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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

QCSOs, Mobilization and Democratization

A Case Study of the 2023 Post-Election Protests in Guatemala

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Abstract

This research examines the essential role of Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) in Guatemala's efforts to resist autocratization and promote democratization, particularly in light of the 2023 electoral scandal. It studies the mobilization efforts of indigenous and non-indigenous communities, by exploring how QCSOs tackle cultural, economic, and political challenges to support democratic resilience.

Using an inductive and theory-building approach, this research incorporates qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews and participant observations conducted in Totonicapán and Guatemala City. It contrasts the effectiveness of QCSOs in indigenous areas with traditional civil society organizations in urban settings, highlighting the unique strategies and cultural values that drive mobilization.

Key findings show the important role of indigenous QCSOs, like the 48 Cantones of Totonicapán, in upholding democratic norms and opposing autocratic trends through nonviolent resistance and strong community ties. In contrast, mestizo urban activism struggles with fragmentation and distrust towards political parties, hindering sustained collective action.

This study provides insights into the factors that initiate and sustain mobilization, the challenges faced by QCSOs, and the broader implications for democratization in Guatemala. It emphasizes the importance of supporting QCSOs to strengthen democratic resilience, offering a detailed understanding of civil society's role in shaping political landscapes amidst autocratic pressures.

Esta investigación examina el rol de las Organizaciones Cotidianas de la Sociedad Civil (OCSC) en los esfuerzos de Guatemala por resistir la autocratización y promover la democracia, especialmente a la luz del escándalo electoral de 2023. Estudia los esfuerzos de movilización de comunidades indígenas y no indígenas, explorando cómo las OCSC abordan desafíos culturales, económicos y políticos para apoyar la resiliencia democrática.

Utilizando un enfoque inductivo y de construcción teórica, esta investigación incorpora métodos cualitativos como entrevistas semi-estructuradas y observaciones participantes realizadas en Totonicapán y Ciudad de Guatemala. Contrasta la efectividad de las OCSC en áreas indígenas con las organizaciones tradicionales de la sociedad civil en entornos urbanos, destacando las estrategias únicas y los valores culturales que impulsan la movilización.

Los hallazgos clave muestran el importante papel de las OCSC indígenas, como los 48 Cantones de Totonicapán, en la conservación de normas democráticas y la oposición a tendencias autocráticas mediante la resistencia no violenta y fuertes lazos comunitarios. En contraste, el activismo urbano mestizo enfrenta problemas de fragmentación y desconfianza hacia los partidos políticos, lo que dificulta la acción colectiva sostenida.

Este estudio proporciona detalles sobre los factores que inician y mantienen la movilización, los desafíos que enfrentan las OCSC y las implicaciones más amplias para la democratización en Guatemala. Enfatiza la importancia de apoyar a las OCSC para fortalecer la resiliencia democrática, ofreciendo una comprensión detallada del papel de la sociedad civil en la configuración de paisajes políticos en medio de presiones autocráticas.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance

Guatemala has been on a concerning trajectory towards authoritarianism in recent years, becoming one of the most notable cases worldwide. This shift has been marked by increasing government actions that undermine democratic norms, including the manipulation of legal systems and suppression of opposition. This trend reflects a broader pattern of democratic erosion in the region, highlighting the challenges faced by institutions in maintaining democratic integrity against authoritarian tendencies (McFarland, 2022). However, this trajectory saw an unexpected shift in 2023. The country became embroiled in a political crisis with allegations of corruption by the elite jeopardizing the democratic transition. Despite these challenges, the sudden advancement of center-leftist opposition leader Bernardo Arévalo to the runoff has sparked a political and constitutional storm in Guatemala. Arévalo's democratic election raises crucial questions: Why is this reversal possible now? How could what seemed like an unstoppable road to authoritarianism be interrupted? The surprising shift indicates potential cracks in the authoritarian facade, suggesting that the resilience of democratic forces, public dissent against corruption, and perhaps international pressure or internal political dynamics have created a unique window for democratic resurgence.

The 2023 electoral process was riddled with irregularities, with criminal charges filed against magistrates of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and members of the winning party, Semilla, which was temporarily suspended. In December, the Public Prosecutor's Office requested the removal of immunity for the new president and vice president, a move condemned by the international community as a violation of the right to participate in public affairs and the rule of law. At the same time. high levels of inequality, poverty, and violence continued to drive forced migration. In October, thousands of people protested peacefully for over three weeks against the criminal prosecution of key figures in the electoral process, led by indigenous authorities demanding the resignation of the attorney general. The government and the Constitutional Court stigmatized the protesters and failed to act to protect them from assaults and intimidation (Amnesty International, 2024). However, following international pressure and

legal petitions, the Constitutional Court reinstated Semilla's legal protection, allowing Arévalo to participate in the runoff, although the Prosecutor's Office maintains its investigation (France 24, 2023).

(Illustrative image of citizens protesting in the aftermath of the 2023 election scandal)

In response to growing authoritarian tendencies within Guatemala, President Bernardo Arévalo took proactive steps by seeking assistance from the Organization of American States (OEA). During a meeting at the OEA headquarters in Washington, he formally requested a mission to observe the upcoming judicial elections in Guatemala. This request was aimed at ensuring transparency and fairness in the election of new judicial authorities, a critical process given the recent challenges to democratic norms in the country (Ramirez Vargas, 2024).

Moreover, according to observers, one of the key factors that enabled the proper functioning of democracy was social mobilization. Indigenous communities, often marginalized, are actively involved in protests against these alleged corrupt practices, highlighting the crucial role of grassroots movements in defending democratic norms (Atahualpa, 2023). Arevalo was able to finally take power on January 15th, 2024, despite the attempt by some lawmakers to hinder the transfer of power, actions that were broadcasted and reported minute by minute by international delegations, who arrived to accompany the new president (Arroyo, 2024).

As authoritarianism threatened Guatemala, the country's citizens rallied, becoming a crucial force in defending their democracy. The widespread public support for Bernardo

Arévalo seen in street protests and various forms of civic participation, was key in pushing back against those who tried to undermine the electoral process. This movement did more than just support Arévalo's victory; it reinforced Guatemala's commitment to democratic values (Arroyo, 2024). The collective determination of the people to stand by these principles showed the world how vital citizen activism is in protecting democracy from authoritarian shifts.

This research investigates the troubling trend of autocratization in Guatemala, highlighting how indigenous and mestizo urban activists are pushing back against these undemocratic shifts, especially following the controversial 2023 election scandal. It particularly focuses on the role of Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs), which play a crucial role in strengthening these efforts and making a significant impact on the political scene.

The research is anchored in an inductive and theory-building approach to understand the role of civil society in halting autocratization and supporting democracy. While autocratization involves the gradual erosion of democratic integrity exacerbated by societal polarization, this thesis explores how civil society can counteract these trends. Employing qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews and participant observations, the research gathers perspectives from both indigenous and non-indigenous communities across the province of Totonicapán and Guatemala City. These two regions were chosen due to their distinct types of civil society and demographic compositions. Totonicapán, with its predominantly indigenous population, has a strong tradition of grassroots mobilization and community-based organizations (Escobar, 1998). In contrast, Guatemala City, with a more diverse and urban population, features a different set of civil society actors, including non-indigenous groups. The findings reveal a complex landscape of mobilization efforts in Guatemala, emphasizing the instrumental role of indigenous groups in countering autocratic tendencies. Indigenous mobilization, supported by strong community networks and continuous advocacy, has proven effective in fostering democratic resilience. The success of these efforts can be attributed to their deep cultural cohesion and the effective use of traditional community structures.

In contrast, mestizo urban activism faces significant challenges. These movements often suffer from fragmentation and a widespread distrust towards political parties, which are perceived as part of the autocratic system they aim to resist. This distrust leads to a lack of cohesion and difficulty in organizing sustained, collective actions.

Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) emerge as vital players in this context. They play an important role in fostering grassroots mobilization and enhancing resilience against autocratic pressures. QCSOs, particularly those led by indigenous groups, emphasize transparency, accountability, and collective decision-making.

These findings illustrate that indigenous-led QCSOs are more effective in promoting democratic values and resisting autocratic trends compared to their mestizo urban counterparts.

1.2 Research Questions and Objective

- ***What were the driving forces behind QCSO mobilization and what obstacles did mobilization face?***

Sub-questions:

-*What factors sparked and sustained mobilization in urban non-indigenous areas?*

- *What conditions facilitated or hindered the mobilization of Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) in indigenous rural areas?*

This thesis aims to describe the mobilization patterns in different segments of Guatemalan civil society and to understand the factors that sparked and sustained these mobilizations, as well as the conditions that made mobilization difficult. The study adopts a theory-building approach, focusing on inductive reasoning rather than testing hypotheses. It explores the dynamics of mestizo and indigenous civil society activism following the 2023 election scandal, seeking to identify the unique contributions of these groups to the democratic process and the influencing factors behind their mobilization efforts.

Objectives:

The objectives of this study are to analyse the mechanisms and conditions that influenced indigenous mobilization and its impact on political change in Guatemala. Furthermore, it aims to investigate the factors driving mestizo urban activism and its role in advocating for democracy after the election scandal. Additionally, the study will assess how Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) support and sustain both indigenous and mestizo mobilization efforts in fostering democratic resilience and resistance.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into several chapters, each addressing different aspects of the autocratization process and the responses to it:

- **Chapter 2: Literature Review** - Provides an in-depth analysis of the political and social history of Guatemala, reviews existing literature on autocratization, culture, marginalization, social movements, and corruption, detailing characteristics, causes, and the role of civil society in democratization processes.
- **Chapter 3: Methodology** - Outlines the qualitative research methods employed, including semi-structured interviews and participant observation.
- **Chapter 4: Analysis of the 2023 Post-Election Protests in Guatemala** - Analyses data to discuss how different groups, particularly indigenous communities, have mobilized in response to the autocratization process and the roles played by QCSOs.
- **Chapter 5: Comparative Analysis of Mobilization in Guatemala** - Compares mobilization efforts across different communities, examining the impact of these efforts on the country's political landscape.
- **Chapter 6**: Discussion
- **Chapter 7:** Conclusion

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study investigates the critical role of Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) in Guatemala's fight against autocratization and its efforts towards democratization, focusing on the influence of cultural factors, marginalization, and political events such as the 2023 Electoral Scandal. These contextual variables are essential for understanding the dynamics of mobilization and resistance within Guatemala's recent political and social transformations. The study adopts an inductive and explorative approach, allowing for a more flexible and nuanced understanding of the unique context of Guatemala.

QCSOs serve as intermediaries in grassroots or community-based mobilization, acting as a bridge that transforms underlying social and political conditions into tangible actions and movements (Pinckney et al., 2022). Their role is crucial in shaping how cultural norms, political scandals, and experiences of marginalization translate into active resistance or support for democratic principles. Understanding this interplay is vital for mapping out how these factors either obstruct or assist civil society's efforts to push back against autocratic trends and maintain democratic integrity.

2.1 Background Information

Guatemala is distinctly divided both geographically and ethnically into regions primarily inhabited by indigenous populations, and those predominantly non-indigenous or Ladino. These divisions are deeply rooted in the country's colonial and post-colonial history, which has perpetuated various degrees of tension and conflict between these groups.

The highlands of Guatemala, towards the Mexico border, are primarily home to indigenous populations, consisting mostly of various Maya groups. This region is known for its rich indigenous culture, languages, and traditions, which are integral to the daily lives of its inhabitants. These communities, often situated in rural areas, primarily rely on agriculture. Despite their cultural richness, these regions face significant socioeconomic challenges, including poverty, limited educational opportunities, and restricted economic development. The hardships and systemic discrimination faced by indigenous populations are vividly portrayed

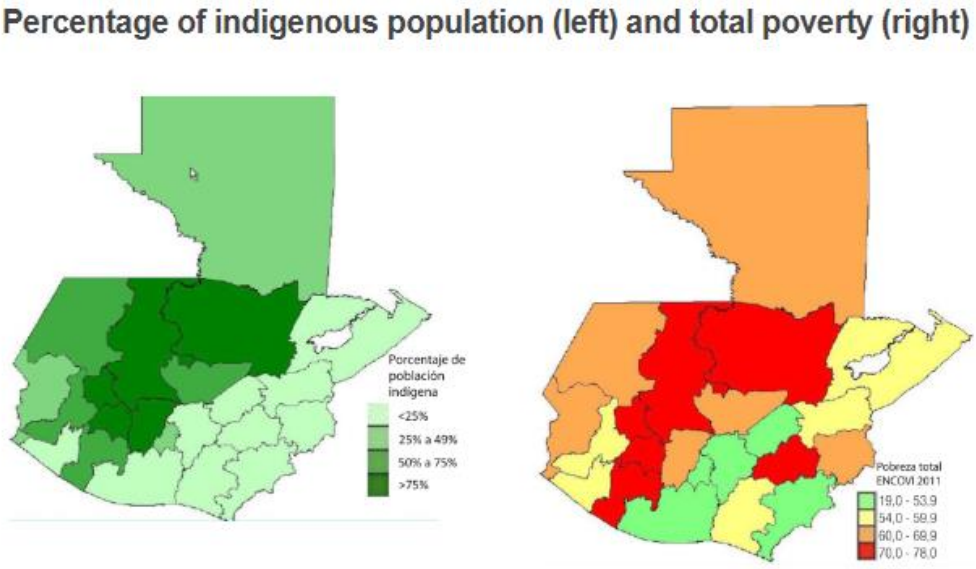
in personal narratives such as "I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala" by Rigoberta Menchú, who details the intense struggles of the Maya people during and after the Guatemalan Civil War (Menchú, 1984).

Conversely, the urban and economically advanced areas such as Guatemala City and the Pacific lowlands are largely inhabited by Ladinos—individuals of mixed indigenous and European descent who identify culturally with Hispanic traditions. These regions serve as the country's political and economic hubs, featuring advanced infrastructure and better access to services. The Ladino population predominantly speaks Spanish and is more integrated into the global economy, which affords them considerable political influence. This demographic and economic disparity has historically led to a distribution of resources and policymaking that often neglects the needs and rights of the indigenous populations. According to Grandin, Levenson, and Oglesby (2011), the political and economic structures in these areas are heavily influenced by a legacy of colonialism and a continued preference for Ladino cultural norms over indigenous ones, which perpetuates inequality and cultural hegemony.

The ethnic and cultural divide between Guatemala's highlands, inhabited predominantly by indigenous Maya groups, and the Ladino-dominated urban lowlands are significant, largely due to historical policies that favoured Spanish and Ladino customs over indigenous cultures and languages. As detailed in Mayas in Postwar Guatemala: Harvest of Violence Revisited (Little & Smith, 2009), these divisions have been perpetuated through a combination of social, economic, and political policies that have historically marginalized indigenous communities. This systemic marginalization is evident in the ongoing discrimination against these communities, reflecting a colonial legacy that continues to impact Guatemala.

For instance, Guatemala's societal divide is starkly illustrated in its healthcare disparities, particularly affecting its indigenous populations. In the following graph, we can see both how the country is ethnically divided, as well as how the government struggles with accessibility issues that predominantly impact indigenous communities. In regions densely populated by these groups, often rural and remote, the lack of adequate healthcare services is alarmingly evident. This insufficiency is manifested in higher maternal mortality rates, rampant

poverty, and severe chronic malnutrition compared to more urban, Ladino-dominated areas (Mazariegos & Bravo, 2020).



