

UC Merced

UC Merced Previously Published Works

Title

Commemorating from the Margins of the Nation: El Salvador 1932, Indigeneity, and Transnational Belonging

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1tr2q607>

Journal

Anthropological Quarterly, 86(4)

ISSN

0003-5491

Author

DeLugan, Robin Maria

Publication Date

2013

DOI

10.1353/anq.2013.0046

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

Forthcoming 2013 Anthropological Quarterly

Commemorating from the Margins of the Nation: El Salvador 1932, Indigeneity, and Transnational
Belonging

Robin Maria DeLugan, Ph.D.

University of California-Merced

School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

5200 N. Lake Road

Merced, CA 95345

rdelugan@ucmerced.edu

Commemorating from the Margins of the Nation: El Salvador 1932, Indigeneity, and Transnational Belonging

Abstract

Recent public commemorations in the US and El Salvador for the 1932 state-sanctioned killing of thousands of indigenous Nahuat in western El Salvador involve Native communities and diasporic Salvadorans who thereby bring attention to the continued marginalization of Native people and cultures. Salvadorans in the US express personal and collective indigeneity while contributing to memory and justice efforts in Izalco, the epicenter of the 1932 violence. Multi-sited ethnography illustrates how Native populations and diasporic others, two publics at the margins of the nation-state, engage popular social memory to acknowledge and commemorate a national tragedy in a process that reconfigures and remakes the meaning of national belonging.

[Key words: social memory, indigeneity, nation-state, diaspora, El Salvador 1932]

As El Salvador continues to re-build in the aftermath of its civil war (1980-1992), new official sites and practices actively draw attention to questions of national culture, history, and identity.ⁱ While museums, textbooks, and educational events highlight archaeological wonders and certain historical narratives for nation-building (DeLugan 2004), there has been a general official silence since the civil war regarding its well-documented atrocities.ⁱⁱ During the post-civil war period, another earlier atrocity, the 1932 “*Matanza*” (Slaughter), an infamous period of state-sanctioned violence against indigenous people in western El Salvador, has received new attention from scholars, human rights activists, indigenous communities, and diasporic Salvadorans. Until very recently, however, the government of El Salvador has not matched their interest in clarifying the link between 1932 and the contemporary marginalization of indigenous populations in El Salvador.

The *Matanza* was a swift and brutal response to a popular uprising in Western El Salvador, and resulted in the deaths of thousands, mostly indigenous Nahuat over a period of weeks. Through the years, estimates of the possible number of victims have varied considerably. Thomas Anderson presents figures that range from a low of 6,000 to a high of 40,000 (Anderson 1982: 198-203). Recent scholarship offers a conservative estimate of 10,000 dead (Gould and Lauria-Santiago 2008). At an August 2011 commemorative event in Izalco, a town recognized as the epicenter of the tragedy, Wilfredo Reyes, the president of El Salvador’s National Legislative Assembly, estimated that the mass killing eliminated 3% of the nation’s total population in 1932. Without additional research, including forensic exhumations, any total number is likely to remain in question. What is certain is that numerous mass graves from 1932 can be identified in western El Salvador,

and that the mass violence has had a devastating impact on indigenous people's well-being.ⁱⁱⁱ

During these post-civil war years, historians are re-visiting this period of national history and offering new scholarship that disentangles the violence from hegemonic Cold War ideology-infused narratives that have dominated understanding of 1932. New research underscores the ethnic dimensions of the *Matanza* and its aftermath, and some scholars refer to the violence as genocide or ethnocide (Gould and Lauria-Santiago 2008: 221-222; Lindo-Fuentes, et al. 2007). While pressures on indigenous populations surely antedated the 1932 violence, the decades following 1932 saw the erosion of communal land rights, the loss of unique dress, and the forfeiture of indigenous languages. That said, recent historical scholarship challenges the popularly-circulating notion in El Salvador that the events of 1932 eliminated indigenous people and culture from society (Lopez Bernal 1998). The new scholarship demonstrates how, for example, post-1932 local birth records in western El Salvador continued to identify indigenous births, documenting a population growth even where national census records had stopped counting (Ching and Tilley 1999; Tilley 2005).

Although its history is disfigured by one of the most notorious cases of state-sanctioned repression in Latin America, El Salvador has been slow to recognize the impact of the violence on the ethnic landscape of national society. Today the exact size of El Salvador's indigenous population is not known, due in part to decades of a state policy which refuses to recognize the nation's ethnic minorities. Today it is unclear whether the combined population of indigenous Nahuat, Lenca, Cacaopera, and Maya totals 10% (Chapin 1989, 1990; Gobierno de El Salvador Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia

Social, Consejo Coordinador Nacional Indígena Salvadoreño, Organización Panamericana de la Salud 2001) or 1% (Lovato 2009) of the national population of approximately 6 million. Considering the historical pressures on indigenous populations in El Salvador, many scholars and activists today recognize that, despite the absence of such cultural markers as spoken language and traditional dress, there is the indisputable physical fact of indigenous bodies (biologically speaking), as well as evidence of a range of other indigenous cultural practices throughout the nation. Distinct world view or *cosmovisión*, orientation to community, connection to place and environment, and traditional medicine are listed among the characteristics that organizations and agencies apply to their definition of who is indigenous in El Salvador (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2003). And, more often than not, a key characteristic is their condition of extreme poverty (Lara Martinez 1993).

The post-civil war period has seen new activism by indigenous organizations in El Salvador that is allied with international supporters in their struggle for official recognition and improved status. Today, increased attention to the impact of the *Matanza* and its aftermath serves to educate and remind state and society not only of the forces that contributed to the ongoing marginalization of El Salvador's indigenous minority, but about the nation's long history of repression and social inequality. My research on post-civil war nation-building follows the gradual shift in hegemonic discourse about 1932 and in state policy. It explores new ways that people are remembering the past. There is one often-cited illustration of how narratives of 1932 have served polarized political ideologies instead of drawing attention to the concerns of indigenous peoples. For years, the dominant right-wing political party *Alianza Republicana Nacionalista* (ARENA) launched

their national political campaign from Izalco by stating that this is the place “where the country was saved from communism” (Achtenberg 2009). Interpretations of the past did not address indigenous peoples’ independent interests and concerns, but instead portrayed them as dupes of social and political movements of the time, flattened out in discourse as “communist” and “anti-communist”. The political left has also used the tragedy of 1932 in public discourses to rally against state repression and to assert opposing political ideologies. In recent years, however, discourse about 1932 increasingly involves the participation of voices that explicitly represent indigenous perspectives.

In 2009, ARENA’s 18 years of conservative rule ended when Mauricio Funes, candidate for the leftist *Farabundo Martí Liberación Nacional* (FMLN), won the national presidency. Among the strategies adopted by his administration to mark the political difference is the willingness to address past episodes of state-sanctioned violence. On October 12, 2010, President Funes issued an apology on behalf of the state for the 1932 violence and the ongoing discrimination against El Salvador’s indigenous populations. On August 9, 2011, on the occasion of the United Nations’ International Day of the World’s Indigenous People, I attended an official act of commemoration that took place in Izalco. At least three hundred people gathered together at “El Llanito” (the flat little plain), the site of a mass grave from 1932. The event began with an indigenous ceremony around a sacred fire. A contingent of Quiche Maya from Guatemala assisted with the ceremony and declared their spiritual and political support of indigenous people in El Salvador. Uniformed school children from Izalco sang the national anthem in Nahuat, accenting a language translation project that has caught national attention. A panel of local and national government officials spoke of the tragedy of 1932 and stated that more would be

done on behalf of indigenous populations. A new monument was installed, and the site was named national patrimony. It was my privilege to participate in the commemorative event and afterward to meet with a group of indigenous leaders to discuss the historic event.

