

**TOWARDS A POST-COLONIAL CONSERVATION PRACTICE: AN EXAMINATION
OF SLOW VIOLENCE ON MAYA CULTURAL HERITAGE IN CENTRAL BELIZE**

BY

JESANN M. GONZALEZ CRUZ

THESIS

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Adviser:

Lisa J. Lucero

ABSTRACT

Throughout the past five years the Spanish Lookout Trust Corporation (SPLC) has actively deforested and plowed the South Block, a plot of land in Yalbac, Belize which contains Maya cultural heritage at risk of destruction by these land practices. This paper highlights SPLC land practices as a form of slow violence against the Maya by conducting a risk assessment of deforestation using satellite and aerial imaging. I frame this study using Post-Colonial Theory and Collective Action Theory to advocate for alternative conservation approaches that can be utilized to prevent or diminish the present destructive land practices. I conclude with a short summary of principle findings, recommendations to the Valley of Peace Archaeology Project and a statement of reflection as a scholar outside of the Belize, Maya, and Mennonite communities.

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Towards A Post-Colonial Conservation Practice: An Examination of Slow Violence on Maya Cultural Heritage in Central Belize

“Da Maya, de smarter dan we” (The Maya, they are smarter than we). Mennonite farmers only buy or lease land with a noticeable presence of Maya mounds because they know the ancient Maya lived on or near the best agricultural soils. – Spanish Lookout Mennonite quoted to L. J. Lucero in 1988

“In regards to other lesser mounds found in the property, no mounds found will be leveled but may be cleared of foliage and used as pasture area, or crops planted around mound or the road diverted to avoid leveling of mound” - Environmental Impact Assessment (Department of Environment 2014a: 8-28)

*“There is, after all, a profound difference between the will to understand for purposes of co-existence and enlargement of horizons, and the will to dominate for the purposes of control.” – Edward Said in a 2003 reflection on *Orientalism* (<https://www.counterpunch.org/2003/08/05/orientalism/>)*

Violence is often framed as visible harm, but what of damage that is slow, constant and enduring, thus rendering it invisible? In the book *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Rob Nixon begins a discussion of the term Slow Violence: “By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (2011:20). This paper serves as a risk assessment of deforestation on ancient Maya lands in Belize, which were approximately occupied from 300 BCE through 900 CE or later and situates current land practices as a form of slow violence (Lucero 2007). Slow violence, for the purposes of this study, is demarcated only within the boundaries of the South Block, a 11,229-acre land

parcel owned by the Spanish Lookout Trust Corporation (SPLC) in the Yalbac Region (Figure 1).

