



Maya Nationalisms and Postcolonial Challenges in Guatemala: Coloniality, Modernity, and Identity Politics (School for Advanced Research Global Indigenous Politics Series)

Emilio del Valle Escalante

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In the past few decades, indigenous movements throughout the Americas have become the cornerstone of popular mobilizations. These movements have made their mark in diverse institutional and political landscapes. Although this prominence has been considered a recent phenomenon, it is but the latest example of the ongoing creativity of indigenous peoples in their efforts to achieve civil rights and legal recognition as differentiated cultural entities. Their struggle has changed the makeup of Latin American nation-states to the point that these can no longer be conceived in conventional terms, that is, as culturally and linguistically homogenous.

This book focuses on the emergence and political-cultural implications of Guatemala's Maya movement. It explores how, since the 1970s, indigenous peoples have been challenging established, hegemonic narratives of modernity, history, nation, and cultural identity as these relate to the indigenous world. For the most part, these narratives have been fabricated by non-indigenous writers who have had the power not only to produce and spread knowledge but also to speak for and about the Maya world. Contemporary Maya narratives promote nationalisms based on the reaffirmation of Maya ethnicity and languages that constitute what it means to be Maya in present-day society, as well as political-cultural projects oriented toward the future.

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