War Era, led to much commercialisation in Guatemala.<sup>4</sup> This commercialisation, combined with liberal politics, was often disastrous for the interests of minorities.<sup>5</sup> The need for economic survival also led to a trend in which many indigenous youths assimilate in Guatemalan society to secure educational and job opportunities.

For my fieldwork I selected Guatemala due to my interest in the history of the *Captaincy General of Guatemala* (1542-1821)<sup>6</sup> as well as the states<sup>7</sup> that succeeded that territory as well

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Warren Currier. (1910). SPANISH-AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. *The American Catholic Quarterly Review*... (1876-1924), 35(137), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Bethell, Leslie. (1984). The population of colonial Spanish America. In *The Cambridge History of Latin America* (Vol. 2, pp. 1-36). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Becerril, M., & Jaksic, Ivan. (2012). Liberalism and Power: Latin America in the Nineteenth Century. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 44(2), 400-401.

<sup>4</sup> Horst, O. (1987). Commercialization of traditional agriculture in Highland Guatemala and Ecuador. *Revista Geográfica*, 0(106), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Carbonnier, G., Campodónico, H., & Tezanos Vázquez, S. (2017). Alternative pathways to sustainable development: Lessons from Latin America (*International Development Policy* 9).

<sup>6</sup> Hawkins, T. (2013). A Research Note: The Narrative of Spanish-American Independence and the Kingdom of Guatemala. *The Latin Americanist / SECOLAS Annals*, 57(3), 83-97.

<sup>7</sup> United Provinces of Central America. (1824). *Circular* (1824-1825), p. 38.

as to build forth on previous anthropological research, by Kedron Thomas,<sup>8</sup> that has been conducted with a similar topic. In addition, piracy and informal economies have been part of Central America since the colonial era and it has always been a grey area.

Two historical markers are used for this: the Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996)<sup>9</sup> as well as the emergence of the Central American Integration System.<sup>10</sup> These two markers are used to explain the context in which piracy takes place in the textile industry of Guatemala. In the context of those two historical markers, also the rising influence of the United States both after independence (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) as well as during and after the Cold War Era also shaped the political and economic landscape of Guatemala (and well as the rest of Central America).<sup>11</sup> In this context, Central America was unofficially perceived as a place with ‘failed states’ or ‘ungoverned spaces’ due to political instabilities.<sup>12</sup>

To properly address the role of piracy in a regional context my research question is: *How does piracy in the textile industry of Guatemala, after the nation’s civil war, reflect the regional integration problems in a globalised economy?* To answer this research question, I have two sub questions in this research: *How does the local (informal) economy relate to the regional economy in Central America?* and *How does the informal economy impact Guatemalan culture?*

My main hypothesis is that piracy in the textile industry of Guatemala reflects the economic desperation that haunts the country due to both internal and external political instability. My hypothesis of the sub questions are: *The local informal economy and the regional economy in Central America are interdependent on one another both due to historical-cultural ties as well as a common resistance against foreign influences and The informal economy is part of Guatemalan culture and it is therefore not likely to disappear anytime soon, Therefore its role is a social cement that keeps Guatemalan identity intact.* In this research, these hypotheses will be tested.

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas, K. (2009). Structural Adjustment, Spatial Imaginaries, and “Piracy” in Guatemala's Apparel Industry. *Anthropology of Work Review*, 30(1), 1-10.

<sup>9</sup> Chamarbagwala, R., & Morán, H. (2011). The human capital consequences of civil war: Evidence from Guatemala. *Journal of Development Economics*, 94(1), 41-61.

<sup>10</sup> Brenner, P., International Monetary Fund, & World Bank. (2006). *Central America structural foundations for regional financial integration* (Books). Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund.

<sup>11</sup> Prevost, G., Vanden, H., Oliva Campos, C., & Ayerbe, L. (2014). *US national security concerns in Latin America and the Caribbean: The concept of ungoverned spaces and failed states* (First ed.). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid idem.*

This thesis consists out of three chapters followed by a conclusion. In the first chapter, the theories and three key concepts (regional integration, piracy, and informal economy) are discussed and elaborated upon. As a lead, I used mimetic theory to describe the key concepts: informal economy, piracy, and regional integration which I will elaborate on in this chapter. The first chapter is to reveal the current academic debates of my central concepts to position this research academically.

In the following chapter, the regional disintegration of Guatemala in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in discussed as well as the growing resistance in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century which led to the Guatemalan Civil War. The second chapter is a historical contextualisation of the topic so the reader will understand the background of the informal economy as well as the economic and political controversies that surrounds it.

In the third chapter my case study is discussed as well as the controversies surrounding informal economies in Central America. This chapter is to present the findings of my fieldwork as well as additional desk research about piracy and informal economy in a regional context. Foreign influences on the region, as well as Guatemala, are elaborated upon to highlight the usefulness of regional integration and how this relates to the existing forms of piracy in Central America. In the conclusion the concluding remarks of this research are given.

This research has been a qualitative (interviews, fieldwork) as well as a quantitative (questionnaire, literature research) research. Five interviews have been conducted during fieldwork in Guatemala and two were conducted after fieldwork as desk research. The fieldwork occurred from the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2019 until the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2019, with a brief pause on the 5<sup>th</sup> till the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2019 – which were used to reflect on the process of the fieldwork while staying in Nicaragua. During my fieldwork I also made use of a guided tour at Lake Atitlan, given by Alex René Montoya (a local expert), to find out more about indigenous textile and its history and I used participatory observation to analyse public attitudes. As respondents I have selected actors who were active in indigenous textile as well as the trade of textiles in general. Due to the low response rate for interviews, I conducted two long interviews with experts after my fieldwork (Dr. Thomas and Mrs. Sotelo).

To compensate for the low response rate, I have also conducted an online questionnaire – on the recommendation of my previous supervisor – using the mailing list I have received from one of my respondents. The questionnaire was in Spanish and meant to provide information

about how the public view was on piracy and the informal (textile) economy. This questionnaire, unfortunately, had a response rate of six. There was an additional low response when I contacted various experts with expertise related to my topic. Therefore, I inquired secondary literature about the topic as well as some primary sources (visual documentaries, media publications) to gain more understanding about the case study.

This research carries the following societal relevance: the textile industry of Guatemala is part of Guatemala's economy as well as society. It is relevant for Guatemalans (as well as those interested in the country) to have documented knowledge about the nation's cultural and political development. In addition, this research is also relevant for scholarship because not much is written about this subject from an anthropological nor political point of view. This research adds to the existing debates by including the regional integration as a context in the whole matter. I would like to credit Dr. José Carlos Aguiar, Dr. Kedron Thomas as well as Dr. H.A.S. Solheim for guiding me through the process of both research as well as writing this thesis.

# 1. Conceptional analysis of piracy, informal economy, and regional integration

This chapter discussed the three key concepts that are used in this thesis: piracy, informal economy, and regional integration. This chapter positions the key concepts by accounting for why they were selected for this research, what the concepts are about and what the academic debates are concerning these key concepts. This chapter is to give the reader insight in what is being analysed in the later chapters and how the key concepts are used in the analysis.

## 1.1 Informal economy

Humans beings have been trading ever since the beginning of time. Trade can be out of necessity; one area lacks resources that another area provides or out of luxury (commercial activities). Trade, prior to the development of states, was in the hand of chieftains and warlord who fought for territory to preserve their tribes. Several ancient empires sought to harmonise trade to control human violence.<sup>13</sup> Since the Greek empire, the Greco-Roman model of commerce has become dominant, which is guarded by a legal system and enacted by the political apparatus. The Roman Empire, as well as the foreign administrations, sought to regulate the economy to have an oversight about the import and export.<sup>14</sup> Trade often happened in a duality: between urban areas and between urban areas and the rural districts. There were formal as well as informal institutions in both the urban as well as rural areas to regulate trade and hinder abuse and exploitation. Social exclusion or punishments were inflicted on those that threatened the economic equilibrium.<sup>15</sup>

Another method to secure compliance was taxation. Taxation is the formal tool of sovereign powers to enforce their laws and economic regulations in their territories.<sup>16</sup> Taxation is seen as the duty of the subject or citizen towards the administration in exchange for the services that the administration provides. Every trade that occurs within the boundaries of taxation and legality are considered approved and secure – because it is backed up by both the legal system

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<sup>13</sup> Northrup, C., & Credo Reference, distributor. (2015). *Encyclopedia of world trade: From ancient times to the present* (Enhanced Credo ed.).

<sup>14</sup> Gurukkal, R. (2016). *Rethinking classical Indo-Roman trade: Political economy of eastern Mediterranean exchange relations* (First ed.). New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid idem.

<sup>16</sup> Peters, B. (1991). *The politics of taxation: A comparative perspective* (Comparative politics 089403819). Cambridge, Mass., [etc.]: Blackwell.

and the recognised authorities. Trade that occurs outside of legality or outside of formal economic regulations are considered informal trade which belong to the informal economy.<sup>17</sup>

An informal economy does not have to be criminal nor in opposition to established economic regulations.<sup>18</sup> An informal economy is nevertheless a system in which there are suppliers, middlemen and demanders. In an informal economy there is always a group with a leverage that seeks compensation from the leverage from another group.<sup>19</sup>

An informal economy is considered informal because it is primarily focussed on closed social circles with firm social relationships. A formal economy, on the other hand, is open to everyone of society to partake once they match the given criteria. Formal economies have publicised policies that are codified in letters (laws) that determine who is included and who is excluded from the economy. Formal economies have two manifest (social) functions: to regulate the need of the administration to feed itself as well as to provide social harmony in its territory. Formal economies are often recognised as legitimate by locals as well as foreigners. Formal economies determine which economic activities are permitted and which ones are criminalised. However, every socio-economic and socio-political system has its dysfunctions that will manifest themselves over time. Those social dysfunctions are either censored or ‘explained away’ by experts or political actors. The social dysfunctions enable the development of informal economies.<sup>20</sup>

Informal economies often occur ‘under the radar’ or ‘behind the scenes’ to compensate for an unacknowledged lack in society.<sup>21</sup> Informal economies often meet the needs that the formal economies cannot or will not supply.<sup>22</sup> Informal economies therefore fall in a grey area between what is legal and what is considered criminal. In this sense, informal economies serve the latent function to validate or to ‘save face’ of the formal economy. This does not mean that formal and informal economies are always on friendly terms: clashes and conflicts between formal and informal economies are of all times. In academic debates, informal economies are often placed in the context of development aid towards a capitalistic model.<sup>23</sup> The other camp is often

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<sup>17</sup> Lemarchand, R. (1991). *Africa insight*, vol. 21, no. 4, p. 214-221.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid idem*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid idem*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid idem*.

<sup>21</sup> Hillenkamp, I., Lapeyre, F., & Lemaître, A. (2013). *Securing livelihoods: Informal economy practices and institutions*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid idem*.

<sup>23</sup> Guha-Khasnobis, B., & Kanbur, R. (Eds.). (2006). *Linking the formal and informal economy: concepts and policies*. OUP Oxford.



Marxist related to social resistance against foreign exploitation.<sup>24</sup> This thesis positions informal economy not on either side, but as a phenomenon that occurs as the result of political conflict.<sup>25</sup>

## 1.2 Piracy and mimetic violence

Based on memetic theory, this thesis uses the term piracy to indicate every form of trade that is deemed unworthy and illegitimate by a local power. According to the memetic theory human beings do not develop their desires and expectation separate from the group. For every human being there is a model: someone that the individual seeks to emulate. What the model has or represents becomes the object of desire. Due to scarcity, there is not enough of the commodity available for everyone. Bystanders are affected by the desire of the individual for what the model represents or has. Over time, throughout the group a desire is established for the same object. Due to scarcity, competition emerges between the individuals in which everyone uses their leverage to get ahead of the other. This leads to interpersonal conflict that fosters trauma, emotional pain and bitterness. After a while, the conflict is not about the scarcity of resource anymore, but it is a vendetta. Such reciprocal violence destroyed communities in the past. To counter this mechanism the scapegoat mechanism was developed in which the community vented their anger on one single victim or a minority.<sup>26</sup> This scapegoat mechanism implies that a formal order is established that determined that everything that is not 'formal' is either 'informal', 'less-relevant' or illegitimate. Piracy fits into memetic theory by revealing the societal power struggles that makes the distinction between piracy and common trade.<sup>27</sup>

Ever since human beings were trading, robbers and exploiters sought to take advantage of economic cycles. In ancient times, piracy related to robbing merchandise to resell them for your own profit.<sup>28</sup> During later ages, piracy became more complicated due to the rise of feudal systems and changing polities.<sup>29</sup> Piracy also has another side to it: copy-cat behaviour. Copy-cat behaviour has been here since the human species. Human beings are memetic creatures: we

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<sup>24</sup> Los, M. (Ed.). (2016). *The second economy in Marxist states*. Springer.

