Barriers to Electoral Participation in Guatemala: Diagnostic of 4 Municipalities

N. Nevitte
J. Cruz
M. Estok
with the assistance of M. Painter-Main

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Presentation

Even though the present study was part of the Mirador Electoral 2007 (Electoral Watch 2007), both its genesis and interest in it as a subject matter go further back in time than the recent elections. This formal attempt to document the existing barriers to political-electoral participation was the result of a happy convergence: a proposal by the *National Democratic Institute for International Affairs* (NDI), whose advisors have undertaken similar studies in other countries, and FLACSO's interest in reliable data on Guatemala's political reality. This project has allowed both organizations to explore hypotheses in this area. Thus, the results of this survey are a valuable contribution to our knowledge and understanding of certain perceptions and practices regarding political and electoral participation among Guatemalans, and – in this particular case study – among four specific communities.

Survey Characteristics

As indicated in study text, the selection of the four municipalities was not random, rather, they were selected because a large percentage of the population in each of these four locations is k'iche', kaqchikel, q'eqchi' or ladino, respectively. San Martín Jilotepeque represents the kaqchikel group, Momostenango represents the k'iche' group, San Pedro Carchá represents the q'eqchi' group and Jalapa represents the non-indigenous or ladino population. On the other hand, the survey data is drawn from a random stratified sample. Additionally, interviews were conducted alternately between women and men and between youth and adults to analyze behavior patterns and specific conditions of each group.

The present study does not pretend to generalize the findings or to present them as representative of the country's entire indigenous

population nor of specific linguistic groups. In this regard, we must emphasize that several authors have acknowledged that indigenous peoples are just as complex as any other groups of the population; with their own social, economic, cultural and political divisions. In other words, indigenous communities are certainly not homogenous and uniform blocks of population just because they speak the same language.[1]

The careful selection of samples by municipality is a strength of the study because it allows us for the generalization of results for each municipal location. It must be pointed out, however, that it does not intend to tackle all aspects of Guatemala's complex social reality. In that regard, results should be interpreted taking into account the historical, political and socioeconomic context of each municipality and of the country as a whole. These important aspects were not documented here, as they were not the objective of this study.

Another important contribution and strength of this investigation is that samples included citizens registered in the national voters list and those who were not registered; as well as non-citizens in the formal sense of the word, that is, those citizens that lack identity documents. This characteristic is fundamental to understand why the results presented in this study may differ from those of other studies that analyze electoral participation on the basis of votes. The latter only take into account indigenous citizens that effectively do have the identification papers required to exercise the right to vote. For example, a report on indigenous participation presented by a Guatemalan election observation group in 2007 (Mirador Electoral 2007) reveals that electoral participation in indigenous municipalities

[1] See PNUD, 2005. *Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2005*. Also, Mack, Luis. *La participación política del pueblo maya, algunas reflexiones.* FLACSO: Area of Sociopolitical Studies. Unpublished document.

generally ranks above average at a national level; that is, that indigenous citizens who are registered in the voters list do vote more than their ladino counterparts. Nevertheless, the results obtained in this survey allow us to have a first glance at a yet to be explored social phenomenon: the universe of citizens with no identification card and those not registered in the voters list; in other words, the universe of non-citizens. This survey, therefore, is only a first step towards monitoring and understanding the problems that underlie electoral and political participation in Guatemala.

Potential and limitations of study's conclusions

The information and conclusions from this investigation can be an effective tool for understanding the barriers to electoral participation. Essentially, the study identified the institutional barriers and the motivational barriers that condition electoral participation faced by these four groups in selected municipalities. Hence, the process of following up on this proposal and of validating its conclusions at a national level is fundamental, precisely to be able to generalize or to rule out its findings.

In regard to the institutional barriers that this document sets forth, it is necessary to emphasize, on the one hand, the role of state institutions responsible for the registration and accreditation of citizens in the official voters list — their proximity, information policies, access, costs, etc. — which have a great bearing on the fact that a large part of the population does not benefit from the full enjoyment of citizen rights because they can't even obtain their identity card. On the other hand, we must also consider the question of institutional design, in this case, the constitutional requirements for becoming a citizen and the difficulties and costs that obtaining a *cedula* (identity card) and registering in the voters list imply.

In relation to motivational barriers, it is evident that the lack of information and a male dominated-paternalistic culture still play a fundamental role in the imbalance of citizen participation between men and women and young and older people. This happens in indigenous communities as well as in non-indigenous or *ladino* communities. Nonetheless, the marked exclusion of indigenous women cannot be exclusively and entirely attributed to institutional design or to the role of ladino elites, as indigenous communities themselves also exhibit the same behavior and cultural patterns in this respect. Although numerical results do not delve into the causes of these phenomena, the extensive round of workshops and focus group discussions that took place in each one of these communities allowed investigators to hear participants themselves express the difficulties and limitations to political-electoral participation from their own and their community's point of view.

Finally, this study is a contribution to the debate on inclusion and the need to strengthen the rights of indigenous peoples, as well as to our understanding of deficiencies in state institutions responsible for securing political rights. Therefore, these four specific cases are only a sample of the problems the inhabitants of this nation are facing, including those who attempt to exercise their rights and those who are not interested in doing so precisely because they still don't have a clear idea how political participation can be beneficial in such a country as ours, where the construction of democracy has been very slow and the advantages of participating in such a system still seem distant.

Paola Ortiz Loaiza

Area of Sociopolitical Studies, FLACSO

Executive Summary

A citizen's right to vote is a central and defining feature of democratic life in any democracy. And it is perplexing that significant proportions of eligible citizens in transitional and consolidated democracies alike do not vote. Why is this so? And what do we know about non-voting in Guatemala?

This project is designed to provide systematic answers to these questions. First, the starting premise is a straightforward but important one. Choosing not to vote is one thing, but being prevented from voting is quite another. Citizens in all non-compulsory vote environments are entitled not to vote if they so choose. More troubling for democratic practices is the possibility that some citizens face higher obstacles to voting than others. Serious analyses on non-voting have to evaluate both of these explanations. To the second question: What do we know about non-voting in Guatemala? The answer: Not much. One pioneering study based on data prior to 2000 (Boneo and Torres-Rivas, 2001) documents that non-voting is greater among indigenous peoples. But two elections have taken place since then and the election law has changed. Another contribution (Seligson, et. al. 2006), based on a national survey, also provides useful insights into the problem, and it confirms the Boneo and Torres-Rivas insight that non-voting is more prevalent in indigenous peoples. Most analysts familiar with Guatemalan society acknowledge that there are profound differences between communities within the indigenous population. But national random surveys, typically, are not useful tools for exploring those differences.

This project complements and expands upon these earlier investigations in three ways:

- It examines the contemporary election environment, after the significant changes were made to Guatemala's election law.
- It is explicitly designed to allow us to probe more reliably the differences in non-voting between and within a predominantly ladino municipality and three predominantly indigenous municipalities of the following linguistic groups: The K'iche' (Momostenango, Totonicapan), Kaqchikel (San Martin Jilotepeque, Chimaltenango) and Q'eqch'i (San Pedro Carcha, Alta Verapaz)
- It probes more deeply the reasons for non-voting. The research strategy stratified random surveys, drills down into the reasons why different subsets of the population -ladino and indigenous people; men and women, and younger and older people - do not vote.

The project relies on survey and focus groups evidence from four municipalities, and the report is organized into six substantive areas. The core findings are:

Voting and Non-Voting

Indigenous respondents are less likely to vote than non-indigenous respondents. Most striking, fully sixty percent of indigenous women did not vote in 2003, and more than half planned to abstain from voting in 2007. This gender gap in the indigenous vote accounts for most of the aggregate difference between indigenous people and ladinos.

Age is a significant predictor of non-voting, all else being equal. The young vote less. Half of those under 26 years of age did not vote in 2003 and they were twice a likely to abstain as their older counterparts.

Reasons for Not Voting

The most common reasons supplied for not voting are institutional, not lack of interest. A "lack of a proper identification" was the most cited reason by ladino's (42 percent) and indigenous people's (40.6 per cent) alike. The motivational barriers (lack of interest) facing ladino (30%) and indigenous (25.8%) are of the same order. Institutional barriers facing both ladino and indigenous people surveyed are higher than in Nicaragua (34.5%).

Trust in Electoral Actors

Indigenous populations have significantly lower levels of confidence in electoral actors (Election Commission, Parliament and the President) than ladinos. The proportion of respondents in each group with "no trust at all" (24.5%) is significantly higher than the proportion that "completely trusts" them (19.4%). Voting is systematically related to trust in the electoral commission. Voters are significantly more inclined (22.5%) than non-voters (18.5%) to say that they have confidence in the electoral commission.

More than half of Guatemalans say they do not trust political parties, parliament or the President "at all."

Non-Electoral Forms of Participation

High levels of community engagement are strongly related to electoral participation. Associational life in Guatemala is relatively strong. Three of four ladinos and two of three indigenous citizens are engaged in their communities. Levels within the Q'eqchi' respondents (57.9%) are even higher. Significantly, indigenous women are twice as likely as indigenous men to be disconnected from the associational life of their community.

Democratic Values

Fewer than half of respondents supported democratic outlooks. Education (high) and age (youth) are the most powerful predictors of support for democratic outlooks. Satisfaction with democracy emerges as a significant predictor of non-democratic outlooks. Non-democrats are significantly more likely than democrats to be satisfied with the way democracy works in Guatemala.

The concluding discussion explores the implications of the findings. Issues of methodology and the technical details underpinning the statistical analyses are reported in the technical appendices.

Introduction

This project provides systematic information about the electoral environment in Guatemala immediately prior to the 2007 Presidential elections. The central question driving the project is: Do specific segments of the Guatemalan population face barriers that limit their opportunities to participate in elections? If so, what are those barriers? And to what extent did they inhibit the participation of eligible citizens in 2007?

The project starts with the premise that the free and open participation of citizens in elections is healthy for the democratic life of a country. To be sure, there is no country in the world, even those with mandatory voting rules, in which 100% of eligible citizens vote on election day. And in Guatemala, as in many other countries, citizens are entitled not to vote if they so choose. Eligible citizens are entitled to vote and the expectation is that in fair electoral environments the opportunities for voting should be the same for all citizens regardless of who they are.

Evidence from other countries in Central America, however, indicates that citizens from different parts of society do not always have an equal opportunity to exercise their voting rights. In Nicaragua, for example, young people are much less likely to vote than others. That bias has nothing to do with the formal rules about eligibility to vote. Nor is it attributable to the fact that young people are less interested in politics in that country. They are not. Young Nicaraguans are less likely than others to vote because a very substantial proportion of young Nicaraguans do not have the proper credentials for voting (Nicaragua Democracy Survey 2007).

This study is specifically designed to explore the question: Are there significant segments of the Guatemalan population that confront obstacles to full electoral

participation. And if they do, who are they? And, what kind of obstacles do they face? The primary focus is on indigenous people, but the analysis also investigates whether other groups in Guatemala, such as women or young people, face the kinds of barriers to electoral participation that have been found in other countries.

Because the analysis is based on interviews data gathered immediately prior to the 2007 Guatemalan Presidential Elections it is reasonable to suppose that most respondents would be aware that the elections were imminent and that their impressions of the election, the campaign, and how key electoral actors were performing, would be fresh and relatively reliable. The details of the methodology used to collect the data are reported in the Methodological Appendix (Appendix A). But it is useful at the outset to draw attention to three specific features of the research design that significantly shape the interpretation of the data. First, the survey data do not come from a simple random sample. Rather, they are from random stratified samples drawn from four different municipalities in: Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, Alta Verapaz, and Jalapa. At the first three studied cases, different Guatemalan indigenous peoples constitute majorities – the K'iche', Kaqchikel, and Q'eqchi' respectively. In the fourth case, Jalapa, ladinos are the majority group. This research design makes it possible to systematically analyze both indigenous versus ladino variations and it also allows for specific comparisons between K'iche', Kaqchikel and Q'eqchi' respondents.

Second, all interviews were conducted face-to-face and respondents were given the choice to conduct the interview in either Spanish or their own language. Interviewers working in each of the three indigenous majority locations were drawn from those locations. And they were given clear instructions for the selection of their subjects. They

were asked to alternate, for example, in the selection of male and female respondents, and between younger and older respondents. This strategy produces a sufficient number of cases for meaningful analysis of those specific subsets of the population who are sometimes marginalized from the electoral process.

Third, the content and methodology of the surveys were deliberately designed to match the content and methodology of a comparable survey undertaken in Nicaragua in 2007. Thus, the Nicaraguan data potentially provide useful context for interpreting the Guatemalan data.

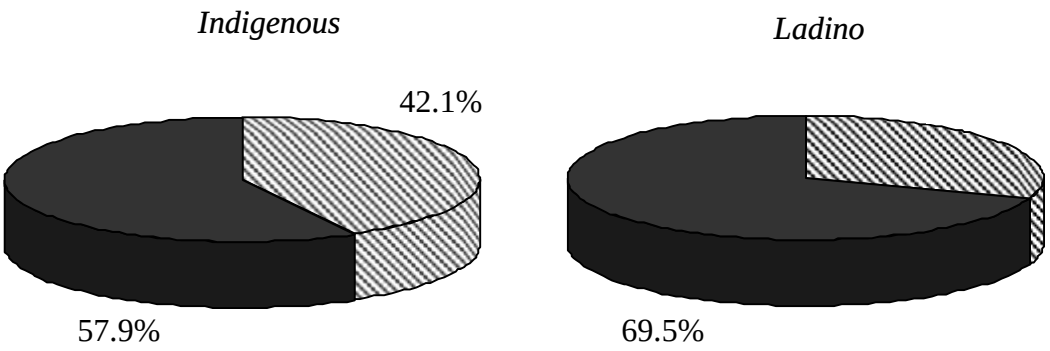
The core of the report is divided into six sections. It begins with a focus on voting and non-voting. The second part examines the reasons people give for not voting and that section is followed by an analysis of public confidence in key electoral actors. The next section considers non-electoral forms of participation and engagement. And the concluding sections turn to the broader issues relating directly to support for democratic values, and evaluations of the future.

Section I: Voting and Non-Voting

The Flacso Barriers Study 2007 asked respondents two direct questions about voting behaviour: "*Did you vote in the last Presidential election?*" And, "*Do you intend to vote in the upcoming Presidential Elections?*"

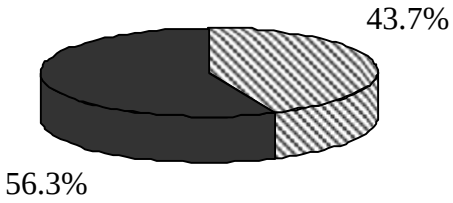
As the summary data in Figure 1 show, ladino respondents in all four researched municipalities were more likely (69.5%) than their indigenous counterparts (57.9%) to say that they voted in the 2003 elections. There are striking similarities across the three locations where different indigenous respondents form the majority. 43.7% of the K'iche' respondents (Momostenango, Totonicapan) reported that they did not vote in 2003 compared to 42.0% of

Figure 1. Voting and Non-Voting: 2007 Guatemalan Presidential Election by Group

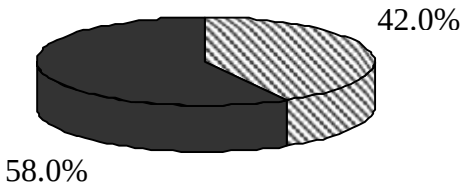


Controlling for Department

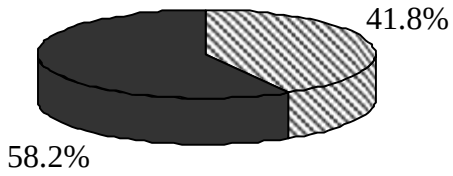
K'iche' (Momostenango, Totonicapan)



Kaqchikel (San Martin Jilotepeque, Chimaltenango)



Q'eqchi' (San Pedro Carcha, Alta Verapaz)



Question: "Did you vote in the last presidential elections of November 2003?"
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

the Kaqchikel (San Martin Jilotepeque, Chimaltenango) and 41.8% of the Q'eqchi' (San Pedro Carcha, Alta Verapaz) respondents. The clearest evidence of any contextual effects comes from the ladino respondents. Only one in four ladinos in Jalapa reported that they did not vote in 2003 compared to some 30.0% for all ladinos in the four samples.[2]

Asking respondents about their intentions to vote in the upcoming 2007 Presidential election has one virtue; it captures the outlooks of those respondents who were too young to vote in 2003. But it also has a drawback: People have good intentions**,** but those intentions are not always reliable predictors of future behaviour. At issue here, however, is not to estimate how optimistic good intentions are, rather it is to

[2]A significant proportion of respondents (some 41.2%) were too young to have been eligible to vote in 2003. For some of the analysis these cases are omitted from consideration.

determine whether there are systematic differences between these same groups when it comes to those intentions.

