
RESEARCH REPORTS AND NOTES

CENTRAL AMERICA IN THE 1980s: Political Crisis and the Social Responsibility of Anthropologists*

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For most of the past decade, Central America has been wracked by revolution, counterrevolution, military repression, and massive dislocation that have affected the lives of millions of people. Yet despite these dramatic events, little anthropological research has been directed toward Central America in the 1980s. Analysis of the contents of seven major cultural anthropology journals from 1980 to 1986 shows no increased attention to the area over a previous period, 1970 to 1976. Research published in the 1980s has been emphatically non-policy-based, even when fieldwork was conducted in the midst of crisis. This research report will analyze the underrepresentation of Central America in anthropology journals and possible reasons for it. I will suggest that the reticence of anthropology as a discipline to legitimate policy-based research in Central America stems from a tendency that has characterized the field since its beginnings: studying communities as isolated, timeless cultures that are

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unaffected by regional, national, and international events taking place outside their borders. This bias causes practitioners who wish to advance their careers to turn their backs on what may be considered controversial policy analysis and write instead about subjects endorsed by the discipline.

Background

Recent events in Central America have created an unprecedented demand for information on the region, and scores of writers have eagerly responded to this heightened interest. Social scientists, political economists, policy analysts, and historians have together produced a plethora of books and articles on such topics as the history and philosophy of the Sandinista Revolution, the massacre and dislocation occurring in Guatemala, U.S. strategic and economic hegemony in the region, and dozens more.¹ The present era presents a significant and challenging time for scholars studying Central America, especially in view of the fact that only a decade ago, it was nearly impossible to find critical analyses of the region. The countries of the isthmus are obviously undergoing dramatic changes that require careful ethnographic analysis and debate. Yet little can be found. Although anthropologists have contributed to the corpus of materials on the crisis in Central America, these contributions seem small when compared to the more significant work accomplished by other academics.² More to the point, anthropologists who are concerned about contemporary Central American affairs are publishing their findings outside the discipline in political journals, human rights reports, and books as well as in alternative nonrefereed periodicals like *Cultural Survival*.³ Few such articles have reached other practitioners via the normal channel of scholarly communication, the anthropological journals. This trend is unfortunate because much of this kind of work is excellent in its timely application of ethnographic methods and analysis of sociopolitical issues.

If anthropologists restricted their readings to the mainstream anthropology journals, they would have no idea of the massive military repression of indigenous communities occurring in Guatemala. Nor would they be familiar with the decade-long pattern of human rights abuses found in El Salvador. Journal readers would not know that areas of the Honduran border have been occupied by thousands of Nicaraguan Contras whose presence had compromised the safety and economy of border towns and villages. Readers would have no sense of the uncertain status of the refugee camps in Mexico, Costa Rica, and Honduras that shelter many victims of this violence. Nor would journal readers be aware of the hundreds of thousands of Central American refugees seeking asylum in the United States. While it is not the responsibility of anthropological journals to keep their readers abreast of sociopolitical events on a monthly basis, it is dismaying to realize that the discipline is paying little attention to the fate of

people whose history and culture have long provided the basis for so much theory and ethnography, not to mention serving as launching pads for several hundred university careers.

Analysis of Journal Coverage of Central America

The importance of prestigious journals to any social science is that they construct and maintain research frontiers, reinforcing the boundaries of those frontiers by meting out professional rewards in the form of publication.⁴ They are thus guardians of tradition and sources of scarce prestige that are eagerly courted by tenure-hungry academics. Journals are consequently powerful in that they provide an important measure of what topics the discipline considers worthwhile in the same way that the news media determine what is newsworthy.⁵ Thus to ascertain the place of Central American research in the field of anthropology in the 1980s, I chose to measure its presence in the major cultural anthropology journals: *American Anthropologist*, *American Ethnologist*, *Current Anthropology*, *Human Organization*, *Journal of Anthropological Research*, *Ethnology*, and *Man*.⁶ I tabulated the number of cultural articles on the region, the subject matter of each article, and its relative status within the journal (major article, book review, or research report). In each case, I noted whether the author took a policy-based approach to the topic that acknowledged crisis and change in the region or handled the subject instead in a conventional anthropological manner. Two computer searches proved sadly incomplete, forcing page-by-page checking that was time-consuming but certainly more thorough. For purposes of comparison, I examined articles published between 1970 and 1976 and between 1980 and 1986, two time periods that chronicle the trend in the region from relative stability to instability and crisis. To measure interest and emphasis in the discipline and to document any geographic bias, I also tabulated the number of major articles written on all other parts of the world in the 1980s.