<sup>25</sup> Gerry, C. (1987). Developing economies and the informal sector in historical perspective. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 493(1), 100-119.

<sup>26</sup> Tomelleri, S. (2015). *Ressentiment: Reflections on mimetic desire and society* (Breakthroughs in mimetic theory).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid idem.

<sup>28</sup> Beresford, J. (2013). Ancient Pirates and Fishermen. In *The Ancient Sailing Season* (Vol. 351, Mnemosyne, pp. 237-264).

<sup>29</sup> Katele, I. (1986). CAPTAINS AND CORSAIRS: VENICE AND PIRACY, 1261-1381 (MARITIME, PIRATES, NAVAL, MILITARY, MEDIEVAL), ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

develop our communities through imitation.<sup>30</sup> Memetic theory also reveals the conflict between ‘legal commerce’ and ‘piracy’ during the colonial era. In the colonial era there was a thin line between pirates and privateers.<sup>31</sup>

Privateers were in the service of kings and regional dynasties during times of war, while pirates – who conducted in a similar manner – were considered vile criminals that had to be combatted. In the strictest sense, the only thing that separated a pirate from a privateer was his papers. If the papers were outdated, he was a pirate.<sup>32</sup> If he were a privateer, the local ambassadors of his homeland would assist him diplomatically. Piracy, therefore, reflects economic nemesis in human societies: human beings seek to imitate each other’s economic ambitions. This imitation of economic ambitions leads to rivalries, polarisation, and even societal conflicts. In some cases, economic mimesis even led to civil wars – e.g. the English civil wars, the American Revolution, the French Revolution etc. As with informal economies, piracy can also stimulate the ‘formal economy’ by giving local powers an excuse for strict regulations. In addition, pirates were often the scapegoats for failing policies during the colonial as well as post-colonial era. Due to the rise of steamships and later aviation, maritime piracy declines (but it never completely vanished!). Similar things are now happening, but they are simply called smuggling or copyright infringement.<sup>33</sup> Today, pirates are internet users or local merchants that create fake imitations of brand products and they sell them to make a living. People that sell stolen goods, e.g. iPhones or Nike shoes, are also considered pirates due to the net loss to the brands. It is obvious that piracy never disappeared, but only transformed due to the change in commercial transportation.<sup>34</sup>

In piracy studies there is a debate concerning how piracy is categorised and how institutions respond to it.<sup>35</sup> Piracy today is also perceived as related to political activism and resistance to global influences.<sup>36</sup> What should be mentioned is that piracy is not only related to theft on sea

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<sup>30</sup> Agustín Moreno Fernández. (2014). The conversion in the René Girard’s mimetic theory. *Pensamiento. Revista De Investigación E Información Filosófica*, 70(263), 277-305.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid idem.

<sup>32</sup> Little, B. (2010). *Pirate hunting: The fight against pirates, privateers, and sea raiders from antiquity to the present* (First ed.).

<sup>33</sup> Ekstrand, V. (2005). *News piracy and the hot news doctrine origins in law and implications for the digital age* (Law and society (New York, N.Y.)). New York: LFB Scholarly Pub.

<sup>34</sup> Guilfoyle, D. (2013). *Modern piracy legal challenges and responses*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

<sup>35</sup> Bueger, C. (2014). Piracy studies: academic responses to the return of an ancient menace. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 49(3), 406-416.

<sup>36</sup> Honniball, A. N. (2015). The 'Private Ends' of International Piracy: The Necessity of Legal Clarity in Relation to Violent Political Activists. *ICD Brief*, (13).

or merchandise transported by sea.<sup>37</sup> This thesis positions piracy as copy-cat behaviour to preserve local and cultural interests.

### 1.3 Regional integration

As mentioned in the introduction, the regional integration of Central America is the context of this research. Add to this that Central America has operated often as a region since the colonial era – first as a Spanish overseas territory and then as a federal republic. In this thesis, the regional integration of Central America is relevant for the analysis of the case study, the foreign influences on the informal economy as well as the historical analysis of how Guatemala broke up as a regional unit in the 19th century.

Apart from central America, regional integration has been common since the end of the Second World War: many new states developed political and economic unions to compensate each other globally.<sup>38</sup> These regional co-operations serve two purposes: to limit the influence of the former colonial powers (the West) and to strengthen each other's economy so the member states do not become too dependent on the global economy. Globalisation is seen as the inevitable consequence of the colonial era and the Pax Americana that was established after the Second World War.<sup>39</sup> In Globalisation economic processes are interdependent due to interwoven financial institutions and multinational corporations.<sup>40</sup>

Regional integration offers a defence against this gigantic corporate and financial world system, which has many political elements to it from the United States and Western Europe.<sup>41</sup> However, regional integration also occurred in Europe after the Second World War – this led to the formation of the present day European Union. So, globalisation is both resisted and embraced.<sup>42</sup> Globalisation is resisted by nation-states that seek to retain their autonomy and local relevancy to their citizens and embraced by nation-states due to the need to be connected to the global economy.<sup>43</sup> Regionalism does not automatically mean that the neighbouring states are on good

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<sup>37</sup> Ehrhard, M. M. (2012). Protecting the seasonal arts: Fashion design, copyright law, and the viability of the Innovative design protection & piracy prevention act. *Conn. L. Rev.*, 45, 285.

<sup>38</sup> Thompson, G. (1998). Globalisation versus regionalism? *The Journal of North African Studies*, 3(2), 59-74.

<sup>39</sup> Caramanis, C. (2002). The interplay between professional groups, the state and supranational agents: Pax Americana in the age of 'globalisation'. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 27(4-5), 379-408.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>41</sup> Di Mauro, Dees, MacKibbin, Dees, Stephane, & MacKibbin, Warwick J. (2008). *Globalisation, regionalism and economic interdependence*. Cambridge [etc.]: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>42</sup> Hamilton, Robert. (2011). Back to the future, again!: Using film to teach resistance to globalisation. *Culture Scope*, 94, 30-34.

<sup>43</sup> Böss, M., Bang, H., & Campbell, J. (2010). *The Nation-State in Transformation Economic Globalisation, Institutional Mediation and Political Values (MatchPoints)*. Santa Barbara: Aarhus University Press.

terms with one another on all fronts. Regionalism is a means to avoid military conflict as well as diplomatic rows as is the case with regional processes in Latin America.<sup>44</sup>

Regional integration is also on the political agenda of the European Union to promote conflict resolution in regions that used to be subjected to colonialism.<sup>45</sup> One motif for the European Union to do this is to validate its own normative power when it comes to promotion of democracy and human rights.<sup>46</sup> Another motif can be that the European Union longs to export its knowledge of conflict resolution which it gained during the disintegration and unification of Eastern Europe into the European Union.<sup>47</sup> From the perspective of the United States, regional integration is beneficial from an economic point of view: Regional Integration enables U.S. Corporation to relocate labour easily without having to deal with too many individual states about the same matter.<sup>48</sup> Besides economic advantages for the capitalistic market of the United States is easier for the foreign policy of the United States to address regions in general.<sup>49</sup>

Regional integration becomes a challenge for countries that are large enough to be considered a region in their own right, such as Brazil.<sup>50</sup> Regionalism is also a challenge for the United States itself which is a union of 50 states with their own economic struggles and interests. In addition, the European Union itself faces the challenge of compromise every time it had to make decisions as a region. The difference between the United States and The European Union is that the United States is a nation-state and the European a political-economic union based on agreed treaties.<sup>51</sup> The consequence is that the United States can act both as a region as well as a sovereign power, while the European Union can act solely as a region when mandated by the EU Member States.<sup>52</sup>

When it comes to the state of art, regional integration becomes a meant to generate a collective heritage between several nations to preserve. Regional integration then becomes a means to

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<sup>44</sup> Ahear, S., Galofre, O., & Gonzalez, R. (2013). Regional integration processes in Latin America. *Revista De Economía Del Caribe*, (11), N/a.

<sup>45</sup> Diez, T. (2017). *The EU, Promoting Regional Integration, and Conflict Resolution*. (Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics Ser).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid Idem*.

<sup>47</sup> Loth, W., Păun, N., & Disintegration Integration in East-Central Europe. (2014). *Disintegration and integration in East-Central Europe, 1919-post-1989* (First ed., Veröffentlichungen der Historiker-Verbindungsgruppe bei der Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften; Volume 16).

<sup>48</sup> Smeets, R., & Wei, Y. (2010). Productivity Effects of United States Multinational Enterprises: The Roles of Market Orientation and Regional Integration. *Regional Studies*, 44(8), 949-963.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid Idem*.

<sup>50</sup> Brigagdo, C. (2011). Brazil: International Relations With The United States And South America. *Relacoes Internacionais*, (29), 83-90.

<sup>51</sup> Ansell, C., & Di Palma, G. (2004). Restructuring territoriality: Europe and the United States compared.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid Idem*.

reconstruct a common culture by enforcing economic integration as was the case in Central America and South Africa.<sup>53</sup> In the case of Southern Africa the regional integration did succeed in forming a South African sense of nationhood – despite racial division – but it did not alleviate the peripheral status of the South Africa.<sup>54</sup> In Central America regional integration was focussed on strengthening the ties between the republics as well as integrating them in the global economy.<sup>55</sup>

In academia, there is a debate whether regional integration is just the obvious result of human history – this is the realist view –<sup>56</sup> or whether regional integration is a constructed co-operation that is fully man-made – in line with social constructivism.<sup>57</sup> This thesis tends to lean more towards the social constructivism paradigm because this thesis focusses on the social and political dynamics as constructed by individual and collective actors.

To conclude; Regional projects can clash both internally as well as externally due to the fact that in a regional integration the member states remain politically sovereign while in practise they have conceded economic and diplomatic power to an intergovernmental and/or supranational political body.<sup>58</sup> In the case of Latin America, much of the regional projects relate to relieving poverty, combating urban crime and protecting the regional economy from exploitation (in other words, piracy).<sup>59</sup> The main problem in Latin American regional projects is the reluctance of the states to admit internal corruption that make themselves unreliable in the long run. In the line of informal economies, piracy and economic mimesis it is relevant to know that regional integration in Latin America is often hindered by economic mimesis that leads to the formation of many informal economies and piracy in Latin American societies.<sup>60</sup> In this thesis, this dynamic will be explain in the analysis.

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<sup>53</sup> Euraque, D., & Niemann, M. (1994). Regional economic integration in the periphery: A comparison of Central America and southern Africa, 1870-1990 (Southern African perspectives. A working paper series; 31 (NL-LeOCL)106976141). Bellville: Centre for Southern African Studies, University of the Western Cape.

<sup>54</sup> Niemann, M. (1991). Regional Integration in the Periphery: The Case of Southern Africa, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

<sup>55</sup> Rodlauer, Schipke, Rodlauer, M, & Schipke, Alfred. (2005). Central America: Global integration and regional cooperation (Occasional paper; 243. 842906088). Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund.

<sup>56</sup> Pedersen, T. (2002). Cooperative hegemony: power, ideas and institutions in regional integration. *Review of International Studies*, 28(4), 677-696.

<sup>57</sup> Ghica, L. A. (2013). Beyond Regional Integration? Social Constructivism, Regional Cohesiveness and the Regionalism Puzzle. *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review*, 13(4), 733-752.

<sup>58</sup> Legler, T. (2013). Post-hegemonic regionalism and sovereignty in Latin America: Optimists, skeptics, and an emerging research agenda. *Contexto Internacional*, 35(2), 325-352.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid Idem.

## 2. Regional disintegration of post-independence Guatemala

This chapter discusses the historical context behind the development of the informal economy in Guatemala. This chapter also reveals that regional disintegration has been a big contributing factor to the development of the informal economy as well as the persistence of piracy in Guatemala. Piracy existed in Guatemala throughout the colonial era. Both foreigners as well as Spanish subjects developed alternative trade routes as well as informal agreements to trade outside of the regulations of Madrid. This was a grey area between illegality and formal economics. Maritime piracy, after independence, modernised and it went into the background in its place brand piracy emerged. To understand this the history of Guatemala after its independence is discussed all the way to the end of the Guatemalan Civil War. This chapter also reveals that Central American as well as Guatemalan history are interconnected. Firstly, Central America was formerly known as the *Kingdom of Guatemala*, or *Captaincy General of Guatemala*, from 1570 until the country's independence from the Spanish Empire in 1821. The region, near the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and beginning 19<sup>th</sup> century, was integrated as one kingdom, existing out of six self-governing provinces (Chiapas, Guatemala, San Salvador, Comayagua/Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica)<sup>61</sup> with autonomous economic, judicial and military policies that were regulated by the Captain General in Guatemala City. Secondly, after independence the region slowly disintegrated and fell into civil wars. The colonial era is mentioned sporadically as a historical reference, the focus is on the societal and economic conflicts that haunted Guatemala – and Central America – after independence.

