MULTI-ETHNIC COMMUNAL AND COLLECTIVE FORMS OF TENURE IN POST-WAR GUATEMALA: LESSONS FROM THE PETÉN

LAURA HURTADO PAZ Y PAZ, Ph.D., Campaign and Advocacy Coordinator, Oxfam in Guatemala, lhurtadopaz@intermonoxfam.org (presenter)

LIZA GRANDIA, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of California-Davis, Department of Native American Studies, emgrandia@ucdavis.edu (co-author)

Paper prepared for presentation at the “ANNUAL WORLD BANK CONFERENCE ON LAND AND POVERTY”
The World Bank - Washington DC, April 8-11, 2013

Copyright 2013 by author(s). All rights reserved. Readers may make verbatim copies of this document for non-commercial purposes by any means, provided that this copyright notice appears on all such copies.
Abstract - 200 words

With highlights from a recent multidisciplinary study to assess the socio-economic and cultural impacts of a $31 million Land Administration Project in northern Guatemala, this paper explores the history of indigenous migration to the northern Guatemalan lowlands and reviews the socio-ethnographic typology of collective forms of tenure developed during the frontier colonization process including: municipal ejidos, cooperatives, forest concessions, non-timber forest product groves, sacred sites, native petenero milpas, and especially indigenous customary land management systems. While “communal” and “indigenous” lands are often conflated, many of these land tenure forms transcend traditional ethnic divides, especially in Guatemala’s post conflict context. Nevertheless, for reasons described in the paper, the formalization of private land titles through land administration projects in this region left indigenous communities particularly vulnerable to land sales, especially in regions targeted for investment for cattle ranching, agrofuel development (mainly African palm) and tree plantations. In dialogue with grassroots leaders, we suggest ideas for meaningful remedy and reparation of indigenous lands, especially sacred sites that were inadvertently privatized through land project interventions and other recommendations to support and re-establish community protections of customary management in future land administration activities.

Keywords

Land administration, Petén, Guatemala, Q’eqchi’ Maya, customary land management
Biographies - 150 words

Laura Hurtado Paz y Paz, Guatemalan sociologist, has conducted social investigations on topics related to agrarian dynamics, farmworker economies, communal lands, and indigenous peoples. She has explored contemporary problems linked to processes of capitalist modernization in agriculture, particularly land takeovers and the expansion of mono-cropping on agricultural frontier zones, the impact of land regularization programs on collective forms of land tenure, and the overlay of “new rights” on land and natural resources. After the signing of the Peace Accords (1996), Dr. Hurtado Paz y Paz served as advisor to the population uprooted by the armed conflict, and has participated in numerous forums for dialogue and negotiation of agrarian conflicts. She led the diagnostic study, formulation, and advocacy process for the Policy on Human Settlements in Protected Areas of Petén and the Verapaces, approved by CONAP in 2002 and 2004.

Dr. Hurtado Paz y Paz received a Ph.D. in Social Sciences from the Latin American School of Social Sciences (2007), Master's in Development from the Del Valle University in Guatemala (2001), and Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Paris VIII University (1975). She is the author of the book, Dinámicas Agrarias en la Globalización: El Caso de Alta Verapaz, 1970-2007 (Agrarian Dynamics in Globalization: The Case of Alta Verapaz, 1970-2007) (F&G Editores, Guatemala, 2008), and many other monographs about poverty and peace in Guatemala.

Liza Grandia, cultural anthropologist, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Native American Studies at the University of California-Davis. Her current research interests include: agrarian and biodiversity conservation issues in northern Guatemala and southern Belize; cultural perceptions of risk/hazard with pesticides & other common toxics; GMOs; controlling processes; corporate and development threats to indigenous peoples; the commons. A graduate of Yale University (BA 1996) and UC-Berkeley (Ph.D. in Anthropology 2006), she is an emeritus advisor to ProPetén, a Guatemalan environmental NGO; founder/coordinator of the Q’eqchi’ Scholars Network; and co-director of the Indigenous Research Center of the Americas.

She is the author of: Enclosed: Conservation, Cattle and Commerce among Q’eqchi’ Maya Lowlanders (2012) & Tz’aptzoq’eb’: El Despojo Recurrente al Pueblo Q’eqchi’ (2009), and co-author of Tierra e Igualdad: Desafíos para la Administración de Tierras en Petén, Guatemala (2012). For more publications, see: http://nas.ucdavis.edu/faculty/liza-grandia
Introduction

Since colonial times, unequal land distribution in Guatemala has been tied to economic inequality, especially among indigenous communities that constitute the majority of this country’s rural poor. One of the few places in Guatemala where indigenous and Ladino (mestizo) peasants had been able to migrate and claim sufficient land for dignified subsistence was the department of Petén. However, due to slow processes of land titling under state-led colonization programs in this region, the land claims of thousands of settlers remained in bureaucratic limbo. In response, many international donors began to finance cadastral and land regularization projects in this region during the 1990s and 2000s. Hoping to stabilize the agricultural frontier and prevent further northward migration into protected areas established in this region in the 1990s, the World Bank joined and intensified these efforts through a $31 loan to the Government of Guatemala for land administration activities in Petén between 1998 and 2007.

Although indigenous people constitute at least two-fifths of Petén’s population, the Land Administration Project’s (LAP I) original managers neglected the Bank’s internal operational directive 4.20 to define and implement safeguards for indigenous people through consultative processes to formulate an Indigenous Peoples Development Plan. However, in the expansion of the Land Administration Project elsewhere in Guatemala (currently underway in 41 municipalities in eight additional departments through a second $62 million loan 2008-2013), project managers claim to have increased attention to indigenous peoples in both project design and implementation. As part of these improved efforts, Bank’s Latin America and Caribbean division (LASCAR) commissioned a study in 2011 to measure the social, economic and cultural effects in Petén of the LAP I, among other donor-sponsored land administration projects. This research was supported by internal trust fund financed by Norway and Finland that “welcomed innovative and operationally relevant proposals aimed at reducing inequality and social exclusion via Bank-led activities.”