Not surprisingly, a larger proportion of ladinos said that they intended to vote in the 2007 elections (79.7%) than reported voting in the 2003 Presidential elections (65.5%). That same pattern also applies to indigenous respondents: 57.7% reported voting in 2003 versus 71.2% indicating that they intended to vote in 2007. Far more surprising is the evidence showing that indigenous respondents were about twice as likely as their ladino counterparts (22.2% versus 12.8%) to say that they did not intend to vote.

More detailed comparisons across all four groups suggest that context, being a member of a majority group, does matter: The K'iche' (in Momostenago), Kaqchikel (in San Martin Jilotepeque), Q'eqchi' (in San Pedro Carcha) and ladinos (in Jalapa) are systematically more likely than "others", those who are minorities in those four areas, to report both that they voted in the last election and to say that they intended to vote in 2007.

Are there any factors, other than group identity, that turn out to be systematically related to electoral participation? Research evidence from other countries consistently shows that there are significant differences between various segments of the population when it comes to electoral participation. These findings apply regardless of electoral rules and regardless of whether a country qualifies as a long-established, or a transitional, democracy: Well-educated people, the wealthy and males are consistently more likely to vote than their poorly educated, lower income and female counterparts.

The Flacso Barriers Study 2007 data reveals findings that are entirely consistent with these broader patterns. Moreover, those same findings hold both across and

between different groups. Thus, wealthier ladinos and those who have higher levels of formal education are significantly more likely than their poorer counterparts and those with less education to say that they voted in 2003. The very same pattern also holds for indigenous respondents.

The data in Table 1 clearly show that those same patterns are reflected, although in a more muted form, when it comes to the question of whether people, ladino or indigenous, said they intended to vote in 2007.

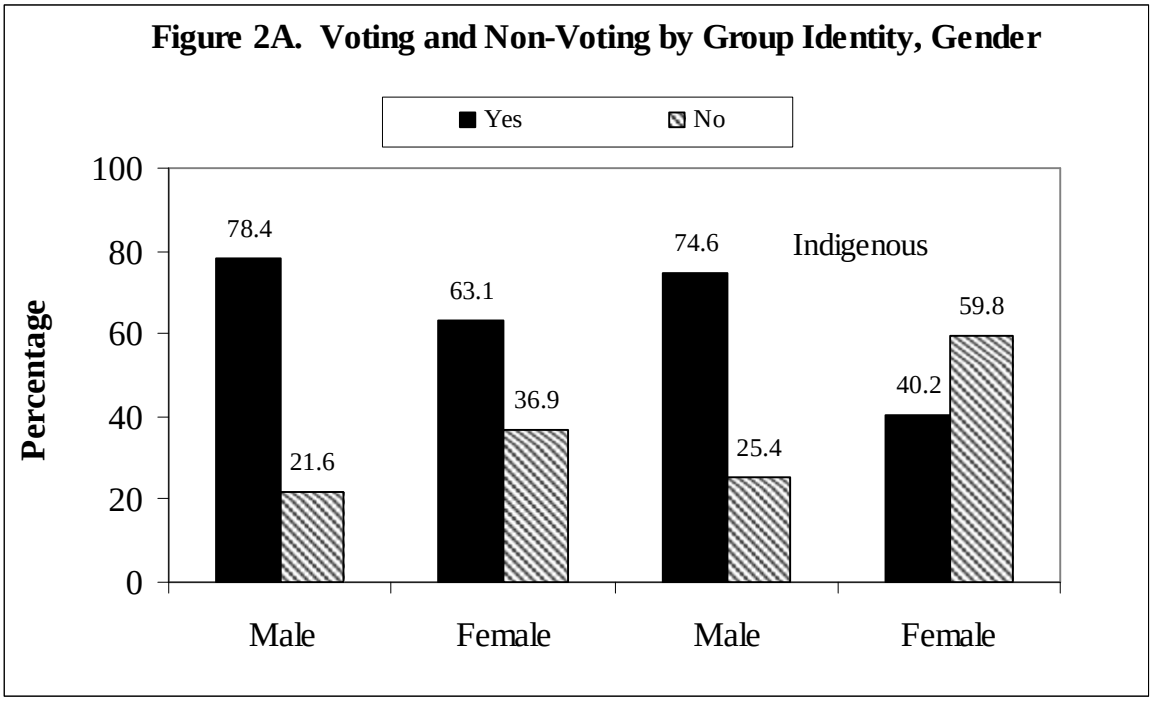
Table 1: Vote in Previous and Upcoming Presidential Election by Income and Education Controlling for Group

	Ladino			**Indigenous**		
	Low	**Medium**	**High**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**
INCOME						
Did You Vote						
(Omitted Too Young)						
Yes	71.7%	61.1%	78.3%	56.9%	63.0%	70.1%
No	28.3	38.9	21.7	43.1	37.0	29.9
Total	60	36	46	376	173	107
Will You Vote						
Yes	81.2%	81.6%	83.1%	71.5%	77.7%	82.0%
No	10.1	12.2	11.9	22.1	16.7	12.5
Undecided	8.7	6.1	5.1	6.4	5.6	5.5
Total	69	49	59	452	215	128
EDUCATION						
Did You Vote						
(Omitted Too Young)						
Yes	69.0%	62.0%	79.4%	48.4%	63.1%	59.5%
No	31.0	38.0	20.6	51.6	36.9	40.5
Total	42	71	63	277	412	220
Will You Vote						
Yes	77.3%	85.9%	76.2%	60.8%	73.9%	76.1%
No	13.6	6.4	17.1	29.7	20.1	18.7
Undecided	9.1	7.7	6.7	9.5	6.0	5.2
Total	44	78	105	296	483	327

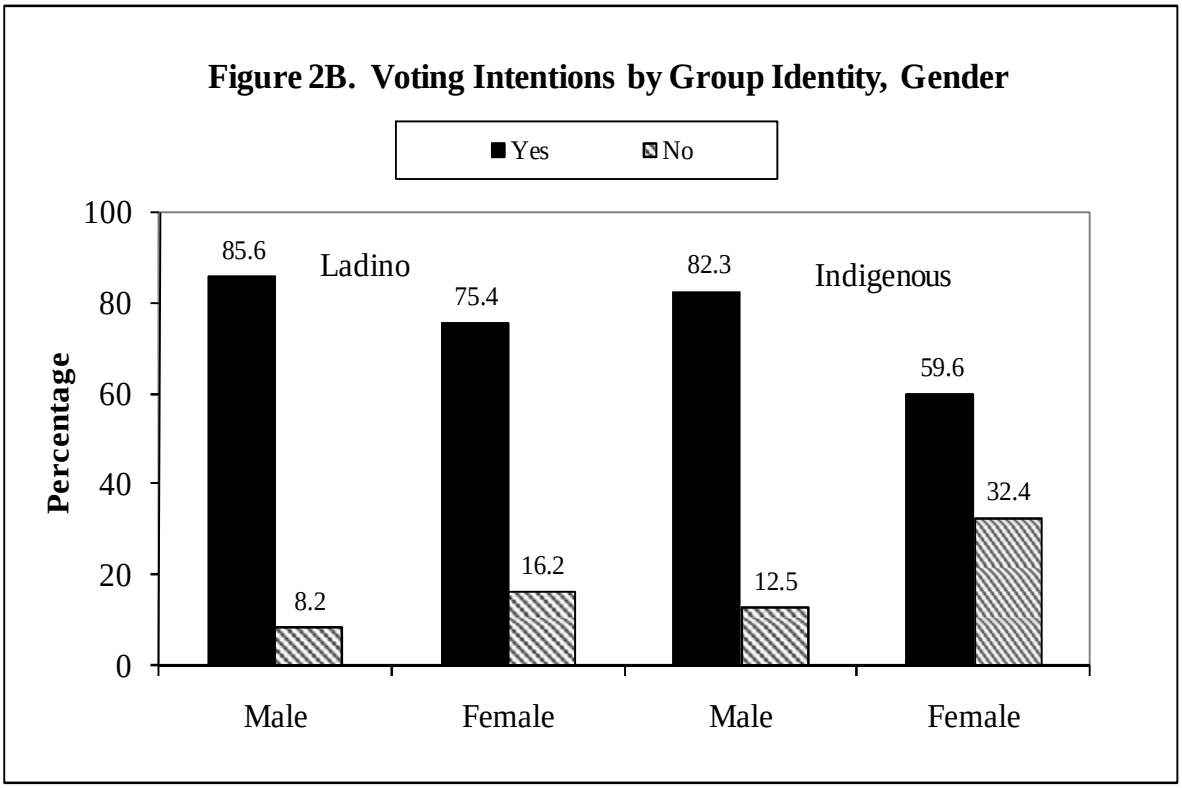
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

The usual explanation for these systematic differences is straightforward. Voting is costly; it requires resources – time, information and interest; those people who are most likely to have those resources at hand, those who are better educated and have more income, are more likely to vote.

Far more remarkable results emerge when gender and age are considered. These findings are summarized in Table 2. First, consider gender. The gender gap in voting is truly striking: Males are significantly more likely than females to report that they voted in the 2003 Presidential elections. And that gender gap holds for ladino and indigenous respondents alike. Indeed, quite aside from the aggregate differences between these two groups, ladino and indigenous males have more in common with each other in this respect than their within-group female counterparts. Certainly, a higher proportion of indigenous males (25.4%) than ladino males (21.6%) reported that they did not vote in



Question: "Did you vote in the last presidential elections of November 2003?"
Figures exclude cases who were too young to vote
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007



Question: "Are you going to vote on September 9?"
Figures do not total 100% because "undecideds" omitted.

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

Table 2. Data for Figures 2A and B: Vote in Previous and Upcoming Presidential Election by Gender Controlling for Group

	Ladino		Indigenous	
GENDER	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Did You Vote (Omitted Too Young)				
Yes	78.4%	63.1%	74.6%	40.2%
No	21.6	36.9	25.4	59.8
Total	74	103	473	448
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Will You Vote				
Yes	85.6%	75.4%	82.3%	59.6%
No	8.2	16.2	12.5	32.4
Undecided	6.2	8.5	5.3	8.0
Total	97	130	570	547

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

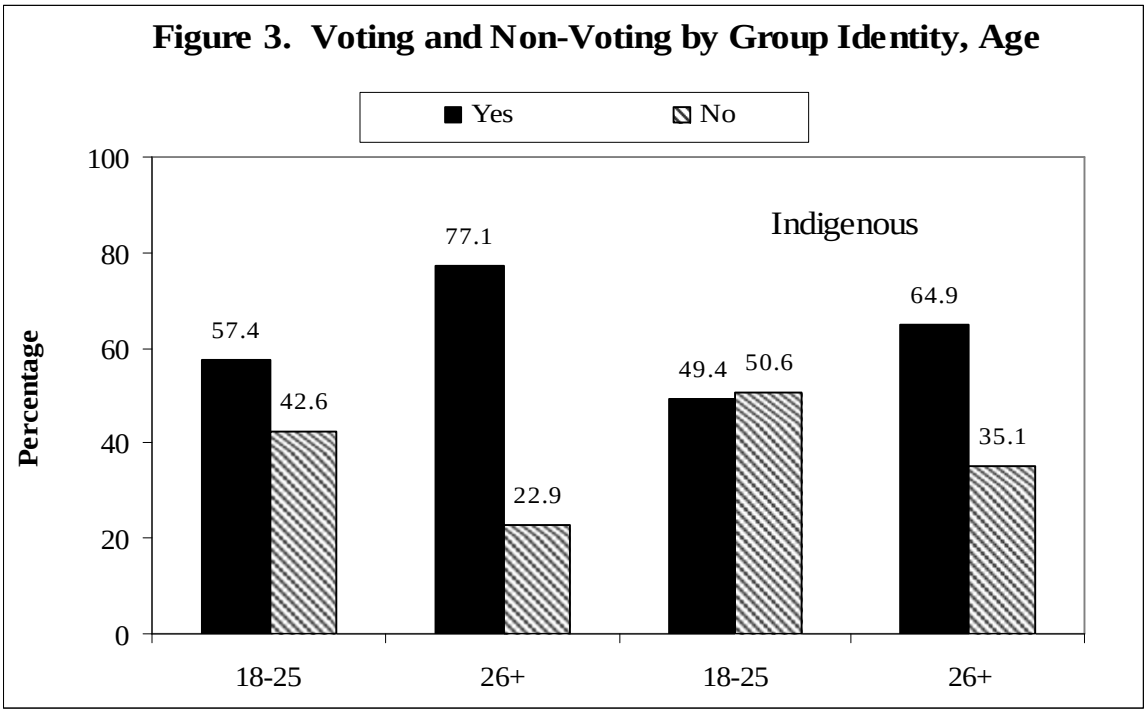
2003. And these differences are statistically significant. Even so, those differences are relatively minor when compared to the comparable data for women. 36.9% of ladino women reported that they did not vote in 2003 compared to 21.6% of ladino men. The gender gap within the indigenous community is even wider. A clear majority of indigenous women (59.8%) indicated that they did not vote in 2003. In effect, indigenous women were two-and-a-half times more likely than indigenous men to not have voted in 2003. In fact, the gender gap within the indigenous community is so large that it alone accounts for most of the aggregate differences in voter turnout between ladinos and indigenous peoples. Indigenous women, it seems, are doubly disadvantaged.

Those same gender gaps are also evident when it comes to respondents' voter turnout intentions in the 2007 Presidential elections. Given the differences between

reporting past behaviour and future intentions, there are reasons to suppose that future vote intentions would effectively reduce the scale of these gender differences. And they do. Even so, it is surely significant that ladino women were still twice as likely (16.2%) as ladino men (8.2%) to say that they did not intend to vote in 2007. And nearly one in three indigenous women (32.4%) indicated that they would not vote in 2007 compared to just 12.5% of indigenous men.

Age also matters. And the effects are precisely what one would expect given the near-consensus coming from cross-national evidence: Politics tends to be a middle-aged sport. The young are nearly always less likely to vote than their elder counterparts.

Figure 3. Voting and Non-Voting by Group Identity, Age



Question: "Did you vote in the last presidential elections of November 2003?"
Figures exclude 326 cases who were too young to vote
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

Table 3. Vote in Previous and Upcoming Presidential Election by Age Controlling for Group

	Ladino		Indigenous	
	18-25	**Over 25**	**18-25**	**Over 25**
Did They Vote (Omitted Too Young)				
Yes	57.4%	77.1%	49.4%	64.9%
No	42.6	22.9	50.6	35.1
Total	68	109	417	504
	18-25	**Over 25**	**18-25**	**Over 25**
Will You Vote				
Yes	77.1%	82.6%	68.0%	75.0%
No	15.3	10.1	24.0	20.0
Undecided	7.6	7.3	8.0	5.0
Total	118	109	616	501

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

Setting aside those cases of people who were too young to vote in 2003, age matters for both ladinos and indigenous respondents: The young are significantly more inclined than their older counterparts to report that they did not vote in 2003. And they are less inclined to say that they intended to vote in 2007. Indeed, fully half of the eligible indigenous youth, those under 26, said they didn't vote in 2003. And indigenous respondents, both the young and others, were about twice as likely as their ladino counterparts to say that they had no intention of voting in 2007.

Three large findings emerge from the data so far. First, there are significant differences between interviewed ladino and indigenous peoples when it comes to electoral participation: ladinos are significantly more likely than indigenous people to vote.

Second, there are very striking gender effects. Women are far less likely to vote than men. And indigenous women are far less likely than ladino women to vote.

Third, there are substantial age effects. The young who are eligible to vote are significantly less likely than their elders to vote. Those age gaps are consistent both within and between ladino and indigenous peoples.

A variety of socio-economic factors appear to be systematically related to non-voting. But which factors are most important? And do these socio-economic characteristics of ladino and indigenous respondents remain significant predictors of non-voting after the effects of other factors are considered and when they are statistically controlled?

Studies of voting behaviour consistently show that people are less likely to vote if they are not interested in politics. Electoral participation might also be shaped by what people think of key electoral actors. Levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works in the country may also matter. And it is surely reasonable to assume that language might be a significant barrier to participation for some of Guatemala's indigenous people. If election campaigns are conducted primarily in Spanish then it becomes harder for those who do not understand Spanish to know where political parties and candidates stand on the major issues of the day.

To isolate which of these factors, and which socio-economic characteristics, are significant determinants of non-voting when all variables are considered together requires a different statistical approach – multivariate analysis. That strategy makes it is possible to determine whether the factors driving non-voting among indigenous peoples and ladino respondents are the same, or different, by considering the two groups separately.

The results emerging from the multivariate analysis (see Appendix B) reveal a number of relevant findings. Among indigenous respondents four factors turn out to be statistically significant predictors of non-voting after all other variables are controlled – gender, age, trust in the legislature, and interest in politics.

1. Indigenous women are significantly less likely to vote than indigenous men. This gender gap persists after all other variables are statistically controlled.