### 2.1 Regional conflict and the development of the informal sectors (1873-1918)

Guatemala, post-1840s, was challenged by its need to position itself as a new sovereign state in an international order where colonial powers competed for territory and significance. It was near the end of the 19th century that a turning point came for Guatemala (as well as Central America as a whole). In 1842, the *United Provinces of Central America* was officially abolished after the states of Nicaragua, Honduras and Costa Rica declared independence from Guatemala in 1838.<sup>62</sup> The falling apart of Guatemala as a regional unity, implied that the Republic of Guatemala that succeeded the United Provinces of Central America in the territory of the former Spanish *Province of Guatemala* (after independence: *Federal State of Guatemala* between 1823-1842) faced several challenges: The social cohesion of the locals, the second was a

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<sup>61</sup> The Provinces of Costa Rica and Nicaragua was joined as one Province between 1812-1814 and from 1820 until independence.

<sup>62</sup> Centeno, M., & Ferraro, A. (2013). State and nation making in Latin America and Spain: Republics of the possible.

political and national identity that excluded the rest of Central America and third was a stable economy that would secure the country's position in a region of rivalling states. The country was also divided between those who wished to re-unite Central America and those who preferred Central America to remain as it was: consisting out of sovereign republics who only shared the same language and a common colonial history.<sup>63</sup> The situation also made Guatemala vulnerable to exploitation by foreign powers as I will show with two examples:

After independence of the Captaincy General of Guatemala, Britain leased the territory called 'British Honduras' from the Republic of Guatemala in exchange for complying with infrastructural developments in Central America.<sup>64</sup> During the Spanish colonial era, Britain was confined to British-Honduras after being expelled from the Mosquito Coast, by the Spanish Forces within the Kingdom of Guatemala, in 1784. After Spanish rule, the British had a better leverage to increase their influence in Central America due to the absence of the Spanish navy to oppose them. However, it was not that easy for Britain to impose their will directly on the sub-continent.<sup>65</sup> The failure of Britain to successfully provide these projects in the Izabal Department, and to adhere to the conditions of Guatemala, led to their temporarily replacement by Belgium.<sup>66</sup>

It is interesting to note that Belgium arrived in the 1840 when Guatemala lost most of its territory. During the 1840s, the Kingdom of Belgium began a colonisation project with the permission from the Guatemalan Government in the Department of Izabal. The presence of Belgium in Guatemala temporarily replaced the dominant presence of Britain in the region of Verapaz and Izabal. This 'Belgian America' failed and it was abolished swiftly.<sup>67</sup> The remarkable thing about the Belgian Colonisation vs the British Colonisation of Central America was that the British Colonisation was a policy of diplomatic tolerance by the Spanish Empire that resulted in the establishment of British-Honduras (which later became the independent

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<sup>63</sup> Slade, W. (1917). The Federation of Central America. *The Journal of Race Development*, 8(1), 79-150. doi:10.2307/29738226.

<sup>64</sup> Toussaint, M. (2016). Hoffmann, Odile British Honduras: The invention of a colonial territory. Mapping and spatial knowledge in the 19th century. *EntreDiversidades. Revista De Ciencias Sociales Y Humanidades*, 1(7), 178-185.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>66</sup> Schwemmer, O. (1966). THE BELGIAN COLONIZATION COMPANY, 1840-1858., ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid Idem.

kingdom of Belize in 1981). The Peace of Paris, in 1783, granted Britain the right for commercial settlements in British-Honduras, while Spain retained the territorial sovereignty.<sup>68</sup>

The remainder of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Guatemala (as well as the rest of Central America) was plagued by military dictatorships, unstable governments and ill-informed foreign policies.<sup>69</sup> Near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Guatemala was economically stagnated and internally divided between liberal and conservative forces that opposed each other.<sup>70</sup> To get a better understanding of the conflict, both perspectives are explained now.

The liberal perspective is founded on principles of self-determination in which the role of the state should be as minimum as possible. In the liberal perspective, there is almost no such thing as an informal economy because there are almost no rules and regulations. The leading factor in liberal economics is the demand and supply mechanism on the market which is led by an ‘invisible hand’ that causes an optimal allocation of resources.<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, an economy is considered informal under liberal terms when it does not conform to the few formal regulations that are in place, whether by the state or by the ‘market’. Liberal economics developed as a result of smuggling during the colonial era.<sup>72</sup> During that time many merchants, importers and exporters sought to overrule or bypass imperial policies by Spain, France, Portugal and other colonial powers.<sup>73</sup> Liberalism therefore came as a result of relief-seeking from mercantilism.

Contrary to liberalism, there is conservatism that seeks to preserve archaic economic relations. Conservative economics is opposed to the principle of the ‘free market’ and seeks to restrain the freedom of economic actors. Conservative economics is politically rooted in avoidance of the unknown. Conservative economics, however, also has a religious dimension: it is rooted in Protestant work-ethics.<sup>74</sup> There are also conservative economics that are rooted in Roman Catholicism<sup>75</sup> or other religious disciplines. In this perspective, conservative economics

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<sup>68</sup> Humphreys, R. (1961). *The diplomatic history of British Honduras, 1638-1901*. London [etc.]: Oxford University Press.

<sup>69</sup> Pattridge, B. (2012). “Autocratic Liberalism and Democratic Conservatism in Nineteenth-Century Guatemala”. *Latin Americanist*, 56(1), 3-21.

<sup>70</sup> Weaver, F. (1999). Reform and (Counter)Revolution in Post- Independence Guatemala: Liberalism, Conservatism, and Postmodern Controversies. *Latin American Perspectives*, 26(2), 129-158.

<sup>71</sup> Gottman, F. (2016). Global trade, smuggling, and the making of economic liberalism: Asian textiles in France 1680-1760 (Europe's Asian centuries).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid idem*.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid idem*.

<sup>74</sup> Felson, J., & Kindell, H. (2007). The elusive link between conservative Protestantism and conservative economics. *Social Science Research*, 36(2), 673-687.

<sup>75</sup> Consider the conservatism in Latin America that derives from the former Spanish Empire.



perceives an economy as informal when it does not provide supply according to the archaic structure that are kept in place.

On one hand, this is obvious: if an economy is diverting away from the common expectation then it can be perceived as a threat. In every economy there are leaders and there are followers. In a liberal economy the ‘leaders’ are those who are opportunistic and practical enough to take advantage of the demands of the public. In a conservative economy, the leaders are (often) the aristocratic elites that depend on the community traditions to remain with their economic leverage.<sup>76</sup> For this reason, conservative economics can be perceived as repressive for entrepreneurs and local communities that seek autonomy.<sup>77</sup>

On the other hand, conservative economics depend on a closed approach: only the leaders matter and the people are perceived as an extension of the leaders.<sup>78</sup> Contrary to liberalism where everyone is perceived as a potential leader, in conservatism only those with the ‘birth right’, the right ‘credentials’ or who ‘earned it’ are allowed to have a lead.<sup>79</sup> So, on one hand there is the liberal economics that developed as resistance towards autocratic economic regimes and there is conservatism that seeks to remedy archaic economic structures. Liberalism are considered ‘left wing’ and conservatism ‘right wing’. In practise, however, both liberalism and conservatism can complement one another politically, while on appearance they seem to be enemies.<sup>80</sup>

Over time, the concept of the free market caused much political and societal dysfunction which empowered conservative politics with a reason the hold unto archaic models. Archaic models, on the other hand, also kept oppressive traditions – just as slavery – in existence. This does not mean that racism and social evils are only known to conservatism.<sup>81</sup> Think about the United States where after the abolition of slavery, Blacks faced racial discrimination by both the liberals as well as conservatives who relied on racial politics for their interests.<sup>82</sup> As mention

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<sup>76</sup> Huntington, S. (1957). Conservatism as an Ideology. *The American Political Science Review*, 51(2), 454-473.

<sup>77</sup> Dorey, P. (2011). *British conservatism: The politics and philosophy of inequality* (p. 7). London: IB Tauris.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid Idem.*

<sup>79</sup> A. R. (1965). *Liberalism vs. Conservatism. Liberty vs. Authority.* By C. William Hushaw. (Dubuque, Ia.: Wm. C. Brown Book Company, 1965. Pp. 113. \$1.40 paper.). *American Political Science Review*, 59(3), 715.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid Idem.*

<sup>81</sup> Anderson, M. (2019). *From Boas to Black power: Racism, liberalism, and American anthropology.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid idem.*

previously, conservatism tends to be religiously linked: in the case of the United States conservatism had an evangelical apocalyptic policy rooted in fear.<sup>83</sup>

So, both liberalism as well as conservatism have a ‘formality’ that keeps their system going. Everything that falls outside of the formality is automatically informal if it does not violate the formality and criminal when it does. The clash between liberalism and conservatism had its boiling point during the Cold War Era in which the Soviet Union became the ‘left wing’ socialist power and the United States was the ‘right wing’ capitalist power.<sup>84</sup> The first world, capitalism, was seen in opposition to the second world, socialism. At the same time, decolonisation occurred. The states that emerged as the dissolution of colonial powers, had to position themselves in relation to either the first world or the second world. Therefore, the new emerging states, as well as most of Latin America became the ‘third world’.<sup>85</sup> In this context, concepts as the wealthy North (referring to Europe, the United States and Japan) and the poor South (mainly Africa and Latin America).<sup>86</sup> In reality, socialism itself took a ‘conservative’ stance by holding onto past ideals of socialist writers.<sup>87</sup>

In the West, liberal democratic politics became dominant internally, while having an archaic approach towards capitalism.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, when it comes to economics there is no factual ‘black and white’ approach. Even the construct of first world, second world and third world are not accurate due to the rise of regional political entities.<sup>89</sup> It is for this reason that a ‘centric’ perspective developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>90</sup> The centric perspective simply implies that an economy is neither left wing, nor right wing, but a combination of the both.<sup>91</sup> So, an economy can be conservative when it comes to migration and liberal when it comes to economic provisions for the unemployed.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, in this thesis informal economy is used to

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<sup>83</sup> Booke, P., Harris-Lacewell, Melissa V., Brehm, John, Elshain, Jean, & Smidt, Corwin. (2009). *Politics of the Apocalypse: The Effect of Premillennial Eschatology on American Political Behavior*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

<sup>84</sup> Callaghan, J. (2001). *The Cold War and the March of Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. *Contemporary British History*, 15(3), 1-25.

<sup>85</sup> Reynolds, Lloyd G. (1980). *Long-term growth in third-world economies: Economic development in historical perspective*. (includes discussion). *American Economic Review*, 70, 91.

<sup>86</sup> *Brand Aid and the International Political Economy and Sociology of North-South Relations*. (Report). (2013). *International Political Sociology*, 7(1), 92.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid Idem*.

<sup>88</sup> Habets, I. (2015). *Liberal Democracy: The Threat of Counter-narratives*. *European View*, 14(2), 145-154.

<sup>89</sup> Muni, S. (1979). *The third world: Concept and controversy*. *Third World Quarterly*, 1(3), 119-128.

<sup>90</sup> *Centrist*. (2009). *The SAGE Glossary of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*.

<sup>91</sup> Rousek Pavel. (2020). *Evaluation of the EU Policy Concerning the Basic Economic Functions of a Modern Government in a Mixed Economy*. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 73, 01024.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid Idem*.

highlight economies that occur outside of the established ‘norm’ in a specific given timeframe. This is in line with the theory of social constructivism, in which human beings ‘create’ their own social, political, and economic reality by building institutions that enforce their ideals and tradition on the environment.<sup>93</sup>

President Barrios, a lawyer, military officer and liberal, sought to reunite Central America under a liberal regime. Prior to his office, Guatemala faced local revolts under a conservative government. The general public considered Commander-in-chief Barrios a better leader than President Granados.<sup>94</sup> During Barrios’ Presidency, Guatemala was reformed into an industrialist nation with a modern state structure.<sup>95</sup> Prior to the constitution of 1879, the national governments ruled by decrees which were based on traditions that emerged from the colonial past. During Barrios’ Presidency, a break with the colonial past was made by introducing the separation between church and state, installing civil marriage as the only marriage-form that was recognised throughout the country as well as decreasing the political and economic power of the Roman Catholic Church (which remained unchallenged during independence).<sup>96</sup>

The enforcement of a school system as well as confiscation of landowner by indigenous households in the favour of his generals and German migrants, caused societal polarisation and alienation between the social classes. On one hand, Barrios reforms removed Guatemala from the colonial structure in which it was mainly an export zone towards Spain, with its main harbours in territories that were lost to the Republic of Honduras. His liberal reforms established a ‘national economy’ in which Guatemala operated as an independent state with its own economic interests as a priority. On the other hand, he weakened the political position of Guatemala by causing conflicts with its neighbours, including Mexico. Barrios’ regime was also repressive towards non-conformists (often Conservatives) who opposed his policies. Indentured labour, imprisonment and even torture were used as deterrents to civil disobedience. His ambition to reunite Central America received support from Honduras and El Salvador. His military aggression, however, caused distrust in his partners and the unification project failed.<sup>97</sup> What can be seen here is that the economic rivalries in post-1842 Guatemala led to an escalation

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<sup>93</sup> Hay, C. (2016). Good in a crisis: The ontological institutionalism of social constructivism. *Good in a crisis: The ontological institutionalism of social constructivism*. New Political Economy.