These recent activities in El Salvador draw attention to the dynamism at work as hegemonic narratives of the past are modified, thanks in large part to new scholarship offering clarification about the past, and indigenous people coming forward to publicly commemorate a painful national tragedy. In this process, I observe a new sense of the past being formed. It is a past that not only brings attention to the current status of El Salvador's indigenous ethnic minority, but also to the nation's ongoing democratization. Important to my research on the post-war nation is that the developments also involve members of El Salvador's diaspora.

Although the first public, non-governmental commemoration of 1932 in El Salvador took place in Izalco in January 2005, some members of the Salvadoran diaspora in San Francisco, California have been commemorating 1932 since 1997. By participating in the annual public gatherings in San Francisco, I have observed how indigenous and non-indigenous people from El Salvador challenge each other to rethink the nation's past. By constructing memory and collective identity primarily around the question of what it means to be an indigenous person from El Salvador, they actively interrogate and remake the meaning of national belonging.

The *Matanza*, Indigenous Populations, and the Nation-State

The *Matanza* and its aftermath affected the identity of all Salvadorans by dramatically altering El Salvador's ethnic landscape. Fear and repression drove indigenous culture further out of sight, while an official ideology and myth of *mestizaje* (Indian and Spanish race and culture mixing) promoted a culturally homogeneous national identity. Structural processes assimilated some native populations into the national mainstream, while the majority remained at the social and economic margins of the nation-state. It is important to note that the 1932 popular uprising was one of a long history of indigenous uprisings in El Salvador. Virginia Q. Tilley (2005) lists 43 indigenous revolts that occurred between 1771-1918 in El Salvador. Despite this deep history of resistance and struggle, prior to the *Matanza* there was already evidence in El Salvador that some had abandoned indigenous language, attire, and other ethnic markers (Lauria-Santiago 1999, Tilley 2005). In the late 19th century, the state actively dispossessed peasant communities in favor of commercial agriculture by privatizing communal indigenous lands. With that said, 1932 and its aftermath had an even more tragic impact on indigenous populations. The dominant ideology of *mestizaje* marked contemporary Native culture as backwards, anti-modern, and an obstacle to nation-state progress.^{iv} Thus it sharpened the social boundaries that marginalized indigenous people, hastening for some the course of assimilation. In El Salvador, the popularly circulating and disparaging phrase “*no seas indio*” (don't act like an Indian) evidences dominant society's ongoing indictment and discrimination. Historical conditions and official practices made indigenous culture appear invisible. This context complicates contemporary efforts by indigenous Nahuat, Lenca, Cacaopera and Maya populations

(including some *mestizo* Salvadorans) in their struggle to be recognized and reclaim their indigeneity.

The concept of indigeneity refers to historically specific and contingent understandings, expressions, and subjectivities of what it means to be indigenous, including self-identification and classification by others.

“Reckoning with indigeneity demands recognizing it as a relational field of governance, subjectivities, and knowledges that involves us all—indigenous and nonindigenous—in the making and remaking of its structures of power and imagination” (de la Cadena and Starn, 2007: 3).

For some indigenous people, the recent ability to publicly commemorate 1932 after decades of relative silence, and the capacity to remind others of its dark legacy, are essential for their political and cultural survival. Despite contesting narratives about 1932 even within indigenous communities^v, and a persistent national lack of historical consciousness about the event (Salamanca 2007), new public social memory practices about the *Matanza* are slowly emerging among indigenous communities in western El Salvador.

In the postwar period, supra-state entities such as the United Nations also contribute to bringing attention to the status of indigenous ethnic minorities in El Salvador. Whether the intention is to discipline the state in the norms of international human rights, especially minority cultural rights (some would argue that international agency investment in social and economic development expects and thus motivates the presence of indigenous subjects), international actors are applying external pressure on the state to recognize indigenous populations. The anthropological critique of

multiculturalism under neoliberalism is relevant here (Hale 2002, Peterson 2007). International currents that promote cultural “recognition” influence indigeneity in El Salvador, and in the postwar period some Salvadorans are reconsidering their identity. Some are examining the historical forces, including 1932, that contribute to the distance of most citizens from a desire to embrace indigenous identity. However, when the policies of cultural recognition fail to address political or economic marginalization, it is understandable that there might be a critique of the overall process. While any critique of neoliberal multiculturalism should not be used to challenge the existence of authentic indigenous populations in El Salvador, the motivation it provides for new expressions of indigeneity does complicate our understanding.

My multi-sited research in El Salvador over the past seven-plus years engages human rights specialists, academics (especially anthropologists and historians), activists, popular media professionals, and others who endeavor to raise national awareness about 1932 and its legacy. I follow how they collaborate with certain indigenous organizations and seek avenues for social justice. Since 2007 the Institute for Human Rights (IDHUCA) at the Universidad Centroamericana “Jose Simeon Cañas” (UCA) has collaborated with El Salvador’s non-governmental Human Rights Attorney (*Procuraduria de Los Derechos Humanos*) to gather testimonials about 1932 from elderly survivors and their descendants, conduct literature reviews of relevant scholarship, and collect other data about the historical episode. The *Matanza* having occurred nearly 80 years ago, there are few living who can speak of a direct experience of the events. While a number of elders have been interviewed, there is also a process of recording the inter-generational transfer of memory, similar to what Susana Kaiser (2005) refers to as “postmemories of terror”. The memory

work that attempts to bring attention to 1932 as genocide against Indigenous people and highlight its ongoing impact on indigenous people's well-being and definitions of national belonging demonstrates how representations of the past are fluid and linked to present-day politics and dynamics.

Below I briefly describe a major three-day public, non-governmental commemoration of the *Matanza* that took place in Izalco to mark the 75th anniversary of the 1932 tragedy. Since that event, other Nahuat indigenous communities, such as nearby Nahuizalco, are also beginning to hold annual commemorations. Also described below is a 1932 commemoration held from afar, as members of the Salvadoran diaspora define their personal and collective identity in relation to the impact of the 1932 state-sanctioned violence on the nation. Beyond commemoration, they also join others in El Salvador to support indigenous peoples' issues.

Migration, Diaspora, and Indigeneity

El Salvador's civil war triggered mass emigration, and today an estimated 2 million Salvadorans and their descendants live outside of national territory (compare this number El Salvador's national population of slightly over 6 million). Similar to many emigrant-sending states around the world, Salvadoran migrants have sustained El Salvador's economy over recent years through remittances, transnational networks, and "tourist" dollars spent during short return visits home.^{vi} These facts have not gone unnoticed by the Salvadoran government which actively recognizes and reaches out to its far-away citizens. I have joined others to explore the variety of state efforts to strengthen affective ties of Salvadoran citizens in the diaspora, new transnational practices and

identities, the role of popular media, and how in the process the meaning of national belonging in El Salvador has been reshaped to reference faraway citizens (DeLugan 2007, Mixco 2009, Rivas 2007, Rodriguez 2005). Through expressions of indigeneity and long-distance support for indigenous people in El Salvador, certain diasporic Salvadorans are among the protagonists who are forming new meanings about El Salvador's past and redefining national belonging.

My research is multi-sited in a number of facets. It involves participant-observation fieldwork in multiple geographic locales, including Izalco, San Salvador, El Salvador, and San Francisco, California. My ethnographic research also gathers evidence on a diverse range of social and cultural sites and practices that I theorize are contributing to official and popular practices of re-imagining the nation in post-civil war El Salvador. The sources of evidence include interviews with academics, indigenous leaders, government officials, human rights advocates, and diasporic Salvadorans. It also includes the study of representations of the nation found in government policy, in official and non-official museums, in public monuments, circulating in popular media, displayed in cultural performances, and produced by academics. This evidence allows me to highlight the dynamism surrounding changing representations of national culture, history, and identity and to identify the social actors, sites, and practices involved in the process. The research I conduct in the US specifically examines how social memory about 1932 and its aftermath influences certain members of the diaspora to define what it means to be from El Salvador.