2. Age is a significant predictor of non-voting, all else being equal. The young are less likely to vote.

3. Indigenous respondents who have less confidence in the legislature are, all other factors being equal, significantly less likely to vote than those who do have confidence in the legislature.

   and

4. Indigenous respondents with little interest in politics are significantly less likely to vote than their counterparts who are more interested in politics, all else being equal.

There is also one noteworthy non-finding: Knowledge of the Spanish language does not emerge as a statistically significant predictor of non-voting after all other factors are taken into account. To be sure, the direction of the estimate (-0.09) is consistent with the expected impact of language capability; the lack of knowledge of Spanish does depress voter turnout somewhat. But the impact of the language barrier is not statistically significant once other factors are taken into account.

Do the same variables predict non-voting among ladino respondents? The short answer is "no". In fact, the only statistically significant predictor of non-voting among ladinos is age: Young ladinos are significantly less likely to vote than their older counterparts (see Appendix B). That finding holds after all other such factors as income,

education level, confidence in electoral institutions and interest in politics are taken into account.

The multivariate analysis clarifies our initial results in two important respects: First, gender is a powerful barrier to voting for indigenous women. And second, age is a powerful barrier to non-voting for ladino and indigenous young people alike. These barriers to participation are clear, and they are not attributable to other factors.

Section II: Reasons for Not Voting

Several important questions emerge from these initial findings: Why are indigenous peoples less inclined to vote than ladinos? Why do women vote less than men? And why do the young participate less than their older counterparts? The Flacso Barriers Study 2007 probed these issues.

Respondents who said "No" to the question "*Did you vote in the November 2003 Presidential Election?*" or to the question "*Are you going to vote on September 9 (2007)*?" were asked two follow-up questions: "*Why did you not vote in the last election?*" and "*What is the main reason for you not voting?*"

The aggregate responses to those questions are reported in Table 4. Not surprisingly, people offer up a variety of reasons for not voting in Guatemala as elsewhere.

Table 4. Reasons for Not Voting in the Previous and Upcoming Election by Group Identity

Why did you not vote in the last election? (Omitted Too Young)	**Nicaragua (2007 National Sample)**	**Ladino**	**Indigenous**	**K'iche'**	**Kaqchikel**	**Q'eqchi'**
Lack of Identification	34.5%	42.0%	40.6%	40.9%	34.8%	49.5%
Lack of Interest	24.8	30.0	25.8	25.2	22.8	24.3
Out of my municipality	11.4	12.0	8.4	13.9	8.7	2.9
Sick	11.4	8.0	9.0	11.3	9.8	5.8
Not on the voter's list	4.8	0	2.0	.9	4.3	1.0
Lack of transportation	3.5	4.0	4.3	0	2.2	11.7
Other	9.6	4.0	9.9	7.8	17.4	4.9
Total	290	50	345	115	92	103

Why will you not vote in the upcoming election?					
Lack of Identification	38.2%	40.2%	42.2%	37.0%	45.9%
Lack of Interest	26.5	30.5	31.4	31.5	29.7
Out of my municipality	2.9	3.1	3.9	0	0
Sick	2.9	2.3	3.9	1.9	1.4
Not on the voter's list	0	.8	0	0	1.4
Lack of transportation	0	4.3	1.0	5.6	6.8
Didn't update my registry*	8.8	8.6	3.9	11.1	12.2
Other	20.5	10.0	13.7	13.0	2.7
Total	34	256	102	54	74

* This category was singled out (rather than put in 'Other') because it has a motivational component to it.
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

Cross-national research typically distinguishes between two quite distinct clusters of reasons that people give for not voting. There are institutional reasons for why some people do not vote. These institutional reasons, or institutional barriers, refer to such procedural matters as the lack of proper identification, or perhaps the fact that an eligible voters' name is not on the voters list. Motivational barriers, by contrast, include such reasons as "lack of interest" or "the candidates were not good enough". These two types of reasons for non-voting are profoundly different. Institutional barriers refer to procedural obstacles that stand in the way of voter participation; those obstacles often lie beyond the control of voters themselves. Motivational barriers, by contrast, are entirely within the control of the individual voter; it is the voter herself who decides not to vote.

The data summarized in Table 4, then, are most usefully interpreted by asking the question: To what extent is non-voting attributable to institutional factors or to motivational factors? Three key findings emerge from these data. First, a comparison of

the distributions reported in the second and third columns of that table indicates that "lack of proper identification" (an institutional barrier) is clearly the most frequent reason for not voting amongst both ladino and indigenous respondents alike. Indeed, the impact of this institutional barrier is almost identical for both groups when the "not on the voters list" answers given by indigenous respondents are added to the "lack of proper identification" responses.

Second, the scale of the motivational barriers facing ladino (30.0%) and indigenous (25.8%) respondents are of about the same order. Moreover, the responses of these groups fluctuate within the same range when the distribution of reasons given for not voting in 2003 are compared to the reasons offered for not voting in the "upcoming election". These two similar "readings" from two different, but comparable, reference points suggest that the data are reliable.

Third, there are, however, significant variations between the K'iche' (in Momostenango, Totonicapan), Kaqchikel (in San Martin Jilotepeque, Chimaltenango) and Q'eqchi' (in San Pedro Carcha, Alta Verapaz) respondents. In this instance, the aggregate response (column 3) masks significant variations between the respondents within these three communities. The institutional barriers to voting are substantially higher for the Q'eqchi (49.5%) than for the K'iche' (40.9%) or Kaqchikel (34.8%). These differences are statistically significant. There are virtually no differences between these groups, however, when it comes to motivational barriers (lack of interest). All are in the same range: About one in four say that "lack of interest" is the main reason for not voting. Note, also, that the pattern of reasons given for not voting in the "upcoming

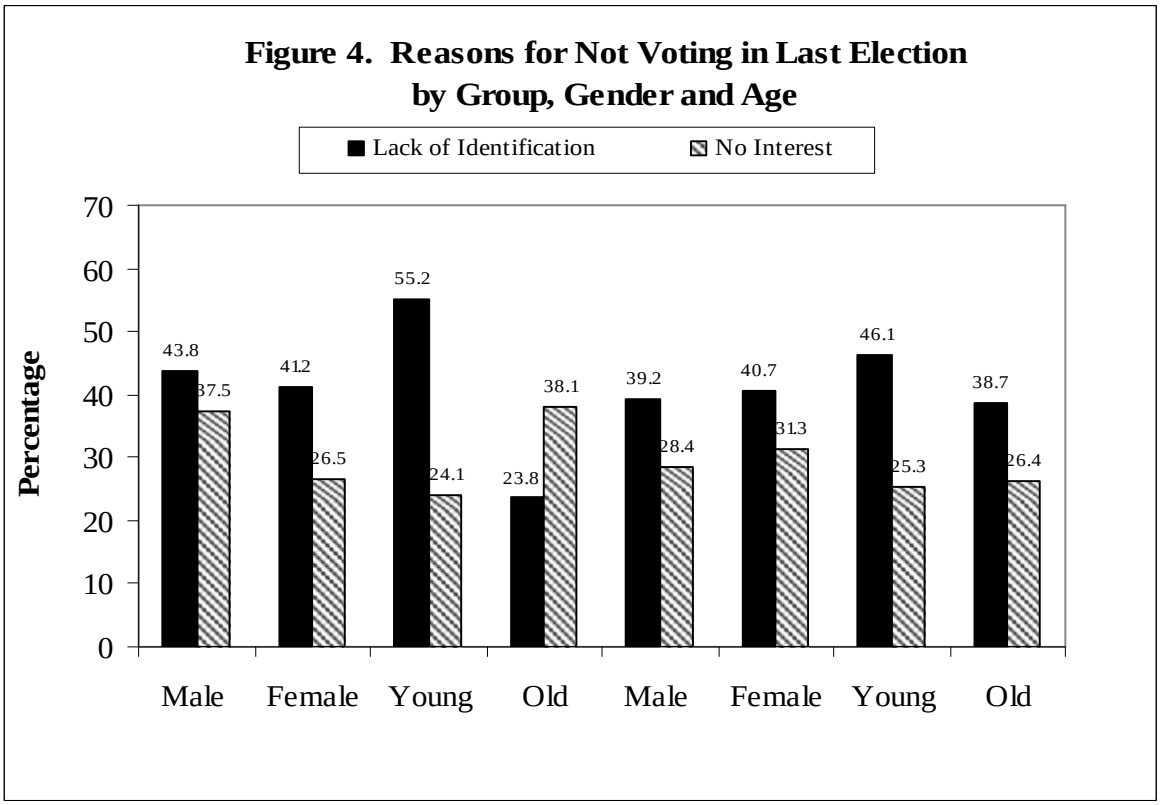
September 9th election" are essentially similar to those given for not voting in the 2003 elections.

How should these findings be interpreted? Comparable cross-national data provide useful context: How do these results stack up against findings from similar settings?

The data summarized in the leftmost column come from a directly comparable survey, using identical questions and response options undertaken in Nicaragua in 2007. The Nicaragua Democracy Survey Report interpreted the scale of institutional barriers facing eligible voters, 34.5% in that case to be "troublingly high". By that standard, the institutional barriers facing both ladino and indigenous people surveyed in Guatemala are clearly problematical; they are even higher.

But what about other variations within Guatemalan society? Evidence presented so far shows that, in addition to ladino/indigenous variations, substantial gender and age gaps are also significantly related to electoral participation. How, then, are institutional and motivational reasons for non-voting distributed across these groups? The core findings are summarized in Figure 4.[3]

[3]The balance of motivations for not voting in the upcoming elections echo those for not voting in the last election. There are too few cases for male ladinos to draw reliable conclusions from this subgroup.



Question: "Why did you not vote in the last elections?"
Figures exclude cases who were too young to vote
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

Table 5. Reasons for Not Voting in the Previous and Upcoming Election by Gender and Age Controlling for Group

Why did you not vote in the last election? (Omitted Too Young)	**Ladino**		**Indigenous**	
GENDER	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Lack of Identification	43.8%	41.2%	32.4%	44.0%
Lack of Interest	37.5	26.5	23.5	26.7
Out of my municipality	12.5	11.8	21.6	2.9
Sick	0.0	11.8	11.8	7.8
Not on the voter's list	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.1
Lack of transportation	0.0	5.9	1.0	5.8
Other	6.3	2.9	7.8	10.7
Total	16	34	102	243
Why will you not vote in the upcoming election?				
GENDER	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Lack of Identification	50.0%	33.3%	39.2%	40.7%
Lack of Interest	10.0	33.3	28.4	31.3
Out of my municipality	0.0	4.2	5.4	2.2
Sick	0.0	4.2	5.4	1.1
Not on the voter's list	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1
Lack of transportation	0.0	0.0	4.1	4.4
Didn't update my registry*	10	8.3	4.1	10.4

Other	30.0	16.7	13.5	8.8
Total	10	24	74	182
Why did you not vote in the last election? (Omitted Too Young)				
	18-25	**Over 25**	**18-25**	**Over 25**
AGE				
Lack of Identification	55.2%	23.8%	44.5%	36.2%
Lack of Interest	24.1	38.1	25.3	26.4
Out of my municipality	6.9	19.0	8.8	8.0
Sick	3.4	14.3	7.7	10.4
Not on the voter's list	0.0	0.0	1.6	2.5
Lack of transportation	6.9	0.0	2.7	6.1
Other	3.4	4.8	9.3	10.4
Total	29	21	182	163
Why did you not vote in the last election? (Omitted Too Young)				
	18-25	**Over 25**	**18-25**	**Over 25**
AGE				
Lack of Identification	50.0%	16.7%	43.8%	34.4%
Lack of Interest	22.7	33.3	28.8	33.3
Out of my municipality	0.0	8.3	2.5	4.2
Sick	0.0	8.3	0.0	6.3
Not on the voter's list	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1
Lack of transportation	0.0	0.0	5.6	2.1
Didn't update my registry*	4.5	16.7	8.1	9.4
Other	22.7	16.7	11.3	8.3
Total	22	12	160	96

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

The sample sizes for the ladino respondents are small and for that reason it is important to interpret these data cautiously. But there are two key findings are worth noting at the outset. First, institutional barriers to voting are high across all groups, but they are significantly higher for both ladino and indigenous youth. Note that the levels of non-voting among the young, for the most part, are not attributable to lack of interest, rather the young are significantly more likely than their older counterparts to indicate that they did not vote because they did not have the proper identification.

Second, although the gender gap is modest, ladino males and older ladinos are more likely than others to indicate that they do not vote because they are "not interested". There is also evidence of some income and educational effects, but in both cases the effects are modest and mostly consistent with expectations. Higher income respondents

are less likely than their low income counterparts to indicate that they face institutional barriers to voting. And respondents with higher levels of formal education are less likely to report that they did not vote for motivational reasons.

The lack of proper identification is clearly the most important single reason respondents gave for not voting. And that finding, in turn, raises yet another question: What is the explanation for why these citizens do not have a cedula?

The Flacso Survey asked all respondents the same direct question: *"Do you have a cedula?"* The vast majority of respondents (97% of ladinos, 90% of K'iche', 95% of both Kaqchikel and Q'eqchi' respectively) reported that they do have cedulas. But those who answered "No" were then asked a follow-up question: *"Why do you not have a cedula?"* The responses are summarized in Table 6. Even though the number of respondents in this category are

Table 6. Reasons for Not having a Cedula by Group

Reasons for not having a cedula	Ladino	Indigenous	K'iche'	Kaqchikel	Q'eqchi'
No birth certificate	14.3%	6.7%	5.6%	12.5%	0.0%
Do not need it	14.3	22.7	16.7	18.8	31.3
No money to pay fees	0.0	12.0	8.3	0.0	37.5
Don't know where/how to get	0.0	4.0	8.3	0.0	0.0
Too far away to get	0.0	9.3	8.3	6.3	12.5
Requested one, but not received	0.0	1.3	2.8	0.0	0.0
Lost it	0.0	10.7	16.7	12.5	0.0
Haven't completed the process	42.9	8.0	11.1	12.5	0.0

No time to get it	0.0	9.3	5.6	6.3	18.8
Other	14.3	4.0	2.8	6.3	0.0
Don't Know	14.3	12.0	13.9	25.0	0.0
Total	7	75	36	16	16

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

quite small there are some intriguing differences between ladino and indigenous respondents. First, the data show that indigenous respondents were more than twice as likely as ladinos (6.6% versus 3.0%) to say that they did not have a cedula. Most ladino respondents (43%) indicated that they "hadn't completed the process"; they anticipate receiving a cedula. Indigenous respondents, by contrast, were more likely to indicate that they had lost their cedulas (K'iche', 16.7%; Kaqchikel, 12.5%) and that they did not have the money to pay the fees for a cedula (Q'eqchi', 37%; K'iche', 8.3%). They were also more inclined than ladinos (22.7% versus 14.3%) to believe that they did not need a cedula. Ladinos, however, were more likely than indigenous respondents (14.3% versus 6.7%) to indicate that they did not have a cedula because they had no birth certificate.

A second institutional barrier to voting concerns the fact that some voters' names were not on the voter's list. Once again, indigenous respondents (22.7%) were more likely than ladinos (16.2%) to report that they were not on the voter's list. About one in three ladinos not on the voter's list indicated that they "didn't need to be on the list" and about one in four indigenous respondents expressed the same view. But the primary reason respondents gave for not being on the voter's list concerns resources- information, time, money and distance. Indigenous respondents were more likely than ladinos to say that they "had no time" (14.5% versus 9.3%) and that they "had no money to pay the fees" (10.8% versus 9.3%). That said, a very substantial proportion of respondent from all groups indicated that they did not know where, or how, to get on the voter's list. One

in five Kaqchikel respondents (21.3%) and about one in six ladinos (16.3%) gave those responses.

In short, the lack of a cedula and not being on the voter registration list are significant institutional barriers facing would be voters. Both of those barriers to voting are higher for Guatemala's indigenous peoples than for their ladino counterparts.

In going to the polling station on election day voters have the satisfaction of knowing that they are doing their duty as citizens. Quite aside from this salutary effect of voting, there is a practical question that arises from these findings: Does it matter if some people do not vote?

On possibility is that it does not matter. For example, if voters and non-voters have exactly the same priorities when it comes to views about what are the most important issues of the day, then not voting may make no difference to what kind of issue agenda is discussed during the election campaign. In that sense, voters would be speaking for non-voters. But if the issue priorities of non-voters are different from those of voters and political parties have a greater incentive to listen to voters, then it is possible that the preferences of non-voters will go underrepresented. The Flacso Barriers Study 2007 asked all respondents the same open-ended question: *"In your opinion, what is the most urgent problem facing the country?"*

A comparison of the responses given by voters and those supplied by people who could not vote because they faced institutional barriers to voting are revealing. On balance, non-voters are significantly more likely than voters to identify economic

matters- the lack of job opportunities and poverty- as the most serious problems facing the country.