<sup>94</sup> Merritts, J., Few, Martha, Gosner, Kevin, & Ortiz, David. (2012). *Presidents Miguel Garcia Granados and Justo Rufino Barrios in Reform Guatemala: 1871-1885*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid idem*.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid Idem*.

<sup>97</sup> Palmer, Steven. (1993). Central American union or Guatemalan republic? The national question in liberal Guatemala, 1871-1885. *Americas: A Quarterly Review of Inter-American Cultural History*, 49(4), 513.

of political violence in Guatemalan society. This escalation could be explained by the following three points:

### **1. Loss of political relevance**

During the colonial era, Guatemala as a region has a common purpose – an international hub for the Spanish Empire. After independence, the goal remained to be a united economic zone in the Americas. However, both independence as well as conflicts between Federalists and Unionists revealed that there was no common consensus between the Provinces to have a common interior, and let alone a common foreign policy.<sup>98</sup> As the union of provinces collapsed, it became clear that Guatemala City lost its international relevance as the capital and economic centre of Central America.<sup>99</sup> Before, Guatemalans used to be all Central Americans. Now, Guatemalans would only refer to the inhabitants below the plains of Yucatan and to the west of the Honduran mountains. Social relationships changed because former ‘fellow citizens’ suddenly became foreigners as well as military rivals. This situation led to Guatemalans to compete for the resources that were left in a nation who lost most of its territory and its people.

### **2. Loss of economic capacity**

Due to the independence of Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, in 1838, many ports were closed for exporters from Guatemala City and its surrounding urban areas. During the late colonial era, the Provinces of Guatemala, San Salvador, Chiapas and Honduras were the *urban provinces*, while Nicaragua and Costa Rica (joined together in 1820) were the *rural provinces* – where also much smuggling and illegal trade occurred.<sup>100</sup> Most of the regions export happened in Honduras, which served as the ‘Spanish export province’. The Province of Guatemala only had Santo Tomás de Castilla as its port for export, besides tiny local ports. This meant that after 1842, Guatemala only had one ex-colonial port at its disposal for international trade, maritime communication and access point for migrants that came by sea. The loss of logistical means for export implied that there were fewer options for locals to realise their economic interests nationally. Prior

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<sup>98</sup> Slade, W. (1917). The Federation of Central America. *The Journal of Race Development*, 8(1), 79-150. doi:10.2307/29738226.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>100</sup> Schott, C., Gosner, Kevin, Barickman, Bert, Brescia, Michael, & Few, Martha. (2014). *Frontiers and Fandangos: Reforming Colonial Nicaragua, 1759-1814*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

to the years 1838-1842, locals had many options for trade and for migration. After 1842, the economic capacity decreased, and this caused the rivalries to turn inwardly.

### 3. Loss of societal trust

The civil wars that emerged after independence also caused societal division between the provinces as well as within the provinces. The falling apart of the federal union in 1842, revealed that Guatemalans became a peripheral nation,<sup>101</sup> who defeated itself with chronic institutional failures, with an elite that still reflected the military mannerisms of their former colonial possessor.<sup>102</sup> With no international agents to intervene, Guatemalans were left to their own devices to deal with internal corruption by their own leaders. President Barrios achieved an economic reform that improved the nation's infrastructure as well as the nation's export. During his presidency, Puerto Barrios was constructed with the aim to replace the former Spanish Santo Tomás de Castilla as the export centre.<sup>103</sup> During this time, Guatemala made peace with Mexico by agreeing on a final border was between the two nations.<sup>104</sup> The conflict concerning the sovereignty of the State of Chiapas (which separated from Guatemala in 1823) was therefore settled.<sup>105</sup>

An informal economy is informal due to the presence of a formal power that enforces its expectations on a community. There must be a formally recognised administration for there to be a classification of informal as well as piracy (a violation of the formal). Guatemala developed into a nation-state under the administration of President Barrios. This development of the Guatemalan nation-state determined the new boundaries for who was considered legitimate (as part of Guatemalan society) and who was considered an outsider. It also gave direction to the economy of Guatemala concerning who was economically relevant and who had to get along with the 'haves'. The regional disintegration of Guatemala caused an economic and political vacuum in Guatemalan society and this vacuum was filled by the Presidency of Barrios. Since

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<sup>101</sup> Wheeler, T. H. (1886, Jul 31). GENERAL BARRIOS, LATE PRESIDENT OF GUATEMALA. *Littell's Living Age* (1844-1896), 170, 282. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/docview/90412732?accountid=12045>

<sup>102</sup> BY ALVAN, S. S. (1883, 06). GUATEMALA. *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* (1876-1904), Xv, 724. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/docview/136553503?accountid=12045>

<sup>103</sup> Merritts, J., Few, Martha, Gosner, Kevin, & Ortiz, David. (2012). *Presidents Miguel Garcia Granados and Justo Rufino Barrios in Reform Guatemala: 1871-1885*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

<sup>104</sup> Castillo, M. Á. (2006). *Mexico: Caught Between the United States and Central America*. MIS Selected Readings on Central America, Migration Policy Institute, Washington, DC. <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm>.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid Idem.

the Presidency of Barrios is was plain that there was no way back to the situation prior to 1842. The political norm was established, and the economy was shaped after this.<sup>106</sup>

The campaign of 1906 occurred in an interesting time: under President Cabrera railroads were constructed in Guatemala.<sup>107</sup> The construction of railroads intended to ease transportation in the country. However, President Cabrera granted excessive land rights, privileges (concerning the use of the railways) as well as tax exemptions to United Fruit Company, an American importer of Caribbean and exotic fruits.<sup>108</sup> United Fruit Company was known for its bribery of local authorities in Central America to exploit the resources of the Spanish American republics. Guatemala, bordering Mexico, and therefore closer to the United States by railways, was in an advantaged position when it came to trade. Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica were far removed from the economic centres that were in Mexico City and Guatemala City. Therefore, the economic position of the other Central American nations was significantly undermined by the Presidency of Cabrera. The Presidency of Cabrera also undermined the economic potential of national actors that were exploited by the United States (who indirectly became the main employer for Central Americans).<sup>109</sup> In this case, you have the formal economy determined by the national government that came into place by informal expectations on the part of the Americans. The Presidency of Cabrera was firm, even though he lacked a military background, but it also brought a divide in Guatemalan society between those that benefited from the exploitation by the United States and those that were further marginalised by Guatemalan society: namely the indigenous population and the rural poor.<sup>110</sup>

What also can be noted about this era in Guatemalan history is that the focus of the economy was on the export of fruit and other raw resources. Indigenous crafts as textile were not considered important in the national economy and therefore those economic activities became the domain of the indigenous locals.

## 2.2. Guatemalan resistance to foreign economic domination (1918-1960)

From the Second World War until the end of the 1950s, Guatemala experienced an increase in Americanisation of their economy due to the excessive presence of American businesses in Central America. During this time, another attempt to reunite central America failed for the

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<sup>106</sup> Merritts, J., Few, Martha, Gosner, Kevin, & Ortiz, David. (2012). Presidents Miguel Garcia Granados and Justo Rufino Barrios in Reform Guatemala: 1871-1885, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

<sup>107</sup> Sullivan, E. J. (1954). A history of the United Fruit Company in Guatemala, 1906-1953.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid Idem.

most part that the propagandists for a re-unification of Central America were often grad students with an aristocratic and military background.<sup>111</sup> On one hand the resistance of the public against Central American unity was obvious: The local elites sold out the locals to American corporations that exploited them. A Unified Central America, under the lead of those same local elites, would benefit the local elites of the united country and put the locals at a further disadvantage. In addition, Nicaragua and Costa Rica would be in a strong disadvantage due to their geographical location as well as the fact that Nicaragua was in a civil war with the Mosquito Indians who never wanted incorporation in Spanish America. Central American nations became labelled as ‘Banana Republics’, which is a derogatory term to signify that the authorities of those nations were unstable and mainly dependent on the export of raw minerals and agricultural resources (as bananas).<sup>112</sup> The term was coined first by American author William Sydney Porter.<sup>113</sup>

The propaganda of a unified Central America failed to unify with the Americans as a common enemy, because most Central Americans became dependent on American enterprises for their daily survival. There was another development that occurred in Guatemala at the same time: Despite the land reforms and introduction of a secular constitution in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Roman Catholic Church re-emerged as a powerful entity in Guatemalan Society in the 1930s.<sup>114</sup> The re-emergence of the Papacy as a dominant actor can be explained as follows: The Roman Catholic Church always had economic power and social recognition in Central America ever since Spanish colonisation.<sup>115</sup> The majority of the population still adhered to Roman Catholicism. Those factors contribute to the fact that during an unofficial economic invasion from the United States, the locals found comfort and support in Roman Catholicism because their leaders were not considered trustworthy.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Evans, S. (1997). At Union's Brink: Ideals and Problems in Restoring the United Provinces of Central America, 1920-1922. *Latin American Research Review*, 32(1), 69-87. Retrieved March 25, 2020, from [www.jstor.org/stable/2504046](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2504046).

<sup>112</sup> Townsend, S. J. (2019). Money Mazes, Media Machines, and Banana Republic Realisms. *American Literary History*, 31(4), 687-714.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>114</sup> Reforming Catholicism: Papal Power in Guatemala during the 1920s and 1930s. (2014). *The Americas*, 71(2), 255-280.

<sup>115</sup> Oss, A. (1986). *Catholic colonialism: A parish history of Guatemala, 1524-1821* (Cambridge Latin American studies; 57 832235911). Cambridge [etc.]: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid Idem.

During that same period time the indigenous communities in Guatemala began to receive international attention.<sup>117</sup> The repression of the indigenous communities of Guatemala caused a bad reputation for the country. There was an obvious irony here: Guatemala declared independence from Spain, and they were against colonialism, in harmony with the Monroe Doctrine that was held high in the United States. One of the arguments against colonialism was the exploitation by the indigenous peoples. However, long after independence, it was not Spain (nor another European colonial power) but Guatemala itself that exploiting and undermining their indigenous population.<sup>118</sup>

The irony caused an international interest to the indigenous population of Central America. During this time, stereotypes of indigenous Mayans became popular.<sup>119</sup> The reason for this is two-fold: damage control and self-validation. It was damage control to cover-up the decades of maltreatment of their own people. It was self-validation because Guatemala had to position itself as a nation-state in the international platform. The country was Spanish speaking, with Roman Catholicism as the main religion and its institutions deriving from its Spanish heritage. By putting an emphasis on the indigenous peoples, Guatemala sought for an identity separate from Spanish colonialism. However, during this time ethnic minorities in Guatemala were still used in disgraceful manners. Former US President Barack Obama even apologised for the unethical medical researched that were conducted in Guatemala during the 1940s.<sup>120</sup> During this time, there were two economies: the urban economy that was dominated by the United States and the rural economies that were sporadic and informal. The distinction was not black-and-white. The informal economy remained mainly local – and governed by indigenous leaders – and the formal economy was internationally orientated and governed by the State.<sup>121</sup> However, the indigenous people of Guatemala faced much hinder in managing their part of the economy due to systematic discrimination.<sup>122</sup>

A coup in the 1950s, involving Mexican influences, orchestrated by the intelligence services from the United States ended the Guatemalan revolution in which civilians revolted against the

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<sup>117</sup> Munro, L., Gosner, Kevin, Few, Martha, Parezo, Nancy, & Way, John. (2014). *Inventing Indigeneity: A Cultural History of 1930s Guatemala*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

<sup>118</sup> Kowalik, K., Malone, Mary, Gold, Janet, & Sowers, Jeannie. (2014). *The Pan-Mayan Movement: Then and Now*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid Idem*.

<sup>120</sup> Crook, J. (2011). *United States Apologizes for Unethical Medical Research in Guatemala in 1940s*. *American Journal Of International Law*, 105(1), 130-131.

<sup>121</sup> Kowalik, K., Malone, Mary, Gold, Janet, & Sowers, Jeannie. (2014). *The Pan-Mayan Movement: Then and Now*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid idem*.