By recalling 1932 and the violence against indigenous populations, Salvadorans in California express their personal and collective sense of indigeneity. I witness how

some are identifying and building community with other Native American groups, including Chicanos/as who also embrace their Native American roots. Their distinct identity expressions are not typical representations of national identity for the US, Mexico, or El Salvador, but instead are expressions of indigeneity that connect foremost with Native American cultures and the earliest inhabitants of the lands. Rather than existing as separate or parallel cultural phenomena, there are direct connections and synergy among these ethnic groups, especially between Chicanos/as and Salvadorans. In California and other US states, Salvadoran migrant youth, and the first, second, and even third generations of Salvadoran-Americans are growing up with self-identified Chicanos/as, a US subaltern identity that has inspired indigeneity and political orientation for over 50 years. Some members of these two groups are more and others less racially marked as Indians. Many are likely to be re-discovering and re-learning indigenous cultural traditions.

In California's San Francisco Bay Area I have interviewed and observed Salvadorans, both young and old, as they come to recognize, value, and practice their indigeneity. Some find their path through participating with Chicanos/as in Aztec dancing, an expressive spiritual practice and community membership. Others recount memories of grandparents and great-grandparents and recall their indigenous practices. Some attend powwows or other North American pan-Indian cultural practices that increasingly link indigenous populations from across the Americas (DeLugan 2010). Also, by participating in commemorative practices that bring attention to El Salvador's national history, they become aware that their family's severance from indigenous heritage can be tied to the 1932 violence.

Through research I conduct in the US, I participate in commemorative practices about 1932 that link faraway citizens to a diasporic identity informed by indigeneity. Some Salvadorans in the US also directly connect their actions with memory practices and struggles taking place among indigenous people and their supporters in El Salvador. I follow some of these transnationally linked social memory and collective identity practices. I argue that the practices in the US and in El Salvador are representations from groups at the margins of the nation-state. In El Salvador, contemporary indigenous cultural identity is neither supported by the state, nor is it valued or adopted by national society at large. By this definition, then, and evidenced by the conditions of poverty that define the experience of most members of El Salvador's indigenous population, they exist on the margins of national society. For diasporic Salvadorans, as contemporary migration and globalization reconfigure nation-state populations and state power, transnational conditions place them within the gaze and reach of both US and El Salvador's state practices. Therefore, diasporic Salvadorans exist on the margins of two nation-states.

As El Salvador is being newly imagined in the aftermath of civil war, massive migration and transnational ties encourage a vision of the nation that extends beyond the limits of traditional geographic territory to reference faraway citizens and their descendents. In the US, diasporic Salvadorans are ethnic and racial minorities. Salvadorans I have interviewed tell me that their indigeneity is informed not only by their understanding of 1932, but also by a sense of their subaltern status in the US. How migration from El Salvador (and other Latin America origins) to the US motivates expressions of indigeneity merits more attention than this article permits. In other writing

I explore the link between indigeneity and cosmopolitanism to describe how members of the Salvadoran diaspora participate in Urban Indian community-building to promote a culture of inclusion, care, and compassion (DeLugan 2010). Here I will focus on the alliances between diasporic Salvadorans with indigenous peoples in El Salvador, and how their activities, separately and jointly, are reshaping national narratives by emphasizing indigeneity and by drawing attention to the nation's history of state violence.

As in the articles by Yuko Okubo and Krisjon Olson in this special issue, I understand the state's effects on indigenous communities in El Salvador and among members of the Salvadoran diaspora as powerful but not totalizing. By focusing on two groups at the margins of the nation-state, my research explores the engagement of the state with national subjects while recognizing the inability of the state to completely capture these populations. In fact, what I wish to demonstrate is how social actors at the margins may indeed influence the hegemonic or the official and not merely exist apart or in opposition to state formation.

Government officials in El Salvador are beginning to recall and represent the state-sanctioned violence of 1932. They do it less through a lens of Cold War political ideologies, paying attention instead to the historical impact of the violence on indigenous cultural survival and human rights. There is a concomitant gradual shift toward recognizing the rights of El Salvador's contemporary indigenous populations. In this regard, new commemorations and new apologies about past episodes of state violence are as much about indigenous people and their international allies, as about historic shifts in El Salvador's political landscape and the interests of a new government eager to communicate that it is different.

Remaking the Meaning of National Belonging

Allow me to reiterate my argument about the role of commemoration and indigeneity in the remaking of the meaning of national belonging. In the post-civil war period, democratic apertures permit greater opportunities for indigenous people to make claims for recognition. In addition, El Salvador's post-civil war government continues to be pressured by the international community to acknowledge its contemporary indigenous populations. As well, the government is extremely attentive to the interests of diasporic and remittance-sending faraway citizens, some of whom articulate what it means to be from El Salvador in relation to indigenous heritage. Some are also allies with indigenous communities and organizations in El Salvador. Therefore, El Salvador's indigenous populations (historically excluded in El Salvador) and diasporic citizens (newly included in the postwar national imagination), as two groups representing the symbolic, social, and geographical margins of the nation-state, are new publics that are gaining fresh attention and also generating new reflection on El Salvador's past and present. Through commemorative practices about 1932 these populations, both separately and collectively, draw attention to the tensions of race, ethnicity, and nation and challenge hegemonic ideas about the nation's past and the meaning of national belonging.

Commemorative practices are fundamental to the links between diasporic Salvadorans and indigenous people in El Salvador. In what follows, I examine how anthropologists and other scholars approach the study of social memory. I note the distinctions made between official and popular social memory in order to posit the value

of viewing popular commemorative events and practices as part of a dynamic process where the official is not only contested, but may also be transformed. Next, I briefly describe and analyze 1932 commemorations in San Francisco, California and Izalco, El Salvador. I discuss links between these sites in terms of local, diasporic, and transnational connections expressed through indigeneity, and focus on how the memory practices highlight historical and contemporary racial and ethnic exclusions and thereby challenge hegemonic notions of what defines national belonging. The article concludes by restating the argument that memory practices of new publics positioned at the margins of the nation-state are reshaping narratives about El Salvador's past and what it means to be from and belong to El Salvador.

Social Memory: Official, Public, and Popular

Ethnographic inquiry into memory practices provides us not only with facts and documentation, but above all with dilemmas and contradictions.

(Fabian 2007: 102)

The making and remaking of nations in the aftermath of state violence or civil war can be viewed in part through the response of state and society to their problematic past. It is through both official and everyday acts of commemoration that a society chooses (or not) to confront bleak earlier periods. Whether the memory work links to national unity, collective identity, or to unresolved and ongoing struggles is a vital topic of research. A decision to not confront a difficult past can be motivated by a desire to not recall what some may consider as "over and done with" in the name of moving forward together; while others may choose to actively fight against a slide into forgetting to prevent the

recurrence of horrible acts, or to continue efforts to right past wrongs. Further, political interests or an expectation of impunity should not be underestimated as a motive for unwillingness to bring attention to a difficult past.

The ways that states contend with past events, often memorialized as national history, can be compared with the popular action of citizens who may counter official efforts to remember or not. Citizens may interpret the meaning of past actions and events for contemporary society differently than does the official version. One way to understand this dynamic is as a tension between history and memory, where “history” equates to official representations about the past, so important to asserting nation-state legitimacy, and “memory” equates to representations that are distinct from the official.^{vii} However, the power of official sites to produce and reinforce shared meanings about past events or personages, particularly through a host of commemorative practices, such as anthems, holidays, and patriotic rituals, and through monuments, museums and textbooks, reveals that “history” can be effectively naturalized, internalized, and reproduced to form the basis of national or other broad-based collective identities and subjectivities.