The priorities of non-voters and voters diverge quite sharply within specific subsets of the population. Among indigenous males, for example, those who cannot vote because of institutional barriers are twice as likely (42.4% versus 21.4%) as their voting counterparts to say that unemployment and the lack of job opportunities are the "most important problem facing the country". And women who are unable to vote for institutional reasons are significantly more likely than those who can vote to identity crime and lack of security as the most important problem facing the country.

Quite aside from evaluations about the problems facing the country, non-voters are more inclined than voters to believe that the government pays no attention, or too little attention, to Guatemala's indigenous peoples.

Given these differences in priorities and outlooks, it is hard to argue that voters, in that sense, speak for those who are not able to vote.

Section III: Trust in Electoral Actors

A variety of different actors play important roles during election campaigns, on election day itself, and in the immediate post-election environment. Public confidence in these institutions is a key pre-requisite for elections to be regarded as legitimate. The hope is that citizens will have confidence in all of these actors. The 2007 FLACSO Survey asked all respondents: *"How much confidence do you have in the work of the election commission, political parties, the media, the legislature and the President?"*

The full results are summarized in Table 7. Once again, the comparative data from the Nicaragua Democracy Survey 2007 provide benchmark contextual information.

Table 7. Levels of Trust for Electoral Actors by Group

	Departments					
Electoral Commission	**Nicaragua (2007 National Sample)**	**Ladino**	**Indigenous**	**K'iche'**	**Kaqchikel**	**Q'eqchi'**
Complete trust	10.2%	18.9%	19.4%	18.5%	24.0%	16.8%
Much trust	19.1	27.7	23.0	13.3	19.4	33.5
Some trust	42.9	32.7	33.0	32.5	27.3	40.2
No trust	27.9	20.7	24.5	35.7	29.3	9.5
Total	1437	217	942	286	242	316
Political Parties						
Complete trust	3.2%	8.6%	8.3%	9.5%	11.7%	4.3%
Much trust	8.2	10.0	10.0	4.9	6.8	18.7
Some trust	39.2	25.3	30.6	23.1	27.1	45.4
No trust	49.4	56.1	51.1	62.5	54.5	31.6
Total	1437	221	1,049	347	266	326
Parliament						
Complete trust	3.0%	8.8%	8.7%	9.9%	11.4%	5.4%
Much trust	7.2	9.2	14.9	5.7	10.3	29.7
Some trust	40.3	23.5	30.0	24.0	26.6	42.6
No trust	49.5	58.5	46.4	60.4	51.7	22.4
Total	1423	217	1,020	333	263	317

President						
Complete trust	14.3%	8.9%	14.8%	13.1%	21.5%	12.6%
Much trust	17.6	15.0	15.2	5.2	11.7	29.7
Some trust	41.1	26.6	31.8	29.4	22.6	45.1
No trust	27.1	49.6	38.2	52.3	44.2	12.6
Total	1415	226	1,043	344	274	317
Media						
Complete trust	11.7%	29.1%	32.0%	35.2%	24.6%	34.4%
Much trust	26.2	26.4	22.2	16.1	23.5	28.7
Some trust	51.4	30.4	31.2	31.1	36.1	28.1
No trust	10.7	14.1	14.7	17.6	15.9	8.8
Total	1456	227	1061	347	277	331

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

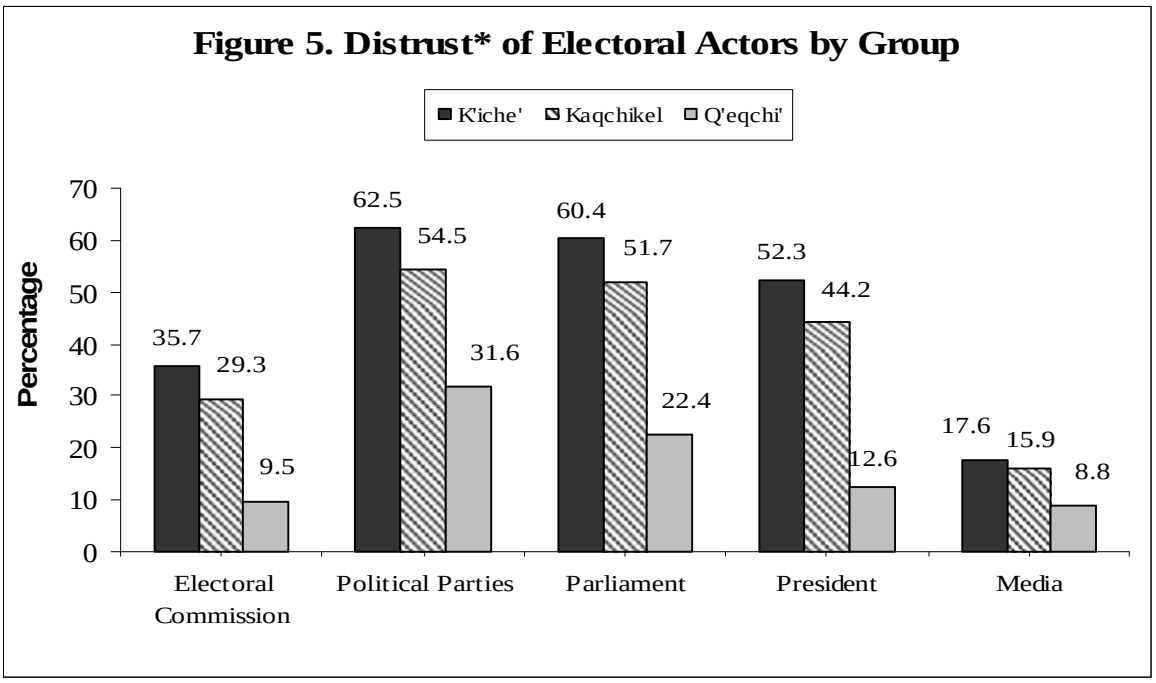
The place to begin is with a comparison of how the responses for each group are distributed across the polar categories: What proportion of each group says that they "completely trust" or "do not trust at all" each actor?

Consider first the election commission. Guatemalans are more likely than their Nicaraguan counterparts to say that they "completely trust" their election commission. Indeed, Nicaraguans are about three times more likely to say that they "do not trust at all" their election commission (27.9%) as they are to say that they "completely trust" it (10.2%).

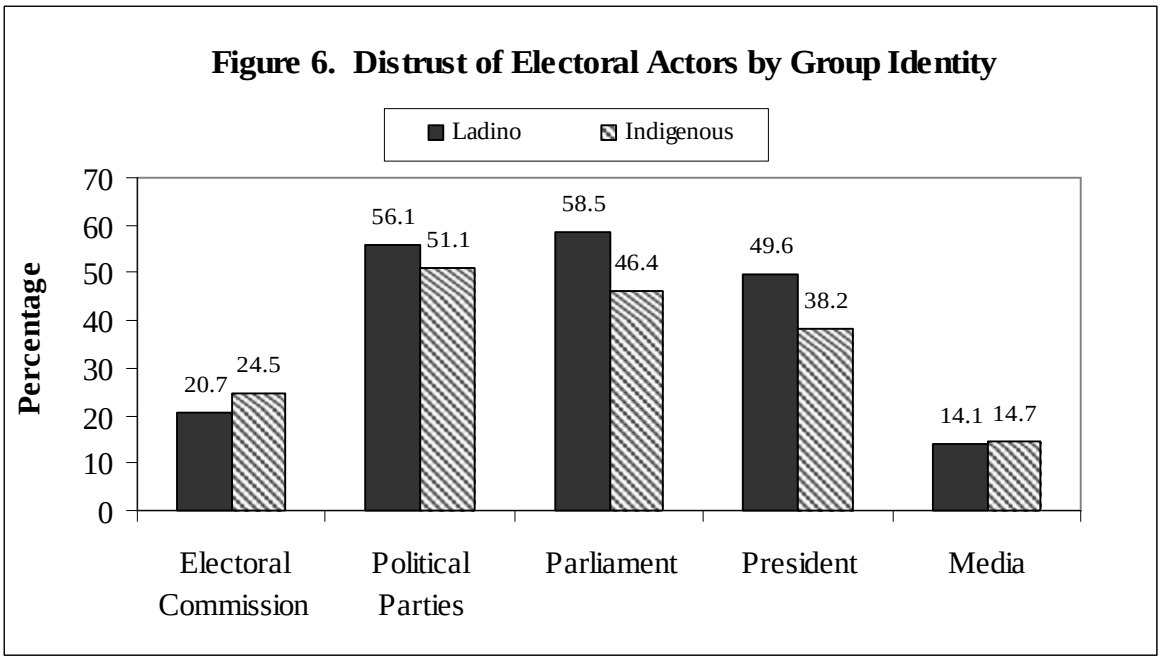
Guatemalan respondents are more evenly divided. About one in five ladinos (18.9%) say they completely trust the election commission, while a similar proportion (20.7%) do not trust it at all. Indigenous respondents are similar in one respect: About one in five (19.4%) say that they "completely trust" the election commission. But, indigenous respondents from the researched municipalities, are significantly more likely (24.5%) than their ladino counterparts to say that they do not trust the electoral commission. And there are very substantial differences between indigenous respondents. Levels of complete distrust of the election commission are much higher among K'iche'

(35.7%) and Kaqchikel (29.3%) than among the Q'eqchi' (9.5%) respondents. Indeed, the Q'eqchi' appear to be outliers with respect to levels of trust in all of the electoral actors considered.

When it comes to political parties, a near majority of Nicaraguans (49.4%) and a clear majority of ladinos (56.1%), K'iche' (62.5%) and Kaqchikel (54.5%) say that they do not trust political parties "at all". But slightly less than a third (31.6%) of Q'eqchi' hold that view.



Question: "Do you trust the following electoral actors?"
*Percentage indicating "no trust at all" in each institution
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007



Question: "Do you trust the following electoral actors?"
* Percentage indicating "no trust at all" in each institution
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

The differences are even more dramatic when it comes to trust in Parliament and the President. Most ladinos (58.5%), K'iche' (60.4%) and Kaqchikel (51.7%) do not trust parliament at all. 22.4% of Q'eqchi' hold that view.

Three general conclusions emerge from these data. First, levels of trust in these key electoral actors are low. The proportion of respondents in each group reporting that it has "no trust at all" in these electoral actors is significantly higher than the proportion that "completely trusts" them.

Second, with the exception of the Q'eqchi' respondents, ladinos have more confidence in these actors than indigenous respondents.

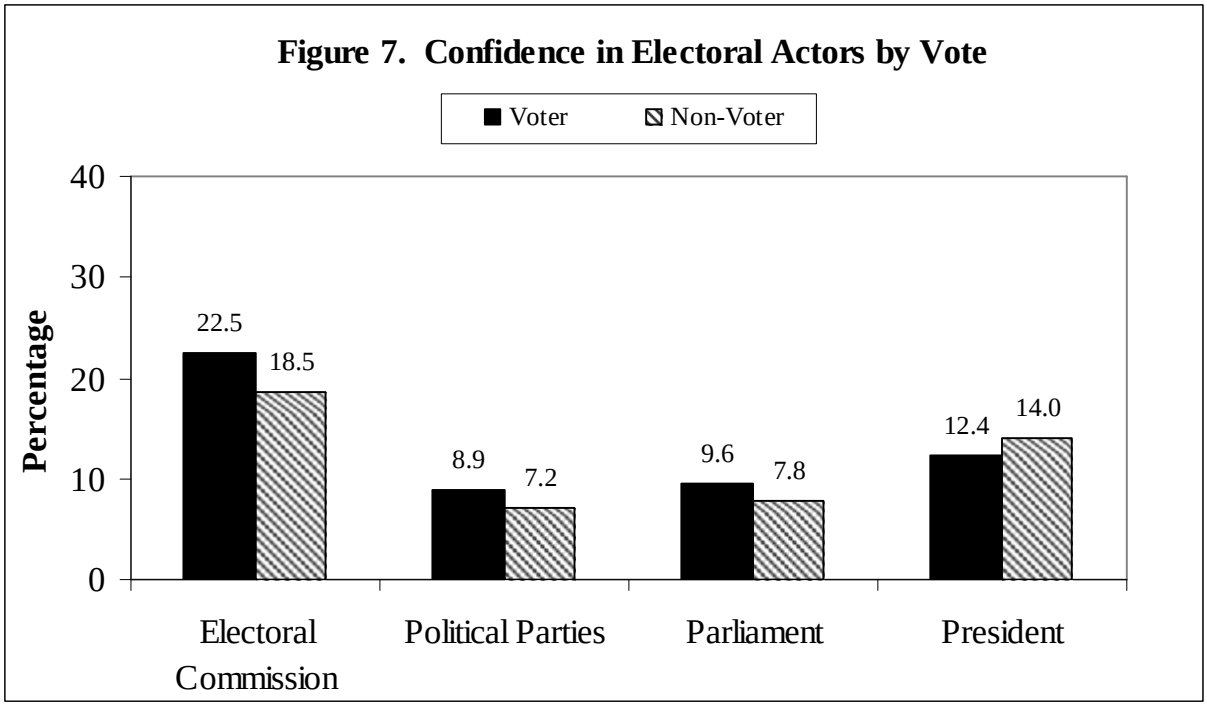
Third, respondents' views about the media are clearly quite different. Arguably, the media are not "electoral actors" in the same sense that applies to the other institutions. It is significant, perhaps, that the media are the only group for whom the proportion of

respondents trusting the media "completely" outweighs the proportion of respondents who do not trust them at all.

Publics in most countries, new and old democracies alike, are at least somewhat distrustful of politicians and political parties. At issue, however, is not just the question of how much, or how little, trust citizens have in particular electoral actors. The more central question for this analysis is: Are these low levels of trust in electoral actors consequential for voter turnout? Put differently, do low levels of trust in political parties, or the electoral commission, turn out to be systematically related to levels of electoral participation?

The hypothesis can be stated in a straightforward way: If levels of trust in electoral actors have no impact whatsoever on electoral participation, then we would expect to find no difference whatsoever between voters and non-voters when it comes to how much trust people in these groups have in these various institutions.

The core findings summarized in Figure 7 are revealing. Voters are somewhat more likely than non-voters to say that they have "more confidence" in political parties and parliament. And non-voters are marginally more likely than voters to express confidence in the President. But none of these differences are statistically significant. There are, however, statistically significant differences between the two groups when it comes to the election commission: Voters are significantly more inclined (22.5%) than non-voters (18.5%) to say that they have confidence in the electoral commission.



Question: "Do you trust the following electoral actors?"
Figures exclude cases who were too young to vote
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

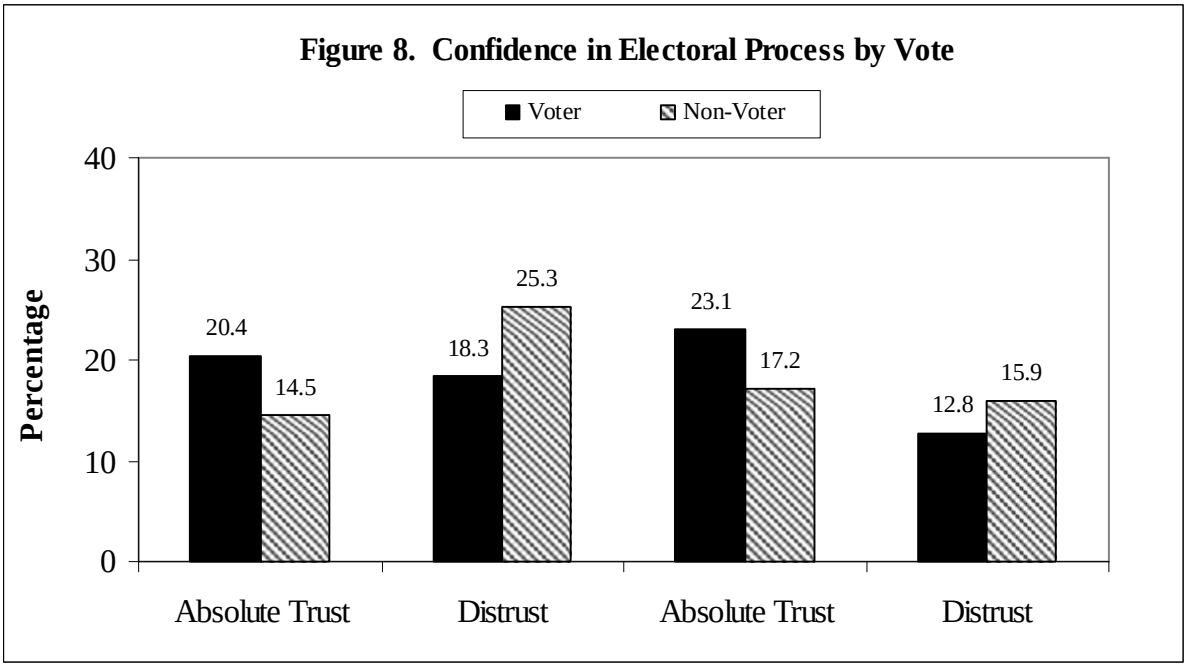
The Flacso Barriers Study 2007 asked all respondents two quite specific follow-up questions about the election commission: *"Do you trust the official results of the last election?"* and *"Do you trust that the election commission is going to be fair and impartial?"*

The expectations are the same as before: If the evaluations of the election commission have no impact on voter turnout then there should be no difference between voters and non-voters when it comes to trusting the official results or beliefs about the impartiality and fairness of the electoral commission.

