

Voting for a Killer:

Efraín Ríos Montt's Return to Politics in Democratic Guatemala

Regina Bateson

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Abstract: From 1982-1983, Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt presided over a brutal counterinsurgency campaign, which was marked by widespread state repression. Less than a decade later, the former dictator emerged as one of the most popular politicians in newly democratic Guatemala. How did a gross human rights violator stage such an improbable comeback? Using process tracing, I argue that Ríos Montt's trajectory is best explained by his embrace of populism as his core political strategy. This analysis deepens our knowledge of an important case, while shedding light on broader questions about how and when actors with profoundly undemocratic values can hijack democracy for their own ends.

From 1982 to 1983, Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt presided over an especially brutal period of the Guatemalan civil war. Under Ríos Montt's watch, the state killed approximately 75,000 of its own citizens.¹ By the time he was overthrown in 1983, Ríos Montt was internationally reviled as a gross human rights violator.

Yet less than a decade later, Ríos Montt emerged as one of his country's most popular politicians. As Guatemala was transitioning to democracy,² Ríos Montt founded a political party, the *Frente Republicano Guatemalteco* (FRG). Ríos Montt attempted to run for president in 1990 and 1995, and polls suggest that had he appeared on the ballot, he could have won.³ However, the courts barred Ríos Montt from running for president because he had previously come to power in a coup. So instead, he ran for and won election to Congress.⁴ Meanwhile, the FRG recruited an alternative presidential candidate, Alfonso Portillo.

In 1999, the FRG swept Guatemala's first peacetime elections. The FRG won control of the executive and legislative branches. Portillo became president, and Ríos Montt became president of Congress. Remarkably, the FRG won in every region of Guatemala—including where Ríos Montt had committed genocide.⁵

The state was responsible for an estimated 93 percent of the Guatemalan civil war's human rights violations,⁶ which spiked during Ríos Montt's time in power. But as Daly notes, after civil wars voters do not necessarily punish their former victimizers.⁷ Indeed, by 1999 nearly half the war's victims said they had a favorable impression of Ríos Montt, and the FRG was the most popular party among both victims of wartime violence and indigenous Guatemalans.

Figure 1. Guatemalans with Favorable Views of Ríos Montt, 1999.⁸

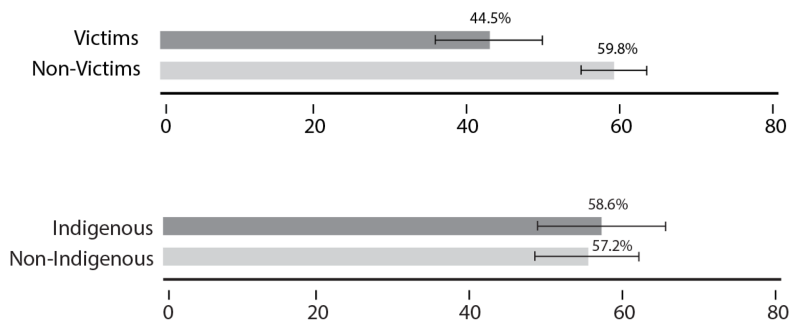
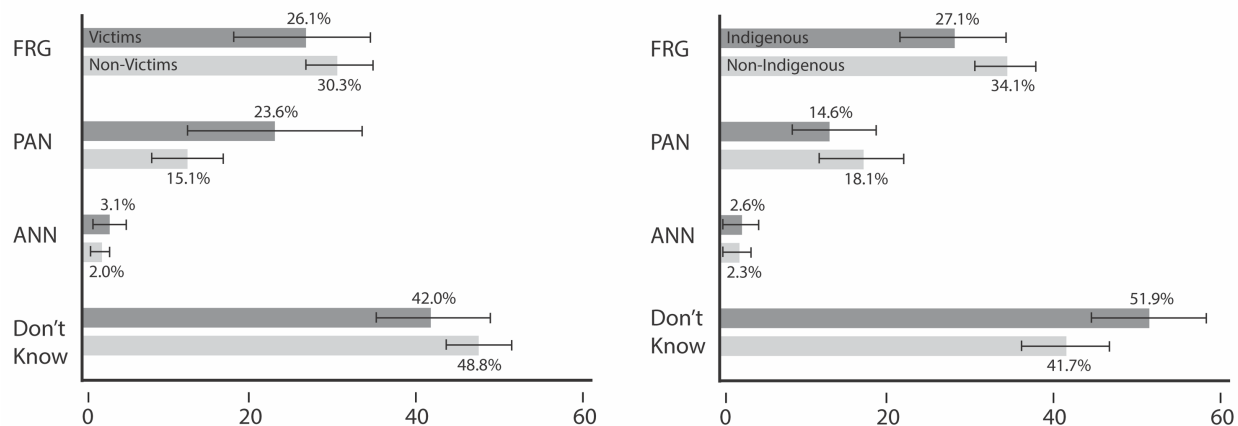


Figure 2. Vote Intent by War Victimization and Ethnicity, 1999.⁹



How did one of the world’s most notorious ex-dictators earn such widespread support—including from some of his former victims? To date, political scientists have analyzed this puzzle primarily through the lens of party dynamics. Loxton¹⁰ and Loxton and Levitsky¹¹ categorize the FRG as an “authoritarian successor party.” Such parties face unique challenges, but per Grzymala-Busse they can also benefit from a “usable past” and “portable skills.”¹² Loxton further develops the idea of an “authoritarian inheritance,” which can include a party brand, territorial organization, a pre-existing

clientelistic network, financial advantages, and a source of party cohesion.¹³

Alternatively, Daly suggests the FRG could be viewed as a “civil war successor party.”¹⁴

Even if their leaders have committed atrocities, Daly argues that parties associated with the victorious side in a civil war often win postwar elections by claiming the mantle of security.

Neither of these rationales fully explains the success of Ríos Montt and the FRG. Most of the factors identified by Loxton did not operate in the case of the FRG. And while Ríos Montt certainly ran on security and had ties to the military, so did many of his rivals. At least a dozen other former military officers and ex-authoritarian leaders also founded parties and ran for office in the 1990s. Why did they fail, while Ríos Montt succeeded?

Using process tracing, I show that Ríos Montt’s electoral victories were not primarily attributable to violence, coercion, or military influence. Nor was his political support limited to his fellow evangelicals. Instead, in elections judged to be free and fair, Ríos Montt and the FRG repeatedly earned the votes of a broad cross-section of Guatemalans.

This outcome was possible, I argue, because as Guatemala transitioned to democracy, it experienced a “crisis of representation.”¹⁵ Conditions were ripe for populism—and of all the political hopefuls jostling for power, only Ríos Montt and his allies in the FRG recognized the political opportunity presented by populism and had the skills and experience necessary to seize the moment.

To be sure, it is unusual for a political science manuscript to focus so closely on one individual. But the story of Ríos Montt merits careful scrutiny because it is

empirically, theoretically, and normatively important. Most countries are now democratic, yet illiberal leaders continue to wield surprising influence. Former dictators or their parties have won elections in half of third-wave democracies.¹⁶ And in democracies new and old, recent years have seen voters elect war criminals, racists, xenophobes, and iron-fisted leaders who pledge to violate the human rights of alleged criminals. Why is this happening? How can democracy be hijacked by actors with profoundly undemocratic values?

The case of Ríos Montt shows that populism can provide a pathway for ex-dictators and other illiberal leaders to gain power under democracy. After a description of the data and methods used, the manuscript opens with a political biography of Ríos Montt. Next, I use process tracing to analyze five hypotheses. I conclude by arguing that Ríos Montt was able to stage a successful return to politics primarily because he strategically embraced populism, in contrast to his rivals.

Data and Methods

This manuscript relies on two types of data. The first is public opinion data from the Seligson Political Culture Survey Archive at the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP).¹⁷ Most of the archive's Guatemala surveys either do not include questions about Ríos Montt and the FRG (as in 1992, 1993, 1995, and 1997) or do not record other key attributes, like religion or income (as in 1998). The 1999 survey, however, provides excellent data on Guatemalans' attitudes toward Ríos Montt and the FRG.

Second and more significantly, I rely on contemporaneous accounts of Ríos Montt and the FRG by actors with different biases, agendas, and perspectives. These historical

sources include newspaper articles, election observation reports, and reports from the Guatemalan *Tribunal Supremo Electoral* (TSE) and the Guatemalan think tank ASIES. The FRG has no official archive, but I was able to access party materials in US libraries and through the Wayback Machine Internet Archive. I also use US government cables in the Digital National Security Archive (DNSA) and the WikiLeaks Public Library of US Diplomacy (PlusD). These documents offer a behind-the-scenes view of hundreds of private meetings and confidential deliberations – precisely the type of data that enables high-quality process tracing.¹⁸

WikiLeaks is a controversial source,¹⁹ but beginning with O’Loughlin et al.,²⁰ the PlusD archive has been used in dozens of academic articles. Regardless of their provenance, the WikiLeaks cables are now in the public domain, and they are a unique, valuable resource.²¹ Having considered the ethical issues outlined by Thomas et al.²² and Boustead and Herr,²³ this manuscript’s use of the PlusD archive is justifiable because it does not harm any living individuals or US national security, the research is in the public interest, and without the PlusD sources, it would be impossible to gain a full understanding of Ríos Montt’s political comeback.

Process Tracing

Process tracing is the “analysis of evidence on processes, sequences, and conjunctures of events within a case for the purposes of either developing or testing hypotheses.”²⁴ This manuscript uses process tracing deductively.²⁵ With careful attention to sequence, timing, counterfactuals, and selection bias, I evaluate five possible explanations for Ríos Montt’s success as a dictator-turned-democrat: a) violence and coercion; b) military support and connections; c) the FRG’s status as an authoritarian

successor party; d) evangelical support; and e) the strategic use of populism. For each explanation, I ask two questions: Did the events suggested by the theory occur? If so, did the proposed causal mechanisms operate as expected?

I answer these questions primarily through within-case analysis, as is typical of qualitative, small-N studies.²⁶ Recognizing that “not all analytical goals can be achieved simultaneously,”²⁷ I prioritize intension over extension. Moving beyond stylized facts, this article dives into the messy realm of historical research, investigating how well social scientific theories perform in a case they are meant to explain.