The findings can be summarized briefly. Coverage of Central American cultures and societies in the seven major anthropological journals in the 1980s does not reflect the existence of severe sociopolitical crisis in the region. The literature showed no increase in attention to Central America from the 1970s to the 1980s, nor did the papers published on Central America reflect cognizance of or concern for the dramatic transformation of the region. Overall, this geographic area has maintained its relatively minor status in the journal literature. Analyzing the major articles accepted for publication revealed that they are decidedly non-political and generally reflect the traditional focus on small-scale, stable cultures to the neglect of national or global issues.⁷

During the two periods in question, the journals showed a remarkable similarity in their inattention to Central American countries. Be-

TABLE 1 Cultural Articles Published on Central America in Seven Cultural Anthropology Journals, 1970–1976 and 1980–1986

Journal	1970–1976			1980–1986		
	Central America	Total Articles	%	Central America	Total Articles	%
<i>American Anthropologist</i>	11	2,731	0.4	17	1,810	0.9
<i>Current Anthropology</i>	2	464	0.4	2	681	0.3
<i>American Ethnologist</i>	4	121	3.3	19	1,045	1.8
<i>Journal of Anthropological Research</i>	2	150	1.3	5	255	2.0
<i>Ethnology</i>	3	196	1.5	1	167	0.6
<i>Man</i>	4	1,836	0.2	4	234	1.7
<i>Human Organization</i>	6	342	1.8	12	374	3.2
Total	32	5,840	0.5	60	4,566	1.3

tween 1970 and 1976, the percentage of all literature devoted to any of the five countries ranged from 3 percent for *American Ethnologist* down to 1.5 percent for *Ethnology* and to less than 1 percent for *American Anthropologist*, *Current Anthropology*, and *Man* (see table 1).

Statistics from the 1980s add up to twice the number of articles published on the region, but the percentage of the total literature remains extremely small (1.3 percent). *Human Organization* led with 3 percent. The other journals varied from less than 2 percent for *Journal of Anthropological Research*, *American Ethnologist*, and *Man* to less than 1 percent for *American Anthropologist*, *Current Anthropology*, and *Ethnology*. The net yield of these figures is approximately 1 percent of total journal literature for each period, a percentage largely unchanged from one decade to the next. Thus while one or two journals may have published a bit more or less on Central America, overall lack of interest in the area has remained constant.

At first the raw numbers in table 1 appear to reflect greater interest in Central America in the 1980s, but it should be noted that articles in that decade were dramatically skewed toward smaller contributions: research reports, letters, and reviews comprised 70 percent of the Central American literature compared with 45 percent in the 1970s publications. A more accurate picture of the two periods results from counting major articles, the featured essays that influence the direction of theoretical and empirical analysis (not to mention tenure decisions). During the 1980s, of the

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ANTHROPOLOGISTS

TABLE 2 Major Cultural Articles Published on Central America in Seven Cultural Anthropology Journals, 1970–1976 and 1980–1986

Journal	1970–1976			1980–1986		
	Central America	Total Major Articles	%	Central America	Total Major Articles	%
<i>American Anthropologist</i>	1	264	0.4	0	183	0.0
<i>Current Anthropology</i>	2	208	1.0	2	215	0.9
<i>American Ethnologist</i>	4	120	3.3	4	282	1.4
<i>Journal of Anthropological Research</i>	2	140	1.4	5	173	2.9
<i>Ethnology</i>	3	196	1.5	1	167	0.6
<i>Man</i>	2	230	0.9	1	229	0.4
<i>Human Organization</i>	5	230	2.2	4	148	2.7
Total	19	1,388	1.4	17	1,397	1.2

sixty articles published on Central America, only seventeen (28 percent)⁸ were major articles. One journal, the *Journal of Anthropological Research*, published five major papers, while *Human Organization* and *American Ethnologist* each published four. *Current Anthropology* had two major articles, and *Man* and *Ethnology* each published one. The *American Anthropologist* published no major articles on Central America (see table 2). In the 1970s, fewer journals published fewer articles overall (thirty-two) but more major articles (nineteen), which accounted for a much larger portion (59 percent) of the region's coverage in the journals.⁹ Nevertheless, in both decades, Central America represented only 1 percent of the major articles published in the seven anthropology journals.

If these articles are examined in terms of content analysis, those published from 1980 to 1986 reveal a skewing toward ethnohistory¹⁰ and a growing interest in sociolinguistics.¹¹ One paper offers an interpretive symbolic analysis of market culture, another deals with matrilocality among Black Caribs.¹² Several papers express a clear concern with social issues such as ethnic relations, fertility control, literacy, labor force discrimination, or urban poverty,¹³ but only two directly address the atmosphere of crisis and change characterizing the period: Richard Adams's "The Dynamics of Societal Diversity: Notes from Nicaragua for a Sociology of Survival" in *American Ethnologist*, and John Donahue's "The