1 The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed herein are those of the author(s), and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank and its affiliated organizations, nor those of the Executive Directors of The World Bank or the governments they represent. The World Bank does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and other information shown on any map in this work do not imply any judgment on the part of The World Bank concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

2 Acknowledgements: The Trust Fund for Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (TFESSD) provided a one-time grant of $200,000 to support this research, and LASCAR contributed with complementary funds to support project management. In addition, team members representing different universities and NGOs contributed significant ad honorem time and resources to the project. Operational support from our host organization Fundación ProPetén, community contributions from grassroots community organizations in Peten, particularly ACDIP (Association of Community and Peasant
With highlights from that multidisciplinary study (Grünberg et al. 2012), our paper presents a brief history of indigenous migration to this region and a socio-ethnographic typology of collective forms of tenure encountered in Petén including: municipal “ejidos” (commons), cooperatives, forest concessions, non-timber forest product groves, sacred sites, native Petenero milpas, and settler and customary land management systems. While “communal” and “indigenous” lands are often conflated, many of these land tenure forms transcend traditional ethnic divides, especially in Guatemala’s post conflict context. Nevertheless, for reasons described in the paper, the formalization of private land titles left indigenous communities particularly vulnerable to land sales, especially in regions targeted for investment for agrofuels (mainly African palm) and tree plantations (primarily teak). In dialogue with grassroots leaders, we suggest ideas for meaningful remedy and reparation of indigenous lands, especially sacred sites that were inadvertently privatized through land project interventions, as well as recommendations to support and re-establish community protections of customary management in future land administration activities.

**History**

Historically a highland people from a mountainous part of Guatemala called Verapaz, Q’eqchi’ people have repeatedly migrated into the country’s northern lowlands to flee agrarian and other injustices in their homeland (Figures 1 & 2). Famous for having successfully resisted Pedro de Alvarado’s invasion of Guatemala, Q’eqchi’ people eventually succumbed to a “spiritual” conquest led Bartolomé de las Casas in the 1540s after having convinced Charles V to place this region under the jurisdiction of the Dominican order. Renaming it “Verapaz” (Land of True Peace), the Catholic Church forcibly congregated most of the Q’eqchi’ population into highland towns and conscripted them to build cathedrals on top of their most important sacred places (Wilson 1995). So long as Q’eqchi’ subjects paid taxes, tribute, and labor to the church, the Dominicans were not interested in carrying out and maintaining land survey records and Q’eqchi’ people continued to administer their farmlands according to customary law (Grandia 2012) -- also referred to Guatemala as “village law” or “community law” (Elias et al. 2009). Unlike other highland Maya groups that almost immediately were obliged to initiate legal claims in the property registry to retain control of their municipal ejidos and common lands against Organizations of Petén), and other data contributions from governmental agencies especially Petén-CEMEC (the Center for Conservation Monitoring associated with national park service, CONAP), NGOs, and academic colleagues were essential to our research outputs.
encroachments by Spanish haciendas, Q’eqchi’ lands remained relatively intact through the colonial period because the Crown prohibited Spaniards and creoles from settling in Verapaz.

That also meant that land laws enacted after Guatemala’s independence from Spain disproportionately impacted Q’eqchi’ people. By the end of the nineteenth century, the state declared almost all Q’eqchi’ lands as “baldíos” (a Spanish term for waste lands) and reallocated them to Europeans and North Americans, whom the Guatemalan liberals in power thought would bring greater “progress” to Guatemala through an export economy, especially coffee plantations. Independent Q’eqchi’ farmers were enslaved as serfs and sharecroppers through debt bondage, which remained legal in Guatemala through the 1940s. Fleeing from these brutal labor conditions, Q’eqchi’ families began migrating in earnest into Petén and as far as the Atlantic coast of Belize, to re-establish customary forms of land management that will be described in more detail within the paper.3 Little by little, they transformed these open-access forests of southern Petén and Belize’s Toledo district into a carefully managed commons.

Agrarian troubles followed them, however, after United States CIA deposed Guatemala’s first democratically elected president, Jacobo Arbenz in a 1954 coup. The military dictatorship that seized power in Guatemala initiated a counter-agrarian reform that again disproportionately affected Q’eqchi’ peoples who had benefited tremendously from Arbenz’s land reform policies between 1952-54. In order to diffuse demands for agrarian reform in Guatemala’s more densely populated western highland and eastern region, the state authorities, in consultation with US advisors, decided to open the northern lowlands for settlement through a colonization project led by a quasi-autonomous state agency called FYDEP (Foment and Development of Petén) (Grandia 2006, Schwartz 1990). Along new roads blazed through the forest, tens of thousands more landless farmers joined Q’eqchi’ peoples to claim parcels for extensive swidden agriculture suited to these karstic lowlands. Many others migrated into the region fleeing violence from the civil war in other parts of Guatemala. Although Petén was also a zone of conflict between the Guatemalan military and leftist insurgents, it was relatively safer than other regions of Guatemala. Petén’s population grew ten-fold: from approximately 5,000 people in 1960 to at least a half a million by the time the Peace Accords were signed in 1996.

Aside from the demarcation of municipal commons intended primarily for use by native Peteneros who had historically resided in Petén’s twelve colonial towns, and the establishment of

---

3As countless Q’eqchi’ immigrants to Petén testified, after working as coffee laborers or sharecroppers with plots smaller than a couple of acres, the seemingly never-ending tropical forests seemed like “paradise.” These sentiments are reflected in some of the Biblical names they chose for their new lowland villages like “New Eden” (La Nueva Eden) or simply “Heaven” (La Gloria). For more testimonies, see Grandia (2012).
a handful of cooperatives in western Petén as a human barrier for border conflicts with Mexico, FYDEP only offered private land titling to settlers. Although Q’eqchi’ communities would have preferred community demarcation to support customary land management, in the context of civil war in which any remotely communal political forms were suspected of ties with the guerilla, Q’eqchi’ people accepted private titling as the safest and most expeditious path to tenure security. With strategic accommodation to this imposed system, Q’eqchi’ communities sent leaders or hired bilingual brokers to help them negotiate the labyrinth of colonization bureaucracies (raising travel money through village dues or the planting of communal fields). Colonization employees—and later land administration technicians hired under the auspices of the World Bank LAP I—often spoke admiringly of Q’eqchi’ organizational prowess, commenting how much easier it was to legalize parcels in Q’eqchi’ villages than in Ladino ones.

In each historical period, Q’eqchi’ communities have had to adapt their communal forms of land and resource tenure to changing legal provisions. The recent processes of land legalization and registry projects in Petén have been no different. Like their colonial historical antecedents, these processes have ignored the ways that communities use land and communal resources, or the diverse concepts and meanings that indigenous communities and different socio-cultural groups assign to the land and resources under their domain.

