

Kedron Thomas*Washington University in St. Louis***Corporations and Community in Highland Guatemala**

This article takes Eric Wolf's concept of the closed, corporate community as a starting point for exploring how senses of community take shape in highland Guatemala in relation to contemporary property and production models that are premised on the sovereignty of legal corporations (i.e., multinational firms). Findings are based on ethnographic fieldwork among indigenous Maya entrepreneurs who own small-scale clothing manufacturing businesses and who routinely copy trademarked fashion brands. Their understandings and practices of community reveal a great deal about the unique dilemmas forged by global rights regimes and transnational capitalist production. Small-scale manufacturers interpret their relationships to international intellectual property protections and maquiladoras [foreign-owned, large-scale factories] through a moral economy that privileges the sharing of knowledge and resources across kin and neighbors and in ways that reinforce senses of belonging to spatialized communities. [corporations, community, intellectual property, apparel industry, Guatemala]

The Incorporation of Community

In a well-known article, Eric R. Wolf (1957) characterized the highland Maya people of Mexico and Guatemala as inhabitants of what he called “closed, corporate peasant communities.” Wolf used the term *corporate* to designate the legal and institutional composition of these communities, that is, that they maintained “a perpetuity of rights and membership” (2) exclusive to insiders. Wolf also endowed the term with sociological significance (see Dow 1973). Maya men and women, Wolf explained, were deemed members through their participation in religious rituals and their upbringing within the territorial bounds of the community. In addition to administering land rights, Wolf's corporate communities impelled the sharing of surplus goods and resources across families and controlled the flow of outsiders and their goods and ideas in and out of a bounded social group.

Wolf developed his concept to highlight the sociological and administrative function of the closed, corporate community in relation to the colonial context (Wolf 1986). In this article, I am interested in how sociological forms that are akin to Wolf's closed, corporate model are reproduced in highland communities in relation to contemporary property and production models premised on the sovereignty of legal corporations (i.e., multinational firms). I draw on 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork in highland

Guatemala among indigenous Maya entrepreneurs who own small-scale clothing manufacturing businesses and who routinely copy trademarked fashion brands such as Nike, Diesel, and Hollister. Their understandings of community, I argue, reveal a great deal about the unique dilemmas forged by global rights regimes and transnational capitalist production. In particular, small-scale manufacturers interpret their relationships to multinational firms through a moral economy that privileges the sharing of knowledge and resources across kin and neighbors in ways that reinforce senses of belonging to spatialized communities.

In the face of economic inequalities evident at local and global levels, and given delegitimizing national and international discourses of illegality regarding the unauthorized use of brand names and logos, appeals to this moral economy are also assertions of moral personhood. Philosophers invoke the concept of moral personhood to draw attention to the fact that morality and the “capacities, commitments, aspirations, and acknowledgment of principle that are essential to [it]” (Eldridge 1989:77) are fundamental components of self-understanding (see also Kleinman 2006). As philosopher Richard Eldridge explained, the fact and experience of moral personhood revolves around one’s ability to make sense of one’s actions in light of held principles and to render oneself capable of self-responsibility and of “incarnating” values (Eldridge 1989:78; see also Frimer and Walker 2008). Anthropologists, noting that the action–principle dichotomy and its implied relationship of “inner” person to “outer” manifestation are culturally relative, have adapted the concept to describe the particular ways in which responsibility and ethical decision-making figure into what it means to be a person and part of a given community (Jaffe 2009). I find that Maya clothing manufacturers discursively posit multinational corporations as foils against which their moral personhood appears unblemished, crafting a sense of community out of shared values, and a sense of self out of what makes them responsible people (and not corporations).

Talleres, Maquilas, and the Pedagogical Imperative

From the time that Wolf proposed the closed, corporate model, anthropologists working in the highlands have documented the relative decline of political and religious institutions, such as the fraternal *cofradía* system, that enjoined the redistribution of material resources among neighbors (Brintnall 1979; Warren 1978). The subsistence agricultural economy in the highlands has also transformed, with Maya men and women engaged in regional, as well as transnational, commerce (DeHart 2010; Fischer and Benson 2006; Little 2004; Smith 1984). In many ways, Wolf prognosticated these transformations. He already imagined closed communities in relation to the organization of agricultural labor for large-scale export production in the 19th and early-20th centuries, and the latter-day processes of industrialization that concentrated political–economic hegemony in the hands of *criollos* (generally, persons of Spanish descent born in the Americas), *mestizos* (generally, in Mexico, persons of mixed native and European descent) and *ladinos* (non-indigenous Guatemalans). As noted above, a principal aim of his work was to uncover the sociological effects of this historical relationship between Maya peasants and the (post)colonial system.