Graph 1

(Mazariegos & Bravo, 2020)

2.2 The 2023 Election Scandal and the 48 Cantones

The 2023 election scandal in Guatemala revolves around a political and constitutional crisis that began when center-left candidate Bernardo Arévalo unexpectedly qualified for the second round of the presidential election. His campaign focused on rejecting corruption, fraud, and state cooptation, which resonated with many voters, particularly young, urban, and mestizo-ladino populations (Arzu & Garcia, 2024). This unexpected outcome caused shockwaves throughout the political establishment. Arévalo and his party, Semilla, were targeted by powerful elites who felt threatened by their success. In response, these elites, with the support of the government, the president, the Congress, and a sector of the oligarchy launched a campaign of intimidation and legal obstacles (Arzu & Garcia, 2024).

The Guatemalan Public Prosecutor's Office suspended the legal status of Arévalo's party, Semilla, claiming it had used fraudulent signatures to register members. This move, labeled a "technical coup" by Arévalo, led to national protests, international condemnation, and raised doubts about the integrity of the upcoming election (Reyes & Mallorquin, 2023). The Constitutional Court's intervention to restore Semilla's legal status and allow Bernardo Arévalo's candidacy seemed to offer a momentary reprieve from the turmoil surrounding the 2023 election scandal. However, the Public Prosecutor's continued investigation cast a long shadow over the political landscape, sustaining uncertainty and contributing to growing doubts about the integrity of Guatemala's institutions (Reyes & Mallorquin, 2023). The unfolding events highlighted the deepening autocratization in Guatemala, where political interference and manipulation of democratic processes threatened to erode the very foundations of electoral democracy (Arzu & Garcia, 2024).

This prolonged instability had a profound impact on the Guatemalan population. The scandal revealed a lack of genuine citizenship and political engagement, with many citizens feeling powerless to challenge the entrenched political and economic elite. The aggressive use of repressive tactics, combined with propaganda that discredited protests and portrayed collective action as subversive, further alienated citizens from the political process (Plaza Publica, 2023). This systematic suppression of dissent contradicted the principles enshrined in the Constitution, reinforcing an antidemocratic order that served the interests of a select few while marginalizing the broader population (Reyes & Mallorquin, 2023).

The most decisive factor in this long struggle for political and cultural hegemony was the involvement of the Ancestral Authorities, particularly the 48 Cantons. With their characteristic maturity and well-defined strategy, they took control of cities, set up roadblocks, and organized popular protests across the country. They declared a nationwide strike that lasted 106 days, demonstrating impeccable coordination among all the Ancestral authorities. Additionally, they established rotating shifts at key locations like Gerona Square, in front of the Public

Prosecutor's Office, the Congress, and the courts, intervening when there were violations against citizens or the interests of the general population (Arzu & Garcia, 4.2).

However, as much as they were patient, they were not naive about the promises made by government officials, especially those with ties to the ruling party. They've seen too many lawmakers break their word, so they're cautious when dealing with the political establishment. This skepticism reflects their understanding that some in power can't be trusted, and that they need to be ready to stand their ground (Guerrero, 2022), leading them to keep the pressure on those in power requires constant vigilance and a willingness to act when necessary. This awareness shows they're prepared to keep fighting for their rights and the broader good. Their stance is a clear message to Guatemala's leaders: they are accountable to the people, and they cannot simply dismiss legitimate demands for justice and fairness (Field Transcript, 2024).

2.3 The Concept of Autocratization

Autocratization can be defined as a "*substantial de-facto decline of core institutional requirements for electoral democracy" (*Luhrmann & Lindberg, 2019*).* The decline in democratic integrity is sometimes referred to as regression or erosion. What distinguishes the current trend of autocratization is its slow and gradual nature. In previous instances, conversely, military coups often brought about sudden shifts in power. Another defining feature of this wave is the way illiberal actors exploit existing polarization to deepen societal divides and undermine democratic institutions. High levels of polarization, often called toxic polarization, create a vicious cycle with autocratization: society becomes increasingly split into opposing groups, and public discourse is dominated by a rhetoric of "us" versus "them." (Boese & Hellmeier, 2022).

Traditionally, literature on democratization has emphasized the important role of institutions and the structural aspects of states in facilitating democratic transitions. Structuralist theories, in particular, argue that the architecture of political and social institutions fundamentally shapes the trajectory and outcome of democratization processes. An influential work in this area, Samuel P. Huntington's "The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th

Century" (1991), analyses how global and regional structural factors have precipitated distinct waves of democratization. Huntington's analysis illustrates how transformations in state structures, influenced by broader geopolitical dynamics and internal institutional reforms, have enabled or constrained democratic developments. Additionally, Corruption and marginalization are key elements in the autocratization process, creating an environment conducive to power consolidation and weakening democratic values. Transparency International highlights that corruption undermines democracy by eroding public trust in institutions and skewing policymaking to benefit a select few. Additionally, corruption promotes state capture and the entrenchment of authoritarian regimes, especially in nations with inadequate national oversight and enforcement mechanisms (Transparency International, 2021).

In contrast to the traditional structuralist view that emphasizes institutional reforms and macro-level changes as primary drivers of democratization, the concept of Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) offers a grassroots-focused approach. This perspective highlights the crucial role of local civil society's everyday engagements in fostering democratic resilience and countering autocratic tendencies. Particularly in contexts like Guatemala, where institutional frameworks may be weak or compromised, QCSOs become indispensable in bridging the gaps left by these institutions. They actively shape democratic norms and practices at the local level, thereby demonstrating that democratic robustness can also emerge from the micro-level dynamics of society. This grassroots approach provides a complementary or alternative pathway to democratization, challenging the traditional view by emphasizing the potential of community action and local civil society resilience to effect change from the bottom up.

2.4 Impact of Political Changes on Society

Literature on historical political party-led movements reveals that these movements have often played a complex and sometimes contradictory role in the process of autocratization. Political parties, especially those in power for extended periods, tend to consolidate authority by manipulating electoral processes, controlling state institutions, and centralizing power. This consolidation often leads to weakened checks and balances, enabling autocratic practices (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018).

In many cases, political parties manipulate elections to maintain their hold on power. This manipulation can take various forms, including gerrymandering, voter suppression, vote-buying, and control of the media to shape public opinion (Schedler, 2002). This kind of electoral manipulation is a hallmark of autocratic regimes masquerading as democracies.

Moreover, Political party-led movements often use their influence to marginalize opposition parties and movements. This marginalization can occur through legal means, such as disqualifying opposition candidates, or extra-legal tactics, including intimidation and harassment (Diamond, 2015). As parties become entrenched, they can undermine democratic competition and erode political pluralism.

The 2023 election scandal in Guatemala highlighted these dynamics. With the electoral process manipulated and dominated by a political elite seeking to maintain power, the scandal revealed the fragility of Guatemala's democratic structures. Indigenous communities, wary of political parties' divisive tactics, preferred to engage with Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs), which emphasize grassroots organization, collective decision-making, and community-driven initiatives. This preference for QCSOs over political parties reflects a conscious choice to pursue a different approach to political engagement.

The scandal demonstrated that the entrenched political elite could control electoral outcomes and stifle dissent, exemplifying Guatemala's status as an electoral autocracy (Aguilar, 2023). As these party-led movements attempted to maintain their grip on power, indigenous QCSOs played a crucial role in mobilizing against autocratic trends. This resistance serves as a counterbalance to the autocratic forces within political parties, reinforcing the importance of community-led mobilization in maintaining democratic integrity.

2.5 Case Studies on Autocratization in Latin America

Some scholars are hesitant to include indigenous organizations within the framework of civil society, despite these groups often being rooted in community-based activities. The reluctance arises from the Anglo-American liberal tradition's definition of civil society as a space between the individual and the state, characterized by voluntary associations such as trade

unions, community groups, cooperatives, and professional organizations (White, 1996). This traditional view emphasizes voluntary and overlapping memberships with a limited scope of activity, whereas indigenous communities typically have stricter, often obligatory, memberships, frequently tied to birth or marriage. Furthermore, these communities tend to require undivided loyalty from their members, which can create antagonism toward other segments of civil society (Hadenius & Uggla, 1996).

Indigenous organizations might also be rooted in precolonial or colonial governance structures, sometimes taking on roles typically associated with local government. Harry Blair's study of Bolivia indicates that indigenous organizations can function as quasi-governmental bodies, serving similar roles to civil society without fully integrating into it. However, Blair acknowledges that the boundary between civil society and governmental roles is often blurred (Blair, 1997). Despite these ambiguities, Gordon White argues that existing definitions of civil society are vague and suggests that "primordial" organizations, based on ethnicity, nationalism, or religion, should be recognized alongside more "modern" entities like trade unions (White, 1996).

Although some liberal scholars perceive the kinship and ethnic foundations of indigenous organizations as a disadvantage, new social movements see them as assets. This perspective, applied in this study, values the strong sense of identity, tight interpersonal networks, and historical resilience of rural-based indigenous groups, recognizing them as significant contributors to new social movements (Alvarez et al, 1998).

This shift dramatically overturns previous views—traits that were once seen as drawbacks are now celebrated as strengths. This change highlights the deep-rooted identity, strong community ties, and enduring resilience of rural indigenous groups, positioning them as crucial players in today's social movements. Consequently, while discussions on social change often focus on urban centers, rural indigenous organizations bring a unique and invaluable perspective that deepens the conversation and broadens the range of strategies and insights available for social movement dynamics. This fresh perspective not only challenges established paradigms but also deepens our understanding of how diverse cultural backgrounds can shape and propel grassroots activism.

Moreover, literature suggest that the structure of pro-democracy movements determines their ability to both force concessions and sustain momentum after initial successes. These campaigns often consist of coalitions that include formal organizations (Pearlman, 2011) as well as informal groups and participants (Branch & Mampilly 2015). These movements often arise from intermediate mobilization processes, where activists utilize existing social networks and organizations to gather support (Della Porta & Diani, 2006).

However, in order to present the argument of mobilization and dive deeper into the mechanics behind QCSOs rationale, we have to consider the factors that ignite people into organizing against autocracy and corruption. For instance, here it is important to study the factors driving the electoral success of candidates involved in corruption scandals, as this will help us understand how mestizo and indigenous communities in Guatemala perceive corruption and autocracy. This is particularly relevant given the 2023 election scandal, which exposed deep flaws in Guatemala's political and judicial systems, leading to nationwide protests and a crisis of public trust (Atahualpa, 2023). The subjective nature of corruption perception complicates its measurement, as cultural norms and community values can shape what is considered not tolerable (Bowler & Donovan, 2016).

This study employs Cultural Theory to understand how cultural values, beliefs, and social norms influence perceptions of corruption and broader democratic practices (Miller & Koshechkina, 2001). The theory suggests that people interpret corruption not only through legal frameworks but also through their cultural context, emphasizing the impact of cultural attitudes on democratic processes like political participation, freedom of expression, and accountability of public officials. This interpretation influences how they react to corruption scandals and engage in democratic practices, including protest mobilization.

During the 2023 election scandal, Cultural Theory is used to analyze why some groups in Guatemala were more mobilized than others. Communities with cultural values that prioritize collective action, accountability, and strong community ties might be more inclined to respond to corruption scandals with significant mobilization. In contrast, groups with cultural norms that emphasize deference to authority or view political processes with skepticism might exhibit lower levels of mobilization.

Cultural Theory also emphasizes the role of social norms in shaping expectations of political participation and freedom of expression. If a community traditionally values these aspects, its members might be more likely to mobilize when corruption undermines democratic principles. Conversely, communities with cultural beliefs that align with hierarchical structures might be less inclined to protest (Miller & Koshechkina, 2001).

Moving on with other aspects relevant to protest mobilization, the literature emphasizes the significant role corruption scandals can play in galvanizing public opposition, sparking mass protests, and driving broader resistance movements. Cases such as Brazil's Lava Jato scandal have illustrated how public outrage over widespread nepotism, embezzlement, and cronyism can lead to significant political repercussions (Watts, 2017). Moreover, when corruption leads to tangible personal costs, as seen in Romania's Colectiv nightclub fire, which resulted in numerous casualties due to lax safety regulations, public anger toward corruption escalates (Olteanu & Beyerle, 2017; Creţan & O'Brien, 2020). These cases show how corruption scandals can act as catalysts for mass and sustained protests, particularly when the corruption in question has a direct and detrimental impact on people's lives (Jenkins & Büchner, 2021).

Given that the 2023 scandal in Guatemala led to significant national protests, this indicates a similar pattern of public reaction against grand corruption, which has far-reaching consequences for a country's social and economic well-being. Grand corruption siphons resources that could be used to tackle inequality, poverty, and inadequate public services, directly impacting people's lives. This kind of corruption has a unifying effect on public sentiment, as it affects all socio-economic classes, providing opposition groups with a powerful platform to challenge the existing power structures.

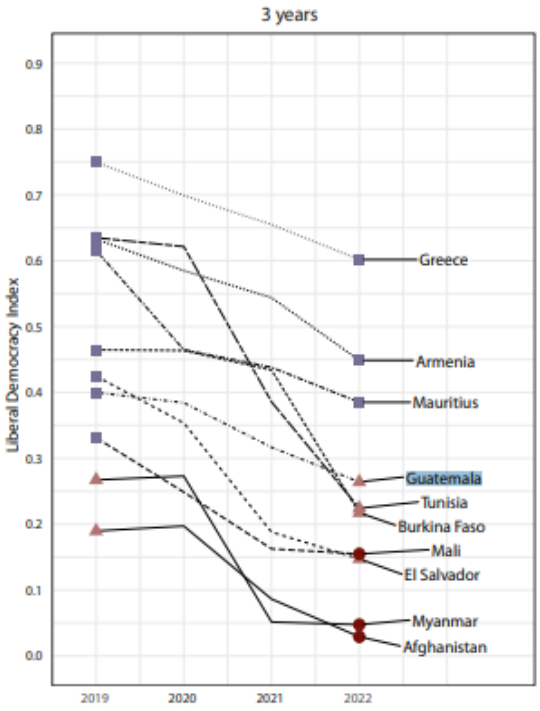
On the matter, previous studies show that public concern about grand corruption is a stronger motivator for citizen participation in anti-corruption protests than individual experiences with street-level bribery. Consequently, opposition groups can craft anti-corruption messages that resonate with a wide range of grievances against perceived self-enrichment by the elite. Moreover, studies suggest that citizens more concerned about grand corruption are

more likely to worry about their country's democracy and economy, making them a key constituency for anti-corruption campaigns (Jenkins & Büchner, 2021).

Given these insights, the 2023 election scandal in Guatemala illustrates the potential of corruption-related events, in addition to cultural factors, to incite indigenous and mestizo populations into broader resistance movements. The widespread protests that followed the scandal demonstrate how these elements serve as a catalyst for mobilization, leading to heightened demand for accountability and democratic reform.