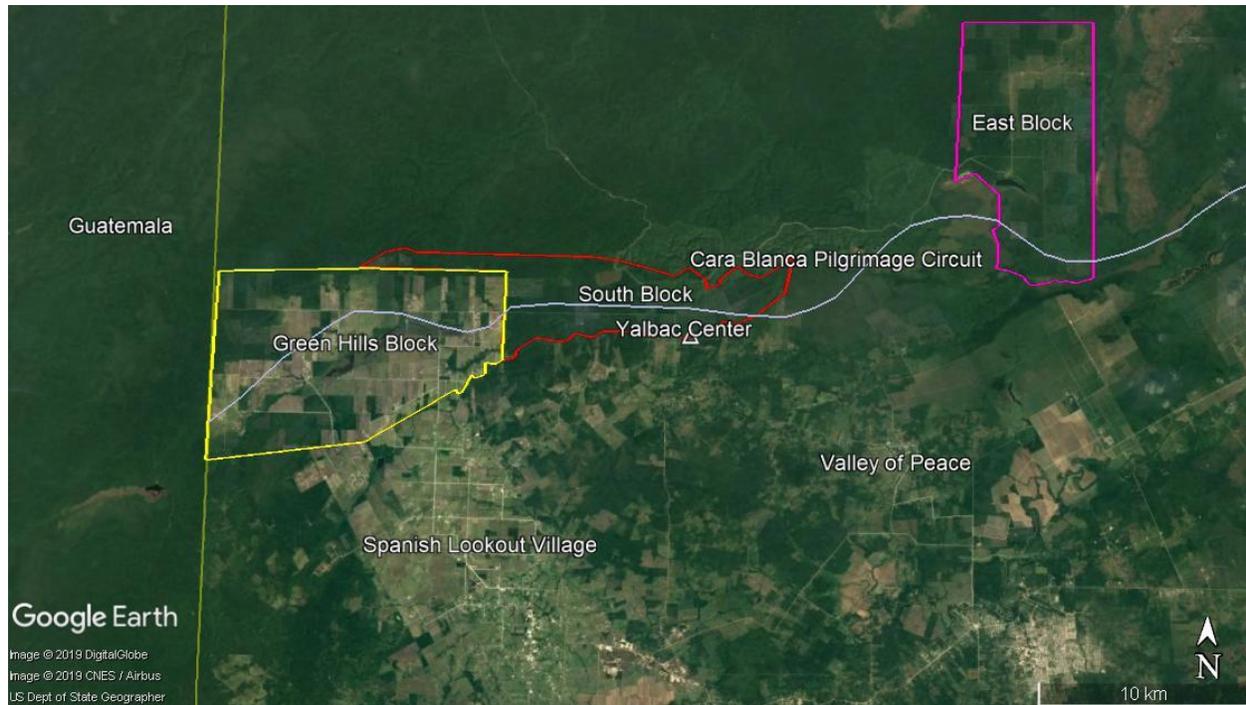


Figure 1 Google Earth Map of South Block in relation to Cara Blanca, Yalbac, and other SPLC Land Blocks

Since 2011, SPLC has actively deforested land in the Yalbac region of Belize for agricultural development. The agricultural methods utilized by SPLC and the rapidity of the deforestation have and continue to endanger ancient Maya cultural heritage, frequently disrupting the archaeological record (Benson 2015, 2017; Carbaugh 2017). Recommendations from the Institute of Archaeology of the Government of Belize, and the Valley of Peace Archaeology (VOPA) Project, directed by Dr. Lisa Lucero, were officially submitted to SPLC, instructing them to refrain from plowing and exhaustive development around any cultural features (e.g., Maya house mounds) (Department of Environment 2014a). In 2014, SPLC signed the Environmental Impact Assessment and submitted a written acknowledgement of the Maya

cultural heritage within the purchased parcel, thereby informally agreeing to protect said archaeological resources (Department of Environment 2014b).

SPLC has not abided by these recommendations, continually plowing indigenous bodies (Maya ancestral burials) and cultural remnants to level the agricultural fields (Benson 2015, 2017; Carbaugh 2017). As Edward Said notes, there lies a difference in one's use of knowledge for benevolence or malice (Said 2003). SLPC's written acknowledgement coincides with previous statements linking Mennonites to Maya land due to correlations between better soil quality and Maya cultural heritage (Lucero 2006a:73, 81, 2006b:297). While VOPA has conducted salvage archaeology in effort to conserve the endangered Maya cultural heritage, resource scarcity makes it increasingly difficult to maintain at pace with the rate of destruction. The severity of the situation requires new forms of conservation praxis and stakeholder compromise.

In this thesis paper, I will quantify Mennonite deforestation and proximity of agricultural practices to Maya archaeological sites to determine if SPLC actions can be characterized as slow violence against the Maya. Quantification of slow violence is critical to establish a foundation from which to advance conflict mitigation efforts and achieve the desired outcome of cultural heritage conservation. To begin, I provide an introduction into the frameworks of Post-Colonial Theory and Collective Action Theory in Belize which structure this study. I follow the theoretical alignment with a broad overview of the Maya, an in-depth review of the Yalbac case study, and highlight the urgency of this thesis paper. Next, I proceed to elaborate on the methodology utilized to conduct the risk assessment of deforestation over time. Upon disclosing results, I enter a discussion on slow violence mitigation methods and outline five pathways to a Post-Colonial approach to cultural heritage conservation. I conclude with a short summary of

principle findings, recommendations to the VOPA Project and a statement of reflection as a scholar outside of the Belize, Maya, and Mennonite Communities.

