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From the Editors

Welcome to Volume 3, Issue 2, of *IK: Other Ways of Knowing*.

This issue contains two peer reviewed articles. The first article deals with constructing and mediating an indigenous identity in Guatemala City, and the second is about sustainable biodiversity management in Southeastern Zimbabwe.

There are also two board reviewed pieces in this issue. The first one is about the significance of symbols in carved Swahili doors, and the second one discusses kidney disease and agrarian transformation in Sri Lanka.

This issue also contains a review of *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology* by Karin Amimoto Ingersoll and a review of *A Culture's Catalyst: Historical Encounters with Peyote and the Native American Church in Canada* by Fannie Kahan, edited by Erika Dyck.

Our News and Notes section is focused primarily on the role of indigenous knowledge in climate change and climate action, but also touches on indigenous rights, and indigenous knowledge in agriculture and plant use.

The editors would like to welcome some new members to the team. Katrina Eckel is the new Associate Editor and Morgan Updyke is the new Assistant Editor. We would also like to thank one of our founding members, Helen Sheehy, for her time on the board, and wish her well as she begins her retirement from The Pennsylvania State University.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

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Pg 1-32

Urban Indigeneity: Constructing and Mediating an Indigenous Identity in Guatemala City

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This paper examines how development provides a site for particular performances of indigeneity in Guatemala. It explores the product of NGO (non-governmental organization) governmentality amongst a group of indigenous students participating in private scholarship programs in Guatemala City. The article draws on existing literature and ethnographic material to analyze three different outcomes when indigenous students engage with development NGOs that are trying to "empower" them and enable them to *superarse*, or overcome their conditions. First, an example of Hale's "*indio permitido*" (permitted Indian); second, one of the erasure of indigenous identity, where success means assimilation into mainstream white/non-indigenous society; finally, a "third space" where indigenous actors become agents of their own development.

Keywords: *Indigeneity; Governmentality; Maya; Identity; Empowerment; Superación; Neoliberalism; Mestizaje; Resistance; Guatemala*

Introduction: Empowering Indigenous Women

Among the glossy papers of Amiga—the Sunday special edition magazine within Guatemala's most important daily newspaper, Prensa Libre—I learned about Sheva, an NGO that works with women's health and hygiene. Between "healthy" diet recipes and ads for Guatemala's most expensive jewelry store, the article detailed a story that was becoming commonplace in my experience with development in Guatemala. Amid a barrage of daunting statistics about the conditions indigenous women in Guatemala face, it described how one of the country's trendiest NGOs on social media is working to empower rural, indigenous girls. This effort sounded similar to many other organizations started and managed by either Guatemala's elite or foreign groups, whose work, geared towards impoverished indigenous women, is described as a virtuous attempt at the "*capacitación*" (training) and "*empoderamiento*" (empowerment) of disadvantaged populations. It joins a field of development interventions that, as Ferguson (1990) has pointed out, erases politics from issues that are not only deeply political, but

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have no hope of improving without political action. To make matters worse, this type of discourse most often engages in a form of victim-blaming, where many of the nation's troubles are said to originate from the bodies and livelihoods of the very people they are trying to empower.

Most commonly in Latin America, development discourse is aimed at the impoverished, racialized "other," making the category of the "indigenous woman" highly desirable for such moral labor (Radcliffe 2015; Nelson 1999, 272-274). In this way, women's bodies become sites of neoliberal indoctrination, where the consequences of deep racial and socioeconomic inequality are taken up by the elites through care and development work in a way that maintains the current power structures (Ferguson 1990; Stevenson 2014; Li 2007, 4993). Women's bodies are singled out as "corrupt," inferior, or uncivilized, thus making them suitable sites for surveillance and "improvement" (Li 2007). These bodies, then, are conceptualized as the site for the formation of docile citizens. Through what are often condescending and patriarchal relationships, NGOs and governments obscure the gendered and racialized structural violence against indigenous women, and so attempt to turn their bodies into productive neoliberal subjects who continue to preserve current power imbalances—including deep systems of inequality. That is, NGOs take up the work of conducing conduct and so produce "subjects who are increasingly 'empowered' to discipline themselves" (Ferguson and Gupta 2002, 989; Rose 1996; Foucault 1977). Despite this pessimistic tone, in this paper I look at how the notion of *superación*[1] (betterment or overcoming)—often used to reinscribe sociopolitical inequalities—can also enable women's bodies as places of resistance and contestation to elite power.

Superación and its sister words, "empowerment" (*empoderamiento*), "training" (*capacitación*), and "moving forward" (*salir adelante*), are terms used to describe the perceived transformation of indigenous, rural individuals into "ideal" neoliberal citizens. This includes not only the material acquisition of wealth and work, but also a less tangible integration into the westernized, ladino (or non-indigenous) culture of Guatemala City. The terms suggest a paternalistic attitude that relies on the "assumption that indigenous peoples [need] help from benevolent outsiders—and a firm belief that indigenous culture had inherent deficiencies that would only be remedied when Indians became more like ladinos" (Hale 2006, 59). Understanding where these terms come from, what they imply, how they are used, and especially who they are intended to describe is crucial to shedding light on power relationships between not only elite NGOs and indigenous women, but on a larger scale, between ladino and indigenous citizens.

Superación, like Li's *will to improve*, "is situated in the field of power Michel Foucault termed 'government.' Defined succinctly as the "conduct of conduct," government is the attempt to shape human behavior by calculated means" (2007, 203). I suggest that those in power[2] use *superación* as a discourse and technique to govern people, encouraging them to comply with current political objectives: those that promote and maintain elite ladino power. In what follows, I describe three different outcomes of this exercise of power. The first is an example of Hale's *indio permitido* (permitted Indian); the second, of the

erasure of indigenous identity (where success means assimilation into mainstream white/ladino society); and finally, one of the "third space" (where indigenous actors become agents of their own development). While this "third space" has many manifestations, all of them can be taken, to varying degrees, as political acts of resistance to the hegemonic power of non-indigenous elites. To construct this argument, I look at how NGOs' use of development and notions of modernity positions indigenous subalterns as objects in need of improvement[3], thereby reinforcing negative connotations surrounding indigenous life. In many instances, NGOs associate indigenous identities with negative notions of rural, backwards, traditional peoples who are confined to endemic poverty.

More importantly, by analyzing how this process plays out, I examine how asserting or suppressing a strong indigenous identity is related to each of the three outcomes. In doing so, I consider the influence that NGO governmentality has on indigenous peoples' habitus, particularly in terms of embodiment (Bourdieu 1977). This includes behavioral patterns—such as eye contact or clothing and food preferences, as well as hygiene and domestic practices. I also consider some psychological effects, such as having particular career goals[4] and economic or lifestyle dispositions. Using this theoretical framework, which combines Foucault's notions of governmentality, biopower, and discipline with Bourdieu's conception of habitus, allows me to create a framework that clearly highlights the power relations at play between NGOs and indigenous peoples. It also allows me to question what is produced by these relations—that is, it makes visible the processes and the outcomes of discourses and techniques of *superación* in Guatemala.

Previous literature demonstrates how governmentality and discourses of improvement are used by those with power to control those without. For instance, in her work on Indonesian development NGOs, Tania Li shows how ultimately, "the will to empower others hinges upon positioning oneself as an expert with the power to diagnose and correct a deficit in power in someone else" and as such, "empowerment is still […] a relationship of power" (2007, 4996). Similarly, in her work on Mexico, Vania Smith-Oka describes how such power imbalances in developmental interventions "set up systems to shape, integrate, and control the population" into idealized neoliberal citizens (2013, 30). As I show below, despite the problematic nature of the ways in which NGOs and governments use biopower and governmentality[5] to control indigenous women (and their reproductive bodies) and the racialized and gendered nature of this oppression, the heterogeneity of the very category "indigenous women" opens spaces of resistance. I suggest here that understanding the interdependent relationship between indigenous women and those carrying out the work of governmentality—both the state and NGOs—along with the complex politics of identity they come into contact with, makes clear the new spaces of contestation and community within these asymmetrical power relations.

In this paper, I bear in mind how women's experience with development programs interacts with concepts of gender, class, and nationality in their articulation and performance of identity. I also take into account the relational and contingent nature of identity (Postero, n.d.; Nelson 1999) by looking at the ways that

the discourses of improvement used by those working with governmentality affect people's understanding of indigeneity. Lastly, I analyze how this mediation of indigeneity feeds *back* into their interaction with development, producing communities of solidarity that have the potential to overcome certain problems that arise with NGO work. In this way, I view the notion of development as merely problematic and apolitical, instead showing how it interacts with complex notions of indigeneity to open spaces of potential resistance to hegemonic power.

That is, I ask: how does development provide a site for particular performances of indigeneity? Answering this question means analyzing the categories of the *ladinoized* Indian[6] (those who have turned their backs on their indigenous identity) and "*indio permitido*" (or authorized Indian) (Hale 2002; Hale and Millamán 2006) as well as the identities belonging in the "third space" that do not fall in either of these categories. Before examining those categories, let me briefly describe first, the methodology of the paper; second, how the theories of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu provide the necessary analytical base for conceptualizing these three categories; and third, how these categories have been defined and managed historically in Guatemala.

Methodology

This paper draws on my own research in Guatemala as well as a variety of existing literature on development, governmentality, and NGOs. While my own research in Guatemala certainly informs the questions I ask and the analysis I develop, I use the data presented by other authors—such as Smith-Oka (2013), Nelson (1999), Radcliffe (2015), Li (2007), and Hale (2002, 2006)—to make a more substantive argument about the nature of the interactions between the fetishized state and the overdetermined indigenous woman, and how these inform indigenous subjectivities. The work of these authors illuminates how the forms of disciplinary power accompanying development reinforce colonial conceptions of race by asserting non-indigenous ways of being. I use their arguments to analyze my own experiences in order to look at how these "modernizing" projects affect indigenous identities, making it evident that a "third space" is needed to fully explain what is produced by this exercise of power.

I draw on ethnographic research I conducted in 2013 and 2015 to examine the ways that various forms of governmentality associated with *superación* can have negative effects on indigenous identities and livelihoods, while at the same time creating spaces for other, more positive practices to develop within a community. The latter became especially clear while working with two education programs in Guatemala City: ITA and UVG, both of which provided grants for underprivileged rural students as well as a health and hygiene organization that aimed to "teach" indigenous women about ladino nutrition and child-rearing practices[7]. Focusing on the experience of this group of students and indigenous mothers as they entered development institutions that not only uphold, but also instill neoliberal values, makes clear how mainstream conceptualizations of indigeneity affect people's understanding of what it means to be indigenous in Guatemala. I describe some of the experiences indigenous youth had with these programs in

the sections that follow. As I interviewed program directors, undergraduates and graduates of the program, one word was repeatedly used to describe what the students and mothers were accomplishing for themselves: *superación* (betterment or overcoming)[8]. The reason this term is troublesome is that people—both ladinos and indigenous—would use it to express the low expectations many Guatemalans had for indigenous youth. It is related to what Hale (2006) argues when he analyzes an informant's desire to be "*Más que un indio*" (More than an Indian). Since being "indigenous" is associated with poverty, backwardness, and inferiority, the notion that these students can have such neoliberal accomplishments—that is, attending prestigious, private universities; having good positions in major companies in Guatemala City; and having escaped the cycle of poverty—signifies that they have exceeded the expectations for being indigenous.

Furthermore, the emphasis on *superación* creates a notion that anyone can improve their situation in life through hard work— a concept that does not consider the structural inequalities and lack of opportunities in the country (again the notion of victim-blaming). Due to the apolitical nature of development, many of the students did not criticize or denounce larger structural problems during my interviews, but rather blamed the nature of Guatemalans (suggesting the image of a wounded body politic, see Nelson 1999). They spoke of Guatemala as a divided nation, thus creating people who are competitive and selfish, and consequently cannot "progress."

My research takes into consideration the idea that, "Culture has often served as a 'therapeutic myth, meant to explain why we fall ill and why we get well'— (and) in Guatemala, poverty, backwardness, and other social ills have been blamed on indigenous culture" (Nelson 1999, 125; See also Merry 2003, 64). In the case of the students in this development program, they were taught that part of "succeeding" in the elite economic sphere was adopting westernized habits, such as styles of dress and eating customs. As part of the program they underwent etiquette classes, where they were told how to eat "properly" with a fork and a knife, as well as how to have a "powerful" handshake and dress accordingly for business interviews. Moreover, living in a Catholic residency in the city changed their diet from tortillas to bread, from pure coffee to the sweeter kinds, and to a larger quantity of meat and desserts than any of them were accustomed to. It placed them in spaces of elite power, while reminding them, through their habitus—including their limited purchasing power, their darker skin, their different clothes—that they were never fully part of the elite. In this way, *superación* can work subtly, suggesting to students in bodily and intimate ways, that their own culture is "backwards," and that their upbringing is what marks them as "un-civilized." It is important to take these negative conceptions of "indigenous culture" into account when considering the formation of indigenous identity and to understand the ways indigenous people are affected by, and react to, the associations and implications of belonging to this ethnic minority.

Moving Towards a Theoretical Base: Incorporating Foucault and Bourdieu's Contributions

Foucault's genealogy of power is useful not only because it makes visible the power inequalities at play in the interaction between indigenous women and NGOs, but also because it illuminates how the bodies of indigenous women are disciplined as part of the larger mechanism operating within development work. His work has allowed us to understand how biopower and techniques of the self are used to govern and control populations through the body. The human body is often a contested site of power and dominance, where subjectivity is formed. Throughout this paper, I use Foucault's notions of biopower and techniques of the self to show how bodies are policed through forms of governmentality in Guatemala. That is, I focus on how power is exercised on the bodies of indigenous women and young students to mold them into ideal neoliberal citizens through their participation in development programs.

For Foucault, power is invested throughout society, immanently present in relations so that there is no one person or state in charge, but rather, there are various forms of power. He writes of the body as a site of power and explains how the body is disciplined (1977, 129-131, 136). There are many techniques that aim to normalize populations, such as the development of a work ethic or a time schedule, documentation and examination, space, and even the development of efficient bodily motions. Foucault recounts how throughout (Western) society these forms of practice and discipline are being used to create docile and functional bodies needed for capitalism. This new form of normalizing power makes the disciplining of our own bodies a form of power that feels natural, in such a way that those who are outside of it are considered dangerous and unintelligible[9]. Here, the term unintelligible is used to refer to the "abnormal individual" such that "all the mechanisms of power […] are disposed around" the unintelligible subject in an attempt to alter her (Foucault 1977, 199).

Foucault describes power as immanent in every relation, and argues that power and knowledge come together (100). It is in discourse that power is both reinforced and exposed "render[ing] it fragile and mak[ing] it possible to thwart it" (101). As a system of shared representations, discourse not only produces resistance, but it also produces subjects by making certain people visible. In this way, discourse and power/knowledge, like normalizing power, differentiate between docile bodies (or intelligible subjects) and those who are outside of intelligibility and who must be disciplined. While in this scenario, discipline is enacted on individuals, and biopower is conceiving these individuals in terms of populace, as members of a whole healthy population. In order to access intelligibility, the body must be subjected to all of this, and so becomes disciplined and normalized.

Because power is not an institution or a structure—nor does it stem from a central point or actor—it is ultimately individuals themselves (as opposed to a dominant class or government) that exert these disciplining techniques of the self on themselves. Producing a category of bodies that falls outside of this intelligibility means that they become the object of a gaze. Foucault is speaking of an instrument of governance concerned with populations: a power fundamentally concerned with the management of the

body politic, which has "as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security" (1978, 102). Thus, Foucault introduces the governmentality of non-state mechanisms: something that can be particularly applied to NGOs.

This is evidenced when NGOs take up the concept of *superación* in the neoliberal attempt to "better" rural indigenous peoples and overcome their rural, underdeveloped dispositions. By analyzing *superación* as a discourse, two different subjects are produced: the first is the underdeveloped, poor (and in most cases, female) indigenous target of NGO *capacitación*[10], the unintelligible subject. The second is the "modern," urban (and in most cases, male) ladino who is seen as the ideal citizen, the intelligible subject. While NGO technicians themselves may not necessarily be male (even, in a few cases, not necessarily ladino), the discourses of improvement make it clear that, as subjects of development, being poor, indigenous, and female means you are at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. Moreover, in the interaction between NGO workers and their indigenous counterparts, what emerges are systems of power inequalities that continually reinforce both beliefs and behaviors that promote ladino and male superiority. Through the normative implications of governmentality in this discourse, indigenous people are brought into development as docile bodies, a category that immediately marks them as lesser—i.e., not as full citizens or "Guatemalans."

Having been imagined so, indigenous women are disciplined: the discourses of *superación* are tied to the apparatus of governmentality, which, using a wide range of technologies, attempts to normalize alterity into ladino forms of being. In this scenario, the aim of development work is to manage this population of unintelligible (indigenous) subalterns and shape them into intelligible subjects. This is possible, in part, due to the constant surveillance that occurs in the uneven interactions between NGO workers and their "target populations." In this process, technologies of discipline come in the form of hygiene training, etiquette classes, self-esteem talks, and generally promoting practices and ideas that arise from, and reinforce, the superiority of the Westernized ladino elite. Those subjects who fail to become docile bodies are labeled recalcitrant, backwards, underdeveloped, and are blamed for their own poverty.

A Foucauldian analysis is certainly helpful for understanding power and its workings. However, the literature I analyzed, as well as my own research, made it clear that the indigenous body is a site of both discipline *and* resistance. Foucault's model leaves little room for agency and individual resistance. In this regard, Bourdieu's model—albeit, while still restricting individual agency—is useful in his use of habitus, which is helpful in conceptualizing how certain structures such as the past, political economy, racism, poverty, culture, etc., shape individual behavior. In a way, Bourdieu's framework has more room for an analysis of subjectivity where the "third space" is present. Here, I outline the concept of habitus more carefully and state how it informs my analysis of power relations between NGOs and their indigenous subjects.

Although Bourdieu describes habitus in many different ways, we can understand it to be grounded in practice and defined as "systems of durable, transportable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (1977, 52-53). As a system of dispositions, habitus is also a consequence of history, meaning that it is shaped by past experiences. Habitus, Bourdieu adds, is also generative: "embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history—is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product" (1977, 56). By using past experiences to shape these structures, habitus conditions and shapes practice in a way that, despite being slightly unpredictable, is also limited. In this way, Bourdieu introduces the concept of structures, and how these govern our practice through habitus (1980, 55). This does not mean that the social actor has no agency, but rather that it is through habitus that we are both constrained and given the independence to act in different manners[11]: "the habitus is an infinite capacity for generating products—thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production" (1980, 55).

For Bourdieu, domination is established through habitus, which reinforces the established social order. It does so by creating practices that make it "unthinkable" to conceive reality in a different manner. Moreover, Bourdieu argues that "habitus and its strategies in setting up and perpetuating durable relations of domination is once again an effect of the structure of the field" (1980, 130). Furthermore, we find the question of structure versus agency: how much of our habitus is structured by doxa and the dominating field[12]? How much agency is allowed within habitus to a variety of practices? How much power do individuals have to notice and struggle against the institutionalized and symbolic strategies that give dominant groups control over social structure and consciousness (1977, 138)? This struggle, Bourdieu acknowledges, gives social science its objective: making it "a reality that encompasses all the individual and collective struggles aimed at conserving or transforming reality, in particular those that seek to impose the legitimate definition of reality, whose specifically symbolic efficacy can help to conserve or subvert the established order" (1977, 141).