American dominance of their nation.<sup>123</sup> The Guatemalan revolution occurred in the context of a frustrated Guatemalan society that demanded more influence in their national policies. The Guatemalan revolution also occurred during national conflicts concerning landownership and the distribution of wealth amongst Guatemalans.<sup>124</sup> In some way, it can be said that the Guatemalan revolution was similar to an independence war against the economic colonisation of Guatemala by the United States. The national policies of Guatemala were indirectly determined by the foreign policies as well as the economic interests of the United States. It was the interests of the United States and the Guatemalan elite that were the priority in the current public policies – not the interest of Guatemalan society.<sup>125</sup>

It is interesting to note that this economic conflict in Guatemalan society was nothing compared to the struggle for independence that happened 123 years earlier in which no blood was spilled during their declaration of Independence from Spain on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1821.<sup>126</sup> Guatemala left the government of Spain and it was slowly subdued by the government of the United States within several decades of independence. The United States benefited from both Guatemala's independence as well as the official reduction of its territory in the early 1840s. The Guatemalan revolution is therefore the result of a conflict that emerged almost a century before. It was a revolution by the people who demanded change for the better, instead of having their country becoming a satellite state of the United States. The conflict was an accumulation of societal animosities that were not resolved properly.<sup>127</sup>

In this scenario, the United States was the formal benefactor of the Guatemalan economy that used loopholes in the nation's legislation to push their agenda on Central America.<sup>128</sup> Due to the weakness of the Guatemalan State, the practises of the United States were not labelled criminal.<sup>129</sup> By this time, maritime piracy – as it was known in the colonial era – decreased worldwide so it could also not be labelled as piracy. When the United States overthrew the Guatemalan government and installed one of their puppets, this was an obvious violation of

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<sup>123</sup> Soledad Loaeza. (2016). The Mexican fracture and the 1954 coup in Guatemala. *Historia Mexicana El Colegio De México*, 66(2), 725-791.

<sup>124</sup> Handy, J. (1988). National Policy, Agrarian Reform, and the Corporate Community During the Guatemalan Revolution, 1944-1954. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30, 698-724.

<sup>125</sup> Kowalik, K., Malone, Mary, Gold, Janet, & Sowers, Jeannie. (2014). *The Pan-Mayan Movement: Then and Now*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

<sup>126</sup> Sullivan-González, D. (1998). *Piety, power, and politics: Religion and nation formation in Guatemala, 1821-1871* (Pitt Latin American series 843505680). Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid Idem.*

<sup>128</sup> Griner, S. (1992). *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954* (review). *SAIS Review*, 12(1), 176-178.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid idem.*

international law. The Guatemalan economy again was subdued by the United States and under a military dictatorship. The presence of a ‘common enemy’, namely the United States, did not cause a social cohesive bond to overshadow the deep-rooted societal conflicts that originated during colonisation and independence.<sup>130</sup>

### 2.3 Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996)

Due to deep-rooted conflicts, which lasted for generation, between the indigenous communities and the urban mestizo population, Guatemalan society fell into a civil war.<sup>131</sup> The Guatemalan civil war had the government forces on one hand – often associated with ‘mainstream’ society, and the rebel fractions – often associated with indigenous communities – on the other hand. One of the main triggers for the war centred around the unequal distribution of land and natural resources between indigenous communities and land-owners that were of European descent.<sup>132</sup> Much of the land was owned by the elite that was strongly connected to corporations from the United State who exploited Guatemala’s land for their enterprises.<sup>133</sup> The plans of the Guatemalan government also included the exploitation of oil reserves that were located on land belonging to indigenous communities in the *Franja Transversal del Norte*.<sup>134</sup>

The state actors were associated with American capitalism, while the indigenous rebels sides with leftist and Marxist ideas.<sup>135</sup> During this conflict, state violence was justified as a means to weaken rebel fractions.<sup>136</sup> During the Guatemalan civil war, the Guatemalan led paramilitary organisations were facing guerrilla warfare from leftist groups that also received foreign support, from e.g. Cuba.<sup>137</sup> It can be stated then that the Guatemalan Civil War was actually not that much about Guatemala itself: it was the powerbase of the United States, in Central America,

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<sup>130</sup> Gleijeses, P. (1991). *Shattered hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

<sup>131</sup> Guatemalan Civil War and Postwar Rebuilding. (2016). In *The Mayans Among Us: Migrant Women and Meatpacking on the Great Plains* (p. 31). Lincoln; London: UNP - Bison Books.

<sup>132</sup> Pierce, D. (2009). "Causes for the Guatemalan Civil War as seen in Paradise in Ashes by Beatriz Manz." *Inquiries Journal/Student Pulse*, 1(10). Retrieved from <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/a?id=7>

<sup>133</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>134</sup> KADING, T. (1999). THE GUATEMALAN MILITARY AND THE ECONOMICS OF LA VIOLENCIA. *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revue Canadienne Des études Latino-américaines Et Caraïbes*, 24(47), 57-91.

<sup>135</sup> Bonner, R. (1981, December 4)

GUATEMALAN ARMY AND LEFTIST REBELS LOCKED IN WAR. Link retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/12/04/world/guatemalan-army-and-leftist-rebels-locked-in-war.html> (date last visited 31st of March 2020).

<sup>136</sup> Kubota, Y. (2017). Explaining State Violence in the Guatemalan Civil War: Rebel Threat and Counterinsurgency. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 59(3), 48-71.

<sup>137</sup> Schwartz, R., Straus, S., Balcells, L., & Sullivan, C. (2018). What drives violence against civilians in civil war? Evidence from Guatemala’s conflict archives. *Journal of Peace Research*, 55(2), 222-235.

that was challenged by the local population. It is acknowledge that the United States played in important role in maintaining the military dictatorship by training its assassins throughout the conflict.<sup>138</sup> For a long time, despite acknowledgement of the involvement of the United States, legal repercussions did not follow nor was the role of the United States mentioned during the trials that follow briefly after the civil war ended.<sup>139</sup> The reluctance to admit the role of the United States in the human rights violations that occurred in Guatemala can be explained two-fold:

- **Political damage control:** The United States demanded for itself the role of ‘promoter of democracy’ in international relations.<sup>140</sup> In line with this ‘democracy promotion’, the United States longed to develop a normative power in their foreign policies.<sup>141</sup> Having to face the fact that the same nation that promotes democracy, on purpose, contributed to the destruction of democracy in a nation that in economically inferior would damage the reputation of the United States. This explains the reluctance of the parties involved in recognising the significant role of the United States in the violence that haunted Guatemala.<sup>142</sup>
- **Economic controversy:** Due to the weak economy of Guatemala, the nation was still economically dependent on the United States. It would be unwise to provoke a diplomatic row with a nation upon whom your country depends. The imbalance in power between the United States and Guatemala. In addition, acknowledging that the foreign policy of the United States was flawed would also imply that the United States would have to take a step back as a leading power in international relations. The reluctance of the United States to accept their role did lead to deterioration of their foreign relations with Guatemala.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Grandin, G. & E. Oglesby (2019, January 25) Washington Trained Guatemala’s Killers for Decades: The US Border Patrol played a key role in propping up Latin American dictatorships. Link retrieved from: <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/border-patrol-guatemala-dictatorship/> (date last visited 31st of March 2020).

<sup>139</sup> Malkin, E. (2013, May 16) Trial on Guatemalan Civil War Carnage Leaves Out U.S. Role. Link retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/17/world/americas/trial-on-guatemalan-civil-war-carnage-leaves-out-us-role.html> (date last visited 31st of March 2020).

<sup>140</sup> Rose, G. (2000). Democracy Promotion and American Foreign Policy: A Review Essay. *International Security*, 25(3), 186-203.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>143</sup> Jonas, S. (1996). Dangerous Liaisons: The U. S. in Guatemala. *Foreign Policy*, (103), 144-160. doi:10.2307/1149207

It is not surprising, in this context, that the relatives of the fatalities – which are over 200.000 – resisted the granting of amnesty, by the Guatemalan government, to perpetrators of genocide (and other crimes) during the civil war.<sup>144</sup>

The Guatemalan civil war occurred in the context of the Cold War, in which a bipolar world order emerged between the United States as the capitalist power on one hand and the Soviet Union as the socialist power at the other hand.<sup>145</sup> During this period there were leftist revolutions going on in Latin America. It was in the economic and political interest of the United States that Latin America remained ‘loyal’ to capitalism or else the economy of the United States would face a recession. The need for a capitalist Central America was the main goal of the foreign policy of the United States concerning the region. In the 1970s’ there were multiple societal conflicts that emerged in Central America. For these reasons, the 1970s can be called a decade of crisis in Central America. During this time there was also an international oil crisis that hit the world’s economy – nations as weak as Guatemala also suffered a recession because of it. At the end of the Cold War Era, the conflict in Guatemala continued and it only came to an end during the second term of the Clinton Presidency.<sup>146</sup>

The end of the Cold War Era brought another development: Another attempt to unite Central America. Even prior to the end of the Cold War era there were developments in which the European Community sought to intervene in the conflict-infested Central America. In 1991, the European Union was established in Western Europe as a supranational-intergovernmental union. A similar regional system was established in Latin America named *Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana* (Central American Integration System).<sup>147</sup> It still took five more years after the agreement for a supranational cooperation to end the civil war in Guatemala. This thesis does not claim that the emergence of *Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana* was the causal factor that led to the end of the Guatemalan civil war, even though the emergence of Central America as a political and economic union did contribute to stabilisation of the region as well as some of its member states. With the establishment of *Sistema de la Integración*

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<sup>144</sup> Deutsche Welle (2019, February 26) Guatemala civil war victims reject amnesty for perpetrators of violence. Link retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/en/guatemala-civil-war-victims-reject-amnesty-for-perpetrators-of-violence/a-476882651> (date last visited 31st of March 2020).

<sup>145</sup> Callaghan, J. (2001). The Cold War and the March of Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy. *Contemporary British History*, 15(3), 1-25.

<sup>146</sup> Gibney, Mark, & Warner, David. (2000). What does it mean to say I'm sorry? President Clinton's apology to Guatemala and its significance for international and domestic law. *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy*, 28(2), 223.

<sup>147</sup> Karlos Navarro. (2018). El concepto de administración pública en la Unión Europea y en el Sistema de Integración Centroamericana. *Revista De La Secretaría Del Tribunal Permanente De Revisión*, 6(12), 149-168.

Centroamericana the regional integration of Central America re-emerged and this time it was a successful project: Later Belize (1998) and the Dominican Republic (2013) also joined. One of the key reasons for the success of Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana was the investment of the European Union in the region to establish an economic equilibrium that would benefit the EU's economy. Such investments were not done by the United States.<sup>148</sup>

The emergence of Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana meant that rivalries between Central American nations came to a halt, even though territorial conflicts (e.g. between Guatemala and Belize) and internal unrest (e.g. of the instability of Honduras) continued in the background.<sup>149</sup> Internal integration attempts were still common due to the differences in between the Member States<sup>150</sup>. Due to the successful regional development of Central America, with the aid from the European Union, Central America – namely Guatemala – became the object of international competition between the United States and the European Union. The investments of the United States in Central America were mainly on the economic level to advance enterprises from the United States. The investments of the European Union, which upheld a reputation as a normative power on the world scene, centred around sustainable development, human rights and the promotion of democracy (similar to that of the United States, but without a military backup).<sup>151</sup> The pressure from the European Union to uphold democracy and human rights meant that Guatemala would only be admitted to trade with the then growing European economy if the nation adhered to European values as well as related in a harmonious manner to its neighbours (where the European Union also invested). Since the 1990s, the presence of the European Union increased in Guatemala, while the presence of the United States slowly decreased – this in combination with the end of the civil war meant that Guatemala was ready for a new chapter in its history.<sup>152</sup>

To conclude, Guatemala used to be a region of incorporated autonomous Spanish provinces with a stable economy. Even during this time piracy and smuggling were part of informal economies between Spanish people and between Spanish and foreign traders. Trade occurred locally between the provinces as well as between the Spanish American kingdoms. The sudden

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>149</sup> Shoman, A. (2010). Belize's independence and decolonization in Latin America: Guatemala, Britain, and the UN (Studies of the Americas 291543596). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>150</sup> David Leal C.Y Marvin Barquero S. (2007). Panama busca unirse a Sistema de Integración Centroamericana; [Source: La Nación]. NoticiasFinancieras, p. 1.

<sup>151</sup> Legler, Lean, Boniface, Legler, Thomas, Lean, Sharon F., & Boniface, Dexter S. (2007). Promoting democracy in the Americas. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid Idem.

independence of Guatemala brought an end to the regional integration as well as the stability of Central America within less than two decades.

The regional collapse of Central America brought an economic vacuum that meant that the divide between formal and informal was not always clear. The local trade between the provinces declined and the economic recession caused impoverishment with the non-urban population which were the main actors in the textile industry. After the collapse of Guatemala as a regional nation, the country was subjected to exploitation by other colonial powers and eventually the country was subjected to the economic exploitation of the United States. The reforms in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century brought a divide between the wealthy urban citizen and the rural, mostly indigenous, population. It is since this era of nation-building that a definitive formal national economy was created with the indigenous inhabitants remaining with an informal economy. During this time and afterwards Guatemala lacked internal stability and unity. The textile industry fell in the informal economy due to the focus being on the export of fruit to the United States.