The study of nation-states and the representation of collective identities that define national membership and belonging tend to focus on the official sites that produce and reinforce shared meaning about the nation. It is here that the past is often the anchor for assertions of nation-state legitimacy. Whether the focus is on the deep archaeological past, on actions and actors connected to the emergence of the modern nation-state, or on more recent events and episodes, official efforts to generate a national imagination to fuel identification with the nation-state usually involve history lessons and commemorative

practices. Scholars examine how key events and personages are added to calendars, represented by monuments, displayed in museums, and narrated in textbooks, and how these sites and practices connect to patriotic public rituals and national ideologies (Anderson 1991 [1983]; Connerton 1989; Fox 1990; Gillis, ed. 1994; Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983). In this way, the past becomes an important resource for consolidating contemporary understandings of national belonging. Critical perspectives highlight the imaginative aspects of new meaning-making about the past that over time may become naturalized as truth and tradition; and how the selective and constructed nature of official representations contrast, for example, with certain marginal or subaltern understandings of the national experience (past or present) or different imaginations about the nation's future (Alonso 1994; Chatterjee 1993; Frazier 2007; Herzfeld 1986; Riano-Alcala 2006).

Scholarship in anthropology has examined state formation, including a focus on those at the margins of nation-state projects (Alonso 1994, 1995; Das and Poole 2004; Malkki 1990). My research looks at how the process of post-civil war nation-making in El Salvador includes those at the margins, both historically-excluded indigenous ethnic minorities and diasporic Salvadorans. The research explores how the past is a resource that not only informs nation-state projects but the projects of new publics as well. This anthropological study of social memory includes official sites and practices of commemoration, but also non-official public sites and practices that demonstrate how social memory creates new social ties, reinforces social orders, and also represents challenges to same (Anagnost 1997; Climo and Cattell 2003; Graburn 1998; Kwon 2006).

Methodological and theoretical explorations of social memory attempt to distinguish between memory generated by official sites and practices and the social memory generated by alternative sites and practices, as represented by diverse social groups and publics. Classic treatises in social or collective memory posit all memory as fundamentally social due to shared linguistic and cultural underpinnings representing experience. Yet, by acknowledging the different ways that certain groups (ethnic, class, gender, etc.) may have distinct recollections of particular past events, scholars point out social memory's connection to power in society (Hawlbachs 1989, Passerini 2003). As mentioned above, some posit this as the difference between (official) history and (unofficial) memory. Still the distinctions can be hard to note, in particular when considering a dynamic process where ideas about the past are not monolithic or immutable, and where silences or forgetting can obscure different experiences of understandings about the past.

Acknowledging the methodological and conceptual challenges of ethnographically studying social memory, Johannes Fabian (2007: 93-96) briefly explores different types of social memory. He contrasts "collective" versus "public" memory to highlight collective memory as underground, secret, preserved, whereas public memory tends to be open, announced, and "published". Fabian makes a further distinction between "public" memory and "popular" memory, where popular memory is closer to collective memory when it is not collected, canonized, or promoted by institutions or political entities, in contrast with public memory, which equates with the official. The extent to which memory is closed or open, institutionalized or not, has implications for its ethnographic study.

I appreciate efforts to sort out distinct characteristics of social memory in order to aid its study. However, schematization of memory must allow sufficient space for examining diverse and dynamic memory practices and processes. In particular, I am interested in how memory from the margins (which may be represented in the above analysis as collective, unofficial, and popular) can also be involved with the transformation of official, public memory, as opposed to simply functioning in opposition to the official. Such a perspective highlights active and dynamic social processes that represent the nation's past, present, and future. Looking to case studies from the Southern Cone of Latin America, for example, we find a number of examples of popular memory work about 1970's violence perpetrated by military dictatorships that slowly resulted in justice and altered ideas about the nation and national belonging. While some of the memories may have been kept alive or passed on in hushed exchanges or in private spaces of family kitchens or other intimate settings, unofficial memory work also took to the street, and popular mobilizations contributed to bringing former military and political leaders to trial, as well as to other efforts towards national reconciliation (Jelin and Kaufman 2000, Kaiser 2006).

Throughout the years in El Salvador, there was a relative silence of indigenous people about 1932. Their silence was replaced by contesting hegemonic narratives about the past that paid little attention to indigenous cultural survival. Today, as new meanings of the past are being formed, the process demonstrates how social memories are fluid and can change, and are linked to the politics of the present. I see parallels to the ways in which contemporary Spain is remembering the Spanish Civil War. Through active reflection and testimonials, Spanish society is breaking relative silence and unleashing

public memories about the brutality of the Franco regime (Colmeiro 2005, Leizaola 2006). Both Spain and El Salvador are undergoing political transitions to democracy, and the tragic national events finally being commemorated have a similar temporal distance of nearly 80 years. As Luisa Passerini reminds us, “it takes strength, sometimes, to keep silence, the silence which allows for meditation and reflection, for absorption of meaning from the environment and projection towards the future” (2003: 248). Silence can give way to many forms of memory expression, and we can see how social memory can be implicated in processes of social and political transformation by challenging and by altering official or hegemonic representations of the past.

Lessie Jo Frazier (2007), whose scholarship records shifts in the modes of popular memory about state violence in Chile, offers anthropology another typology of social memory by acknowledging the dynamic, even transitory, nature of memory about particular historical events. In particular Frazier analyzes changes in affect generated by memory work in different historical periods around certain episodes of violence and repression. Frazier names the qualitative differences in affect as moving from “cathartic” to “empathetic” to “sympathetic” responses. Identifying these different types of memory are important for her exposition on how memory can structure feelings and motivate social action. While looking to memory to constrain state violence and to create just societies, she reminds us that memory is “persistent, elusive, ironic, and both sheltering and obscuring possibilities for emancipatory politics” (2007: 31).

Indigeneity: Transforming memories and identities

Frazier illustrates how social memory of a particular event can be experienced differently in distinct periods of time and under specific conditions. It is a valuable perspective for research on the commemorative practices that link indigenous people in El Salvador and diasporic Salvadorans. Over decades in El Salvador, official ideology promoted a homogeneous *mestizo* national society while continuing to marginalize El Salvador's indigenous population. In common with other societies in the Americas, indigenous people in El Salvador are regarded as symbolically useful for evidencing unique national myths and origins were, in reality, treated as obstacles to national progress and modernization. This has resulted in a nebulous (at best) status for El Salvador's Nahuat, Lenca, Cacaopera and Maya indigenous populations. I have followed how some indigenous leaders, organizations, and communities have fought against invisibility to assert their presence in the postwar nation. Commemorative practices and revised history lessons have resulted. These activities are gradually expanding beyond indigenous populations (and certain diasporic Salvadorans) to reshape official meanings of the nation. The August 2011 official commemoration in Izalco described above is one such example.

In the aftermath of El Salvador's civil war, indigenous communities in El Salvador have found increasing international support for their efforts for nation-state recognition. Post-war democratic apertures along with assistance from United Nations and other international entities have motivated the emergence of indigenous social and political organizations. While one prominent national indigenous organization, *Asociación Nacional de Indígenas de El Salvador* (ANIS), existed prior to the civil conflict, many new organizations have proliferated since 1992 (Tilley 2005). Over the

years I have seen new coalitions form among these organizations. There is also conflict and competition. The political landscape among indigenous organizations in El Salvador is complex, and while I have good relationships with several high profile indigenous leaders, I do not claim to understand the intricacies of the various groups or the quality of their interactions, nor is it the goal of my scholarship to do so. From my view, most organizations are focused on the needs and interests of specific local communities. This creates a somewhat fractured political scene that may hamper the development of a unified vision for transforming Indian and nation-state dynamics. There is at least one exception: for nearly two decades, getting the Salvadoran government to sign onto International Labor Organization convention 169 appears to be a common goal of all indigenous organizations.