Using Bourdieu to deconstruct *superación* makes evident how important the role of habitus is when it comes to establishing and sustaining relations of ladino domination. While habitus is structured by one's socio-economic status, family, religion, education, and ethnicity, NGOs can also have an effect on it. I argue that development works first to internalize the inferior position of indigenous peoples in the country's class and ethnic hierarchy, and second to reinforce behaviors that either erase indigeneity or police it so that it does not threaten the current order of things. My analysis of development in Guatemala makes clear use of how habitus works (or does not work), how it comes into existence, how it is propagated by institutionalized modes of domination, and how it affects future behavior or practice. As I expand throughout the paper, ladino superiority is reinforced through practices and bodily hexis that build on Guatemala's long history of racial hegemony.

However, the result is not a simple equation where input and surveillance from NGOs is taken up by their beneficiaries to conform and adapt their habitus to this regime. Rather, the resulting practices that emerge can have unintended consequences on the subjectivity of those involved. Thus, while in most cases NGOs teach submission and conformity with the hegemonic world order that places indigenous ways of being at the bottom of the social ladder, it also gives these people tools that can be used to challenge this same order. Changing bodily practices on the one hand erases indigenous practices in favor of ladino ones, but on the other hand it makes people more intelligible in the eyes of that same ladino society. In this way, NGOs enable traditionally disenfranchised people to make demands according to the conventions of the ladinoized political society.

In many instances, what development programs attempt to teach (in terms of behavior modification) is quite different from their actual results. In some cases people react against the impositions of NGOs by asserting their own ways of being and not conforming to the hegemonic conceptions of social difference and hierarchy that are being imposed on them. Here, the spaces where NGOs work become sites of resistance, where people can come together to protest the harmful ways that mainstream *mestizo* society treats them.

To summarize, Bourdieu and Foucault provide lenses and analytical models by which we can make sense of society, particularly the way power and discipline affect a person's understanding of the self and the behaviors that are accorded to such a person through habitus. However, their theories leave little room for explaining the work that occurs at the interstices between habitus and field, and outside of binomial classifications of normal/abnormal individuals. The framework that arises from combining Foucault's notions of discipline provides a conceptual model that effortlessly explains how the forms of governmentality associated with development produce *indios permitidos* and erasures of indigeneity, suggesting that a third theoretical conception must be added to this base in order to build an analytical model that can account for all that is being produced by *superación*.

Indigeneity and Difference in Guatemala

Indigeneity is a central category of difference in Guatemala. Statistically speaking, the last governmental census in Guatemala identified around 4.4 million people of Mayan descent out of a total population of 14 million, and despite a certain unreliability of census numbers due to the self-identification variable—which may vary depending on factors such as how the question is framed—these percentages do convey a sense of just how sizable this minority group is. It is also exceedingly important to note that, although the term *the Mayas* is used to talk collectively about the indigenous peoples of Guatemala as a single indigenous group, this obscures the degree of linguistic, social, and cultural diversity possessed by the different ethnic groups within Guatemala. Similarly, this collective language should not be interpreted to mean that their own ethnic consciousness and culture is homogenous or static.

With the end of the military dictatorship in 1986 and the rise of the Maya cultural rights movement, the Guatemalan state has become a site of demand, where Maya activists and popular groups can petition and claim certain rights (mostly regarding citizenship) from the state (Nelson 1999). It would be impossible to analyze the current affair of ethnic relations and identifications in Guatemala without taking into consideration the long history of nation-building practices and policies that have been enacted in the name of building and consolidating the "imagined community" (Anderson 1983). Much of the perceived power of the state comes from first, its presentation of itself as clearly bounded and second, the way it is able to associate itself with modernity. Thus, the state comes to be shaped through "struggles over culture and history, over modernity and tradition, and over Mayan and national identity [which] articulate the state, modify its identity, and penetrate the apparent boundaries between state and civil society" (Nelson 1999, 76-77).

As early as the nineteenth century, and certainly throughout the twentieth, Central American states adopted liberal ideas that prompted a variety of reforms in the name of modernization (Hale 2002). During this time, nation-states developed discourses of *mestizaje* as a tool of nation building, seeking to address "the indigenous question," which presented indigenous cultures (and their status as "other" or different) as a hindrance to development and modernity. Fundamentally, the indigenous "problem" boiled down to the issue "that 'the Indian question[ed] the very existence of the nation' and did not allow it to be a unified entity (Sanz Jara 2009, 262)" (in Smith-Oka 2013, 33; See also Nelson 1999, 181). Ultimately, *mestizaje* discourses maintain "that indigenous culture is inevitably, almost naturally, destined to disappear, replaced by a hardy and unique hybrid national culture that draws sustenance from both indigenous and European traditions" (Hale 2002, 500). Thus, in everyday practice and policies, such discourses[13] tend to be quite discriminatory against indigenous cultures, valuing European and ladino identities above indigenous livelihoods (doing very little to alleviate the marginalization of these populations).

The twentieth century also saw an attempt at liberal "modernization," which tended to aggravate the problems of discrimination and poverty issues already present in rural and indigenous communities. This endeavor is described by many as "a homogenizing political and cultural project" (Similox 2005),[14] which promoted assimilation by discouraging communal life and confiscating communal lands, and by encouraging monolingual education (in Spanish) and liberal economic policies, which stressed the importance of developing a market economy (Similox 2005; Stavenhagen 2002). Many of these "modernization" plans became policies of exclusion, the most notable being the "asymmetric distribution of land and the unequal access to the territorial property"[15] (Cayzac 2001, 39, translation. See also Casallas and Padilla 2004; Stavenhagen 2002), which led to the systematic impoverishment of not only indigenous populations, but also of the ladino rural populations, with over fifty percent of the population living below the poverty line. Indeed, some scholars suggest that this economic factor played one of the

most significant roles in the uprisings against the government that began the Civil War (Cayzac 2001; Stavenhagen 2002).

In this way, *mestizaje* joins discourses of modernization to create a "narrative of progress" that was reinforced through political tracts, educational textbooks, and even novels (Stephenson 1999, 809). In most instances such progress was equated with the three basic themes of modernity: "the great divide between nature and culture (or society), the colonial difference between moderns and nonmoderns, and a unidirectional linear temporality that flows from past to future" (Blaser 2010, 4). This colonial divide is particularly important for the maintenance of current power imbalances and the implementation of state power.

Thus, despite the strong attempts at forming a single ethnic identity within the country and uniting the nation under a homogenous imagined community (Anderson 1983), the Guatemalan nation-state is still characterized as a broken body politic (Nelson 1999). This fact carried on after the civil war, and led many to fear that Guatemala's next conflict would be a violent ethnic confrontation—especially with the rise of the Maya cultural rights movement (Hale 2006; Nelson 1999). Indeed, "the failure of Ladino elites to construct a cohesive national identity and constitute the majority of the population as citizens" led directly to the "ideological struggles surrounding national identity" (Grandin 2000) that characterize the subsequent rise of multiculturalism.

Debates surrounding nation-building and national identity were also relevant during the armed conflict that ravaged the country for over 30 years (1960-1996) and have had a profound influence on the Maya cultural rights movement. With over 200,000 people dead or disappeared—the majority of them indigenous—the atmosphere that pervaded was one of terror. Arising from an oppressive and monopolized power scheme, Guatemala entered a period characterized (even more than ever) as one of intolerance and exclusion, as well as by a lack of accountability, legal order, and respect for the law (Cayzac 2001). The war has been labeled genocidal[16] due to the brutal repression against indigenous communities, even when it was not solely indigenous peoples who were the subject of ruthless killings. Indeed, "the counterinsurgency discourse that justified killing off peoples 'to the last seed' targeted indigenous people, but primarily as they were seen as subversives and thus subsumed in the larger category of adversary to the health of the body politic" (Nelson 1999, 95). Thus, examining the vicious atrocities and aftermaths of the Civil War is crucial to understanding both the rise of a Pan-Maya identity and the cultural rights movement as well as understanding how indigenous peoples see themselves and are seen in relation to the Guatemalan body politic.

In recent years, the neoliberal era has brought about an age of NGO professionalization and multiculturalism, which have taken over the nation building project and are now charged with dealing with indigenous peoples (that is, in managing difference, including gender). While the end of the Civil War made it impossible to deny that indigenous peoples have been oppressed and discriminated against

since colonial times and that their socioeconomic marginalization continues today, the question of how to redress thousands of years of mistreatment is still spiritedly debated. While some disagree on how to carry out this compensation—with minority rights, government ministries, women's rights groups, land compensation, to name a few—others with more neoliberal agendas still dispute the very idea of collective rights.

Even when neoliberalism acknowledges difference (cultural, ethnic, linguistic) "the hierarchies upon which they rest—gender, race, and sexuality—remain firmly in place (Wade 2009, 217-8)" (in Radcliffe 2015, 324). What's more, the discourses of development and human rights need the modern-traditional dichotomy—with culture and indigeneity falling into the latter—just as much as the discourses of nation-building do (Merry 2003, 58). Moreover, the era of multiculturalism brought with it a new version of Foucault's (1997) panopticon in the form of the professionalized NGO (Hale 2002, 496). The governmentality exercised by development experts and NGOs is deeply tied to colonial legacies of racism and hegemony, something that deeply affects indigenous women. A recent study done by the National Survey of Living Conditions (Encovi, Encuesta Nacional de Condiciones de Vida), carried out by the National Institute for Statistics (INE, Instituto Nacional de Estadística) and the World Bank (MSPAS 2017), shows how indigenous women continue to be disproportionately impoverished and uneducated[17]. Beyond statistics, "the biopolitics of postcolonial intersectionality bring power relations down to the scale of the body, linking identities to bodies, thereby naturalizing routine exclusion" (Radcliffe 2015, 300). Radcliffe also describes how, in Ecuador, "*Indígenas*' poverty, racialization and abjection in postcolonial hierarchies remained yet again outside the factors to be considered in policy that focused excessively on their bodies and reproduction" (2014, 327). She asserts that in the Ecuadorian case, neoliberal development has maintained both colonial racial categories and the sexualized conceptions of these, something that is also true of Guatemala (2014, 339).

While such sobering interpretations may appear as major setbacks, there is no denying the fact that the stage has changed dramatically in regards to both articulating and negotiating an indigenous identity, as well as negotiating with the state. Nelson reminds us that the rise of cultural identities can be used for political gain (to make demands, to gain power, etc.) by arguing that culture can be both a technique of governmentality used by the state and a strategy of resistance used by Maya activists (1999, 115). Similarly, Mario Blaser argues that activist movements involving indigenous groups can have powerful results: "Indigenous peoples' agency and their alliances with wider movements themselves can have, and sometimes have had, transformative effects on the emergence of alternative structures of governance that are not rooted in globalizing development" (Blaser et al. 2004, 2). That is, while discourses of indigeneity, in all its formulations (as part of *mestizaje* or multiculturalism) can have very clear negative effects on indigenous identities and livelihoods, they can also have positive consequences for these same communities.

Indio Permitido

As suggested in the previous section, the way government (both the state and NGOs) has managed difference has had a lasting effect on indigenous identities and subjectivities. While governmentality can certainly produce a complete erasure of identity (see section below), in the neoliberal context certain applications of this exercise of power can also retain Maya subjectivities while impeding significant social reform. Hale (2002) describes a form of governmentality he calls "neoliberal multiculturalism," which conducts behavior and is enacted through non-state transnational organizations. In the case he describes, the normalizing effect of discipline and power-knowledge (menacingly) produced two types of indigenous subjects: the neoliberal Indian (or "*indio permitido*"[18]) and the dangerous, revolutionary Indian (or "*indio prohibido*"). By "endors[ing] some facets of multiculturalism, so long as it does not go too far" (2002, 490), multiculturalism shapes Mayan subjectivities and aims to "re-activat[e] the community as [an] effective agent in the reconstitution of the Indian citizen-subject" (2002, 496). In this way, through various power relations (or structures) indigenous bodies and behaviors are disciplined by professionalized NGOs, which Hale describes as the new panopticon (2002, 491; Foucault 1997).

The result is a recognition of difference that does not translate into tangible rights or privileges. Instead, the state and its allies work to conduct the habitus of civil society and indigenous culture in a way that instills techniques of the self that ensure non-radical, neoliberal subjects (Hale 2002, 496). As I discussed earlier, modernity and ladino identity are linked together: "speaking Spanish, wearing 'western' clothing, and enjoying access to advanced technology has historically defined ladinos as against the tradition, superstition, and backwardness of indigenous culture" (Nelson 1999, 78). Consequently, when indigenous peoples perform these "modern" behaviors they are seen as leaving their indigenous identity behind in favor of a ladino one. Alternatively, there are also people who choose to assert their indigenous identity while integrating themselves into ladino cultural spheres. In these cases, their indigenous identity is perceived by the ladino elites as non-threatening due to their endorsement (openly and implicitly) of neoliberal and multicultural ideals.

Many NGOs work with these ideas in mind, aiming to "modernize" the indigenous, impoverished, and oftentimes, rural populations they work with. In many instances this is seen as a socioeconomic question, where empowerment is achieved by economic integration and the adoption of westernized customs. The notion that *superación* is about class is also touched on by Nelson (1999)[19], who suggests that for many, "Indians will be freed from their chains when they unite behind the battle fatigues of the guerrilla (for neoliberal ladinos, behind a three-piece Armani business suit)" (233).

During my work with the ITA and UVG scholarship programs, most of the workers and the majority of the students who were part of the program appeared to feel that a rise in class would erase the low status of their indigeneity. Take, for example, Carlos[20], the first student to become part of the UVG program. Dressed in a sharp business suit, he was one of the few indigenous informants to openly speak about his

Mayan descent from the very start. His office, which was located in one of the many high-rises that make up Guatemala City's business district, provided a stark contrast to any of the stereotypes commonly held about Guatemala's indigenous populations. The building was extremely busy, with men and women in suits or company uniforms bustling about, and private security workers visible everywhere. Upon arriving there, I presented my ID at the street entrance, walked through a metal detector while a security guard wrote down my information, and then waited ten minutes for an elevator to arrive. After getting off the elevator on the tenth floor, another security guard, this time sitting at a desk in front of what clearly looked like a bullet-proof glass wall, wrote down my information. He buzzed the front desk so another security-guard-turned-receptionist could open the door and let me in to the waiting area. Once inside, I was pointed to a tiny sitting area in between two thick, bullet-proof doors where I was to wait. The security guard then informed Carlos through an intercom that I had arrived.

Such increased security has become commonplace in the elite business world of Guatemala City. With the rise in violent crimes and murders throughout the country[21], privatized security has become yet another means by which the poor are segregated from the rich.[22] The consequences of such segregation only exacerbate the rising levels of income inequality in the country by making those who cannot afford private security vulnerable to extortions and theft at the hands of violent gangs and criminals. Moreover, security procedures such as the one in Carlos' high-rise mark a clear divide between those who belong inside the air-conditioned buildings and those who are left outside to face the harsh realities of the Guatemalan capital.

After a few more minutes of waiting for Carlos in this setting, he came to this second, also bullet-proof glass door and let me in to where the offices were. The elegant, double ceilinged hallway leading to his office was lined with professionally taken pictures of Mayan people in traditional clothing. As we sat down to begin our interview, a uniformed employee brought us glasses of water and asked if we would be needing anything else. We thanked the *señorita* for our water, he silenced his blackberry, turned down the air conditioning, and we began our interview. Carlos was an alumnus of one of the prestigious, private universities in Guatemala City. Unlike most of the people graduating from these institutions, however, he had grown up in an underprivileged family, in a rural area of the country. Like many of the indigenous students I interviewed, Carlos had been the recipient of a comprehensive scholarship meant to give bright, disadvantaged students the opportunity to attend college in the private universities of the City. His story is remarkable: not only was he the first student to have received the scholarship and attended UVG with it, he was now both a professor there and held a very successful job at one of Guatemala's largest and wealthiest corporations.

Coming from a rural area of the country and born of indigenous parents, his profile was markedly different from the rest of Guatemala City's top executives. Carlos recounted the challenges and pressure he felt growing up to quit school to work and start a family (both direct pressure from his family and

societal pressure from his peers). After having failed out of school and working as a carpenter for a couple of years, Carlos decided to go back to school. After winning first place in a national science championship, he was chosen by the scholarship program, JBG (a privately founded non-profit that had decided to expand by finding talented youth and providing scholarships for them). As he sat there in front of me dressed in a blue suit and tie, playing with his blackberry, it was hard to imagine him in any other context, much less a small rural town. To those who had introduced me to Carlos and the JBG and ITA programs, he was living proof of how development through education can break the cycle of poverty and backwardness associated with being indigenous. What these elite program directors and ladino university staff failed to acknowledge, however, was that—because of Guatemala's extremely high levels of income inequality as well as racist attitudes[23]—Carlos was a very small exception, rather than the rule.

He repeatedly told me how his success, and that of other JBG students, was a question of attitude, emphasizing that the combination of high self-esteem and hard work he had developed during his years with the program had led to strong "self-empowerment." Carlos insisted on distancing himself from those indigenous activists he saw as "*tajantes*" (stubborn or backward)[24], and instead embodying the "modern businessman" (Hale 2002). On one occasion he denounced the notion of collective rights, and argued vehemently against the government providing special rights for minorities:

> I don't want, just because I am indigenous, I don't want to be gifted a job or be gifted a house, or be gifted a piece of land, like, if my being indigenous is the reason you want to give me all these things, just because I am from that place, then you are cutting off my feet and my hands! I want to be recognized for my talent and my capacities and for what I am.[25]

In this way, by embodying the *indio permitido*[26] role Hale describes, Carlos was able to openly admit he was indigenous (notably, one of the few students who did so with ease and detail), and that he came from a rural background, while at the same time distancing himself from the perceived negative stereotypes of being associated with such identities. Moreover, distancing himself from the "extremists" of the Mayan rights movement served to promote the notion that development truly is the solution to the poverty and marginalization of Guatemala's poor. What's more, Carlos was also taking up the neoliberal discourse of the entrepreneurial individual who achieves success solely through his or her hard work.

Erasure of Identity

While discourses of development have the potential to mold indigenous identities into neoliberally permissible categories (see above, Hale 2002), this is not always the case. Governmentality work can also come to stamp out—often through very violent and intimate ways—an indigenous livelihood and identification (though these are hard to define in and of themselves). In this sense, NGOs take up "the indigenous problem" in such a way that Guatemalan society's ambivalence towards its indigenous

components leads to "the pervasive sense that Indians must be brought out of those spaces, assimilated into a larger community and national project" (Nelson 1999, 87). This means that on many occasions, the work of development NGOs pressures and urges people to abandon their indigenous identification altogether in favor of assimilating into the ladino majority. For many, including both NGO professionals and those they work with, development is seen as a linear project as indigenous, rural, and backwards at one end (the beginning) and ladino, modern, prosperous on the other (the goal). Moreover, keeping indigenous peoples at the beginning of this linear progress myth means that "as long as this catching-up process remained incomplete, Indians could be considered legitimate objects of intervention" (Blaser 2010, 50).