Although it could be considered a single in-depth case study, this article also benefits from considerable within-case variation. Ríos Montt’s political career spanned decades and included six national campaigns. Simultaneously, at least one hundred political parties contested national elections in Guatemala, and dozens of aspiring politicians founded parties and ran for president. This allows me to leverage three types of longitudinal and cross-sectional comparisons: I compare changes in the FRG and Ríos Montt over time, I compare Ríos Montt with other ex-military and ex-authoritarian politicians, and I compare Ríos Montt with civilian politicians. Table 1 provides one illustrative example of each of type of comparison. More than twenty additional comparisons are embedded within the process tracing analysis.

Table 1. Three Examples of Within-Case Comparisons.

Type of Comparison	Entities compared	Analytic contribution
Over time	2003 campaign vs. 1999 campaign	Shows that the ex-civil patrollers mobilized on behalf of Ríos Montt only very late in his political career
With other former authoritarian leaders	Ríos Montt vs. Benedicto Lucas García	Shows that a history of repression was not sufficient for electoral success under democracy
With civilian politicians	Ríos Montt vs. Óscar Berger	Shows that a history of authoritarian rule was no necessary to win the support of the ex-civil patrollers.

Ríos Montt: A Political Biography

José Efraín Ríos Montt was born in the small highland city of Huehuetenango in 1926.

Ríos Montt's father was a shopkeeper, his mother was a seamstress, and they owned a small farm nearby.²⁸

Ríos Montt came of age during the strict, law-and-order dictatorship of Jorge Ubico (1931-1944). Ríos Montt joined the Army as a teenager. After a few years in the infantry, he secured a spot in Guatemala's national officer training school, *La Escuela Politécnica*, where he was the top-ranked student.²⁹ When he graduated in 1950, he taught at the *Politécnica*, held a series of bureaucratic positions, and trained at the School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone.³⁰

Ríos Montt did not play a significant role in the 1954 coup against leftist Pres. Jacobo Arbenz. But by the time the Guatemalan civil war began in 1960, he was running

the *Politécnica*. There, Ríos Montt was known as a moralistic disciplinarian with unusual religious fervor, even requiring the cadets to carry Bibles.³¹

Later in the 1960s, Ríos Montt was selected for training in the US and Italy, and he advanced to lead the prestigious Mariscal Zavala brigade. In 1972 Ríos Montt was promoted to Brigadier General, and in 1973 he was made Army Chief of Staff – a post he held for only a few months. He lamented his demotion. As he later told a US official, “I was kicked out of the finest job in Guatemala, a job which is better than being President.”³²

In July 1973, Ríos Montt was dispatched to the Inter-American School of Defense in Washington, DC.³³ There, the Guatemalan Christian Democrats (DCG) approached Ríos Montt and invited him to run for president.³⁴ Ríos Montt said yes, and he returned to Guatemala to begin his campaign.

At the time, Guatemala was a military-dominated electoral authoritarian regime that held regular but unfair elections. In 1974, a coalition of opposition parties, the *Frente Nacional de Oposición* (FNO), fielded Ríos Montt as their candidate, with civilian leftist Alberto Fuentes Mohr as his running mate.

US officials categorized candidate Ríos Montt as a “capable left-of-center military officer” who would shift Guatemala “perceptibly but not radically to the left.”³⁵ In private, however, Guatemala’s Army Chief of Staff called Ríos Montt “a communist S.O.B.”³⁶ Pro-government posters likened Ríos Montt to Lenin,³⁷ and ads featuring hammer and sickle imagery warned “voters not to fall into a communist trap by supporting Ríos.”³⁸

Initially, the Guatemalan government did not see Ríos Montt as a “real danger”³⁹ or a “serious threat,”⁴⁰ but he proved to be an effective campaigner. When it became apparent that Ríos Montt might win, US officials predicted the government would resort to fraud to keep him from power.⁴¹ On the eve of the election, Ríos Montt was “under great stress” because he believed that government sharpshooters were trying to kill him.⁴²

By most accounts, Ríos Montt won the 1974 election. But in move that “smack[ed] of gross fraud,”⁴³ the government doctored the results to favor their preferred candidate, Brig. Gen. Kjell Laugerud García. Ríos Montt, on the other hand, was sent to Spain to serve as Guatemala’s military attaché. He arrived on the verge of “mental and physical exhaustion,”⁴⁴ and he was profoundly unhappy in Spain.

In 1977 he returned to Guatemala City, where he fell in with the *Iglesia El Verbo*, the Guatemalan branch of Gospel Outreach, and became an evangelical Christian. By 1978, Ríos Montt was a regular fixture at home Bible studies in tony neighborhoods of Guatemala City, and in 1979 he visited Gospel Outreach’s headquarters in Eureka, California.⁴⁵

At the same time, Guatemala was on the precipice of total war. Urban violence had increased, and several guerrilla groups were active in the heavily indigenous Western Highlands, and state repression was increasing. During the 1978-1982 presidency of Gen. Romeo Lucas García, the state killed about 35,000 civilians.⁴⁶ Even in urban areas, death squads operated in broad daylight, and bodies littered the streets. Several parties approached Ríos Montt about running for president in 1978 and 1982, but he refused, preferring to focus instead on his church work.⁴⁷

When Gen. Aníbal Guevara won an outrageously flawed election in March 1982, a broad coalition of civilian parties—including the ultra-rightist MLN and the center-left DCG—joined together to protest. Before Guevara could take office, a cadre of young, reformist officers overthrew the outgoing Lucas García. To lead the new junta, they tapped Ríos Montt, whom they remembered fondly from their days at the *Politécnica*.

Ríos Montt served as de facto president from Mar. 23, 1982 to Aug. 8, 1983, initially in a junta with Col. Luís Gordillo Martínez and Brig. Gen. Horacio Maldonado Schaad, and then as the sole head of state after he dismissed them in June 1982.⁴⁸ During Ríos Montt's tenure, some observers perceived a decrease in urban repression, but rural violence intensified. As part of *Plan Victoria 82*, at least 440 villages were destroyed in the first six months of Ríos Montt's rule.⁴⁹ Ríos Montt also implemented several programs—first *Fusiles y Frijoles*, then *Techo, Trabajo, y Tortillas*—designed to coerce rural civilians into government allegiance.

By mid-1983, Ríos Montt had achieved some success on the battlefield, but critics disapproved of his concentration of power, unwillingness to hold elections, and extreme religiosity.⁵⁰ After several failed coup attempts, Ríos Montt was overthrown in August 1983 by Gen. Óscar Humberto Mejía Vítores, who had served as his Minister of Defense.

Mejía Vítores continued to prosecute the war, but he also implemented the democratic reforms the young officers had envisioned back in 1982. Guatemala convened a constituent assembly in 1984 and held national elections in 1985. The far left was still outlawed, but the center-left was allowed to participate, and Christian Democrat Vinicio Cerezo was elected president.

Ríos Montt was largely absent from Guatemalan politics in the mid-1980s, though he continued to speak at conservative and evangelical gatherings in the US. In 1984, for example, Ríos Montt spoke at the National Religious Broadcasters' convention and meetings of the National Association of Evangelicals and the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship.⁵¹ Similarly, in 1985 Ríos Montt attended the National Prayer breakfast,⁵² and he spoke alongside Pat Robertson at the First Hispanic Congress of Evangelization in Southern California.⁵³

In 1989, Ríos Montt began talking of running for president. Ríos Montt registered the FRG as a party in early 1990, and for the 1990 elections, the FRG formed a coalition called the *Plataforma No-Venta* with the PID and FUN.⁵⁴ Ríos Montt attempted to run as the coalition's candidate for president, with businessman Harris Whitbeck Pinol as his running mate. While it is difficult to assess the quality of public opinion data from this era, polls had Ríos Montt in the lead.⁵⁵ However, because he had previously seized power in a coup, the courts ruled him ineligible to run for president.

Instead, Jorge Serrano of MAS won the presidency. Serrano was an evangelical former associate of Ríos Montt, who had appointed him to head the Council of State in 1982. Serrano served until 1993, when he fled to Panama after unsuccessfully attempting to dissolve Congress and the Constitutional Court.

Guatemala held Congressional and municipal elections in 1994, followed by national elections in 1995. The FRG contested both elections as an independent party. Freshly drafted manuals described the FRG as non-ideological and guided by the Bible.⁵⁶ In practice, the FRG was highly personalistic and "virtually synonymous with the figure of Ríos Montt."⁵⁷

Ríos Montt was elected to Congress in 1994, setting up another presidential campaign in 1995.⁵⁸ Ríos Montt was the “undisputed frontrunner,”⁵⁹ and he enjoyed a double-digit lead in the polls.⁶⁰ But again his candidacy was blocked by the courts, as was his wife’s attempt to run as his surrogate.⁶¹

The FRG was left candidate-less until Alfonso Portillo, a Christian Democratic member of Congress, agreed to run for president as a “stand-in” for Ríos Montt.⁶² Portillo was a “former Marxist”⁶³ and “former rebel sympathizer”⁶⁴ who had spent the war in exile in Mexico.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, Portillo said he would “defer to General Ríos Montt if elected,” and he ran on the slogan, “Portillo to the presidency, Ríos Montt to power.”⁶⁶ Portillo advanced to the second round runoff, where he lost to Álvaro Arzú of the PAN.

In 1996, Arzú and the guerrillas signed the Peace Accords, ending the civil war. Ríos Montt and the FRG were frequent critics of the peace process, and the FRG’s congressional delegation obstructed a package of constitutional reforms to implement the Peace Accords.⁶⁷ After years of delays, the reforms were rejected in an extremely low-turnout referendum in May 1999.