The short-lived Guatemalan revolution, in the 1940s, was shut down by the United States and eventually the conflict escalated into a 36-year-long civil war. At the end of the Cold War Era, Guatemala untied itself with its Central American neighbours to form an economic stable region. The economy of Guatemala has suffered from exploitation, internal corruption, and civil unrest ever since independence and the present-day economy is still divided between the 'Americanist' urban population and the rural indigenous or ladino communities. Both internal as well as external rivalry hindered the development of Guatemala as an independent nation and it is after the end of the civil war that a more stable era began for Central America.

### 3. Case study: Informal economy of Guatemala from 1996-2019

The previous chapter discussed the historical background of the development of the informal economy and piracy in Guatemala after its independence. This chapter will discuss the case study which is the informal economy of Guatemala from 1996 until 2019. Here will be revealed that piracy in the textile industry of Guatemala is not just economical; it is both a political as well as a cultural phenomenon. The cultural part of the piracy in the textile industry of Guatemala lies in the fact that Guatemala, just as any other nation-states, bases its national identity on exclusion from the group. The group in this case is who belongs to Guatemalan society. This chapter will also elaborate more on my fieldwork and the findings of that research. For this fieldwork I conducted only five interviews (because several people cancelled their appointments), attended a tour at Lake Atitlan, conducted participatory observation and desk research (including two more interviews with exports). In addition, this chapter will reveal the cultural impact of the informal economy as well as how Central America is affected by foreign influences in this matter. In this chapter my fieldwork is included as well as the data I gathered from interviews as well as observations in Guatemala. As mentioned earlier, my work succeeded previous anthropological research on this topic of informal economies conducted by Dr. Kedron Thomas. My research included the context of the regional development that occurred since the establishment of Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana.

#### 3.1 Societal attitude towards piracy and the informal economy

The civil war period of Guatemala revealed that post-colonial politics still had traces of colonial ideas concerning race, ethnicity and social roles.<sup>153</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Cold War Era was the time when the generational conflicts escalated in a civil war that lasted for two generations. The emergence of Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana offered hope and opportunities for Guatemalan society. The developments in the 1990s were positive on one hand: societal stability, de-militarisation of Guatemalan society as well as better economic relations with its neighbours. On the other hand, the 1990s also revealed the dire state of Guatemalan society as a self-destructive society that still needs to develop its autonomous sense of nationhood that excludes themselves as the object of exploitation.

The period after the civil war also revealed the need for Guatemala to adapt to globalisation in which the cosmopolitan influences of the West became dominant in economics, culture,

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<sup>153</sup> Martínez Salazar, E. (2012). *Global coloniality of power in Guatemala racism, genocide, citizenship*. Lanham [Md.]: Lexington Books.

entertainment as well as politics. For a nation that has known series of (collective) humiliation, disappointment in its own leaders and chronic abuse of human rights,<sup>154</sup> the pressure to adapt to globalisation was both a challenge as a problem. The need to adapt to globalisation was a challenge because it offered Guatemala the chance to build its own reputation and economic relevance in the world order. The need to adapt to globalisation was also a problem because the nation still had to process the collective trauma of killing their own as well as facing the reality that their country was still divided along racial boundaries and social classes. In addition, in Post-civil war Guatemala the economic dominance of the United States was still a topic of controversy and contention. The emergence of Central America as a political-economic unity as well as the presence of the European Union offered Guatemala a leverage against the exploitation of the United States that was the norm in most of its post-independence existence.<sup>155</sup>

The division in Guatemalan society also expressed itself in its economics: the formal, national, economy remained centred on the export to the United States mainly and the informal economies, by local (indigenous) communities remained focussed on internal trade. There was no optimal allocation of resources, so the informal economies remained informal and exposed to risks of abuse by civil servants or criminal organisations.<sup>156</sup>

When it comes to piracy in the present day informal economies in Guatemala, and other places in Central America, the main type of piracy that occurs is 'Brand Piracy' in which a company or business commits plagiarism with the product of style of someone else.<sup>157</sup> Brand piracy has two components: the one producing a style or a product and the one taking advantage of the production without the consent nor consideration of the original producer. Brand piracy itself is a type of politics due to the fact that the industry of brands is something that came forth from the capitalist west and it is therefore modelled after patterns of globalisation (and the exploitation associated with it). In the textile industry of Guatemala, which was the object of my fieldwork, piracy is common for the following reasons:

- Ignorance by producers

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<sup>154</sup> Democracy fails in Guatemala. (recent election) (editorial). (1990). The New York Times, p. A18.

<sup>155</sup> Rueda-Junquera, F. (2009). Economic Relations between the European Union and Central America: Building a Bi-Regional Association. Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series Vol. 9 No. 11. October 2009.

<sup>156</sup> Canelas, C., & Gisselquist, R. (2018). Human capital, labour market outcomes, and horizontal inequality in Guatemala. *Oxford Development Studies*, 46(3), 378-397.

<sup>157</sup> Thomas, K. (2013). BRAND "PIRACY" AND POSTWAR STATECRAFT IN GUATEMALA. *Cultural Anthropology*, 28(1), 144-160.



- Lack of effective legislation
- Lack of economic opportunities

One factor that plays a big role in piracy in the textile sector is that many of the producers are either uninformed or unaware of their legal rights as producers. This leads to situations where the ignorance of the producers is exploited by locals to make money at the expense of the producers. When it comes to textile this causes a loop of impoverishment in which the Mayan producers cannot gain sufficient revenue to keep their craft going. In addition, the government of Guatemala lacks effective legislation and repercussions for those that misuse the intellectual property of Mayan weavers. For this reason, it is easier for locals to exploit the Mayan producers, because there is almost no back-up from the state in protecting the craft of indigenous peoples. Another motivator for pirates to exploit the textile industry is the lack of economic opportunities. This does not serve as an excuse for violating the intellectual property of the producers. Poverty and lack of economic opportunities does trigger some Guatemalans to look for creative ways to earn an income, one of these ways is by screen-printing the designs of Mayan textile workers and use those screen-prints for mass production. In this case, the screen-printers rely on the mass consumption for their income. On one hand, this practise of screen-printing is condemned to honour the principle of intellectual property. On the other hand, the practise of screen-printing is perceived as a benefit to Guatemalan society and to the indigenous communities of Guatemala in particular.

The production of Mayan textile is labour intensive. During a trip to Lake Atitlan, I participated in a tour to several of the town around Lake. One of the towns contained a small weaving mill where we were allowed to witness the process of making Mayan textiles: from the collection of the raw materials from the plants, the colouring of the raw materials as well as the actual weaving of the cloths. According to our tour guide, as well as the weavers present, it can take weeks or months to complete one piece of textile. That tour revealed that Mayan textile is a family tradition that has been passed down throughout the centuries. Other respondents also revealed that Mayan textile patterns varied per village and per family.

The labour of the Mayan women (and men) in this regard implied that the price of their production must be high enough to sustain their businesses. There are successful Mayan or Mestizo weavers that have their own businesses where they sell their hand-made productions. The merchandise is often meant for tourists, but also local Guatemalans purchase handcrafts as a symbol of pride of their nation.

This brings the research to the following: Mayan textile is perceived (and presented by tourist corporations) as a part of Guatemalan history and Guatemalan heritage. When it comes to nation-building and generating social cohesion in society it is nothing new to use the past to create a sense of belonging. However, internal political instability as well as the social marginalisation of those who do not conform to urban society cause a dichotomy. On one hand, racial tendencies in Guatemalan society tends to portray urban middle class life as the norm and the desired outcome.<sup>158</sup> At the same time, those same racial tendencies as well as the controversy concerning the colonial past, cause Guatemalan society to want to resist identification with its Spanish history and to identify themselves apart from Spanish colonial history.

The indigenous people are perceived as the original inhabitants and their heritage seen as ‘one of their own’. The resistance against their Spanish history is a contradiction. The colonial era enforced certain fashions that became the norm for how people dressed in the Spanish empire. For example, men were not condoned to wear dressed by the Spaniards. When Guatemala was still a kingdom, Mayan men were discouraged (and sometimes even punished) for wearing dresses that were handmade. There was another stigma that the Spanish empire enforced upon the Mayan population: Men that weaved clothes were looked down upon as effeminate.

Due to the urban development that occurred in the Kingdom of Guatemala, in which Spanish colonists acquired large plots of land for the export, the Council of the Indies constructed urban centres and the indigenous peoples became depended on the Spanish export, many of the indigenous people’s moved to the urban centres at the expense of their remote indigenous villages.<sup>159</sup> In the Spanish urban areas the norm was for men, whether from Spanish, Black or Indigenous descent, to wear trousers and the behave according to the masculine standards of Spanish society which were dominated by the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>160</sup>

Due to the Mayan men being separated from their traditional labour, much of the Mayan culture changed consequently. Textile weaving as well as the production of chocolate remained key components in Mayan communities, but due to the lack of male participation the Mayan textile production became a ‘feminine’ branch and with that it lost the respect of society in general.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Martínez Salazar, E. (2012). *Global coloniality of power in Guatemala racism, genocide, citizenship*. Lanham [Md.]: Lexington Books.

<sup>159</sup> Jones, O. (1994). *Guatemala in the Spanish colonial period*. Norman [etc.]: University of Oklahoma Press.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid idem*.

<sup>161</sup> Few, M. (2002). *Women who live evil lives: Gender, religion, and the politics of power in colonial Guatemala*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

After independence, the gender roles that were conditioned on the masses by the Spanish Empire remained on Guatemalan society and those gender roles have lasted till this day. The gender roles were the characteristics of the institutions that emerged in Central America during the colonial era.<sup>162</sup>

The post-colonial era continued the assimilation of many Mayan men into a society dominated by Roman Catholicism and military rivalries. In this timeframe, the idea of a man weaving and wearing a dress became anathema in public view. The hardships suffered by indigenous communities also required the men to be involved in industries where it was possible for them to earn an income for their households. The liberalisation that happened in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century also meant that indigenous textile was not valued much due to the focus being on banana export to the United States.

The Mayan textile industry, therefore, has become an informal branch because it did not fit with the societal standards of Spanish and later Guatemalan society. This change in culture meant that much of the Mayan traditions were lost, while core beliefs and practises (e.g. textile production) remained in existence because of social marginalisation by Guatemalan society.

Imagine the following: You live in a society where you need a job to survive. The jobs are offered by mostly foreign corporations who have nothing in common with your indigenous past nor your indigenous culture. To have a job you must fit in society to get long. A priority for the youth becomes societal acceptance to advance their options in life as well as to escape poverty. In assimilating to mainstream society, you develop the standpoints of that society and everything that might hinder your acceptance is repressed by you (and your peers). This is the dynamic that keep Mayan communities in societal stagnation for decades. There are Guatemalans that proudly endear their Mayan descent and who are open about it. However, the Hispanic norm that is still dominant in Guatemalan society represses any possible 'revival' of Mayan culture in mainstream society (except fashion fads that come and go).

Mayas are part of Guatemala's demography and they are the original inhabitant of the region, in contrast to Afro-Guatemalans and criollos who have their ancestral origins in other continents. Culturally, Mayans are part of Guatemalan culture. At the same time, acknowledging Mayan as part of Guatemalan culture and Guatemalan heritage, also implies that Mayans become

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<sup>162</sup> Zavala, S. (1945). *Contribución a la historia de las instituciones coloniales en Guatemala* (Jornadas; 36). México: El Colegio de México.

entitled to compensation by the state as well as political power in Guatemalan society. This is where the conflict lies: Guatemalan society is reluctant to allow Mayans and other indigenous groups to increase in political power due to the Hispanic and Western norms that are part of the dominant culture.

The financial and economic resources are also located in favour of the non-indigenous groups which make it easier for dominant society to suppress political movements from indigenous communities. One of my respondents admitted that in Latin America, including Guatemala, it is rare to encounter long-term resistance by locals against the government because civil disobedience often punished with death. Riots and protests are deadly and risky events to partake in. In this context, it becomes clear that there is a climate of fear in Central America when it comes to challenging the status quo. The impression is that the governments use the military to protect themselves, and their private interests, from the commoners instead of investing the state to benefit the commoners in the long-term.

This climate of fear is also sensed in the marketplaces. I was told by one of my respondents, and by some locals, that some people might fear that I am from the CIA and therefore lock down in answering questions. My first impression was to consider the statement an overreaction. However, during my fieldwork I noticed indeed that prospect participants shut down quickly out of fright. I understood quickly that it was nothing personal to me, taken into consideration the (recent) history of the nation.