The strength of this push to erasure was clear in an interview I had with Rafael[27], an indigenous entrepreneur who ran a very successful and profitable business in the city. While he was not a graduate of the ITA or JBG program, I had been introduced by two former JGB students who regarded him highly. Though his last name and accent attested to his being considered indigenous, I was still very careful about bringing up the subject of his ethnic identity[28]. When we finally touched the topic of his hometown in the highlands, I attempted to ask a question that would go into more depth about his background; however, his answer provided the background to how he had managed to establish his business in the city. Thinking I had been misunderstood, I rephrased the question to ask about his learning of Spanish (something that other informants had brought up when talking about being indigenous). Again, he avoided the question and proceeded to talk about more specific aspects of his commerce.

Though I was puzzled at the moment, understanding this as a desire to distance himself not only from an identification as "*tajante*" (Hale 2002), but from an indigenous identity altogether indicated more than a mere misunderstanding of a question (as I had originally thought). By blatantly refusing to even acknowledge my question, Rafael was in fact communicating that he did not wish to elaborate on the topic of his hometown or the language he spoke because they are both clear indications of, or ties to, being indigenous. In a country, and particularly a city, that juxtaposes indigenous and ladino negatively, it would make sense for people to want to distance themselves from being indigenous and thus from all the things that indigeneity can come to evoke. Moreover, there is also an influence from a "cultural discourse" (*discurso cultural*), which "associates the indigenous with a fixed series of 'cultural' attributes and supposes that when these attributes fade or change, indigenous identity decreases accordingly" (2004)[29].

Rafael and many of the other students' hesitation to identify as indigenous can be interpreted first, as part of this cultural discourse that suggests economic success and urban life as incompatible with indigeneity. Second, it can also be considered as an aversion to being associated with the stigmas related to being a minority in Guatemala, exemplifying how the "subtle assumption of superiority permeates—not automatically, but as strong, diffuse propensities and patterns—the entire range of life experiences" (Hale

2006). It is no surprise then, that with the added pressure of NGOs' discourses and technologies of development—explicitly stating that they aim to improve and train (*capacitar*) those who are seen as inferior, and producing the practices it deems necessary to achieve such an improvement—the desire to leave an indigenous identity behind intensifies.

"*Nosotras no somos castellanos, pero con la ayuda de GuateAyuda lo estamos logrando*"

I was sitting inside a darkened, small meeting room in a village close to Tecpán, Guatemala. Magdalena[30], the woman I was speaking to, had just completed the first phase in a two-part women's empowerment program run by the Guatemalan NGO GuateAyuda[31] and we were celebrating her graduation (along with nine other women). We had left the city early in the morning, and after stopping for breakfast in Tecpán we met up at the local office with the rest of the team's technicians and Tecpan's priest. We followed GuateAyuda's pickup truck through the unpaved, bumpy road, eventually arriving at the village community room, amid breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains. During our journey up, the director and co-founder of the program, Esteban[32], had been explaining to me how the ceremony was the culmination of a year and a half of *capacitación* or "training"[33] as well as distancing GuateAyuda from the various other NGOs that worked in the same village (as evidenced by the many posters and flyers on the road advertising a myriad of development agencies around the area).

During multiple occasions both volunteers and workers told me that the organization's goals were "to leave the women's culture intact." Esteban said that this meant that "we don't want to influence the women's language or dress or really their culture." For this reason, most of the *capacitación* the women got was taught in their native languages, in their own villages. It was interesting, however, that he had specifically mentioned language and dress as the main component of women's culture and did not consider how habitus, household organization, or any other component of daily life could be considered a part of culture. The association's separation between what they perceived as "secular" hygiene and nutrition instruction and the racialized indigenous bodies they aimed to work with was not clear in real life, however. That is, there was no way to talk about these topics (hygiene, nutrition, and childcare) without touching on cultural traditions.

Moreover, when I asked who was able to participate in the program, or who counted as a "*socia*," a businesslike term used to describe the women that chose to work with GuateAyuda, I was told it was "mothers—or future mothers!" Thus exemplifying again the way indigenous women's bodies are both gendered and radicalized as they are chosen to be the targets of elite development organizations. In this case the indigenous maternal body was seen as faulty and as such "needing help" or improvement. For it was on the body of the mother, "*la mujer encinta*" (the pregnant woman), and of the mother's children that the organization focused. A woman who was not a mother, or a future mother, was not even considered as existing by the program. In addition, there was also a patriarchal relationship between the organization itself and the "*socias*" (business partners) apparent in the language with which the women

expressed their fear of "graduating" from the first phase of the program and being abandoned. More specifically, however, it was clear in the (often condescending) way the organization's technicians and volunteers regarded and spoke of these women.

This is emblematic of the larger hegemonic system within the country, which places indigenous women at the lowest rung of society. Moreover, it also reinforces the idea that in order to *superarse*, even in the domestic realm, there needs to be an adoption of white, western customs and values. Furthermore, the structuring of the program seems to suggest that, in order to achieve economic advancement and independence, women must first be taught how to become "*castellanas*." This implied correlation—perhaps even causation—between household and bodily improvement and economic growth once again reinforces the notion of indigenous inferiority and victim-blaming. What's more, it also reinforces the patriarchal belief that women's value and productivity lies merely in her household work and reproductive body (an ironic fact considering that the organization strictly avoided any topics regarding reproductive and sexual health).

The "Third Space"; Forming Communities and Finding Resistance at the Interstices

The struggle to mediate and define an indigenous identity encompasses both the long history of colonialism and marginalization, and the way that *indigenous* is associated with poverty, backwardness, and inferiority, especially for those coming from rural areas of the country—which has similar connotations of "underdevelopment" and "traditional." These associations are necessary in order to present ladinos and the state as "developed" and "modern," thus creating a codependent relationship between feminized indigenous tradition and masculine ladino modernity. Despite these negative and neo-colonial connotations ascribed to indigeneity, culture can also provide a "third space" beyond the binomial of oppressor and oppressed (Hale 1997; Bhabha 1990; Nelson 1999; Radcliffe 2015, 302). In such a way, Hale reminds us, "the term 'subversion' sheds its former meaning of 'conspiring against the system' and refers instead to the art of working at the interstices, finding the inevitable cracks and contradictions in the oppressor's identity, discourse, or institutional practice, and using them to the subaltern's advantage" (1997, 581).

Bhabha's original conception of the term is tied to representational strategies of hybridity, where he analyzed "hybridization as subversion of authority in a dialogical situation of colonialism" (Wolf 2000, 133; Bhabha 1990). For Bhabha, understanding the power relations at play in postcolonial contexts makes evident an "in-between space" of hybridity between the elite and the subaltern "other" because these categories are continually influenced by each other (Bhabha 1990). Thus, the possibility for the renegotiation of these oppositional and seemingly binary categories exists in this third space of hybridity. Building on this, Wolf establishes that "the space in-between […] exists in everyday life [and] It is in this everyday encounter that new meaning can be produced" (2000, 137). In her analysis she adds to Bhabha's understanding of the "third space" by drawing from feminist theory[34] to argue away from a "clash of

civilizations" and into one of intertext (in the sense of a semiotic transformation), which consciously creates an in-between space. By bringing together Bhabha with feminist and linguistic theory, Wolf demonstrates how this concept of the "third space" remains useful for ethnographers (and translators), in order to conceptualize the ways in which subalterns can find spaces beyond the damaging binaries of oppressor and oppressed—of ladino and indigenous. More importantly, she shows how this space contains the potential for an intervention of hegemonic dominance (2000, 140).

For Hale, the "third space" (1997) can be a transformed way of "doing politics" such that subversion exists outside of the elite and subaltern categories in what he cites as a space of "multidimensional political subjectivity" (Bhabha 1990 in Hale 1997, 581). For him, this space-in-between (the interstices) contains possibilities for new strategies and tactics that subaltern groups can use to challenge hegemonic power and assert their subjectivities (Hale 1997). Hale applies this to Guatemala, citing how Maya cultural activists "have found ways to hack out[35] a space within the national political arena, subverting the traditional-modern dichotomy that has always been used against them, and at the same time helping to dispel the impression that they are engaged in radical, frontal opposition to 'the system'" (1997, 281; Nelson 1999). Taking all of this into consideration, here I take the "third space" to be both material and discursive, located at the interstices of development such that the uneven power relations between NGOs and the subjects they discipline create the possibility for subversion and resistance. This space can take the form of challenging elite discourses and practices as well as producing certain bodily habits[36], both of which help in asserting indigenous subjectivities, producing indigenous knowledge and forming meaningful subaltern communities. Hale (1997) and Wolf (2000) inform this framework by showing how subalterns can find productive and political ways to challenge hegemonic structures[37] and damaging conceptions of indigeneity from within the political and socioeconomic system by asserting politicized identities.

In this section I analyze how this "space-in-between" applies to my own work in Guatemala. I show how certain articulations of identity bring people together in order to subvert the dichotomies between modern/traditional, oppressor/oppressed, ladino/Indian, and so challenge power inequalities. This space of resistance is one where the system itself is not changed in a revolutionary manner, but rather where identity is used strategically to undermine the authority of those in power. More importantly, identity and culture are used to bring people together into meaningful communities where subalterns come together with a common cause: it can be to actively resist discriminatory power, as in the case of Maya activists, or it can be in smaller ways, in order to improve the lives of those who have previously fallen into a category of non-agentive "other" in need of development. By illustrating how this happens in each of the three ethnographic works I am analyzing as well as in my own work, I demonstrate why the analytical frames of the *indio permitido* and of an erasure of identity cannot fully explain what is occurring when development projects attempt to police and discipline indigenous women and youth.

In my own research, I was able to witness this process of discovering the "third space" through my interviews with Carmen[38]—a graduate of ITA's development program and someone who now works for an NGO herself. During one of our interviews, she detailed the significance of both "hacking" her identity as a rural indigenous student and of forming a supportive community that brought new meaning to development work. She began by detailing the shame she felt about her socioeconomic background when she came to the city to join the ITA program, and the challenges of joining a private university in the city.

Carmen recounted how, upon first arriving at the Catholic residency where they housed scholarship students, she was embarrassed to realize that her background was completely different from the "modern" ladinos she was now living with. She recounted how being told to eat with a fork and a knife, and with bread instead of tortillas made her feel uncomfortable. Even the coffee, her favorite drink, tasted different, sweeter, making her realize that she was not "like the other students." Moreover, she recounted how her economic position set her apart, as she was not someone who could spend Q120 ($15) on a meal at *Saúl*[39], the trendy café where other students would go for group meetings and study sessions. Carmen confided that she even felt ashamed that her clothing was not from *Zara*[40] or other Westernized luxury stores.

The pressure of becoming "*superada*" in these two forms, of joining the elite socioeconomic world of UFM (Universidad Francisco Marroquín) and the sphere of higher education in a private university are two things that ended up manifesting themselves in very real physical illness for Carmen. After a particularly bad and painful episode that landed her in the hospital[41], Carmen told me, she realized how absurd her feelings were. By recognizing—and then refusing—her shame and her feelings of being "less than" (that is, needing to *superarse*) the other students at UFM, she came to see herself as powerful and to understand her role in "constructing a city of honorable and responsible people (*personas dignas y responsables*)," the university's original motto. She had taken this neoliberal phrase[42], understanding it to be "promoting a philosophy of life that is egocentric" and focused on the neoliberal individual, and given it her own meaning. For Carmen, this motto encouraged her to value her own worth and to acknowledge her privileged position by helping others who, like herself, had been born into structural poverty and lack of education. Another student from the same program summarizes this process of becoming proud of their background and of rearticulating notions about their identity perfectly, explaining how "On the way, one also changes certain mental structures and beliefs, transforming certain paradigms."[43] She recounted how overcoming the negative stereotypes surrounding her "story" had helped her become a confident public speaker, and now she gave encouraging talks ("*pláticas*") to other students to encourage them to find the self-confidence that she did.

Another student also spoke of breaking these "mental structures and beliefs" by changing the paradigm that structures relationships between ladinos and *indios* through eye contact. My experience with this subject began not with one of the students in the programs, but rather with a member of the UVG's (Universidad del Valle de Guatemala) board of directors. During one of our meetings she said something

that at the time I wrote off as nothing more than a stereotype, but later became one of the most interesting and influential aspects of our interview. During a story about a "*superada*" indigenous student at the Altiplano campus, she mentioned how "indigenous people don't really look you in the eye, they sort of speak down [at this she lowered her head and looked away] like this," citing how this pattern was changing in young women thanks to UVG's education (for more on eye contact, see Hale 2002, 515). Though at the time I ignored this comment and focused on other aspects of her story, I was reminded about the power-laden implications of eye contact in further occasions. For example—while very few of those I worked with seemed particularly averse to eye contact, and in fact were quite talented at public speaking (many of them citing how they now gave "*pláticas*" at universities or business conferences)—the topic did come up in one conversation with Carlos, who told me the following story:

> When I came to Guatemala for the first time, I interviewed with Isabel, who had already given me a scholarship, but it was the first day I came to Guatemala City in order to meet her. That's where I was going to officially receive the scholarship, and you know—Doña Isabel was sitting on this side, and I went in and what I did was, I was like [imitates a meek-sounding tone, eyes are downcast] 'Look, Doña Isabel, thank you, for the opportunity, the truth is that I am very happy,' and I never looked into her eyes. And that was a very important lesson I learned from her. Until she, at that meeting, told me: [*slaps table once, enthusiastically*] 'Stop, Carlos, do you owe me something?' 'No'. 'Then why the hell do you not look me in the eye'. And that's a… it's a behavioral factor that you bring from home you see, when one is—especially among the indigenous populations, the famous beatings right, so beware if you look your grandfather in the eye! Or even your dad, because that's like… almost that, it's a challenging right, like you get there and, [imitates a meek-sounding tone] 'goodnight' and lower your head. And one comes with these behavioral patterns, right.[44]

Anecdotes like these exemplify the way that *superación* is intimately tied to the body. For Cordelia and Carlos, the state of being *superado* is not relegated solely to economic prosperity or an academic degree. Rather, there is also an implied change in bodily practices; in this case eye contact, but also in cases such as GuateAyuda's personal hygiene training. Since the discourses of *superación* emerge from unequal power relations, its disciplining nature is utilized by those in power to control and curtail difference, starting with the body. First, *superación* enacts power differentials because it produces the hierarchical idea of inferior objects in need of improvement (usually indigenous, poor, and female) and reaffirms those in the higher position of force relations, the superior subjects who manage this path to improvement (usually ladino, wealthy, and male). Second, *superación* limits difference by dictating which forms of cultural alterity are acceptable and which are not. That is, it conditions people into conducting themselves

in ways that do not question the existing capitalist power structure or disrupt elite notions of indigenous inferiority. In this way, the management of the body is a strategy of the larger socioeconomic and political management of a population (Foucault 1977, 25-27).

Additionally, Carlos and the others are exemplifying (and even describing) here Bourdieu's notion that bodily practice—arising directly from habitus—reinforces belief, identity, and domination. That is, they exemplify his argument that "relations to the body are charged with […] relations to other people, time and the world" (Bourdieu 1977, 70). In this case, eye contact serves to "reinforce belief in the prevailing system of classification by making it appear grounded in [a] reality" (1977, 71), where Europeanized ladinos are considered naturally superior. Moreover, unspoken in these comments about bodily hexis is the notion of racial domination and Guatemala's long history of indigenous subjugation both by physically and psychologically violent means.

For this reason, the fact that the students had become proficient public speakers and looked people in the eye was taken to mean that they had overcome (*superado*) their inferior or antiquated behavioral patterns. While this belief may have arisen out of the policing power of *superación*, it also shows how powerful it can be to break these behavioral molds. As Carmen expressed, being part of this development program had transformed certain paradigms in her life, the first of which being that as an indigenous woman she is submissive. For these students, eye contact can be seen as the first step towards being treated like equals and believing themselves to be on par with other citizens, regardless of socioeconomic background or ethnicity, overcoming the negative connotations associated with being indigenous and rural. Carmen and Carlos' stories can be interpreted both as "*indios permitidos*" (or even as *ladinoized* individuals) and also as examples of people challenging colonial stereotypes and problematizing ladino identities[45].

These are two very distinct approaches that nevertheless reveal important aspects of governmentality in development work, making it important to analyze what discourses of development produce in their entirety. That is, understanding that the same elements of discipline can have different results amongst individuals: creating both *Indios Permitidos* and "third spaces," as well as completely erasing indigenous subjectivities. Deconstructing *superación* through a Foucauldian lens makes evident that there are two types of government: self-government, and government enacted by state and non-state apparatuses. Both of these work to extend and reaffirm current power inequalities (Foucault 1977, 78). NGOs manage conduct through both of these means, first by virtue of being "the new panopticon" and making westernized ladino lifestyles the ideal that people should aspire to live by (but can never truly attain) (Hale 2002, 491). Second, NGOs manage indigenous bodies and populations by explicitly teaching their target populations how they should behave and perform their identities and making sure these instructions are followed (through systems of punishment or rewards). For example, in the case of the students, one of the program managers explained how etiquette classes were a crucial aspect of the program so that

students could adopt behaviors that were more in line with the elite sensibilities of those attending the university.

These exercises of power, however, cannot be expected to produce the same type of docile bodies in the subjects of development. Indeed, the "double mode[,] that of binary division and branding" that Foucault describes accounts for the types of discourses surrounding *superación,* but not the types of subjects produced (1977, 199). For this reason, it is important to analyze the spaces of hybridity and resistance that are created in relation to NGOs and development. This "third space" became evident in my own research, when, despite the heavy policing of these students during their participation in the scholarship programs, in many instances they reflected upon their journey through development as a process of self-discovery and identification—a process that really made them question and consider not only their distinct background, but also their privileged position after having graduated from UFM and UVG.

As part of this self-discovery and articulation of her own indigenous background, Carmen had joined CUE[46] (a development program aimed to "empower" indigenous women in *La Limonada*, one of Guatemala City's poorest and most dangerous zones[47]), and now worked at the development agency, bringing other women into this space of resistance. That is, she took a stand against being labeled as inferior and against being molded into a neoliberal businesswoman: she refused to work for the private sector, choosing instead to work somewhere where her talents can help others. Thus, despite the problems with development NGOs, they cannot be seen merely as "bad." This would be oversimplifying, ignoring the complex ways in which development joins nationalism, race, and class in the formation of intricate identities. By participating in this development program, Carmen and her classmates managed to form a community of solidarity.

Moreover, she was changing the trend where, as I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, it is primarily foreigners and the elite who work in development. As Radcliffe (2015) suggests, such transformations open up space for development work that does not reinforce current inequalities, but rather works to fight against them. Not only was Carmen now actively working to "improve" the lives of other indigenous women by helping them take development into their own hands, but she also told me the story of how the students from the scholarship program worked together to form a supportive community for themselves.

After a particularly bad tropical storm during Guatemala's rainy winter, one of the student's childhood homes had collapsed. Immediately, the other students in the program came together and pooled their already limited stipends (limited because many of them were already sending most of it back home every month) and giving this young man's family enough money to rebuild his childhood home. The irony, that the poorest students of the university would contribute their scarce income to this cause when the majority of UFM's students come from the wealthiest families in the country, demonstrates the way that this program brought people together in a powerful community—a space that resists hegemonic power through solidarity.