Wolf also presaged the growing importance of entrepreneurship and commerce in the highlands, warning that closed, corporate agrarian communities would not survive unless internal population growth was managed through the absorption of young people into Mexico's and Guatemala's national entrepreneurial sectors. Otherwise, he explained, a growing population would put pressure on land resources and force communities to "open" up to other ways of life and livelihood. This perspective largely ignored how commercial enterprise was already integral to a regional highland economy at the time of his writing (Smith 1977; Smith 1984), and it feeds into a more general concern with Wolf's model: he overstated the closed nature of Maya communities. Nonetheless, due to population growth, but also assimilationist politics at the national level (Casaús Arzú 1992; Grandin 2000; Hale 2006), nearly 40 years of internal armed conflict, including a genocidal campaign by the Guatemalan state against Maya people (Carmack 1988; Little and Smith 2009; Smith 1990), and an economic transition away from import-substitution policies and toward export-oriented production in the postconflict period¹ (O'Neill and Thomas 2011), indigenous communities' relationships to the state and the global economy have changed in important ways.

Export-led development in Guatemala has been accompanied by other reforms, including the privatization of communal lands and opening of agricultural markets to foreign imports, leading to job loss in domestic agriculture and patterns of rural dislocation and transnational migration. Declining formal sector employment, both public and private, since the 1980s has left the vast majority of Guatemalans engaged in informal sector activities, including petty capitalist enterprise (Chase-Dunn 2000; Green 2003). Amidst processes of economic restructuring, a handful of highland towns, including Tecpán (my primary field site), benefited from geographical conditions that facilitated integration into Central American commercial markets. Beginning in the late 1950s, Maya men and women began to engage in nontraditional apparel production activities structured either as cottage industries or small-scale, independent manufacturing firms (Ehlers 2000; Fischer 2002; Goldín 2010; Hendrickson 1995; Ortez 2004; Smith 1984, 1989). In Tecpán, the industry took off in the late 1980s, as the state-directed violence of the armed conflict subsided and neoliberal economic reforms impinged on more traditional livelihoods. Today, Tecpán is a progressive town of approximately 20,000 people, the majority Kaqchikel Maya, with a burgeoning middle class. Hundreds of garment *talleres* (workshops)—many of them no larger than a single, concrete-block room built onto the back of the owner's home—employ anywhere from 2 to 40 employees each.

Alongside the growth of a domestic garment trade, Guatemala also entertained a *maquila* boom in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Maquilas are mostly foreign-owned, large-scale factories where garments are assembled for export, usually to U.S. and European markets. Maquila expansion, fueled mainly by U.S. and South Korean capital, was rapid (Petersen 1992) in the aftermath of the armed conflict. The number of factories nearly doubled between 1992 and 1996. By the mid-1990s, 130,000 Guatemalans were employed in almost 500 textile and garment factories; 99 percent of these products were exported to the United States (Traub-Werner

and Cravey 2002). By 2005, Mexican and Central American maquiladoras supplied nearly 20 percent of all apparel sold in U.S. stores (Abernathy et al. 2005). Yet, this “flexible” industry has always been volatile, with nearly 100 maquilas closing and moving elsewhere in the late 1990s in search of lower wage rates and more favorable regulatory climates (Goldín 2001), even as other factories were opening. Closures have accelerated in recent years, leaving around 30,000 Guatemalans employed in the garment export industry (Muñoz 2012). Factory closings are often sudden, and rumors abound of employees showing up to work only to find the factory locked up, leaving them with no way to collect their final paychecks.

Officially, maquilas do not compete with the Maya-owned talleres that have been the focus of my research, and which supply Central American markets with inexpensive, stylish clothing. Small-scale workshops are connected to maquilas, however, through a “grey market” trade (Phau et al. 2001) in popular brand names. Since maquilas contract directly with foreign brand owners or their licensed subsidiaries and distributors, they often have stockpiles of tags and labels that feature the logos of popular, multinational clothing companies. Tags and labels are sometimes smuggled out of maquilas into informal markets, where they can be purchased cheaply by Maya producers, who then incorporate them into their own garment designs for Guatemalan consumers. Maquilas also challenge the competitiveness of the domestic industry when they illegally dump imperfect garments and overruns onto local markets, flooding them with low-priced, brand-name goods.