My experience in Guatemala was that there was indeed a tensed climate when it came to politics as well as economics. During my fieldwork, the Presidential elections took place. While travelling with the bus, it became clear that political campaigns were sponsored a lot, and this gave the impression of much political participation by Guatemalan society. Unfortunately, the online questionnaire did not bring forth sufficient results to be able to make any statistical conclusion about this. There was no sign of political violence, in the streets, that I noticed during my fieldwork. It is also possible that due to good policing of the capital and surroundings that such political violence went unnoticed to me. Another thing that I considered interesting was that Guatemalans themselves were relatively open about the violence that plagued their nation. One time, at the Central Square of the Guatemala City, police officers warned me that I need to be gone around 18:00 P.M. due to urban violence, by criminals, that might erupt. One time I was even warned by a shop-owner to be careful when withdrawing money from the ATM. Growing up in what is considered by the world a 'first-world country', The Netherlands, it took

me a while to understand why Guatemala was considered a ‘third-world country’. This has more to do with the presence of uncontrolled urban violence than with anything cultural. Urban violence occurs in all countries as well as corruption. As an anthropologist, I did not want to perceive Guatemala via the lens of Western public opinion. It is for this reason that I wanted to visit the country myself to have direct experience with its society. I took all the warnings from locals seriously and I did not become any target of any crime anywhere in the country. Growing up in a peripheral neighbourhood myself, in Rotterdam, I knew how to recognise signs of potential escalation.

I visited Nicaragua after six weeks of researching. For this, I travelled by land. I noticed some odd cultural tendencies<sup>163</sup> as well as differences between the societies of Central America.<sup>164</sup> I did not spend any days in El Salvador besides passing through the country twice (on my way to Nicaragua and on my way back to Guatemala). What was remarkable about El Salvador was that the country used American dollars as their currency because the nation forfeited the Salvadoran Colón in 2001. A national currency is an expression of sovereignty and history. In the Eurozone, national currencies have been replaced by a supranational one: The Euro. In any case, the currency of a country reflects the nation and the nation’s perspective – e.g. you will not find Spanish historical figures on Chinese coins nor Japanese syllables on Korean cash. The introduction of the American dollar, in El Salvador, can be perceived as a cultural concession to preserve the economy.

One thing to note about the regional integration of Central America is that all the member states, except El Salvador, retain their own currencies and national autonomy to inflate or deflate their currencies when needed. The lack of trust is also visible: paying taxes between the borders with

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<sup>163</sup> During my fieldwork I became ill twice and the second time, I took five days off in Nicaragua. My reason for going to Nicaragua by bus was to experience more of Central America as a region. It is one thing to write about it, the second one to experience it yourself as a researcher. I discovered that there was a customs union between Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. However, in practise the customs union seemed revealed more of the distrust between the nation’s than of openness. This interpretation can be the result of my understanding of a custom’s union based on the model of the Schengen Area in the European Union where no border nor passport controls exist between the Schengen countries. What was also remarkable was that white Americans were treated with a form of ‘high respect’ in which social transgressions were ignored. At the border between Guatemala and El Salvador, a white American pushed himself in front of everyone and ignored instructions by the officers. He was not punished nor addressed by anyone. It did not take long for me to understand that it was likely due to his background that he was left alone.

<sup>164</sup> In Leon, I reflected on the field work till then and I focussed on what I could find next. Taking some tours in Leon to find out more about the country’s history, which I aimed to use as a comparison for my analysis of the regional integration, I concluded the following: Central American states have similar histories of civil wars and civil unrest, but each one of them deals with it on their terms. Guatemala, for example, has many public sectors privatised while in Nicaragua there was free healthcare and free education.

Honduras counts for both traders as well as civilians. When leaving Honduras, we were checked thrice instead of just once by the Honduras border patrol. One Chinese traveller was stopped because her Chinese passport was not accepted, but a call with the Chinese author its fixed it quickly. The border between El Salvador and Guatemala contained no additional taxes. Central America is a union culturally due to its common language, history, and common historical struggles. However, the trust is not as far that the member states are willing to give up much of their domestic powers to supranational institutions.

There is one phenomenon that I noticed in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua<sup>165</sup> and that is that malls have absorbed much of urban life. This can be one way for the local authorities to better police the population. However, the absorption of urban life by malls can also cause alienation with those outside of the urban areas. In the urban areas I noticed that screen-printed textiles were available besides the more ‘modern’ merchandise. The indigenous visual expressions, in textile, are publicly appreciated in Central America but not at the expense of the ‘modern’ view that is dominant. If there is a difference between Guatemala and Nicaragua, where I spend most of the time and observed more, than it is that in Guatemala the indigenous history is incorporated in the nation’s narrative – even the name of Guatemala’s currency and its depictions express the indigenous origins of a large part of the population. In Nicaragua, the emphasis was more on the ‘modern’ era after the last military dictatorship. In El Salvador Mayan textile was visible mostly in markets near the highways where women wore colourful clothes as in Guatemala. A veteran, who give us a tour in one of Leon’s museums, revealed that Nicaragua’s was more pragmatic and adaptable to the current developments. When comparing this to Guatemala’s national history, Guatemala has a more conservative and static attitude about their national narrative.

### 3.2 Regional rivalries in the informal economy

Earlier in this chapter, the regional integration of Central America was considered a success because it worked as lasts until this day. The previous attempts to initiate a unification of Central America all failed due to internal corruption or disagreements between the prospect member states. The success of Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana did not eliminate the core societal problems that afflict Central America, namely political corruption as well as urban

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<sup>165</sup> I did not spend enough time in Honduras to make any conclusions about that country. I was recommended by the Dutch state as well as locals not to visit the country due to the out-of-control civil and state violence.

violence.<sup>166</sup> This paragraph discusses the dimension of crime when it comes to regional integration and the informal economy in Central America.

Gang rivalry is one of the main factors that keep urban violence going in Central America.<sup>167</sup> In the previous paragraph there is a mentioning of a climate of fear in Central America. The climate of fear in Central America, including Guatemala, is the result of rivalry between states and non-state actors. The rivalry is also fought between non-state actors. Due to the institutional instability of the Guatemalan state, non-state actors fill in the vacuum that should be filled by the national administration. This is the reason why transnational gangs are a phenomenon in Central America with a significant amount present in Guatemala City.<sup>168</sup> The presence of transnational gangs in Guatemala City has some interesting factors. First, reveals the international character of Guatemala City as one of the main urban areas in Latin America – as it has been for centuries. Secondly, it reveals that criminality is not bound by race nor ethnicity, but by common interests.<sup>169</sup>

When it comes to the regional integration of Central America, criminal subversion of local politics is a controversy that is seldom mentioned: the glorification of criminal perpetrators as resistance fighters against oppression by the Government.<sup>170</sup> In the case of Guatemala, criminal groups established their own trade and circulation of labour and goods. These new economies fell in the grey zone because many locals participated in them as the result of failing government policies. When it comes to the textile industry, criminal organisations found new ‘markets’ to invest their ill-gotten money into the local economy. By criminals enmeshing themselves with local distribution (of not only textile), criminal subversion was a success: it became unclear where the boundary of criminality and informality was. The existing resentment towards the Guatemalan State, by many who were affected by the previous civil war and the aftermath of it, for covering up crimes by state actors, also made it controversial to enforce a policy to end

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<sup>166</sup> Knox, V. (2019). Gang violence, GBV and hate crime in Central America: State response versus State responsibility. *Forced Migration Review*, (62), 79-81.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid idem*.

<sup>168</sup> Fontes, A. (2018). *Mortal doubt: Transnational gangs and social order in Guatemala City (Atelier (Oakland, Calif.); 1)*.

<sup>169</sup> Weld, K. (2012). Dignifying the Guerrillero, not the assassin: Rewriting a history of criminal subversion in postwar Guatemala. *Radical History Review*, 113, 35-54.

<sup>170</sup> Weld, K. (2012). Dignifying the Guerrillero, not the assassin: Rewriting a history of criminal subversion in postwar Guatemala. *Radical History Review*, 113, 35-54.

all criminal involvement in the Guatemalan economy.<sup>171</sup> Guatemala is not the only country with criminal rivalries that play out in the informal economy.

The non-state actors, who rival with one another, also reveal the difficulty in promoting and advancing democracy in Central America.<sup>172</sup> The promotion of democracy, which is advocated by both the United States and the European Union, reveal the tribal culture of Central American politics in which the social class and favouritism often leads to corruption.<sup>173</sup> In the case of Guatemala alone, favouritism in politics enabled genocide and state fascism in which many local communities were silenced from emitting the fact that something was amiss.<sup>174</sup> It is therefore good to note that rivalry does not only occurred between those that are part of the problem, but also those that resist the problem.<sup>175</sup> This shows that on one hand, there is potential for change in Guatemala as well as Central America in general. On the other hand, unity in finding solutions is often limited or even non-existent.

The reason why unity in finding solutions for regional rivalries is often fruitless is because national conflicts in Central America are so deep-rooted that addressing these too openly may disrupt the present-day equilibrium in society.<sup>176</sup> One reason for this is that civil unrest was not always directly tied to nationhood.<sup>177</sup> Therefore, discussing deep-rooted problems as nations make it problematic to where the problems originated.<sup>178</sup> The collective memory of political and societal violence has been kept alive due to art expressions which were often opposed by local regimes.<sup>179</sup> When it comes to informal economies, the collective memory of violence perpetrated by society or the government were one of the reasons why those economies remained informal (due to their resistance to the local regimes).<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid idem.

<sup>172</sup> Legler, Lean, Boniface, Legler, Thomas, Lean, Sharon F., & Boniface, Dexter S. (2007). Promoting democracy in the Americas. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>174</sup> Esparza, M. (2018). Silenced communities: Legacies of militarization and militarism in a rural Guatemalan town.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>176</sup> Holden, R. (2004). Armies without nations: Public violence and state formation in Central America, 1821-1960.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid Idem.

<sup>179</sup> Hatcher, R. (2018). The power of memory and violence in Central America.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid Idem.



Informal economies are empowered by the fact that many locals prefer to have options besides the formal establish economies by the regime. Rivalries about who has stakeholdership in those informal economies will therefore persist in Central America.

### 3.3 Foreign influences on the informal economy

In this paragraph the foreign influences on the informal economy of Guatemala is discussed in relationship the, informal economy and Guatemalan society after its civil war. Present-day Guatemalan society is a hybrid mixture of democracy, military autocracy, and post-colonial conflicts.<sup>181</sup> In the previous chapter the post-colonial conflict has been discussed in depth. In Guatemalan society it is visible how globalisation and regional integration transformed the country into modernity and how this transformation led to the dichotomy between modern and traditional in their national narrative.<sup>182</sup> A national narrative is a common view of how a society sees itself. This common view is expressed in public art, national symbols as well as the ‘face’ that is shown as who the nation is.<sup>183</sup> However, the national narrative of a nation is not devoid of conflict and controversies.<sup>184</sup> In the case of Guatemala, the national narrative is filled with resistance against foreign influences that were considered invasive or undermining.<sup>185</sup>

Earlier in this thesis the role of the United States has been revealed as an economic coloniser of Guatemala after its independence. It is important to note that the Guatemalan economy always, since Spanish colonisation, depended on export to Europe.<sup>186</sup> The pattern of economic dependence shifted towards the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it was resisted in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The European Union took over much of the dominant position of the United States at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At this moment, Guatemala has three major international players that shape its economy: The United States, The European Union and Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana. The United States remains relevant due to the economic interest between the two nations. The European Union remains relevant for the human rights cause as well as the normative expression of power (including democracy promotion)<sup>187</sup> by EU leaders in Central

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<sup>181</sup> Azpuru de Cuestas, D. (2007). *Construyendo la democracia en sociedades posconflicto un enfoque comparado entre Guatemala y El Salvador* (1.st ed.). Guatemala, Guatemala: Ottawa [Ont.]: F & G Editores; Centro Internacional de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo.

<sup>182</sup> Sieder, R. (2011). 'Emancipation' or 'regulation'? Law, globalization and indigenous peoples' rights in post-war Guatemala. *Economy And Society*, 40(2), 239-265.

<sup>183</sup> Mylonas, H. (2012). *The politics of nation-building: Making co-nationals, refugees, and minorities* (Problems of international politics).

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid Idem.*

<sup>185</sup> Vrana, H. (2017). *This city belongs to you: A history of student activism in Guatemala, 1944-1996.*

<sup>186</sup> Jones, O. (1994). *Guatemala in the Spanish colonial period.* Norman [etc.]: University of Oklahoma Press.

<sup>187</sup> *Democracy fails in Guatemala. (recent election) (editorial).* (1990). *The New York Times*, p. A18.

America. The Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana relies on both the United States and The European Union, and other observing entities, to remain functional.

The European Union, contrary to the United States, has no military motive for its involvement in Guatemala nor Central America. Central America is a source of much illegal migration to the United States, via Mexico.<sup>188</sup> Ever since the Cold War Era did Mexico and the United States cooperate to hinder illegal aliens from coming to U.S. soil.<sup>189</sup> The illegal migration from Guatemala to the United States had to do with the civil war and the push factor was the escape from genocidal violence and poverty. After the civil war, poverty is still a push factor for illegal migration to the United States. Illegal aliens are often exploited by human traffickers at both Guatemala-Mexico and the Mexico-USA border.<sup>190</sup> The illegal migration also involved organised crime in which migrants are exploited by gangs and other non-state actors that inflict violence in the region.<sup>191</sup> The illegal migration to the United States peaked at the end of the Cold War Era due to the rise in urban crime throughout Latin America at the same time.<sup>192</sup> The influences of the United States and the European Union are not likely to disappear soon due to the economic dependence of Guatemala, and the rest of Central America, on both of them.