Later that year, Guatemala held its first postwar general elections. The FRG won a plurality of the votes cast in the first round (48%) and a resounding majority in the second round (68%). Alfonso Portillo was elected president, and Ríos Montt became the president of Congress. The two were said to have a “gentlemen’s pact” that allowed Ríos Montt to exert considerable influence, even co-presiding over some Cabinet meetings.⁶⁸ Ríos Montt “was widely believed to have been the real power broker in the FRG, over and above President Portillo.”⁶⁹

As their term wore on, Ríos Montt, Portillo, and the FRG faced a backlash due to their failure to curb Guatemala's violent crime epidemic and well-founded allegations of corruption.⁷⁰ Fissures also developed between the *portillista* and *riosmonttista* factions of the FRG,⁷¹ which had expanded to include a diverse set of actors with competing interests.⁷²

Nonetheless, Ríos Montt decided to run for president in 2003. He was finally able to appear on the ballot because the FRG pressured the courts to allow it. The FRG also used its incumbent status to coerce and intimidate voters.⁷³ Yet Ríos Montt earned just 19% of the vote, and he failed to advance beyond the first round. Óscar Berger of GANA won the presidency, with Álvaro Colom of UNE in second place.

From 2003 onwards, the FRG entered into a slow decline. The FRG won fewer and fewer votes each election, and the party suffered defections as politicians abandoned it. Ríos Montt won election to Congress again for the 2008-2012 term. But by the start of the 2012-2016 term, the FRG held just one seat in Congress. The FRG dissolved in 2013, and a new term entered Guatemala's political lexicon: *exferregista*, or "ex-FRG member."

Simultaneously, Ríos Montt was finally held accountable for his war crimes. Since 1999, survivors of the genocide, led by Rigoberta Menchú, had been pursuing justice in the Spanish courts. In 2007, a judge issued an arrest warrant for Ríos Montt, but Ríos Montt was never extradited, and he seemed unlikely to be tried in Guatemala. However, in January 2012 Guatemalan prosecutors brought a genocide case against Ríos Montt, who had lost his immunity because he was no longer in Congress.

Ríos Montt was convicted in May 2013, though the sentence was quickly invalidated on procedural grounds. Subsequently, Ríos Montt's health declined to the point that he was no longer able to participate in his own defense. He died in April 2018, in the midst of his retrial in absentia. As former Guatemalan attorney general Claudia Paz y Paz said, "he died facing justice."⁷⁴

Process Tracing Ríos Montt's Return to Politics

Given his violent past, how did Ríos Montt succeed in democratic politics? Using process tracing, I evaluate five possible explanations: violence and coercion; military support; the FRG's status as an authoritarian successor party; evangelical support; and Ríos Montt's strategic embrace of populism.

Violence and Coercion

Ríos Montt and the FRG are sometimes associated with violent electioneering due to an incident known as, "Black Thursday." In July 2003, the FRG bused party supporters to Guatemala City, armed them, and exhorted them to attack the government institutions that were, at the time, blocking Ríos Montt from running for president. The mob laid siege to most exclusive neighborhoods of Guatemala City and brought the city to a standstill.

Black Thursday was one of the most violent episodes in postwar Guatemala, and it backfired for the FRG. Some party officials later faced criminal charges for their roles in the melee, and Black Thursday made the FRG "look to voters like a band of thugs."⁷⁵ Moreover, Black Thursday occurred quite late in Ríos Montt's political career, so it does not explain how Ríos Montt achieved his electoral successes in the first place.

Although Ríos Montt and the FRG faced consistent scrutiny, there is no record of them behaving particularly violently in the 1990s. It is true that in 1990 an anonymous caller threatened to kill an election official if Ríos Montt were not registered as a candidate, and Ríos Montt suggested that his followers might riot if he were denied a place on the ballot.⁷⁶ But despite these threats, no actual violence transpired. Similarly, some 650 international observers monitored the 1995 elections, which they deemed “remarkably free of violence.”⁷⁷

When the FRG swept into power in 1999, both former guerilla commander Jorge Ismael Soto (aka “Pablo Monsanto”) and Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú agreed the elections were calm, fair, and peaceful.⁷⁸ At the time, Guatemala was under particularly intense international scrutiny, so there is good reason to believe that if the FRG had won through violence or intimidation, it would have been noted. But despite their critical posture toward Ríos Montt and the FRG, organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch did not attribute *any* election-related violence or threats to Ríos Montt or the FRG.⁷⁹ Similarly, the FRG and Ríos Montt were not named as instigators or suspects in any of the 31 election-related altercations recorded by the Organization of American States.⁸⁰

Military Support

Even under democracy, the military remains the most powerful institution in Guatemala. As a retired officer, did Ríos Montt benefit politically from his ties to the military and related forces, such as the civil patrols? To answer this question, I begin with a hoop test, evaluating whether Ríos Montt and the FRG had a close relationship with the military. Next, I look for potential advantages that Ríos Montt might have obtained

through military connections. Finally, I examine the timing and durability of the ex-civil patrollers' support of Ríos Montt.

Hoop Test: A Special Relationship?

Ríos Montt had some allies in the military, but throughout his career he also accumulated many enemies. When he was fired as Army Chief of Staff in 1973, US officials reported:

Ríos is not popular among his peers, and indeed one of the reasons for his abrupt dismissal as army chief of staff was that he aroused the enmity of senior commanders by being too much of a disciplinarian. However, he is respected by a number of army rank and file ...⁸¹

During his 1974 presidential campaign, Ríos Montt deepened these fissures by boldly criticizing the military.⁸² Later, as head of state Ríos Montt did “not enjoy the full support of the Army High Command,”⁸³ and he weathered several serious coup attempts.

When Ríos Montt re-entered politics, these conflicts haunted him. Tellingly, it was businessmen, not military officers, who “tutored” Ríos Montt before his 1990 presidential campaign⁸⁴—perhaps because he was “not on good terms with his former military colleagues.”⁸⁵ In 1990, “the military leadership ... [was] said to be most wary of a strong Ríos Montt candidacy” because in 1982-1983, Ríos Montt had “disrupted the military hierarchy.”⁸⁶ Indeed, in the run-up to the 1995 elections, Col. Francisco Luís Gordillo publicly urged Ríos Montt not to run for president.⁸⁷ Ríos Montt was sufficiently alarmed that he attempted to “mend fences within the Army,” as a US cable reported:

Ríos Montt ... has sent out letters telling officers that he no longer carries a grudge over the actions of the past. ... Ríos understands that a number of GT

Army officers are against a Ríos presidency as they believe it will either be bad for the country, their individual careers, or both. What Ríos reportedly wants is the military to remain neutral during any kind of political conflict that may take place during an election campaign or a potential Ríos administration. ... In an attempt to obtain such a “neutral” stance, Ríos has sent letters out to a large number of officers explaining that what happened in the past needs to remain in the past and to let bygones be bygones, so to speak.⁸⁸

As compared to Ríos Montt and the FRG, some civilian-led parties actually had stronger relationships with the military. In 1990, the center-left DCG was thought to have a “strong hold over Army leadership,”⁸⁹ whereas Ríos Montt was “not believed to have a strong base of support in the military.”⁹⁰ Likewise, before the 1995 elections, the FRG and the PAN had cultivated allies in the Army in roughly equal numbers.⁹¹ After the PAN won the presidency in 1995, the PAN-aligned officers demoted their FRG-linked colleagues, suggesting that the civilian-led PAN had military connections that rivaled or exceeded those of Ríos Montt and the FRG.⁹²

Assistance from the Military

Despite the apparent lack of a preferential relationship between Ríos Montt and the military, I also searched carefully for any evidence that the military helped Ríos Montt or the FRG. I found no evidence of any such assistance when Ríos Montt was politically ascendant in the 1990s.

During the 2003 campaign, however, a military commander required troops to build a stage for an FRG rally. And during Black Thursday, the military declined to take action against pro-Ríos Montt hooligans wreaking havoc on the streets of Guatemala

City.⁹³ However, these instances both originated from a specific family relationship, *not* longstanding ties between Ríos Montt and the military as an institution. Sources in the Interior Ministry, the police, and the military attributed the military's pro-Ríos Montt actions during the 2003 campaign to orders given by his son, Enrique Ríos Sosa, who was Army Chief of Staff at the time.⁹⁴ Due to allegations of corruption and his actions in support of his father, Ríos Sosa was forced to resign during the 2003 campaign. As a US cable observed,

His role as Army Chief of Staff during this heated electoral campaign was seen by many as supporting his father's controversial presidential candidacy. His departure will lower anxieties over possible military involvement in support of the FRG.⁹⁵

The Civil Patrols

During the civil war, the civil patrols were pro-government militias. Guatemala's system of civil patrolling began under Lucas García. When he came to power, Ríos Montt significantly expanded the patrols. The civil patrollers operated in their home communities, where they were charged with the civic and political organization of the population.⁹⁶ The patrollers also killed and tortured their neighbors, committing an estimated 18 percent of the war's human rights violations.⁹⁷ When the civil war ended in 1996, the civil patrols formally disbanded. However, they remain an "alternative power structure in the countryside,"⁹⁸ and some patrols continue to operate to this day.⁹⁹

Given that the civil patrols once operated under Ríos Montt, authors like Loxton have speculated that they may have powered his postwar political rise.¹⁰⁰ At minimum, it is clear that Ríos Montt counted some ex-patrollers among his supporters, and ex-

patrollers participated in Black Thursday in 2003. But did the ex-patrollers play a significant role in Ríos Montt's earlier electoral victories? The sequence and timing of events suggests not.