I argue that this type of community formation, even though it is arising from the "anti-political" machine that is development (Ferguson 1990; See also Li 2007), is still political. For me, it is a very clear sign of resistance—resistance to neoliberal values of the university, resistance to the larger society that has abandoned them to structural poverty, and resistance against the very hegemony of such an elite institution. While being cautious, and understanding that development can also end in an erasure of indigeneity or in "*indios permitidos,*" it is important to remember that identities can be continually articulated to change what they mean and no identification is truly binomial or bound (Nelson 1999). The acts of these students coming together to raise funds for a fellow classmate, to recruit their neighbors and cousins to join these programs, and to take development into their own hands illuminate a way to view these students in their agentive capacity, carving out their own subjectivities in a hostile environment.

In these situations, they are by no means the "easily duped" or passive receivers of a problematic development program, but rather they are central actors in their own quest to create a better life for themselves, their families, and their communities. In these instances, the categories of *indios permitidos,* or assimilated Indians,[48] cannot explain why or how students such as Carmen contested the selfish, individualizing nature of a school founded after the Austrian School of Economics. It cannot account for the way Carmen found dignity in her background despite being subject to etiquette classes that sought to erase her habitus as a rural, "backwards" student. It *can* be explained in terms of a semiotic and political transformation that allowed her to assert her own subjectivity outside of this problematic *india permitidia/asimilada* dichotomy and within the boundaries of the "third space."

Conclusions

Understanding how Guatemala has managed difference throughout history reveals the extent to which (male) ladino elites are preoccupied with controlling indigeneity (Smith-Oka 2013; Nelson 1999). While seemingly ignoring cultural difference (and denying indigenous peoples full rights and citizenship), this elite desire to form a cohesive nation-state has actually had the opposite effect: an obsession with controlling indigenous identities. Decades of assimilationist policies (in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century) and the subsequent multicultural policies have left behind significant consequences for how being indigenous is conceived and policed. Part of this process has involved the "NGOization" of development (Cody 2009; Radcliffe 2015), which brought about a depoliticization of problems that are inherently political (Ferguson 1990). This process involves creating a discourse surrounding development that treats indigenous peoples as the "other" within the nation, as those who are traditional and backwards, while at the same time presenting itself as the harbinger of modernity. In this way, development can negatively affect indigeneity in ways that can both erase strong articulations of Mayan identities and police those that are left in ways that depoliticize[49] their grievances and conform them to multicultural principles.

I use *superación* to account for both the discourses of indigenous inferiority as well as the disciplining of indigenous habitus by NGOs. The term is useful in its ability to encompass the complexities of development: the historically nuanced way elites conceptualize indigenous peoples "as the objects of debates, not as debating subjects;" the overt ways indigenous peoples are disciplined; and the types of subjects that are produced both as discursive categories and in praxis (Blaser 2010, 102; Smith-Oka 2013). This latter is extremely important, for it distinguishes between the *intended* subjects, indigenous peoples who *superado* their backwards ethnic associations, and the *produced* subjects, which cannot be described as easily.

As such, an analysis of *superación* necessitates an interpretive framework that can account for this diversity of subjects. That is, a model that includes the erasure of identity, the creation of "*indios permitidos,"* and the space-in-between (Bhabha 1990; Hale 1997; Wolf 2000). Thus, analyzing development work merely as apolitical or problematic may obscure other processes occurring around humanitarianism and development. Analyzing development with a fluidarity (Nelson 1999) approach—that is, outside dichotomies such as political-apolitical, oppressor-oppressed, nation-state-civil society, etc.—can make visible the ways in which governmentality work produces a "third space" where subaltern can "work at the interstices" (Bhabha 1990 in Hale 1997 and in Radcliffe 2015). While the examples that I have provided do support the notion that governmentality both effaces indigenous identities and produces "*indios permitidos*" (permitted Indians), they also support the idea that development has other, positive effects. In the case of the ITA and JBG students, these programs provided not only communities of solidarity, but were also a way for these students to gain agency, and to take their futures into their own hands.

Consequently, what this analysis exemplifies is how techniques of disciplinary power (as a form of governmentality tied to *superación*) are not just top-down exercises of power, but rather they are reworked at every level, taken up in diverse ways by different people. In some cases, this process can lead to the formation of agentive subjects—as opposed to passive subjects or even objects. This fact opens up the complex process of *superación* to practices that end up contesting the very elite power that sought to discipline subaltern subjectivities. In these occasions, the techniques of the self that are taught by NGOs become useful to indigenous peoples in asserting their rights and responsibilities as citizens; in crafting subversive responses to the hegemonic world order that casts them as inferior; and finally, in establishing a community of solidarity among other subjects of development. For these reasons, I argue that once development is co-opted by subalterns themselves to assert and articulate Maya identities, then it is likely that there will be many more examples of communities working in the "third space" against hegemonic power, and less "*indios permitidos.*"

Thus, despite valid criticisms that can be made of the development programs discussed in this article, it is important to remember that the situation of the country in general is weak and the structural issues facing

most of Guatemala's (and Latin America's) youth are overwhelming (see also Smith-Oka 2013, 190). For this reason, the programs stand out for their ability to provide an opportunity for bright, talented students to take matters into their own hands and substantially increase their agency. In the end, the students are the ones who craft their own road towards *superación* and give the term a whole new meaning. Their resilience in the face of what can be an overwhelming exercise of governmentality in *superación* suggests this form of power, while it may be ubiquitous or inescapable, does not always produce docile bodies. For many subjects of development, the power and means gained from having been a part of these programs outweigh any negative connotations that, in analyzing the biopolitics at work behind these programs, are ascribed to the condition of being *superado*.

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Endnotes

[1]While *superación* (as a noun) and *superarse* (as a reflexive verb) are hard to translate outright, they connote an idea of both betterment and of overcoming—essentially, overcoming a combination of indigenous, rural, and impoverished identity. In a sense, these terms imply the following: first, rising above an identity that is seen as "lacking," and second, an improvement of the overall quality or esteem of a person. Indeed, Hale writes that while "'superarse' is a tricky verb, whose meaning changes with context [...] If the reference is to an Indian, [...] the effort to 'better oneself' is apt to take on an additional charge. In the traditional ladino mindset, an Indian could not substantively 'better himself' without becoming less Indian" (Hale 2006, 238).
[2] *i.e.* non-indigenous and for the most part male.
[3]As Li (2007) reminds us, "planned development is premised upon the improvability of the 'target group' [and] also posits a boundary that clearly separates those who need to be developed from those who will do the developing" (339).
[4] Related to white collar work as opposed to manual labor.
[5] For an elaboration of the usage of these Foucauldian terms, see below.
[6] Which I also call the erasure of indigenous identity.
[7]This fieldwork was part of an undergraduate senior thesis project, funded by the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts at the University of Notre Dame, which took place in the summer of 2013. This research is supplemented by a second summer of research during the summer of 2015 thanks to a grant from the Tinker Foundation as well as my own lived experiences as a Guatemalan. These two fieldwork periods generated over 30 interviews, the ones presented here were chosen for the way the words of those participating in these development programs captured the tensions, relations, and resistance I theorize about.
[8] For a more detailed clarification of the term, please see intro section, endnote 1.
[9] "Generally speaking, all the authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); and that of coercive assignment, of differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized; how a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way, etc.)" (Foucault 1997, 199).
[10] The word *capacitación* is not exactly like training, and carries a connotation of development, especially or preparing oneself to improve. For a more detailed explanation see section on Erasure of Identity.
[11] It is important to note that this is a rather restrained notion of "freedom" to act, as it must always be in accordance with the structuring structures already in place.
[12] That is, the field of possible discourse, which shapes what people think and say by making it appear as self-evident (Bourdieu 1977).
[13] Not just *mestizaje,* but also *indigenismo*, the political and cultural movement that arose in the twentieth century as a response to such qualms about the divided nation. It was contradictory in that it sought to elevate or defend indigenous cultures, but was carried out by non-indigenous elites in often paternalistic and racist ways (see also Smith-Oka 2013, 31-33).
[14] "un proyecto político y cultural homogenizador."
[15] "La marginación de importantes sectores de la población empieza por una repartición asimétrica de la tierra y el desigual accesso a la propiedad territorial."
[16] A term that is still widely and vehemently debated both in the public spheres (from newspaper articles and television shows to governmental press releases) as well as in the private domain (such as Facebook, Whatsapp groups, and everyday conversations).
[17] From "Siete datos que debes saber para debatir sobre Guatemala" (or "Seven Facts You Need to Know to Debate About Guatemala") in the independent newspaper *Nómada.*
[18] While Hale and Millamán have fine-tuned the term (Hale and Millamán 2006), they acknowledge that it is a phrase first used by Rivera Cusicanqui: reminding us that, "the phrase "indio permitido" names a sociopolitical category, not the characteristics of anyone in particular. We borrow the phrase from Bolivian sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, who uttered it spontaneously, in exasperation, during a workshop on cultural rights and democratization in Latin America" (Hale 2004, 17).

[19] Drawing on C. Smith (1991).
[20] Pseudonym.
[21] Both in part of the police and army as well as in the growing violent threat presented by gangs and drug cartels. The newspaper *Prensa Libre* reported that there were 5,259 homicides in 2013 alone (from Lara, Julio F. "El 2013 cerró con 2,259 homicidios," in *Prensa Libre*, Guatemala, January 2, 2014), a number that surely does not represent the cases of people who disappeared at the hands of cartels, or as victims of police corruption.
[22] Earlier in 2015, *Prensa Libre* reported that there are 128 legal private security firms and over 30 clandestine ones (Lemus 2015). Between them, they employ over 88,000 private security agents (police records show that only 28,000 of these are legally registered with the National Police, or PNC).
[23] See Hale 2002, 2004; Nelson 1999.
[24]A word with strong negative connotations, it is usually utilized to describe people who are stubborn in an extremist way, closed to any form of negotiation.
[25] "Yo no quiero que a mi, por ser indígena me puedan regalar un trabajo, o que me puedan regalar una casa, o que me puedan regalar un pedazo de tierra pues, ósea si por indígena me estas queriendo dar eso solo porque yo soy de esa parte, me estas cortando los pies y las manos pues! Yo quiero que me reconzcás por mi talento, por mi capacidad y por lo que yo soy."
[26] That is, be a non-radical, neoliberal subject that still retained his identity as someone who grew up in a rural, indigenous environment.
[27] Pseudonym.
[28]I had been warned by a fellow Guatemalan anthropologist that this could be a source of discomfort for people who might feel the negative connotations of being indigenous.
[29] This "Asocia lo indígena con una serie fija de atributos 'culturales' y supone que cuando estos atributos se desvanecen o cambian, la identidad indígena disminuye en consecuencia," is my translation.
[30] Pseudonyms.
[31] GuateAyuda, an NGO aimed at providing nutrition information and microloans to indigenous women in rural areas.
[32] Pseudonym.
[33]The word *capacitación* is not exactly like training, and carries a connotation of development, especially or preparing oneself to improve. Upon asking a couple of people to define what *capacitación* meant to them, one of them explained that it was meant "to overcome (*superar*) educational differences…in education, or technical, like they can't even cook or sew" ("para superar diferencias educativas… de educación técnicas, que no pueden ni cocinar ni coser algo"). Usually *capacitación* is used in either development or business training settings.
[34] Feminists have taken up this concept of the "third space" in order to locate spaces beyond the male-female dualism.
[35] In reference to Nelson's metaphor of the "Maya hacker" (1999).
[36] Bodily habits that are not prescribed by the NGOs per se, but that were reformulated and reworked in assertive, bold, or confident manners to support indigenous subjectivities, indigenous knowledge, or the formation of meaningful subaltern communities. For example, a person's politically conscious decision to use *traje* or Mayan greetings.
[37] Here, I take "structures" to be influenced by Foucault and Bourdieu's notions of the unconscious apparatus that guides habitus and the behavior of the social body.
[38] Pseudonym.
[39] A chain of Cafés (as well as men's high fashion and suits boutique) throughout the City. They describe themselves as "combining European avante-garde with a solid Latin-American identity" (from http://www.saulemendez.com/site/es/gastronomia.html). While they have dishes inspired by traditional Guatemalan cuisine, they are best known for their crepes and passion for Nutella. Their all-male staff's uniforms as well as their upholstery frequently have "traditional" Mayan cloth sewn on.
[40] Spanish clothing, shoes, and accessories chain, located in the elite shopping centers of the city, it models its clothing after European runway fashion.

[41] She exemplifies the ways in which governmentality work negatively affects those employed in very powerful, intimate, and bodily ways. To respect her privacy, I do not detail her illness, but after consulting various doctors, she realized that it was caused by stress.
[42]Neoliberal because it was inspired by libertarian, Austrian School of Economics principles. With auditoriums and conference rooms named after figures such as Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek, and where the entire front of an academic building is devoted to a statue of Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged.* A school of philosophy and economics that continues to ignore the country's alarming growth of income inequality, promoting instead a linear, modernist path towards "development" (Blaser 2010).
[43] "Uno en el camino también va cambiando ciertas estructuras mentales y creencias, se van transformando ciertos paradigmas."
[44] "Cuando yo vine a Guatemala, la primera vez que yo me entrevisté con doña Isabel Gutierrez, ya me habían dado la beca, pero fue el primer día que yo vine a Guatemala a conocerla. Que es donde me iban a entregar oficialmente la beca, yo sabe como- Doña Isabel estaba sentada en este lado, y yo entraba y [blackberry vibrates] eh, y yo lo que hacía era, eh, hágase cuenta que es Doña Isabel, yo [imitates a meek-sounding tone', eyes are downcast] 'mire doña Isabel, muchísimas gracias, por, por la oportunidad, la verdad es que yo estoy muy feliz,' y yo nunca le miraba a los ojos. Y esa fue una lección muy importante que yo aprendí con ella. Hasta que ella, en esa misma reunión me dijo: [slaps table once, enthusiastically] 'Momento Carlos, vos me debes algo?' 'no'. 'Entonces porque chingados no me miras a los ojos'. Y eso es un- es una factor conductual que uno trae desde su casa vea, Cuando uno es- sobre todo en la población indígena, el famoso mento verda, usted cuidado que le vea a los ojos a su abuelo. O incluso al papá, porque eso es como.. Casi que le esta, lo esta retando verda, uno es como llega, [imitates a meek-sounding tone] 'buenas noches' y agacha la cabeza. Y uno trae esos patrones conductuales verda."
[45] Carlos often joked that he was an interesting candidate for many interviews as he broke down the stereotype of the traditional CEO of a company as white and from an elite Guatemalan family.
[46] Pseudonym.
[47] By teaching them to upcycle materials into crafts that they could later sell for cash.
[48] That is, whose indigenous identities have been effaced and they can now "pass" as ladino.
[49] In the sense that these problems are labeled "economic," "cultural," and "social" woes rather than as the result of a long-standing oligarchic and now neoliberal regime that favors only a few. That is, it does not call for political changes like land or labor reforms or constitutional amendments that favor the majority of Guatemalans.

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Strengthening Traditional Governance Systems for Sustainable Biodiversity Management in Southeastern Zimbabwe

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In pre-colonial Africa, local communities lived in harmony with nature and used indigenous knowledge systems and traditional authorities to manage biodiversity. The introduction of European colonial regimes in Africa eroded the traditional institutional framework and capacity for sustainable natural resource management. The post-independence governments tended to perpetuate the status quo. This study analyzed the contemporary traditional governance systems for biodiversity management and assessed the effectiveness of traditional institutions and methods in protecting the ecosystem. Key informant interviews, questionnaire surveys, focus group discussions, and in-depth document interrogations corroborated and yielded valuable data that sustained the discourse. The study revealed that traditional governance systems in Zimbabwe have been significantly weakened by both colonial and post-independence governments that consolidated and centralized power. Traditional authority is marginalized in the governance of mainstream natural resources despite the fact that indigenes' culture imbues the conservation of natural resources. The study underscored the dire need for traditional authority to be restored and enhanced; the need for roles of traditional leaders and local people be clearly defined; the need for responsibilities and accountability of all actors to be emphasized; and the need for institutional capacities to be strengthened to ensure sustainable biodiversity management and livelihoods for the local communities.

Keywords: *Traditional Governance Systems; Sustainable Biodiversity Management; Traditional Authority; Indigenous Knowledge Systems; Traditional Leaders*

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The world we live in today is confronted with myriad environmental problems. Many studies show environmental degradation and deterioration of ecosystems are mainly due to selfish human actions (Makanyisa, Chenhuru, and Masitera 2012; McNeely and Camara 2007; Conway-

Gomez et al. 2010). Ironically, the environment and its natural resources are humankind's sole source of well-being (United Nations 1992a). Historically, human societies living in local landscapes realize the limitless significance of the environment and its rich endowments. These indigenous peoples recognize that biological diversity and ecosystems are important for food security, medicines, fresh air and water, shelter, and a clean and healthy environment (McNeely and Camara 2007). It is through such insightful experiences that these local peoples interact with their environments in exceptional, well-coordinated ways that enable them to live harmoniously with nature (Dore 2001; Chiwandamira and Mbengo 1991). Globally, indigenous people live a naturalistic life. While drawing guidance from a traditional institutional framework, they are guided by community-led approaches that utilize indigenous traditional ecological knowledge. This guidance has proven to be the answer to sustainability as it has been demonstrated by stable local societies, economies, and ecosystems' integrity (Lathan 2005; Matyszak 2010; Makanyisa, Chenhuru, and Masitera 2012). Such a way of life sees local people living off nature's income (ecological products) rather than its capital account (natural resources). Thus, local societies do not temper with the environment's capital stock; rather, they live off its goods and services. The traditional leadership must always consent to the harvesting of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and insects, as well as the killing of wildlife (Mapedza 2006). This approach sees local communities maintaining their standard of living while experiencing sustainable growth in civilizations; however, it appears that as soon as external culture and new institutional settings intrude into a local community, the center no longer holds an ecosystem's integrity causing local socio-economic systems to collapse precipitously. Such a scenario indicates the detriments of eroding existing traditional ecological knowledge, cultural practices, and institutional frameworks. Globally, indigenous peoples rely on local traditional ecological knowledge and practices, and look to traditional authority for natural resource management. This is local natural resource management based on customary power bases and traditional governance systems (Mapedza 2006). It has proven to be very effective for biodiversity management (utilization and conservation) in both spatial and temporal scales, however outside of local societies, a governance system that is capable of benefiting people and the environment across large areas and within reasonable time frames is still needed (Lovell, Mandondo and Moriaty 2000; Lathan 2005). Traditional governance systems have inbuilt mechanisms ensuring that communities have well developed and coordinated local monitoring skills and systems. The United Nations (1992b) recognizes that indigenous people have developed, over many generations, a traditional holistic scientific knowledge of their lands, natural resources, and environment. This assists in tracking the state and making audits of natural capital stock within given precise geographic jurisdictions and periods of time. Traditional governance is often held in high esteem for management of proximate natural resources and environments of areas that local people traditionally occupy (United Nations 1992b).