Post-Colonial Theory and Collective Action Theory in Belize

SPLC is a Mennonite shareholding company, consisting of mechanized Mennonites in the Spanish Lookout Community of Belize (see Figure 1). As pacifism is a core tenet of the Mennonite faith (see Pacifism Amidst Migration Section), this paper seeks to highlight the tension between Mennonite pacifism and the destruction of Maya cultural heritage as a form of slow violence. The contextualization of SPLC in Belize is critical to an understanding of their positionality as dual-colonialists (see Colonialist Extension and Institutional Complicity section) and necessary for future stakeholder interventions, thus I include the Spanish Lookout Community history within this paper, framing it within post-colonial and collective action theory.

Post-Colonial Theory

Post-Colonial theory, an amalgamation of thought and practices hardly concretely defined across the literature, acts as a resistance to colonialism, with a looming goal directed at redemption of stolen land, and stolen histories (Childs and Williams 1997:1–25; Young 2003:4, 6). As the central theme of Post-Colonial theory lies in relations with sovereignty, or independence, in connection with decolonization wherein outcomes are inequitable and colonial structures are continuous, Post-Colonial theory is an apt choice to begin understanding Mennonite positionality within Belize (Young 2003:4).

The longtime struggle for Belize's independence centered on two key issues: economic and militaristic dependence of Belize on Britain (Peedle 1999:41; Sutherland 1998:61). Much of Belize's economy during the colonial period relied on timber trade with a large failure in

attempts at expanding into other markets. The mono-culture economy, followed by the Great Depression in 1930 and a major hurricane in 1931, greatly impacted the economic state of Belize in the decades following (Peedle 1999:34). The weakened economy created a prioritization of agriculture and land speculators over Maya rights and land security (Peedle 1999:70). Although independence talks and negotiations began in 1962, Guatemala's vie for the territory of Belize made it difficult for the country to relinquish the British armies necessary for national security (Sutherland 1998:61). The liminal status of Belize between the years of 1930 and 1981 served as a catalyst for Mennonite migration from Mexico to British Honduras and their consecutive economic growth.

The risk assessment conducted in this paper is aligned with Post-Colonial perspectives – inciting an action plan towards a Post-Colonial practice of cultural heritage conservation of Maya burials, worship grounds, and history within the South Block (Baltus 2008; Carbaugh 2017). To do so, we invoke the concepts of mimicry and hybridity as theorized by Homi Bhabha. In his text *Locations of Culture*, hybridity is defined as the construction of a new political object which is distinct from the colonizer and the Other (Bhabha 1994:25). Bhabha's framework is fitting to describe Mennonite arrival in Belize in 1958, formerly known as British Honduras. As an ethnically white group migrating into a British colony of primarily non-white populations, the Spanish Lookout Mennonites were adopted into a colonial structure which privileges white people. This inherited elevated status places Spanish Lookout above local indigenous populations such as the Maya, despite the late arrival which “dissociates” them from the original British colonizers.

Jaques Lacan's description of mimicry is quoted as an act of camouflage or being perceived as something- rather than truly becoming it (Bhabha 1994:85). In reference to

colonialism, mimicry takes hybridity one step further in arguing that a recognizable Other is constructed, wherein acknowledgements of similarity are made in addition to slight reinforcements of difference (Bhabha 1994:86). In this regard, SPLC presents itself as Belizean (familiar Other), while maintaining a spirit of separation in politics, education, etc., (difference). Lifeworld is an all-encompassing term for quotidian links, including norms, values, and expectations of individuals which drive and bind a community (Habermas 1987:113–152). The use of the term mimicry allows for the SPLC Mennonite lifeworld, or the understanding of what it means to be a Belizean Mennonite, to come into focus. An in-depth examination of the identity of Belizean Mennonite is useful in shaping mitigation efforts by highlighting avenues of common goals (e.g., peace).