Profession and the People: Primary Health Care in Nicaragua," published in *Human Organization*. Most researchers reported their findings in a "business as usual" manner, carrying on in the best tradition of colonial researchers studying kinship terminology. For example, the article by Sarah Green, Thomas Rich, and Edgar Nesman in *Human Organization* reports on Indian literacy in Quiché without noting that their research had taken place in an area where between 1978 and 1984 sweeps of villages had left thousands dead and dozens of communities burned to the ground.¹⁴ The same may be said for Barbara Tedlock's article on Quiché ritual language and Tedlock and Tedlock's piece on text and textile among the Quiché. Although one of Barbara Tedlock's research sites (Momostenango) was relatively peaceful at the time she was working there, she makes no mention of the physical destruction, extrajudicial executions, massacres, and disappearances taking place not far away at her other sites (Chichicastenango and Chinique).¹⁵ John Watanabe's study of a cognitive model of Mayan cosmology among Mam-speakers in Santiago Chimaltenango was researched during an intense period of military brutality in and around the community where he was working. This context was omitted entirely from his article.

The two articles by Mary Helms, one by Philip Dennis and Michael Olien, and another by Olien on the Miskito Indians of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua illustrate the same point. Recent events have changed these Indians forever from their status as "marginally interesting" people.¹⁶ Since 1979 they have been embroiled in a bitter conflict with the central government over issues of indigenous rights and autonomy, a situation exacerbated by the forced relocation of thousands of Miskito, Sumu, and Rama to camps further away from disputed borders. Only one article mentions this situation, and only in passing. These articles emphasize Miskito ethnohistory and kingship, subjects that are worthy but strangely anomalous in relation to a war directly affecting the subjects of the study.

In contrast, Adams's paper on the same population emerges from his interest in a new category of social organization that may be characteristic of a revolutionary situation. He applies his rigorous theoretical and evolutionary model to a rapidly changing culture. Adams utilizes the dramatic events that have characterized Nicaragua since 1979 to test his theory of survival vehicles with specific application to the embattled Atlantic Coast. Donahue also focuses on changes in the new Nicaragua, this time in terms of the delivery of medical services. He points out that local groups now have greater control over medical facilities because of the government's emphasis on decentralization and regionalization. Donahue fears, however, that the substantial achievements in popular health programs will be reversed if the Contra war continues. Except for these two articles, major papers published in the 1980s reflect minimal scholarship on the violence and turmoil characterizing Central America.¹⁷

It should come as no surprise that the articles on Central America from the 1970s are also non-policy-based.¹⁸ The early part of the decade was a time of relative calm, and anthropologists, influenced by ideas about modernization, elected to study issues of persistence and change. Four papers dealt with modernization's impact on ethnic identity,¹⁹ three measured population trends,²⁰ one studied pricing and market behavior,²¹ and Carol Smith and Paul McDowell debated Marxism and highland market economics. Other papers dealt with indigenous medicine,²² urbanization,²³ and a literacy development program.²⁴ One author contrasted U.S. anthropologists with their Guatemalan colleagues in terms of "big" and "little" traditions,²⁵ and another discussed agricultural labor efficiency.²⁶ Overall, the major articles from the 1970s represented classical anthropological themes as well as a newer interest in development. Several of these topics were reprised in the 1980s, sometimes by the same authors. During both periods, Richard Adams alone showed interest in relations of power outside the local context.²⁷

Some differences were found over sixteen years, however. In the 1970s, traditional holistic studies of small village culture dominated the literature on Central America. As mentioned, by the 1980s, 40 percent of the major articles were sociolinguistic or ethnohistorical studies. Another major change noted was the decreasing dominance of Guatemala as a research site. During the 1970s, 95 percent of all the articles published on Central America were on Guatemalan subjects. Only one of the nineteen major papers dealt with another part of the isthmus (Costa Rica). By 1986 the percentage of Central America articles on Guatemala had dropped to 58 percent. Of the seventeen major articles, Guatemala now comprised ten, Nicaragua six, and Costa Rica one. Neither Honduras nor El Salvador was the topic of major articles in either decade. In fact, El Salvador did not appear as a subject anywhere in the journals from 1970 to 1986.

Discussion

One reason for the relatively small amount of research on Central America, as contrasted with Mesoamerica as a whole, is that very few anthropologists actually work in the region. The prodigious ethnographic output of Mesoamericanists²⁸ rests overwhelmingly on Mexican rather than Guatemalan research. For example, a bibliography of a major review article on Mesoamerica cites 127 books and articles on Mexico but only 14 on Guatemala.²⁹ In 1987 the Latin American Studies Association listed 226 anthropologists as members (9.4 percent), but of those, only 21 specialize in Central America. This low figure partly reflects diminishing interest in Central America as a research site. In a recent survey of new Ph.D.s, the American Anthropological Association concluded that while dissertation research in all other geographic areas has remained relatively

stable since 1971, research on Central America has actually declined year by year from 11 percent of all research in 1971 to only 6 percent in 1986.³⁰ The AAA's figures include all four subdisciplines but nevertheless reveal a movement away from work in any of the five countries.