Biodiversity is a key natural resource for most rural communities globally, especially in developing regions (Defra 2011; McNeely and Camara 2007). It represents the vast wealth of different animal and plant species living in a region. Biodiversity is a source of livelihood for many rural peoples. It provides socio-economic resources such as wild honey, fruits, and vegetables; fuel wood for energy; edible herbs and medicines; wild game for skins, milk, blood, and meat; and aesthetic enjoyment and recreation. Most industrial products are derived from biotic resources (Defra 2011; Conway-Gomez 2010; McNeely and Camara 2007; Grundy and Le Breton 1998). Biodiversity also provides ecological services such as purifying water and air, nourishing and anchoring soil, influencing micro-climates, stabilizing the water cycle and food-producing ecosystems, and pollinating and cross-fertilizing vegetation (Surkar 2012; Conway-Gomez 2010). The Convention on Biological Diversity and World Heritage Convention recognize that biodiversity is about more than plants, animals, microorganisms, and their ecosystems. It is about people and their need for food security, medicines, fresh air and water, shelter, and a clean and healthy environment in which to live (McNeely and Camara 2007). Indigenous peoples are aware that biological diversity is a crucial factor in generating the ecological services and natural resources on which they depend on (Gadgil, Berkes, and Folke 1993). When local peoples rely on the immediate environment for the provision of various physical, socio-economic resources and services, they develop a stake in conserving and even enhancing biodiversity (Mapedza 2006).

Pronouncements by the United Nations (1992b) that indigenous people and their communities shall enjoy the full measure of human rights and fundamental freedoms without hindrance and discrimination have not been honored, reflecting a long history of the dismissal of the rights of indigenous groups. Invasions of local areas and the subsequent conquests by powerful external groups started in the 16th century. The colonizers despised local traditional natural resource governance systems and dismissed them as primitive, simplistic, static, irrelevant, and overly ineffective (Mapedza 2006; Makanyisa, Chenhuru and Masitera 2012). Therefore, they introduced a new, foreign natural resource governance and management system that replaced traditional governance systems for natural resources. Naturally, such a development was resisted and antagonized by indigenous people and their communities as well as traditional leadership. Eventually, the colonial governments bribed the traditional leaders and co-opted them into their authority systems in a compromised capacity. Traditional leaders were utilized as primary policy implementers, and were given extensive powers as a means for colonial governments to exercise control over the rural populace and natural resources (Twine, Siphugu, and Moshe 2003; Matyszak 2010). Local communities and traditional authorities were weakened by the fractious relationship; they turned against each other; social cohesion and communal values were destroyed; individualism and household-centered behaviors emerged; and interpersonal cooperation (abandonment of the philosophy of *ubuntu* [respect of human life and rights while

upholding good morals]) and responsible resource-use practices by indigenous people declined (Guveya and Chikandi 1996; Campbell et al. 2001; Twine, Siphugu, and Moshe 2003; Matyszak 2010). Such is the recipe for the collapse of traditional common property regimes. The local landscapes and natural resources have been plundered and looted as general and widespread environmental degradation have ensued. The state and traditional systems of natural resources' governance rely on systems of legitimization and a unique corpus of regulation systems, which produce conflict between the two systems (Mapedza 2006). In this scenario, biotic resources are like grass bearing the brunt of two elephants fighting. This situation saw biodiversity loss increasing on public lands (Roe, Nelson, and Sandbrook 2009).

The indigenous people fought for their freedoms and rights, which culminated in political independence from former colonial masters. However, the post-colonial governments have inherited and perpetuated the colonial natural resource governance systems. They have maintained, empowered, and cosmetically restructured the same statutory bodies (Environmental Management Agency [EMA], Zimbabwe National Water Authority [ZINWA], Forestry Commission [FC], Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife Authority [ZimParks]) and institutions (Village Development Committee [VIDCO], Ward Development Committee [WARDCO]) to exclusively manage natural resources on both state and communal lands (Mandondo 2000; Nemarundwe 2001; Matyszak 2010). These statutory bodies are manned by professionally trained natural resource managers who largely utilize western scientific knowledge and little or no local traditional ecological knowledge. All too often, the state and traditional institutions have competed and conflicted (but collaborated) because their sources of legitimacy differ (state versus customary). They operate without clearly defined mandates and articulated processes (Nemarundwe 2001; Lathan 2005). This has left the local people and their communities even weaker and confused. Traditional common property regimes, such as community-based natural resource management approaches in Tanzania, Namibia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe, have struggled regardless of the corrective strategies adopted by post-independence governments (Nhantumbo, Norfolf, and Pereira 2003; Katerere and Guveya 1998).

Nonetheless, there has been a resurgence of traditional knowledge practices as a contemporary global phenomenon in a bid to preserve local biodiversity. Battiste and James (2000) contend that the demeaning, marginalization and subjugation of traditional natural resources management systems in favor of western systems has contributed to a crisis of environmental degradation and unsustainability around the world. There is now a conscious effort towards empowering local people and their communities into participatory local natural resource management. This largely follows the United Nations' (1992a) call for recognizing and strengthening the role of indigenous people and their communities in sustainable development practices. It cannot be overemphasized now that the role of hereditary traditional leaders (village heads, headmen, chiefs, and their

councils) in natural resource management should be clear with the view to increase communities' involvement in resource governance.

Given this background, this study seeks to establish a basis for the drafting of a framework that strengthens traditional governance systems for sustainable biodiversity management in Southeastern Zimbabwe. Firstly, this study analyzes the contemporary traditional governance systems in biodiversity management as pale remnants of their former selves in the pre-colonial era. Secondly, it critically assesses the effectiveness of traditional institutions and methods in protecting ecosystems' integrity. Lastly, this study proposes institutional and policy reforms for empowering traditional governance systems for sustainable biodiversity management.

Study Area

The study was conducted in five districts of the Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe. The districts include Bikita, Chiredzi, Chivi, Mwenezi, and Zaka. Except for the Chiredzi district, which has an agricultural town and commercial sugar estates, the other four districts are largely communal areas dotted with service centers and a growth center courtesy of the Government of Zimbabwe's Growth Point policy. The study area has mostly a rural population totaling 952,458 (Zimstat 2012). More than 90 percent of the Masvingo province's population live in rural areas where they depend on the environment for their livelihood and sustenance (Zimstat 2012). The area is semi-arid to arid (agro-ecological zones four and five) with an erratic mean annual rainfall of 400mm or less, mean annual temperature of 22°C, and an excess of evapotranspiration over precipitation. The soils are largely dry, over-utilized, and now infertile, sandy loams with some pockets of dry clay loams, especially in the Chiredzi and Mwenezi districts. The vegetation is mostly open grasslands punctuated by thorny, bushy shrubs with pockets of miombo and mopane woodlots. The terrain is mountainous and hilly in both Bikita and Zaka, but gently slopes in the other districts. In terms of socio-economic development, the area has a modest share of the nation's educational, health, marketing, transportation, and agricultural amenities. The population derives livelihood mainly from agriculture and trade, though the climate is a bit harsh for dry land cropping. The average population density is 26 persons per square kilometer, which is below the national average of 33 persons per square kilometer. This is partly due to general environmental degradation and deteriorating ecosystem integrity.

Materials and Methods

This case study relies on both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. In-depth document interrogation was conducted to trace the historical governance of natural resources in Zimbabwe and acquaint the research with the general dynamism in the local institutional framework. The literature on several studies concerning roles of traditional

institutions in natural resource management, traditional ecological knowledge systems, state organs in natural resource management, statutory bodies and legislative instruments, and other related issues are deeply interrogated in this study. This exercise shapes the epistemology of this study and directs the research into real issues that would fill the information gap. A questionnaire survey was conducted among 50 adult villagers who were stratified, then randomly and proportionately selected from 134 wards in the study area (Table 1.1). The questionnaire yielded data on villagers' perceptions on and experiences with local institutions involved in natural biological resources management.

District	**Total No. of Wards**	**Wards Sampled**	**Male Respondents**	**Female Respondents**	**Total Respondents**
Bikita	23	8	4	4	8
Chiredzi	22	8	4	4	8
Chivi	27	10	5	5	10
Mwenezi	25	9	4	5	9
Zaka	37	15	8	7	15
Totals	134	50	25	25	50

Table 1.1: Sampled Questionnaire Respondents

The study also conducted key informant interviews with five EMA district officials, seventeen traditional leaders (targeted were chiefs, headmen, and village heads), five councilors, five district administrators, and five Agritex district officials from each of the five districts. The interviews were administered concurrently with the questionnaire survey. Data was also collected through five focus group discussions. The results from these discussions are triangulated with responses from the questionnaire survey and key informant interviews. The focus group discussions are organized concurrently with the interview and questionnaire surveys to save on resources.

Results

The study underscores that traditional authorities in the Masvingo province are deservedly legitimized through the Traditional Leaders Act (Chapter 29:17) to exercise control and management of the land and environmental resources within areas under their jurisdiction. Legally, according to 17 (86 percent) of the government officials interviewed, traditional leaders are the custodians of customary laws and practices, hence they are entrusted with the responsibilities of ensuring the social cohesion of local communities. Institutions of traditional authority include the chief (*ishe/mambo*), who presides over a territory (*nyika*); the headman (*sadunhu*), who presides over a ward (*dunhu);* and the village head (*sabhuku*), who presides over

a village (*bhuku*). These institutions have endured and adapted to the ever-changing world order, and villagers in the study area unanimously rated them as the most respected of all local institutions. They fall second to the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) however, when it comes to influential and active participation in the management of land and natural resources on communal lands (Figure 1.1). The villagers identified the following as leading in advocating for the sustainable management of environmental goods and services: EMA, Agritex, Forestry Commission (FC), traditional authorities, Zimbabwe Water Authority (ZINWA), Rural District Council (RDC), Ward Development Committee (WADCO), Village Development Committee (VIDCO), and environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

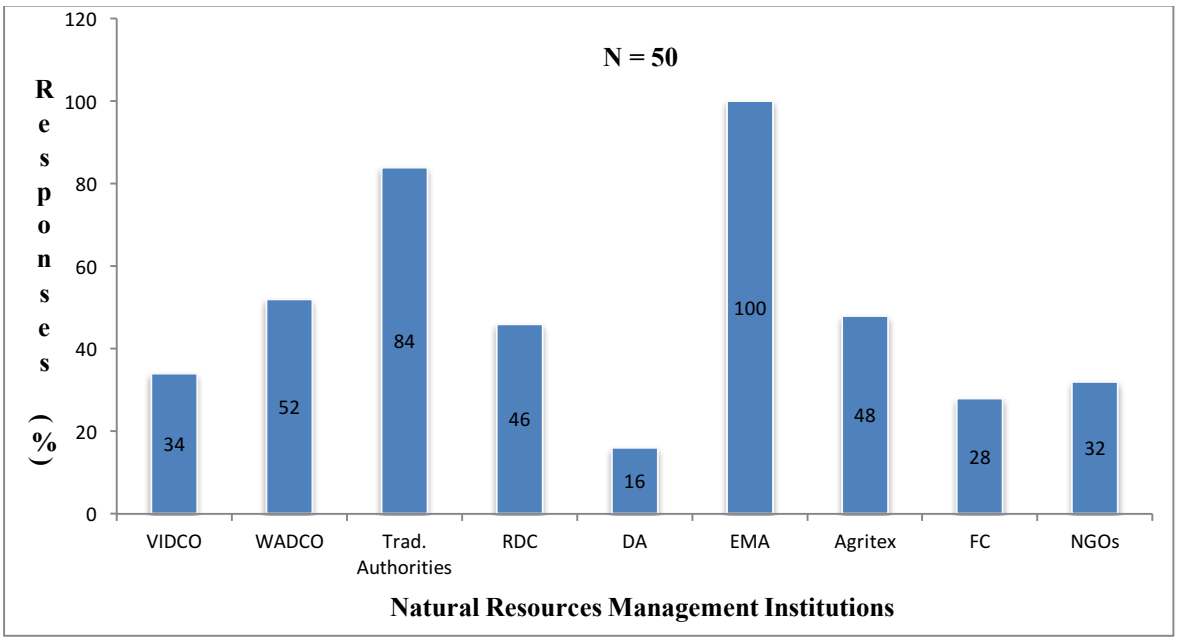

Figure 1.1: Perceptions of Villagers on Local Institutions for Proximate Natural Resources Management

However, when the villagers were collectively rating, on a ten-point scale, the historical role played by traditional institutions in the conservation and encouragement for the wise use of natural resources, in five focus group discussions, a declining influence is noticed (Figure 1.2). The average score of ten shows very strong influence and active participation, while the score of zero indicates no influence and no participation.

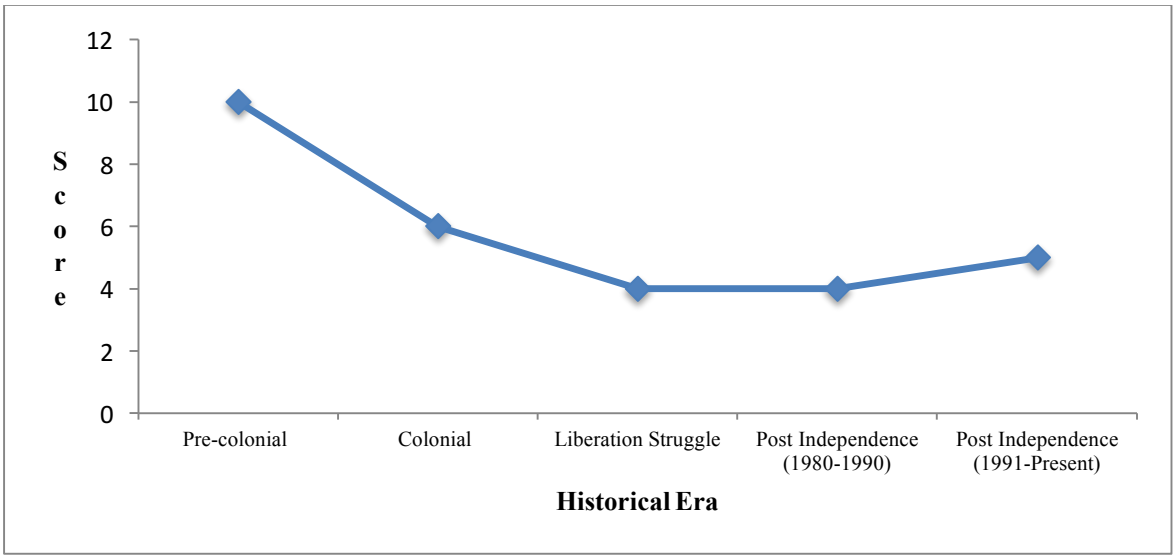

Figure 1.2: Historical Role Played by Traditional Authority in Natural Biological Resources Management

Traditional authorities relied on traditional ecological knowledge and practices to enforce and attain good management of the land and biological resources in the local environment (Table 1.2).

Methods	**Perceptions on Contemporary Practices**
Sacredness	Sacred areas are still being feared and respected.
Totems	The Karanga and Shangaan people strongly respect their totems and totemic symbols.
Implicit norms, taboos, and myths	Greatly threatened with modernity, most of these are being demystified by western science and Christianity.
Sanctions and quotas	Roles largely lost to state natural resources managers – uncontrolled harvesting patterns and rates have become the norm.
Customary law and practice	Is largely observed, but those convicted can appeal to the parallel state judicial system.
Metaphors and proverbs	No longer have their sentimental appeal to society, though some villagers are still being influenced by these rich language structures.

Folklore dances, stories, and plays	Little time is committed to these, hence they are dying.
Selective harvesting	Due to no entitlement to land, harvesting is no longer controlled.
Rituals	Modernity is slowly, but surely, eroding these cultural beliefs and practices – Christianity condemns such acts.

Table 1.2: Traditional Methods for Sustainable Biological Resources Management

The villagers noted that the traditional methods of protecting natural biological resources were systematically weakened and rarely observed. Figure 1.3 shows that villagers lowly rated the observance and practice of some traditional ecological knowledge systems and customary laws in contemporary societies. Ultimately, villagers feel no obligation to respect traditional rules governing management of proximate biotic resources.

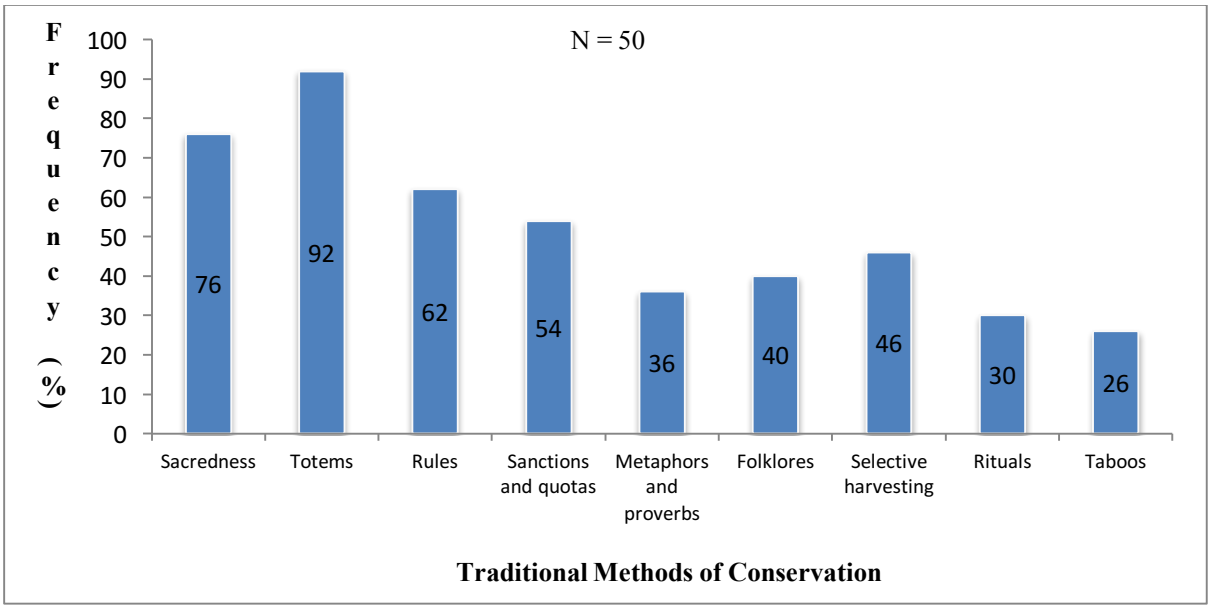

Figure 1.3: Traditional Methods of Natural Biological Resources Conservation

According to villagers' questionnaire responses, challenges confronting and weakening traditional authority (Figure 1.4) have mainly been exacerbated by modernity and a rise in the culture of greedy, individualistic, household-centered behaviors and materialism.