Ríos Montt first tried to run for president in 1989-1990. At the time, the civil war was ongoing, the civil patrols were still formally operating, and the patrollers had fresher memories of Ríos Montt's time in power. Yet while Ríos Montt had some support among the civil patrollers,¹⁰¹ I am unable to find any evidence of coordinated action by civil patrollers on behalf of Ríos Montt in 1989 or the early 1990s. This lack of evidence is telling because international observers were actively concerned that the patrollers might try to meddle in politics. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) reasoned that "if the military were to influence the [1990] election, it would be through the civil defense patrols."¹⁰² NDI even heard allegations that the incumbent Christian Democrats were trying to convince the civil patrollers to vote for their candidate for president.¹⁰³ Yet when NDI examined the role of the civil patrols in the campaign, they found that although "opposition parties said they expected the military to try to influence the elections through the civil patrols," there was ultimately "no evidence of a national or local coordinated military attempt to affect the outcome of the vote through pressure on the patrols."¹⁰⁴

The ex-patrollers finally mobilized on behalf of Ríos Montt and the FRG only in the early 2000s – but even then, the story is complicated. From 2000-2003, Ríos Montt and Portillo used the advantages of incumbency to curry favor among the ex-patrollers. In a blatant attempt to buy their votes, the FRG offered to pay the ex-patrollers for their

wartime service.¹⁰⁵ According to US officials, “the compensation package for the ex-PACs¹⁰⁶ was clearly used to try to build support for the FRG in the [2003] elections.”¹⁰⁷ For a few months, this scheme worked. The FRG turned out ex-patrollers for rallies and protests, culminating in Black Thursday. But the ex-patrollers proved fickle. “When the [Guatemalan government] came through with actual cash payments for less than half of those who claimed to be ex-PACs,” a US analyst observed, “protests broke out around the country, ultimately working against the FRG candidate, Ríos Montt.”¹⁰⁸

When they were not paid, ex-patrollers “publicly threatened the FRG” and took hostage FRG mayors and governors.¹⁰⁹ Voters saw “daily images in the press of armed peasants blocking roads and forcing the FRG to cancel campaign rallies,” creating the impression “that FRG candidate Ríos Montt is not welcome in many rural communities where the ex-PAC feel deceived.”¹¹⁰ When other parties promised compensation, the ex-patrollers were quick to shift their allegiances. They ultimately proved willing to back civilian politicians like Óscar Berger, who won the 2003 presidential election.

An Authoritarian Successor Party?

Even if Ríos Montt and the FRG did not enjoy significant support from the military, Ríos Montt’s authoritarian past could still have mattered. Loxton categorizes the FRG as an “authoritarian successor party,” and he argues that such parties succeed when their baggage is counterbalanced by an “authoritarian inheritance” – “resources that, paradoxically, allow them to survive, and even thrive, under democracy.”¹¹¹ These resources include a party brand, territorial organization, clientelistic networks, a source of party finance, and a source of party cohesion.¹¹² Yet because Ríos Montt was previously head of state for such a short time, and because Guatemala’s party system is so volatile,

the FRG did not enjoy the advantages available to many other authoritarian successor parties.

Party Cohesion

Unlike many other authoritarian successor parties, the FRG was not particularly cohesive, and it did not inherit a stable leadership structure dating back to Ríos Montt's time as an authoritarian leader. While Ríos Montt certainly built some important political relationships in 1982-83, his allies did not remain loyal over the years. Ríos Montt associates like Jorge Serrano and Francisco Bianchi later formed their own parties (MAS and ARDE) and ran *against* the FRG. By 1999, Bianchi was an especially outspoken critic of the FRG, which he said had "abandoned its principles."¹¹³ Similarly, Harris Whitbeck Pinol was a founding member of the FRG and Ríos Montt's running mate during his thwarted 1990 campaign. However, Whitbeck left the FRG in 2002, and in 2003 he ran for president *against* Ríos Montt as the Partido Patriota (PP) candidate.¹¹⁴

Territorial Organization, Clientelistic Networks, and Finances

Similarly, Ríos Montt's authoritarian past does not appear to have created a strong pre-existing organizational template for the FRG. As late as 1989, Ríos Montt "did not have a party,"¹¹⁵ and once he founded the FRG, it floundered. Rather than emerging as a well-organized political machine, the FRG was seen exclusively "as an electoral vehicle" to support Ríos Montt's 1990 presidential campaign¹¹⁶ – a point underscored by the party's near-total failure to run any mayoral candidates in 1990. At the time, the DCG was "generally considered to have the best grassroots organization."¹¹⁷ The FRG, by contrast, operated on a "shoestring budget,"¹¹⁸ and it "did not really function like a political party, but more closely resembled a tent meeting."¹¹⁹

Crucially, the FRG was not a former authoritarian *ruling* party. Kitschelt and Singer argue that only former authoritarian ruling parties that “governed and acted as mobilizing agents for an extended period of time” enjoy a head start when it comes to building up a party apparatus and competing under democracy.¹²⁰ Ríos Montt was de facto president for less than eighteen months, and he did not govern in anticipation of elections. He never built a territorial organization or clientelistic network, so there was little if any infrastructure for the FRG to inherit.

Party Brand

On the eve of the 1990 elections, just 5.8% of Guatemalans were affiliated with a political party.¹²¹ Guatemala has one of the most volatile party systems in the world¹²²—to the point that Sanchez classifies Guatemala as a “party non-system.”¹²³ In Guatemala, it is not just that today’s winners are likely to be tomorrow’s losers. Today’s winners are likely to disappear and tomorrow’s winners have yet to be established.¹²⁴

Amidst such instability, it is difficult for any party to establish a brand as conceptualized by Lupu.¹²⁵ And even by Guatemalan standards, the FRG was notable for its lack of any purpose beyond supporting Ríos Montt. In the early 1990s, exhaustive volumes on Guatemalan political parties contained almost no information on the FRG, because there was simply nothing to report.¹²⁶

The FRG did indeed recycle some slogans and images from Ríos Montt’s time as de facto president. Most notably, the party resurrected the pledge, “*No robo, no miento, no abuso*,” (“I don’t steal, lie, or abuse”), which Ríos Montt required of civil servants in 1982-83. It is hard to say whether this rhetorical move meaningfully invoked a party

brand. Regardless, the FRG immediately took steps that would have diluted its brand,¹²⁷ such as running in a coalition with two other parties (PID and FUN) in 1990. Later, the FRG further confused matters by selecting former Christian Democrat Alfonso Portillo as its presidential candidate in 1995 and 1999, and even accepting former president and human rights ombudsman Ramiro de Leon Carpio as a member in 1999.¹²⁸

Given this wild game of political musical chairs, it should come as no surprise that by the mid-1990s, Guatemalans found it nearly impossible to differentiate between parties.¹²⁹ In 1998, just one year before FRG's electoral sweep, only 7 percent of Guatemalans identified the FRG as their preferred party.¹³⁰ This suggests the FRG did not have a strong brand that stood "for something in the eyes of voters."¹³¹

Evangelical Support

If an authoritarian inheritance was not primarily responsible for Ríos Montt's political comeback, what about support from evangelicals? When Ríos Montt re-entered politics, some observers believed he would have "great appeal as an unabashed, born-again Christian in a country that has become increasingly evangelical over the last two decades."¹³²

Yet despite his ties to influential evangelicals abroad, like Luis Palau, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson,¹³³ Ríos Montt never had a lock on elite or mass evangelical support in Guatemala. Even as elders from his church, *El Verbo*, played a significant role in his 1982-1983 administration, other Guatemalan evangelical leaders felt that Ríos Montt's erratic behavior tarnished their image.¹³⁴ As a result, they were less than enthused to see him back on the political scene. In 1990, "some of the people most uneasy about Ríos Montt's presidential bid were evangelical leaders,"¹³⁵ and by 1999, the

founder of the Guatemalan Evangelical Alliance was openly campaigning against Ríos Montt and the FRG.¹³⁶

In terms of popular support, it is true that as compared to Catholics, Protestants felt more favorably toward Ríos Montt (see Figure 3 and Appendix Table 1.2). However, this gap existed because Catholics *disliked* Ríos Montt, not because Protestants were especially supportive of him. Furthermore, religion had no meaningful relationship with Guatemalans' voting intentions in the 1999 elections (see Figure 4 and Appendix Table 1.3).

Figure 3. Protestants and Catholics with a Favorable View of Key Political Figures, 1999.

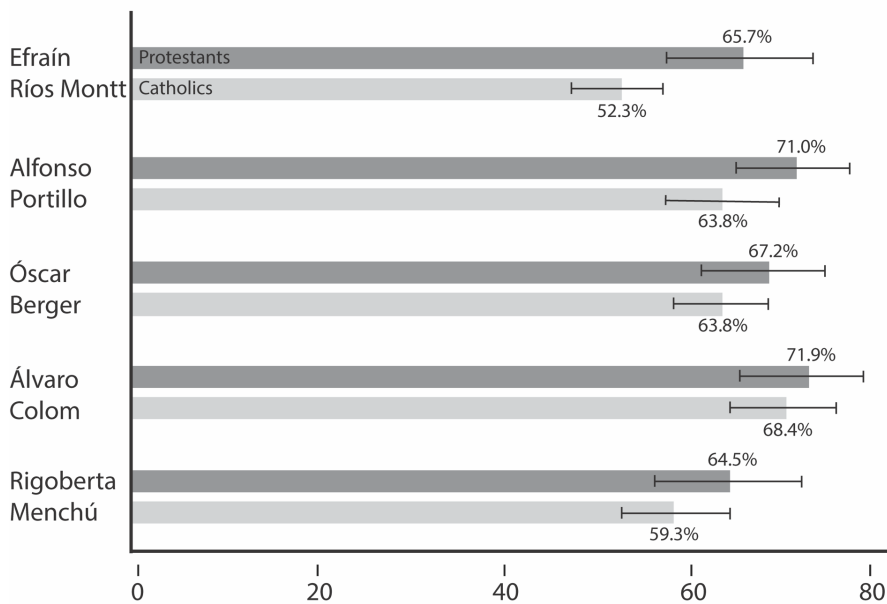
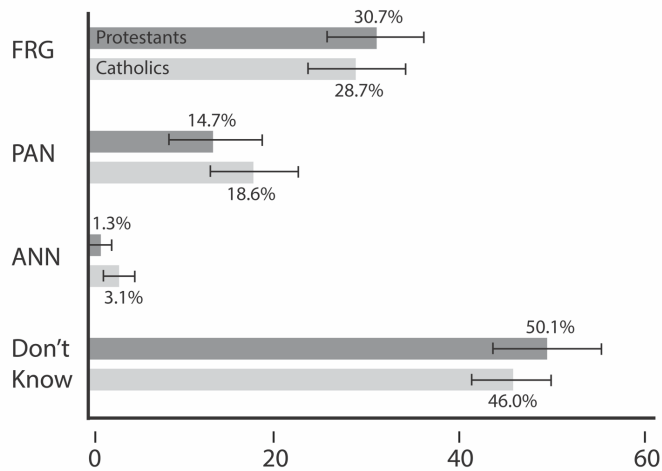


Figure 4. Vote Intent among Protestants and Catholics, 1999.