The data summarized in Figure 8, however, show that there are statistically significant differences between voters and non-voters. Non-voters are substantially less likely to trust election results (25.3%) than voters (18.3%). And non-voters are

significantly more likely (15.9%) than voters (12.8%) to believe that the election commission is not fair and impartial.

Figure 8. Confidence in Electoral Process by Vote



Questions: "Do you trust the official results of the last election?" and *"Do you trust that the election commission is going to be impartial and fair?"*
Figures exclude cases who were too young to vote
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

The core findings to emerge from these data concerning confidence in electoral institutions are as follows:

First, the absolute levels of confidence in those actors that have institutional responsibilities during elections are low. The proportions of respondents indicating that they have "no confidence at all" in these institutions substantially outweigh the proportions that express "complete confidence" in these institutions. That finding holds across ladino and indigenous respondents.

Second, respondents do discriminate between different electoral actors; fewer people have "no confidence at all" in the media, and fewer have "no confidence at all" in the election commission than in political parties, parliament or the President.

Third, however, lack of confidence in the electoral commission, trust in the official results, and beliefs about the fairness of the election commission are systematically related to voter turnout.

The perceived shortfall in trust of electoral actors, particularly the election commission, raises a quite practical question: Are there measures that could be reasonably introduced to increase citizen confidence in the administration of elections? One practice commonly followed to promote confidence in the electoral process is to have non-partisan and impartial actors such as international or domestic organizations participate by observing elections. Election observations are sometimes regarded as intrusive, and election commissions sometimes see them as unnecessary. But is there any public support for the idea?

The Flacso Barriers Study 2007 asked respondents two questions about election observers: *"Do you believe the participation of international electoral observers is: very necessary…might somehow help…I doubt it will help…or it is useless?"* And *"What about Guatemalan electoral observers that do not belong to any of the political parties, how necessary do you consider their participation to help in the upcoming elections?"*

The responses to these questions are summarized in Table 8. Once again, the data from the Nicaragua Democracy Survey 2007 provide a useful context.

Table 8. Support for Election Observation by Group

	Departments					
International Observers	**Nicaragua (2007 national sample)**	**Ladino**	**Indigenous**	**K'iche'**	**Kaqchikel**	**Q'eqchi'**
Really necessary	65.9%	41.6%	33.7%	27.6%	35.5%	37.6%
Help a little	24.3	43.4	42.6	44.9	42.9	37.3
Doubt they can help	3.7	9.6	12.2	13.0	11.3	14.8
Useless	6.1	5.5	11.5	14.6	10.4	10.3
Total	1457	219	950	301	231	311
National Observers						
Really necessary	62.1%	40.0%	31.3%	28.4%	27.5%	36.3%
Help a little	30.2	41.9	45.9	48.4	47.2	42.8
Doubt they can help	3.7	9.8	12.8	13.1	14.4	12.3
Useless	4.0	8.4	10.1	10.1	10.9	8.6
Total	1453	215	963	306	229	325

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

First, the levels of support for international and domestic election observers are about the same among Guatemala respondents; they are less emphatically enthusiastic than their Nicaragua counterparts. Two out of five ladinos see international or domestic observers as "really necessary". And another two out of five believe that having observers would at least "help a little".

Second, support for election observation among respondents from the three indigenous communities is a bit more muted. But a clear majority, over two thirds of respondents in each group, believe either that election observers are "really necessary" or would "help a little". Only one in ten view the presence of observers as "completely useless".

Section IV: Forms of Engagement

(A) Civic Engagement

Voting is vital to the democratic health of a country; it is the primary means by which citizens hold their leaders accountable. But there are other forms of engagement, such as participation in the associational life of a community, that also contribute in important ways to a vibrant democracy. Activity in community associations has also been linked to trust. And a substantial body of evidence indicates that, together, trust and associational activity nurture social capital, a key attribute of well functioning democracies (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993).

The Flacso Barriers Study 2007 asked all respondents about the extent to which they participated in a variety of social, cultural, sports and other community groups. And from those responses we can create a summary index that identifies the different levels of engagement of different respondents.

Respondents were asked: *"I'm going to mention a list of groups and I'd like you to tell me if you have participated in the following types of meetings or activities over the past year: Church or religious groups, cultural groups, sports groups, unions or worker associations, political parties or community development groups."* The distribution of levels of civic engagement are summarized in Table 9 and there are a number of noteworthy results. First, there are substantial cross-national variations. The levels of

Table 9. Association Membership Activity by Group[4]

Associational membership/ involvement	**Nicaragua (2007 national sample)**	**Ladino**	**Indigenous**	**K'iche'**	**Kaqchikel**	**Q'eqchi'**
Low/None	39.8%	24.5%	36.5%	43.1%	44.7%	24.8%
Moderate	24.1	22.6	20.2	17.8	24.5	17.2
High	36.1	52.8	43.3	39.1	30.8	57.9
Total	1367	212	946	302	253	290

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

associational activity are significantly higher for ladinos and indigenous respondents surveyed than in Nicaragua. Almost 40% of Nicaraguans reported low levels of associational activity. By comparison, only one in four ladinos in the Guatemalan sample (24.5%) and one in three indigenous respondents (36.5%) qualified as disengaged. Second, there are also significant variations across the three researched indigenous municipalities. Q'eqchi' respondents were the most fully engaged; 57.9% reported high levels of associational activity, significantly higher than K'iche' (39%) or Kaqchikel (30.8%) respondents.

Third, notice also that levels of associational activity are significantly related to the likelihood of voting: 73.1% of all respondents reporting high levels of associational activity also reported that they voted. Of those with low levels of associational membership, by contrast, only about half (53%) indicated that they voted in the last election.

Given the evidence already shown, there are reasons to anticipate that both gender and age might matter. And they do. As the evidence summarized in Table 10 shows, there are

[4]See Appendix C for coding details

Table 10. Association Membership Activity by Age and Gender Controlling for Group

	Indigenous		Ladino	
Associational membership/ involvement	**Young**	**Over 25**	**Young**	**Over 25**
Low/None	37.9%	34.7%	23.4%	25.7%
Moderate	19.9	20.5	20.7	24.8
High	42.2	44.8	55.9	49.5
Total	522	424	111	101
	Indigenous		**Ladino**	
Associational membership/ involvement	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Low/None	23.4%	50.7%	19.8%	28.5%
Moderate	19.3	21.2	26.0	19.8
High	57.3	28.2	54.2	51.7
Total	492	454	96	116

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

clear age effects across different community groups. Young and old ladinos are more engaged than their young and older indigenous counterparts. If there is one somewhat surprising finding to emerge it is that young ladinos exhibit levels of associational engagement (56%) that are higher than those of their older ladino counterparts (49.5%). Far more intriguing, however, are the effects of gender reported in the bottom half of Table 10.

Regardless of which community they come from, women are much more likely than their male community members to be disconnected from the associational life of their community. And the differences are statistically significant. The most striking finding of all concerns the extent to which indigenous women are disengaged. More than

half (50.7%) of indigenous women are disengaged compared to about one in four (23.4%) of indigenous males and one in five (19.8%) of ladino males and 28% of ladino women. And older respondents are about twice as likely as indigenous women to qualify as "high" on the engagement index.

Do these findings matter for electoral participation? The evidence seems to suggest that they do. The core finding emerging from Table 11 is that people who participate more in the associational life of their community are also more likely to vote. When the connection between associational membership and vote turnout is examined for each and every subgroup – young and old ladinos and indigenous people, male and female ladinos and indigenous people, the very same pattern holds. A more detailed analysis of these data shows that even among indigenous males with low associational involvement, voters outnumber (see Table 12) the proportion of non-voters by a ratio of

Table 11. Vote by Associational Membership Controlling for Identity Group

	Indigenous			**Ladino**		
Did you vote in the last election? (excluding those too young to vote)	**Low/None**	**Moderate**	**High**	**Low/None**	**Moderate**	**High**
Voters	45.5%	55.1%	71.5%	62.8%	67.6%	77.1%
Non-voters	54.5	44.9	28.5	37.2	32.4	22.9
Total	277	158	330	43	37	83

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

Table 12. Vote by Associational Membership Activity Controlling for Gender and Group

Did you vote in the last election? (excluding those too young to vote)	Indigenous Male Low/None	Male Moderate	Male High	Ladino Male Low/None	Male Moderate	Male High
Voters	65.6%	69.3%	82.1%	71.4%	75.0%	83.8%
Non-voters	34.4	30.7	17.9	28.6	25.0	16.2
Total	93	75	234	14	20	37
Did you vote in the last election? (excluding those too young to vote)	**Indigenous Female Low/None**	**Female Moderate**	**Female High**	**Ladino Female Low/None**	**Female Moderate**	**Female High**
Voters	35.3%	42.2%	45.8%	58.6%	58.8%	71.7%
Non-voters	64.7	57.8	54.2	41.4	41.2	28.3
Total	184	83	96	29	17	46

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

about 2:1. For indigenous females with similarly low levels of associational involvement the pattern is reverse: non-voters outnumber voters by a ratio of 2:1. The sharpest evidence of the extent to which women face a steep electoral barrier is that female non-voters outnumber voters, regardless of levels of associational involvement. That finding stands in stark contrast to their ladino counterparts.

(B) Political Action

Associational engagement provides one general indication of the extent to which citizens are connected to a broader community. In the 1970's an influential group of researchers (Barnes, Kaase et al, 1979) pioneered the development of survey indicators that measure the extent to which citizens are prepared to participate in more specific

direct forms of political action. Those indicators have been repeatedly tested in multiple national settings (Dalton, 1988, 1996; Norris, 1999; Inglehart, 1997; Nevitte, 1996) and they were also included in both the Nicaragua Democracy Survey 2007 and the Flacso Barriers Study 2007. Respondents were asked if they had participated, were willing to participate, or not willing to participate in three direct action behaviours: *"(1) make a direct request for government authority; (2) participate in a legal demonstration; and (3) support a protest"*. The cumulative responses to these questions indicate the extent to which different people are inclined to engage in direct forms of political action. The basic findings, which include data from the Nicaragua Democracy Survey 2007, are reported in Table 13.

Table 13. Political Action by Group[5]

Political Action	**Nicaragua (2007 national sample)**	**Ladino**	**Indigenous**	**K'iche'**	**Kaqchikel**	**Q'eqchi'**
Low/None	25.9%	31.1%	37.5%	34.5%	46.9%	32.7%
Moderate	23.2	19.3	21.9	19.0	20.5	28.0
High	50.9	49.5	40.6	46.5	32.7	39.4
Total	1491	212	960	310	254	297

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

Like their Nicaraguan counterparts, about half of ladino Guatemalans tend to rate high when it comes to their inclinations to engage in direct political actions. Guatemala's indigenous respondents are significantly less inclined to do so.

The cumulative evidence drawn form a number of different national settings typically indicates that different forms of engagement tend to be related to each other.

[5] See Appendix C for coding; Alpha=.61

Data showing levels of associational activity are related to levels of voter activity among Guatemalans have already been reported. Thus it should it come as no surprise to discover that levels of direct political activity are related to both associational engagement and patterns of electoral turnout in similar ways. The data from the Flacso Barriers Study 2007 provide further empirical support for those expectations. A more detailed analysis of these patterns for all groups examined reveal the following:

1. Women are less inclined than men to engage in direct political action. And that gender gap holds within both indigenous and ladino respondent groups.
2. 47% of indigenous women are disinclined to participate in ***any*** form of direct political action, compared to 34% of ladino women. 29% and 28% of indigenous and ladino men respectively fall into this "non-participatory" category.
3. Age also matters. Young indigenous respondents (39%) are ***less*** likely to engage in direct action strategies than their young ladino counterparts (27%).
4. And for each group, preparedness to engage in direct political action is significantly related to the likelihood of voting in the predicted way: People who engage in direct political action are also systematically more inclined to vote. These patterns hold both within and between all groups – ladinos and indigenous respondents, the young, the old, men and women.
5. When respondents scores on the associational and political action indexes are considered together, as summarized in Table 14, two significant findings are underscored once again:

Table 14. Political Disengagement by Group Controlling for Age and Gender[6]

Political Disengagement	Indigenous Young	Indigenous Over 25	Ladino Young	Ladino Over 25
Completely Disengaged	19.7%	17.2%	5.8%	13.7%
Somewhat Disengaged	59.2	58.0	57.7	54.7
Engaged	21.0	24.8	36.5	31.6
Total	461	367	104	95

Political Disengagement	Indigenous Male	Indigenous Female	Ladino Male	Ladino Female
Completely Disengaged	10.3%	28.0%	6.5%	12.2%
Somewhat Disengaged	57.8	59.7	60.9	52.3
Engaged	32.0	12.3	32.6	35.5
Total	438	390	92	107

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

i. The proportion of indigenous respondents who are completely disengaged is significantly higher than for the ladino sample;

ii. The least engaged of all groups are indigenous women: Only 12% of indigenous women qualify as engaged compared to 32% of indigenous men, 33% of ladino men and 36% of ladino women.

[6] See Appendix C for coding

Section V: Trust and Democratic Values

The main focus to this point has been on people's particular and immediate views about Guatemala's electoral context in 2007. After presenting evidence concerning the scope and scale of voting and the specific reasons why some respondents choose not to vote, the focus shifted to broader views of trust in electoral actors and forms of participation that go beyond voting. This final section turns to consider even broader issues that relate more generally to those outlooks that promote successful democratic transitions. Citizen participation in elections and civic life and confidence in electoral institutions are necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for democratic life. Democracies are sustainable only when significant proportions of the citizenry subscribe to broader democratic values (Diamond, Linz and Lipset, 1988). One such value is interpersonal trust. The evidence indicates that interpersonal trust contributes to social cohesion; the widespread embrace of the norms of reciprocity contributes significantly to social, economic and political dynamics associated with a vibrant civil society (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993). Societies with higher levels of interpersonal trust are more prosperous; they find it easier to sustain democratic practices. These findings, based on systematic evidence from the World Values Survey (Welzel, 2004; Abramson and Inglehart, 1995) have far reaching implications.

Three decades of civil strife in Guatemala are not easily forgotten, especially by those with first hand experience with the conflict. Nonetheless, it is difficult to promote democratic practices when mutual distrust is deep and entrenched. Nor is it easy to sustain democratic institutions when publics are excessively cynical[7]. Then again,

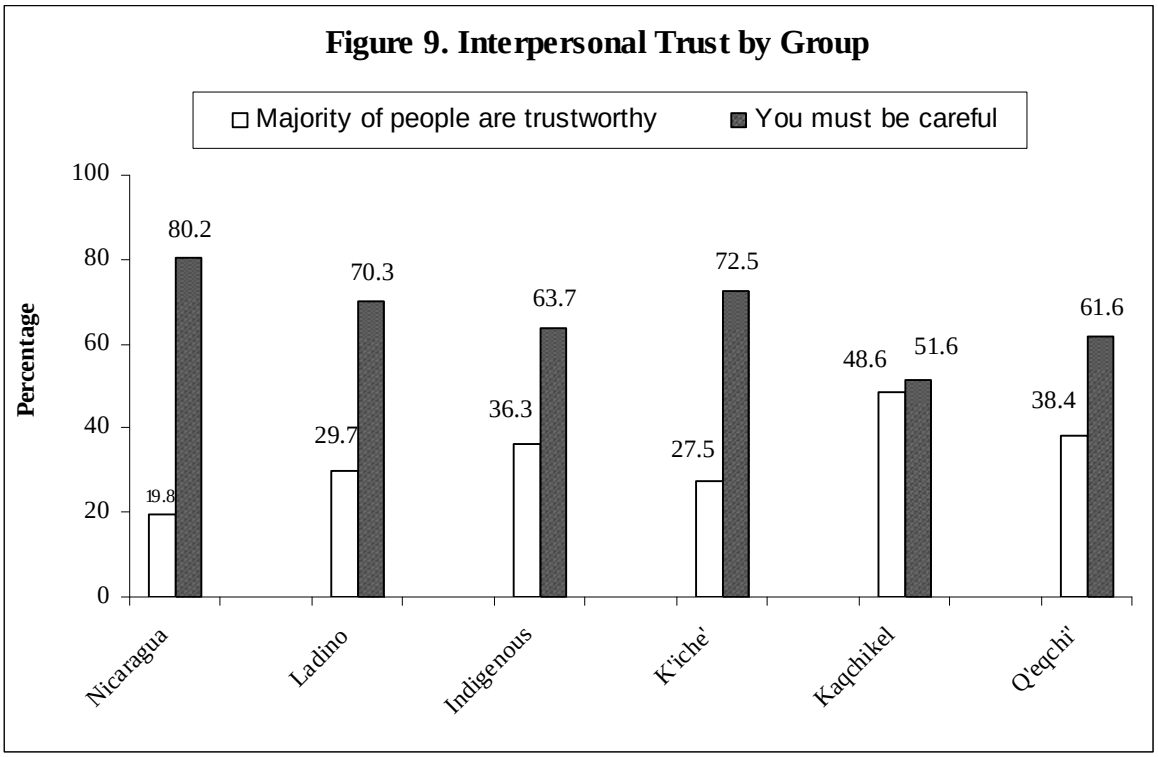
[7] Cynicism takes on different meanings in colloquial use in Spanish and in the social science community. In the social science community, Cynicism refers to a psychological skepticism captured by agreeing with two

democratic practices can only be expected to work when citizens value democratic practices. In most transitional democracies support for these practices is uneven.