Although colonization officials assumed that private land titling would be more efficient than the formalization of customary land management systems, FYDEP’s onerous 43-step legalization process was so slow that by 1990, the state had accumulated more than 40,000 unprocessed land claims (for approximately 16,000 parcels) (Kaimowitz 1995). Many claims had been repeatedly sold, while other settlers had waited more than twenty years to legalize their parcels. Boundaries overlapped and conflicts abounded. Northward migration of landless people into the Maya Biosphere Reserve was perceived as a serious—if not the primary—threat to biodiversity conservation. In response, several donors (Inter-American Development Bank, German GTZ, and USAID) began piloting land legalization projects in the buffer zone of protected areas to establish some order to this “wild west” of pioneer claims. Following the Peace Accords, the World Bank stepped into this mix with an ambitious project to establish a multi-use cadastre in Petén that would presumably support sustainable development.

Although Operation Directive 4.20 was ignored in the project design process, after the LAP I loan was approved, World Bank managers did commission an ethnohistorical study to document the diverse forms of tenure held by multietnic populations in Petén (the aforementioned cooperatives on the Mexican border, multi-ethnic communities resettled from Mexican refugee camps as part of the Peace Accords process, municipal ejidos, forestry
concessions, and the *de facto* customary land management associated with Itzá, Chortí, Mopán Maya and Petenero swidden agricultural practices) (Schwartz 1998). In practice, however, project managers and government agencies responsible for implementation (a proto-institution named UTJ/Protierra [Technical-Juridical Unit] under the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, which evolved into the National Cadaster Registry [RIC]) ignored these expert recommendations and proceeded with plans to survey and title Petén under private property. Although the Peace Accords and other international agreements 4 clearly state that indigenous communities should have had the opportunity to reconstitute customary and communal management of lands, 5 those responsible for project implementation were convinced that private titles were a culturally superior and more “secure” form of tenure that would permit property holders to access credit. 6

Having lost or been denied community safeguards prohibiting land sales to outsiders, individual parcel holders were left vulnerable to a wave of land grabbing by narcos, cattle ranchers, oil palm planters, and other speculators. In the land rush that followed, almost half of smallholder beneficiaries (46% by our calculations) have sold – or been forced to sell – their land within five years of the close of project (Grünberg et al. 2012). Land sales, in some cases, were voluntary. Some Q’eqchi’ people sold because they received parcels that were too rocky, swampy, or far away to productively farm with declining terms of trade for corn and beans. Many others sold for cash to cover a medical emergency or pay for a child’s education (Grandia 2006, 2009). Yet, over the last few years, there has been a notable shift towards coercive sales (Zander and Dürr 2011) in the broader context of continued impunity for violent crime in Guatemala.

We therefore wanted to evaluate two related questions about land sales and ethnicity, as part of a broader multidisciplinary investigation on the social, economic, ecological, and cultural impacts of land administration on Petén (whose methodology is discussed more in detail by B.


5 In our investigative process, we adopted the definitions and basic typology for communal lands presented by CONAP (2009) that identified seven or more forms of collective tenure in Petén, including: (1) extractivist communities, (2) municipal communal lands (ejidos), (3) communities established by FYPDEP and INTA through “Collective Agrarian Estates” or co-ownership, (4) cooperatives, (5) indigenous communities with communal tenure that settled during the internal armed conflict due to economic reasons or to repression and violence, (6) community forestry concessions, and (7) communities with cooperation agreements (“residence”), with these two last categories situated on protected areas. In addition, it is known that many communities in Petén collectively cultivate “communal cornfields” with the aim of granting material support or financing various communal activities.

6 See Gould (2009) for interviews with project managers.
Milian and L. Grandia in these conference proceedings): Does private land titling make indigenous communities more vulnerable to selling their lands, and if so, why? And, in this process of privatization, what happened to other communal resources, such as sacred places, natural and archaeological sites, multi-use forest reserves, the extraction of medicinal plants, non-timber resources, hunting grounds, etc. upon which both indigenous and non-indigenous rural people depend for subsistence and cultural identity?

While our study demonstrated that both indigenous and ladino farmers seem to be selling land at roughly equivalent rates (Grünberg et al. 2012), Q’eqchi’ people seem to have been more heavily targeted by narco/cattle ranchers and African palm plantations due to their historic zones of land settlement in southeast and southwest Petén that overlap with zones targeted for export plantations and illicit drug activity. In terms of other empirical findings from the study:

• Most Q’eqchi’ settlers had participated in customary land management systems in their places of origin—80%, in fact, of Q’eqchi’ villages participating in a representative survey came from places were land tenure was governed communally.

• Almost three-quarters of the Q’eqchi’ and mixed Q’eqchi’/Ladino villages from this same survey affirmed having designated a sacred area in the process of settling a new village in Petén. These include: caves, church sites, boulders, springs, built shrines, and other natural features of the landscape associated with Q’eqchi’ spiritual beliefs in Tzuultaq’a (gods of the Hill and Valley).

• Of communities affirming the existence of sacred places, half reported that their village sites had been privatized as a result of land titling projects in the 1990s and 2000s.

• In some cases the new private property owner continues to permits community use of the site, but almost half of communities (44%) testified that they have been denied access to their sacred places.

If these experiences are representative, some two hundred or more Q’eqchi’ sacred areas may have been privatized in Petén alone. Although legal mechanisms exist for the inventory and designation of sacred lands, project technicians failed to ask communities about their existence. Without any readily apparent mechanisms to protect their sacred landscapes, village elders were understandably reluctant to voluntarily reveal these locations to surveyors for fear that they would be expropriated by the state and they would be denied access by Guatemala’s archaeological institute, IDAEH. From their experience living alongside ancient Maya ruins, Q’eqchi’ communities rightly worried if their sacred sites were known to the state, “IDEAH— not peasants,

7 For the survey, we developed a contextual sampling method that covered 6% of Petén’s rural communities, described by Milian and Grandia in more detail at this conference.
or rather indigenous people—would administer them for tourism to sell to people who come from elsewhere and they couldn’t be used for mayejak\(^8\) ceremonies” or they would be charged for entering, as they are at Tikal and other archaeological parks. Although project managers have made a good faith effort to improve demarcation of sacred lands in the LAP II, state inventories still reflect a highland- and urban- bias towards public altars and formal archaeological sites, and cadastral survey procedures continue to ignore the hundreds of village-based shrines and caves where Q’eqchi’ people and other traditional Maya spiritual leaders practice “costumbre” (ritual customs).

Underlying these problems of legibility (the inability to “see” and legally recognize communal forms of land tenure) (Scott 1998) is the refusal by states and international institutions to indigenous communities as subjects of specific collective rights. Along these lines and as part of a broader, ongoing conversation about the different types of communal or collective tenure of land and natural resources that exist and thrive across Guatemala despite outside pressures, threats and the refusal of state agencies to recognize them, in the rest of this paper, we describe and explore the “eco-cultural logics” of Q’eqchi’ customary land management systems. We present a series of qualitative reflections beyond the “hard” statistics garnered from our research about the confrontation of differing western and indigenous paradigms about land tenure, as a way of underscoring the intangible losses to indigenous communities caused by erosion of their collective visions of land management.