What is the situation in other geographic areas? If anthropological journals are indeed publishing little on Central America, what parts of the world are they covering? Each journal clearly has its own geographic preference. For example, by tabulating the geographic areas of major ethnographic articles,³¹ I found that 43 percent of these articles in *Human Organization* dealt with the United States. In *Current Anthropology*, a journal with a cross-cultural comparative emphasis, the most represented geographic area, the Andes, accounted for 16 percent of ethnographic articles. Despite variations among journals, areas with large indigenous populations are well-represented in the literature. Articles on Africa were among the top five topics in all the journals, and Native Americans were high on many lists. Remarkably, while Central America accounted for only 1 percent of the total journal literature in the 1980s and 1 percent of the major ethnographic articles, Oceania practically dominated the literature. Articles on Oceania accounted for 17 percent of the major ethnographic articles, a reasonable enough figure. But topics dealing with Oceania comprised 22 percent of the major ethnographic articles published in *Ethnology*, 25 percent in *Man*, and 40 percent in the *American Anthropologist*. During the same period, *Man* and *Ethnology* published only one major article on Central America while the *American Anthropologist* published none at all.

These results show that interest in Central America has waned precisely at a time when scientific research is needed. Moreover, the material on Central America that has been published in the journals does not begin to reflect the critical conditions in the region, where revolutionary movements and responses to them are dramatically impacting life as previously chronicled by anthropologists. It appears that ethnographers, rather than confront and analyze the metamorphosis of Central America, are opting to undertake solid studies elsewhere in safer parts of the world. When research does take place in Central America, policy-based subjects that may offer great scientific promise are neglected. For example, small, isolated literacy programs in Guatemala were reported in articles in the 1970s and 1980s. Yet the national-level literacy campaign that taught thousands of Nicaraguans to read between 1980 and 1983 has not been addressed by anthropologists in the journals.³²

It should be noted nevertheless that authors who write noncontroversial articles about politically controversial places usually have legitimate reasons for doing so. For one thing, they may have been unable to reach their research sites and were thus forced to write up old data (a third of the major articles on Central America were based on research done five

to eleven years earlier). Other justifications may exist as well. For example, some researchers have no interest in the machinations of the military-political power struggle and wish to simply do their research and go home to write up their field notes. Some anthropologists reject the idea that they are morally obliged to address themselves to politically sensitive issues outside their research interests.³³

Even those who might wish to write about national political conflicts may be hampered by several factors. First, politically volatile situations make traditional fieldwork extremely difficult if not impossible. For example, since 1980 in Guatemala, the long-term presence of a foreigner in a community not only would have endangered the field-worker but would have compromised the safety of informants and other community members. It has been suggested to me that one reason why fewer articles were published on Guatemala in the 1980s than in the previous decade may indeed be the hostile political climate. Second, funding agencies are disinclined to support what is known in-house as "suicidal" ethnographic research in political "hot spots," where researchers may be endangered or expelled and projects abandoned.³⁴ Last, permission to enter countries in the midst of volatile political situations may be denied to researchers, seemingly to insure their safety. Such restrictions can also be used to minimize the amount of information leaving the country or to control the impact of "outside agitators."

These and other variables must be taken into consideration when deciding on research strategies, but no one of them offers a viable explanation for the dramatic "understudy" of Central America. It is true that until 1987, Guatemalan fieldwork was discouraged by the Guatemala Scholars Network to protect informants out of fear that prolonged contact with strangers might be used as grounds for accusations of "subversion."³⁵ The network also agreed that conducting anthropological "business as usual" in Guatemala would be an unseemly legitimization of military rule. Researchers nevertheless went into the field for prolonged visits, as documented by the articles by the Tedlocks and Watanabe. Moreover, Guatemalanists researching the consequences of counterinsurgency campaigns and massacres made trips to field sites and impacted areas during periods of relative calm in the early 1980s, when much of their work became the basis for human rights reports.³⁶ During this period, other valuable work was conducted on topics that did not require extensive in-country fieldwork, such as that on Guatemalan refugee camps in Mexico.³⁷ In short, although new investigations by inexperienced scholars may have been scuttled, the evidence suggests that research continued. Moreover, when fieldwork becomes untenable in a particular area, alternative field sites exist all over Central America, as in Nicaragua, where the Sandinista government strongly encourages social science research.³⁸

Second, although in the past a successful search for financial support has legitimated research endeavors and made possible lengthy foreign stays for many anthropologists, ethnographic research need not grind to a halt when funding is elusive. According to the American Anthropological Association's survey of 1986 Ph.D.s, the typical new job seeker manages to fund his or her own dissertation research.³⁹