(A) Trust

The Flacso Barriers Study 2007 asked respondents a variety of questions that allow us to probe these issues. It included a standard question about interpersonal trust: *"Speaking about people in your community (neighbourhood or village) do you think you can trust most of them, or do you have to be careful when dealing with them?"* The basic responses are reported in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Interpersonal Trust by Group



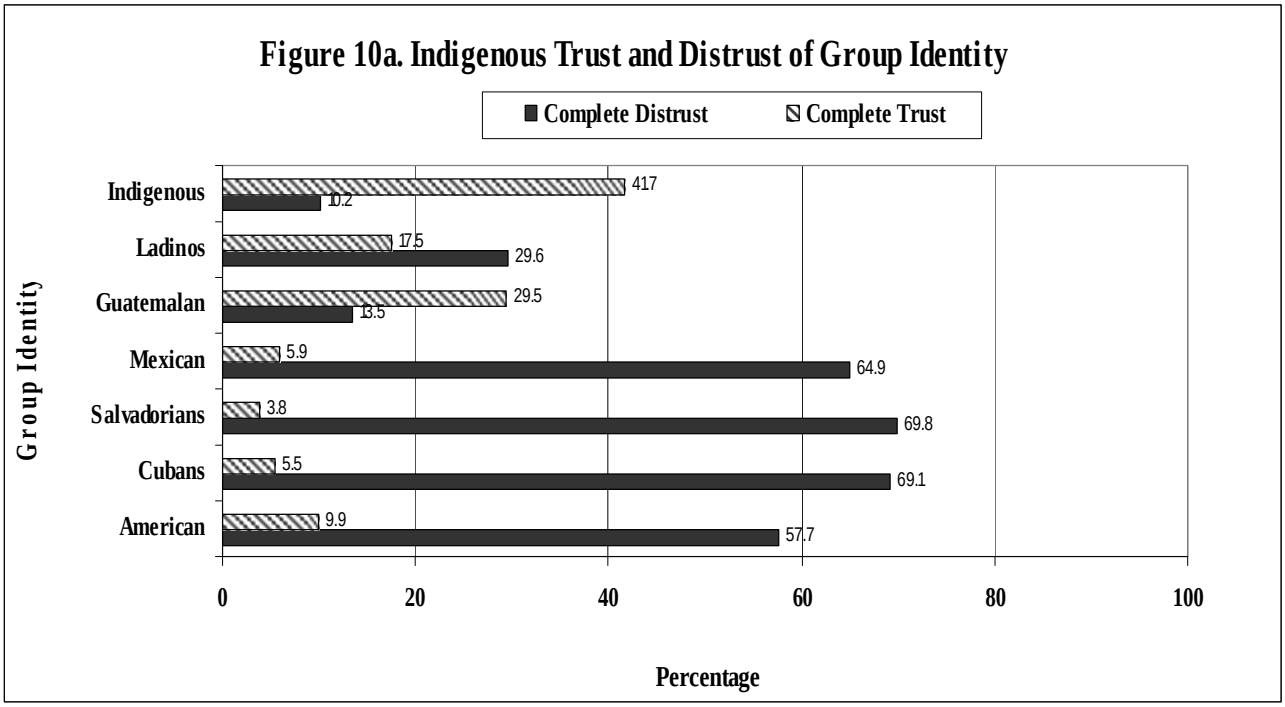
Source: 2007 Flacso Barriers Study 2007

statements: 1. I believe that the government doesn't care about people like me; and 2. Politicians lie to be elected.

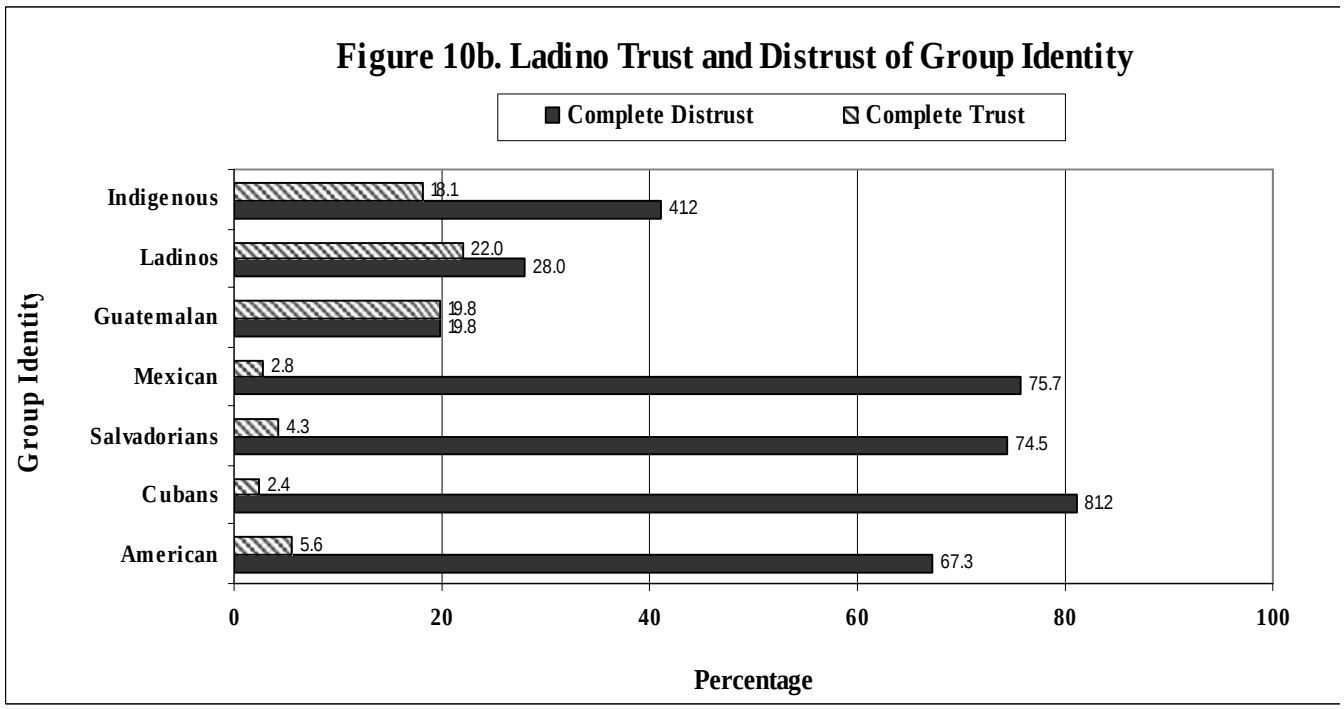
Once again, data from the Nicaragua Democracy Survey 2007 provide a larger context. Like Guatemala, a significant proportion of the Nicaraguan public also has fresh memories of civil strife. About four out of five Nicaraguans qualify as "distrustful" of others. A clear majority of Guatemalans, about two out of three, also qualify as distrustful of people in their community. K'iche' respondents are the least trustful and Kaqchikel respondents exhibit the highest levels of interpersonal trust. Even so, a majority of that group (51.4%) nonetheless is more likely to distrust rather than trust their neighbors.

The Flacso Barriers Study 2007 adopted a battery of World Values Survey questions that shed light on a more specific aspects of trust that is particularly pertinent in communally divided societies-intergroup trust. Specifically, all respondents were asked: *"How much do you trust the following groups?"* And the groups listed, for ladinos and indigenous respondents alike included: "indigenous people", "ladinos: and "Guatemalans" as well as such external reference groups as "Mexicans", "Salvadorians", "Cubans", and "Americans". Typically, people are more inclined to trust "their own kind", ingroups, and less inclined to trust more distant "others", outgroups.

Those expectations are supported by the evidence. Figures 10A and 10B summarize levels of intergroup trust for indigenous and ladino respondents respectively. The focus is on polar responses- complete trust, and complete distrust.



Question: *"How much do you trust/distrust the following groups?"*
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007



Question: *"How much do you trust/distrust the following groups?"*
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

First, levels of distrust of distant outgroups are consistently substantially greater for distant outgroups- Mexicans, Salvadorians, Cubans and Americans- than for within country groups. That finding holds for both indigenous and ladino respondents. Ladinos, however, are generally less trusting of these outgroups than their indigenous counterparts.

Second, the ladino- indigenous variations in levels of trust/distrust for domestic reference groups are intriguing. When it comes to "own group" comparisons, for example, indigenous respondents are about twice as likely as ladinos (41.7% versus 22.0%) to completely trust people from their own community.

Third, also intriguing are the asymmetries of intergroup trust and distrust. About 30% of indigenous respondents say they "completely distrust" ladinos. That finding is essentially the same for how ladinos feel about ladinos; 28% of ladinos completely distrust ladinos. The proportion of ladinos who completely distrust "indigenous people" (41.2%), by contrast, is substantially greater than the proportion of indigenous respondents (29.6%) who distrust "ladinos".

These outlooks are also mirrored in how indigenous and ladino respondents perceive and evaluate, the conditions that indigenous people face in the country. The Flacso Barriers Study 2007 asked all respondents three different questions probing perceptions of the conditions facing indigenous peoples:

1. *"Do you think that the indigenous in this country are better off, worse off, or about the same as ladinos?"*
2. *"Do you think that the government pays too much attention to the indigenous, too little attention, or about the right amount of attention?"*

and

3. *"Here are two statements. Please tell me which one comes closest to your own views:*
    - *(i) The indigenous would be better off if they worked more*
    - *(ii) It doesn't matter how hard the indigenous work, they will always be the same because of the discrimination problem"*

The summarized responses are reported in Table 15.

Table 15. Views about Indigenous People

	Indigenous	**Ladino**
Condition of Indigenous in Guatemala compared to Ladinos		
Better	17.2%	26.2%
Equal	35.8	46.6
Worse	47.1	27.2
Total	1,067	206
Attention given to Indigenous by Government		
Too much	4.3%	17.8%
Appropriate	9.2	11.2
Too little	57.7	60.3
None	28.8	10.8
Total	1,083	214
Perceptions of Indigenous People		
Better if they worked more	43.9%	36.6%
No matter how much they work, discrimination will be the same	56.1	63.4
Total	1,032	216

Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

First, and not surprisingly, there are significant differences between ladinos and indigenous respondents when it comes to how they evaluate the conditions facing indigenous peoples. Nearly half of all indigenous respondents (47.1%), but just 27.0% of ladinos, evaluate indigenous peoples as worse off than ladinos.

Second, a clear majority of both ladino (60.3%) and indigenous respondents (57.7%) agree that the government pays "too little attention" to indigenous people. In

fact another 28.8% of indigenous respondents (and 10.8% of ladinos) thought that indigenous peoples were invisible as far as the government is concerned; they received no attention at all.

The third set of findings, those concerning what indigenous people can do to improve their conditions and about the impact of discrimination, are far more surprising. A majority of indigenous respondents and ladinos alike agreed with the view that "no matter how much the indigenous work, discrimination will be the same." The striking finding is that a larger proportion of ladino respondents (63.4%) than indigenous respondents (56.1%) hold that view.

(b) Democratic Values

Democratic practices are hard to support, and democratic institutions hard to sustain, in the absence of public support for democratic values (Eckstein, 1988). But countries vary according to the extent to which those values are shared. The Flacso Barriers Study 2007 asked a number of questions designed to evaluate citizen commitment to democratic values. Borrowing from the pioneering work of Linz and Stepan (1996) and Klingemann (1999), the 2007 FLACSO Survey included a set of indicators that reliably measure democratic outlooks[8]. These indicators include views about the acceptability of authoritarian regime types.

The democracy outlooks index is based on the following questions:

"Tell me if you completely agree, agree, disagree or completely disagree with…"

1. *having a strong leader that governs without elections or Congress*
2. *having experts who act according to what they believe is best for the country*

[8] Alpha=.63

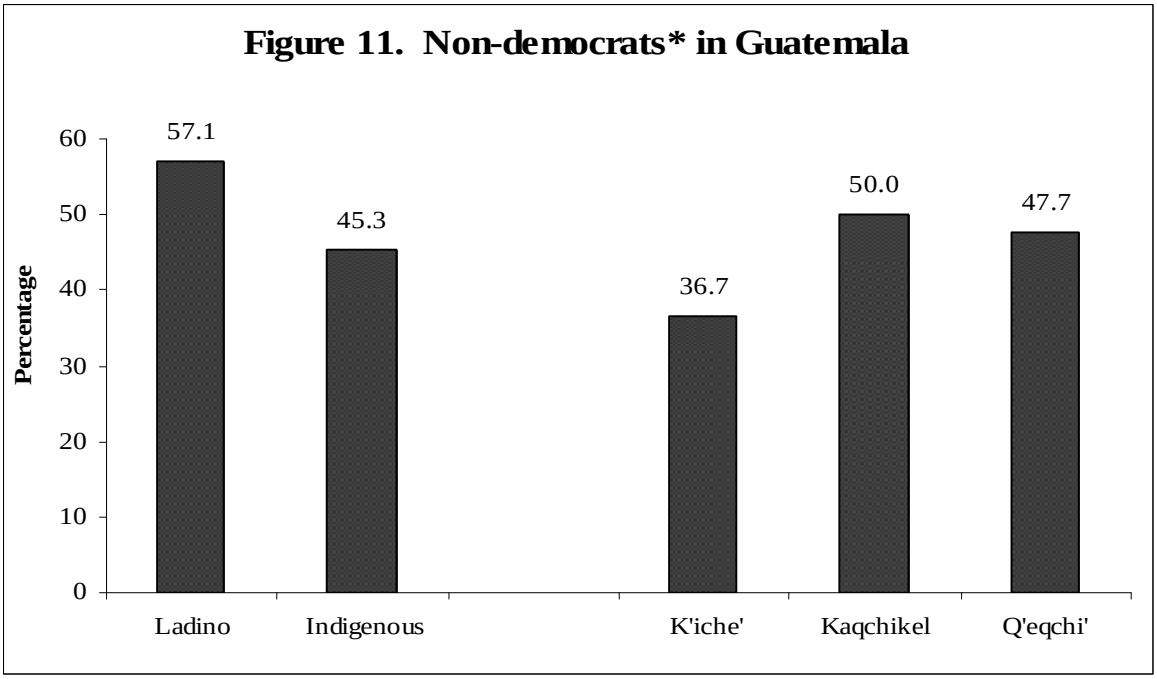
3. *that the army governs*

The cumulative responses of each individual to those three questions are added together to produce a scale (the democratic outlook index) and this allows us to distinguish between levels of support for democratic or authoritarian values (the details of the coding and index construction are provided in Appendix C).

How widely, then, are these democratic/non-democratic values shared? And how are they distributed within and across different subgroups?

The distribution of non-democratic values are summarized in Figure 11. Non-democratic values are more widely shared by ladino respondents (57.0%) than by indigenous respondents (45.3%). And there are significant variations between respondents from the different indigenous communities.

Figure 11. Non-democrats* in Guatemala



^Those who were 2 or 3 on democratic values index
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

A more detailed picture of how these democratic and non-democratic values are distributed within and between indigenous and ladino respondents is evident from the data in Table 16.