To the limited extent that monitoring and evaluation evaluations are conducted to assess the impacts of development interventions, they tend to focus on direct outcomes for individual project participants. Yet, as suggested by the inverted cone of the Inter-American Development Bank’s exemplary “Grassroots Development Framework,” development projects have both tangible and intangible outcomes on multiple scales beyond the originally intended consequences (Figure 3). The first layer of direct economic outcomes, in turn, may build (or erode) the organizational capacity of grassroots, government, and civil society organizations—which, in turn, shape the broader policy environment. While some development organizations take into account long-term thinking about tangible project outcomes, there has been less consideration in the development field for intangible outcomes on collectivities beyond the immediate beneficiaries (Vance 2009). Yet, the ripple effects of projects upon cultural diversity and human rights may be as important, if not more to the long-term success of projects as measurable

---

\(^8\) This is a multi-day Q’eqchi’ ritual involving pilgrimages to sacred places and collective offering of food and prayers to the Tzultaq’a.
outcomes such as increase in individual or family income or, in the case of land administration, the number of hectares measured.

Through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and community questionnaire, we therefore attempted to document some of the intangible effects of land administration—with special attention to indigenous forms of organization and decision-making mechanisms; the relationship of land tenure to agricultural production systems; the presence of cultural values and practices; and the link between the communal and the sacred in the production of identity in migration processes, and the reorganization of communities in the context of frontier colonization. Broadly speaking, we found that not only have customary land management systems helped migrants maintain social cohesion and provide social safety nets, but they also may prove to be more ecologically adaptive and sustainable in the long-durée of Petén. Communal lands constitute a vital space where concepts about nature, life, social relations, and men’s and women’s relationships with their environment are practiced and reproduced. Sacred sites are an important focal point within communally organized lands that serve to anchor the material, cultural, and spiritual life of communities to the landscape. The ability to maintain these forms of land and natural resource tenure, therefore, constitutes a fundamental human right for indigenous peoples in the land titling process.

1. Indigenous usufruct versus colonizing usufruct

The first Q’eqchi’ groups and communities that arrived in Petén at the end of the nineteenth century and in later waves through the 1960s and 1970s occupied the land “freely”; their practice was to establish a new community in an area without signs of previous occupation, to farm the land and live in peace according to their culture. According to descriptions of Q’eqchi’ communities' patterns of occupation and settlement, groups of Q’eqchi’ settler families would first ascertain that the land was not inhabited, owned, or in use by other people.

They were guided by a usufruct system that entitled families to claim only the land that they could productively farm, a measure that was constrained by reciprocal and kinship farming relations. Community land tenure involves a mixture of private family plots, as well as commonly held areas—for examples, communal forests for firewood collection—without the need for fences or physical boundaries. If someone clears a piece of forest, other members of the community will respect that land as his/hers even as it lays fallow. A family typically recruits group labor for planting and sometimes harvesting, but ultimately the land and the crops belong to the nuclear or extended family. Likewise, although house building may involve collective labor, house sites are

---

9See studies by Schwartz, Grünberg, Milián, and Grandia, among others.
considered “private.” All members of the community might be called upon to help clear boundary regions to demarcate the community and to maintain paths to farming fields. Newly arriving migrants would be expected to learn all the implicit rules of village land governance and might be tested in village meetings to determine if they were willing to accept, comply with, and respect these guidelines.

Traditionally in a Q’eqchi’ customary management, the four principal elder families, in order of their hierarchy, should be the first to mark and clear their fields. Traditionally, they would announce their intention to do so at a community or church meeting, after which all the younger men would free to mark and clear their fields and schedule labor groups for planting. This system involves a mixture of sacred and civic obligation. Each family is expected to ask permission from the Tzuultaq’a through ritual offerings and prayers to claim and work a parcel (chapok pim) and then through traditional measuring practices (b’isok) make this space known to others. When the usufruct control of a particular field is unknown, a Q’eqchi’ farmer is expected to ask around the village before clearing fire lanes or planting corner posts. As a general rule, however, through social conversation, farmers know where others in the community intend to plant. Cultural traditions, such as shared labor groups for planting, reinforce egalitarian ethics. The ability to coordinate and reciprocate group labor subtly constrains the total amount of land claimed by an individual. These flexible social norms also enable farming families to expand and contract their farming lands over the demographic cycle of a household, especially in relationship to the number of male children available to help with farming activities (see Chayanov’s [1986/1924] classic writings on peasant household logic).

None of the above-mentioned exists in written form. It is governed by words that bear the weight of social commitments. The community (lāa’o li komon, “we the common people”) though assembly or observation witnesses these commitments and vouches for the legitimacy of ownership. As a spokesperson of the common will, a village leader may represent—but cannot define—the group’s consensus position vis-à-vis the outside world. In turn, the community derives its authority by virtue of being constituted by indigenous “children of the land” (lāa’o aj ralch’och’), who have asked permission to use the land for family and community life. As Q’eqchi’ people often express, “The land is our mother and father (Li Ch’och’ a’an li Qana’ li Yuwa’)” (Macz and Grünberg 1999).

In the 1970s, ethnically mixed “southerners” motivated by state-sponsored land settlement programs began to arrive with other legal theories of legitimacy and ownership that fed a land-grabbing fever for claiming, demarcating, and legalizing private properties. They aggressively felled the forest and/or converted fallow fields to pasture, in part, because state
institutions recognized these as legitimate “improvements” (mejoras) required for processing land claims. The Ladino concept of 45-hectare “agarrada” (frontier claim) began to encroach upon Q’eqchi’ cosmologies about the land.

Prior to colonization, Q’eqchi’ people perceived themselves to be in reciprocal relationship to the earth. Land was considered sacred (loqlaj), not a commodity that could be bought and sold. Fearful they might lose their land to Ladinos, some Q’eqchi’ families began to formalize their usufruct claims through applications in state land agencies, but many others refused to do so. To avoid conflicts with southerners, especially in the broader political context of civil war and pervasive military control, they opted instead to migrate northward, especially along a NW highway in La Libertad, to settle on “free” lands where they could recreate their farming and community-based usufruct systems. The legacy of these internal migrations is reflected in repeated village names in southern and northern Petén (e.g. El Naranjo I and El Naranjo II). In many cases, however, this second wave of Q’eqchi’ migrants found that the land was no longer so “free.” Land occupations and land grabs increased after the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996. Many indigenous communities mistakenly believed that the Accords condoned settlement inside protected areas. In turn, this motivated many Q’eqchi’ farmers to apply for land title to avoid repeated dispossession and to be able to legitimize their holdings and pass them along to their children.