These material connections between the maquila industry and the highland garment trade, although salient to the production and marketing decisions that Maya producers make, are not necessarily the most important relationships to large-scale capital that small-scale manufacturers cited in interviews and casual conversations. After an hour spent observing and chatting with the young men intensively engaged at the dozen sewing machines that comprise his workshop, I walked with Roberto Ordoñez² through the dusty courtyard of his home toward the kitchen door. Roberto and one of his brothers have done considerably well in the apparel trade, due in large measure to a well-timed capital investment made possible by the sale of ancestral farmland (an option not commonly available to often-landless garment manufacturers). Their surname, associated with modestly priced children’s clothing and fashionable screen-printed tee shirts, is well known around town and across highland markets.

Pulling a chair up to the table where his wife had arranged an assortment of pastries for Roberto and me, I inquired if any of his employees had worked in maquilas before coming to work for him.

“Well, no. The problem with the maquilas,” he replied between sips of watery coffee, “is that they don’t pay what they should, they exploit people, and when they decide to leave town, they go without paying their debts [to employees].” Roberto’s wife and daughter are in the courtyard scrubbing a few dishes at the concrete washbasin. The buzz of sewing machines drifts in from the workshop across the way. Later in the week, Roberto will deliver the tee shirts the employees are making to regular customers in a handful of wholesale markets around the highlands.

Complaints like Roberto's about the maquilas are common among maquila workers and other highland residents. Most maquilas have opened either on the outskirts of Guatemala City or along the initial 50 or so kilometers of the Pan-American Highway as it stretches westward into the highlands. Area residents continue to migrate to the capital and surrounding towns in search of factory employment (Goldín 2001) despite the notoriously poor working conditions and gendered patterns of labor abuse directed toward their mostly female workforces (Ross 1997). The movement of women and men into industrializing towns along the highway reshapes family- and community-level social dynamics (Goldín 2001). Along with the "proletarianization" of the young women working in the factories, anthropologist Liliana Goldín records a sentiment among highland residents that the benefits and ills of city life have accompanied the construction of maquiladoras along the highway. When migrant laborers move to centers of maquila production, locals complain about drunken workers and rising crime rates, the "worst of urban life" coming to a small town (37). They also hear stories from friends and relatives, read the news reports, or experience firsthand the low wages and exploitative practices of many of these sweatshops. And they witness the impact of these businesses suddenly picking up and moving to Honduras or Nicaragua or the Philippines, where the wages are slightly lower and the labor and environmental regulations not quite as tight.

Roberto does not stop at exploitation, however. He has other concerns that carry more weight in relation to his own garment manufacturing business. "The other problem," he says, "is that they don't teach you very much." He begins here to draw a sharp contrast between maquilas and Tecpán's talleres, concentrating on a pedagogical imperative evident among *taller* owners; namely, that they impart knowledge and skills that go beyond task-oriented training to the mostly young men they employ.

In the talleres, you have to learn how to finish a whole piece—a shirt, for example. You learn to attach the collar, the sleeve, the cuffs, bodice, buttons—everything that makes up a shirt. So, this person [trained in a workshop] could find work anywhere. But in the maquilas, the *muchachos* [boys] don't know how to work. He might be able to run one kind of machine, but *real* work is making a whole garment.

Roberto goes on to recount how he has just finished training a 17-year-old boy from one of the hamlets outside of town, who rides his bike to the workshop and then home after each 10-hour workday. As he continues with the story, Roberto falls into a steady rhythm of contrastive terms, emphasizing differences between the two types of garment manufacturing, but also spatializing those differences in a way that draws attention to his own belonging to a production community.

Here, a person learns how to work. And my way of thinking is this: if a young man works with me, and learns how to work, that's good. He doesn't have to work with me all his life, maybe two years. He does the work, and he leaves. Because then I've helped in his education; he has

the tools he needs, the knowledge, and no one can take that away from him. But in a maquila, he could stay five years working, and nothing. Here, it's a question of putting together a bit of money and setting up his own workshop, and then he starts working on his own. He can take care of a family that way. There, in the maquila, if he made money, took care of his family, maybe even bought a few things . . . but when the maquila cuts him loose, what does he know how to do? [field notes, 2009]

Moving back and forth between “here” and “there,” Roberto outlines important boundaries of social membership. Far from simply referencing our geographical coordinates, he marshals a spatial rhetoric that situates him comfortably within a particular kind of community, one that echoes certain attributes of the typical closed, corporate community that Eric Wolf described.

