

shift toward textile exports in *maquiladoras*, and palm oil cultivation versus bananas—as well as the controversial 2009 military coup that overthrew elected President Manuel Zelaya with little protest from Washington. The drug trade and increased immigration to the United States in recent years have further strained the relationship between the two countries. Gene editing and continued widespread pesticide use have also provoked a new “ethical food” movement that encompasses bananas from Honduras and the new mega-exporter, Ecuador. Soluri has taken an already classic and wonderfully accessible work and further enhanced it by bookending it with these two new thought-provoking and insightful essays. In doing so, he has only strengthened an already pioneering work.

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GUATEMALAN YOUTH

Youth in Postwar Guatemala: Education and Civic Identity in Transition. By Michelle J. Bellino. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2017. Pp. 272. \$34.95 paper. doi:10.1017/tam.2022.56

After the signing of the peace accords, El Salvador in the mid 1990s had a remarkable (though fleeting) period of tangible relief and surprising calm. People of a variety of constituencies I met and worked with in different parts of the country were generally glad that overt hostilities and military action were promised to end. Michelle Bellino’s tender and thoughtful foray into Guatemala after the Armed Conflict of 1990–96 demonstrates that “postwar” is a theoretical ideal: “Everyone was dissatisfied by the postwar. No matter who they were . . . the war’s aftermath held everyone captive” (1). Bellino’s book battles against historical silence with a series of personal vignettes that show how the rising generation of Guatemalan citizens struggles with many of the conditions that led to armed conflict in the first place, legacies that endure in part because of active forgetting or “*disremembering*” of the Armed Conflict (5). Overall, this book is a thoughtful, well-grounded examination that makes sense of complex and discordant issues.

Bellino traces common elements—families with youth in school, student attitudes and experiences, the educational staff and what and how they teach—to explore a mosaic of relationships and actions. The analytical beginning and ending chapters are punctuated by personal observations to support interpretations; analysis and critique consistently infuse the more narrative chapters. Throughout, Bellino introduces intimate moments (such as making sandwiches or long hikes to register a complaint officially) as the quotidian environment that also hosts extraordinary discussions of how to understand and create Guatemalan civic identity.

The first two chapters briefly outline major events of the Armed Conflict, key themes of how education relates to civic engagement and justice, and the methodology of vertical case studies. The core of the book, Chapters 3 to 6, explores each of the case studies, one at a time. The point and counterpoint of these examples expose rifts deeper than rural/urban or elite/working-class divides: they show how people “inhabit different Guatemalas” (188). The setting for Chapter 3 is an elite international school whose environment undermines political recognition of inequality. The dissonances among Alejandro, the teenage son of social-justice and human-rights activists, comfortable classmates who at times express racist sentiments, and teachers who dance around critical questions about Guatemala’s past and present provide opportunities for Bellino to present scathing critiques. For example, at the International Academy, Bellino emphasizes that Professor Castillo’s “both-sides” approaches to teaching the history of the Armed Conflict “move from postmodernist truth claims to nihilism, cloaked in an explanation that it is the discipline of history that makes truth unknowable” (66).

The Paulo Freire Institute, the setting for Chapter 4, seems the inverse of the previous example—still urban, but a “liberal” school with students from working-class families. Vivid descriptions of experiences of violence, but also the co-construction of historical understanding, are a poignant mix of distress and hope. The Sun and Moon High School in the rural hamlet of Río Verde (Chapter 5), where many residents battle with mining companies over land rights, contrasts yet again with the previous examples. The students are mostly indigenous, the featured student is the child of ex-guerillas, and teachers and students have a murky understanding of the Armed Conflict despite a desire for a single truth.

While a feeling of futility looms over the students at Sun and Moon, dread looms within, in Bellino’s last example at another school, Tzolok Ochoch (Chapter 6). The young Maya women Bellino spent time with regularly get “called” and fall sick from visitations of spirits that Bellino argues are animated by wartime legacies of fear and violence. Despite a frank acknowledgment of the risks, suffering, and resistance the students will face as future leaders, the climate in the school and the community is of possibility and a duty to the *pueblo*. Doing nothing is not an option.

The point of concordance among these islands is imagining a future built by educated youth. The troubled oceans of memory, injustice, democracy, risk, and hope seem too much to navigate, yet Bellino’s solidly anthropological portraiture seeks and finds goodness in a clear-eyed way that I suspect largely met the hopes and standards of the Guatemalan youth of this study, which would be high praise, indeed.

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