So while both Ladino and Q’eqchi’ people applied for land in the colonization process, we should emphasize that they did so with different intentions and under different political constraints. Ladinos applied for land in ad hoc fashion, defining boundaries vis-à-vis others for economic development, whereas Q’eqchi’ communities continued to apply for land en masse, on behalf of community interests. For the latter, the abstract concept of property “ownership” was a means to maintain and cohere community identity, not a pathway to “credit-worthiness” or as land market participants, as such.

2. Use value versus exchange value of land

Through the process of land titling, however, an individualistic mentality emerged in some Q’eqchi’ communities – with a newfound feeling of power and agency in receiving legal land titles from agrarian officials. Simultaneously, a profound and substantive change occurred in the way that land and natural resources were perceived. Previously, people considered land’s

---

10 During this time, the army’s territorial control of Petén was absolute, such that people approached the military rather than civil authorities to request permission or impart information about ownership. The army had a presence in almost every village through mandatory Civil Defense Patrols (PAC) and other military service obligations.
*use value* – that is, as a material good to be used to meet practical and concrete needs – in relationship to deeper spiritual and ethical values. In traditional Q'eqchi' worldview, land was intimately linked to a deeply felt sense of the sacred; access to land, water, the forest, and forest resources is ritualized and lived as a relationship of reciprocity. Q'eqchi' people ask permission from the *Tzuultaq’a* (gods of the hill and valley) to use the land; they thank them for allowing them to settle on it and build their lives on it; they are obliged, therefore, to allow the land to rest (fallow) so that they may use it and benefit from its fruits over the long-term. As such, it is personal labor — rather than a piece of paper — that enhances and strengthens one's legitimacy as landholder.

However, in regularizing land ownership, state institutions and programs ignored these local sources of legitimacy and use values of the land. Instead, they sought to make property regimes legible to outsiders, without taking into account the settler communities' culture or their particular forms of land use and tenure. In response, for many people in indigenous communities, land took on an *exchange value*, and titled began to represent a property that could be traded, that could be measured monetarily and sold to others. The 1996 Peace Accords set out to complete the necessary and pending task of regularizing land ownership;\(^\text{11}\) to that end, several civil society organizations became actively involved in accompanying and advising farmworker and indigenous communities, helping close the cultural gap between state-led agrarian institutions and Q'eqchi' worldviews of land. Ironically, however, to move forward with private land titling, they often made use of community organizing and consensus to streamline the process.

So for a short moment in democratic opening after the Peace Accords, thousands of Q’eqchi’ farmers had the opportunity to become property-owning “yeomayan” farmers. Yet, for almost half of land administration project beneficiaries, private land ownership turned out to be fleeting. Following titling processes (and often during them), agro-industrial companies and land speculator-intermediaries approached new Q’eqchi’ land owners, offering them unprecedented amounts of money. Banks, credit companies, and cooperatives played a role as well: ignoring the realities of inadequate markets, they began distributing production credits that led a sizeable number of project beneficiaries to lose their land in foreclosure. Lacking basic information about inheritance procedures, many older Q’eqchi’ people sold land to avoid conflicts amongst their children. “Land market stimulation” envisioned by World Bank planners was borne out in practice, but to the detriment of Q'eqchi’ communities and to sound agro-ecological land use.

\(^{11}\)This State commitment was incorporated into the Agreement on Resettlement of the Population Groups Uprooted by the Armed Conflict and the Agreement on Socio-Economic Aspects and Agrarian Situation.
3. The ecologies of customary management versus quadrangular allotment

Until the advent of state-led land regularization, communities internally managed the distribution of land not only for economic reproduction, but for the reproduction of community life through the careful reservation of communally-used areas, especially sacred spaces. They did so with emphasis on equality and reciprocity, but also for ecological sustainability. They avoided farming marginal lands such as steep slopes or swampy and rocky areas and tried to equalize the burdens of commuting to farming fields on foot (which, in the extensive farming practices of lowland swiddening, can require up to four hours daily at an intense pace). These customary practices are much more complex than merely dividing the land between “communal area” and “individual plots” as perceived by State and financial institutions. Through dynamic customary systems, farmers could claim multiple small parcels in different ecological niches and avoid farming on fragile soils.

However, external land titling programs, without community consultation, placed artificial divisions between private plots and communal areas—the latter reduced to a site for the village health center and the school, and possibly a meeting house and soccer field. Farming land was divided in quadrilaterals with homogeneous measurements without regard to the actual topography of the landscapes. On paper each landholder might appear to be receiving an equitably-sized parcel, but in these karstic lowlands the quality of these plots varies considerably—whether in terms of slope, soil quality, distance from trails and water sources, or other productive attributes. As a result, many new Q’eqchi’ property holders received plots in swampy areas or other types of un-arable land. Without productive or marketing assistance from the state and/or donor agencies, many farmers rationalized that it would be better to sell or lease land to palm companies or other outsiders. However, prospects for good jobs on the plantations and rural employment are dismal (Hurtado and Sánchez 2011). As such the “equitable” distribution of Petén’s landscape into standardized parcels (whether 22.5 or 45.0 ha.) has contributed to irrevocable social and economic differentiation.

Once a few sold, others joined (or were forced to join) the land fever. Prior to land legalization, community members could freely circulate on and travel through their neighbors’ plots. Since land legalization, a large number of access points and travel routes previously known and respected by communities are now crisscrossed by private boundary lines breaking up community territory. Currently, community members and even entire communities have complained repeatedly about losing their right-of-way access to routes, even to their field plots and to water sources, due to the individualized status of rights to contiguous plots and the
purchase and sale of properties. Indeed, the quadrangular logics of land allotment have also favored a strategy of block acquisitions, in which a few cattle ranchers or agricultural companies purchase land in geographic formations that will “choke off” any farmers who might be reluctant to sell his land. By refusing them access to fields or to water, farmers become exasperated, fearful, and thereby acquiesce to unfavorable land deals. This has especially in the former San Román military reservation in Petén’s southwest municipality of Sayaxché, where at least a dozen communities have sold their land entirely and are said to have “disappeared.”