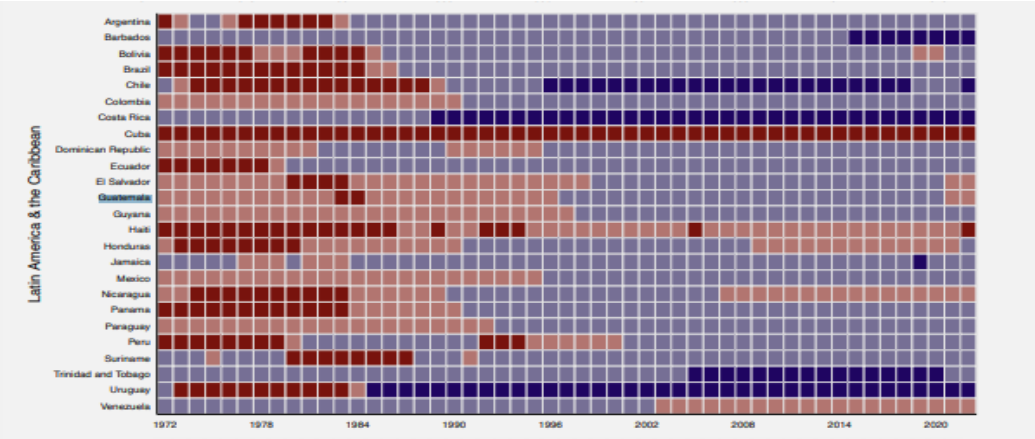
2.6 Guatemala and Autocratization

In Latin America, looking at the shorter-term perspective of the last three years, Guatemala is one of the top ten countries where democracy has regressed. In this period, democracy effectively collapsed in five of these countries: Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mali, and Tunisia. The decline in democracy in Guatemala has been well-documented, highlighting a pattern of autocratization characterized by weakened judicial independence and political polarization. According to Papada et al. (2023), this significant regression in democratic governance has been driven by the undermining of corruption investigations, attacks on the judicial system, and a broader political trend toward populism and authoritarianism. These factors have contributed to Guatemala's transformation into an electoral autocracy, where democratic institutions are weakened, and political processes are manipulated (Papada et al., 2023).



Graph 2

**Graphs taken from the Democracy report 2023 by the V-Dem Institute*



Graph 3

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A critical factor in Guatemala's autocratization has been the weakening of the judicial system. Corruption investigations, once seen as a beacon of hope for a fairer and more transparent society, have faced relentless interference (Arzu & Garcia, 2024). High-profile corruption cases have been suppressed, with anti-corruption prosecutors and investigators subjected to harassment, threats, and legal reprisals. The judiciary, which should act as a check on governmental overreach, has become increasingly politicized, with key judicial appointments influenced by political interests rather than merit (Arzu & Garcia, 2024). This politicization has undermined public trust in the legal system and paved the way for autocratic tendencies.

These high levels of corruption in the country presents a complex problem that affects different levels of society and governance. In this Central American country, the campaign against corruption has brought people together, as evidenced by the high support for the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) during the last presidential term (Plaza Publica, 2024). This shared concern for fighting corruption indicates a common demand for greater accountability and transparency in a nation that is otherwise divided on various fronts. Corruption can encompass a wide array of activities and involve numerous actors, ranging from minor offenses to massive embezzlement by public officials. Fundamentally, corruption undermines the ethical frameworks that underpin social organizations, steering them away from their intended purposes and even leading to their collapse (Plaza Publica, 2024). Although smaller acts of corruption might cause limited disturbances, large-scale corruption by state officials can do significant damage to society, weaken public institutions, and require strong legal measures to restore accountability and rebuild public trust.

Consequently, the political landscape in Guatemala has seen a surge in populist and authoritarian rhetoric, with political leaders exhibiting anti-democratic tendencies. These leaders gain support by exploiting societal divisions and demonizing their opponents, contributing to heightened polarization. This, in turn, makes it easier for those in power to justify measures that weaken democratic institutions and processes (Arzu & Garcia, 2024).

The trend towards electoral autocracy in Guatemala's institutions is arguably largely driven by co-optation, especially in key agencies like the Public Ministry, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, the General Comptroller's Office, the Constitutional Court, and the Supreme Court of Justice. Although these bodies haven't entirely stopped fulfilling their official functions, the ruling party uses them strategically to exert control over the electoral process. A notable example of this co-optation is the exclusion of certain candidates who challenge the status quo. While not all opposition is suppressed, those who pose the most significant threats are selectively removed (Aguilar, 2023).

Beyond institutional manipulation, the electoral process in Guatemala suffers from restricted voter freedom. This isn't just due to the official exclusion of specific candidates; it's also because of a deeply rooted clientelist system. This system functions through territorial networks that switch party loyalty easily, fuelled by both legal and illicit public funding. Local mayors, who often act like political bosses, use public resources to gain voter support, creating an uneven playing field (Aguilar, 2023). Consequently, voters are seen more as a commodity to be manipulated rather than as individuals with genuine choices. Therefore, although not every voter is directly influenced by this system, a sufficient number are to ensure that election results remain under a level of control.

The electoral system has also been compromised, with reports of voter suppression, electoral fraud, and manipulation to ensure outcomes favourable to entrenched political and economic elites. The corruption and manipulation of the electoral process have undermined the legitimacy of elections, turning them into tools for maintaining autocratic power rather than expressions of democratic will (Arzu & Garcia, 2024).

Therefore, it is clear that the trend toward autocratization in Guatemala can be attributed to several key factors, including the co-optation of critical institutions, judicial manipulation, and deep-seated corruption. The strategic use of institutions like the Public Ministry and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal to consolidate political power has facilitated the suppression of dissent and undermined democratic processes. This pattern of co-optation, along with a politicized judiciary, has eroded public trust and opened the door to further autocratic practices,

facilitating a climate of political polarization, where populist rhetoric and societal division further justify the suppression of dissent and democratic erosion.

2.7 The Role of Civil Society in Democratization

Some authors have explored factors beyond QCSOs that impact democracy, which are visible in the case being studied. Andreas Schedler's "The Menu of Manipulation" extensively outlines tactics employed by autocratic regimes to uphold power while upholding a semblance of democracy. These include electoral fraud, where regimes manipulate electoral processes for favourable outcomes; repression, utilizing state apparatuses to intimidate and suppress opposition; co-optation, neutralizing threats by assimilating key opposition figures into the regime; manipulation of institutions, altering constitutions and controlling the judiciary to solidify power; and control of media, shaping public perception through censorship and propaganda. Schedler emphasizes the role of civil society and opposition movements in resisting these tactics by mobilizing grassroots support, advocating for transparency, and leveraging international networks to promote democratic norms (Schedler, 2002).

Mark R. Beissinger's exploration of modular political phenomena investigates how successful revolutions, like the Bulldozer Revolution in Serbia and the Rose Revolution in Georgia, act as catalysts for broader mobilization efforts across different contexts. Beissinger identifies mechanisms of diffusion, including transnational networks, communication technologies, and shared grievances that facilitate the adoption of revolutionary strategies. Strategic framing of issues to resonate with societal values, such as democracy and justice, is crucial for galvanizing public support. Additionally, international organizations and diaspora communities play a supportive role by providing resources and expertise. Moreover, Beissinger notes the challenges these movements face, such as differing political contexts and state capacities, which can influence their success. Together, these works underscore the significance of comprehending both the manipulative tactics of autocrats and the transnational dynamics of democratic movements in promoting and sustaining democratic change (Beissinger, 2007).

While these theoretical accounts are relevant for the case of Guatemala, this research builds specifically on a prior work by Jonathan Pinckney, Charles Butcher, and Jessica Maves Braithwaite titled "Organizations, Resistance, and Democracy: How Civil Society Organizations Impact Democratization." This foundational study suggests that successful democratic transitions are often driven by the participation of durable organizations rooted in everyday relationships that are not inherently designed to compete for political power, termed "quotidian civil society organizations" (QCSOs). According to Pinckney et al., QCSOs are more likely to maintain stable pro-democracy preferences and possess lasting mobilization structures, which help ensure greater accountability from emerging elites during political transitions. This contributes to a higher probability of achieving democratic shifts, compared to movements predominantly led by other organization types, such as political parties (Pinckney et al., 2022). This research seeks to provide an empirical contrast to this concept by examining the case of Guatemala in 2023, offering insights into the mechanisms of this theoretical framework.

Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) are defined by two key characteristics: First, they are rooted in everyday social networks formed through consistent and stable interactions, providing a robust and high-trust framework for mobilization. Second, QCSOs are not intended to seize political power. This deep connection with daily social networks allows QCSOs to generate anti-state mobilization and maintain it over the long term (Thurber, 2019). While the ability to initiate mobilization is crucial for driving regime change (Chenoweth & Belgioioso, 2019), sustaining that mobilization is essential for democratization (Butcher, Gray, & Mitchell, 2018). Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) generally favour democratic systems that limit the state's ability to use repressive force and that provide formal means to replace political leaders, as they do not aim to control the government themselves. Because of these characteristics, resistance movements with a high level of QCSO involvement often exhibit stronger and more sustainable mobilization, as well as a greater tendency toward democratic principles. This combination increases the likelihood of achieving successful democratization.

Moreover, the independence from political parties and state institutions also contributes to their effectiveness, as it reduces the risk of co-optation and corruption. QCSOs with direct

ties to political parties or state entities tend to have a diminished impact on democratization. In contrast, those with roots in worker or professional constituencies and no political or state affiliations are more likely to drive meaningful democratic change, as the data indicates that democratization is often facilitated by older QCSOs with stable mobilization structures, emphasizing the importance of quotidian networks in fostering enduring democratic movements (Pinckney et al., 2022).

To clarify, and to better understand what makes an organization a QCSO and not a CSO, the concept of CSO is briefly explored. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) encompass a broad array of entities, including NGOs, professional associations, trade unions, and advocacy groups, operating in diverse fields such as human rights, environmental protection, and social services. These organizations often engage in political advocacy and may aim to influence policy and governance, sometimes having ties to political parties or participating in electoral processes, which can expose them to risks of co-optation and political manipulation (Jezard, 2018). In contrast, Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) are deeply rooted in the everyday social networks of communities, focusing on maintaining and improving community welfare without seeking political power. QCSOs, such as the 48 Cantones in Totonicapán, are characterized by high levels of trust and social cohesion, enabling them to sustain long-term mobilization efforts and foster democratic resilience more effectively. Unlike CSOs, QCSOs' lack of political ambition allows them to remain independent and in theory, less susceptible to corruption, making them uniquely effective in grassroots mobilization and community-led resistance against autocratic tendencies (Pinckney et al., 2022).

48 Cantones de Totonicapan as QCSO

The 48 Cantones of Totonicapán align closely with the theoretical concept of Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) as described by Thurber. QCSOs are characterized by their deep roots in everyday social networks and their lack of intent to seize political power, allowing them to generate and sustain anti-state mobilization effectively. The 48 Cantones are deeply embedded in the daily lives and social fabric of the people of Totonicapán province, relying on consistent and stable interactions within the community to provide a robust and high-trust framework for mobilization. This connection to everyday social networks enables the 48

Cantones to mobilize community members effectively and sustain long-term activism, grounded in the trust and stability of their community relationships (Field Interviews, 2024).

Furthermore, the 48 Cantones do not aim to control the government themselves. Instead, their goal is to hold the government accountable and ensure that the rights and needs of their community are respected (Field Interviews, 2024), aligning with the QCSOs' preference for democratic systems that limit state repression and provide formal means for political change.

Consequently, it can be argued that the role of indigenous QCSOs in resisting autocratic trends is critical. Their actions during the nationwide strike, coupled with their nonviolent approach and deep-rooted skepticism of autocratic power, demonstrate that they are not only capable of maintaining pressure on oppressive structures but also serve as a pillar for broader democratic values.

In this context, the leaders of the 48 Cantones have consistently relied on peaceful methods to challenge legislative and governmental actions. They avoided aggressive tactics like violence, loud protests, graffiti, or tire burning, opting instead for a respectful and dignified approach. This nonviolent resistance demonstrates that effective advocacy does not need aggression to be impactful (Guerrero, 2022). This steadfastness underlines their dedication to achieving meaningful change through consistent and peaceful means.

Drawing upon the theoretical framework established, the study seeks to explore how indigenous mobilization plays a role in resisting autocratization, focusing on Guatemala and its 2023 election scandal by examining how indigenous groups, known for their durable and independent networks, contribute to democratic resistance. This will be done by assessing if whether indigenous movements in Guatemala align with the mobilization patterns typical of other QCSOs, as well as determining their effectiveness in challenging autocratic tendencies. The scandal surrounding the 2023 elections provides a meaningful setting to investigate how these groups engage in political resistance and evaluate their influence in opposing authoritarian practices.

2.8 Political Parties and Autocratization

After revising the influence non-governmental structures can have in mobilizing citizens, and consequently impact autocratic trends, we proceed to look at political parties, that can also play a significant role in autocratization by manipulating electoral processes, dividing communities, and undermining grassroots movements. Indigenous communities have historically been skeptical of political parties due to past conflicts and the manipulative nature of electoral politics. This skepticism stems from the sense that party candidates often fail to fulfill their electoral promises, compounded by the rapid growth of centrally controlled agencies that operate independently of local and provincial councils (Korovkin, 2001).

This reluctance to engage in national electoral politics can be seen in Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs). Unlike political parties, which are prone to top-down structures and partisan agendas, QCSOs tend to focus on broader community development and collaborative goals, an approach that aligns with the traditional values of indigenous groups.

Research also shows that structural adjustment policies have increased indigenous communities' awareness of national politics, leading to stronger alliances with nonindigenous organizations. This collaboration, facilitated by interactions with governmental development agencies and NGOs, fosters a more unified approach to addressing political issues. The community-oriented nature of QCSOs provides a counterbalance to the often-divisive nature of traditional political party politics (Korovkin, 2001).

The literature on autocratization identifies several key factors contributing to this trend. The V-Dem Institute's 2023 Democracy Report highlights a troubling global movement towards autocratization, with significant declines in democratic practices particularly in regions like Latin America. This global backdrop of democratic erosion is extraordinarily alarming for Guatemala, suggesting that its efforts to solidify democratic norms are being undermined not

just by internal pressures but also by broader international shifts away from democratic governance (Papada et al., 2023).

Given this backdrop, the skepticism of indigenous communities toward political parties makes sense, as these parties represent the entrenched power structures that have historically marginalized indigenous voices. The preference for Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) over political parties is thus a reflection of the distrust in traditional political mechanisms and a search for more grassroots, community-oriented approaches to achieving social and political change. The 2023 election scandal in Guatemala brought these dynamics to the forefront, illustrating the divide between the entrenched political elite and the indigenous movements seeking a more democratic and inclusive future. The emphasis on QCSOs as a means of mobilization is not just a reaction to autocratization but a conscious choice to pursue an alternative path that prioritizes collective decision-making and community-driven goals, offering a robust resistance against authoritarian tendencies in the country.

This study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics of civil society mobilization in Guatemala as it aims to uncover the underlying factors that drive successful democratic resistance and highlight the critical role of grassroots organizations in shaping the country's political landscape amidst autocratic pressures with the following implications and exploratory aims are outlined for the case study of Guatemala:

Role of Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs):

-Investigate how QCSOs leverage their deep community roots and high levels of trust to sustain democratic norms and practices in contexts where traditional political and judicial institutions are compromised or weak.

-Explore the specific mechanisms through which QCSOs mobilize communities and maintain pro-democracy efforts, particularly focusing on the unique strategies employed by indigenous groups compared to mestizo urban movements.

-Examine how the community-oriented and grassroots nature of QCSOs contributes to their resilience and effectiveness in promoting democratic values.

Cultural and Social Dynamics:

-Analyze how cultural values, such as collective action and accountability, influence the mobilization patterns and effectiveness of different civil society groups in Guatemala.

-Explore the impact of cultural norms and historical experiences on the ability of QCSOs to foster democratic engagement and resist autocratic tendencies.