Table 16. The Socio-Demographic Profiles of Non-Democrats and Democrats^

	Indigenous		Ladino	
	Non-Democrats	**Democrats**	**Non-Democrats**	**Democrats**
Age				
18-25	44.1%	55.9%	60.0%	40.0%
Over 25	46.9	53.1	53.9%	46.2
Income				
Low	46.9%	53.1%	67.9%	32.1%
Moderate	47.1	52.9	62.8	37.2
High	41.2	58.8	55.6	44.4
Gender				
Male	44.4%	55.6%	47.3%	52.8%
Female	46.4	53.6	66.0	34.0
Education				
Low	49.8%	50.3%	67.7%	32.3%
Medium	47.4	52.6	66.1	33.9
High	39.3	60.7	48.0	52.0
Knowledge index				
Poorly-informed	48.7%	51.3%	75.0%	25.0%
Well-informed	43.9	56.1	52.3	47.7
Cynicism index				
Non-cynical	46.7%	53.3%	62.7%	37.3%
Cynical	43.7	56.3	53.5	46.6
Political action index				
Low	43.5%	56.5%	48.2%	51.8%
High	47.7	52.3	63.5	36.5
Associational Membership/ Involvement				
Low	41.8%	58.2%	60.5%	39.5%
High	44.6	55.4	54.6	45.4
Interpersonal trust				
Most people are reliable	49.3%	50.8%	58.0%	42.0%
You have to be very careful	43.2	56.8	56.7	43.3
Outgroup trust				
Trust	42.6%	57.4%	55.1%	45.0%
Distrust	48.6	51.4	63.0	37.0
N	380	109	459	82

^Non-democrat=2,3 and democrat=0,1 on democratic values index
See Appendix C for coding
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

First, consider age and gender. Young indigenous respondents score higher than their elder counterparts on the democratic values index. But for ladino respondents the reverse holds: Younger ladinos are less democratic than their elders. When it comes to gender distribution of democratic/non-democratic values there are virtually no differences between indigenous males and females. But there are sharp gender differences among ladino respondents: ladino women are significantly less democratic in their outlooks than ladino men.

Second, what about income, education and knowledge? There are strong reasons to expect those who are more educated to be more democratic in their outlooks than those with less formal education. And education, of course, is systematically related to income, knowledge and interest in the wider political world (Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry, 1996). The data support these expectations for both indigenous and ladino respondents. The well educated, better informed and more wealthy are significantly more likely than their more poorly educated, uninformed and less wealthy counterparts to hold democratic values.

Indigenous and ladino democrats, however, are more likely than their non-democratic counterparts to be cynical about their political environment; they are more likely to believe that *"the government doesn't care about people like me"* and that *"politicians lie to get elected"*. They are also less engaged and less active than non-democrats. And both ladino and indigenous democrats have lower levels of interpersonal trust, but higher levels of outgroup trust, then their non-democratic counterparts.

The socio-demographic profiles of democrats and non-democrats are useful to consider. But, by themselves they do not answer a deeper question: which particular

factors are the significant drivers of democratic and non-democratic values after the effects of all of the other variables are held constant?

To answer that question requires resorting once again to a multivariate analysis of the data. The results of that analysis are reported in Table 17. The analysis for indigenous and

Table 17. Predictors of Non-Democratic Outlook^

	Model 1		**Model 2**	
	Indigenous			
	Unstandardized Coefficents	**Standardized Coefficents**	**Unstandardized Coefficents**	**Standardized Coefficents**
Male	.078	.037	.034	.016
Income (high)	-.058	-.043	.005	.003
Education (high)	-.117***	-.085	-.092	-.066
Age (older)	.088	.042	.136	.065
Political Interest (high)			.020	.009
Satisfaction with Democracy (satisfied)			.428*	.207
Knowledge index (high)			-.048	-.041
Political action index (high)			.066	.055
Interpersonal trust (Distrust)			-.066	-.031
Outgroup trust (Distrust)			.014	.014
Associational membership index (high)			.085	.070
Cynical index (Cynical)			-.101	-.073
Constant	1.539		1.318022	
Adjusted R Square	.009		.0472	
N	625		422	
	Ladino			
	Unstandardized Coefficents	**Standardized Coefficents**	**Unstandardized Coefficents**	**Standardized Coefficents**
Male	-.147	-.065	-.119	-.051
Income (high)	.000	.000	.045	.033
Education (high)	-.359**	-.226	-.397***	-.238
Age (older)	-.244	-.107	-.381	-.164
Political Interest (high)			.141	.054
Satisfaction with Democracy (satisfied)			.687**	.295
Knowledge index (high)			.072	.051
Political action index (high)			.025	.018
Interpersonal (Distrust)			.221	.082
Outgroup trust (Distrust)			-.024	-.023
Associational membership index (high)			.090	.067
Cynical index (Cynical)			-.041	-.026
Constant	2.49		1.4922	
Adjusted R Square	.035		.1629	
N	153		113	

^uses the unrecoded (0-3) democratic values index
*p<.001; **p<.01; ***p<.05
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

ladino respondents proceeds in exactly the same way. The first step (model 1) considers the net effects for socio-demographic variables only. The second step (model 2) introduces other outlooks and attributes. Notice that the focus is on isolating the predictors of non-democratic outlooks.

Two revealing findings emerge from the results. First, the most powerful predictor of non-democratic outlooks is education: people with non-democratic outlooks have significantly lower levels of formal education. That finding holds for both indigenous and ladino respondents alike. The effects of other variables, such as age and gender, are consistent with the previously reported results. Older respondents are somewhat less democratic than younger ones, for example, and wealthier respondents tend to be more democratic than their poorer counterparts. But these factors, when considered together with others, are not statistically significant. The results for the ladino sample have to be interpreted more cautiously because the sample size is much smaller. Nonetheless, they run in the same direction. Low levels of education turns out to be the strongest predictor of non-democratic outlooks.

The second key finding is also common to both indigenous and ladino respondents alike. Satisfaction with democracy emerges as a significant predictor of non-democratic outlooks. That finding seems counterintuitive but it is consistent with findings reported elsewhere. Only those who subscribe to non-democratic values are satisfied with the way "democracy works" in Guatemala. Those holding democratic values, those who are more knowledgeable and have higher levels of education, are systematically less satisfied with the status quo. They also are more cynical about

politics and they have less trust in such key electoral institutions as political parties and the legislature[9].

[9] 46% of ladinos and 53% of indigenous respondents indicate that they are either somewhat or completely satisfied with "the way democracy works" in the country. Comparable data from the World Values Survey shows that levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works are higher in Chile (88%), Nicaragua (76%) and Venezuela (62%) than among publics in such consolidated democracies as the United Kingdom (54%) or Italy (36%).

Section VI: Looking Towards the Future

One of the recurring themes documented throughout this report is that there are significant differences between ladino and indigenous respondents, as well as between indigenous respondents from different communities, on a variety of behaviours and outlooks. But that does not mean that these groups evaluate their future options in fundamentally different ways. The Flacso Barriers Study 2007 presented all respondents with four agree/disagree statements. These same statements were asked in the Nicaragua Democracy Survey 2007. In the summary results, reported in Table 18, the Nicaraguan responses are included for comparative purposes.

Table 18. Looking to the Future

	Indigenous			**Ladino**			**Nicaragua (2007 National Sample)**		
	Agree	**Disagree**	**N**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**N**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**N**
Violence is sometimes necessary as an answer to injustice	47.7%	52.4%	999	52.6%	47.4%	209	24.7%	75.3%	1445
It is better to go to another country to have a better future	50.2	49.9	1,021	65.9	34.1	220	38.2	61.8	1447
Political power is concentrated in a few hands	70.7	29.4	879	78.0	22.0	200	63.5	36.5	1319
The best way to solve the country's troubles is through dialogue	89.3	10.7	1,001	90.6	9.4	212	96.8	3.2	1453

Question: *I will now read some things that people say about the political process in Guatemala. I would like you to tell me if you completely agree, agree, disagree or completely disagree with these affirmations.*
Source: Flacso Barriers Study 2007

The first, and somewhat troubling, finding is that a significant proportion of ladino (52.6%) and indigenous respondents (47.7%) agree with the idea that violence is sometimes necessary as an answer to injustice. That finding may be attributable to Guatemala's recent history of violence. But Nicaragua also qualifies as a recent post-

conflict environment and yet Guatemalan respondents are about twice as likely as their Nicaraguan counterparts to think that violence is justifiable.

Faced with difficult economic, political and social conditions publics, and particularly the young, often see “leaving the country” as the best option to “have a better future”. This indicator is, perhaps, a proxy indicating whether respondents are optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the country. Once again, the Nicaraguan data provide a useful point of comparison. Strikingly, two out of three ladino respondents (66%) agree with that option, as does one half of all indigenous respondents (50%). Guatemalan respondents, clearly, are more pessimistic than their Nicaraguan counterparts; just over one out of three Nicaragua respondents agreed with that option (38%).

Guatemalan respondents (78% of ladinos and 71% of indigenous respondents) are also more inclined than Nicaraguans (63.5%) to agree that political power is “concentrated in too few hands”.

Perhaps the most heartening finding to emerge is that nine out of ten ladino and indigenous respondents agree that the best way to solve the country’s problems is through dialogue.

Section VII: Concluding Discussion

It is not unusual for people to hold strong opinions about the workings of a country's political system. But on some aspects of political behaviour there is remarkably little systematic and reliable information. The Flacso team of researchers, and their technical assistants, saw the 2007 Guatemalan elections as an opportunity to evaluate the country's electoral environment from a particular vantage point. The key question driving the project was informed by a central feature of the Guatemalan population: Like many multicultural states, Guatemala is a country of many communities. But unlike many other multicultural states, Guatemalans minority communities, when taken together, form a majority of the population. Not surprisingly, Guatemala's indigenous peoples have been the object of study of a myriad of anthropologists for decades. There are rich bodies of information describing the numerous cultural variations both within and between these peoples. Far more surprising is the absence of systematic information concerning the contemporary political orientations and behaviour of these subgroups. This project represents a further step in that direction; it drills deeper into the data. This report does not speak to each and every indigenous group in the country. Nor does it summarize all of the survey results gathered by Flacso researchers. The goal instead has been to gather information on three prominent indigenous communities, and to report those results that are most relevant to the changing political environment.

Four key sets of findings deserve deeper reflection. First, there are significant systematic differences between indigenous peoples and ladinos when it comes to exercising the most basic participatory rights of citizens: indigenous peoples are less

likely than ladinos to vote. That finding clearly holds across each and every subgroup analyzed. That finding is consistent with data from other analyses[10]. Indeed focus group participants were not at all surprised to learn that indigenous groups vote less than the ladino population. They were all aware of the conventional wisdom that indigenous people do not vote due to lack of interest.

In non-compulsory voting environments all citizens have the right to choose not to vote. But the second significant finding from the data is that for a very substantial proportion of indigenous respondents not voting is not a mather of personal choice. They are not voting because they face procedural obstacles that prevent them from voting. Most of these non-voters do not have the proper documentation that enables them to vote, and many others are not on the voters' list.

A third significant finding is that the barriers to participation are biased against particular subgroups within the indigenous and ladino populations. Young people face greater institutional obstacles to full electoral participation, and so do women. These barriers have a cumulative effect: young, indigenous women are disadvantaged three times over. The collective impact of these barriers to participation essentially marginalizes these young women from the participatory mainstream. Some might rationalize the low electoral participation rates of indigenous people, young citizens and women, on the grounds that the preferences of these non voters are nevertheless taken into adequate account on election day. That logic might hold up if it could be shown that the preferences of those excluded from voting were exactly the same as the preferences

[10] Reports released by Seligson et. al, and Boneo found similar patterns in indigenous versus ladino electoral participation. This FLACSO report delved deeper into these issues.

and priorities of those who face no such barriers and who vote. The problem is that the data do not support that hypothesis. Those excluded from the electoral process do not have preferences that are identical to those who are not excluded.

Several clear programmatic lessons emerges from these findings to satisfy the reasonable standards of fairness and transparency.

First, the barriers facing indigenous peoples need to be lowered to the point that indigenous peoples have opportunities to vote that are the same as ladinos.

Second, the barriers facing young people need to be lowered so that young people have opportunities to vote that are the same as their older counterparts.

Third, and most urgently, the very substantial institutional barriers confronted by indigenous women need to be lowered dramatically.

Focus group participants were clear that indigenous women, particularly young indigenous women, and youth across the board should be targeted by projects to increase electoral participation. They recommended renewed efforts to grant citizen identification cards and to register voters, but they stressed the need for those campaigns to be staffed by individuals with a command of local languages as well as by women. They also recommended streamlining these processes, speaking at length about the costs involved in obtaining this important document, including time away from the children or their jobs, travel expenses and fees. Likewise, the young people at these meetings insisted that youth be consulted and involved in this work of the electoral commission.

The report highlights other facets of a democratic deficit that are also important. A very substantial proportion of respondents, both indigenous and ladino alike, do not have confidence in the electoral commission, political parties or the legislature. This

deficit is related to the first deficit: people who do not trust these electoral institutions are systematically less likely to vote. The implication of this finding is that significant electoral actors have an opportunity to regenerate public trust in them through sincere and transparent efforts to lower procedural barriers to voting faced by significant subsets of the population. Lowering those barriers increase the chances that more people can vote, and voters, in turn, exhibit higher levels of trust in these important institutions. Running elections, of course, is a demanding administrative burden. But it also carries an important symbolic message. Marginalized groups, some focus group participants said, do not see themselves as meaningfully represented in, or consulted by, the national, district, or municipal electoral institutions. Trust in institutions increases when social distance between those institutions and the people they serve, is reduced.

Other evidence emerging during the course of this report indicates that non-voting is just one face of a deeper aspect of disengagement for young people and particulary for women. Technically, there are no procedural barriers that prevent people from exercising there "voice" either in the associational activities within their immediate communities or in making demands on the political system. There is no guarantee that lowering procedural barriers to voting will necessarily produce immediate increases in other forms of engagement. Democratic practices are learned and generalized from one setting to the next, and so lowering procedural barriers to voting presents the disengaged with an opportunity to learn. Without those opportunities citizens have little incentive to become interested in, and to be knowledgeable and care about, the political life of their community.

Publics in transitional countries that have long exposure to authoritarian rule and conflict typically do not shed the residual effects of these experiences quickly (Rose et al, 1998; Lagos, 2001). For that reason it comes as little surprise to discover that democratic values are not broadly and enthusiastically embraced by a very substantial portion of the public. One encouraging finding is that there are islands of democratic values. And those who hold these democratic values are least satisfied with the status quo. A second encouraging finding is that the vast majority of respondents from every part of society believe that the best way to solve the country's problems is through dialogue.

Appendix A: Methodology

I Project Design

1. Focus

The investigation's design includes three municipalities of the most numerous indigenous linguistic groups (K'iche', Kaqchikel, Q'eqchi') and a municipality of non-indigenous people (ladino). Indigenous groups were focused upon because comparisons among this segments of Guatemalan society has not been fully analyzed in the past. This enables for an examination of different barriers to political participation by linguistic groups, which possess unique cultural characteristics. Further, every group is stratified by gender and age.

The chosen municipalities were San Martin Jilotepeque from the Kaqchikel linguistic group, Momostenango from the K'iche' group, San Pedro Carcha from the Q'eqchi' group, and Jalapa from the ladino group. These specific municipalities were chosen due to the fact that they contained sufficient numbers of the indigenous and non-indigenous population to allow for representation across the different communities within each municipality. In each municipality, 20 populated places were randomly selected as a means of gaining a wide cross-section of the population.

As suggested, one of the most important themes of the investigation was the focus on indigenous communities. Subsequently, it was necessary to give attention to the language use in these municipalities. Therefore the choice for people to respond to the interview in their regions' language or in Spanish was given.

2. Field Work

Field work was conducted in three phases:

Phase I
From 07/19/2007 to 07/22/2007 in Momostenango

Phase II
From 07/21/2007 to 07/24/2007 in Jalapa and San Pedro Carcha

Phase III
From 07/26/2007 to 07/30/2007 in San Martin Jilotepeque

II Methodology

1. Sample

Four municipalities were chosen non-randomly. Within each municipality, 20 regions were selected, with 20 interviews conducted in each of those regions. This resulted in 400 total interviews in each municipality and a total sample of 1600.

2. Response/Refusal Rates

San Martin Jilotepeque: For every three attempts, one interview was conducted (1/3)

San Pedro Carcha: For every two attempts, one interview was conducted (1/2)

Momostenango: For every three attempts, one interview was conducted (1/3)

Jalapa: For every two attempts, one interview was conducted (1/2)

3. Random Sampling and Quotas

One of the main objectives was to have a highly representative sample. This involved incorporating systematic random procedures along with specific quotas.

A. Random Sampling

All interviews were face-to-face interviews conducted in the respondents' residence. The reason for residential interviewing was to provide a greater sense of certainty that those being interviewed were actual citizens of the municipality.

The selection of residences differed depending if the area was urban or rural, as the way residences are organized and population density differed. In urban areas interviewing areas were divided up in sectors, with each sector possessing several blocks of residences. One or more sectors were randomly chosen (depending on the municipality) for interviews. Within the selected sector houses in the southwest were interviewed first. Every fourth house was eligible for the survey, with only one individual from each residence being interviewed.

In rural areas, the selection process was adapted to accommodate the dispersed population. As such, every house was examined in a sector. The exception being one house having close relatives of another house that was already interviewed. Again, only one individual per residence was interviewed.

B. Quotas

In order to achieve a demographic profile consistent with Guatemala's national population, a set of quotas for sex and age were put in place. This involved having a even split in terms of gender. Further, 60% of those interviewed were 18 to 25 and 40% were 26 years old or older.