4. Sacred versus secular logics

Among the reasons for Q’eqchi’ peoples prior migratory success are their egalitarian social structure; extraordinary social intelligence based on such concepts as balance, equity, and respect for one another; and flexible spirituality (Grandia 2012). While Petén lacks high sacred mountains that were an important point of reference for Q’eqchi’ spirituality in the highlands, Q’eqchi’ migrants find new places where they believed their gods (Tzuultaq’a) reside and carry messages back to the more powerful mountains in Verapaz. In contrast to other Maya peoples who more frequently use pre-Colombian temples and constructions as sacred sites or ceremonial centers, lowland Q’eqchi’ communities usually designate features of the natural landscape as sacred places; these heterogeneous sites include: hills, caves, natural springs, reflective pools, cairns, and groves. As a consequence of centuries of religious syncretism, Q’eqchi’ people also perform ceremonies in front or inside a Catholic church. To a limited but growing degree, they are reclaiming certain archaeological sites for ceremonies influenced by the national Maya movement.

For various reasons, Q’eqchi’ leaders and elders remained silent about their sacred landscape (or were actively silenced) in secular land legalization meetings. As such, most of these sites enclosed into private individual properties. If the new owner is sympathetic to traditional Q’eqchi’ world-view and spirituality, s/he might not oppose community members’ continued use of the site. However, as sometimes happens, if the new owner does not partake of those beliefs or practices or comprehends Q’eqchi’ traditions, he/she may refuse to allow community members to enter his property.

12 Guatemala’s Civil Code allows for the establishment of “rights-of-way” to address these cases; but, in a hoarder mind-set, land buyers refuse to allow passage, as a way of forcing farmworker families to sell their land (Hurtado 2008, 2009).
13 See the example of the community La Ceiba on the route between Chisec and Sayaxché (Hurtado and Sánchez 2011).
In some cases, communities did explicitly articulate a preference for communal legalization or the designation of communal shared areas, but almost invariably, the technicians and lawyers representing agrarian institutions responded that every single area to be measured and regulated needed to be titled “in someone's name” (“Tiene que salir a nombre de alguien”) according to the reasoning that the community did not constitute a legal, heritable entity. Although the Peace Accords designated indigenous communities' right to their own forms of organizing and to the legal status of their own communities, and the Municipal Code and Decentralization laws approved by the Congress of the Republic in 2002 recognized this right,14 land administrators advised cooperatives to privatize communal holdings. If communities insisted on registering the land as communal property, their members had to conform to one of the cumbersome legal entities acknowledged in national legislation.15 In doing so, indigenous communities have had to subsume their own forms of self-government into boards of directors, administrative councils, and other such structures in order to translate their endogenous and flexible organizing structures into friable agrarian estates, cooperatives, associative farmworker businesses, and associations.

While, in theory, the second phase of the World Bank-sponsored Land Administration Project, allows for greater recognition of sacred sites, the standardized methods prescribed for their designation may continue to ignore the existence of village sacred sites. For example, the annex to Environmental Impact Analysis for the LAP II includes an inventory (apparently drawn up by the state Institute of Anthropology and History and replete with misspelled names) of some 20 Q’eqchi’ sacred sites to be demarcated by the project (see Figure 4) (RIC 2006). The list, however, is limited to just a few of the major mountains around Cobán, some archaeological sites and a handful of shrines at urban Catholic Churches. Nor do similar lists drawn up by the Commission for the Declaration of Sacred Areas, constituted after the Peace Accords under UN supervision and governed jointly by a national Maya organization and state officials adequately inventory the small sites considered sacred by Q’eqchi’ and other Maya communities for reasons described below.

Separated from the western highlands by the Cuchumatanes mountain range, Q’eqchi’ are the only major Maya group not located on or near the Pan-American highway. Consequently Q’eqchi’ people less involved in contemporary Pan-Maya organizing than contiguous western highland groups which established highly organized associations of spiritual guides. In the

---

14 Articles 18, 19, 20, and 21 of the Municipal Code or Decree 12-2002, effective as of July 1, 2002.
15 Legislation and norms to register different types of civil society organizations are found in the Civil Code and are regulated by various Governmental Accords (512-98, 515-93 y 496-2001) and the NGO Law.
Q’eqchi’ region, rituals remain more impromptu and egalitarian, led by a council of elders (typically four men and their four wives) that organize rituals at local village caves and other secluded forest sites. While other highland Maya groups organize ceremonies timed strictly to the Maya calendar with prayers said kneeling to the cardinal points with colored candles, Q’eqchi’ rituals tend to be more loosely organized around the agricultural season and are oriented towards a church altar and/or the entrance of a cave where plain white and ideally homemade candles are burnt. Given their long colonial history under Dominican rule, Q’eqchi’ ceremonies also remain deeply infused with Catholic traditions referred to in Guatemala as “costumbre,” which sometimes puts them at odds with Pan-Maya organizations that reject syncretism and Catholic enculturation, and want to cleanse Maya spiritual practice of colonial impositions.

Albeit different than other Maya groups, Q’eqchi’ sacred sites have a foundational and holy value to the community and are a source for reproducing their world-view and their internal values, principles, and standards; in sum, these sites constitute elements of their identity and social cohesion. Denial of access to these places that anchor Q’eqchi’ spirituality to the landscape, in turn, exacerbate the general erosion of community norms and cohesion underway.

5. **Tangible and intangible outcomes**

Once land has been privatized, divided up, and demarcated (its borders cleared), with outside actors purchasing increasing quantities of land, social guidelines – which for decades had allowed Q'eqchi’ and indigenous communities in Petén to live without significant intra-community problems – have rapidly eroded. Though not the sole factor driving social and cultural change, land demarcation is seen by many communities as a pivotal moment in their history. In turn, there are fewer threads of community and solidarity labor amongst farmworker families, such as “labor exchanges” (in which men gather on pre-determined dates to help a neighbor with his planting and then be helped in the same manner) or the practice of planting “community cornfields” (in which a plot is collectively cultivated with the aim of providing material support or financing different communal activities). Although the latter still exists in some Q’eqchi’ and even Ladino communities (especially for the benefit of churches), the land must be volunteered or sacrificed by an individual rather than from the community. While previously, a landless neighbor might reasonable ask to “borrow,” a piece of land to plant corn, the practice of paying ground rent is forcing many out of farming.