In recent years El Salvador's government has grappled unevenly with the claims of its indigenous ethnic minority population. In 2005 the government of El Salvador presented a contradictory report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD). On one hand, the report continued the claim that El Salvador has a negligible indigenous ethnic minority population, and on the other hand, it asserted that the state is engaging in efforts to recognize its indigenous population (such as establishing the government office of *Asuntos Indígenas/Indian Affairs*). The government report suggested that because the indigenous population is dispersed throughout Salvadoran society, racism does not exist in the country, nor was special legislation to protect the rights of indigenous people necessary. The government affirmed that they would not ratify the International Labor Organization's Convention 169, which recognizes the cultural rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. To do so, they

stated, would violate the equal rights provision in El Salvador's national constitution. The government delegation also rejected providing any moral or economic recognition for indigenous people that survived 1932 or other episodes of state violence, stating that a general amnesty law in El Salvador impedes investigation or compensation for these situations. UNCERD officials pointed out the ambiguity apparent in the government's stance towards indigenous populations.

Anticipating the state's continuing reluctance to fully commit to policies or actions to address its indigenous ethnic minority, a coalition of human rights and social justice organizations in El Salvador presented the UNCERD a separate "shadow report" (Federación Luterana Mundial 2005). The report summarized research and other sources of information that depict the contemporary conditions and continued marginalization of El Salvador's indigenous population.^{viii} This coalition of social actors demonstrates the increasing support for indigenous people in El Salvador.

In 2007 El Salvador conducted a national census which dramatically undercounted El Salvador's indigenous population. The undercount was blamed in part on methodology, whereby census takers made their own judgments about who was or was not indigenous and did not permit self-identification. Certainly the complicated history of repression, myth of *mestizaje*, denigration of indigenous cultural identity, and the long process of assimilating indigenous people into a national mainstream contribute to why many Salvadorans today do not to assert their indigeneity. The faulty census statistics were brought to the attention of UNCERD by the same coalition referenced above. It remains to be seen whether or not the challenged census figures will be permitted to officially represent El Salvador's indigenous population or whether the

statistics will be modified to more accurately represent El Salvador's population. These engagements of the state, international community, and other social actors in El Salvador regarding the ambiguous status of native peoples is the context in which public commemorations of 1932 are beginning to occur in Izalco and other communities in western El Salvador. Although Izalco is known for its sizable indigenous population^{ix}, the town's social dynamics mirror national attitudes wherein indigenous elements are disparaged rather than embraced, and where native populations and their issues continue to be marginalized.

As mentioned above, recent examples from Chile, Argentina, and Spain demonstrate how the atrocities of state violence are not left unanswered or forgotten. Exhilarated and intergenerational activism can keep memories strong, along with vows that never again will such repression be allowed, and also keep civic attention focused on the culprits and social memory on the deplorable past. In El Salvador, fear and state repression contributed to indigenous people's relative silence about 1932. In the early aftermath of the civil war, amid the general silence of indigenous elders, public practices surfaced to draw attention to 1932. For example, in addition to collecting testimonials about 1932, El Salvador's *Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen* (Museum of the Word and the Image) conducted archival research that resulted in an exhibit and the 2003 documentary film *1932: Cicatriz de la Memoria* (1932: The Scars of Memory), which featured an oral history of the 1932 Matanza. The film circulated in university classrooms and community-based organizations in El Salvador (and in the US), contributing to the increasing memory work around 1932. The archival research and collection of testimonials revealed both the fragility of memory and the difficulty of reconstructing

events of a long-ago past. When scholars, activists, and representatives from the office of the nation's non-governmental Human Rights Attorney first began seeking testimony from survivors of 1932, they reported encountering grave difficulty. While collecting testimonials in Izalco and nearby communities in the department of Sonsonate, they had a sense of failure because many of the indigenous elders they spoke to were silent, evasive, and even cried when asked about what occurred in 1932.^x Whether the silence, evasion and tears should be attributed to trauma, repression, forgetting, or to the frail connections that present-day populations have with an 80 year old historical experience needs to be explored.

Diasporic Salvadorans also assist with memory work about 1932, but connect to the past through different registers. There is the shallow past that, through recent migration, connects immigrants and Salvadoran-Americans to an original homeland. There is also a deeper past based on heritage and meaning-making that I understand foremost as indigeneity. For some it may refer to a familial transfer of culture and memory, but according to many interviews I conducted with Salvadorans in San Francisco, their expressions of indigeneity are less about intergenerational recall and continuity than about discontinuity, dislocation, and loss. The indigeneity and memory work of certain Salvadorans in the diaspora are not representative of hegemonic views of nation-state belonging (either in the original homeland of El Salvador or in the US), but generate new longings, practices, and collective identities that connect instead to the valorization of indigenous culture and heritage and with particular subaltern political orientations and desires.

My multi-sited ethnographic research endeavors to record and understand how

new expressions of indigeneity relate to national and transnational structures of power and collective imagination. Academic attention to contemporary indigeneity dispels conventional understandings that native identity is narrowly tied to place or blood or unchanging traditions (Garoutte 2003; de la Cadena and Starn 2007). This perspective benefits my study of how new expressions of indigeneity relate to international migration and diaspora. It also illustrates the resilient survival and renaissance of indigenous identity in which memory work plays a fundamental role (Forte 2005).

In contrast to certain Salvadorans in the US with whom I conduct research, mainstream El Salvador does not actively embrace its indigenous heritage, even when such heritage is physically apparent and abundantly evident in local language, place names, material culture, and local traditions. Interestingly, however, it is only after leaving El Salvador and grappling with the migration experience of being Salvadoran or Salvadoran-American in the US that some choose indigeneity to inform their identities, subjectivities, and cultural practices. There are very obvious parallels to be drawn with Chicano/a (Mexican-American) and Borinqua (Puerto Rican/Puerto Rican-American) identity in the US. These two collective identities primarily connect with the experience of marginalization from dominant society, and find expression in terms of indigenous roots, desire for decolonization, and subaltern political, spiritual, and worldview practices. The recent edited volume *Memories and Migrations: Mapping Boricua and Chicana Histories* (Ruiz and Chávez 2008) explores a dynamic relationship between space, memory, and identity.^{xi} Sheila Contreras (2008) examines the poetic and ethnographic expression of Chicano/a indigeneity. These studies of particular expressions

of Latino subjectivity mirror the meaning-making occurring with certain Salvadorans in the diaspora examined in my research.

Large waves of Salvadoran migration to the US began in the late 1980s. Because the history of mass migration is fairly recent, we are now provided with a timeframe to understand patterns and expressions of identity of those who left El Salvador's civil war violence, as well as those of first, second, and even third-generation Salvadoran-Americans. While I have yet to systematically explore the connection between members of the Salvadoran diaspora and Chicanos/as in their expressions of indigeneity, in San Francisco I have attended many 1932 commemorative events in San Francisco where Salvadorans participate as members of Aztec dance groups, and where the public audience includes Chicanas/os lending their solidarity to the struggle for Salvadoran indigenous cultural survival. Indigeneity as a particular response to being Latino/a in the US, coupled with efforts to understand the personal impact of the violence of 1932 and its aftermath, help diasporic Salvadorans explain why their families "back home" might not claim indigenous cultural roots and identity. Today these factors inform an imaginative diasporic indigeneity that also fuels interest in providing direct support of indigenous people in El Salvador. Salvadorans who express their identity as indigeneity also find support from San Francisco Bay Area's Urban Indian Community. David Escobar, Salvadoran and founder of the non-profit organization Three Nations Indian Circle (TNIC), an entity that organizes the annual 1932 commemorations in San Francisco, described what he understands to be fundamental similarities between indigenous people throughout the Americas: "same cat, different stripes".