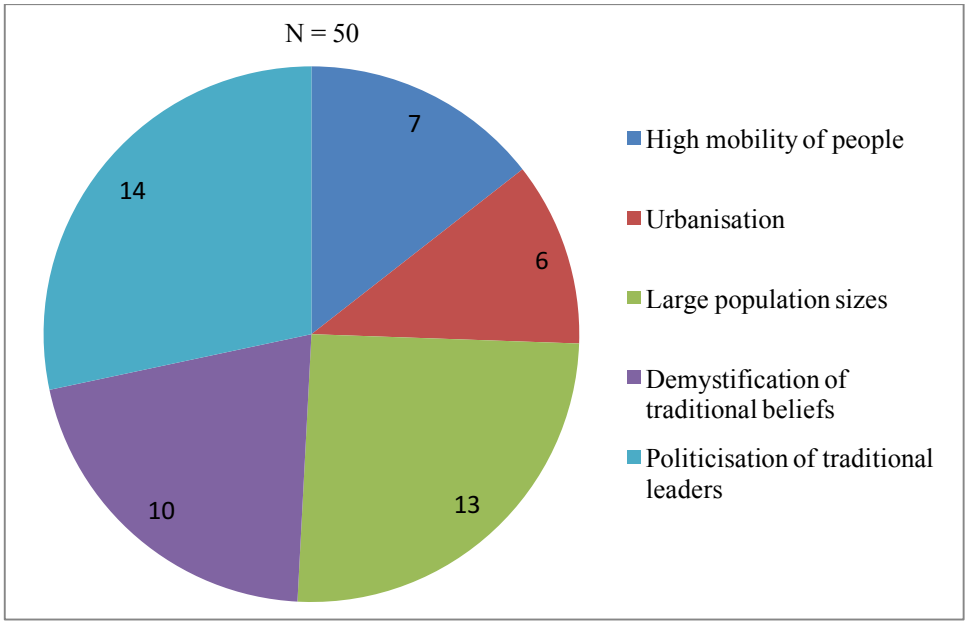

Figure 1.4: Factors Weakening Traditional Governance Systems in Biodiversity Management

Focus group discussions and in-depth key informant interviews yielded fascinating suggestions on what needs to be done to empower traditional leaders and strengthen traditional institutional capacity. Table 1.3 summarizes the actions needed to ensure effective and sustainable traditional governance systems in biological resources conservation.

Strategy	**Explanation**
Streamline the power and authority traditional leaders and institutions are allowed to wield	A clearly defined control system, rights, responsibilities, and accountability of all actors should be accented.
Assign clearly defined functions/roles and responsibilities of traditional leaders and their institutions	The tried and trusted mandates and duties of traditional leaders should be upheld and no interference with their authority should be guaranteed.
Training and capacity building for traditional leaders to foster endurance and adaptability of their institutions	Avail valuable information, knowledge, management skills, and capacity building to traditional leaders and their councils to improve local development and sharpen traditional natural resources management

	practices and administrative capacity.
Correctly appointing deserving and authentic traditional leaders	Appointment of the rightful traditional leadership instils confidence and evokes respect from community members, who would in turn offer genuine support and participation. The Karanga and Shangaan cultures recognize hereditary chieftainship only as authentic.
Draw committed budgets at grassroots level	Being fully resourced ensures that traditional institutions could now adequately finance their visions and aspirations.
Craft a well circumscribed interface between central government and traditional governance systems	The juxtaposition of such two governance systems engenders convergent management systems, a relationship of trust and mutual sharing.
Document traditional authority and ecological knowledge systems	This safeguards sanctity of local authority and the indigenes' knowledge and belief systems, and ensures their continual existence.
Allocating people more land (with secure tenure) under the ongoing post-independence resettlement schemes to decongest communal areas	Land and natural resources in communal areas have been over utilized because of high population pressure. Relieving these areas of excess people proffers opportunities for traditional authorities to restore traditional common property management regimes, which thrive where land is ample.

Table 1.3: Strategies to Empower and Strengthen Traditional Institutional Capacity

Discussion

The study unequivocally shows that in the Masvingo province, the institution of traditional authority was quite formidable and effective in natural resource management before the invasion, subsequent conquest, and permanent settlement by the white European colonialists (Dore 2001; Zimbabwe Institute 2005; Chigwenya and Manatsa 2007). This was reiterated by chiefs, headmen, village heads, and their fellow villagers who participated in this study. In pre-colonial Zimbabwe, environmental resources were communally owned. Individual members under a

communal land tenure system possessed usufruct rights. The stewardship of the natural resources was held by the chief and allied traditional institutions (Mandondo 2000). The chief and his council had authority over natural resources. The members of this team were custodians of the local environment. They were the bearers of traditional values; therefore, they enforced the rules and guidelines on how to own, access, utilize, and conserve natural resources. Traditional methods of resource utilization were well adapted to conservation, enabling local people to survive in a balanced relationship with their natural and social environment (Chigwenya and Manatsa 2007). This hereditary traditional authority, originating within indigenous peoples' own communities, naturally earned respect and commanded compliance.

However, following the establishment of the British colonial administration (1890 – 1980), a legislative framework was put in place that created statute bodies and institutions, which had sole legal mandates to manage, among other resources, all natural biotic resources in the country (Mandondo 2000; Katerere and Guveya 1998; Guveya and Chikandi 1996). This saw the institutionalization of a top-down approach to natural resource management by state empowered natural resource managers, simultaneously sidelining traditional institutions that had historically intimate and intricate relationships with the land. In the process, local people were not only disenfranchised from their natural heritage, but were made to believe that their customary governments were weak, institutionally incapacitated, and headed towards biological calamity (Zimbabwe Institute 2005). All biotic resources were declared the property of the Queen of England, and their exploitation, both for domestic and commercial uses, required her express written permission. The colonial administration promulgated statutory laws such as the Natural Resources Act (Chapter 20:13 of 1941) and instituted the Natural Resources Board to manage environmental resources both on state protected areas and customary lands. The traditional leadership became the lowest-ranking representatives of the established colonial administration system. In the 1930s established Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) (now Communal Lands under a customary tenure system), ecosystem protection and integrity, as well as biological resource conservation, were all greatly compromised in the absence of secure land tenure rights for local communities. This state obtained (as the policing and criminalization approaches used by native commissioners resulted in sabotages and non-support of any state) sanctioned conservation initiatives and development programs (Mandondo 2000; Dore 2001). Therefore, the study underscores that inappropriate institutional arrangement is detrimental to sustainable natural resource management. The colonial governments attempted to revitalize the local institution of traditional authority, starting in the 1950s, but that only gave superficial autonomy to traditional institutions (Tribal Trust Land Act of 1967). The struggle for independence and the protracted war of liberation in Zimbabwe, then Southern Rhodesia, (1965 – 1980), were strongly motivated by the need for self-governance and restoration of indigenous communities' pride, as well as their entitlements to land and land-based resources (Mawere 2012). This asserts that people

deprived of their birthrights will always revolt, seeking redress and an alternative administrative order.

The post-independence Zimbabwean government, however, largely and ironically, regurgitated, adopted, and perpetuated the colonial governance system and institutional framework albeit with some cosmetic amendments to the environmental legislative framework (Dore 2001). Mandondo (2000) expands on this by noting that the amendments, to date, have largely deracialized the colonial acts and policies without democratizing them. The 1982 Chiefs and Headmen Act (Chapter 29:01) retained chieftainship as a symbol of traditional values, but without any administrative or judicial functions (Zimbabwe Institute 2005). It relegated and condemned traditional authority to the peripheral zones of governance as the government sought to punish chiefs for purportedly collaborating with the oppressor during the liberation struggle (Dore 2001; Chigwenya and Manatsa 2007; Chakunda 2009). This act was repealed by the Traditional Leaders Act (Chapter 29:17) of 1998, and some meaningful concessions were made to empower traditional leaders and their institutions. The Zimbabwe Situation (2010) acknowledges this effort as it records that the Zimbabwean leader, President Robert Mugabe, is a strong advocate of traditional leadership, and has facilitated the creation of powerful groupings for chiefs, including reserving parliamentary seats for them. Under the current legislative provision, traditional authority may adjudicate over issues of land, natural resources conservation, and management, in areas under their jurisdiction (land is held under a customary tenure system in communal lands of Zimbabwe). The study, however, hastens to note that the Environmental Management Act (Chapter 20:27), Rural District Councils Act (Chapter 29:13), Communal Land Act (Chapter 20:04), Parks and Wildlife Act (Chapter 20:14), among other pieces of legislation, more often than not, effectively check the autonomy of traditional leadership when it comes to management of biological resources in communal lands of Zimbabwe. Of course, the state institutions responsible for the implementation of these environmental regulatory laws are manned by highly trained professional officers whose natural resource management capabilities are commendable. It is this study's quest, however, to advocate for the granting of absolute and exclusive legal jurisdiction to traditional institutions over management of proximate natural resources.

The Traditional Leaders Act is theoretically sound, but falls short of granting judicial autonomy and practical execution procedures when it comes to the governance of natural resources. This act defines one traditional leader's functions: to administer the needs of communities under their jurisdiction in the interest of good governance. The effort seeks to operationalize the sustainable traditional management of biological resources in communal lands of Zimbabwe by revitalizing institutions of governance at a local level, rooted in the indigenous system of governance (Dore 2001; Latham 2005). However, a management framework that mimics the pre-colonial era, in which traditional authority ensures collective action and common property management regimes,

is needed. In reality, the institution of traditional leadership remains very important in the sustainable management of natural resources in communal lands of Zimbabwe, as it often co-exists with introduced institutions (CRDZIM 2013; Nemarundwe 2001). In Zimbabwe, the challenge remains in which governance of land and land-based resources are replicated in various pieces of legislation, such as the Communal Land Act, the Communal Land Forest Produce Act, the Rural District Councils Act, the Traditional Leaders Act, and now, the umbrella act for natural resources conservation: the Environmental Management Act (Manzungu and Kajinga 2002; Chigwenya and Manatsa 2007). This institutional plurality leads to duplication, overlapping authority, conflict, and, overall, the exploitation of loopholes by environmental offenders. Matyszak (2010) also weighs in by noting that communal lands have to contend with the numerous tentacles of power emanating from different sources due to the bifurcated system (state and customary land control systems).

Despite being closely located in proximity to biological resources, and historically being the stewards and champions of their conservation, traditional authority in Zimbabwe has systematically lost autonomy over land governance. The colonial and post-independence governments of Zimbabwe have instituted state bodies and authorities to superintend the management of natural resources on both state and communal lands. Lathan (2005) notes that the central government lacks genuine intention to decentralize authority and control over natural resources or to place these things in the hands of the local level indigenous communities and their governance institutions. As a result, the traditional leadership and their communities have not only lost grip of their access and utilization of local biological resources, but have had their management systems despised, undermined, and dismissed as weak, ineffective, and primitive. The traditional authority has been significantly weakened as its autonomy and power has been usurped by state authorities who now have all power centralized to themselves (Mandondo 2000). This is despite the fact that the Karanga and Shangaan cultures are imbued with a culture of land and natural resources conservation. The relegation of these vital stakeholders resulted in the degradation of natural ecosystems and biodiversity loss in communal lands of the country. Hardin's Tragedy of the Commons (1968) sets in once a traditional common property resource (CPR) regime is allowed to progress without some well-defined and coherent user group. Non-entitlements to land being occupied, a governance system relying on externally imposed sanctions and rules (often lacking consensus), and an enforcement system using state natural resource managers, who rely on compulsory and coercive conservation methods, are a recipe for sabotage—both non-co-operation and non-participation. Meaningful stakeholder participation in natural resource management is not guaranteed at all under such a system. More often than not, the villagers regard any conservation effort introduced in their communities without consultation to be an 'EMA project' or 'RDC program'; that is, they dissociate themselves from the effort. Such a situation should be lamented, since non-participation by all key stakeholders, especially

the local communities, in any developmental project such as this naturally leads to its failure and collapse.

Traditional authority ensures a shared framework, is more accountable to local livelihood needs, embraces local interests and priorities, and grants people's rights to self-determination (Shackleton et al. 2002). Mapedza (2006) adds that traditional leaders are highly regarded because of responsiveness to local needs or aspirations, apt feedback mechanisms, and accountability to villagers. It is due to these virtues that local traditional institutions need to be restored, empowered, and actively involved in schemes, programs, or projects meant to benefit local communities. The study advocates for an empowerment drive that seeks to restore traditional authority's autonomy and societal cohesion through traditional ties and respect, as well as to observe and uphold the sanctity of the traditional institutions. This is envisaged because, as averred by Dore (2001), the threads of traditional institutions have remained largely intact despite the historical impositions. The communities need to be fully resourced and fully capacitated in order to pursue their developmental goals. This is only attainable if the central government accepts that the traditional governance system is a tried and tested natural resource management system that has survived many ages through endurance and adaptation, to reach this age of modernity. Also, the traditional authorities in Zimbabwe need to take advantage of the legal statutes in place (Traditional Leadership Act and the new Constitution of Zimbabwe, among others) which legitimize their institutions and recognize their indispensability. This study notes that in order to avoid policy discord, in which two or more policies seek to protect a common natural resource, room should be created for the clear definition of each stakeholder's roles, functions, judicial powers, and authority. Such a set-up nurtures complementariness and accountability, as well as justifies claims for legitimacy among the key stakeholders.

Of course, there are challenges that militate against the noble efforts of returning to the traditional way of life. Firstly, the traditional leaders have been dragged into the bureaucratic ranks of state administration, and answer to state officers who not only regulate their conduct, but are empowered to appoint, crown, and even discharge them from authority. This power-sharing is often skewed in favor of the state. The Zimbabwean president now acts as the paramount chief, possessing unlimited powers to force the traditional leaders to toe the state-defined line or that of the ruling party of the day. Secondly, the traditional leaders have been co-opted into national party politics, and have allowed themselves to act as party machineries to the detriment of their historic community status. It now appears impossible for them to proclaim their apolitical status as political parties seek to reap political fodder from their strategic positions in communities. Thirdly, the high population growth rate and pressure on land and natural resources seem to have outpaced traditional leaders' administrative capacity. Indigenous natural resource management institutions do well where societal dynamism is relatively and

progressively stable and slow, which is now impossible due to globalization. Also, traditional leaders receive salaries or allowances from the government, but have no central treasury budgetary support to finance their own governance systems. In the modern cash economy, no institution or organization may deem itself committed to meeting set goals without a supportive budget. The study notes, with regret, that although the traditional governance system is the ideal institution for the sustainable management of proximate biological resources, it is dogged by some practical challenges to really occupy its natural position. These, and other challenges, are not beyond the Zimbabwean community's capacity to overcome and move on. Focus, goodwill, full stakeholder participation, and, above all, political will are required for the traditional governance system to be fully revitalized for societal gains.

Conclusion

This paper argues for the restoration of legitimate power to traditional authority since they remain a key institution in the sustainable management of proximate natural resources. The institution of traditional leadership has a long history of active and effective participation in the legitimate conservation of local-level natural biological resources, which is widely attested to, across both the political and academic divides. The subsequent governments in Zimbabwe have sought to fully usurp the authority and autonomy of traditional leaders and centralize all the powers to themselves. Such machinations have, however, backfired, as the degradation of natural ecosystems and biodiversity losses have become the norm and not the exception on communal lands. There are opportunities at the disposal of both the government and communities to strengthen traditional governance systems and judiciary of natural resources to attain sustainable management of biotic resources in communal areas of Zimbabwe. Of course, there are challenges that must be overcome for such a development to become a reality. This study accentuates how the presence of difficulties in reconstructing traditional common property institutions in fact strengthens the process and makes the end product authentic and capable of enduring and adapting in the ever-changing global environments. The use of traditional governance systems in the sustainable management of biological resources is widely applauded and has won the full support of the United Nations, which actively rallies behind strengthening local traditional authority in order to achieve sustainable development.

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Cultivating Health in Landscapes of Uncertainty: Mystery Kidney Disease and Agrarian Transformation in Dry Zone Sri Lanka

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Since the first reports of a mysterious new form of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKDu) emerged in the early 1990s, Sri Lanka's dry zone has become the epicenter of an epidemic that is slowly crippling agricultural communities across the island's rice belt. In this field report, I provide a detailed description of my fieldwork in two "CKDu hotspots" including an overview of my research design and some preliminary research findings. This work is grounded in feminist methodology and integrates ethnographic and archival fieldwork conducted in the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka over the summers of 2013 and 2015 as well as eleven months of research in Sri Lanka over 2016-17. This article elaborates on fieldwork that I undertook across a range of sites including libraries, farmers' fields, kidney screening clinics, and government offices. Collectively, an analysis of this data provides a deeper understanding of how the problem of CKDu reconfigures human-environment interactions, subjectivities, and relations of expertise in areas where the disease is endemic.

Keywords: *Mystery Kidney Disease, Geography, Dry Zone Sri Lanka, Methodology*

For over two decades, farming communities across Sri Lanka's dry zone have been caught in a double bind: suffering disproportionately from falling crop prices and from a mysterious kidney disease now endemic in the island's North Central Province (NCP). Named "Chronic Kidney Disease of Unknown Etiology" (CKDu) by the World Health Organization (WHO 2012), this mystery illness frustrates scientific attempts to explain its cause (Athuraliya et al. 2011; Jayatilake et al. 2013). Despite its uncertain status, CKDu generates a distinct geographical pattern of incidence, found within Sri Lanka's dry zone – and particularly within NCP – leading many scholars to conclude that it is an environmentally induced illness (Chandrajith et al. 2011; Nobel et al. 2014). Since the early 2000s, estimates of CKDu's prevalence in the dry zone have risen dramatically and the WHO (2012) believes it could impact between 200,000- 400,000 people (15-30% of NCP's current population). As a result, the disease is considered a "public health crisis" that poses a bigger predicament than even the country's 30-year long civil war (Handunnetti 2012).

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Drawing on fifteen months of ethnographic and archival fieldwork between 2013-2017, my dissertation research makes three critical interventions into existing debates about this mystery disease and its effects. First, I argue that the "problem of CKDu" actually signifies and provides insight into three tightly intertwined problems, which co-constitute each other, namely: disease, the limits of scientific explanation, and the limits of government. Second, I document how this complex of problems *creates* new human-environment interactions in areas where the disease is endemic, particularly by reworking cultivation practices, local tastes, resource use, and subjectivities. Third, I investigate how the problem of CKDu intersects with longstanding schemes to enact health in Sri Lanka's dry zone and is active in redefining the relationships between agricultural modernization, health, and state building in the dry zone.

This project was organized around two main components:

1) Archival and library research in Sri Lanka and the UK to investigate how concerns about health intersect with programs of agricultural transformation and state building in Sri Lanka's dry zone over time.

2) Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, field transect walks, and participant observation in dry zone villages across my two primary field sites: Padaviya and Sri Pura (refer to Figure 1). Through this work, I was able to investigate how the problem of CKDu socializes new behaviors of consumption and cultivation in areas where it is endemic. I also tracked the mechanisms driving these changes; the emergence of new sets of relations between farmers and the environment; and the perspectives of people about the disease and responses to mitigate its effects in the region. In short, I illustrate how the tripartite problem of CKDu reorganizes landscapes and subjectivities.

More broadly, I anchor my research in feminist methodologies and their commitments to reflexivity and situated knowledges as well as their thematic strengths in analyzing embodiment, subjectivity, and the "intimate" scales of everyday life. According to feminist scholar Donna Haraway (1989), feminist research is tied together by epistemological and methodological commitments— which, in contrast to positivist epistemologies, re-embed knowledge claims "in place"— and accounts for the agency of both the knowledge producer and the object of study in shaping the research process. Central to feminist methodology then "is the idea that there is no one truth out there to be uncovered and, as a result, all knowledge is partial and linked to the contexts in which it is created" (Nightingale 2003, 77). Within feminist approaches, conceptual and empirical weight is also given to documenting obscured dimensions of resource struggle as well as accounting for contradictory and complex human-environment relations (Elmhirst 2015; Nightingale 2011, 2012; Sultana 2011). In my own work, I marshal feminist methodology to illuminate the multi-dimensional nature of suffering in diseased and contaminated landscapes, the plural and often contradictory nature of environmental subjectivities in contexts of toxic uncertainty, and the limits and partiality of existing knowledge about CKDu. Ultimately, my work enacts a feminist methodology by documenting how "local opinions of problems [and] locals themselves have been largely written out of actual scientific practice… [and by] exposing and interrogating the practice of scientific

research and planning in the reproduction of colonial power relationships" (Robbins 2006, 315-16). Or put another way, I seek to "unite inquiry into scientific, environmental research questions with inquiry into the power of science" itself (Robbins 2006, 316).