In other aspects of community life, we can observe a weakening of manifestations of a moral economy beyond the logic of the market. Diminished ethics regarding the shared use of water and forests—previously considered to be highly respected communal resources—are
leading to more intra- and inter-community conflicts about natural resources, especially in palm growing regions (Alonso Fradejas et al. 2011, Hurtado 2009, Hurtado and Sánchez 2011). In turn land privatization has caused land values to skyrocket (see Milian and Grandia’s paper in these same conference proceedings) making people more vulnerable to dispossession or land loss through other mechanisms—and contradicting the very goal of land tenure security declared by both State agrarian institutions and international financial institutions. To underscore this point, we repeat the major finding of our study: at least 46% of project beneficiaries have sold—or been forced to sell—their parcels within five years close-of-project (Grünberg et al. 2012).

Last, but not least, land regularization processes have entailed a blurring of community outlines. Titled land plots are now listed in the General Property Registry according to a number filed by estate, page, and volume, and the National Registry also assigns each piece of land an identification code. From that point on, these two numbers are the reference points in identifying a given piece of land. The registries only denote the outlines and borders of private estates and house plots. Nowhere in this paperwork chain do state land registries record that a property is considered part of a particular community.

Yet, despite the onslaught of privatizing and individualizing logics, the existence of the community (*li kaleb’aal*) continues to remain a economic, social, and political entity and a reference point for belonging for Q’eqchi’ people (Hurtado 2001, 14). Indeed, it is significant that in the course of conducting our study, a demand made by the communities to investigators was that they be granted (“returned”) an orthophoto of the “corrected” community land map that accurately records the contours of lands (and properties) that are considered “part of the community” — that is, the layout of the *original* property which was later broken into private property plots. Beyond the simple and inexpensive courtesy of returning cadastral maps to communities at the close of multi-million dollar process of land titling, what else can be done to repair the fabric of community life and communal rights?

**Recommendations**

First, we concur with a demand conveyed to us by key community and peasant leaders when this research was presented to the Petén public that a moratorium should be placed all current and future land administration projects to allow for time, reflection, and true informed consent about the long term consequences of land titling. In fact, transcripts of the half-day meetings held with each Maya group as part of the Indigenous Peoples Development Plan for the LAP II, reveal that Q’eqchi’ representatives actually refused to comment on the project —arguing
that a real consultation ought to allow them time and space to seek counsel from their communities before providing feedback.

We should note that such a constitutional recognition of indigenous communities should be guaranteed by the political Constitution of the Republic itself,\textsuperscript{16} the Peace Accords,\textsuperscript{17} ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Yet as noted by the United Nations,“…laws have not yet been adopted [in Guatemala] to recognize indigenous communities' traditional forms of land tenure, ownership, and collective property. This situation generates serious obstacles for communities to be able to legally defend their rights on their land, particularly when faced with irregular or illegal property registration, registry overlaps, lack of knowledge of borders, and the lack of a trustworthy land survey.”\textsuperscript{18}

Next, funds and political steps should be taken to help indigenous communities in Petén reconstitute their lands under customary governance (as is the wish of a growing village movement in southeast Petén accompanied by the Catholic pastorate of that region) or to create by-laws regulating the sale of village lands, which as which, as historian Michael Bertrand (1989) argued, has been the central advantage of customary land management since the colonial period. While individual parcel owners may be easily pressured into coercive land sales, it is more difficult to obligate an entire village to sell. In other cases, communities (indigenous and non-indigenous alike) that wish to conserve part of their communities in communal lands for environmental or social aims (for example, as firewood conservation zones or to protect and conserve water sources or watershed) should be able to do so retroactively. Finally, through the Secretariat for Agrarian Issues (SAA), the World Bank should finance a special legal unit that will help communities negotiate and re-acquire access to their sacred sites that were privatized by land administration projects.

In turn, a holistic inventory of these and other types of communal lands,\textsuperscript{19} albeit reduced and fragmented, should be developed as reference for future projects at the grassroots to re-

\textsuperscript{16} Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala, Articles 66 through 70.
\textsuperscript{17} Agreement on Socio-Economic Aspects and Agrarian Situation, section 37; and Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples, section F.
\textsuperscript{19} To date, no effort has been made to map “communal lands” in Petén. In 2010, the NGO CEIDEPAZ accompanied the community Santa Cruz de Poptún in its process to be recognized municipally as an “indigenous community,” and once its own legal entity was established, it proceeded to have its land recognized and titled as “communal land.” In other cases, while the lands in question may be legally registered under a different legal status, they are in fact “communal lands”; their “communal” character derives from their common tenure and the way they administer the lands. Even if they are officially
establish social safety nets lost in the privatization process. This should include attention to and monitoring of the livelihood trajectories of the newly landless, many of whom are living in precarious situations in peri-urban settlements, squatting on private lands, or occupying national parks. Finally, efforts should be made to align reforestation incentives, credit programs, and other environmentally-oriented projects towards the interests of small holders.

This moratorium would allow project managers and state agencies the time needed to determine more efficient ways within Guatemala’s legal system to recognize diverse forms of communal land tenure and property rights such as those that exist in municipal lands (ejidos), cooperatives, indigenous communities, and other examples of customary land management, such as those found in Petén, which include a mix of common and private lands. Before initiating the process of regularizing or measuring lands, a participatory community process is necessary in order to determine if community spaces do exist or if there is a desire to reconstruct such spaces; also needed is a community strengthening process to recognize valid internal regulations or to establish internal regulations that can contribute to preventing the massive purchase and sale of lands that has been observed in Petén and that has made dispossessed communities and families more vulnerable and their situation more precarious.

A moratorium would also allow for the development of more sensitive methodological processes for eliciting information about the existence and governance of sacred lands\(^{20}\) than the current set of bylaws developed by the Cadastral Information Registry (RIC) in May 2009.\(^{21}\) This must entail respect and recognition for the heterogeneous nature of Maya spirituality and recognizing that many sacred places are governed by elders and other “traditionalists” and not necessarily by “spiritual guides” who belong to centralized associations in the capital. Given more than two thirds of the indigenous population affected by the LAP II is Q’eqchi’, the project must take into account the specificities of their Q’eqchi’ spiritual practices and places. The aforementioned will naturally require ongoing consultation with indigenous groups and leaders, and not only one-way “social communication” projects that are a current popular focus of international donor funds.

\(^{20}\) In some Q’eqchi’ communities of Alta Verapaz, the position of “land leader” continues to exist, as an indigenous authority in charge of safeguarding property titles, handling land issues with State institutions, and tending to inter-community land conflicts or those among neighbors and abutters. In other communities, the Elders’ Council (involving the "Yuwa' Ch'och'" or land-father) fulfills these roles. In some places, community committees or community representatives take on these tasks. All of these authorities act in deference to the Community Assembly as the highest community authority that confers legitimacy on leaders and decisions.