However, foreign influences can also have a contributing factor for the local cultures. One of my respondents pointed out that art preservation of the Mayan heritage of Guatemala was initiated mainly by foreign collectors who showed interest in the indigenous culture of Guatemala. This respondent also pointed out, as an art collector, that it is a good development, in her point of view, that screen-printing occurs because it keeps the Mayan culture alive. The art collectors, from the United States, preserved much of the visual culture from Guatemala and these collectors did not receive much support from Guatemala itself. It can therefore be stated that Mayan culture is kept in remembrance by foreign pressure to preserve local indigeneity. This does not mean that no Guatemalan actor ever interested in their own indigeneity. It is to

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<sup>188</sup> Castillo, M. Á. (2006). Mexico: Caught Between the United States and Central America. MIS Selected Readings on Central America, Migration Policy Institute, Washington, DC. <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm>.

<sup>189</sup> Rohter, Larry. (1989). Mexico assisting in U.S. plan to cut illegal migration; helps I.N.S. collect data; officials say policy is aimed at Central Americans who sneak across border. (Immigration and Naturalization Service). The New York Times, p. A1.

<sup>190</sup> Rus, J. (2010). Comment: Financing undocumented migration and the limits of solidarity: Unsettling findings from Guatemala. *Latin American Perspectives*, 37(1), 145-147.

<sup>191</sup> Knox, V. (2019). Gang violence, GBV and hate crime in Central America: State response versus State responsibility. *Forced Migration Review*, (62), 79-81.

<sup>192</sup> Wood, C., Gibson, C., Ribeiro, L., & Hamsho-Diaz, P. (2010). Crime Victimization in Latin America and Intentions to Migrate to the United States. *International Migration Review*, 44(1), 3-24.

point that economic interests often overruled cultural interests when it comes to Guatemala and Central America in general.

The foreign influences of the United States and Europe boosted the need for tourists to see indigeneity in Guatemala and the rest of Central America. This need for an exotic ‘other’ provoked the tourism industry in Guatemala and it also revived foreign interest in indigenous crafts, such a textile.<sup>193</sup> However, the pressure to have an ‘indigenous identity’ to display also triggers the misuse of crafts products by locals: copy-cat behaviour without the consent nor consideration of the original creators. This type of piracy, on one hand, serves the cosmopolitan need for the tourism industry as well as keeping Mayan heritage ‘alive’ by redistributing it nationally and internationally. The distribution of Guatemala’s indigenous crafts in a globalist context also contributed to the rise of a cosmopolitan nationalism in which Guatemalans perceive themselves as the ‘modern’ product of both colonialism as well as the works of their ancestors.<sup>194</sup> In this case, foreign pressure worked out constructively for the preservation of Mayan crafts, the informal economy as well as the cultural diversity in Central America. In addition, activism among Mayans for their crafts is also growing.<sup>195</sup>

To conclude, Guatemalan society developed into a moderate democracy after its civil war that lasted for three and a half decades. The formation of democracy in Guatemala did not undo the damage caused by the civil war nor of the political stagnation in its post-independence history. The Mayan textile industry reveals this conflict in Guatemalan society in which their economy is informal in the sense that it is not formally incorporated in the national economy (which is still mainly centred on the United States). The lack of legal and societal support for Mayan weavers as well as other indigenous productions reveals the internal conflict that needs to be resolved. Besides Guatemala, central America in general has its political wounds that need to be addressed – even though the regional integration of Central America does reduce some of the tensions that haunt the sub-continent. Despite all the political and societal controversies, the present of foreign pressure contributes indirectly to the preservation of indigenous crafts, informal economies as well as leading to a new form of nationalism.

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<sup>193</sup> Taylor, S. (2014). Maya cosmopolitans: Engaging tactics and strategies in the performance of tourism. *Identities*, 21(2), 219-232.

<sup>194</sup> Amado, A. (2011). The Fox Trot in Guatemala: Cosmopolitan Nationalism among Ladinos. *Ethnomusicology Review*, 16, Np.

<sup>195</sup> Piegorsch, K. (2009). An ergonomic bench for indigenous weavers. *Ergonomics in Design*, 17(4), 7-11.

## Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction the aim of this thesis was to show which role piracy (or copycat behaviour) plays in the textile industry of Guatemala in a regional context. In the research I also involved the foreign influences on the matter. Based on the fieldwork, desk research and analysis done, there are seven conclusions that I came to:

First conclusion: The division between the urban and rural communities which led to a civil war and the shaping of ‘modern’ piracy and the current informal economy in Guatemala were caused by Guatemala’s societal conflict concerning its colonial past and its position in international relations. The colonial past of Guatemala already constructed a division between the modern citizens and the indigenous locals that retained their traditional way of life. The end of the colonial era led to, as explained in Chapter two, to the regional disintegration of the former kingdom as well as the falling apart of Guatemala as a nation. Territorial loss and economic stagnation caused Guatemala, as well as the other Spanish republics in Central America, to become the object of exploitation by Britain, Belgium and eventually the United States. So, Guatemala’s position in international relations after its independence was never a stable one that secured the national interests of its divided society. Those conflicts led to the escalation that lasted for 36 years as a civil war.

Second conclusion: Guatemalan society, as well as Central America as a region, are shaped by globalisation as well as the changing political landscape. Ever since globalisation emerged, the need for regional integration re-emerged in Central America due to its weakened international position as a third world country/region. As explained before, the current regional project – Central American Integration System – has been observed and supervised by foreign powers to secure its success. So Guatemalan society developed in the context of globalisation, regional integration as well as international observation of its post-civil war economics.

Third conclusion: Piracy in the textile industry is the result of societal and well as cultural conflict that play out in the political and public realm. Due to the resistance of Guatemalan society to American imperialism, there is a cultural conflict concerning Guatemalan identity when it comes to its indigenous population. The textile industry is also divided by this conflict in the ‘formal textile’ which is focussed on export to the United States and the local indigenous textiles which are considered part of the informal economy. As mentioned earlier, informal economies exist in the context of an established norm that is considered formal. In the case of Guatemala’s textile industry, the division between formal and informal also reflect the cultural

division that is present in Guatemalan society. So on a political level there is a conflict concerning the preservation and protection of indigenous textile and in the public realm this fight is displayed by Guatemalans both using pirated material as well as showing off more modern productions to be part of the modern world.

Fourth conclusion: Piracy will remain an issue if there is no solution to the failing public policies when it comes to protecting the rights of indigenous peoples. As mentioned in the previous conclusion, the political conflict in Guatemala is the result of identity politics of how Guatemalan society positions itself: modern vs indigenous. The conflict has to do with social marginalisation of Guatemala's indigenous population. The marginalised groups lack in sufficient resources to defend their political and public interests. The weak political institutions in Guatemala also contribute to a vicious cycle in which the marginalised communities continue to lack resources to defend their interests. For there to be any resolution in this matter the toxic incompetence of the public policies and their institutions needs to be addressed.

Fifth conclusion: The informal economy in Guatemala is a collection of local economies in which state actors are often omitted. The absence of state actors leaves room for non-state actors to fulfil the role where the state is neglectful. The lack of effective public policies by the Guatemalan government implies that locals are often depended on either private actors or actors that partake in the criminal or informal sector. Due to the fragile infrastructure and lack of railways in Guatemala, domestic transportation of goods is also costly and sometimes even dangerous – e.g. during the raining seasons it is dangerous to travel on certain highways. The difficulty comes when those risky highways are the only routes to connect remote places where informal trade occurs. The only option left for the informal actors is to become self-reliance and resilient in their daily transactions. Conflicts in the informal economy are resolved internally due to judicial assistance is often unwanted or even dangerous because the informal activities tend to occur in a grey zone in which the line between criminality and legal behaviour is often blurry. Due to the grey zone in which the informal economy operates as well as the weak state actors, the risk for corruption is also present.

Sixth conclusion: The situation in Guatemala has relatively improved due to the economic and political equilibrium of Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana, which is enabled by the increasing presence of the European Union in Central America. As explained before, the European Union, as a normative power, demands that human rights are honoured and protected. The human right clause is one of the main conditions of the European Union for becoming

involved with any country or region. This pressure, from the European Union, as well as the reducing interest of the United States in providing state aid to Central America, implies that Central America has a bigger incentive to agree on the EU's human rights clause as well as the cry from their domestic populations to also honour their basic human rights. Besides human rights, the European Union observes the economic development of Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana as well as their projects that occur in the Central American republics. All of this contribute to a more stable economic and political region becomes a deterrent to military conflict.

Seventh conclusion: The textile industry of Guatemala reveals the symptoms of the collective damage on Guatemalan society. The lack of institutional support of Mayan textile, as well as the dominant orientation on the United States, hinders national harmonisation of the economy. If Guatemalan society has not processed its collective trauma that came into being due to the Guatemalan civil war, the nation cannot collectively process its dark past and continue to improve its internal relations. Even though this thesis was not primarily focussed on researching the effects of the civil war on present-day Guatemalan society in general, this research did reveal that the aftermath of the Guatemalan civil war is still present in its society and this reflects in its domestic relationship with its indigenous peoples and minorities.

In the historical analysis chapter, the conclusion was that Guatemala's economy was unstable and therefore the object of exploitation by the United States and other colonial powers. During that time, Guatemala disintegrated as a region and it became a nation-state in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century during a military dictatorship. The history chapter also revealed that the inevitable result of all those conflicts was a long civil war that undermined the economic development of Guatemala. The chapter that followed discussed my fieldwork and the condition of Guatemalan society and the regional integration of Central America after the Guatemalan Civil War. The chapter explained that Guatemalan society is still in recovery from the civil war that caused much collective trauma to the population. The presence of non-state actors that serve as a replacement for the state causes both rivalry between the state and non-state actors as well as rivalries between the non-state actors. The rivalry between the state and non-state actors contributes to the (increasing) urban violence in Guatemala. The textile industry is one of the battle fields where the institutional conflicts of Guatemala are playing out. When it comes to the position of indigenous textile: there is activism going on and the present-day foreign

pressures indirectly contribute to the preservation of indigenous cultures, informal economies and the popularity and distribution of indigenous textile.

The research question of this thesis was *How does piracy in the textile industry of Guatemala, after the nation's civil war, reflect the regional integration problems in a globalised economy?* My main hypothesis was *piracy in the textile industry of Guatemala reflects the economic desperation that haunts the country due to both internal and external political instability.* The two sub-questions were: *How does the local (informal) economy relate to the regional economy in Central America?* And *How does the informal economy impact Guatemalan culture?* The hypotheses for the sub questions were: *The local informal economy and the regional economy in Central America are interdependent on one another both due to historical-cultural ties as well as a common resistance against foreign influences* and *The informal economy is part of Guatemalan culture and it is therefore not likely to disappear anytime soon, Therefore its role is a social cement that keeps Guatemalan identity intact.*

Hereby, my main hypothesis is rejected: political instabilities are not the main factors that contribute to piracy in the textile industry. Instead, political instabilities reveal the fact that Guatemala is still lagging when it comes to regionalism and globalism: this is what the persistence of piracy in the textile industry reveals. My other two hypothesis, however, are confirmed: the informal economy, as well as modern piracy, are the result of regionalism, globalisation and they form part of local cultures. However, this thesis does not speculate about the direction of Guatemala's future. This thesis ends with a recommendation for future researchers to pay attention to the anthropological and sociological dynamics in Guatemala as well as the rest of Central America. Those developments, and how it will affect the indigenous communities of Central America, are interesting points of research for the future.

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## Appendix

<b>List of interviews carried out</b>				
Interviewed	Affiliation or role	Issues	Place and date	Duration
Karen Mayorga	Textile worker	Public policies, piracy	Panajachel, 31-05-2019	18:27
Lucia Palacios	Government official, export service	Public policies, piracy	Ciudad de Guatemala, 11-06-2019	12:36
Olga Reiche	Textile worker	Public policies, piracy	Antigua Guatemala, 17-06-2019	16:59
Nancy Hernández	Textile worker	Commerce, piracy	Antigua Guatemala, 24-06-2019	10:47
Alice	Textile worker	Commerce, piracy	Antigua Guatemala, 28-06-2019	6:30
Dr. Kedron Thomas	Anthropologist	Commerce, piracy, public policies	Skype	43:59
Melissa D. Sotelo	Art collector (for a museum)	Commerce, piracy, public policies, history	Skype	41:57

### Online questionnaire

Date: August 2019

Place: Online

Responses: 6

Type: Quantitative

Link: <https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/PZYGL2F>