Field sites

Since 2013, I have been conducting research in villages located in the agricultural settlement schemes of Padaviya and Sri Pura of the North Central Province (see Figure 1). These schemes are: 1) zones of CKDu endemism and have among the highest rates and longest history of disease, 2) currently hotspots of disease-related interventions, and 3) enduring objects of state intervention designed to increase the agricultural productivity and health of the dry zone.

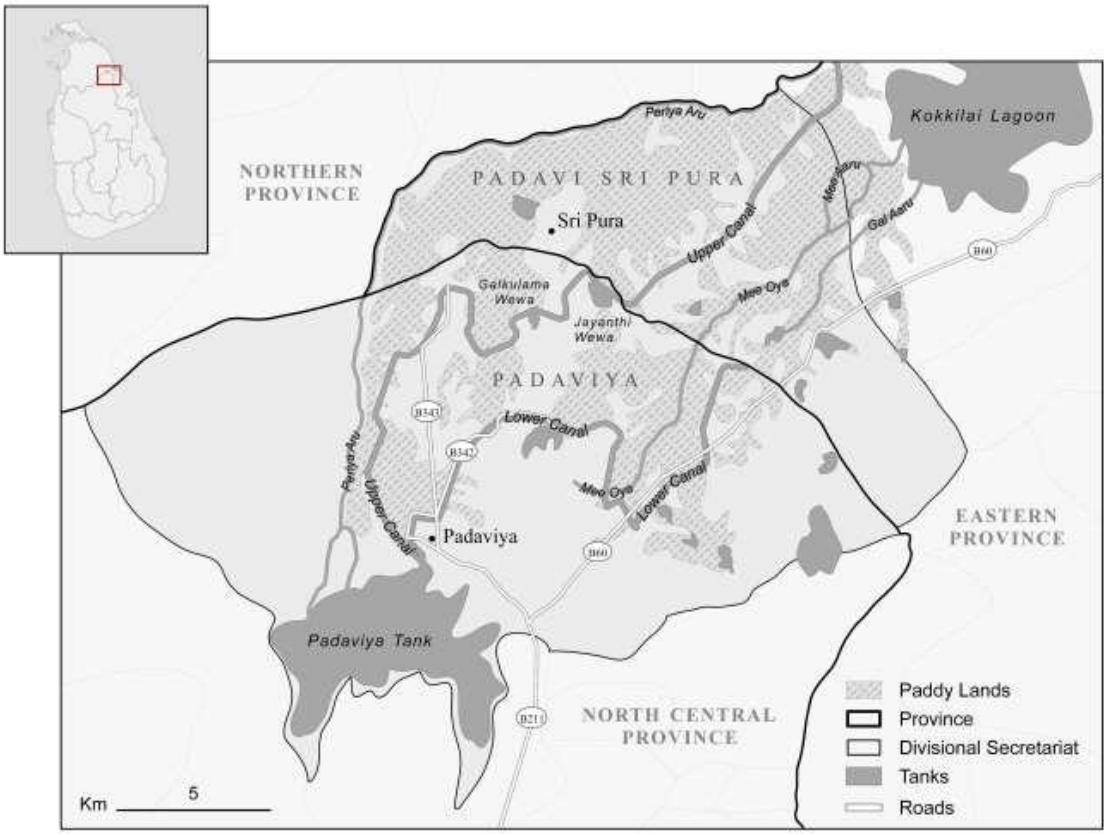

Figure 1: Map of field sites (hydrological features and land use)
Map designed by Brittany Waltemate

	Padaviya	**Sri Pura**
Year of first settlement	1957	1958
Grama Niladhari (administrative) Divisions	15	10
Population (total)	25,438	13,242
Population (families)	7,225	3,817
Total land area	144 km^2	217 km^2
Maximum paddy extent	8246 acres	8254 acres
Land cultivated (wet season 2016-17)	5745 acres	5589 acres
No. families receiving welfare (poverty) payments	2044	836
No. receiving kidney patient stipend	521	298
No. of kidney patients	613	453
No. of Reverse-Osmosis (R.O.) Filters	26	31

Table 1: Some descriptive characteristics of Padaviya and Sri Pura (compiled from local government reports)

Major Activities, Objectives, and Some Preliminary Findings

The archival component of this project documents how CKDu intersects with the long history of agricultural modernization, public health campaigns, and state building projects in the dry zone, and is active in redefining the region's relationship to the Sri Lankan state. This involved five months of historical research at key collections across Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom, at the following sites:

- The National Archives of Sri Lanka
- The National Library of Sri Lanka
- The Royal Asiatic Society Library
- The Mager Institute Library
- University of Colombo, Central Library
- Department of National Museum's Library
- HARTI Library
- Central and Agriculture Libraries of the University of Peradeniya (including the Ceylon collection)
- The National Archives of the UK
- The British Library
- The Royal Commonwealth Society Collection, University of Cambridge Libraries

During this time, I conducted extensive searches of archival and library catalogues to identify and track down primary sources related to the following themes:

- Health and agricultural statistics of the dry zone through time
- Writings on both traditional crops and cultivation methods, including botanical records and scientific periodicals on the dry zone through time
- Writings on the implementation of state-sponsored agricultural settlements (both colonial and post-colonial) in the dry zone, and the restructuring of cultivation practices in the region
- Writings on the rehabilitation of irrigation schemes (colonial and post-colonial) in the dry zone
- Writings on disease and disease-eradication in the dry zone (especially malaria and yaws)
- Writings on green revolution technologies and groundwater irrigation infrastructure during the mid-late 20th century.

As a result of this work, I have built a repository with bibliographical records and notes for more than 200 relevant documents. This collection includes: sessional papers; government gazettes; the Ceylon Register of Correspondence (dispatches between offices and individuals); press cuttings; cabinet papers; original manuscripts; administration reports; botanical records, and samples from both the photography and map collection on Sri Lanka during British colonial rule.

My time at these various libraries and archives has helped validate existing hypotheses and has also been generative of new lines of inquiry. First, through this work, I have tracked shifts of both discourse and policy in colonial and postcolonial interventions on health and agricultural modernization in the dry zone over time. The historical record reveals critical points of reversal as well as continuities in state interventions in the dry zone from the early 20th century to date. For instance, one consistent thread in administration reports of governments (both colonial government and early post-colonial) is the framing of *chena* (upland, slash and burn) cultivation and traditional crops (such as *kurakkan* and *deshi* or indigenous rice varieties) as pathological, not only to human health but also to the agricultural environment and agricultural progress. In this way, many of the transformations of agricultural systems under the British in the early 20th century were justified on the basis of health. In fact, my research suggests that agricultural modernization was positioned as key to achieving and enacting health in the dry zone (particularly in the context of endemic malaria). While reading these documents I was struck by how this narrative has now come full circle as CKDu is increasingly positioned as a problem that *results from* agricultural rationalization and key actors actually advocate a movement back to traditional cultivars and techniques in response to the disease.

The second core component of my research investigates how the "problem of CKDu" restructures human-environment interactions in areas where the disease is endemic. This involved 10 months of ethnographic fieldwork in villages across Padaviya and Sri Pura. To investigate how the problem of CKDu has changed attitudes about the environment, patterns of resource use, and cultivation practices, I conducted:

- A survey of 215 households across four *Grama Niladhari (G.N.)* divisions in the agricultural settlement schemes of Sri Pura, North Central Province
- 11 focus group discussions in villages across Sri Pura and Padaviya
- 74 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with villagers across my field sites
- 76 semi-structured interviews with civil society actors, medical practitioners, and government officials
- Participant observation in fields, community forums, and at mobile screening clinics run by the Kidney Protection Foundation

Methods	**(n)**
Semi-structured interviews with villagers	74
Semi-structured interviews with government officials	18
Semi-structured interviews with academics	14
Semi-structured interviews with civil society/activists	34
Semi-structured interviews with medical practitioners	10
Household surveys	215
Focus group discussions (with villagers)	11
Participant observation: mobile screening clinic	4
Field transect walks	30

Table 2: Summary of data collected (2013-2017)

The ethnographic component of my research was organized around four sub-questions:

a) How do farmers perceive their environment and its relation to human health? Have their attitudes towards the environment shifted in response to the problem of CKDu?
b) What cultivation strategies and crop varieties are adopted by farmers producing in CKDu endemic areas? Have cultivation techniques shifted in response to the problem of CKDu? If so, how? If not, what factors constrain alternative production choices in the dry zone?
c) How are local tastes and norms of food "purity" attuned by and to suspected environmental health risks? Has the problem of CKDu socialized new behaviors of water consumption in areas where CKDu is endemic?
d) Do changes in consumption and cultivation practices differ within and between communities? If so, what factors shape these variations?

Empirically, my fieldwork was grounded in an analysis of three ongoing attempts to govern CKDu and by extension, to socialize new behaviors of disease management, consumption, and cultivation: 1) new mobile kidney screening programs and public awareness campaigns, 2) the proliferation of community-level Reverse-Osmosis (RO) water filters, and 3) the roll-out of a national initiative promoting indigenous and organic rice cultivation as a "long-term solution" to the problem of kidney disease.

As part of this analysis, I conducted a structured household survey of 215 families. Household surveys used a non-probability sampling design, which establishes trends and themes in villagers' experiences, behaviors, and understandings "without seeking to make generalizable claims about whole populations" (McGuirk and O'Neill 2010, 205). These surveys included families with and without CKDu patients. Surveys focused on 1) settlement histories, 2) demographic and household information, 3) livelihood portfolios, 4) water consumption practices, 5) disease profiles (including rates of co-disease burden), and 6) cultivation practices. By doing so, my dissertation research is the first study to identify spatial and social patterns in the shift to alternative agricultural techniques and filtered water in areas where CKDu is endemic.

In addition to the structured household survey, I conducted 74 in-depth and open-ended semi-structured interviews with villagers across Padaviya and Sri Pura. Semi-structured interviews provide more in-depth perspectives on: 1) local environmental histories and observed changes in local ecosystems and cultivation techniques; 2) changes in attitudes towards the environment; 3) changes in agricultural livelihood systems in response to the problem of CKDu, 4) changes in water consumption practice in response to the problem of CKDu, and 5) changes in how people come to think of their health, bodies, and identities.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, I conducted field transect walks (Doolittle 2015) and on-site observation to confirm the type of seed and farming practices employed by farmers in my sample. I also conducted participant observation with a mobile kidney screening clinic, which allowed me to observe and document: a) practices of diagnoses and biomedical classification, b) clinical management of disease, and c) attempts to guide and direct behaviors of health management through public awareness campaigns. Ethnographic documentation of everyday, embodied practices has also been useful for understanding how individuals with CKDu manage and regulate body-environment exchanges, and how these activities might engender new environmental subjectivities (Nading 2014). Through long-term participant observation and semi-structured interviews, I have documented daily experiences of environmental suffering, uncertainty, and risk that are often not captured by the methods, scales of analysis, and standards of evidence used in existing research on CKDu.

An emerging finding from my research is that many farmers who were recently encouraged to cultivate traditional rice varieties (as a disease mitigation strategy) are now switching back to improved varieties. Ironically, this shift back to hybrid seeds accompanies the rise of a national movement promoting indigenous rice varieties and "toxic free food." This contradiction has opened up new lines of inquiry in my research, namely: How do we explain the local collapse of *deshi* cultivation at the very moment that the national movement, which promotes it, is expanding in rhetorical coherence and presence? Additionally, I am fascinated by how villagers in my study sites have cultivated new tastes related to toxic-free food, *deshi* varieties of rice, and filtered water as well as how these tastes reconfigure people's relationships to the environment and health. I hope to draw on this work to argue that attending to affective relations can provide a more nuanced account of why rural people are motivated to value, act,

and understand their relation to the environment (in this case, particular systems of cultivation) in certain ways and not others.

Conclusion

The problem of CKDu reconfigures the relations between health, knowledge, agricultural modernization, and state building in ways that are imperative to study given the dry zone's identity as the rice belt of Sri Lanka, its role in maintaining the island's food security and supply, and the long history of state-led interventions designed to resettle and redevelop its productive capacity. This paper details a methodological approach that holds potential for documenting and illuminating the complex relationships between agricultural modernization, diseased landscapes, and everyday practices. It combined a mix of archival, survey, and ethnographic analyses to examine how geographic processes of health-environment interaction and agrarian change shape experiences of risk as well as the possibilities for health, well-being, and agricultural sustainability in Sri Lanka's dry zone.

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The Messages Behind Carved Swahili Doors: A Field Report on Pre-Dissertation Research in Tanzania, Kenya, and Ghana

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For the powerful merchants who established control along the Swahili coast of East Africa in the nineteenth century, doors held great meaning. Especially prevalent in the Stone Town district of Zanzibar are extant examples of massive, elaborately carved wooden doors that adorned the front entrances of grand buildings. These facades stood as direct messages of power, wealth, heritage, security, religious beliefs, and more. They delineated space in a myriad of ways. Who was the audience for their messages, what visual propaganda was at play, and how might this inform our understanding of cultural exchange and communications in the region today?

Keywords: *Carved Swahili Doors, Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana, Art History*

Introduction

With the support of a Whiting Indigenous Knowledge Student Research Award, I visited the Swahili coast of East Africa and the Ashanti region of Ghana for two months in the summer of 2017. A major purpose for this travel was pre-dissertation research. This research included visits to heritage sites, architectural and archaeological sites, artist studios, art markets, archives, museums, universities, festivals, and other cultural events. Most importantly, this also included time for personal engagement, language familiarization, and casual conversations with locals in a wide variety of cities, towns, small villages, and neighborhoods in the two regions. It was important to establish contacts at universities and to gain an initial overview of the types of archives and objects that would be available to me during a longer, more focused research visit; however, the relationships I began to build with Swahili and Ghanaian people were the most valuable for future learning and efforts to construct and preserve indigenous knowledge. Since my larger project revolves around the ideas of visual communication, audience reception, and personal identification or association with specific messages and histories, I was able to gather incredible information from those exchanges. The encounters and enlightenment are already providing new possibilities for partnerships with African institutions and scholars, along with innovative fuel for my long-term research directions.

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Background

As a brief overview, I started graduate school as a way to begin a second career. I earned my undergraduate degree from Miami University in marketing and international business with a minor in fine arts. For two decades I had a rewarding and successful career in marketing communications as a graphic designer and creative director for a variety of institutions. In 2014, I left the corporate world to test the waters in academia. I began my master's degree in art history as part of a search for a career that could satisfy and encompass more of the competing confluence of interests and capabilities I was hoping to engage in my professional life: design, art, language, international trade, transnational histories, communications, cultural engagement, heritage, and preservation.

Now, as a PhD candidate in art history at the Pennsylvania State University, my focus and research interests are trained on the patterns and designs of the African continent and their relationship to marketing and cultural exchange. A successful designer creates associations for his or her audience through imagery that does not rely upon a specific linguistic understanding or a particular context. It is a natural progression and logical sequence of vision that has drawn me to the study of form, pattern, and ornament in African cultures, where visual identities have been used this way for centuries. In exchanges between cultural groups that share no common language, information about a person is communicated through symbols and signs that equate to memory and identity in a variety of forms.

In many ways, the methods I use are a new approach to research in the field of traditional African art history, especially when applied to the arts and material cultures of particular groups and regions. Specific details of my findings and proprietary knowledge are not included in this brief field report because my research efforts are ongoing. What follows is primarily information that is commonly understood as general knowledge; however, I have tried to frame it in the context of my firsthand investigations and personal comparisons. Through these experiences, I was able to directly establish visual and cultural understandings from primary sources and artist visits, and to gather and preserve indigenous knowledge through oral histories.

Tanzania and Kenya: Carved Swahili Doors

The Swahili coast is the narrow strip of East African coastline that stretches from Mogadishu, Somalia down to Cape Delgado in Mozambique, including the islands and archipelagos that proliferate those shores. The history of the Swahili coast is most meaningfully constructed through the development of trade accomplished by merchants who used *dhows*, which are nimble boats with adjustable sails that easily navigated the monsoon winds that flow north for one half of the year, and south for the next half. The role of trade on the East African coast is a significant aspect of a long and influential history that contributed to the unique growth and amalgamation of the Indian Ocean Rim.

Figure 1: Dhow at Sunset, Zanzibar

The cumulative effect of multi-layered interactions with partners around the Indian Ocean and the African interior correlates with the formation of Swahili society— a complex aggregation of people whose robust visual culture has received little attention in art historical scholarship. The Islamic faith is a unifying facet of the population, but the Swahili brand of Islam is syncretic. The language of the Swahili people, Kiswahili, adds another layer of consideration as a Bantu African linguistic base intertwined with Arabic, European, and Asian vocabulary. The ornamental style that proliferates Swahili art and architecture is recognized as a composite blend of symbols from these diverse inputs and influences on the culture.

Figure 2: Carved Door, Zanzibar

Still standing throughout the Swahili coastal region are massive, elaborately carved wooden doors that adorned the front entrances of grand buildings in the nineteenth century. For the powerful merchants who established control of the Indian Ocean trade systems in the region at that time, the doors held great meaning. These facades were charged with direct messages of power, wealth, heritage, security, and political and religious beliefs. They delineated space in a myriad of ways. Could the signs and symbols that decorate the doors be the key to unlocking a better understanding of Swahili culture and syncretism?

Figure 3: Mombasa, Old Town

Figure 4: Zanzibar, Stone Town

During my visits to East Africa, I concentrated a large portion of my time in the Stone Town section of Zanzibar City on Unguja Island of Tanzania and in the Old Town region of Mombasa Island in Kenya. Zanzibar Stone Town was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000, and Mombasa Old Town was nominated for that designation and is on the tentative site list. In both locations, I walked the narrow streets and alleyways to examine as many examples of the carved wooden doors as possible. I documented the different types of designs, the variety of carving styles, and the combinations of symbols. I also visited shops and markets, spoke with artists, and spent time gathering oral histories about cultural beliefs, the neighborhoods, the trade, the politics, and the mix of religions and nationalities in the Swahili region.

My ability to communicate with Tanzanians and Kenyans in the lingua franca for those countries, Kiswahili, was an enormous advantage in these activities. I studied Kiswahili at Penn State for two semesters. Then, in 2016 I was the recipient of a Critical Language Scholarship from the U.S. Department of State. With that award, I spent two months of intensive language study and cultural immersion in Arusha, Tanzania. That experience most definitely fueled my interest in East African societies and Indian Ocean trade. CLS students make a pledge to speak no English during their time traveling in their chosen country, and I held myself to that same commitment again during this pre-dissertation research trip. As a result, my language skills continued to improve enormously, and I was able to converse in Kiswahili with individuals who may not otherwise have been open to speaking with me in English.

The standard construction of the carved doorways consists of a center post and lintel, frames on either side, and two doors. The doors are understood to have male and female sides by the Swahili.

Figure 5: Zanzibar Door

The oldest doors have rectilinear frames. The styles of doors commonly known as either Omani or Indian became more popular at the end of the nineteenth century, when we start to see more curvilinear forms in the carvings. The carved door was a declarative statement about the person who owned the house to

which it was attached. The greater the owner's social position and wealth, the larger the construction, and the more elaborate the carvings and designs. A few examples of motifs that represent this type of economic-related symbolism include squares, wavy lines, ropes, vines, and chains.