-Investigate the role of social cohesion and community trust in enabling sustained mobilization efforts, particularly among indigenous communities.

Challenges and Limitations:

-Identify the challenges faced by mestizo urban movements in sustaining mobilization efforts and achieving democratic goals, given their predominantly urban and less community-oriented nature.

-Examine the barriers to effective mobilization in urban areas, including issues of trust, fragmentation, and the influence of political parties.

-Investigate how QCSOs navigate and overcome these challenges to maintain momentum and achieve their objectives.

Interconnectedness of Social Groups:

-Explore the interplay between different social groups, including university students, marginalized urban populations, and indigenous communities, in the broader mobilization efforts against autocratization.

-Analyze how these groups collaborate, share resources, and coordinate their activities to enhance the overall strength and sustainability of the movement.

-Investigate the role of shared grievances and common goals in uniting diverse segments of society in the fight for democratic reform.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The objectives of this study are to analyse the mechanisms and conditions that influenced indigenous mobilization and its impact on political change in Guatemala. Furthermore, it aims to investigate the factors driving mestizo urban activism and its role in advocating for democracy after the election scandal. Additionally, the study will assess how Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) support and sustain both indigenous and mestizo mobilization efforts in fostering democratic resilience and resistance. Through this approach, the study seeks to build theories on civil society mobilization

To achieve the research objectives, a set of methods has been established to explore how mestizo and indigenous populations in Guatemala mobilized in response to the 2023 election scandal. The methodology aims to understand how these mobilization efforts varied between indigenous and non-indigenous communities.

The primary methods for data collection are qualitative interviews and participant observation, conducted during fieldwork in Guatemala. Using a semi-structured format, these interviews allowed participants to freely express their perspectives. This approach emphasizes exploring the complex aspects of mobilization efforts, including cultural influences and historical factors shaping the response to the 2023 election scandal. Semi-structured interviews offer flexibility while ensuring that key themes related to the research questions are addressed.

Participant observation was integrated into the study to provide a deeper understanding of the social dynamics, fragmentation, and real-time responses during protests and community gatherings. This method involved the researcher actively observing and participating in a relevant event, allowing for a more nuanced and contextual analysis of mobilization patterns.

The interview questions were meticulously designed to explore the complex dimensions of these questions into specific topics that comprehensively address different facets of the broader inquiry. These topics cover various aspects of mobilization, community organization, cultural influences, and political responses (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). The interviews were recorded and later transcribed for detailed qualitative analysis.

It is important to note that this study focuses on Totonicapán and Guatemala City, limiting the generalizability of the findings to the entire indigenous and mestizo populations. The data reflect the unique contexts of these regions, which may not capture the full diversity of experiences across Guatemala.

The study compares Totonicapán and Guatemala City to illustrate the distinct contexts influencing civil society mobilization within Guatemala. Totonicapán was chosen particularly because, during the national strike, its indigenous community, led by the 48 Cantones, initiated and orchestrated the entire movement. This region is characterized by its rich cultural heritage, strong community ties, and the presence of Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs), which are deeply embedded in the everyday lives of the people. These organizations foster high levels of trust and social cohesion.

In contrast, Guatemala City represents an urban and political hub with a diverse population that includes a significant number of non-indigenous residents. The city's civil society actors operate in a more fragmented social environment influenced by political party dynamics and economic interests. The unique characteristics of Totonicapán and Guatemala City highlight that the findings from these two areas are not necessarily generalizable to other parts of Guatemala, as other regions may have different mixes of populations and contexts. However, this comparison provides a nuanced understanding of how local contexts shape democratic resilience and resistance to autocratic trends.

3.1 Research Design

The qualitative approach focuses on exploring the experiences and narratives of individuals within the indigenous and non-indigenous communities, allowing for a deeper understanding of their perceptions and responses to the 2023 election scandal. This explorative approach is aimed at understanding how mobilization patterns differed and how these differences can be comprehended within the given contexts.

Given Guatemala's cultural diversity, this inclusive approach ensures the study does not miss crucial insights by exploring a range of mobilization dynamics. The research draws

participants from Totonicapán, with its predominantly indigenous population, and Guatemala City, representing a more urban and non-indigenous context. This contrast helps identify commonalities and differences in how these communities respond to the same event: the 2023 election scandal.

Moreover, the researcher chose to quantify the data in the analytical part to make it easier to visualize and identify key themes. The aim of the quantitative content analysis in this study is to systematically quantify and analyse the presence and frequency of themes related to civil society mobilization as reflected in the interviews. This method provides a structured look at how often specific topics, such as indigenous mobilization and political party influence, are mentioned, offering insights into the importance and emphasis placed on these issues by the interviewees. In this case, converting qualitative data into quantitative metrics helps identify patterns and trends that might not be immediately obvious through qualitative analysis alone.

Participant selection for this study was conducted to represent the diverse perspectives and experiences of indigenous and non-indigenous communities in Guatemala. The criteria for inclusion required that participants belong to either the mestizo or indigenous population. This approach was chosen to capture the contrasting views on mobilization and protest, in order to better understand how these efforts varied between communities with different cultural backgrounds.

In Totonicapán, interviews were conducted with leaders from the 48 Cantones organization, the apolitical indigenous organization responsible for orchestrating the post-election protests. This selection reflected the importance of hearing from those directly involved in mobilization. Additionally, the study included a former vice-mayor, another former official who held office during the protests, and several ordinary community members. This range of participants allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the different roles within the indigenous mobilization effort.

Data collection in Ciudad de Guatemala, the capital city, provided a contrasting view of the indigenous mobilization in Totonicapán. Here, the focus shifted to non-indigenous (mestizo) communities to capture a broader spectrum of perspectives. The interviews were conducted with a diverse group of stakeholders, including Accion Ciudadana, a prominent non-

profit organization specializing in anti-corruption and transparency; Plaza Publica, an independent newspaper; and a well-known political analyst with over 30 years of experience in Guatemalan politics. This varied selection provided insights into the reactions and responses to the 2023 election scandal from a non-indigenous perspective, as each of these interviewees contributes unique perspectives based on their roles and expertise, offering a holistic view of the subject. This selection allows for cross-sector insights, highlighting how different sectors—NGOs, media, and political analysis—interact and influence each other in the context of mobilization efforts.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Data collection took place in Guatemala from February 22nd to April 8th, with field research focusing on two key locations: Totonicapán and Guatemala City.

Field Research in Totonicapán: the fieldwork targeted indigenous communities, with interviews conducted to understand their mobilization following the 2023 election scandal.

Field Research in Guatemala City: in Guatemala City, the focus was on non-indigenous (mestizo/ladino) communities, offering a contrasting view to the indigenous mobilization in Totonicapán.

Observation in Colonia Bethania: an observation was conducted during an anti-discrimination protest on March 23rd in Colonia Bethania, a marginalized neighborhood on the outskirts of Guatemala City. The observation aimed to understand the social dynamics in the area and the responses to discrimination.

A total of eight interviews were conducted, with five in Totonicapán and three in Guatemala City, offering a diverse range of perspectives on mobilization efforts and the influence of corruption.

In Totonicapán, interview questions* in this location explored a variety of topics, including:

- Perceptions of corruption within the community and how they have changed since the election scandal.
- The role of cultural factors, such as Mayan beliefs and community traditions, in shaping responses to corruption.
- The motivations behind indigenous-led protests and how these movements were organized.
- The impact of corruption on social cohesion within the community and the barriers to effective governance.

In Guatemala City, the interviews*[1] the type of questions asked in this location included:

- Observations on the factors driving mobilization among non-indigenous communities.
- The organizational structures within non-indigenous communities and their effectiveness in coordinating collective protest actions.
- External influences and the dynamics that shaped the responses to corruption in the capital.
- Challenges and barriers to taking action against corruption, such as social fragmentation and lack of cohesive leadership.

[1] **For a comprehensive list of the interview questions used in this study, please refer to the appendix. The appendix contains the full set of questions that were designed to explore the various aspects of mobilization in response to the 2023 election scandal.*

These questions were designed to delve deeply into the factors influencing mobilization, allowing for a thorough exploration of both indigenous and non-indigenous communities' responses to the election scandal.

3.3 Coding Framework and Analysis

The coding framework used in this study employs thematic analysis, a qualitative research method that provides a systematic approach to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within data. This method is instrumental in organizing and interpreting larger datasets, allowing for a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives captured through interviews and observations.

The process of thematic analysis began with a detailed reading of interview transcripts and observation notes to immerse in the data. Initial codes were generated by noting down recurrent themes and ideas pertinent to the research questions. These codes were then refined and grouped into larger themes that accurately represented the underlying data. The thematic clusters formed include QCSOs, Conventional (Urban) QCSOs, Cultural Factors, Economic Factors, Political Factors (particularly the 2023 Electoral Scandal), Indigenous Mobilization, Autocratic Tendencies, and Corruption. Each theme represents a significant aspect of the qualitative data, providing structured insights into how indigenous and non-indigenous communities mobilize in response to corruption, and autocratic trends, and defend democratic governance.

During coding, special attention was given to how different themes interacted and influenced each other, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics at play in the context of Guatemala's political landscape. This thematic analysis was crucial in identifying not just standalone themes but also the interconnections between them, which are critical in understanding the broader implications of the findings.

Additionally, an essential aspect of the coding framework is the connotation table, which indicates whether references to specific topics are positive or negative. This qualitative

element provides deeper insights into the sentiments and attitudes behind each reference, offering a more nuanced understanding of the context in which these topics are discussed.

The connotation analysis specifically focuses on *indigenous communities* and *political parties*, as this helps explain why traditional political parties, including the opposition, might have been unable to mobilize effectively and why indigenous structures outperformed them. Indigenous communities, especially through Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs), play a significant role in grassroots mobilization and supporting democracy. Understanding their mobilization efforts provides insights into how community-based actions contribute to democratic resilience when compared to political parties.

Category	Description	Context/Examples
Independent Variables	Factors that are being studied for their effect on mobilization efforts.	
QCSOs	Civil society organizations focusing on grassroots or community-based mobilization.	- QCSOs in indigenous communities - Urban-based QCSOs
Conventional CSOs	Pro-democratic activism by conventional civil society organizations.	- Urban-based CSOs - Political advocacy groups
Contextual Factors	Elements that influence mobilization efforts.	
Cultural Factors	Cultural elements influencing mobilization or resistance.	- Mayan beliefs and practices - Cultural identity and community traditions
Economic Factors	Factors related to socio-economic conditions.	- Marginalization - Economic disparities between indigenous and non-indigenous communities
Political Factors	Issues related to the political landscape and events.	- 2023 Electoral Scandal - Democratic processes - Acts of corruption - Autocratic tendencies
Dependent Variable	The outcome being measured or affected by the independent variables.	
Successful Pro-Democratic Mobilization	Effective efforts to promote or sustain democratic practices and resist autocratic tendencies.	- Success in maintaining democratic rule - Sustained democratic participation

Table 1

Subgroups: T1, T2, T3, T4, T5 correspond to Indigenous

GC1, GC2, GC3 correspond to non-indigenous.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are fundamental to this study, given the sensitive nature of the topics and the use of interviews as a primary data collection method. The following ethical principles were adhered to throughout the research process:

Informed Consent: addressing both practical challenges and the broader conceptualization of ethics in various methodologies. This study adopts a rigorous approach to addressing key ethical issues, such as roles, responsibilities, informed consent, and the fluidity of ethical dialogue. A significant emphasis is placed on scrutinizing anonymization and pseudonymization practices to ensure adherence to ethical principles while preserving the interpretive richness of the data (Wolff-Michael Roth & Hella von Unger, 2018).

This ensures that all participants, especially those from indigenous communities and local stakeholders, fully understand the research's purpose and voluntarily choose to participate. Confidentiality and anonymity are fundamental, given the politically sensitive context, to protect participants' identities and ensure their safety.

Moreover, **data security** was a high priority, with all collected data stored securely to prevent unauthorized access.

Lastly, **cultural sensitivity** was crucial, particularly when engaging with indigenous communities. The researcher approached the fieldwork with respect for local customs, traditions, and cultural norms, recognizing the historical context of marginalization in Guatemala. This approach fostered positive relationships with interviewees and ensured the research process respected their cultural backgrounds.

These ethical considerations ensured the study was conducted with respect for participants and adherence to ethical research standards, providing a trustworthy basis for further analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 4: Analysis of the 2023 Post-Election Protests in Guatemala

In this chapter's analysis of the 2023 post-election protests in Guatemala, it is vital to emphasize that the findings are based solely on the viewpoints of a limited number of interviewees. These insights, while substantively rich and illustrative of certain experiences represent only the opinions of a few individuals.

Aligning with established methodologies in the analysis of semi-structured interviews, this study employs frequency analysis as utilized in similar research. Following the approach outlined by Møller & Stensöta in their examination of caseworkers' role perceptions and problem explanations (Møller & Stensöta, 2017), this study applies thematic coding to generate frequency counts that help identify dominant themes within the interview data. This methodological framework supports the systematic examination of the qualitative data.

During the data collection process, theoretical saturation was meticulously monitored. Thematic analysis of the interviews consistently revealed recurring patterns and themes across various respondents. Upon the completion of the eighth interview, it became apparent that subsequent interviews were not yielding additional unique themes or significant new insights. Core themes, such as the role of cultural factors, the influence of corruption, and the disparities between indigenous and urban mobilization efforts, were well-established and supported by the data. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the interviews were also constrained by the limited timeframe available in the field and the low willingness of local participants to engage in the process.

The convergence of these themes across various interviews indicated that theoretical saturation had been achieved. Further interviews would likely have reaffirmed the existing themes rather than providing new information. This point of saturation confirms that the data collected is sufficient to support the study’s conclusions and provides a reliable basis for the analysis presented in the thesis.

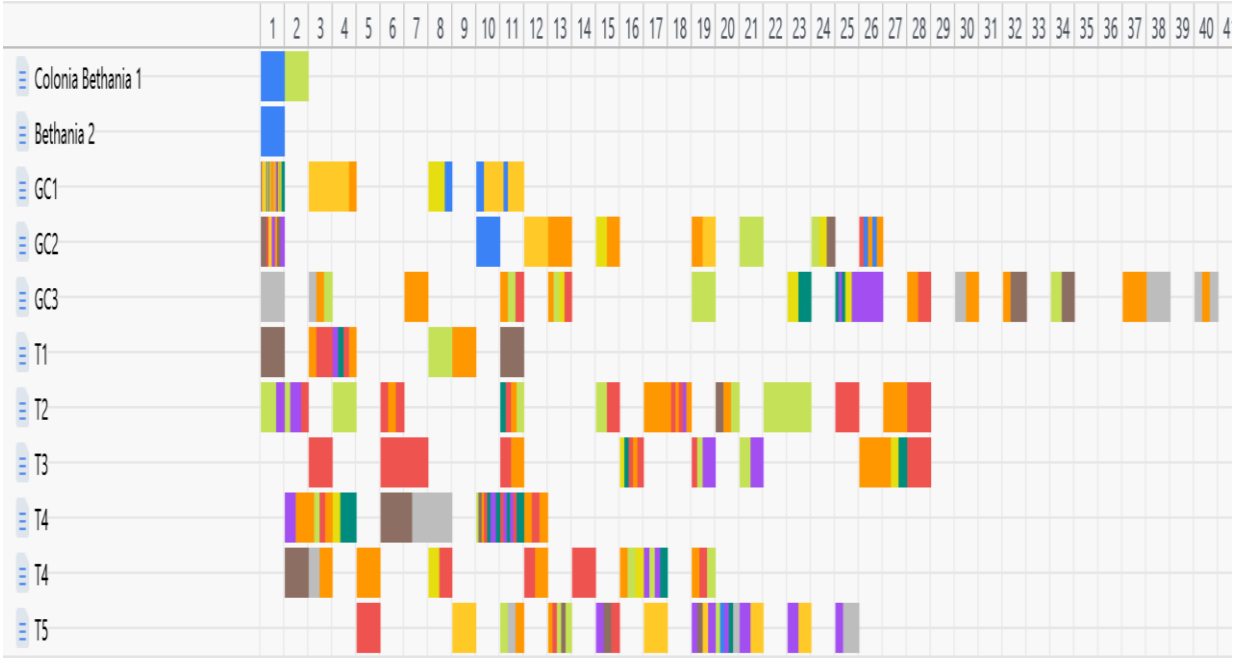
While analyzing the data, the researcher found many commonalities in the topics discussed by the respondents. To map out these recurring themes more effectively, the data was quantified. This approach organizes the data in a clearer and more understandable way, facilitating easier visualization and identification of key themes and their relationships.