A plausible alternative explanation for why researchers have stayed away from the Central American controversy can be drawn from Patricia Higgins's discussion of the pitifully small role played by anthropologists in the U.S. national debate during the Iran hostage crisis from 1978 to 1981. Higgins suggests that policy-based research usually results in neutral or negative rewards from colleagues and academic departments and can potentially undermine the researcher's career. Accordingly, the limited contribution by anthropologists to the Iran dialogue reflected the fear that policy-based work would be interpreted as compromising their scientific objectivity and thus prejudice their professional futures: "They observed that hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions continue to rest much more heavily on contributions to relatively obscure academic journals."⁴⁰

Like the Iran specialists studied by Higgins, scholars who study Central America recognize that refereed journals rarely publish politically sensitive analysis. To maintain their professional positions, these scholars must therefore prioritize their scholarship and make an important choice. Thus the decisions that many anthropologists make to study symbolic, religious, kin-based aspects of peasants' lives in the midst of chaos, poverty, war, and revolution are political decisions, however unwittingly made. Ample precedents can be cited. Take the case of the members of the Harvard Chiapas Project, who worked for decades in Zinacantan and environs but scarcely hinted at the fact that the Indians whose symbolic worldview they had carefully chronicled were a despised and desperate minority group.⁴¹ These researchers clung to static structural-functionalist models that failed to recognize important contemporary and historical linkages among community, ethnicity, and the oppressiveness of the larger mestizo-dominated economy. Instead, their work featured micro-level investigations of religion, worldview, folklore, and language.⁴² However legitimate and valuable these studies may be to the canon, such specialized idealist research skirts the larger reality of the cultures they portray.

Emphasis on the timelessness of isolated, pristine cultures has long been a feature of anthropology, often to the dismay of those who wished the discipline would apply itself to more urgent problems.⁴³ Even today, when faced with worldwide sociocultural transformations, anthropology remains handicapped by the persistence of analyses that are too general, esoteric, and arcane to be relevant to wider global issues.⁴⁴ We anthropologists disengage ourselves from politically relevant investiga-

tions appropriate to our geographic areas, opting instead for exotic and narrow topics that fill meeting agendas and demand attention as major articles in anthropological journals.

What does this emphasis and the disciplinary orthodoxy that sustains it imply for Central American research in the 1990s? Basically, it means that little room exists in the journals for policy-based research because the nature and history of anthropology as a discipline militate against it.⁴⁵ Such studies are treated as peripheral to the science and not entirely appropriate to the literature.⁴⁶ Moreover, the journals' conservative reputations can intimidate potential submitters to the extent that few if any policy-laden articles are even proposed.⁴⁷ Both situations obligate authors who work on sensitive policy issues to choose alternative venues, to publish in books and journals outside the discipline that may be considered irrelevant to promotion or tenure decisions. Consequently, anthropologists learn that careers cannot be built on controversial or politically sensitive research, and many abandon it, thus reinforcing anthropology's reputation as an arcane, old-fashioned, and largely irrelevant science.

Overall, what is troubling about non-policy-based fieldwork conducted amidst crisis is not only the neglect of global issues but the failure of many researchers who acknowledge the crisis to make the connection between their small studies and the big picture. Researchers who are aware of or make brief reference to a problematic national-level situation without linking it to their subject matter are in a sense avoiding potentially valuable ethnographic analysis. Social responsibility aside, this oversight could diminish the long-term contribution of their work and deprive policy-oriented anthropologists and the discipline as a whole of the benefits of badly needed research.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Carmen Diana Deere and Peter Marchetti, "The Worker-Peasant Alliance in the First Year of the Nicaraguan Agrarian Reform," *Latin American Perspectives* 8, no. 2 (1981):40-73. See also I, *Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, edited by E. Burgos-Debray (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984); Thomas W. Walker, *Nicaragua: The Land of Sandino* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1981); *Guatemala in Rebellion: Unfinished History*, edited by Jonathan Fried et al., (New York: Grove Press, 1983); Chris Krueger and Kjell Enge, *Security and Development Conditions in the Guatemalan Highlands* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin America, 1985); J. Pearce, *Under the Eagle: U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean* (Boston, Mass.: South End Press, 1982); R. A. White, *The Morass: United States Intervention in Central America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).
2. Carol A. Smith and Jeff Boyer, "Central America since 1979: Part 1." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 16 (1987):197-221.
3. Anne Ferguson, "Marketing Medicines: Pharmaceutical Servicers in a Salvadoran Community," *Latin American Perspectives* 10, no. 4 (1983):40-58; Shelton Davis and Julie Hodson, *Witness to Political Violence in Guatemala* (Boston, Mass.: Oxfam America, 1982); Chris Krueger, *The Guatemalan Highlands: Democratic Transition or the Continua-*