Roberto participates in a genre of talk about pedagogy and mutual obligation as the basis for the industry's growth and success that I frequently documented in my conversations with Tecpán's residents (Thomas 2012). It is true that the number of workshops in Tecpán has largely expanded through this type of apprenticeship, as well as through the sharing of resources among kin. It is also vital, however, that manufacturers display pedagogical, and sometimes financial, generosity toward employees in order to maintain their moral standing within the community. Roberto's discourse is partly about local positioning and politicking, given that the apparel trade has led to some socioeconomic stratification in Tecpán. Roberto's brother's two-story home and Roberto's own late-model van used for hauling goods to market evidence disparities between their family and neighboring taller owners who occupy meager block houses and rely on unsafe public buses for transportation.

Demonstrating one's commitment to community-based relations of reciprocity is a good strategy for avoiding the accusations of selfishness, individualism, and even sorcery that can often accompany the accumulation of wealth in the central highlands (Thomas 2009, 2012).³ These are precisely the informal mechanisms of social control, aimed at encouraging solidarity, reciprocity, and egalitarianism, that anthropologists have associated with closed, corporate communities following Max Weber's sociological model of the corporation (Wilk 1983). Yet, in this case, solidarity and reciprocity emerge as contested norms, fraught realities, and normalizing discourses amidst broad-scale processes of change, including the entrance of Maya men and women into a different kind of relationship to the (juridical) corporation in the guise of maquilas. Roberto also outlines shared parameters of gendered, moral personhood: learning a trade, teaching others, taking care of family, and knowing “how to work” all define what it means for Roberto to be an effective head-of-household and, quite simply put, a good man.

As our conversation continues, I grow curious about how Roberto imagines the maquila industry and why he thinks its approach to employee training is so different. When I pose the question, I see from his quick response that Roberto has thought about this, as young men and women trained in maquilas sometimes come by his

home seeking employment in his workshop, which he is reluctant to offer because of their specialization in only one particular task. He explains,

This [type of training] works to the benefit of the owner of the maquila, and this is what you have to think about: that it's better for the owner if the worker doesn't know everything, because in a little while, that worker is going to open his own workshop, going to need his *own* employees, and he's going to call on those that are in the maquila. This is why the Koreans and the Chinese don't teach everything, and this is why I don't fault the maquilas, even though I'm not in agreement with them. [field notes, 2009]

Maquilas become a "problem" for Roberto, not when they threaten to take his workers (a concern that other producers in Tecpán shared with me), but when they do not contribute to the process of community-centered "development" (Thomas 2012) that interests Roberto and other Maya manufacturers. The fact that he does not "fault" them in the same way that he might fault a fellow producer who instituted such a system reveals that, for Roberto, these businesses are part of a different social sphere, even a distinctive moral world (Kleinman 1999).⁴ What matters for the Koreans and the Chinese (and he insists on this national, perhaps also ethnocultural, difference, emphasizing several times that he is certain most of the maquila owners are Korean) is protecting one's market position and ensuring a surplus labor pool. While these are business basics in neoclassical economics, they do not feed into the kind of moral personhood and the sense of corporate community that concerns Roberto and his neighbors.

(In)citing Corporations

Commercial activities not only put Maya people in contact with international markets and multinational corporations, but also in conflict with national and international legal regimes and the corporate interests they so often represent. For example, practices of sharing, appropriation, and copying have a lengthy history in the highland apparel trade; the sharing of knowledge and resources among producers and their kin and employees is indeed enjoined within the moral economy outlined in the previous section. Maya garment manufacturers borrow from and imitate one another's designs. They also copy global brand names (Thomas 2012), a practice that now qualifies as "piracy" according to globalized legal regimes. Since joining the World Trade Organization in 1995 and ratifying the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Agreement (implemented in 2000) and the Central America Free Trade Agreement (ratified in 2006), Guatemala has been obligated to strengthen and enforce its intellectual property (IP) protections for multinational corporations. The state demonstrates its commitment to IP law enforcement through sporadic raids on homes in depressed zones of Guatemala City and on street vendor stalls, where police confiscate blue jeans, CDs, and DVDs. The government recently removed hundreds of street vendors from Guatemala City sidewalks, part of a larger gentrification

program with the unstated goal of making indigenous and lower-class Guatemalans involved in the piracy trade a less conspicuous feature of the urban landscape (Véliz and O'Neill 2011). In spite of pushes by the United States Trade Representative and rights-holding corporations to refocus enforcement efforts on piracy producers (USTR 2010), few, if any, raids have occurred in much less conspicuous highland workshops. Even so, garment manufacturers in Tecpán are aware of the discourse against piracy that echoes across national newspapers, and they sometimes wondered if I was not a Nike representative sent to spy on “pirates.”⁵

