

on-going rules volatility found in Nicaragua, where regulatory instability and targeted confiscation persist to the present.

In the final chapter, Schwartz broadens her analytical framework and considers the possibility that undermining rules might emerge in response to different kinds of threats, not just in the context of civil war. This addition expands the potential application of her framework to novel settings, as scholars continue to explore the co-existence of parallel and conflicting rules governing state institutions. Her concluding call for the international community to assist with the ‘deconstruction’ of shadow power coalitions may make too many assumptions about the political capacity of external actors and under-examine the problematic dimensions of hybrid governance. Overall, however, this study does a monumental job explaining how informal institutional practices develop and persist in diverse postwar contexts, and the challenges associated with bringing about change.

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## **Rachel Nolan, *Until I Find You: Disappeared Children and Coercive Adoptions in Guatemala***

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Rachel Nolan’s recently released book *Until I Find You* explores the politics of international adoption within Guatemala, one of the largest ‘sending’ countries of children during the late 1990s and early 2000s. As the title suggests, Nolan shows how the practice of child relinquishment for adoption in Guatemala essentially ‘disappeared’ children, mirroring the violent disappearances of suspected political subversives during the earlier armed internal conflict. Disappearing children through international adoption involved coercing poor and Indigenous mothers into relinquishing their children without meaningful consent; child procurement tactics often involved fraudulent legal documents and, at times, outright kidnapping. A cabal of lawyers then shepherded the now-adoptable children through a privatised legal system designed to eliminate state oversight or intervention in issues of child welfare. Adoption lawyers facilitated adoptions for their clients in the global North within murky not-quite-legal-yet-not-illegal grey areas of law, yet a powerful culture of impunity allowed them to brazenly operate adoption rings and child-exporting businesses with little fear of repercussion. At the height of the Guatemalan adoption boom in 2004, one out of every 100 children left the

country through adoption. Guatemalan children became one of the nation's most valuable export commodities and the business spiralled dangerously out of control, leading to the complete closure of international adoptions from Guatemala in 2007 due to mounting pressure to combat corruption.

Against the backdrop of the violence of the Guatemalan armed internal conflict, Nolan historicises these recent events and argues that the nation's long histories of state practices of violence, racism and cultural and material dispossession from its Indigenous Maya majority produced 'adoptable' children. Through a series of legislative changes, the Guatemalan adoption system evolved from a state-run child welfare division into a fully privatised for-profit system run by a small elite coterie of lawyers and notaries, a unique arrangement found nowhere else in the world. Meanwhile, as the state unleashed a torrent of violence toward Indigenous Maya communities in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the state's increasing embrace of neoliberal economic policies in the 1990s commodified its children and created an unregulated global marketplace for them through international adoption. The long commodity chain involved in facilitating international adoptions, in effect, served as a new kind of privatised counter-insurgency that often inflicted the highest kind of violence possible against poor and Indigenous mothers and their communities when it took their children for adoption. What emerges most clearly from conversations with Indigenous Guatemalan birth mothers is how chronic poverty and racial marginalisation made them exceptionally vulnerable to chains of people, from the *jaladoras* (baby brokers) to the elite white lawyers who made up adoption trafficking rings to funnel Guatemalan children to unsuspecting families in the global North. Nolan provides the reader with substantial evidence that suggests that most Guatemalan birth mothers did not wish to relinquish their children but did so under the strain of living in grinding poverty combined with coercive tactics to remove their children.

Nolan's book engages debates within Latin American studies about how to understand both state-sponsored armed conflicts and broader regional neoliberal shifts to forms of privatised violence in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Additionally, this book's thematic focus on adoption politics also places it within emerging conversations about reproductive justice, an interdisciplinary field that now includes legal scholars, anthropologists and historians. Nolan's book expands this literature as it draws readers away from simple generalisations about providing homes for unwanted children and towards disturbing conclusions about the destructive consequences of the private actions of a powerful cabal of Guatemalan elites who sourced children on demand for foreign clients. As Nolan's book makes clear, international adoption as a practice, though often popularly framed as a way to lift children out of poverty, nonetheless reinforces and reproduces the precise socio-economic inequalities it intends to mitigate within sending countries.

Readers looking for a broader transnational analysis of the socio-economic disparities and racial differences between sending and receiving countries won't find that analysis here. Nolan foregoes analysis of the demands of the 'receiving' countries of the global North, letting them stay in the background to allow full development of the powerful local and national stories she weaves together. Instead, Nolan's study stays firmly rooted in Guatemala and rightly turns the reader's

attention towards local and national politics rather than the international to show how the nation's unique history of oppression, poverty, racism and violence towards Indigenous Maya communities generated its privatised international adoption practices. While the book takes international adoption as its primary thematic focus, the book remains a substantial work of Guatemalan history, admirably weaving together the past and recent present.

Nolan not only analyses state adoption records from Ministry of Social Welfare, but also adoption documents from at least one of the private lawyers who arranged, and continues to defend, international adoption. Nolan received unprecedented access to adoption records of the Ministry, yet the agency later inexplicably revoked public access to those documents, creating a parallel narrative of another type of disappearance, one of an ephemeral archive now unavailable to researchers. Additional source material comes from police records, court cases and personal interviews. The book is at its most compelling when readers get to hear the voices of the many people who made up the Guatemalan adoption system, from lawyers, to birth parents, to baby brokers, to birth mothers, and finally, the people arguably most affected, Guatemalan children separated from their families and sent abroad as adoptees. Overall, Nolan's work makes a valuable contribution to Latin American studies broadly and also provides devastating insight into a dark chapter in Guatemalan history that challenges much popular and academic discourse about the socio-economic benefits of adoption and demonstrates the consequences of its use as a tool of political violence on the lives of thousands of birth mothers in Guatemala and their exported children.

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## **Lewis Taylor, *Gamonales y bandoleros: violencia social y política en Hualgayoc–Cajamarca, 1900–1930* (2nd edition)**

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We're all familiar with those academic works whose titles – typically tricked out with artful alliterations and ludic parentheses – promise the theoretical earth, but finally deliver just another narrow case study: a detailed miniature presented as if it were a new Sistine Chapel. Lewis Taylor's *Gamonales y bandoleros* ('Bosses and Bandits') is rather the reverse. A substantially expanded version of a 1986 English-language monograph, the book is broader and more illuminating than its