Appendix B
Regression on Non-Voting

Predictors of Non-Voting (Those too young to vote in Previous election excluded)

	Model 1		**Model 2**	
	Indigenous			
	Unstandardized Coefficents	**Standardized Coefficents**	**Unstandardized Coefficents**	**Standardized Coefficents**
Male	-.339*	-.344	-.339*	-.347
Income (high)	-.031	-.048	-.022	-.037
Education (high)	-.033	-.049	.002	.003
Age (old)	-.130*	-.133	-.145*	-.154
Trust in:				
Election Commission			-.087	-.076
Parties			.096	.102
Legislature			-.125***	-.131
President			-.048	-.049
Political Interest (high)			-.139**	-.140
Satisfaction with Democracy			.054	.058
Spanish (know how to read/write)			-.090	-.080
Constant	.706		.887	
Adjusted R Square	.146		.195	
N	647		425	
	Ladino			
	Unstandardized Coefficents	**Standardized Coefficents**	**Unstandardized Coefficents**	**Standardized Coefficents**
Male	-.075	-.083	-.058	-.069
Income (high)	.032	.061	-.009	-.018
Education (high)	-.090	-.148	. -.067	-.117
Age (old)	-.200**	-.218	-.296*	-.342
Trust in:				
Election Commission			.174	.160
Parties			.137	.161
Legislature			-.083	-.095
President			.084	.100
Political Interest (high)			-.090	-.103
Satisfaction with Democracy			.035	.041
Constant	.516		.37	
Adjusted R Square	.037		.11	
N	142		102	

See Appendix D for coding
Source: 2007 Guatemalan Flacso Survey

Appendix C
Question Wording, Variable Construction and Index Construction

I. Group= (p38)

1. P38 ETHNIC GROUP
Which ethnic group do you belong to?

1 (1)[11] K'iche'
2 (1) Kaqchikel
3 (1) Q'eqchi'
4 (2) Ladino
5 (1) Indigenous
6 (1) Maya
7 (3) Guatemalan
8 (2) White/Spaniard
9 (3) Momesteco
10 (2) Jalapaneco
11 (2) Castilian
12 (1) Achi
13 (1) Mam
88 (3) DA/DK

1=Indigenous
2=Ladino
3=Other

II. K'iche'= (p38) if District Code[12]= 3

2. P38 ETHNIC GROUP
Which ethnic group do you belong to?

1 (1) K'iche'
2 (0) Kaqchikel
4 (0) Ladino
5 (1) Indigenous
6 (1) Maya
7 (0) Guatemalan
8 (0) White/Spaniard
88 (0) DA/DK

III. Kaqchikel= (p38) if District Code= 1

3. P38 ETHNIC GROUP
Which ethnic group do you belong to?

1 (0) K'iche'
2 (1) Kaqchikel
3 (0) Q'eqchi'
4 (0) Ladino

[11] Values in parentheses represent variable re-coding.
[12] Note: the actual variable used was called "muni" and seems to be the actual measure of district code with 1= San Martín Jilotepeque; 2= San Pedro Carcha; 3= Momostenango; 4= Jalapa

5 (1) Indigenous
6 (1) Maya
7 (0) Guatemalan
8 (0) White/Spaniard
17 (0) Mam
88 (0) DA/DK

IV. Q'eqchi'= (p38) if District Code= 2

4. P38 ETHNIC GROUP
Which ethnic group do you belong to?
1 (0) K'iche'
2 (0) Kaqchikel
3 (1) Q'eqchi'
4 (0) Ladino
5 (1) Indigenous
6 (1) Maya
7 (0) Guatemalan
8 (0) White/Spaniard
88 (0) DA/DK

V. Associational Membership index= (P13.1 + P13.2 + P13.3 + P13.4 + P13.5 + P13.6)
0-6 scale was then recoded so that low= 0,1; medium= 2; high=3,4,5,6
I will now mention you a list of groups and organizations for you to tell me how much participation you have had in reunions or activities always…frequently…rarely…or never.

5. P13.1 RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY
6. P13.2 CULTURAL GROUPS
7. P13.3 SPORTS GROUPS
8. P13.4 TRADE UNIONS OR GUILD ASSOCIATIONS
9. P13.5 POLITICAL PARTIES
10. P13.6 DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE COCODES/COMUDES
1 (1) Always
2 (1)
3 (1)
4 (0) Never
88 (.)

VI. Cynicism Index= (P15.1 + P15.2)
0-6 scale was then recoded so that low= 0,1,2,3; moderate= 4,5; high=6
I will read you some of the things people say about politicians, the government or other people. I would like you to tell how much you agree to…

11. P15.1 I BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT CARE SO MUCH FOR PEOPLE LIKE ME

12. P15.2 THE POLITICIANS MIGHT LIE TO BE ELECTED

1 (3) Completely agree
2 (2)
3 (1)
4 (0) Strongly disagree
88 (.)

VII. Democratic Outlook index= (P27.1 + P27.2 + P27.3)

I will mention some possible government systems for our country. Tell me if you completely agree, agree, disagree or completely disagree with each one.

13. P27.1 HAVING A STRONG LEADER THAT GOVERNS WITHOUT ELECTIONS OR CONGRESS

14. P27.2 HAVING EXPERTS WHO ACT ACCORDING TO WHAT THEY BELIVE IS BETTER FOR THE COUNTRY

15. P27.3 THAT THE ARMY GOVERNS

1 (1) Completely agree
2 (1)
3 (0)
4 (0) Completely disagree
88 (.)

VIII. Knowledge index= (P9.1 + P9.2 + P9.3)

Can you tell me the name of…?

16. P9.1 THE MAYOR OF YOUR MUNICIPALITY

17. P9.2 THE NAME OF GUATEMALA'S PRESIDENT

18. P9.3 THE NAME OF THE UNITED STATE'S PRESIDENT

1 (1) Correct
2 (0) Incorrect
88 (0)

IX. Political Action index= (P16.1 + P16.2 + P16.4)

0 to 6 scale was then recoded so that low= 0,1; medium= 2; high= 3,4,5,6

Referring to the citizen participation, people get involved in different ways. I will mention some of these forms and ask you to please tell me if you have participated, you would like to, or if you would never participate under any circumstance:

19. P16.1 ASK OR SIGN A WRITTEN REQUEST TO AN AUTHORITY TO HELP YOU SOLVE A COMMUNITY PROBLEM

20. P16.2 PARTICIPATE IN A LEGAL DEMONSTRATION

21. P16.3 SUPPORT A PUBLIC PROTEST

1 (2)
2 (1)
3 (0)
88 (.)

Appendix D
Variable Coding

1. Income= (P49)

1 (0) Those making less than Q.750
2 (1)
3 (2)
4 (2)
5 (2)
6 (2) Those making more than Q.10,000
88 (.)

2. Education= (P40)

1 (0) None
2 (1)
3 (2)
4 (2)
5 (2)
6 (2)
7 (2)
8 (2) Post Graduate
88 (.)

3. Knowledge[13]

0 (0) None right
1 (0)
2 (1)
3 (1) All right

4. Cynicism

0 (0) Not cynical
1 (0)
2 (0)
3 (0)
4 (0)
5 (1)
6 (1) Very cynical

5. Political Action

0 (0) Low
1 (0)
2 (0)
3 (1)
4 (1)

[13] The knowledge, cynicism, political action and associational membership variables are recoded from the indexes created in Appendix C

5 (1)
6 (1) High

6. Associational Membership

0 (0) Low
1 (0)
2 (0)
3 (1)
4 (1)
5 (1)
6 (1) High

7. Outgroup Trust= P28.7 and P28.8[14]

1 (0) Complete trust
2 (0)
3 (1)
4 (1) No trust
88 (.)

8. Interpersonal trust= (P06)

Talking about the people of the community (neighbourhood or villiage), do you think you trust the majority or should you be cautious dealing with them?

1 (1) The majority of people are trustworthy
2 (2) You must be cautious

9. Political Interest= (P08)

How much interest do you have in politics?

1 (1) Very interested
2 (1)
3 (0)
4 (0) Reject it
88 (.)

10. Satisfaction with democracy= (P05)

If we talk about the way in which democracy works in our country, how satisfied do you feel about it?

1 (1) Very good
2 (1)
3 (0)
4 (0) Really bad
88 (.)

11. Trust in Institutions= P14.3; P14.9; P14.10; P14.11

Now I will mention several organizations. I would like to know how much you trust the work they carry out.

[14] When looking at Indigenous peoples P28.8 was used and when looking at the ladino P28.7 was used.

Election Commission (P14.3)
Political Parties (14.9)
Legislature (14.10)
President (14.11)

1 (1) Complete trust
2 (1)
3 (1)
4 (0) No trust
88 (.)

12. Non-Voting= (P30) if P31~=1
Did you vote in the last presidential elections of November 2003?

1 (0) Yes
2 (1) No
88 (.)

13. Spanish= (P39)
Do you know how to read and write Spanish?

1 (1) Yes
2 (0) No
88 (.)

14. Political Interest= (P08)
How much interest do you have in politics?

1 (1) Very interested
2 (1)
3 (0)
4 (0) Reject it
88 (.)

Appendix E

Socialization Workshops

In order to make public the results of the project "Barriers to Electoral Participation", a series of socialization workshops took place in the departments of Chimaltenango, Totonicapan, Alta Verapaz and Guatemala, from October 11 to October 16, 2007.

Participants attending these workshops represented the following entities:

- Non-government organizations
- Specialized international organizations
- Media
- Maya organizations
- Women organizations
- Student associations
- Political parties
- Cooperatives
- Communities / Populations
- Universities
- Government agencies
- Civil society
- Students
- Professionals
- Specialists on subject matter

Subjects that were discussed during workshops

Based on the discussions and presentations, the following results reflect the outlooks and concerns of participants:

1. Reactions among participants

Which finding surprised you the most? Why?

Participants pointed out the issues that they consider more relevant, and made comments on their possible causes.

Main issues pointed out:

1. The scarce participation of youth, indigenous people and women.
2. The lack of credibility and trust in political parties and other institutions, which makes people lose interest in participation.
3. The lack of leadership in political parties and institutions.
4. Institutional barriers, such as not having an identity card (*cedula*), not being able to register in voter registration list, the scant and feeble approach of state institutions towards the population, the lack of transportation.
5. Several participants indicated that the cause of low participation is the lack of education.
6. Language

Main causes of problems:

- Difficulties to register in voter registration list.
- The role of political parties in electoral circumstances.
- The causes of insufficient female participation are male chauvinism (machismo) and child- care duties of women.

- Low levels of trust in electoral institutions and in political parties as a result of manipulation and deceit.
- Political parties are not representative and there are no open spaces for participation.
- The fact that institutional barriers to voting result in low participation is also evidence of the weakness of national political institutions, especially that of the Electoral Commission.
- Decentralization processes have created new institutional actors such as the Municipal Electoral Circumscriptions (CEM). However, these actors do not have specific and defined criteria in order to be efficient.
- Lack of motivation causes low levels of participation among young people.

2. Participation gap between men and women

Main problems detected:

1. Difficulties to obtain identity card (*cedula*)
2. Lack of money
3. Cultural problems
4. Discrimination
5. Education
6. Language

Main causes of problems:

- The cost of getting an identity card is a barrier especially for women, as they are often economically dependent on their male family members or husbands.

- Lack of instruction and education is even more pressing amongst women.
- Lack of documents among women for various institutional, idiomatic and cultural reasons.
- Male chauvinism is a cultural factor. Men don't deem it necessary to register their daughters in the Civil Registry when they are born, and in due time they are not allowed to get their identity card nor to participate in civic or communal activities. It is a patriarchal and racist system.
- Language barriers are higher in indigenous women as many of them do not speak Spanish. This was exemplified as follows: "Women only need to use their native language because they're always at home taking care of the children."
- Participants expressed that therefore indigenous women are not informed and are not aware of their rights and obligations.
- Scarce institutional attention towards women. The government is the reflection of a chauvinist society. Ongoing policies and approaches are insufficient.

3. Participation gap between adults and youngsters

Main problems detected:

1. The way political parties set conditions for the approval of projects.
2. Adults feel disappointed with the system.
3. Lack of motivation to vote among youngsters.
4. Lack of trust in institutions.
5. Time and money is required to obtain an identity card.
6. Migration of young people.
7. Lack of interest
8. Lack of registration (not on voter registration list)

9. Education

Main causes of problems:

- Political parties do not make any attractive or interesting propositions to young people; therefore youngsters are not motivated to participate.
- On the other hand, the inclusion of young people in political parties has been mostly cosmetic and/or youngsters have been used as cheap labor during the electoral campaign. Youth is not taken into account when discussing needs and proposing solutions.
- Adults feel let down by the system. Repeated disappointment paves the road to the lack of interest in voting even in those whose papers are in order.
- Most of the migrant population is young.
- As in the case of women, the economic cost of getting an identity card is often an issue for young people in general, although some did argue that getting a *cedula* was not an obstacle in their communities.
- Lack of institutional credibility. Institutions are perceived as non-functional.
- Young people distrust political parties, and perceive them as power seekers who are motivated only by self-interest. Political parties certainly do not respond to their needs.
- Political parties have not promoted electoral participation in specific population groups; instead, their proposal is very general. It's an issue of representation, in other words, to what degree do different groups feel represented in the proposals of the various political parties?

- Lack of education does not encourage participation, as young people ignore why they ought to exercise their right to vote.
- There is an institutional communication problem: the voting system has been de-centralized so people can register and vote in their own or in a nearby community. But this process has not been sufficiently publicized and therefore many youngsters do not vote.

4. Participation gap between indigenous and non-indigenous (*ladino*) citizens

Main problems detected:

1. Ineffective decentralization for voting purposes
2. Gap between rural and urban population
3. Access to information and media
4. Ignorance as to rights and obligations
5. Limitations to fill government positions
6. Racism and discrimination
7. Economic issues
8. Transportation
9. Education
10. Language

Main causes of problems:

- Racism and discrimination are historical and structural problems.
- The government has not provided for the educational needs of the population. Access to education for indigenous peoples is more limited in comparison to that of the non-indigenous population.
- The educational level of an individual affects his or her capacity to participate in electoral processes. Indigenous citizens don't exhibit

the same level of participation as that of *ladinos* because of lower levels of formal education and instruction.

- The gap between urban and rural populations is decisive. There are more barriers and fewer opportunities for rural populations than for urban populations.
- There are highly capable indigenous leaders, but their participation is not welcome within political parties. These leaders have no access or opportunities to hold positions.
- Access to information through the media also determines the gap between indigenous and *ladinos*. *Ladino* homes have the means to access and reproduce information for all household members. It is not so among the indigenous population, especially in the rural areas.
- Informed people can share information with their children, who at the same time can also obtain information through the media. In indigenous populations with no access to information, this process is not possible.
- Access to formal education is an important issue because schools teach civil values, citizen rights and obligations, etc., allowing children to have broader perspectives. Access to education is more difficult in indigenous populations.
- In many parts of the country with a basically indigenous population, political parties are nevertheless presided by *ladinos* who don't really represent indigenous interests. The indigenous population is useful to political parties inasmuch as it adds up votes to their candidates.
- The procedures to elect national authorities are very different from traditional election methods amongst the indigenous peoples. Political offerings do not respond to the particular needs of the indigenous population.

- The poorer segments of Guatemala's population are indigenous. In many cases, poverty prevents indigenous citizens from obtaining their *cedula.*
- The *cedula* and the voter registration list are not thoroughly trustworthy instruments and may allow alterations in the electoral process.
- Access to voting centers is often difficult for indigenous citizens. Free transportation is only provided in urban centers. Distances and geophysical conditions in the rural areas are more complex, therefore decentralization processes must be improved.

5. Can you suggest actions in response to the problems detected in this study?

1. Promote an identity card project in coordination with the different municipalities, to publicize among youth the importance of obtaining an identity card and of enrolling in the voter registration list.
2. Include indigenous people, young people and women in civic education programs.
3. Establish projects that promote civic participation by means of generating trust in institutions.
4. Initiate a process of youth formation, especially for women, stressing the importance of citizen involvement.
5. Election of electoral local authorities through consensus.
6. Gender oriented projects in rural areas and communities to encourage women, improve their education, etc.
7. Projects that focus on the political formation of women.
8. How to make a leader.
9. Political formation of young people.

10. More community-oriented activities that not only publicize results but also improve the performance of state institutions.
11. Diversify projects that are based on a multicultural vision, especially in the case of government programs.
12. Introduce and promote “the importance of political formation and of the identity card.”
13. Projects that support the establishment of a consensus process to elect authorities.
14. Projects that “diagnose the situation of the community”.
15. Preparation and formation of candidates.
16. Political decentralization, considering the diversity of our country.
17. A properly functioning media.
18. A plural state.
19. Setting controls and limits to corruption and impunity.
20. Assisting citizens to understand the concept of “state” and of “politics”.
21. Assisting citizens to understand clearly what a democratic and inclusive country is; promote the idea that positions should be filled by individuals that sincerely want to help their community.
22. The role of the press.
23. Reforms to the Law of Elections and Political Parties

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