The construction of the frequency table in the study is straightforward and based on a systematic approach to coding qualitative interview data. Each time an interviewee mentions a topic related to one of the predefined thematic codes—such as "Indigenous Mobilization"—that mention is counted as a single instance. For example, any reference, discussion, or allusion to "Indigenous Mobilization" during an interview is recorded as one occurrence in the frequency table for that specific code. This method allows for the quantification of qualitative data, providing a numerical representation of how often particular themes are discussed across the interviews.

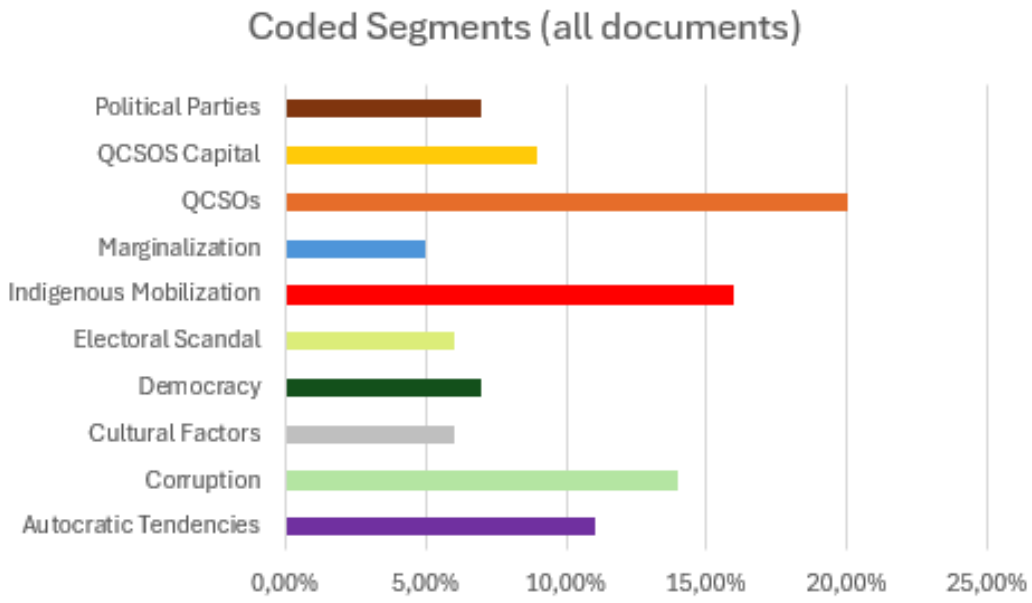
It is crucial to emphasize that the frequency values obtained from semi-structured interviews should not be considered representative of the general population. As mentioned, these data stem from a limited set of interviews, which, while informative, do not necessarily reflect a representative sample of the entire population of interest. Therefore, these values should be interpreted as indicative and used to explore trends and hypotheses in a broader exploratory context, rather than as definitive statements about the population as a whole. Nonetheless, this approach allows for preliminary analysis that can guide more extensive and methodologically representative future research.

Graph 4 presents a column chart representing the transcripts from the data retrieved during participant observation at Colonia Bethania, followed by every interviewee from Guatemala City (GC's) and Totonicapán (T's). Graph 5 shows the themes identified during the analysis of the transcripts, with each theme represented by a different colour. These themes are visible in Graph 1. The rows numbered 1 to 40 represent the progression of each interview from beginning to end.

For example, we can visualize that the third interviewee in Totonicapán (T3) predominantly discussed indigenous mobilization throughout the interview. Additionally, T3 mentioned other themes such as democracy, the electoral scandal, cultural factors, political parties, and marginalization at various points during the conversation



Graph 4



Graph 5

Connotation Table

Interviewees	Indigenous Mobilization (Positive/Negative)	Political Parties (Positive/Negative)
GC1	Positive	Negative
GC2	Positive	Negative
GC3	Positive	Negative
T1	Negative	Negative
T2	Positive	Negative
T3	Negative	Negative
T4	Positive	Negative
T5	Positive	Negative

Table 2

Connotation Table Description

The connotation table provides insights into the sentiments expressed by various interviewees regarding "Indigenous Mobilization" and "Political Parties." It indicates whether these topics are viewed positively or negatively:

- **Columns**: The two main topics are "Indigenous Mobilization" and "Political Parties." Each is categorized as having a positive or negative connotation based on interviewee responses.
- **Rows**: Interviewees are identified by codes (GC for Guatemala City, T for Totonicapán), with their respective connotations under each topic.

As mentioned earlier, the connotation analysis concentrates on indigenous communities and political parties to help understand why traditional political parties struggled to mobilize effectively, while indigenous organizations proved to be more successful.

Two themes, *"Indigenous Mobilization" and "Political Parties,"* carry over into the connotation analysis, while other themes do not. This selection is intentional and based on their relevance to understanding the core dynamics of mobilization in Guatemala.

Indigenous Mobilization is crucial because it highlights the effectiveness and resilience of indigenous organizations like the 48 Cantones. Analyzing the positive and negative sentiments towards indigenous mobilization helps to illustrate why these groups were successful in their efforts, providing a counterpoint to the struggles faced by traditional political parties.

Political Parties is included to explore the widespread distrust and negative perceptions associated with political parties in Guatemala. Understanding the connotations related to political parties helps explain their inefficacy in mobilizing the public compared to indigenous organizations. The negative sentiments towards political parties underscore their lack of legitimacy and the challenges they face in galvanizing support.

Other themes, while important, do not directly address the core question of why indigenous organizations outperformed political parties in mobilization efforts. Themes such as *"cultural factors"* or *"economic factors"* provide valuable context but are less central to the connotation analysis aimed at comparing the effectiveness of mobilization strategies between indigenous groups and political parties. Therefore, the connotation analysis focuses on the two most relevant themes to provide clear insights into the mobilization dynamics at play.

Interpretation of the Connotation Table

Indigenous mobilization is predominantly viewed positively by most interviewees. For instance, all interviewees from Guatemala City (GC1, GC2, GC3) expressed a positive connotation, indicating a general approval or appreciation for indigenous-led mobilization

efforts. Similarly, a majority of Totonicapán interviewees (T2, T4, T5) also share this positive view. However, interviewees T1 and T3 expressed negative sentiments, suggesting dissatisfaction or criticism of indigenous mobilization, due to internal community issues or personal perspectives.

In contrast, political parties are uniformly perceived negatively by all interviewees, reflecting a widespread distrust or disillusionment with their role in Guatemala. This consistent negative connotation across both Guatemala City and Totonicapán interviewees highlights broader issues such as corruption and ineffective governance associated with political parties.

Insights from the Table

The positive perception of indigenous mobilization among most interviewees, including all participants from Guatemala City, suggests that indigenous efforts are seen as a constructive force for resisting autocracy and promoting democratic values. This highlights the critical role of indigenous communities in fostering democratic resilience.

On the other hand, the unanimous disapproval of political parties underscores a shared sense of skepticism and frustration, rooted in experiences with corruption and lack of accountability in Guatemala's political system. This widespread disillusionment indicates long-standing issues within the political landscape that need to be addressed to restore public trust.

The mixed sentiments within Totonicapán, where T1 and T3 expressed negative views on indigenous mobilization, reflect internal community challenges or differing opinions within the indigenous population. These mixed sentiments suggest that while there is overall support for indigenous mobilization, there are also areas of contention that need to be understood and addressed to ensure cohesive and effective mobilization efforts.

4.2 Indigenous Mobilization and Resistance to Autocratization

Indigenous-led mobilization has been instrumental in pushing back against autocratic trends in Guatemala, demonstrating their capacity to mobilize effectively against oppressive structures and advocate for democratic values. Data focusing on the 2023 election scandal in Guatemala reveals a significant disparity in mobilization between indigenous and non-indigenous groups. This notable difference highlights the role indigenous communities play in resisting autocracy.

"The moment the Board of Directors of 48 Cantones takes office and the 48 communities, the 48 mayors, are in support, the mandate is to look out for the common good... 48 Cantones ensures that this execution is carried out. And that is why here, we could say that locally within the municipality there has perhaps been corruption, there has always been some, but it has been less because 48 Cantones is the one that applies pressure. When they see that some projects are not being carried out in the communities, they immediately organize and put pressure on the municipality with the municipal mayor and the investigations begin to see what happened." (Field Transcript, 2024).

This powerful statement evidences the capacity indigenous structures have at the time of mobilizing. Indigenous communities, especially through Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs), play a significant role in grassroots mobilization and supporting democracy.

Interviewee T1 emphasized the importance of community participation: *"If you're not part of politics, you can't change anything."* This underscores the necessity of involvement to drive change. T1 further noted the risk and commitment involved: *"Living in Toto, we know we face risks, but that doesn't stop us."* and *"I do support the 48 Cantones because if they aren't there, no one defends our lands."* (Field Transcript, 2024).

This shows that Indigenous-led mobilization in Guatemala has played a significant role in countering autocratic trends, as seen in the 2023 election scandal, as interviewees emphasized the importance of community participation for driving change, despite the associated risks. The strong support for 48 Cantones illustrates the commitment to defending their lands and supporting democratic principles.

4.3 The hidden mechanics behind the indigenous mobilization

Despite all the evident positive impacts of indigenous QCSOs had at the time of stepping up against autocracy, the data collected during the fieldwork also brought to light the dynamics behind the indigenous mobilization during the strike, particularly through forced mobilization and the economic consequences of strike-induced shortages, presenting a complex landscape of ethical dilemmas and strategic considerations. These issues are vividly illustrated through the experiences and voices captured in the interview transcripts, revealing the mechanics at play.

Social Penalties for Non-Participation: The coercive tactics employed to ensure participation in protests are starkly highlighted by one community member's description of the consequences of opting out:

> "*If you don't want to go, you don't go. But in the case of the communities, if you don't go, they* cut off your water. They take away the water at your house and already, you are not left with water*." (Field Transcript, 2024).
>
> *Referring to the 48 Cantones de Totonicapán

This quote shows how basic necessities like water are leveraged to enforce community-wide participation, illustrating the severe repercussions faced by those who choose not to participate in collective actions.

Threat of Exclusion from the Community: The social ramifications of non-participation extend beyond physical needs to include social exclusion:

> "*What else do they* do? Oh, they can even expel you from the community. For example, you live here, and all your neighbors go and you don't go... Then what do they do? They eliminate you (from the community), you are no longer allowed to enter your house, and they kick you out of the area.*" (Field Transcript, 2024).

This passage reveals the extreme measures taken to ensure conformity, where individuals not only face material penalties but are also at risk of being physically and socially isolated from their community.

Representation and Avoidance of Penalties: Some community members navigate these coercive environments through strategies that mitigate personal risk:

> "*No, because someone is representing me, but you have to make it clear that someone is going... if that is allowed and it is more profitable for you to send someone than..."* (Field Transcript, 2024).

This strategy of sending a representative suggests a form of compliance that still respects individual limitations, showing how community members adapt to and negotiate with enforced mobilization norms.

Immediate Impact on Supply Chains: The economic impact of strikes, particularly those that lead to roadblocks, is immediately felt across community supply chains:

> "*And besides, with the little that was obtained, prices went up, there was a price hike, and right now in my store, it did not go down much from what it was before..."* (Field Transcript, 2024).

This quote underscores the rapid onset of shortages and inflation, severely impacting the daily lives and economic stability of community members, indicating the direct consequences of protest actions on local economies.

Long-Term Economic Damage: The long-term economic ramifications are profound, as articulated by another community member discussing the impact on local businesses:

> "*What happens is that the businesses had products and everything, and all of it was spoiled, and right now they could not recover; they failed because of those stoppages, new products, imagine a truckload of products and has invested so many thousands of quetzals* (Guatemalan currency) *there, and all this spoiled, who is going*

to pay that small businessman? He lost, and right now he will not recover because it was lost once and for all." (Field Transcript, 2024).

This narrative highlights the broader economic fallout from prolonged strikes, as it details the devastating effects on small businesses, where losses due to spoilage and halted operations lead to financial ruin.

Community's Response to Shortages: The use of questionable mechanisms for mobilization is often justified by the leaders and participants within these movements as being necessary to ensure the impact and visibility of their protests. The harsh reality faced by these communities is that without such strong, unified displays of resistance, their grievances might be easily ignored or suppressed by the authorities. The trade-offs between ethical mobilization practices and effective protest outcomes create a pragmatic acceptance of these tactics. Despite these challenges, the community's prioritization of broader democratic goals over immediate economic needs is evident:

"*But the issue is, they prioritize the democratic problem of the blockade over the shortage, that is, they said for me, that is, for the people it was more important to demonstrate in favour of democracy than to re-supply. Not for the people but rather because of the pressure that was there in this case.*" (Field Transcript, 2024).

This reflection reveals the complex decision-making within communities, where the urgency for political expression and change can take precedence over solving immediate logistical and economic issues.

Thus, the dynamics within indigenous communities during mobilizations against autocracy, particularly those led by entities like the 48 cantons, present a dual narrative. On one hand, these Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) are critical in the fight against government overreach and corruption, providing support and a voice to communities often marginalized in broader political discussions. On the other hand, the methods employed to ensure widespread participation reveal a complex tapestry of coercion and strategic necessity, laden with ethical dilemmas. These coercive practices, while effective in mobilizing large segments of the population quickly and demonstrating a united front, can undermine the very

democratic principles these movements aim to uphold, as coercing participation, movements risk replicating authoritarian behaviors, paradoxically using oppression to fight oppression. This can lead to internal and external skepticism, potentially delegitimizing the movement. The long-term effects can be detrimental as individuals who feel forced to participate may become resentful towards the leaders and the cause itself. This internal division can fracture movements, making them vulnerable to external pressures and diminishing their capacity to sustain long-term campaigns.

However, the overwhelming legitimacy and acceptance of groups like the 48 cantons within indigenous communities are notable. This support is largely because these organizations often provide more tangible benefits and protections to their communities than the local or national governments. The disenchantment with governmental corruption and inefficiency means that even with their coercive tactics, QCSOs are seen as a necessary and effective means of achieving communal goals and garnering attention to their causes.