Commemorating 1932 in San Francisco, California:

El Salvador's Ministry of Foreign Relations (*Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores*) estimates that approximately 327,000 Salvadorans live in the San Francisco Bay Area. Every year on or about January 24 for the past fourteen years, TNIC a small non-profit organization working directly with indigenous organizations and communities in El Salvador and in the San Francisco Bay Area, organizes a public commemoration of 1932 in San Francisco, California. As a scholar of El Salvador and as someone who has worked with indigenous communities in El Salvador, in 1996 I accepted an invitation to join the board of directors of TNIC.^{xii} I have attended all but one annual commemorative event and have watched the audience grow larger and more diverse. Over the years TNIC has supported indigenous communities in El Salvador with land purchases and other community development efforts. They have hosted visits from members of El Salvador's indigenous communities and sponsored educational and cultural exchanges that increase knowledge about indigenous peoples' issues.

TNIC's annual 1932 commemorations demonstrate "pan-Indian" influences by involving individuals and cultural practices from diverse indigenous nations throughout the Americas. In 2011 the primary event took place in The Women's Building in the heart of the Mission district, the hub for San Francisco's Latino population. As people gathered on a Saturday evening, the scent of burned sage and copal perfumed the air. The program included traditional Lenca and Nahuat dances that were interspersed with the beat of North American Indian drumming, Aztec dancers and drummers, and Purepecha dancers. One Hopi-Navajo dancer was accompanied by a hand-drum. To educate the participants about El Salvador's history, accounts of the 1932 violence were

linked to information about the ongoing marginalization and struggles of indigenous groups in El Salvador. Hip-hop artists from Los Angeles and San Francisco ended the activity by sharing potent messages of indigeneity, resistance, and decolonization. There were over 150 people in attendance, including families with small children, young adults, and elders from the Urban Indian and Salvadoran community. While the majority of participants were Salvadoran, it was a broad audience representing many indigenous ethnic communities and community organizations focused on indigenous people's issues.

Over the years the TNIC commemorations have drawn diverse audiences of Salvadorans who not only learn about 1932 but aspects of El Salvador's contemporary indigenous cultures. The organization educates Salvadorans about their heritage in ways that are not prevalent in El Salvador and as such has attracted individuals who desire to express their ethnic identity through indigeneity. Because of the organization's history of working with indigenous communities in both the western and eastern regions of El Salvador, TNIC has developed a reputation as a credible source of information about El Salvador's indigenous peoples. It has relationships with other organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area (and beyond) that perform the same mission for native communities in other parts of the Americas. The annual 1932 commemoration in San Francisco is the hallmark of TNIC.

Commemorating from Izalco, El Salvador: January 2007

From January 19-22, 2007 I attended the first public commemoration of 1932 in Izalco, El Salvador. The picturesque town in western El Salvador has a large Nahuat population and is popularly recognized for such challenging the prevailing notions that El

Salvador's Indians are "invisible". Izalco is known for its elaborate *cofradia* system, and for having two mayors, including one for the indigenous population (*alcaldia del común*).^{xiii} Many also know Izalco as the epicenter of the 1932 violence. Several mass graves were dug in Izalco to bury the indigenous people who were rounded up and slaughtered in the early weeks of 1932. It was also where Feliciano Ama, the indigenous leader and martyr of the 1932 uprising, was hung from a tree in the town center. Today his great niece Juliana Ama de Chile is one of the local leaders of the 1932 historical memory and justice movement in Izalco.

The International Forum on Genocide and Truth: El Salvador 1932 – Izalco 2007 (*Foro Internacional sobre el Genocidio y la Verdad El Salvador 1932 – Izalco 2007*) took place at "el Llanito" on the grounds of Asunción Izalco Catholic Church (mentioned above) where some of the dead from 1932 remain buried in a mass grave. A makeshift stage was erected along with overhead public shelter from the intense heat. In attendance from El Salvador were indigenous people from Izalco and other communities in western El Salvador, along with representatives of human rights organizations, universities, churches, museums, and popular media. There was also a contingent of Salvadorans living in San Francisco, California, including representatives from TNIC. Also arriving from San Francisco were *Danza Azteca Xiuhcoatl* members, who provided a ceremonial sacred fire and whose dancing and praying demonstrated and reinforced the spiritual dimensions of the gathering. With a conch shell serving as both wind instrument and guide, the dancers and other participants began their morning rituals by facing and praying to each of the cardinal directions, then the sky and the earth. The dancers' unique and colorful regalia, with their feather-plumed headdresses, and the sounds of their turtle

shell rattles drew the attention of local curious onlookers. I also observed some Izalco residents, many of whom I assume were indigenous Nahuat, watching from outside the activity area, pressing their faces against the fence...unsure about what they were witnessing. While Aztec dancing is identified with Chicana/o identity, a number of the members of this group are Salvadoran/Salvadoran-Americans illustrating my observations about the influence of Chicana/o indigeneity on Salvadorans in the US.

There were over 100 people in attendance during each of the three days of activities in Izalco. The program included a few academic presentations based on relevant research in El Salvador, and workshops from activists about strategies for teaching difficult histories and about international human rights. But the event was community-centered, and activities featured testimonials from elders and young people alike, who embraced the opportunity to discuss and express their Nahuat identity. One shy young man from Izalco, Tito Chue, addressed the audience and commented that while growing up, his Nahuat last name and his biologically Indian features were often the source of ridicule by others. He spoke to the gathering: "For years I felt that I didn't belong here (in Izalco). Now I finally know this is where I belong." The heartfelt emotion and sincerity in his trembling voice and the obvious personal courage he mustered to come forward brought tears to my eyes. Tito's experience speaks to how towns such as Izalco, known for a large indigenous presence, generally disregard indigenous people. However, as Izalco becomes a symbol of the impact of the 1932 violence as well as a major site for contemporary efforts to remake meanings about the past, there is a dynamism that points to increased attention and recognition of indigenous peoples' issues.

I have briefly described 1932 commemorations taking place in San Francisco and in Izalco. In between these major public events are the everyday practices of social actors in El Salvador and in the US who engage in a range of activities to affirm their connection to El Salvador through expressions of indigeneity. Marisol de la Cadena and Orin Starn (2007) remind anthropologists to be attentive to the way that indigeneity is practiced, claimed, and represented today. Today people's connections to tradition, territory, and nation are attenuated and transformed by historical circumstances, including nation-state power dynamics, domestic and international migration, and diaspora. This requires us to rethink conventional ideas about indigenous collective identity. Any consideration of contemporary indigenous identity points to the role of social memory. As indigeneity motivates and underpins 1932 commemorations in El Salvador and the US, I recall Andreas Huyssen, who describes memory sites as "expanded fields", referring to the process of crossing of borders "in relation to geographies, politics, and the discourse of traumatic memory themselves" (2003: 97).

Conclusion

In 1932 in western El Salvador, an episode of state-sanctioned violence against indigenous Nahuat populations resulted in the loss of many thousands of lives and in the subsequent repression of indigenous culture and identity. Until recently the government of El Salvador maintained silence about the violence's impact on indigenous groups and national society. In the post-civil war period, public, non-governmental commemorations of 1932 have taken place first in the US and then in El Salvador to draw attention to the historical and contemporary interests and well-being of indigenous people from El

Salvador. The commemorations and related social memory work advanced by Salvadorans and Salvadoran-Americans in the US are also expressions of indigeneity. They involve personal and collective identity claims that indigenous peoples' history and culture inform what it means to be from El Salvador. In the process, diasporic Salvadorans also collaborate with indigenous people in El Salvador. Transnational links show how mutual attention to commemorating 1932 involves raising historical consciousness in El Salvador about the legacy of the state-sanctioned violence, and the subsequent marginalization of native people and cultures. By including the voices and experiences of El Salvador's indigenous population and by rescuing indigenous cultural practices from invisibility, the practices reshape narratives about the nation's past and present.