As Samson and others have observed, the Guatemalan evangelical community is marked by considerable pluralism.¹³⁷ Guatemalan evangelicals are indigenous and ladino, wealthy and poor, urban and rural, liberal and conservative. They have never voted as a bloc,¹³⁸ and evangelical candidates often compete against each other. Consider the 1999 presidential race, which included two evangelicals: Francisco Bianchi, a ladino and former Ríos Montt acolyte who running for the conservative ARDE party, and the Rev. Vitalino Similox, a Mayan human rights advocate who was the vice-presidential candidate for the leftist ANN.¹³⁹

Ríos Montt founded the FRG as a party guided by Biblical principles, but it was never an evangelical party, and Ríos Montt “did not attempt to run for office as a ‘Protestant candidate,’ per se.”¹⁴⁰ The FRG included many Catholic candidates, such as Alfonso Portillo, and the party drew the majority of its support from Catholics (Appendix Table 1.4). So while there are reports of evangelicals canvassing for Ríos Montt,¹⁴¹ evangelical backing does not appear to have been crucial to his victories.

More than religion, concerns over security may have driven support for the FRG. As shown in Appendix Table 1.3 and noted by Azpuru,¹⁴² crime victimization was one of the only factors strongly associated with support for the FRG. Consistent with Daly's argument, a plurality of the FRG's backers said they planned to vote for the FRG because it would "impose order" (Appendix Table 1.6). But many other parties were also running on law and order. So how did the FRG come to own the issue of security? The next section addresses this point.

Populism

Scholars of Guatemala have long recognized Ríos Montt as a populist,¹⁴³ but he is largely absent from the political science literature on populism in Latin America. Yet in contrast to arguments about violence and coercion, military assistance, party dynamics, and evangelical support, analyzing Ríos Montt as a populist offers more insights into his success under democracy. A focus on populism is compelling because Ríos Montt hewed so closely to the typical populist playbook, and because it explains on three puzzling developments: why other ex-authoritarian politicians were not more successful; Ríos Montt's strange relationship with Alfonso Portillo; and the failure of Ríos Montt's 2003 presidential campaign.

A Textbook Populist

Even as its civil war wound down, Guatemala was "nearly immobilized by malaise."¹⁴⁴ Crime rates were high and rising, poverty remained endemic, and corruption was widespread. Ordinary citizens felt "deceived and defrauded" by their first two democratically elected presidents, Cerezo and Serrano.¹⁴⁵ By the time of the 1995

elections, voters had been “alienated by corrupt politicians and a system that has done little for them.”¹⁴⁶

Ríos Montt seized upon these sentiments and presented himself as a populist who met the moment. In Weyland’s influential conceptualization, populism is not an ideology or set of economic policies.¹⁴⁷ Rather,

populism is best defined as a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers. This direct, quasi-personal relationship bypasses established intermediary organizations or deinstitutionalizes and subordinates them to the leader's personal will. ... A charismatic leader wins broad, diffuse, yet intense support from such a largely unorganized mass by “representing” people who feel excluded or marginalized from national political life and by promising to rescue them from crises, threats, and enemies. The leader appeals to the people for help in his heroic effort to regenerate the nation, combat the privileged groups and their special interests, and transform the “corrupt” established institutions.¹⁴⁸

This is a near-perfect description of Ríos Montt’s political strategy in the 1990s and to some degree in 1982-83 as well.

Recall that the junior officers selected Ríos Montt to lead the junta because he was known as an outsider willing to challenge the establishment – as in his 1974 campaign. True to his image, as head of state Ríos Montt did not play nicely with his country’s business, religious, military, or political elites.¹⁴⁹ To the contrary, Ríos Montt earned their “undying enmity” as he dismantled institutions, consolidated power in his

own hands, and condemned corruption.¹⁵⁰ Ríos Montt “railed especially at political parties, which he tarred as a ‘wretched, sick, miserable lot’ that had no relevance to the people for whom they claimed to speak.”¹⁵¹ Simultaneously, he communicated directly with the people in his weekly “sermonettes,” which were broadcast on radio and television.¹⁵²

When Ríos Montt returned to politics in the 1990s, his embrace of populism only intensified. Rhetorically, Ríos Montt combined direct appeals to “the people” with the moralistic allusions typical of populism.¹⁵³ Ríos Montt also denounced crime and anarchy. But as Stoll notes, Ríos Montt’s appeal was not only that of the “iron fist.”¹⁵⁴ If it were, as argued by Daly,¹⁵⁵ then other hardline ex-military candidates would have fared better.¹⁵⁶ Ríos Montt was unique in that he embedded his promises of security within a populist discourse that promised to protect the people from corrupt institutions and other threats, while returning power to them. He framed his re-entry into politics as “a question of principle, a movement” that would “let the voice of the people be heard.”¹⁵⁷ As candidate Ríos Montt told a crowd in Nebaj, “Guatemala is not the police, the captain, the mayor, or the congressman. Guatemala is you!”¹⁵⁸

Organizationally, Ríos Montt also followed a populist playbook. He *first* held large rallies and communicated directly with the public, *then* he built a traditional party apparatus. At the time of the 1990 elections, the FRG’s lack of infrastructure looked like a serious weakness. But for populists, a lack of formal organization is a feature, not a bug. By launching their movements without establishment backing, elite endorsements, or a conventional party structure, populists are able to show that they are of the people, not of the system.

Thematically, Ríos Montt emphasized two messages that are typical of populists. First, like most populists, Ríos Montt and the FRG offered intuitive solutions to complex problems. Ríos Montt particularly embraced a “simplistic law-and-order approach to public safety.”¹⁵⁹ Second, Ríos Montt used conflict with the establishment to his political advantage. When elites criticized him, they perversely bolstered his credentials as an outsider.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, when the electoral authorities repeatedly refused to register Ríos Montt as a presidential candidate, he responded by casting himself as the victim of an unjust system, enhancing his populist appeal.¹⁶¹

Ex-Authoritarian Political Wannabes

Ríos Montt is Guatemala’s most famous dictator-turned-democrat, largely because his political career proved so successful.¹⁶² But as the civil war waned, many other former military officers also went “looking for new avenues of power.” In the early 1990s, there were

about a dozen former military officers trying to burst onto Guatemala’s political stage, campaigning for political office or setting up political movements. In a country afflicted by rising crime and labor strife, the former officers are answering appeals from political parties looking for candidates with tough images.¹⁶³

Strikingly, in the 1995 presidential election, “five of the six front-runners served under former military regimes.”¹⁶⁴ As Daly might expect, these candidates recognized that promises of security would resonate with the electorate. To quote former defense minister and 1995 PID-FUN¹⁶⁵ presidential candidate Hector Gramajo, “the electorate wants a military man because we represent credibility, law, and order.”¹⁶⁶

Yet when most military-linked candidates ran, they lost. For example, in 1990 Gen. Manuel Benedicto Lucas García ran a strikingly unsuccessful campaign for president under the banner of the right-wing *Movimiento Emergente de Concordia* (MEC). Lucas Garcia was well-known because during his brother's presidency (1978-1982), he had served Army Chief of Staff and directed the military's shift to mass violence. Simultaneously, MEC ran Col. Francisco Luís Gordillo, a former member of Ríos Montt's junta, on its national list for Congress. But despite having such high-profile ex-military candidates who could have painted themselves as guarantors of law and order, MEC earned only a few thousand votes.

Similarly, in 1994 Gen. Óscar Humberto Mejía Víctores ran at the top of the FUN's national list for Congress. Mejía Víctores enjoyed "instant name recognition" because he had served as head of state in 1983-1986.¹⁶⁷ But he garnered just 6,495 votes, as opposed to more than 200,000 for Ríos Montt and the FRG.

The story of the MLN is even more intriguing. Rabidly anti-communist with "decidedly inquisitorial" views, the MLN openly operated death squads in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁶⁸ If ever a party were well-positioned to portray itself as tough on crime, it was the MLN. Yet despite running ex-military candidates in the elections of 1990, 1994, and 1995, the MLN earned only a miniscule share of the vote in each election, finally failing to qualify as an active party after the 1995 elections.

All these right-wing military- and authoritarian-linked candidates attempted to run on law and order, but unlike Ríos Montt and the FRG, they did not combine this messaging with populist appeals – perhaps because they lacked the political acumen or demeanor to do so. "Forceful and charismatic," Ríos Montt's "strong personality"¹⁶⁹

allowed him to communicate his populist message effectively, distinguishing him from the tepid slew of uninspiring candidates in early 1990s Guatemala.¹⁷⁰

The Strange Story of Alfonso Portillo

Ideologically, Ríos Montt and Portillo were unlikely allies. But like Ríos Montt, Portillo embraced populism as his core political strategy. Known as “*El Pollo Ronco*” (“The Hoarse Chicken”), Portillo ran “boisterous” campaigns characterized by “populist rhetoric.”¹⁷¹ Portillo styled himself as a “man of the people,” and Guatemalan analysts attributed his win in 1999 to his populist streak. Portillo, Manfredo Marroquín said, was the only [1999 presidential] candidate who dared to talk about revolting against the system and bringing social justice, and that’s what the people wanted. His victory is the revolt of the masses.¹⁷²

Understanding Portillo as a populist explains two mysteries about his political career. During the civil war, Portillo fled to Mexico. How did a former leftist end up running for president as a proxy for the *very same* dictator he once feared? And how did Portillo have any credibility, given that while running for president under the banner of the rightist FRG, he continued to call himself a social democrat¹⁷³ and even likened himself to Tony Blair?¹⁷⁴ These contradictions might have spelled the end for more traditional politicians, but not for Portillo and Ríos Montt because they were populists, not ideologues. Populism has an “essentially chameleonic quality;” it is “empty-hearted” and has no ideological core.¹⁷⁵

Portillo’s populist strategy also enabled him to weather—and *benefit from*—the revelation that he had killed two men in Mexico in 1982.¹⁷⁶ When media reports of the killings surfaced late in the 1999 campaign, Portillo spun his actions as “evidence that he

would defend the nation and guarantee justice.”¹⁷⁷ And indeed, the incident “only reinforced the perceptions that [Portillo], along with other FRG leaders, could solve the problem of crime.”¹⁷⁸ As one campaign ad put it, “if Portillo can defend himself, he can defend you and your family.”¹⁷⁹

Perversely, Portillo used the sudden disclosure of the killings to portray himself as a victim battling predatory, opportunistic elites. Portillo said the accusations showed that oligarchy

wanted to destroy me, not because they are interested in my past, but rather because they wanted to destroy a man of the people who is going to be president, a man who is the same as you.¹⁸⁰

In the hands of a skilled populist like Portillo, a history of homicide was a means of building rapport with the people, rather than a political liability.