Moreover, the dominance of indigenous leaders and structures within these movements is deeply entrenched in cultural traditions, which naturally lends these leaders a significant degree of de facto control and decision-making power. This cultural orientation can influence the acceptance of what outsiders might view as coercive tactics. For leaders within these movements, employing force or social penalties is sometimes seen as an extension of traditional practices of community discipline and solidarity.

Another participant, T2, highlighted the historical continuity of resistance: *"The resistance of our communities is historic, it's not something new."* and the importance of self-reliance: *"Support comes from our people, from no one else."*

Interviewee T3 pointed out the daily, pervasive nature of their struggle: "*Our fight is daily and, on all fronts, not just during elections."* and the necessity of self-protection: *"We have to protect what's ours, no one else will do it for us."*

T4 provided a historical perspective linking past and present resistance: "*The Spanish crown tried to keep us in a state of domination, as certain political parties try to do now."* and

emphasized their role in safeguarding democracy: *"Overseeing voting points and centers to ensure no fraud occurred was part of our civic responsibility."*

Organizations like the 48 Cantones of Totonicapán showcase the stability and resilience of indigenous-led efforts. Their strategy includes organizing community mobilization, roadblocks, and leading widespread protests, all while maintaining a peaceful approach (Arzu & Garcia, 2024). When they declared a national strike lasting over 90 days, it sent a clear message that indigenous-led mobilization is not only effective but also enduring. As Interviewee T2 emphasized, *"The resistance of our communities is historic, it's not something new."*

This pattern observed in the connotation analysis reflects a broader skepticism toward traditional political mechanisms and a growing preference for grassroots, community-led approaches. The observed strength of QCSOs lies in their commitment to stable democratic values and their focus on collective decision-making (Pinckney et al., 2022). This emphasis on inclusivity and community contrasts sharply with political party-led movements, which are often driven by top-down structures and narrow partisan goals (Korovkin, 2001).

4.4 Non-Indigenous Mobilization and Political Party Influence

In contrast, the disconnection between political parties and non-indigenous mobilization in Guatemala highlights a broader issue of legitimacy and trust. Political parties have long been viewed with suspicion, often associated with corruption and manipulation. This negative perception explains why non-indigenous mobilization has struggled to gain traction. One respondent noted, *"Guatemala City particularly doesn't have actors with that kind of legitimacy to call for mobilization... The actor that traditionally calls for action in Guatemala City is the Association of University Students. The university students, a mobilized university—what other actor is there in Guatemala City to call for action? There aren't any..."* (Field Transcript, 2024).

The distrust in political parties and their perceived association with corruption has hindered the ability of non-indigenous communities to mobilize effectively. Interviewee GC1 mentioned, *"The political parties, which are primarily the entities with the capacity to mobilize people, often fail in their efforts."* (Field Transcript, 2024). This lack of trust and legitimacy undermines the potential for large-scale mobilization, as political parties struggle to galvanize public support.

GC1 also noted the spontaneity and urban focus of past mobilizations: *"There was mobilization, yes, but more urban, more from students, from these particular organizations and not necessarily like what we saw in 2015, with the government of Perez Molina also being very urban, not necessarily led and more spontaneous."* (Field Transcript, 2024).

GC2 highlighted the questionable alliances within political parties: *"She (candidate for the presidency) entered in a questionable manner with traditional alliances, dark alliances, linked to magistrates, linked to deputies."* and the elite nature of these connections: *"It tells the story of a character from the economic elites who precisely enter the game when it was necessary and to put things in order."* (Field Transcript, 2024).

These deficiencies have made it challenging for non-indigenous communities to come together in meaningful ways to oppose autocratic tendencies. This aligns with the theory that political parties, seen as complicit in autocratization through acts like voter suppression and institutional manipulation, lose the credibility required to lead successful mobilization efforts (Schedler, 2002). Consequently, there is a visible gap in the ability of non-indigenous areas to mount cohesive resistance, as distrust has hindered collective action and limited the potential for large-scale mobilization.

4.5 The Role of Corruption and Marginalization

Corruption and marginalization play a central role in the autocratization process, providing fertile ground for power consolidation and undermining democratic values (Boese & Hellmeier, 2022). The coding references indicate a connection between corruption and autocratization, with both indigenous and non-indigenous groups expressing great concern over corruption and its impact on governance.

One respondent articulated this concern: *"Political elites, these power groups are becoming bolder, more shameless, always trying to push further with corruption."* (Field Transcript, 2024). This quote highlights the pervasive and brazen nature of corruption within the political elite. Another interviewee pointed out the stark contrast between the wealth of politicians and the dire state of public services: *"Living in a community in Huehuetenango and seeing a congressman who owns five houses, or a minister or a departmental delegate and then going to a hospital where there is no medicine."* (Field Transcript, 2024). This disparity fuels public frustration and distrust in government institutions.

Further emphasizing the detrimental effects of corruption, an interviewee noted: *"Look, they're leaving us in the streets, aren't they?"* (Field Transcript, 2024). This statement underscores the abandonment felt by ordinary citizens as corrupt officials enrich themselves at the expense of public welfare. Another participant described the entrenched nature of corruption: *"It's a vicious cycle where they serve themselves within their own circle."* and *"But the state apparatus is so corrupted and so large that trying to remove the head, another will pop up."* (Field Transcript, 2024). These observations reflect the difficulty in addressing systemic corruption and the entrenchment of autocratic practices.

Marginalization, particularly of indigenous communities, compounds the issues of autocratization. Interviewee T2 highlighted the long-standing disparities, stating, *"This is a very racist country."* (Field Transcript, 2024). This systemic racism contributes to the social and economic exclusion of indigenous people, exacerbating their marginalization.

These disparities manifest in reduced access to resources, education, and political representation, allowing the ruling elite to maintain control while excluding large segments of

the population from meaningful participation in governance. Indigenous mobilization addresses these issues by providing a counterbalance to corruption and marginalization.

* For further details, please refer to the Appendix B

4.6 Marginalization: The Case of Colonia Bethania

Building upon the matter of Marginalization, it is important to acknowledge that this does not only occur against the indigenous population of the country, as it is also present within the non-indigenous mestizo population in the capital city. This is particularly important at the time of understanding mobilization in Guatemala City, as the social fragmentation that is prevalent from within does significantly impact their capacity to create that social cohesion seen in the indigenous communities. Here is where the case of the Colonia Betania comes to showcase these inner instances of marginalization.

The festival held in Colonia Bethania on March 20 was a significant event in the broader context of discrimination and social justice in Ciudad de Guatemala. The community-organized festival focused on addressing discrimination and promoting mutual respect among residents, serving as a response to the ongoing debate surrounding Initiative 5692 in Congress, which aimed to reform the Penal Code to classify all gang-related activities as terrorism (Publinews, 2024).

During the indefinite national strike that began on October 2, 2023, lasting over 100 days, Colonia Bethania, located in Zone 7 of Guatemala City, emerged as one of the first urban sectors to join the indigenous and ancestral communities in their fight for democracy and against corruption (Espinoza, 2024). Residents of the area successfully and non-violently resisted multiple attempts by riot police to disperse their protests, demonstrating resilience and commitment to their cause.

The spark for this resistance was a controversial initiative proposed by a sanctioned politician, Rodríguez, who has faced international sanctions for corruption. He accused the

Semilla party and its deputies of failing to support a bill that would declare gang members as terrorists, citing the participation of Colonia Bethania residents in demonstrations defending democracy. Despite this attempt to discredit Semilla, the community's involvement in the protests showcased their dedication to democratic values and rejection of corrupt practices (Espinoza, 2024).

The scenes in Colonia Bethania on March 20th, 2024, evoked memories of the national strike, with attendees holding signs that expressed pride in their community and condemnation of corrupt political figures. Messages like "*Soy Bethania, soy dignidad*" ("I am Bethania, I am dignity") were prominently displayed, emphasizing the community's collective spirit. Later during the festival, children joined in, jotting down their feelings on sheets of paper attached to the ground, demonstrating a multi-generational resolve to oppose corruption.

The events in Colonia Bethania during the indefinite national strike in Guatemala City are crucial to understanding how marginalized urban communities can mobilize against autocratization, as it addresses prominent issues of corruption and social fragmentation, as well as challenging political narratives that seek to marginalize and discredit grassroots movements.

One protester's remarks challenge the widespread marginalization and stigmatization within Guatemala City. They reject the harmful labels placed on their neighborhood, emphasizing the presence of hardworking and respectable individuals within Colonia Bethania. His assertion that "*Here within the peninsula, there are football players, architects, graduates, teachers, writers, poets—there's a bit of everything within the Bethania peninsula"* illustrates the diversity and talent within the community, countering the derogatory narrative presented by politicians like Rodríguez.

This challenge to the dominant narrative is significant in understanding marginalization and social fragmentation in Guatemala City. When powerful figures label entire communities as criminals or terrorists, it reinforces a sense of social exclusion and justifies oppressive practices against those communities. Consequently, to stand up against these defamatory statements, the people of Colonia Bethania are fighting to reclaim their dignity and demand a public apology for the insult. As one speaker said, *"It's not possible for someone to label all of*

us as hitmen, gang members, or terrorists.", highlighting the outrage against this form of marginalization.

Another emotive moment during the demonstration came when a wheelchair-bound man directly confronted Rodríguez, criticizing his accusations against Colonia Bethania residents and highlighting his work ethic. He stated, "*I've been working here in my wheelchair since I was 13, and I'm not a thief. I'm concerned that you're insulting the people of Colonia Bethania... I have another child who doesn't dare to come here. And I've never stolen a single cent, Mr. Allan Rodríguez. It's a shame because even in my wheelchair, I work and keep on working."*. This powerful testimony emphasizes the indignation felt by the residents at being labeled as criminals and reflects the broader struggle against marginalization.

In response to these derogatory statements indicating a broader struggle against autocratization, the speaker's demand for a public apology underscores the community's refusal to accept discrimination and marginalization. This resistance against harmful stereotypes resonates with the broader context of the 2023 election scandal, where marginalized groups rallied to resist corruption and defend democratic values.

As we have seen in this analysis, in addition to indigenous communities, university students and marginalized urban populations have played important roles in mobilization efforts. University students, often organized through associations, bring strategic advocacy and legal expertise to the movement. Their participation stems from deep frustration with systemic corruption and a desire for change through structured and informed activism. This group often organizes protests, advocates for policy changes, and raises awareness through various media channels, which amplifies the movement's reach and impact. However, university students alone often lack the cohesive community support and organizational infrastructure seen in indigenous mobilizations, limiting their ability to sustain prolonged efforts independently.

Marginalized urban populations, such as those in Colonia Bethania, also contribute to mobilization efforts, frequently joining forces with indigenous communities. These groups highlight the compounded effects of social and economic exclusion, aligning with broader issues of corruption and governance. However, their efforts often struggle to gain momentum

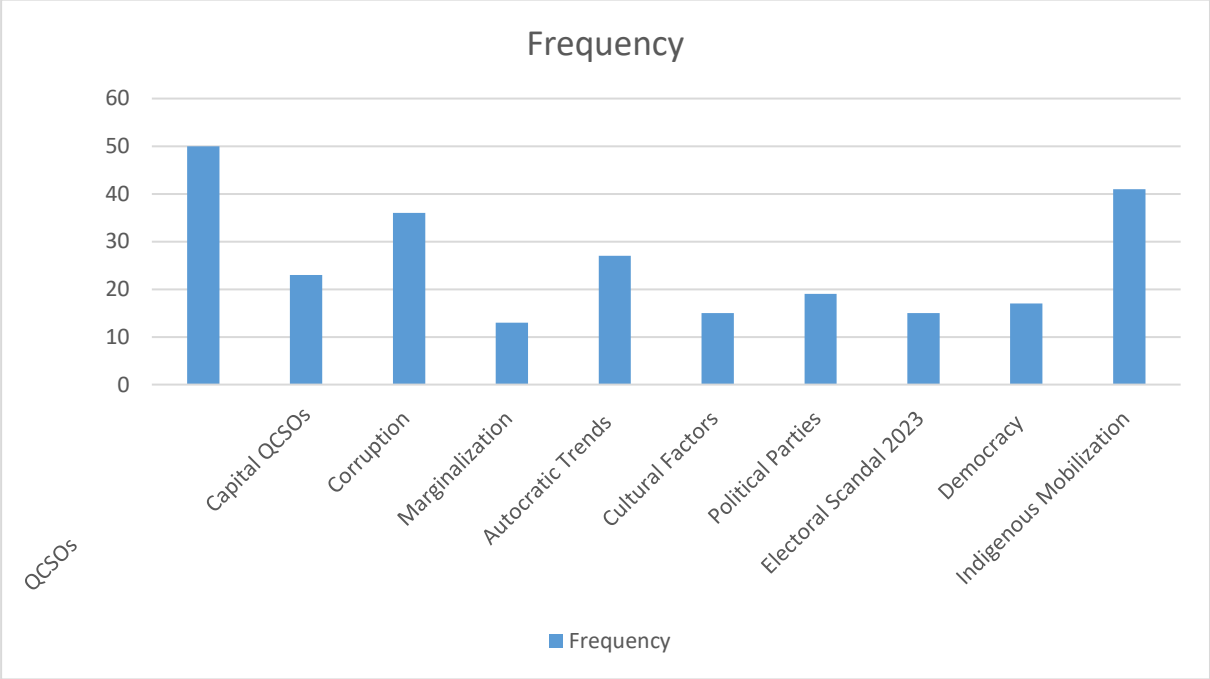
and achieve lasting impact when undertaken in isolation due to fragmentation and a lack of strong organizational frameworks.

Incorporating this perspective into the analysis offers valuable insight into the resistance against social fragmentation, as it demonstrates that marginalized communities are not passive victims but active participants in the fight against autocratization. However, despite the community's significant involvement and resilience, this situation further explains the low levels of mobilization capacity within Guatemala City. The broader struggle against marginalization, as demonstrated through their protests and community events, emphasizes the difficulties in sustaining widespread mobilization within a fragmented urban landscape.

Chapter 5: Comparative Analysis of Mobilization in Guatemala

In this chapter, an illustrative and non-representative graph is presented, aiming to explore trends and hypotheses in a broader exploratory context, presenting the responses of each sub-groups visually. Moreover, mechanisms behind the indigenous mobilization are discussed, based on the fieldwork interviews.

5.1 Analysis of Frequency Table



Graph 6

The frequency table, without distinguishing by ethnic group, provides an indicative overall view of the coding references across all interviewees. It is important to note that these numbers are illustrative rather than representative.

Key Observations:

The analysis reveals several key observations. Corruption, with 36 coding references, emerges as the most significant contextual factor, indicating its central role in uniting various

groups in their mobilization against autocratic tendencies. Indigenous mobilization, with 41 coding references, stands out highlighting its significant role in driving democratic change. Other important themes include the 2023 electoral scandal (15 references), cultural factors (15 references), democracy (17 references), and non-indigenous mobilization (17 references), underscoring their importance in the mobilization efforts.

Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs), classified as an independent variable, have 50 references, indicating their substantial role in grassroots mobilization.

In conclusion, the coding frame and numerical presence suggest that while both indigenous and non-indigenous groups are motivated to resist autocratic trends, their pathways to mobilization vary significantly due to cultural and contextual factors, highlighting the diverse influences on mobilization efforts and the crucial role of QCSOs in fostering democratic resilience.