- tion of War (Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin America, 1987); *Trouble in Our Backyard: Central America and the United States in the Eighties*, edited by Martin Diskin (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983); *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*, edited by Robert Carmack (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988); Shelton Davis, "The Social Consequences of 'Development' Aid in Guatemala," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 7 (1983):4-11; W. George Lovell, "From Conquest to Counter-Insurgency," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 9 (1985):46-49; and David Stoll, "Guatemala, The New Jerusalem of the Americas," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 7 (1983):28-31.
4. Diana Crane, "The Gatekeeper of Science," *American Sociologist* 2, no. 4 (1967):195-201.
 5. G. A. Donahue, Philip J. Tichenor, and Clarice N. Olien, "Gatekeeping: Mass Media Systems and Information Control," in *Current Perspectives in Mass Communication Research*, edited by F. G. Kline and P. J. Tichenor (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1972), 41-59.
 6. Determination of the seven most significant cultural anthropology journals was based on Eugene Garfield's assessment of the influence and readership of each journal in "Anthropology Journals: What They Cite and What Cites Them," *Current Anthropology* 25, no. 4 (1984):514-28.
 7. Mina Caulfield, "Culture and Imperialism: Proposing a New Dialectic," in *Reinventing Anthropology*, edited by Dell Hymes (New York: Vintage Press, 1974), 182-212.
 8. Richard N. Adams, "The Dynamics of Societal Diversity: Notes from Nicaragua for a Sociology of Survival," *American Ethnologist* 8, no. 1 (1981):1-20; Laurel Bossen, "Plantations and Labor Force Discrimination in Guatemala," *Current Anthropology* 23, no. 2 (1982):263-68; Douglas E. Brintnall, "A Model of Changing Group Relations in the Mayan Highlands of Guatemala," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 36, no. 3 (1980): 294-315; Philip A. Dennis and Michael D. Olien, "Kingship among the Miskito," *American Ethnologist* 11, no. 4 (1984):718-37; John M. Donahue, "The Profession and the People: Primary Health Care in Nicaragua," *Human Organization* 45, no. 2 (1986): 96-103; John D. Early, "Ethnography as an Interpreter of National Censuses: The Guatemalan Case," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 36, no. 1 (1980):71-86; Nancie Loudon González, "Rethinking the Consanguineal Household and Matrilocality," *Ethnology* 23 (1984):1-12; Sara E. Green, Thomas A. Rich, and Edgar G. Nesman, "Beyond Individual Literacy: The Role of Shared Literacy for Innovation in Guatemala," *Human Organization* 44, no. 4 (1985):313-21; Mary W. Helms, "Miskito Slaving and Culture Contact: Ethnicity and Opportunity in an Expanding Population," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 19, no. 2 (1983):179-97; Mary W. Helms, "Of Kings and Contexts: Ethnohistorical Interpretations of Miskito Political Structure and Function," *American Ethnologist* 13, no. 3 (1986):506-23; Jeffrey C. Jacob, "Urban Poverty, Children, and the Consumption of Popular Culture: A Perspective on Marginality; Theses from a Latin America Squatter Settlement," *Human Organization* 39 (1980):233-41; Michael D. Olien, "The Miskito Kings and the Line of Succession," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 39 (1983):179-97; Miles Richardson, "Being-in-the-Market versus Being-in-the-Plaza: Material Culture and the Construction of Social Reality in Spanish America," *American Ethnologist* 9 (1982):421-36; John J. Swetnam, "Disguised Employment and Development Policy in Peasant Economies," *Human Organization* 39, no. 1 (1980):32-39; Barbara Tedlock, "Sound Texture and Metaphor in Quiché Maya Ritual Language," *Current Anthropology* 23, no. 3 (1982):269-72; Barbara Tedlock and Dennis Tedlock, "Text and Textile: Language and Technology in the Arts of the Quiché Maya," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 41, no. 2 (1985):121-46; and John M. Watanabe, "In the World of the Sun: A Cognitive Model of Mayan Cosmology," *Man* 18 (1983):710-28.
 9. *American Ethnologist* did not begin publication until 1974.
 10. Dennis and Olien, "Kingship among the Miskito"; Olien, "Miskito Kings"; and Helms, "Miskito Slaving" and "Kings and Contexts."
 11. Tedlock, "Sound Texture and Metaphor"; Tedlock and Tedlock, "Text and Textile"; and Watanabe, "World of the Sun."
 12. Richardson, "Being-in-the-Market"; and González, "Rethinking the Consanguineal Household."
 13. Bossen, "Plantations and Discrimination"; Brintnall, "Changing Group Relations";