Ríos Montt's Defeat

Any theory purporting to explain Ríos Montt's political trajectory must account for not only his political rise, but also his fall. As the 2003 presidential election approached, Ríos Montt had more coercive power than ever before, along with a stronger party infrastructure and the opportunity to use the resources of the state to win votes. His authoritarian baggage had not increased, and his authoritarian inheritance (if any) had not diminished. So when he was finally allowed to run for President in 2003, why did Ríos Montt perform so abysmally at the polls?

In a word: populism. Populism is inherently “episodic ... because of its attitude towards institutions.”¹⁸¹ Once in power, populists either adopt new political strategies and “transcend populism,” or they fail.¹⁸² Ríos Montt fell into the latter category. Ríos Montt

built his democratic political career railing against corrupt, ineffective politicians. But during the FRG administration of 1999-2003, corruption worsened, rather than improving, and crime rates went up, not down.

The public noticed. During the 2003 campaign, former supporters of the FRG told US officials that “the current FRG government [was] doing a bad job” and they planned to vote for “anybody but Ríos Montt.”¹⁸³ Another cable reported “almost unanimous disappointment in the current [FRG] government, especially its failure to address security and crime issues.”¹⁸⁴ Ríos Montt came to be seen as just another ineffectual, self-interested politician, and for the first time since 1989, his poll numbers plummeted to the single digits. Ríos Montt went on to lose decisively in the 2003 elections, putting “an end to 20 years of [his] pivotal role in the Guatemalan political scene.”¹⁸⁵

Conclusion

A single case can never disprove a theory. However, careful analysis of Ríos Montt’s political career suggests that violence and coercion, military backing, and party dynamics do not fully explain how former dictators regain political power after transitions to democracy. Nor does Ríos Montt’s evangelical faith explain his electoral victories. Instead, I use process tracing to argue that Ríos Montt succeeded because he strategically embraced populism.

Guatemalans voted for a war criminal not because they were naïve, intimidated, or easily duped, but because Ríos Montt and the FRG skillfully appealed to their deepest fears—much like other populists now enjoying electoral success around the world. Ríos Montt’s political comeback may have astounded contemporary international observers,

but he was not an historical aberration. Rather, Ríos Montt represented the leading edge of a new wave of ex-dictators, alleged criminals, xenophobes winning office under democracy.

For pro-democracy advocates, Ríos Montt's political comeback is a cautionary tale. But for democracies grappling with populism, the story of Ríos Montt also offers a path forward: Hold leaders accountable. Shine a light on corruption. Point out broken promises and policy failures in clear, concrete terms. Because just as populists like Ríos Montt can ride waves of popular anger into office, so too can the people sweep them from power.

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NOTES

¹ Jennifer Schirmer, *The Guatemalan Military Project: A Violence Called Democracy* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998): 1.

² Starting in 1984, Guatemala began a gradual process of democratization. Progressively freer wartime elections were held in 1985, 1990, 1994, and 1995. Guatemala's first fully democratic peacetime general elections occurred in 1999.

³ On 1990, see David Stoll, “Why They Like Ríos Montt,” NACLA Report on the Americas 24 (no. 4, 1990a): 4-7, 4; National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), *The 1990 Guatemala Elections: A Pre-Election Report* (Washington, DC, 1990a), 1; Virginia Garrard-Burnett, *Terror in the Land of the Holy Spirit: Guatemala under General Efraín Ríos Montt, 1982-1983* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 10. On 1995, see Marina Jimenez, “The Old General Fights On,” *The Spectator* (Hamilton, Ont.), 18 March 1995, A7; Larry Rohter, “Guatemala Hopes Vote Ends War,” *New York Times*, 12 Nov. 1995a, 16; Larry Rohter, “Conservative Has Big Lead in Guatemala, but Faces a Runoff,” *New York Times*, 15 Nov. 1995b, A5.

⁴ Guatemalan *diputados*, or members of Congress, are elected through a closed-list proportional representation system with seats allocated both regionally and nationally. When he sought election to Congress, Ríos Montt headed the FRG’s national list.

⁵ Virginia Garrard-Burnett, *Living in the New Jerusalem: Protestantism in Guatemala* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998): 167; Garrard-Burnett, 2010, 10-11.

⁶ Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, *Guatemala: Memory of silence: Report of the Commission for Historical Clarification: Conclusions and recommendations* (Washington, DC: AAAS, 1999), 20.

⁷ Sarah Zuckerman Daly, “Voting for Victors: Why Violent Actors Win Postwar Elections,” *World Politics* 71 (no. 4, October 2019): 747-805.

⁸ Based on the Guatemala 1999 survey in the Seligson Political Culture Survey Archive at the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). Respondents were asked, “What

is your opinion about the following national leaders: very unfavorable, unfavorable, favorable, or very favorable?”

⁹ Respondents were asked, “If the presidential election were held tomorrow, for which party would you vote?” For a glossary of political parties, see Appendix Table 1.1.

¹⁰ James Loxton, “Introduction: Authoritarian Successor Parties Worldwide,” in *Life after Dictatorship: authoritarian successor parties worldwide*, eds. James Loxton and Scott Mainwaring (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 17, 40.

¹¹ James Loxton and Steven Levitsky, “Personalistic Authoritarian Successor Parties in Latin America,” in *Life after Dictatorship: authoritarian successor parties worldwide*, eds. James Loxton and Scott Mainwaring (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 117, 124-126.

¹² Anna Grzymala-Busse. *Redeeming the Communist Past: The Regeneration of Communist Parties in East Central Europe*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹³ James Loxton, “Authoritarian Successor Parties,” *Journal of Democracy* 26 (July 2015):157-170; Loxton, 2018.

¹⁴ Daly, 747.

¹⁵ Kenneth M. Roberts. “Populism, Political Mobilizations, and Crises of Political Representation,” in *The Promise and Perils of Populism: Global Perspectives*, ed. Carlos de la Torre (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2015).

¹⁶ Loxton, 2018.

¹⁷ The Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), “The Seligson Political Culture Survey Archive,” 17 Jun 2020. <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/Seligson-Archive.php>

¹⁸ Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel. “Process Tracing: From Philosophical Roots to Best Practices,” in *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, eds. Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 33.

¹⁹ Gabriel J. Michael, “Who’s Afraid of WikiLeaks? Missed Opportunities in Political Science Research.” *Review of Policy Research* 32 (March 2015): 175-199.

²⁰ John O’Loughlin, Frank D. W. Witmer, Andrew M. Linke, and Nancy Thorwardson, “Peering into the Fog of War: The Geography of the WikiLeaks Afghanistan War Logs, 2004-2009,” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 51 (no. 4, 2010): 472-495.

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²² Daniel R. Thomas, Sergio Pastrana, Alice Hutchings, Richard Clayton, and Alastair R. Beresford, “Ethical Issues in Research Using Datasets of Illicit Origin,” *Proceedings of the 2017 Internet Measurement Conference* (New York: ACM, 2017).

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²⁴ Bennett and Checkel, 7.

²⁵ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 3.

²⁶ Gary Goertz and James Mahoney, *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and*

Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 89.

²⁷ Henry E. Brady, David Collier, and Jason Seawright, “Refocusing the Discussion of Methodology,” in *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, eds.

Henry E. Brady and David Collier (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.), 21.

²⁸ Joseph Anfuso and David Szczepanski, *Efraín Ríos Montt: Servant or Dictator?* (Baltimore, MD: Vision House Publishers, 1984).

²⁹ Ibid, 35-40.

³⁰ DNSA Department of Defense Intelligence Information Report, 2 April 1974.

³¹ Anfuso and Szczepanski, 47-50; see also Garrard-Burnett, 1998, 140.

³² PlusD 1974GUATEM01585_b.

³³ DNSA Department of Defense Intelligence Information Report, 2 April 1974.

³⁴ PlusD 1973STATE185435_b.

³⁵ PlusD, 1973GUATEM04458_b.

³⁶ PlusD, 1973GUATEM04625_b.

³⁷ The posters are reproduced in Anfuso and Szczepanski.

³⁸ PlusD 1974GUATEM01150_b.

³⁹ Plus D 1973GUATEM04625_b.

⁴⁰ PlusD 1973GUATEM04927_b.

⁴¹ PlusD 1974GUATEM01150_b; PlusD 1974GUATEM00960_b; PlusD 1974GUATEM00903_b.

⁴² PlusD 1974GUATEM01151_b, PlusD 1974GUATEM01317_b.

⁴³ PlusD 1974GUATEM01261_b.

⁴⁴ DNSA Department of Defense Intelligence Information Report, 2 April 1974.

⁴⁵ Anfuso and Szczepanski, 4.

⁴⁶ Schirmer, 44.

⁴⁷ Anfuso and Szczepanski.

⁴⁸ See Garrard-Burnett, 2010.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 20.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Stoll, 1990b, Loc 2628.

⁵² Lauren Turek, "To Support a 'Brother in Christ:' Evangelical Groups and US-Guatemalan Relations during the Ríos Montt Regime," *Diplomatic History* 39 (no. 4, 2015): 689-719, 718.

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⁵⁵ Stoll 1990a, Garrard-Burnett 2010, 10.

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⁶¹ Maryann Bird, "A Coup Too Far for Guatemala's Former Leader," *The Independent* (London), 18 August 1995, 11; "Buscan Sustituto de Ríos Montt," *Reforma* (Mexico D.F., Mexico), 30 July 1995, 22; Phil Davison, "General Ready to Put Fear of God into Guatemala," *The Independent* (London), 13 November 1995, 12.