5.2 Comparative Insights

The success of the theoretically less pro-democratic mobilizations, particularly those led by indigenous Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs), presents a central paradox in the analysis. Despite being perceived as less aligned with conventional democratic activism, these QCSOs have demonstrated significant effectiveness in resisting autocratic trends and fostering democratic resilience. This paradox can be understood through several key factors that differentiate QCSOs from traditional political movements.

First, the cultural cohesion within indigenous communities plays a crucial role. The frequent mentions of Mayan beliefs and community traditions by Totonicapán interviewees highlight how these cultural influences foster a strong sense of unity and collective identity. This cultural solidarity enables effective mobilization as members share common values and a collective purpose, making it easier to organize and sustain resistance efforts. The coding references for "Indigenous Mobilization" among Totonicapán interviewees, show the importance of indigenous mobilization in pushing back against autocracy. Combined with the

largely positive connotations of these efforts, this underscores the perception that indigenous mobilization is an effective means to defend democracy and resist authoritarianism.

Second, the commitment to community-based governance and nonviolent resistance sets QCSOs apart. These organizations emphasize transparency, accountability, and collective decision-making, aligning closely with indigenous cultural norms. Their approach contrasts sharply with the hierarchical and often opaque nature of traditional political parties, which struggle to build genuine grassroots support. The coding references for "Political Parties" among Guatemala City interviewees, all with negative connotations, explain why non-indigenous mobilization often does not align with political parties. This lack of alignment and trust has led to fragmented mobilization efforts in non-indigenous areas, with many participants opting for individual rather than collective action.

Moreover, the historical marginalization of indigenous communities has paradoxically strengthened their resolve and capacity for mobilization. The coding references for "Marginalization" underscore the long-standing disparities between indigenous and non-indigenous populations. These disparities, characterized by reduced access to resources, education, and political representation, have fuelled a strong motivation to challenge the status quo. Indigenous QCSOs address these issues by providing a counterbalance to corruption and marginalization, and organizing coordinated actions that emphasize nonviolent resistance and community participation. Their stability and durability have also been evidenced.

Although both indigenous and non-indigenous groups mobilize against corruption and autocratic trends, it is clear that their approaches differ significantly. Indigenous groups in Totonicapán rely on traditional community structures, reflecting their strong social cohesion. In contrast, non-indigenous groups in Guatemala City tend to react individually due to a lack of cohesive organizational structures for collective mobilization. This divergence indicates that both groups share a common goal of resisting corruption and autocracy, but their pathways reflect unique cultural contexts and varying levels of marginalization.

The insights from Cultural Theory provide a valuable framework to understand the mechanisms of mobilization observed in indigenous communities in Guatemala. Specifically, these concepts

help to explain why indigenous groups, such as those in Totonicapán, have been more successful in resisting autocratic tendencies compared to their non-indigenous counterparts.

In Totonicapán, the deep-rooted cultural traditions that prioritize collective action, accountability, and community solidarity have created a strong foundation for effective mobilization. The communal nature of these societies, reinforced by shared cultural and historical experiences, fosters a cohesive and unified approach to political activism. The 48 Cantones of Totonicapán exemplify how cultural cohesion and collective identity can drive sustained and impactful mobilization efforts. The emphasis on Mayan beliefs and community traditions among interviewees highlights the central role of these cultural elements in underpinning their resistance strategies.

These conclusions, however, are drawn specifically from the indigenous groups in Guatemala and should not be generalized to the broader term of indigenous as such. The norms emphasizing community participation and mutual accountability observed in these Guatemalan indigenous communities translate into a high propensity for collective action when democratic principles are threatened. This strong cultural foundation enables groups like the 48 Cantones to maintain nonviolent resistance and organized efforts, even in the face of significant risks and challenges.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Key Findings and Their Implications

In Guatemala, Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) have been particularly effective in mobilizing indigenous communities, which face significant socioeconomic challenges but maintain strong cultural and social cohesion. The nonviolent methods, sustained advocacy, and community-oriented governance of QCSOs like the 48 Cantones have enabled these groups to challenge oppressive structures and resist autocratic trends. Their actions during the 2023 nationwide strike, which included coordinated protests and roadblocks, demonstrate their ability to maintain pressure on the government while adhering to democratic principles.

This research found a deeply divided nation, consistent with the literature review. Guatemala is split into two main parts: the urban areas, predominantly inhabited by non-indigenous populations, and the rural highlands, home to many indigenous communities. This division plays a crucial role in how QCSOs operate and succeed in their efforts. The contrast between indigenous and non-indigenous mobilization efforts underscores the unique strengths of QCSOs. While non-indigenous groups often struggle with distrust in political parties and fragmented mobilization efforts, indigenous communities benefit from the deep trust and robust organizational structures provided by QCSOs. This trust and organization enable more effective and sustained mobilization against corruption and autocratic tendencies.

The broader implications for democratization in Guatemala are significant. QCSOs have shown that, in the very specific case studied, they can play an important role in resisting autocratic trends by leveraging their deep community roots and high levels of trust. Their community-driven initiatives provide a powerful counterbalance to the autocratic tendencies of the political elite. Therefore, supporting QCSOs should be a priority for those seeking to promote democratic resilience in Guatemala. These organizations can help bridge the gaps left by weak or compromised institutional frameworks, fostering democratic norms and practices at the local level.

Moreover, the study's findings suggest that QCSOs in Guatemala can mitigate the negative effects of corruption and marginalization by focusing on community-based governance and advocacy. These efforts help distribute resources and political representation more fairly. As highlighted by existing research, structural adjustment policies have increased indigenous communities' awareness of national politics, leading to stronger alliances with non-indigenous organizations (Hale, 2002). These alliances further enhance the ability of QCSOs to promote democratic resilience and inclusive governance in Guatemala. The following table presents a comparison between the thesis findings and the reviewed literature:

Theme	Findings	Literature Reviewed	Comparison
Role of Civil Society in Democratization	- QCSOs are identified as crucial for mobilizing against autocratic trends - QCSOs foster grassroots engagement.	- **Pinckney et al. (2022)**: QCSOs drive democratic transitions - **Thurber (2019)**: QCSOs sustain long-term mobilization - **Butcher et al. (2018)**: Sustained mobilization is vital for democratization.	The thesis findings align with the literature, emphasizing the importance of QCSOs due to their grassroots nature and sustained efforts.
Indigenous Mobilization	- Indigenous communities (48 Cantones) effectively resist autocracy - Mobilization is rooted in cultural identity and historical resistance.	- **Alvarez et al. (1998)**: Indigenous movements have strong identity and resilience - **Menchú (1984)**: Cultural and historical motivations fuel resistance - **Little & Smith (2009)**: Indigenous groups have unique mobilization strategies.	The findings are consistent with the literature, highlighting cultural identity and historical context as key factors in indigenous mobilization.
Autocratization	- There is a gradual erosion of democratic norms in Guatemala - Polarization and marginalization exacerbate challenges.	- **Luhrmann & Lindberg (2019)**: Autocratization is a slow decline in democratic norms - **Boese & Hellmeier (2022)**: Polarization deepens societal divides and weakens democracy - **Levitsky & Ziblatt (2018)**: Political manipulation contributes to autocratization.	The results mirror the literature, depicting autocratization as a gradual process exacerbated by polarization and manipulation.
Cultural Factors and Corruption	- Cultural values shape perceptions of corruption and mobilization - Corruption is a unifying factor for mobilization.	- **Miller & Koshechkina (2001)**: Cultural values impact perceptions of corruption - **Bowler & Donovan (2016)**: Corruption scandals can drive public mobilization.	The findings align with the literature, showing cultural influences on mobilization and corruption as a powerful mobilizing factor.

Table 3

6.2 Theoretical and Practical Contributions of the Study

This study contributes to both theoretical and practical understandings of democratization, particularly in contexts where traditional political and judicial institutions are compromised or weak. The study provides empirical evidence supporting the important role of QCSOs in sustaining democratic norms and practices. These organizations leverage deep community roots and high levels of trust to effectively mobilize and maintain pro-democracy efforts over the long term. Moreover, the findings highlight the importance of cultural values and social norms in shaping political behavior and mobilization efforts in this particular context. Indigenous communities, with their emphasis on collective action and accountability, are more inclined to respond to corruption and autocratic practices with significant mobilization, enhancing their capacity for sustained resistance.

The study also highlights the importance of supporting QCSOs to boost democratic resilience in Guatemala. These groups can fill the voids left by weak or compromised institutions, promoting democratic values and practices at the grassroots level. Strengthening QCSOs' efforts can reinforce local resistance to autocracy and foster a more inclusive and participatory democracy.

However, it's also crucial to address ethical concerns related to forced mobilization. Encouraging voluntary participation and reducing coercion will enhance the legitimacy and sustainability of these movements, ensuring that the fight against autocracy doesn't mimic authoritarian methods.

6.3 Limitations and Areas for Further Research

Despite the positive impact of QCSOs, the study also encountered several challenges and limitations that highlight the need for further research. One significant challenge is the coercive tactics sometimes employed by QCSOs to ensure participation in mobilization efforts. These tactics, while effective in securing widespread participation, raise ethical concerns and risk undermining the democratic principles that these organizations aim to uphold. Forced mobilization can lead to internal and external skepticism, potentially delegitimizing the movement and creating internal divisions. Additionally, the economic consequences of prolonged strikes, such as those led by the 48 Cantones, pose significant risks. Shortages of

goods and financial losses for small businesses can create long-term economic damage, impacting the livelihoods of community members. Balancing the immediate needs of the community with broader political goals remains a complex challenge for QCSOs.

This study has been conducted in Totonicapán and Guatemala City. Consequently**, the generalizability of the findings cannot be extended to the entire indigenous population and the entire mestizo population.** The insights and data gathered reflect the specific contexts and dynamics of these two regions, which may not fully represent the diverse experiences and perspectives of all indigenous and mestizo communities across Guatemala.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that the indigenous mobilization, particularly in reaction to the 2023 election scandal, has evidently been significant nationwide. The impact of these mobilizations resonated with portions of the population beyond Totonicapán, demonstrating the broader influence and importance of these movements.

The study's reliance on semi-structured interviews also presents limitations. The insights gained are based on the viewpoints of a limited number of interviewees and may not be fully representative of broader public sentiment. This presents the need for caution in generalizing the findings and underscores the importance of further research to validate and expand upon these results. The generalizability of both empirical and theoretical contributions should be evaluated within the defined parameters of the study, centered on the unique post-election dynamics within the examined ethnic groups.

Future research should explore several areas to build on the findings of this study and further understand the role of QCSOs in promoting democratization. First, a more comprehensive analysis of the long-term impacts of QCSO-led mobilization efforts on democratic resilience in Guatemala is needed. This analysis should include a broader and more representative sample of interviewees to provide a more nuanced understanding of public sentiment. Second, research should investigate the ethical implications of coercive mobilization tactics used by QCSOs. Understanding the balance between effective mobilization and adherence to democratic principles is crucial for the legitimacy and sustainability of these movements. Third, future studies should examine the economic impacts of prolonged strikes and other forms of resistance led by QCSOs. Identifying strategies to mitigate negative

economic consequences while maintaining effective resistance efforts will be essential for the long-term success of these organizations. Finally, comparing QCSOs in Guatemala with those in other regions and countries could offer valuable insights. These comparative studies can help researchers spot common strategies and challenges, leading to a better understanding of how grassroots organizations can promote democratization around the world.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Final Remarks

7.1 Summary of Key Findings

This study highlights the role that Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs) play in countering autocracy and fostering democracy in Guatemala, in the aftermath of the 2023 election scandal. These organizations are key drivers of grassroots mobilization, turning social and political conditions into actionable movements. Their strong community presence enables them to convert cultural norms, political scandals, and experiences of marginalization into active resistance against autocratic practices and support for democratic values.

As the country was sliding into authoritarianism, QCSOs mobilized and resisted, particularly around the candidacy and presidency of Bernardo Arévalo. This resistance was essential in keeping democracy alive in the country.

During the election scandal, these QCSOs have been particularly successful in mobilizing indigenous communities in Guatemala, which face significant socioeconomic challenges but have strong cultural and social ties. The nonviolent methods, ongoing advocacy, and community-focused governance of groups like the 48 Cantones have allowed them to challenge oppressive systems and resist autocratic trends. Their organized protests and roadblocks during the 2023 nationwide strike show their ability to pressure the government while sticking to democratic principles.

The research also reveals a deeply divided country, consistent with what was found in the literature review. Guatemala is split between urban areas mainly inhabited by non-indigenous people and rural highlands home to many indigenous communities. This division greatly affects how QCSOs function and succeed. Non-indigenous groups struggle with distrust in political parties and fragmented efforts, while indigenous communities thrive on the deep trust and strong organizational structures provided by QCSOs. This trust and organization lead to more effective and sustained efforts against corruption and autocracy.

The implications for democratization in Guatemala are significant. The empirical findings suggest that QCSOs can help reverse autocratic trends by leveraging their deep

community roots and high levels of trust. Their community-driven initiatives provide a powerful counterbalance to the autocratic tendencies of the political elite. Therefore, supporting QCSOs should be a priority to promote democratic resilience in Guatemala. These organizations can fill the gaps left by weak or compromised institutions, fostering democratic norms and practices at the local level.

7.2 Policy Recommendations

Given the apolitical nature of the indigenous organizations in Guatemala and their reluctance to engage directly with government structures, policy recommendations need to respect their independence and unique approach.

1. **Respect Autonomy**: Policymakers and practitioners should respect the independence and apolitical nature of QCSOs. Support should be provided in a manner that does not compromise their autonomy or force them into political frameworks they do not endorse.
2. **Community-Based Support**: Enhance the capacity of QCSOs through community-driven initiatives. This can involve providing resources for education, cultural preservation, and local economic development, which align with the goals of QCSOs without imposing external political agendas.
3. **Strengthen Legal Protections**: Ensure robust legal protections for QCSOs and their members. This includes safeguarding their rights to peaceful assembly, free speech, and protection from harassment or violence, particularly by state actors. Legal support can be provided to help QCSOs navigate any conflicts with authorities.
4. **Facilitate Networking**: Encourage networking among QCSOs and other grassroots organizations, both locally and internationally. This can help QCSOs share best practices, strategies for nonviolent resistance, and ways to effectively mobilize communities while maintaining their apolitical stance.
5. **Promote Inclusivity and Equity**: Develop policies that address the specific needs and rights of indigenous communities without tying them to political structures. This includes ensuring access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities in ways that reinforce the community's autonomy and values.

6. **Mitigate Economic Impacts**: Provide indirect support to mitigate the economic impacts of mobilizations, such as prolonged strikes. This can include financial assistance for affected small businesses and community projects to ensure economic stability during periods of resistance.

Fostering connections between indigenous communities and non-indigenous portions of the country is crucial to addressing marginalization and creating national cohesion. Initiatives to bridge these communities can be implemented through cultural exchange programs, joint community projects, and dialogue forums.

7.3 Final Remarks

The experience has been transformative, providing extensive insights into Central America, its people, social divisions, disparities, the impact of colonization, and, most significantly, corruption.

The research highlighted that indigenous communities in Guatemala lack substantial representation in the national government. This situation arises because each indigenous province effectively governs its communities with minimal interaction with the central government. Complicating this further, the indigenous half of the country comprises 23 different subgroups, each speaking distinct languages, making unified action challenging and exacerbating the disparity in both representation and wealth.