- Jacob, "Urban Poverty, Children, and Popular Culture"; Green, Rich, and Nesman, "Beyond Individual Literacy"; and Early, "Ethnography as Interpreter of National Censuses."
14. My analysis is based on Krueger and Enge's 1985 report, *Security and Development Conditions in the Guatemalan Highlands*, which examined the impact of political violence on towns and villages in the western highlands. It should be noted that although the researchers mentioned in this paragraph were not necessarily eyewitnesses to the violence and social disruption described by Krueger and Enge, they certainly were familiar with its consequences in and around their research sites and throughout the country.
 15. For a similar criticism of Barbara Tedlock's work, see Benjamin Colby's review of *Time and the Highland Maya in American Anthropologist* 85, no. 1 (1983):210-11.
 16. Smith and Boyer, "Central America since 1979: Part 1."
 17. Jacob does mention the worsening highland situation in a footnote to his article in *Human Organization*: "Approaching the summer of 1980, Guatemala faces increasing violence and even the possibility of civil war as the forces of repression attempt to control the country's increasing wealth in spite of an active opposition." See Jacob, "Urban Poverty, Children, and Popular Culture," 241.
 18. Richard N. Adams, "Brokers and Career Mobility Systems in the Structure of Complex Societies," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 26, no. 4 (1970):315-27; Peggy F. Barlett, "Labor Efficiency and the Mechanism of Agricultural Evolution," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 32, no. 3 (1976):124-40; Laurel Bossen, "Women in Modernizing Societies," *American Ethnologist* 2 (1975):587-601; John D. Early, "Education via Radio among Guatemalan Highland Maya," *Human Organization* 34, no. 3 (1973):275-87; John D. Early, "Population Increase and Family Planning in Guatemala," *Human Organization* 32, no. 3 (1975):221-28; John D. Early, "The Changing Proportion of Maya Indian and Ladino in the Population of Guatemala, 1945-1969," *American Ethnologist* 2, no. 2 (1975):261-69; Robert Hinshaw, Patrick Pyeatt, and Jean-Pierre Habicht, "Environmental Effects on Child-Spacing and Population Increase in Highland Guatemala," *Current Anthropology* 13, no. 2 (1972):216-30; Michael H. Logan, "Humoral Medicine in Guatemala and Peasant Acceptance of Modern Medicine," *Human Organization* 32, no. 4 (1973):385-95; Alfredo Méndez-Domínguez, "Big and Little Traditions in Guatemalan Anthropology," *Current Anthropology* 16, no. 4 (1975):541-52; Paul McDowell, "Guatemalan Stratification and Peasant Marketing Arrangements: A Different View," *Man* 2, no. 2 (1976):273-81; Benjamin D. Paul, "The Maya Bonesetter as Sacred Specialist," *Ethnology* 15 (1976):77-81; Lois Paul and Benjamin D. Paul, "The Maya Midwife as Sacred Specialist: A Guatemalan Case," *American Ethnologist* 2, no. 4 (1975):707-26; Ruben E. Reina and Norman B. Schwartz, "The Structural Context of Religious Conversion in Petén, Guatemala: Status, Community, and Multicommunity," *American Ethnologist* 1, no. 1 (1974):157-91; Bryan Roberts, "Urban Poverty and Political Behavior in Guatemala," *Human Organization* 29, no. 1 (1970):20-28; Norman B. Schwartz, "Assimilation and Acculturation: Aspects of Ethnicity in a Guatemalan Town," *Ethnology* 10, no. 3 (1971):291-310; Carol A. Smith, "Examining Stratification Systems through Peasant Marketing Arrangements: An Application of Some Models from Economic Geography," *Man* 10 (1975):95-122; Waldemar R. Smith, "Beyond the Plural Society: Economics and Ethnicity in Middle American Towns," *Ethnology* 14, no. 3 (1975):225-43; Berkeley A. Spencer, "Community Differentiation and the Fallacy of Intersectorial Causation," *Human Organization* 32, no. 1 (1973):59-71; and John J. Swetnam, "Oligopolistic Prices in a Free Market: Antigua, Guatemala," *American Anthropologist* 75, no. 5 (1973):1504-10.
 19. W. Smith, "Beyond the Plural Society"; Reina and Schwartz, "Structural Context of Religious Conversion"; Schwartz, "Assimilation and Acculturation"; and Spencer, "Community Differentiation."
 20. Hinshaw, Pyeatt, and Habicht, "Environmental Effects on Child-Spacing"; and Early, "Changing Proportion of Maya Indian and Ladino" and "Population Increase and Family Planning."
 21. Swetnam, "Oligopolistic Prices in a Free Market."
 22. Logan, "Humoral Medicine in Guatemala"; Paul, "Maya Bonesetter as Sacred Specialist"; and Paul and Paul, "Maya Midwife as Sacred Specialist."