Indeed, there is much to be learned from a Q’eqchi’-led organization, APROBASANK (an acronym that translated roughly into “Harmony in our Community”) in the Chisec municipality of Alta Verapaz, to the south of Petén and similar to Petén in terms of its karstic soils and the transition-type ecosystems located there. Taking into account this ecological variability, APROBASANK developed a system for demarcating external community boundaries with cost-efficient methodologies that involved the training of village leaders in GPS technology. Next, they assisted communities in a highly participatory process of developing internal governance systems of agricultural and forest management with interlinked biodiversity conservation corridors along the Chinaja mountain range and the protection of sacred caves and other communal use areas. They created diverse and multiform maps that reflect egalitarian Q’eqchi’ land management practices in which all community members (including future generations) can access plots for growing basic grains (corn and beans), as well as market crops (cardamom). Their innovative methodologies could represent a less laborious alternative for the state, since the communities have become responsible for resolving minor conflicts and updating their own internal registries and inheritance practices.

The APROBASANK experience showed that although communal management may not have been the first choice of some Q’eqchi’ communities, in the right context, “the ability to base community management of resources on a common moral framework reappeared as an important part of the cultural repertoire” (Stocks 2002: 17). Beyond establishing a new legal precedent for indigenous co-management of cultural patrimony, the project’s other key achievement was to move beyond simplistic and polarizing debates about communal versus private land. By harnessing the advantages of both systems, APROBASANK and the communities constructed management plans suited to the ecology of each place. Moreover, they explicitly built in a pricing structure that encouraged conservation and discouraged land sales. As of 2011, no land rights had been sold in any of the 22 communities of Chisec that collective titled their land in 2002 with FONTIERRAS and established customary land governance systems in alliance with APROBASANK. It is a prime, flexible, and replicable example of how to harness the land legalization process for concurrent economic, environmental and cultural goals — as well as many other intangible benefits beyond the crude indicators of land market dynamics that have thus far dominated land administration projects.

22 Interview with director of local NGO “APROBASANK,” June 2011.
Figure 1 – Political and topographic map of Guatemala

Source: Open source map
Figure 2—Q’eqchi’ and other indigenous territories of Guatemala

Source: Grandia 2012
Figure 3 – The inverted cone of the Grassroots Development Framework

Source: Inter-American Foundation website, www.iaf.gov
Figure 4: Sacred areas to be designated by the LAP II

Cuadro: Lugares sagrados mayas en el área de acción del Proyecto por Comunidad Linguística.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lugar sagrado</th>
<th>Ubicación</th>
<th>Comunidad lingüística</th>
<th>Observaciones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q’eqchi’</td>
<td>Xucanab</td>
<td>Chameco, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td>Cerros sagrados (tí马拉_q) más mencionados por los q’eqchi’. y los cerros más altos de la región. Cerro Q’anq’in-Reserva de Biosfera de las Minas. Cerca del cerro yq’eqchi’, hay una Reserva Privada propiedad de la Universidad del Valle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raxón ’Te’umum</td>
<td>Punzos, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siyab</td>
<td>Senahu, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q’usa’ itsam</td>
<td>Cahabon, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td>Q’usa’ (señora) únicos cerros con tratamiento de respeto en femenino. A los demás se les antepone Q’awá’ que significa señor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q’usa’ masía’ oneek</td>
<td>Cahabon, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q’usa’ tomasa</td>
<td>El Estor, izabal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q’usa’ abas</td>
<td>Telemán, Panzos, A.V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q’usa’ suuj k im</td>
<td>San Pedro Carchá, A.V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pekmo</td>
<td>San Pedro Carchá, A.V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rub elpek</td>
<td>Senahu, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grutas de Lanquin</td>
<td>Lanquin, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parque Nacional. lugar sagrado en el interior de las grutas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi</td>
<td>Lanquin, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cruz en la cima, domina el pueblo de Cahabon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se uq</td>
<td>Cahabon, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sitio con recinto cerrado para la celebración de ceremonias mayas. Pirámide en construcción.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chajjak’ub’</td>
<td>Cobán, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavallero Coban</td>
<td>Cobán Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvario Carchá</td>
<td>San Pedro Carchá, A.V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvario chameco</td>
<td>Chameco, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvario chamil</td>
<td>Chameco, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poqomoch’</td>
<td>Chicoy</td>
<td>Purulhá, Baja Verapaz</td>
<td>Monumental cueva visitada por mayas de occidente y las verapaces. Está en propiedad privada y su acceso es pagado. Cuenta con vigilancia, limpieza e infraestructura mínima.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi itim</td>
<td>Tactic, Alta Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uno de los lugares sagrados más importantes para poqomoch’ y q’eqchi’. Cristianizado por la construcción de un calvario el famoso Cristo de chi itim. Subsisten varios sitios ceremoniales más del templo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poqomoch’</td>
<td>Kakoj</td>
<td>San Cristóbal Verapaz, A.V.</td>
<td>Esta obra de cuatro sitios rodea el pueblo de San Cristóbal, siendo todos muy visitados, con excepción de cúmulo, donde el actual dueño evangélico ha prohibido el acceso ceremonial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panekalera</td>
<td>San Cristóbal Verapaz, A.V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cómul</td>
<td>San Cristóbal Verapaz, A.V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinich ajau</td>
<td>San Cristóbal Verapaz, A.V.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reserva de Biodiversidad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Martín-waxabaj</td>
<td>Purulhá, Baja Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achi’</td>
<td>Kajrup</td>
<td>Rabinal Baja Verapaz</td>
<td>- antigua ciudad maya. Sitios visitados por los poqomoch”, pues allí habitaron antes de la llegada de los hablantes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuitumun</td>
<td>Rabinal Baja Verapaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garifuna</td>
<td>Playa Quehueche</td>
<td>Livingston, izabal</td>
<td>Reserva del uso múltiple Río Sarutún en quehueche hay casa ceremonial para cloro o dugo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playa Cocoli</td>
<td>Livingston, izabal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xine’</td>
<td>Fuentes de agua</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RIC 2006
Works Cited


Elias, S. n.d. *La lucha por el territorio y la autonomía indígena en guatemala*.


Grandia, L. 2006. *Unsettling: Land dispossession and enduring inequity for the Q'eqchi' Maya in the Guatemalan and Belizean frontier colonization process*. Ph.D., Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.


Schwartz, N.B. 1998. Socio-ethnographic evaluation of land tenure and land legalization problems in protected areas (core, multiple use and buffer zones; archaeological parks), municipal commons (ejidos), and areas outside protected areas, 136 pp.


