Abstract

This thesis explores how politically active Mayan women in 1995, at the close of the armed conflict in Guatemala, speak about their in/security as Mayan, women, and poor. The body of this work is based on partial life-history interviews conducted with 18 leaders of different organizations within the popular/Mayan movement. The thesis explores the marginalized and dissident discourses of danger and in/security that organize the narrator's texts. It also explores the hybridity and fluidity of the representations of insecurity and subjectivity by addressing the narrators' in/securities and sense of their political identity in the different contexts that make up their lives: the Family/Community, Ladino-Mayan Relations, the Organization/Political Movement, the Political Economy, Guatemala—the Nation-State. An analysis of the spatio-temporal contexts reveals how the narrators navigated their texts around the violent experiences they endured at the confluence of various discourses such as of colonialism, nationalism, racism, classism, and sexism.

This thesis raises questions around how it may be possible to shift the focus of in/security to take into account the in/security of those who do not identify or situate themselves in the ways prescribed by the architects of security policies, or according to the ways one commonly thinks about global politics. Violence that is poorly understood through the lenses of state-centered security thinking could perhaps be better understood if we began asking questions around the injury that can occur at the confluence of competing identity claims and the efforts at securing subject positions.