⁶² Rohter, 1995a, 16.

⁶³ Ibon Vilelabeitia, "Confessed Killer Leads Polls for Guatemalan Presidency," *Toronto Star*, 5 November 1999, 1.

⁶⁴ Downie, A18.

⁶⁵ Byron Barrera Ortiz, *Portillo: La Democracia en El Espejo* (Guatemala, Guatemala: F & G Editores, 2014).

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⁶⁷ Susanne Jonas, *Of Centaurs and Doves: Guatemala's Peace Process* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), 190-205; see also Cynthia J. Arnson, Ed., *La Consulta Popular y el Futuro del Proceso de Paz en Guatemala*, Documento de Trabajo Número 243 (Washington, DC: The Latin American Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1999).

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⁷¹ Lehoucq 2002, 114; Kruijt 2001, 101.

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⁷⁶ NDI, 1990a, 11-12; National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), *1990 National Elections in Guatemala*. (Washington, DC., 1990b), 18.

⁷⁷ Rohter, 1995a, 16.

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⁹⁰ NDI, 1990a, 14.

⁹¹ DNSA GU02045.

⁹² DNSA GU02052.

⁹³ PlusD 03GUATEMALA1906_a.

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⁹⁵ PlusD 03GUATEMALA2255_a.

⁹⁶ Ricardo Sáenz de Tejada, *¿Víctimas o vencedores? Una aproximación al movimiento de los ex PAC* (Guatemala: FLACSO, 2004).

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- ¹⁰¹ DNSA GU01382.
- ¹⁰² NDI, 1990a, 20.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid, 21.
- ¹⁰⁴ NDI, 1990b, 31-32.
- ¹⁰⁵ The Carter Center.
- ¹⁰⁶ “Ex-PAC” is another term for an ex-patroller.
- ¹⁰⁷ PlusD 03GUATEMALA2850_a.
- ¹⁰⁸ PlusD 03GUATEMALA2850_a.
- ¹⁰⁹ PlusD 03GUATEMALA2744_a; Carter Center, 37.
- ¹¹⁰ PlusD 03GUATEMALA2744_a.
- ¹¹¹ Loxton 2018, 10.
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- ¹¹⁶ National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *Report of the NDI Survey Mission to Guatemala, July 2-8, 1995* (Washington, DC., 1995), Appendix E.
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- ¹¹⁸ Lindsey Gruson, "Guatemalan Church Fights Evangelical's Rise," *New York Times*, 17 October 1990.
- ¹¹⁹ Henry J. Frundt, "Guatemala in Search of Democracy," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 32 (1990, no. 3):24-75, 41.
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- ¹²¹ Trudeau, 141.
- ¹²² Paola Ortiz Loaiza, "Introducción," in *Partidos Políticos en Guatemala: Entre Institucionalidad y Pragmatismo Político*, ed. Paola Ortiz Loaiza (Guatemala, Guatemala: FLACSO, 2008); Edelberto Torres-Rivas, "The Limits of Peace and Democracy in Guatemala," in *In the Wake of War: Democratization and Internal Conflict in Latin America*, ed. Cynthia Arnson (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2012).
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¹²⁹ Graciela Romer & Asociados and the National Democratic Institute, *Perspectivas Sobre El Rol de Los Partidos Politicos y Los Comites Civicos en Guatemala*.

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<http://www.latinobarometro.org/latOnline.jsp>

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¹³⁶ Andrea Althoff, *Divided by Faith and Ethnicity: Religious Pluralism and the Problem of Race in Guatemala* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 311.

¹³⁷ Althoff; Stoll, 1990b; Virginia Garrard-Burnett, *Living in the New Jerusalem: Protestantism in Guatemala* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1998): xiv, 133, 170; C. Mathews Samson, “From War to Reconciliation: Guatemalan Evangelicals and the Transition to Democracy,” in *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America*, ed. Paul Freston (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008): 64-94.

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¹⁴³ E.g., Stoll, 1990a; Jonas, 253; Lehoucq; Garrard-Burnett 2010, 10-13.

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¹⁴⁶ Downie, A18.

¹⁴⁷ Kurt Weyland, “Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics,” *Comparative Politics* 34(October 2001): 1-22.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 14.

¹⁴⁹ Even some evangelical leaders “were not shy about criticizing” Ríos Montt’s performance. Stoll, 1990b, Loc 2645-2667.

¹⁵⁰ Stoll, 1990a, 5-7.

¹⁵¹ Garrard-Burnett, 1998, 143.

¹⁵² Garrard-Burnett, 1998, 141.

¹⁵³ Carlos de la Torre, “Power to the People? Populism, Insurrections, Democratization,” in *The Promise and Perils of Populism: Global Perspectives*, ed. Carlos de la Torre (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky).

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¹⁵⁵ Daly.

¹⁵⁶ Stoll, 1990a, 6; see also Johnson, 1994.

¹⁵⁷ Larry Rohter, "Guatemala Ex-Dictator on Rebound," *New York Times*, 28 May 1995c, 14.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in Stoll, 1990a, 6.

¹⁵⁹ Tracey Wilkinson, "World Report Profile: Efraín Ríos Montt," *Los Angeles Times*, 14 February 1995, 5.

¹⁶⁰ Stoll, 1990a, 6.

¹⁶¹ Rohter, 1995b, A5; Trudeau, 145.

¹⁶² The study of authoritarian successor parties and civil war successor parties is fraught with selection bias. If we only study those parties and politicians who manage to run serious campaigns and win elections, we ignore those who are less successful.

¹⁶³ Tim Johnson, "Guatemalan Political Parties Look to Army for Tough Image," *The Gazette* (Montreal), 25 June 1994, A12.

¹⁶⁴ Michael McCaughan, "Fear and Poverty Mark Run up to Presidential Polls," *Irish Times* (Dublin), 11 November 1995, 13.

¹⁶⁵ Gramajo ran for an alliance of the *Partido Institucional Democrático* (PID) and the *Frente de Unidad Nacional* (FUN).

¹⁶⁶ Larry Rohter, 1995c, 14.

¹⁶⁷ Johnson, A12.

¹⁶⁸ James Dunkerly, "Guatemala Since 1930," in *The Cambridge History of Latin*

America, ed. Leslie Bethell (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 235; and

NDI, 1990a, 6, 16.

¹⁶⁹ Wilkinson, 5.

¹⁷⁰ Downie; Jimenez.

¹⁷¹ “Right-wing Candidate Wins Presidency in Guatemala,” *Associated Press*, 28 Dec. 1999.

¹⁷² Quoted in Villelabeitia, 1.

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¹⁷⁵ Paul A. Taggart, *Populism* (London: Open University Press, 2000), 3-5.

¹⁷⁶ Miguel de la Vega, “Guatemala: ¿Un Asesino a la Presidencia?” *Mural* (Guadalajara, Mexico), 31 October 1999, 12; see also Barrera Ortiz, 4-11.

¹⁷⁷ Kovalesski; David Carey, Jr., “Maya Perspectives on the 1999 Referendum in Guatemala: Ethnic Equality Rejected?” *Latin American Perspectives* 31 (2004, 6): 69-95, 76-77.

¹⁷⁸ Lehoucq, 111.

¹⁷⁹ Holiday, 82.

¹⁸⁰ “Arremete Portillo Contra Oligarquía,” *Reforma* (Mexico, D.F.), 6 November 1999, 28.

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¹⁸² Weyland, 14.

¹⁸³ PlusD 03GUATEMALA2802_a.

¹⁸⁴ PlusD 03GUATEMALA2787_a.

¹⁸⁵ PlusD 03GUATEMALA2889_a.

Online Appendix 1:
Supplemental Tables

Table 1.1 Glossary of Key Political Parties in 1990s Guatemala¹

Party	Name	English Translation	Brief Description
ANN (coalition)	<i>Alianza Nueva Nación</i>	New Nation Alliance	Leftist alliance of the URNG and DIA. Their 1999 presidential candidate was Álvaro Colom.
ARDE	<i>Acción Reconciliadora Democrática</i>	Democratic Reconciliatory Action	Rightist, evangelical party founded by former Rios Montt associate Francisco Bianchi.
DIA	<i>Desarrollo Integral Auténtico</i>	Authentic Integral Development	Small center-left party.
DCG	<i>Democracia Cristiana Guatemalteca</i>	Guatemalan Christian Democracy	Longstanding center-left party. The DCG's Vinicio Cerezo was president from 1986-1991.
FRG	<i>Frente Republicano Guatemalteco</i>	Guatemalan Republican Front	Party founded by Rios Montt. Based on Biblical principles. The FRG's Alfonso Portillo was president from 2000-2004.
FUN	<i>Frente de Unidad Nacional</i>	National Unity Front	Rightist party that included ex-military leaders.
GAN (coalition)	<i>Gran Alianza Nacional</i>	Grand National Alliance	Center-right coalition of the PP, PSN, and MR. GANA's Óscar Berger was president from 2004-2008.
MAS	<i>Movimiento de Acción Solidaria</i>	Movement of Solidaristic Action	Party founded by evangelical Jorge Serrano, who was president from 1991

¹ This list includes only those parties mentioned in the manuscript. It is not an exhaustive accounting of all Guatemalan political parties.

			until his attempted “self-coup” in 1993.
MEC	<i>Movimiento Emergente de Concordia</i>	Emerging Movement of Harmony	Rightist party that ran several ex-military candidates in the 1990s.
MLN	<i>Movimiento de Liberación Nacional</i>	Movement of National Liberation	Longstanding extreme right-wing party. Traditionally led by civilians to the right of the military. The MLN also ran some ex-military candidates in the 1990s.
MR	<i>Movimiento Reformador</i>	Reform Movement	A small center-right party that was part of the 2003 GANA coalition.
PAN	<i>Partido de Avanzada Nacional</i>	Party of National Advancement	Center-right civilian-led party. The PAN’s Álvaro Arzú was president from 1996-2000.
PID	<i>Partido Institucional Democrático</i>	Institutional Democratic Party	Longstanding military-linked party.
PP	<i>Partido Patriota</i>	Patriot Party	Rightist party that included both civilians and ex-military officers, such as Gen. Otto Pérez Molina (president from 2012-2015).
PSN	<i>Partido de Solidaridad Nacional</i>	Party of National Solidarity	Center-right party that was part of GANA.
UNE	<i>Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza</i>	National Unity for Hope	Center-left party. UNE’s Álvaro Colom was president from 2008-2012.
URNG	<i>Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca</i>	Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit	Left-wing party affiliated with the rebels in the civil war.