Apart from suspicions about the occasional *gringa* anthropologist, however, foreign rights-bearing corporations generally seem distant, making it socially acceptable among Maya producers to copy popular brands and styles. As part of my ethnographic investigations of the domestic garment trade, I worked on an unpaid, flexible basis in the clothing workshop of Alberto Ixim, a middle-aged Kaqchikel Maya man who makes sweaters and sweatshirts to sell in highland markets. After a long day in the concrete-block room, wedged into my seat in a row of five young men, all of us guiding sweater knit and fleece material through industrial sewing machines, it was a welcome change to accompany Alberto to his home for late afternoon coffee. As we drove in Alberto's beat-up Toyota sedan, headed from the rented workshop space to his home on the outskirts of town, we passed a clothing shop with several Abercrombie & Fitch sweatshirts displayed on clothes hangers in the entryway. These sweatshirts were not too different from the ones Alberto's employees and I had been assembling that day, which featured unauthorized reproductions of globally popular brand names.

Alberto, who was wearing a knock-off Lacoste polo shirt, turned to me and commented: “You see a lot of clothing that says Abercrombie on it. Abercrombie is not here.” He began to laugh. At once a critique of Guatemala's position in the world system, as a place from which globally popular things like Abercrombie simply do not originate, Alberto was also making a joke out of the fact that the Abercrombie name and logo are indeed everywhere in the highlands and throughout Guatemala. For several years during my fieldwork, Abercrombie & Fitch hoodies were some of the most popular garments worn by Maya women and men, and especially young men, in the highland region. “Do you mean that Abercrombie is not from Guatemala?” I asked to make sure I got the joke, and he laughed even harder. “It is definitely not from Guatemala, and definitely not from Tecpán,” he replied (field notes, 2009).

This exchange with Alberto is typical of my conversations with Maya apparel producers about the brand names they affix to the clothing they make and wear. With vague reference to “elsewhere,” a sense of the brand as originating outside of the contexts in which it circulates in the Guatemalan highlands, these small-time manufacturers often drew attention to the sociopolitical and geographical distances that separate Maya people who consume fashionable brands from the places where those brands are said to originate.⁶

A second reason why the copying of fashion brands is socially acceptable, and seen, in fact, as a legitimate mode of appropriation (Thomas 2012) throughout much of

Guatemala, is because the expensive products sold by multinational corporations are beyond the reach of most Guatemalan consumers. More than two-thirds of indigenous Guatemalans live in poverty as defined by the United Nations, and Maya people who do have the resources to access more expensive styles sold in urban commercial centers commonly face discrimination from salespeople and other customers when they enter formal retail spaces wearing traditional clothing styles, speaking a Mayan language, or exhibiting other racialized markers of difference.

Practices that governments and intellectual property proponents label piracy are not unique, of course, to Guatemala. The universality of this phenomenon marks both the globalization of popular cultural forms (including corporate brands) and the spread of relatively cheap technologies that facilitate the copying of a whole range of trademark and copyright-protected materials (Aguiar 2013; Karaganis 2011). The use of trademarked logos by Maya apparel producers is also a strategic marketing decision in response to transnational competition. As noted above, there are underpriced overflows from maquilas that feature authorized name brands, as well as the glut of name-brand, second-hand clothing coming into Guatemala each year from the United States. Finally, there are imported garments from China, Taiwan, and Mexico, much of these also featuring “pirated” brands. In this environment, it is difficult to sell a garment without a label, and, more specifically, a label that affords some competitive advantage in a marketplace dominated by global brand names (Thomas 2013).

Mateo Tecum’s one-room workshop is neat and tidy, not cluttered with remnants and scraps and old parts like so many of the neighboring talleres. He prides himself on running an orderly business and likes to work on a contract basis with wholesalers in Guatemala City rather than the market vendors who demand that producers supply them with goods on credit, a kind of consignment arrangement that makes it difficult for many producers to maintain cash flow. At the same time, Mateo tells me, he copies, just like everyone else. As we discuss the garment design he is working on during one of our conversations—on this day, it is a tee shirt with the Adidas logo screen-printed across the front—Mateo explains to me that companies such as Adidas have offices in the capital, where producers are supposed to pay for *el derecho* (the rights) to use popular brands. He has read in the national newspaper about crackdowns on market vendors selling “pirated” goods and seems keen on assuring me that he knows and understands the law. When I ask if anyone from Tecpán ever pays for these rights, his face lights up with a broad smile. He exclaims, “The market is *puro pirata*, *puro pirata Morgan* [pure piracy, pure Captain Morgan]!” (field notes, 2009).