Figure 6: Chain and Rope Motifs in Swahili Woodcarving

Geometric designs heavy with squares have been linked to accountants, while wavy lines and ropes conveyed that the merchant behind the door owned fishing vessels or made a living by the sea. The presence of chains in a carved door design is often linked to slave trade. Chains might also have been a symbol of security or protection.

Ghana: Accra and Ashanti Region

For comparative purposes, I also made a short research trip to visit museums, architectural sites, political centers, and artist or textile studios in the Ashanti region of Ghana. This trip was organized by a group of

African art historian colleagues in collaboration with Ghanaian artists and scholars. The opportunity to engage in an informed and meaningful dialogue with Ghanaian community members about historical artist-patron-political relationships was an extremely valuable addition to my understanding of indigenous practices. There are historic parallels between the Ashanti region and the Swahili coast, including the centuries of trade and exchange systems built with a wide variety of partners.

In the city of Accra, Ghana, I met with contemporary artists who talked about the ways they incorporate a variety of symbols and historical messages related to cultural identities into their current work. The artists I met in Accra work in a variety of mediums: painting, sculpture, ceramics, graphic design, industrial design, graffiti, and fibers or fashion. The chance to learn about the motivations behind such breadth and variety in these different forms of cultural expression was immensely valuable as I consider what must have been similar approaches taken by the artists who created historical art forms.

A highlight of my visit to the Ashanti region of Ghana was the chance to visit studios in the town of Bonwire, which is the historical center for *kente* weavers and *adinkra* cloth production. Symbols and visual messages figure prominently in both types of textiles. Artists were generous with their demonstrations of production methods, historical traditions, and the use of *adinkra* symbols, which are visual markers that are used extensively throughout Ghana to represent aphorisms, historical motifs, or specific concepts.

Figure 7: Carved Adinkra Stamps, Bonwire, Ghana

I was taught how to carve stamps for the symbols out of dried calabash gourds, and I stamped my own strip of *adinkra* cloth. The *adinkra* symbols I chose were representations of the concepts of "flexibility/adaptability" and "the power of love."

Figure 8: Adinkra Stamp Printing, Bonwire, Ghana

A *kente* weaver tried to teach me how to use a loom, but I could not come close to learning how to master the coordinated efforts of the four different motions simultaneously required by hands and feet.

Figure 9: Janet Purdy on the Kente Loom, Bonwire, Ghana

Kente cloth and *adinkra* symbols continue today as important visual representations and graphic messaging forms in Ghana and throughout the world.

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I am incredibly grateful for the support of the Whiting Indigenous Knowledge Student Research Award. During my summer 2017 travels in Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania, I had so many incredible opportunities and engagements that led to a great expansion of knowledge and cultural understanding in ways that will support and substantially impact my dissertation work and future research.

I would also like to thank the following groups who also supported my travel in Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania: The Arts Council of the African Studies Association; Penn State Art History Department Research and Travel Grants; Penn State Africana Research Center; Penn State Global Programs; Penn State College of Arts and Architecture; CLS Alumni Development Fund from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State.

A Review of *A Culture's Catalyst: Historical Encounters with Peyote and the Native American Church in Canada*

Book Review by Kevin Feeney
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A Culture's Catalyst: Historical Encounters with Peyote and the Native American Church in Canada by Kahan, Fannie, edited by Erika Dyck. 2016. Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press. 130 pp. Paperback $27.95. ISBN 978-0887558146

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Fannie Kahan's new book, *A Culture's Catalyst*, provides a novel glimpse into an era when psychedelic research was at its peak, and when social fears about psychedelics were limited to the imagined orgies of peyote cults. Kahan's original manuscript was completed back in 1963, but failed efforts at finding a publisher left the book gathering dust in the archives of the author's brother, Abram Hoffer. The manuscript remained buried in papers until it was uncovered by historian Erika Dyck during investigations on the history of psychedelic research in Canada. Dyck has brought this manuscript to light by editing it for clarity and uniformity, and providing an in-depth introduction contextualizing Kahan's work within the political landscape of the 1950s and early 1960s.

Kahan's book is largely built around a Native American Church peyote ceremony held during 1956 in North Battleford, Sasketchewan. A handful of White scientists attended the ceremony, including book contributors Duncan Blewett, Abram Hoffer, Humphry Osmond, and Teodoro Weckowicz. Kahan, who is a journalist by training, has assembled and presented what might best be characterized as a defense of peyotism, the religious use of peyote, with a text that veers between reporting and editorializing. Kahan draws heavily from anthropologists J. S. Slotkin, Weston LaBarre, and Omer Stewart, but also demonstrates her investigative prowess through her collection of a variety of government documents, ranging from department memos to legislative hearings, and court transcripts and decisions as primary resources. From this research, she provides, as an addendum to chapter three, the full court opinion on the seminal case of *Arizona v. Attakai*, which is the first U.S. court decision to find that the Constitution protects religious peyote use. Kahan also draws on the original research of her collaborators, including various communications with members of the Native American Church.

Kahan provides a brief introduction to the manuscript, then goes on to outline the historical context that gave rise to the peyote religion in the United States (in addition to other Native religious movements that were suppressed), and its eventual spread to Canada in the 1930s. Kahan details several significant legal developments in the U.S. and Canada related to the relationship between Native peoples and their respective federal governments. She also examines a fascinating conflict over peyotism on the Navajo

reservation. As a lawyer, the details of this conflict, leading up to the *Attakai* case, are to me a highlight of the book. Kahan goes on to describe the structure and ethic behind the Native American Church and the peyote ceremony, providing the foundation for the chapters that follow and complete the book.

Humphry Osmond contributes a poetic account of his experience as a participant in the peyote ceremony. The account is notable not only for its visual imagery, but also for its honesty, including disclosing Osmond's fears about "vomiting in public" (69). Duncan Blewett, in chapter 6, examines the psychological benefits provided to Native peoples by peyote and the peyote ceremony, particularly in the aftermath of colonialism and in the reserve and reservation eras. Blewett, a clinical psychologist, participated in the 1956 ceremony, but did not consume peyote. Therefore, much of his discussion and analysis is based on a synthesis of his observations in the peyote ceremony and his clinical work with psychedelics such as LSD and mescaline, the latter being the active component of peyote.

Teodoro Weckowicz provides (perhaps my favorite chapter in the book) an analysis of the peyote ceremony in Jungian terms. Weckowicz outlines Jung's theory on archetypes and the collective unconscious, and draws some provocative parallels with the peyote ceremony. The book closes with a short chapter by Abram Hoffer and Humphry Osmond discussing the recent (1958) classification of peyote as a prescription drug by the Canadian government. Here, they examine the ethical perils, among others, of placing doctors in the role of gatekeeper to a religion's sacrament.

Kahan's book is ambitious, but as a full-throated defense of peyotism it misses the mark, both in terms of tone and content. Kahan herself did not attend the 1956 peyote ceremony, and it is not clear what, if any, experience she has working or interacting with First Nations' or Native American peoples. She strikes a strong tone of support for Native peoples and the peyote religion throughout the book, but the tone is often polemical rather than critical, and frequently veers into generalization and stereotype. As an example of the strange tone, Kahan makes the following statement attempting to emphasize the importance of indigenous religions in helping Native peoples to adapt to post-colonial life; however, she somehow manages to both patronize and romanticize the Native individual in the process: "Hard as he tries to adjust to our ways, the Indian still finds that truth and integrity exist only in himself, the everlasting mystic" (20).

Inartful statements, similar to the previous example, are presented throughout Kahan's work. Sometimes these statements are more clearly supportive of Native peoples and critical of the continuing colonial realities in North America, such as when referring to the "cultural smugness of the White man" (66). Frequently, however, these statements are made without developing the proper context to support them, leaving the delivery acerbic rather than poignant. This practice of stating, rather than demonstrating, takes away from the power of the overall work, and leaves a piece that some might find abrasive. While I generally sympathize with the views of the author, I believe that it is the tone that she struck, rather than the content of the book, that prevented Kahan from finding a publisher in the 1960s.

The organization and cohesiveness of the original manuscript could also be tighter. The introduction by Kahan is brief, and lacks an outline or comprehensive overview of the original manuscript. There is some repetitiveness and overlap between chapters as well. The Introduction to the published book, written by editor Erika Dyck, helps to build a structure around the original manuscript and provides the reader much needed context in terms of the period and the individuals involved in the production of the original manuscript. It is Dyck's contribution, providing a proper foundation, that brings the book together as a satisfactory whole.

As an anthropologist, there is not as much analysis as I would like; however, this is not truly an anthropological work. The book draws heavily from J. S. Slotkin's (1956) ethnography, *The Peyote Religion*, which I would highly recommend as complementary reading. That said, the content, quotes, rare bits of information, and historical value of Kahan's work were enough to keep my interest. All in all, Erika Dyck should be commended for her efforts in reviving Kahan's manuscript. Despite its faults and peculiarities, I believe there are sufficient virtues to merit the interest of the modern reader and researcher.

A Review of *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology*

Book Review by Manulani Aluli Meyer
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Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology. By Ingersoll, Karin Amimoto. 2016. Durham: Duke University Press. 216 pp. Paperback $23.95. ISBN: 9780822362340

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"…as my body enters the sea, I enter an indigenous thought-world stimulated by cultural memory, imagination, perception, and understanding. Time becomes a condition of action in the ocean" (115).

Natural systems have always been models for our thinking. Their marginalization is a symptom of the dumbing-down of our society, which is expressed in standardization of schools, government and social systems modeled without respect for our natural world. In *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology*, Karin Amimoto Ingersoll's passion for surfing comes to life and helps detail an emerging Oceanic literacy (knowledge shaped by Island life-styles) discovered in her own embodied knowing. *Interconnection, flexibility,* and *movement* (10) act as descriptors of what could be referred to as a surf session: Karin Ingersoll's writing splashes from context into text, and from essence into form.

Waves of Knowing is an intimate discussion of both external and internal realities found both in the politics of Hawai‘i and within the author's perception. Ingersoll eschews a colonial-variety, empirical world (knowledge without the nuance of dreams or intuition) and instead explores a dynamic, place-based, historic memory empowerment which becomes its own *living archive* (34) and instructs Ingersoll's own self-determination. The author uses her *na'au mind*, her authentic voice, to honor Hawaiian names and *mo‘olelo* (stories) for all things *moana* (ocean). Ingersoll works to re-code this fluid sensibility back into our thinking so feeling and emotion can respectfully re-enter our cognitive reality, and *Kanaka time* (115) can once more be a privileged space.

Filled with self-noted false dualities in both her person and her writing, Ingersoll ultimately commits to wholeness. Knowing then becomes embodied sensations within cognition (113). For Ingersoll, the sea was not something to be "studied," but to be engaged through her own metaphysical ontology, which she discovered in her own sensuality (86, 122). She introduces *he'e nalu* (surfing), *ho'okele* (way-finding), and *lawai'a* (fishing) as tools to understand a seascape epistemology more interested in life, purpose, and joy than in commodification, extraction, and power.

> Oceanic literature becomes a phenomenological tool for Kanaka, a political literacy that can reimagine possibilities through sensations felt not merely by the surfer as an isolated figure, but [by] all of the possibilities included in her image; the waves, the sand, the reef, the fish, ancestors and future generations. These sensations radiate out, reaching those watching on the shore, affecting and pulling them (even tourists)

> into the experience. He'e nalu is an enactment by which energy is released, digested, and then rereleased in an incessant cycle of rejuvenation and (re)connection (77).

What I find interesting in this seascape epistemology is that it can indeed be a space for a (k)new (already known) model to enhance our thinking. Natural systems have always instructed us through their patterns, purpose, and inspiration. Perhaps, even surfing tourists will one day play a role in keeping pristine those very places they commodified. Here is my own understanding of Ingersoll's writings, along with the liquid source we know as *moana nui ākea*: ultimately, we are not racially defined, we are *culturally engaged*. Way-finding, fishing, and surfing remain disciplines of a consciousness that by its very nature transforms society because of its potential for personal awareness and collective devotion to our *beloved* natural world. Karin Amimoto Ingersoll details the occupied machination of Hawai'i (the American political and social climate dominating our Island society) and our minds in *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology,* but I know she wants to be in the ocean. Maybe that is what she wants us all to do, and that—just that—will change *everything.*

New Resources on Indigenous Knowledge

This section lists recent publications related to indigenous knowledge. It is not intended to be comprehensive, but covers a wide range of disciplines and provides a snapshot of the depth and breadth of research on indigenous issues.

Ahearn, Ariell, and Troy Sternberg, eds., with Allison Hahn. 2017. *Pastoralist Livelihoods in Asian Drylands: Environment, Governance and Risk*. Indigenous Perspectives on Pastoralism, Policy, and the Environment. Cambridge, UK: White Horse Press.

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The Indigenous Navigator, an Innovative Initiative by and for Indigenous People

During the **72nd Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 72)** at the UN Headquarters in New York from September 12 to 25, 2017, one **event marking the 10th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples was the official launching of** the *Indigenous Navigator*. This is an open source tool, available online, that can be used by indigenous peoples worldwide to gather data on the status of the recognition and implementation of their rights. It monitors the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the outcomes of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, and essential aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals. According to the website of this initiative, "By using the Indigenous Navigator, indigenous organizations and communities, duty bearers, NGOs and journalists can access free tools and resources based on community-generated data." The aim of this initiative is that, "By documenting and reporting their situation, indigenous peoples can enhance their access to justice and development."

This initiative has been piloted for two years in six countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and further developed based on lessons learned, the recommendations of indigenous communities, and the incorporation of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) Outcome Document and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

The Indigenous Navigator is a collaborative initiative developed and managed by a global consortium composed by ILO, IWGIA, Tebtebba, AIPP, Forest Peoples Programme, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, with the support of the European Union (EU).

New UN Platform for the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples

In November 2017, the 23rd annual "Conference of the Parties" (COP 23) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) made the *Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform* operational. The platform was established during the COP 21 in Paris in order to facilitate "the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices on mitigation and adaptation," and to catalyze learning, engagement, and policy coordination that benefit local communities and indigenous peoples, as well as the international community. According to the UNFCCC website, "Operationalizing the platform for indigenous peoples and local communities is an opportunity to create strategic linkages between the UNFCCC process, the broader UN system, the sustainable development goals and vulnerable groups and peoples. The platform should enable promotion of adaptation actions in line with the priorities and needs of indigenous peoples and local communities to care for and protect the valuable eco-systems and biodiversity on which our planet depends."

The ILO Report Highlights Indigenous Peoples' Role in Climate Action

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has released a report that analyzes the situation of indigenous peoples in the context of climate change. The report, titled *Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change: From Victims to Change Agents through Decent Work*, suggests that indigenous peoples are affected in distinctive ways by climate change, and also by the policies or actions that are aimed at addressing it. The report highlights that indigenous peoples, with their traditional knowledge and occupations, have a unique role to play in climate action. As agents of change, indigenous peoples are thus essential to the success of policies and measures directed towards mitigating and adapting to climate change. The report concludes that, "in order for climate action to be successful, indigenous peoples must be seen as powerful agents of change, accorded access to decent work opportunities and the ability to participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of sustainable policies and measures aimed at combating climate change. Simultaneously, it is also essential that the factors which make indigenous peoples uniquely vulnerable to climate change be addressed in a distinct and targeted manner."

NEMA, UNESCO Seek Modern, Indigenous Interface to Tackle Climate Change

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Nigeria has partnered with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in a bid to seek modern and indigenous ways of tackling climate change in Nigeria. As reported by the *Leadership* publication, the director general of NEMA, Engr. Mustapha Yunusa Maihaja, stated, "The combination of both indigenous knowledge and modern science is inevitable; none completely can stand alone or excludes the other if our goal is to assure a reduction in loss of life and property." The Regional Director of UNESCO Multi-Sectoral Regional Office (West Africa) in Abuja (Nigeria) and UNESCO Representative to Nigeria, Benin, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Togo, Mr. Yao Ydo, noted that the event is focused on the Lake Chad Basin because, "as we all know, that ecosystem is severely affected by the impacts of climate change with terrible human and environmental consequences." The African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Lake Chad Basin commission established a program named Rehabilitation and Strengthening the Resilience of Socio-Ecological Systems of the Lake Chad Basin (PRESIBALT). Mr. Yao Ydo said, "This programme is geared towards enhancing the resilience of vulnerable populations of Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, and Chad. These countries depend on the Lake basin's natural resources."

Combining Genomics with Farmers' Traditional Knowledge to Improve Wheat Production

For the first time, scientists demonstrate that the indigenous knowledge of smallholder farming communities may yield genomic targets useful for wheat breeding for local agriculture. Researchers in Italy and Ethiopia conducted research that demonstrates the indigenous knowledge of traditional farmers, passed on from one generation to the next for hundreds of years, can be measured in a quantitative way and used with advanced genomic and statistical methods to identify genes responsible for farmers' preferences of wheat. As reported by the *EurekAlert!* publication, Matteo Dell'Acqua, geneticist at the Scuola Sant'Anna and coordinator of the research, said, "This study is a milestone in modern crop breeding as it is the first in demonstrating that the traditional knowledge of smallholder farmers has a genetic basis that can be extracted with methods already available to the scientific community. These farmers can teach us how to produce crop varieties adapted to local agriculture, fighting food insecurity in farming systems most exposed to climate change."

The result of this original research, conducted by scientists from the Institute of Life Sciences of Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna in Pisa and from Bioversity International, and also with participation by the University of Bologna, the Amhara Agricultural Research Center, and the Mekelle University in Ethiopia, was published in an article in the *Frontiers in Plant Science* journal.

An Australian Parliament to Recognize and Revive Indigenous Languages for the First Time in the Nation's History

As reported by ABC.net.au in October 2017, NSW Parliament in Sydney ushered in a historic piece of legislation — the Aboriginal Languages Bill. As part of the new legislation, the State Government said it would appoint an independent panel of Aboriginal language experts, and establish a new languages center.

Language revival has mostly been a grassroots movement, and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council wants it to stay that way. Barkindji man Murray Butcher spoke in his Indigenous language, urging the Parliament not to try to control the preservation of Indigenous languages: "Put the power back in our people to save our languages and give us the power to control our destiny."

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Sarah Mitchell said that about 1,800 people spoke Aboriginal languages in NSW, with Wiradjuri being the most widely spoken. An estimated 35 original languages are spoken across the state, with dozens of different dialects and varying levels of fluency. For decades, speaking Indigenous languages was discouraged by state governments.

Join the L-ICIK Listserv

Readers of *IK: Other Ways of Knowing* are invited to join the free listserv managed by the Interinstitutional Center for Indigenous Knowledge, which is open to anyone interested in indigenous knowledge.

The nearly one thousand subscribers to ICIK's listserv receive postings that include informative articles from reliable sources.

The listserv will provide you with advance notice of ICIK seminars that can be viewed in real time via Mediasite or viewed at your leisure as an archived video on the ICIK website. The listserv will also inform you of upcoming conferences and current articles about indigenous peoples and their cultures as well as calls for submission of proposals issued by government and non-governmental programs.

To join the ICIK listserv, go to the ICIK website, then click "Join the ICIK Listserv" on the home page and provide your name and e-mail address.