An important lesson learned is the complexity of field research. Researchers often envision a linear set of causals and outcomes; however, in reality, these dynamics are multifaceted. For example, during interviews, it became clear that motivations for mobilization are influenced not just by perceptions but also by factors such as local organizational cohesion and external pressures. This underscores the necessity of a holistic approach to understanding social realities.

Regarding local governance, several factors need attention. Primarily, local authorities in indigenous communities must focus on enhancing accountability and legitimacy. Currently,

municipalities are viewed as corrupt and unreliable, while indigenous organizations are respected for their efforts to combat these corrupt practices. The obvious solution might seem to be merging indigenous organizations with municipal authorities, but this is culturally unacceptable. Indigenous leaders, rooted in Mayan beliefs, fear that participation in governmental entities would lead to inevitable corruption due to the involvement of money.

Given the distrust between indigenous communities and municipal authorities, establishing a collaborative platform could bridge this gap. Indigenous-Municipal Collaborative Councils could facilitate dialogue and mutual understanding by including representatives from both indigenous organizations and municipal governments. These councils could work on joint projects related to infrastructure, social services, and anti-corruption measures.

To address corruption and build trust, local authorities should implement transparency and anti-corruption initiatives involving indigenous leaders and organizations. This might include creating community-based oversight committees or integrating indigenous organizations into existing anti-corruption frameworks.

The challenges and disparities between indigenous and non-indigenous communities in Guatemala are deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and systemic factors. Field research revealed unique governance structures in Totonicapán and distinct mechanisms for mobilization and social cohesion among indigenous groups. Despite different perceptions and organizational frameworks, both indigenous and mestizo communities share a common frustration with corruption and a desire for accountability. Bridging these gaps will require innovative approaches that respect indigenous autonomy while fostering collaboration with municipal governments.

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9. Appendix

Appendix A: Interview Questions

The following questions guided the semi-structured interviews in Totonicapán and Guatemala City:

Totonicapán

How do you perceive the participation of your community in the mobilizations organized by the 48 cantones?

Are there any specific events or issues that have significantly mobilized the community in the past?

What role do local leaders play in the mobilization efforts?

How does the leadership of the 48 cantones influence the community's willingness to participate in protests?

What motivates you and your community to participate in mobilizations?

Are there any personal or community benefits that drive participation in these activities?

What are the main challenges faced by the community in sustaining long-term mobilization efforts?

Are there any barriers that prevent people from participating in mobilizations?

Guatemala City

How do you perceive the mobilization efforts in Guatemala City compared to rural areas like Totonicapán?

Are there differences in the way urban and rural communities mobilize and protest?

What role do civil society organizations play in mobilizing people in Guatemala City?

How effective are these organizations in influencing political or social change?

How engaged are the citizens of Guatemala City in political and social mobilizations?

What factors influence public engagement in these efforts?

What are the main challenges faced by urban communities in organizing and sustaining mobilizations?

Are there any specific barriers unique to urban settings?

Informed Consent Given to all interviewees

Título del Proyecto: Comprendiendo las Percepciones sobre la Corrupción y la Respuesta Comunitaria

Consentimiento para Participar en la Investigación

- Yo, [-], voluntariamente acepto participar en este estudio de investigación.
- Entiendo que incluso si acepto participar ahora, puedo retirarme en cualquier momento o negarme a responder cualquier pregunta sin consecuencias de ningún tipo.
- Entiendo que puedo retirar el permiso para utilizar los datos de mi entrevista dentro de dos semanas después de la entrevista, en cuyo caso el material será eliminado.
- Me han explicado por escrito el propósito y la naturaleza del estudio y he tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas sobre el estudio.
- Entiendo que la participación implica compartir mis perspectivas y experiencias relacionadas con las percepciones sobre la corrupción y las respuestas comunitarias durante una entrevista cualitativa.
- Entiendo que no recibiré beneficios directos por participar en esta investigación.
- Acepto que mi entrevista sea grabada en audio.
- Entiendo que toda la información que proporcione para este estudio será tratada de manera confidencial.
- Entiendo que en cualquier informe sobre los resultados de esta investigación, mi identidad permanecerá anónima. Esto se realizará cambiando mi nombre y disfrazando cualquier detalle de mi entrevista que pueda revelar mi identidad o la identidad de las personas sobre las que hablo.
- Entiendo que se pueden citar extractos disfrazados de mi entrevista en cualquier informe, tesis, presentaciones en conferencias o artículos publicados resultantes de esta investigación.
- Entiendo que si informo al investigador que yo o alguien más está en riesgo de daño, pueden tener que informar esto a las autoridades relevantes; discutirán esto conmigo primero pero pueden estar obligados a informar con o sin mi permiso.
- Entiendo que los formularios de consentimiento firmados y las grabaciones de audio originales serán retenidos de manera segura por el investigador hasta el 01/06/2024.
- Entiendo que se retendrá una transcripción de mi entrevista en la que se hayan eliminado todos los datos de identificación durante [04/06/2024 - 01/06/2024].
- Entiendo que, según la legislación de libertad de información, tengo derecho a acceder a la información que he proporcionado en cualquier momento mientras esté almacenada según se especifica anteriormente.
- Entiendo que soy libre de contactar a cualquiera de las personas involucradas en la investigación para buscar más aclaraciones e información.

Firma del participante de la investigación

Firma del participante — 08/03/2024 — Fecha

Firma del investigador

Creo que el participante está dando su consentimiento informado para participar en este estudio

Firma del investigador — 08/03/2024 — Fecha

Appendix B: Codebook

Code System

1. Corruption: 36
2. Marginalization: 13
3. Autocratic Trends: 27
4. Cultural Factors: 15
5. Political Parties: 19
6. Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs): 50
○ 6.1 Capital QCSOs: 23
7. Electoral Scandal: 15
8. Democracy: 17
9. Indigenous Mobilization: 41

1. Corruption

Definition: Dishonest acts or illegal behavior involving a person in a position of power or other institutions.
Examples: Cases of bribery, abuse of power, embezzlement of public funds, corruption scandals.

2. Marginalization

Definition: The process or condition of relegating to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group.
Examples: Discussions about the historical and current marginalization of indigenous communities in Guatemala.

3. Autocratic Trends

Definition: Actions or behaviors indicating a shift towards autocratic governance or a decline in democratic principles.
Examples: Restrictions on civil liberties, concentration of power, government corruption.

4. Cultural Factors

Definition: Aspects of culture that influence mobilization, resistance, or other democratic processes.

Examples: Traditional beliefs, cultural practices, community ties, or the influence of Mayan culture in resistance movements.

5. Political Parties

Definition: References to political parties and their role in mobilization or influence on political outcomes.
Examples: Discussions about movements led by political parties, party strategies, or political structures.

6. Quotidian Civil Society Organizations (QCSOs)

Definition: Quotidian Civil Society Organizations that focus on grassroots or community-based mobilization, often playing a key role in democratic transitions.
Examples: Local community groups, indigenous organizations, and activist networks.

- 6.1. Capital QCSOs

  Non-Indigenous QCSOs

7. Electoral Scandal

Definition: References to the 2023 electoral scandal in Guatemala and its implications for democracy.
Examples: Discussion about the scandal, its causes, consequences, and public reaction.

8. Democracy

Definition: Processes or events that promote or contribute to the creation or strengthening of democratic governance.
Examples: Public participation in political processes, efforts to ensure government accountability and advocacy for democratic principles.

9. Indigenous Mobilization

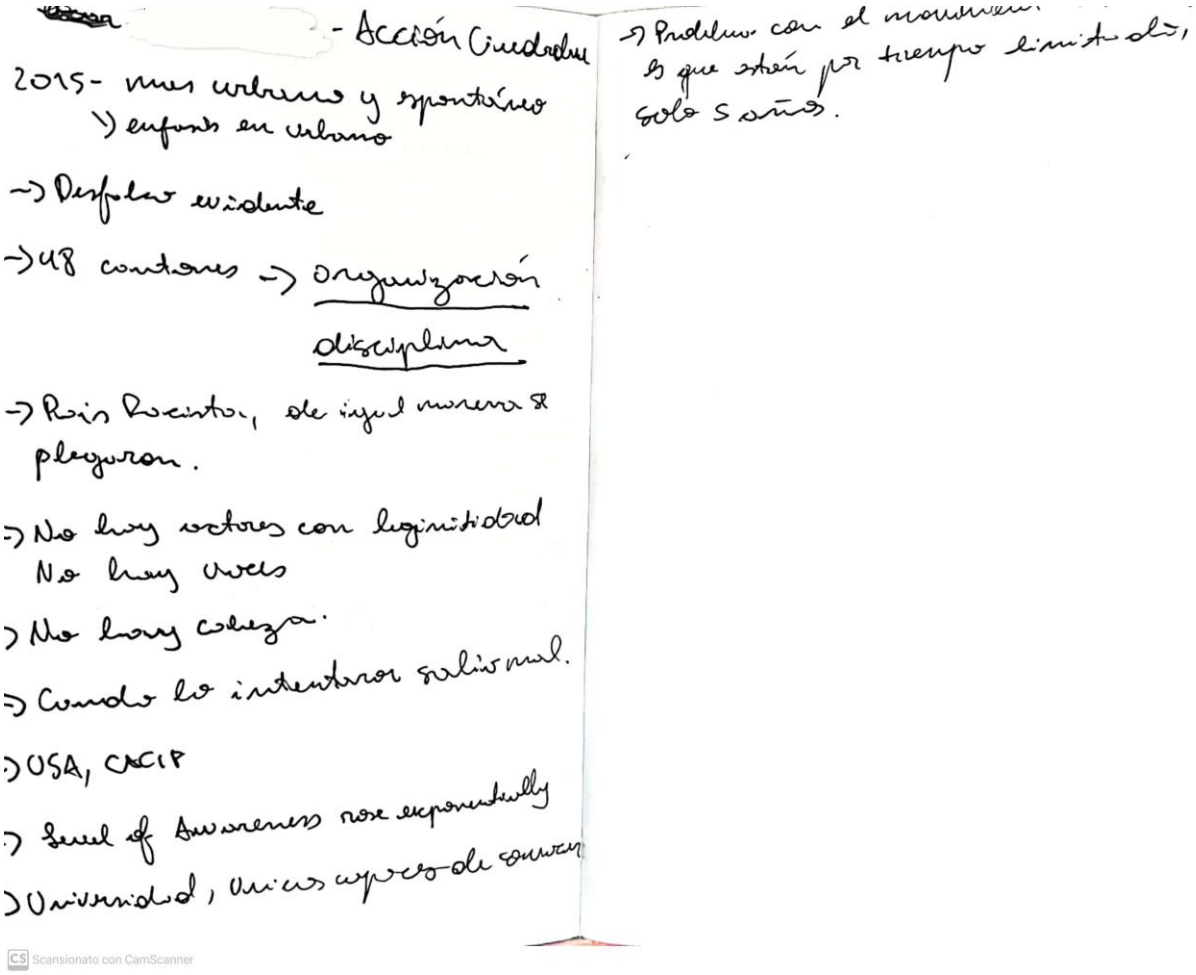
Definition: Instances where indigenous communities organize or mobilize to defend democratic principles or resist autocratic trends.
Examples: Protests, demonstrations, community meetings, leaders' gatherings.

Numerical Coding Presence

Classification	Attribute	Value	GC1	GC2	GC3	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	Total
Independent Variables	QCSOs	Coding References	8	8	10	4	6	3	6	5	50
	Capital QCSOs	Coding References	4	3	6	2	3	2	2	1	23
Contextual Factors	Corruption	Coding References	4	5	6	1	9	2	5	4	36
	Marginalization	Coding References	1	1	1	0	1	1	3	5	13
	Autocratic Trends	Coding References	3	4	3	0	1	3	7	6	27
	Cultural Factors	Coding References	1	0	6	0	0	0	4	4	15
	Political Parties	Coding References	2	3	2	1	1	3	4	3	19
	Electoral Scandal 2023	Coding References	4	2	4	0	0	2	3	0	15
	Democracy	Coding References	1	0	3	1	1	2	8	1	17
Dependent Variable	Indigenous Mobilization	Coding References	1	2	4	3	11	8	4	8	41

Appendix C: Additional Data

Notes taken



- Plaza Publica

2023 - 2015 - 1944

Cometiza hartazgo -> corrupción instalado en la narrativa

1) USA y CICIF
↳ elites economicas

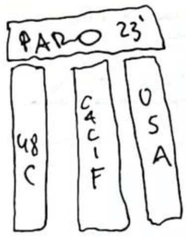
- País étnicamente fragmentado
-> 48 por un lado, elites comerciales por otro

- corrupción como cohesion social
- corrupción como populismo

2023

Indigenas toman la iniciativa
- Pacto de corruptos -> oficialismo
-> Enemigo Publico -> Consuelo Porras
-> Injerencia de USA
-> Colonias Populares
-> Colonia Bethania

-> Sectores urbanos ...
-> 48 cantones responsables ...
↳ comunalización
-> US leverage. ley ... ...



-> País estructuralmente corrupto
corrupción estructural

-> Bien común local

-> - corrupción gracias a ellos

-> Lastra peso

-> Falta democracia

-> Reunión Pore

-> Ayuda sistema

-> Derecho Moral

-> Punto de inflexión

-> Voluntad Popular

-> Porque? Altamente(?) el poder corrompe

I get to see the reason of different in action:
es como viven -> indígenas viven mejor

CACIF -> Gobierno

48C -> Gob. Local

NARCOS ORIENTE

Para ellos

CACIF -> GOB

48C -> GOB

↓

Para el Pueblo

//

48C -> unica fuerza = PAROS

CACIF -> = FINANCIACION a politicos

Cordera

-> Golpe de estado técnico.

-> Democracia (SIN) = + corrupción.

-> Monopolios.

-> 48 cantones fueron prometidos cargos.

-> en capital -> no hay organización
= - protesta.

-> comunidades = + protestas
<u>organización</u>

↙

condicionan!

Si no sales a la protesta, te cortan servicios.

∴ Asistencia obligatoria

—— // —— // ——

Mucha corrupción a nivel comunal

-> coima

-> <u>Amigos.</u>

-> los 48 cantones

↳ conocidos de las alcaldías ∴ no chocan.

-> Si organizaciones no llaman a protesta, nadie protesta.

[Municipalidad] [48 cantones]

[otras comunidades]

[cacif] — intereses

[USA] — intereses

Paro de 48 cantones afecta al <u>cacif</u>. porque afecta a la economía.

Efecto dominó.

[48] -> [cacif] -> [Gob]

-> Voluntad de la gente en duda
-> Represalias de los 48 cantones si no se suman a las protestas
-> Efectos de doble filo: Desabastecimiento, perdida de productos locales.

However, al final les es peor rebelarse y causar multa

-> Intereses pesan más que motivación
-> Percepción igual, organización diferente
∴ diferente acciones.

-> Muchos manifestantes ni saben que pasa
-> Van arreados / pagados o amenazados.

-> corrupcion(?)
-> 48 pedían por democracia, porque si no, la corrupción es peor.
-> pero, si no le ayudan a la gente, convocatoria baja.
corrupción combatida con corrupción?
-> la gente por iniciativa propia no se manifestaría.

PARO —Presión→ Gobierno
→ Economía Nacional
→ Liquidar a los propios locales.

-> Desabastecimiento = inflación.
-> Situación de desgaste

Pictures from the Field

Totonicapan


SE VENDE
COMIDA DE
PALOMAS


METETE
TODO
DRY

Guatemala City

Participant observation Colonia Bethania

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