Mateo musters a joke that says a lot about the relationship between small-scale producers like himself and the multinational corporations that hold “the rights” to the brand names that adorn high-priced, exclusive consumer goods. Captain Morgan rum, a brand that plays neatly on the pirate history of the Caribbean system, is heavily marketed in Latin America through television, online, and print media. Perhaps, in citing Captain Morgan, the Welsh privateer-turned-storied-pirate hero who wreaked havoc on Spanish fleets and colonial settlements, Mateo is calling up centuries of struggle against Spanish imperialism and first-world interventionism in Central America. Perhaps he means to draw a parallel between the appropriation of intellectual

property by Guatemalan Mayas and the ransacking and potlatching of colonial wealth by Morgan and his men. Or perhaps not. What is certain is that Mateo echoes a public discourse about “piracy” that one hears among nonindigenous professionals in Guatemala City and reads in the pages of the country’s major dailies and sees in the televised coverage of industry-funded, anti-piracy public relations campaigns, all trying to discourage trademark and copyright infringement in Latin America. Mateo plays on this label that has been given to him and his neighbors, the implication that he might be outside the law and just as disruptive of sovereignty as a pirate of the Caribbean, when his tidy workshop more accurately reflects the entrepreneurial spirit celebrated in neoliberal development discourse at national and international levels. An “ethnic entrepreneur” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009; DeHart 2010) as much as a “modern pirate” (see Thomas 2009), Mateo is also citing his capacity to (in)cite an international brand, to invoke the symbols and structures of the global economy. He situates himself among both brand consumers and the brand producers whose citations and materializations generate brand value (Manning 2010). Five centuries of evolving pirate modernities (Sundaram 2010) come together in Mateo’s clever evocation that is also a reflection on how states, law, and corporations make people into “pirates” (cf. Gallant 1999).

Conclusions

The fashion systems, production regimes, and antipiracy public relations and enforcement efforts that put Maya men and women in contact with global corporations are conditioned upon a sensed topography of difference and blame. Maya garment manufacturers understand that what counts as authentic in highland Guatemala—the relationships of reciprocity that undergird small-scale capitalist enterprise and the pedagogical imperative that structures employer–employee relations, but also the experience of being outside the core flows of technology and modernity—amounts to a distinctive moral and political economy, a type of corporate community in and of itself, that marks them as distinctive from first-world corporations, the sweatshops with which those corporations contract for garment production, and the property regimes that lead those corporations to work with states to prosecute “pirates” in Guatemala.

These differences also contribute to a local sense of moral personhood in the highlands, one that sometimes runs counter to the sense of corporate personhood (which includes anthropomorphic capacities for creativity and innovation) that underwrites intellectual property law. Returning to Wolf’s formulation, then, my fieldwork directs attention to the ways that corporations can in fact produce closed communities, why membership might be tightly guarded amidst legal and moral uncertainties, and how a moral economy premised on a relatively loose property regime might develop in response to postcolonial conditions of subordination that make it difficult for most indigenous Guatemalans to participate in the formal, legal structures of modernity on which the state and international law insist.

Notes

1. It is important to note that although United Nations-negotiated Peace Accords ended the armed conflict in 1996, violent crime and impunity are increasing problems in postwar Guatemala. The country has the fourth highest homicide rate in the world (UNODC 2010), due mostly to drug trafficking, and less than 2 percent of homicides result in a conviction (Wilson 2009).
2. Tecpán is a well-known center of clothing production; nonetheless, names and identifying characteristics have been changed to protect the anonymity of individual garment producers.
3. This is not to say that Roberto's morality is entirely local. His comments echo religious themes of hard work and responsibility that circulate globally, sometimes converge with neoliberal ideology, and manifest in particular ways among Guatemalan Catholics and amid a booming neo-Pentecostal movement (Goldín and Metz 1991; O'Neill 2009).
4. See also Walter Little's 2009 article on the articulation of different moral economies in the Guatemalan highlands.
5. For more on the social production of illegality, see Thomas and Galemba 2013.
6. My use of the term "originate" here necessitates reference to the particular meanings of "original" evident among highland garment producers (see Thomas 2013).

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