The linked commemorative practices demonstrate how new publics positioned at the margins of the nation-state are involved with practices that attempt to remake the meaning of national belonging. While indigenous people in El Salvador have been historically excluded, new political apertures and social support now exist, and they continue to press for rights and recognition (Patrick 2004). Their efforts are supported by supra-state entities that attempt to influence the state in human rights standards upheld by the international community. Some Salvadoran emigrants that fled El Salvador in large numbers during the nation-state's civil war (1980-1992) and their descendants in the US are commemorating 1932. Through expressions of indigeneity and social memory practices, diasporic Salvadorans remake individual and collective identity about being from El Salvador in ways that differ from mainstream representations of national identity. On one hand, these are expressions of ethnic and racial minorities at the margins of US

society. On the other hand, they are expressions of far-away citizens, newly recognized by the Salvadoran state, who express their root connections to El Salvador in novel ways.

My argument is that a process is underway whereby unofficial practices of popular social memory are increasing historical consciousness about 1932 and shaping popular and official meanings about what it means to be from and belong to El Salvador. Each year in El Salvador a handful of newspaper outlets cover the 1932 commemorative events taking place there, bringing the annual practice to a broader Salvadoran public. In January 2010 the first annual commemoration of 1932 took place in Los Angeles among members of its large Salvadoran population. *Centro Cultural Techantit* and *Centro Cultural Indígena Mesoamericana* hosted the gathering. Many of its members are diasporic Salvadorans. Similar to the activities in San Francisco, the Los Angeles commemoration involved participation from other diasporic indigenous people in Los Angeles with origins in Mexico and Central America. With 1932 as a focal point, ongoing social memory practices in El Salvador and the US demonstrate how collective and public memory practices from new publics at the margins of the nation-state challenge and influence transformations in official and hegemonic representations of national culture, history, and belonging.

Acknowledgements:

I offer my appreciation to the anonymous reviewers who provided excellent feedback on an earlier version of this article. Thanks to Don Myers, Yuko Okubo, Krisjon Olson, and Mariane Ferme for their support in the writing process. Special thanks to Juliana Ama de Chile for her tireless work in Izalco, Daniel Flores y Ascencio, and to Three Nations Indian Circle.

References Cited:

- Achtenberg, Emily. 2009. El Salvador Elections: The Ghosts of Izalco. *Upside Down World*. April 2, 2009. <http://upsidedownworld.org/main/el-salvador-archives-74/1795-el-salvador-elections-the-ghosts-of-izalco>. (Accessed August 20, 2011).
- Alonso, Ana María. 1994. The Politics of Space, Time and Substance: State Formation, Nationalism and Ethnicity. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23: 379-405.
1995. *Thread of blood: colonialism, revolution, and gender on Mexico's northern frontier*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Anagnost, Ann. 1997. *National past-times: narrative, representation, and power in Modern China*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread*

of nationalism. Revised Edition. London: Verso.

Anderson, Thomas P. 1982. *El Salvador 1932*. (trad. .M. Castellanos), 2nd. San José: Educa.

Chapin, Mac. 1989. The 500,000 Invisible Indians of El Salvador. *Cultural Survival Quarterly*. 13(3): 11-16.

----- 1990. *La Población Indígena de El Salvador*. San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación, Dirección de Publicaciones e Impresos, Government of El Salvador.

Chatterjee, Partha. 1993. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post-colonial Histories*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ching, Erik Kristofer, Carlos Gregorio López Bernal, and Virginia Tilley. 2007. *Las masas, la matanza y el martinato en El Salvador*. San Salvador: UCA Editores.

Climo, Jacob J. and Maria Cattell, ed. 2003. *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Colmeiro, José F. 2005. *Memoria histórica e identidad cultural: de la postguerra a la postmodernidad*. Rubí (Barcelona): Anthropos Editorial

Connerton, Paul. 1989. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Corcuff, Stephanie, ed. 2002. *Memories of the Future: National Identity Issues and the Search for a New Taiwan*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Contreras, Sheila Marie. 2008. *Blood Lines: Myth, Indigenism, and Chicana/o Literature*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Das, Veena and Deborah Poole, eds. 2004. *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*. Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research.

De la Cadena, Marisol and Orin Starn, eds. 2007. *Indigenous Experience Today*. Oxford; New York: Berg.

DeLugan, Robin Maria. 2008. Census, Map and Museum (Revisited): Emigration and El Salvador's Post-War Trans-national Imagination. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*. 18: 1-23.

2010. Indigeneity Across Borders: Hemispheric Migrations and Cosmopolitan Encounters. *American Ethnologist* 37(1): 83-97.

Fabian, Johannes. 2007. *Memory Against Culture: Arguments and Reminders*. Chapel

Hill: Duke University.

Federación Luterana Mundial et al. 2005. Informe Sombra Sobre los 9^o, 10^o, 11^o, 12^o y 13^o Informes Periodicos de la Republica de El Salvador Presentados Ante el Comité Para la Eliminación de la Discriminación Racial CERD. San Salvador, November 30, 2005.

http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/OIAHR/UN_Bodies/CERD68-El_Salvador_Shadow-Report-SP.pdf. Accessed November 15, 2009.

Forte, Maximilian C. 2005. *Ruins of absence, presence of Caribs: (Post)colonial representations of aboriginality in Trinidad and Tobago*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Fox, Richard G. 1990. *Nationalist Ideologies and the Production of National Culture*. American Ethnological Society Monograph Series, Number 2. Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association.

Frazier, Lessie Jo. 2007. *Salt in the sand: memory, violence, and the nation-state in Chile, 1890 to the present*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Garoutte, Eva Marie. 2003. *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native Americans*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gillis, John R., ed. 1994. *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*. Princeton University Press.

Gobierno de El Salvador Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social (MSPAS), Consejo Coordinador Nacional Indígena Salvadoreño (CCNIS), Organización Panamericana de la Salud (OPS). 2001. *Condiciones de Saneamiento Ambiental en las Poblaciones Indígenas de El Salvador*. Serie: Pueblos Indígenas, Salud y Condiciones de Vida en El Salvador, N° 2. San Salvador: MSPAS – CCNIS – OPS. San Salvador.

Gould, Jeffrey L. and Aldo Lauria-Santiago. 2008. *To rise in darkness: revolution, repression, and memory in El Salvador, 1920-1932*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Graburn, Nelson H. H. 1988. Weirs in the River of Time: the Development of Canadian Inuit Historical Consciousness. *Museum Anthropology* 22(2): 54-66.

Halbwachs, Maurice. 1980 [1941, 1952]. *On Collective Memory*. New York: Harper and Row.

Hobsbawm, Eric and Terrence Ranger. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Jelin, Elizabeth and Susana G. Kaufman. 2000. Layers of Memories: twenty years after in Argentina. In T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, eds. *Politics of War and Commemoration*. Pp. 89-10. New York: Routledge.

Kaiser, Susana. 2005. *Postmemories of terror: a new generation copes with the legacy of the "Dirty War"*. Palgrave studies in oral history. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kwon, Heonik. 2006. *After the Massacre: Commemoration and Consolation in Ha My and My Lai*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lara Martinez, Carlos Benjamin. 1993. *Consideraciones Sobre la Problematica Indígena en El Salvador*. San Salvador: Dirección General del Patrimonio Cultural.

Lauria-Santiago, Aldo. 1999. *An agrarian republic: commercial agriculture and the politics of peasant communities in El Salvador, 1823-1914*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Leizaola, Aitzpea. 2007. La mémoire de la guerre civile espagnole: le poids du silence. *Ethnologie Francaise*. XXXVII, 3, pp. 483-491.