23. Roberts, "Urban Poverty and Political Behavior in Guatemala."
24. Early, "Education via Radio."
25. Méndez-Domínguez, "Big and Little Traditions."
26. Barlett, "Labor Efficiency and Agricultural Evolution."
27. Adams, "Brokers and Career Mobility Systems" and "Dynamics of Societal Diversity."
28. See Eva Hunt's review of "San Bernardino Contla: Marriage and Family Structure in a Tlaxcala Municipio," *American Anthropologist* 72, no. 5 (1970):1135-38. My separation of Mexican scholarship from Guatemalan scholarship is a political device, of course. One cannot ignore the fact that Mesoamericanists specialize in the Maya and other indigenous peoples of both Mexico and Guatemala. The problems associated with fieldwork in Mexico, however, differ considerably and are not addressed in this research report.
29. Erve J. Chambers and Philip D. Young, "Mesoamerican Community Studies: The Past Decade," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 8 (1967):45-69.
30. American Anthropological Association, *1986 Survey of Anthropology Ph.D.s* (Washington, D.C.: AAA, 1987).
31. Ethnographic articles from Central America and the rest of the world were tabulated if they analyzed data from only one geographic region. Discussions comparing two or more countries from different parts of the world were not counted.
32. See S. J. Cardenal, Fernando Miller, and Valerie Miller, "Nicaragua 1980: The Battle of the ABC's," in *Revolution in Central America*, edited by Stanford Central America Action Network (Boulder, Colo.: Westview), 447-58.
33. Thomas Weaver, "Toward an Anthropological Statement of Relevance," in *To See Ourselves: Anthropology and Modern Social Issues*, edited by Thomas Weaver (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman), 1-4.
34. Telephone conversation with an official of the National Science Foundation who preferred to remain anonymous, 1988.
35. The discipline's failure to encourage research on Central America does not imply that anthropologists are not interested in events in the region. Several interdisciplinary organizations like the Central America Resource Center in Austin, Texas, coordinate scholarly efforts and facilitate research. In 1980, when two hundred persons attended a session of the AAA meetings in Los Angeles entitled "Fire in the Lake, Part II," anthropologists formed the Guatemala Scholars Network. Since that time, this national organization has provided materials, networks, and timely information. In 1985 and 1986, I served as the national coordinator of the Guatemala Scholars Network.
36. See, for example, the many fine articles in Robert Carmack's *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988). See also Krueger and Enge, *Security and Development Conditions in the Guatemalan Highlands*, and Davis and Hodson, *Witness to Political Violence in Guatemala*.
37. See Beatriz Manz, "Guatemalan Refugees: Violence, Displacement, and Survival," *Cultural Survival* 7 (1983):38-42.
38. Telephone conversation with Mike Conroy, LASA Task Force on Nicaragua, Winter 1988.
39. American Anthropological Association, *1986 Survey of Anthropology Ph.D.s*.
40. Patricia J. Higgins, "Anthropologists and Issues of Public Concern: The Iran Crisis," *Human Organization* 43, no. 2 (1984):132-45.
41. For additional discussion, see Barry L. Isaac, "The Mesoamerican Context of Ritual Kinship," *Man* 17, no. 3 (1982):555-57; Jan Rus and Robert Wasserstrom, "Civil-Religious Hierarchies in Central Chiapas: A Critical Perspective," *American Ethnologist* 7 (1980):466-79; and Waldemar R. Smith, *The Fiesta System and Economic Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).
42. See, for example, Evon Z. Vogt, *Tortillas for the Gods: A Symbolic Analysis of Zinacanteco Rituals* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976); Gary Gossen, *Chamulas and the World of the Sun* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974); R. M. Laughlin, *Of Cabbages and Kings: Tales from Zinacantan* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977); and Victoria R. Bricker, *Ritual Humor in Highland Chiapas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973).

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43. Mina Caulfield, "Culture and Imperialism"; and Omer C. Stewart, "The Need to Popularize Basic Concepts," *Current Anthropology* 5, no. 5 (1964):431-32.
44. June Nash, "Anthropological Research in Latin America in the 1980s," in *Directions in the Anthropological Study of Latin America: A Reassessment*, edited by Jack R. Rollwagen (Brockport, N.Y.: Institute for the Study of Man), 79-96.
45. Thomas Weaver, "Anthropology as a Policy Science: Part I, A Critique," *Current Anthropology* 44, no. 2 (1985):97-105.
46. As part of this study, I wrote to the editors of all seven journals asking if they could explain the absence of papers on Central America in their journal literature. Only two wrote back, both sending form letters that did not address my query. One editor telephoned and said in response to my question, "I'm not in the business of publishing diatribe."
47. This statement is not meant to imply that Central Americanists who do publish nonpolicy articles in the major journals are committing some egregious ethical breach. Many researchers mentioned in this article are both politically active and intellectually astute. Most likely, they recognize that their analyses of politically sensitive issues will not be published in standard journals and choose to submit them elsewhere.