Table 1.2. Correlates of Favorability toward National Leaders, 1999.

	(1) Feels Favorably Toward Efraín Ríos Montt ²	(2) Feels Favorably Toward Alfonso Portillo	(3) Feels Favorably Toward Óscar Berger	(4) Feels Favorably Toward Álvaro Colom	(5) Feels Favorably Toward Rigoberta Menchú
Female	0.0490 (0.0342)	0.0508 (0.0338)	0.0999** (0.0345)	-0.000873 (0.0341)	0.0975** (0.0346)
Indigenous	-0.00285 (0.0391)	0.0207 (0.0383)	0.00570 (0.0386)	0.00320 (0.0388)	0.0668 (0.0393)
Protestant	0.130*** (0.0389)	0.110** (0.0377)	0.0208 (0.0393)	0.0414 (0.0391)	0.0491 (0.0390)
Age in Years	-0.000934 (0.00121)	-0.00247* (0.00122)	0.00468*** (0.00124)	0.00231 (0.00126)	0.00103 (0.00124)
Crime Victim	0.0366 (0.0399)	-0.00917 (0.0400)	-0.0349 (0.0410)	0.0322 (0.0400)	-0.0181 (0.0407)
War Victim	-0.172*** (0.0442)	-0.123** (0.0465)	0.0318 (0.0458)	0.0110 (0.0457)	-0.0275 (0.0457)
Years of Education	-0.0208*** (0.00480)	-0.0192*** (0.00497)	-0.00401 (0.00498)	-0.00986* (0.00488)	-0.0144** (0.00505)
Satisfaction with Economic Situation ³	0.0188 (0.0183)	-0.00564 (0.0182)	0.0275 (0.0186)	-0.0132 (0.0188)	-0.0137 (0.0190)
Ideology ⁴	-0.00882 (0.00681)	0.00419 (0.00678)	0.00449 (0.00708)	-0.00338 (0.00672)	-0.00773 (0.00686)
Urban	-0.0789 (0.0415)	-0.0585 (0.0409)	-0.00668 (0.0413)	-0.0478 (0.0410)	-0.0526 (0.0419)
Constant	0.691*** (0.108)	0.775*** (0.108)	0.305** (0.109)	0.625*** (0.109)	0.616*** (0.111)
<i>N</i>	814	814	814	814	814

All models are OLS and include fixed effects by region. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

² The dependent variables are binary measures of whether each respondent felt favorably toward each political figure.

³ I used this variable instead of household income, because household income was missing for a large percentage of respondents.

⁴ Ideology was measured as a 10-point scale. Higher numbers reflect more conservative ideology.

Table 1.3. Correlates of Voting Intentions among Guatemalans, 1999.

	(1) FRG	(2) PAN	(3) ANN	(4) Don't Know
Female	0.00430 (0.0340)	-0.0434 (0.0286)	-0.00856 (0.0137)	0.0597 (0.0319)
Indigenous	-0.0630 (0.0386)	-0.0567 (0.0300)	0.0171 (0.0168)	0.0774* (0.0368)
Protestant	0.0233 (0.0391)	-0.0267 (0.0320)	-0.0179 (0.0118)	-0.00206 (0.0372)
Age	-0.00379** (0.00120)	0.00192 (0.00111)	0.000893 (0.000526)	0.000880 (0.00116)
Crime Victim	0.101* (0.0402)	-0.0317 (0.0349)	0.0147 (0.0182)	-0.0966** (0.0355)
War Victim	0.00304 (0.0450)	0.0494 (0.0404)	0.0162 (0.0216)	-0.0528 (0.0409)
Years of Education	-0.00794 (0.00476)	0.00880* (0.00414)	0.00587** (0.00178)	-0.0126** (0.00462)
Satisfaction with Economic Situation ⁵	-0.0136 (0.0185)	0.0385* (0.0161)	-0.0107 (0.00672)	-0.00288 (0.0174)
Ideology ⁶	0.0107 (0.00714)	0.0122* (0.00578)	-0.00689** (0.00257)	-0.0151* (0.00612)
Urban	-0.000388 (0.0413)	0.0978** (0.0329)	0.0149 (0.0120)	-0.112** (0.0400)
Constant	0.462*** (0.106)	-0.0706 (0.0939)	0.0118 (0.0430)	0.580*** (0.0985)
<i>N</i>	814	814	814	814

All models are OLS and include fixed effects by region. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

⁵ I used this variable instead of household income, because household income was missing for a large percentage of respondents.

⁶ Ideology was measured as a 10-point scale. Higher numbers reflect more conservative ideology.

Table 1.4 Religious Breakdown of Each Party's Supporters, 1999.⁷

	<u>% Catholic</u>	<u>% Protestant⁸</u>
FRG	57.7	32.8
PAN	66.9	28.2
ANN	74.9	17.6
Don't Know	56.0	32.4

Table 1.5 Religious Breakdown of People who Saw Each Political Figure Favorably, 1999.

	<u>% Catholic</u>	<u>% Protestant⁹</u>
Efraín Ríos Montt	53.3	35.6
Alfonso Portillo	56.0	33.1
Óscar Berger	57.9	32.5
Álvaro Colom	57.5	32.2
Rigoberta Menchú	57.6	33.3

⁷ "Supporters" are those who said they intended to vote for each party in the 1999 election.

⁸ Percentages do not total 100 because some respondents said their religion was "other," neither Catholic nor Protestant.

⁹ Percentages do not total 100 because some respondents said their religion was "other," neither Catholic nor Protestant.

Table 1.6 Top Reasons for Supporting Each Party¹⁰

	<u>FRG</u>	<u>PAN</u>	<u>ANN</u>
They will impose order.	25.8%	3.5%	--
They can help solve the problem of crime.	11.3%	2.0%	2.8%
They can help solve the problem of poverty and cost of living.	12.6%	20.7%	11.1%
They have capable people.	22.3%	33.0%	16.7%
They have a good presidential candidate.	--	9.9%	16.7%
I share their political ideas.	11.9%	11.8%	19.4%
They have honest people.	--	3.9%	19.4%

¹⁰ After they indicated which party they would vote for if the election were held tomorrow, respondents were asked, “Why would you vote for that party?” This table summarizes their answers. The table reports answers provided by 2% or more of each party’s supporters.

Online Appendix 2:
Full References for DNSA and PlusD Cables

DNSA

This section provides the full citation information for all DNSA cables cited in the manuscript. The cables can be accessed at <https://search.proquest.com/dnsa/>.

GU01274, “Preparation of Presidential Candidate Rios Montt,” Confidential Cable, 8 September 1989.

GU01375, “Growing Political Turmoil within Army,” Secret Cable, 25 September 1990.

GU01382, “Guatemala: Presidential Election,” Secret Cable, 4 October 1990.

GU01394, “In the Aftermath of the Guatemalan Elections: Preliminary Observations,” Confidential Cable, 14 November 1990.

GU01902, “Rios Montt Attempts to Mend Fences with the Army,” Secret Cable, 2 February 1995.

GU02045, “What the Future Holds – A Junior Officer’s View,” Secret Cable, 8 January 1996.

GU02052, “Outlook for the Future,” Secret Cable, 1 February 1996.

PlusD

This section provides full citation information for all PlusD cables cited in the manuscript. The cables can be found online at <https://search.wikileaks.org/plusd/>.

1973STATE185435_b, “Conversation with Ríos Montt”, Confidential Cable, 18 September 1973.

1973GUATEM04776_b, “Presidential Candidate General Ríos Montt Gets Enthusiastic Airport Reception,” Limited Official Use Cable, 1 October 1973.

1973GUATEM04458_b, “Christian Democrats Name General Rios Montt Presidential Candidate,” Confidential Cable, 13 September 1973.

1973GUATEM04625_b, “Christian Democrats Name General Ríos Montt Presidential Candidate,” Confidential Cable, 21 September 1973.

1973GUATEM04927_b, “The Electoral Campaign,” Confidential Cable, 11 October 1973.

1973GUATEM05699_b, Untitled, Confidential Cable, 30 November 1973.

1974GUATEM01362_b, "Election Report Number 30," Confidential Cable, 8 March 1974.

1974GUATEM01261_b, "Presidential Election Situation Remains Confused – Election Report Number 15," Confidential Cable, 5 March 1974.

1974GUATEM01585_b, "Christian Democratic Leader Comments on Rios Montt's Post-Election Activities," Confidential Cable, 19 March 1974.

1974GUATEM01150_b, "Electoral Scene," Confidential Cable, 27 February 1974.

1974GUATEM00960_b, "Defense Minister Rubio Promises Army Will Respect Outcome of March 3 Elections," Confidential Cable, 19 February 1974.

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03GUATEMALA1906_a, "Update on Violent Political Protests in Guatemala," Confidential Cable, 25 July 2003.

03GUATEMALA2255_a, "Ríos Sosa Suddenly Resigns," Confidential Cable, 2 September 2003.

03GUATEMALA2850_a, "Scene Setter for Guatemala's Elections: A Growing Expectation of Change," Confidential Cable, 6 November 2003.

03GUATEMALA2744_a, "Former Civil Patrol Members Take Journalists Hostage," Confidential Cable, 28 October 2003.

03GUATEMALA264_a, "Presidential Pre-Candidate Harris Whitbeck Discusses Upcoming Election," Confidential Cable, 31 January 2003.

03GUATEMALA2802_a, "Voters in Jalapa Set to Cast Ballots for 'Anybody but Rios Montt,'" Unclassified Cable, 3 November 2003.

03GUATEMALA2787_a, "Election Snapshot #4: Concerns in the Indigenous Highlands," Confidential Cable, 31 October 2003.

03GUATEMALA2889_a, "Berger and Colom Begin Second Round Campaign; FRG Does Well in Congress and Municipalities," Confidential Cable, 12 Nov. 2003.