Lindo-Fuentes, Hector, Erik Ching, Rafael A. Lara-Martinez, and Lyman L. Johnson. 2007 *Remembering a Massacre in El Salvador: The Insurrection of 1932, Roque Dalton, and the Politics of Historical Memory*. Albuquerque: University of New

Mexico Press.

Lopez Bernal, Carlos Gregorio. 1998. Indígenas, comunismo y nacionalismo: secuelas del levantamiento de 1932. In *Anuario de Investigaciones*. Centro de Investigaciones en Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades. San Salvador, El Salvador: Universidad de Jose Matias Delgado.

Lovato, Roberto. 2009. Izalco, El Salvador and the Way Beyond the Silence. *Of América*. March 12, 2009. <http://ofamerica.wordpress.com/2009/03/12/izalco-el-salvador-and-the-way-beyond-the-silence/>. (Accessed August 20, 2011).

Malkki, Liisa. 1990. Context and Consciousness: Local Conditions for the Production of Historical and National Thoughts among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania. In Richard G. Fox, ed. *Nationalist Ideologies and the Production of National Culture*, pp. 32-62. Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association.

Nora, Pierre. 1989. Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire. Translated by Marc Rondebush. In Natalie Zemon David and Randolph Starn, eds. Memory and Counter-Memory, Special issue of *Representations*. Spring 1989. No. 26, pp. 7-25.

Passerini, Luisa. 2003. Memories Between Silence and Oblivion. In Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, eds. *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, pp. 238-254. New York: Routledge.

- Patrick, Lyana. 2004. Indigenous Rights in El Salvador: Prospects for Change. *Human Rights Review*. 5(3): 92-102.
- Peterson, Brandt G. 2007. Remains Out of Place: Race, Trauma, and Nationalism in El Salvador. *Anthropological Theory*. 7(1): 59-77.
- Riano-Alcala, Pilar. 2006. *Dwellers of Memory: Youth and Violence in Medellin, Colombia*. Edison, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Rivas, Cecilia Maribel. 2007. Imaginaries of transnationalism: Media and cultures of consumption in El Salvador. Ph.D. Dissertation. Department of Anthropology. University of California, San Diego.
- Rodriguez, Ana Patricia. 2005. "Departamento 15": Cultural Narratives of Salvadoran Transnational Migration. *Latino Studies* 3.1 (April 2005): 19-41.
- Ruiz, Vicki and John R. Chávez, eds. 2008. *Memories and Migrations: Mapping Boricua and Chicana Histories*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Salamanca, Elena. 2007. Identidad indígena diluida. Revista Dominical. *La Prensa Gráfica*. January 21, 2007. <http://archive.laprensa.com.sv/20070124/dominical/696724.asp> (Accessed August 20, 2011).

Tilley, Virginia Q. 2005. *Seeing Indians: A Study of Race, Nation and Power in El Salvador*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

ⁱ In July 2009, one of the first actions of Mauricio Funes, El Salvador's newly elected president, was to create a Secretariat of Culture. Previously, government efforts associated with national culture, history, and identity (textbooks, museums, archaeological sites, monuments, commemorations, etc.) were administered by CONCULTURA, a sub-unit of the Ministry of Education. Establishing a separate ministry-level entity for national cultural policy reaffirms the government's continued attention to issues of culture and identity, including how to contend with El Salvador's indigenous ethnic minorities.

ⁱⁱ Although the Peace Accords strongly recommended that a holiday and national monument in honor of the victims of the civil war be established, the government of El Salvador has not yet responded accordingly. In 2008 a monument to the civil victims of the armed conflict, *A la Memoria y Verdad*, (To the Memory and Truth) was erected in Parque Cuzcatlán in the capital San Salvador. The memorial was an effort by citizens and civil society and did not involve government sponsorship.

ⁱⁱⁱ Here they estimate 1,000 dead, and on occasion human bones find their way to the surface. I was told that there are no less than eight similar mass graves in the area (personal communication with Julia Ama de Chile, Fundación Feliciano Ama).

^{iv} Rebecca Earle's *Return of the Native: Indians and Myth-making in Spanish America, 1810-1930*, Duke University Press, 2007 compares the symbolic function of the Indian and Indigenous culture for a number of Latin American nation-building projects.

^v In communities such as Izalco, the memory of 1932 also divides indigenous communities. Even in 1932, indigenous actors such as the martyr Feliciano Ama, were blamed for bringing the state-sanctioned violence upon the region (Gould and Lauria-Santiago 2008). These tensions continue today.

^{vi} In 2010, El Salvador's Central Bank estimated that remittances totaled \$3.5 billion. Source: Banco Central de Reserva de El Salvador <http://www.bcr.gob.sv/>. (Accessed August 20, 2011).

^{vii} Pierre Nora (1989) offers a powerful perspective on the relationship between history and memory, wherein history is the "uncharged" past, distanced from emotional or collective attachment that is represented instead by memory. Nora illustrates his argument by inventorying the changing meanings that contemporary French society attributes to certain statues, monuments and other representations of the French past. Memory in this case may connect with official projects to mark and celebrate particular pasts. Nora's contribution is to show the dynamics wherein past events once elemental to collective identity can become less relevant with either the passing of time or (post)modernity.

^{viii} The organizations contributing to the *Informe Sombra* include: El Instituto de Estudios Juridicos de El Salvador (Institute of Juridical Studies of El Salvador); El Centro Para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos “Madeleine Lagadec” (Center for the Promotion of Human Rights “Madeleine Lagadec”); la Fundación para el Estudio y Aplicación del Derecho (Foundation for the Study and Application of Law); El Departamento de Derechos Humanos del Sinodo Luterano Salvadoreño (Department of Human Rights of the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod), el Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (Museum of the Word and the Image), and the Federación Luterana Mundial (Lutheran World Federation).

^{ix} In El Salvador there is a fundamental contradiction: although many will state that there are no Indians in El Salvador, they will nonetheless point to communities such as Izalco, Nahuizalco, and Sonsonate (among others) as towns where indigenous people live. I have visited these communities on many occasions, and while they are places with a large indigenous population, this does not mean that there is broad acceptance or respect for indigenous difference. Even in these towns, indigenous populations are marginalized.

^x “Fundamentally in 1992 when we began to investigate the events of 32 in the rural enclaves in the western region...really we failed because we only encountered silence, evasion, tears, when we would ask the elders about the events of 32; in this sense we perceived that really the events of 32 left in the historical memory of the peasant communities of the western region a great collective trauma and we only succeeded to get close to the theme through the intimacy of families.” [“*Fundamentalmente en los cantones de occidente cuando comenzamos a investigar sobre los sucesos del 32 en el*

año 1992....realmente fracasamos porque solo encontrábamos silencio, evasivas, lagrimas, cuando preguntábamos a las ancianas, ancianos, sobre los sucesos del 32; en ese sentido percibimos que realmente los sucesos del 32 dejaron en la memoria histórica de las comunidades campesinas de occidente un gran trauma, trauma colectivo y solamente lográbamos aproximarnos al tema solamente en la intimidad de las familias.”]

Carlos Henríquez Consalvi, Director of the Museum of the Word and the Image. Cited in Federación Luterana Mundial et al. 2005. Pg. 25. [My translation to English.]

^{xi} Another future direction for this research is to consider the broad literature that examines how other diasporic communities engage in long-distance national commemoration and trauma recollection. This helpful suggestion comes from one anonymous reviewer of an earlier draft of this article.

^{xii} As an anthropologist participating over the years in multi-sited ethnographic participant-observation research about culture, memory, and identity in postwar El Salvador, I acknowledge my role in forging links between Salvadorans and indigenous populations in the US and in El Salvador and in bringing attention to issues that concern indigenous groups in El Salvador.

^{xiii} The *cofradía* system, while based on the Catholic Church and the celebration of certain saints, is also a particular characteristic of indigenous communities in El Salvador and throughout Latin America.