Pacifism Amidst Migration

Hershberger, a Mennonite scholar on peace, once stated that true practitioners of peace and nonresistance are believers in justice (Schlabach 2009:143). To begin understanding the juxtaposition of slow violence and Mennonite faith with post-colonial alternatives, it is important to understand the role of pacifism in the Mennonite belief system. Pacifism, alongside many other Mennonite practices, stems from the biblical scripture referred to as the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) (Schlabach 2009:134). The creation of the Mennonite faith, the global spread, and its arrival in Belize is an exemplary history of the practice of pacifism within Mennonite community cohesion and hegemony. The creation of the Mennonite sect stems to the Protestant Reformation in 16th century Europe, which urged for the concentration of power to be returned to biblical literature rather than the Catholic clergy. During the religious upheaval of the Protestant Reformation, the Anabaptists formed, advocating for non-resistance (pacifism), adult baptism, separatism, simplicity, and obedience to Christ (Redekop 1969:4; Thiesen

1999:18, 19). Mennonites, like the Amish and Hutterites, fall under the Christian denomination of Anabaptism. Besides sharing in the beliefs of the Anabaptists, the Mennonites also believe in a devout following of the Bible, including the refusal to make any oath in the name of the lord and avoidance of public office (Redekop 1969:251). The Mennonite tenacity to avoid straying from their religious practices contributes to the Mennonite history of migration.

Growing persecution and a desire to maintain a lifestyle under Mennonite beliefs (i.e. separatism, pacifism, religious education in German) pushed multiple migrations to neighboring lands such as Poland, and later the Russian Empire. By the 18th century, military conscription was growing in the north-eastern hemisphere contemporaneously with the rise of nationalism, thereby threatening the Mennonite pacifist way of life. Government granted privileges diminished, leading to the late 19th century Mennonite migration to North America, primarily the United States (e.g., Nebraska) and Canada (e.g., Manitoba) (Redekop 1969:5). It is important to note that throughout each migration, Mennonite populations were moving in groups and never as single persons, solidifying community cohesiveness via shared experiences and increased interdependence for survival both in spirit and in health.

Included in the migration to Canada were those in the conservative Kleine Gemeinde congregation, who later colonized Spanish Lookout, Belize (Dana et al. 2013). Governmental pressures to assimilate Mennonite schools forced the Mennonites to relocate from Canada to Mexico in 1948, specifically creating the Quellen Colony in Chihuahua (Roessingh and Schoonderwoerd 2005). Ten years later, the pressure to join the social security system, a growing population and increased land shortages within the community led the Kleine Gemeinde and two other Mennonite communities, Altokolonier, and Sommerfelder, to sign an agreement called the Privilegium with the government of Belize, formerly British Honduras (Nippert 1994;

Sawatsky 1969). The Privilegium signed with Belize legally outlines and protects additional rights (e.g., freedom from military conscription, control of educational curriculum, liberation from any official government oaths, etc.) for the three Mennonite groups provided they migrate to Belize and foster growth in the agricultural sector of the economy. The 1958 migration led to the establishment of the colonies of Shipyard, Blue Creek, and Spanish Lookout (Nippert 1994). The agreements made in the Privilegium are still active today and contribute to the Mennonite approach to land. As noted, each migration was fueled by pacifism amidst conflict. The current conflict regarding the South Block has yet to inspire such impulses of migration highlighting some tension between the concepts of peace and conflict.

Colonialist Extension and Institutional Complicity

In preparation for their arrival, Kleine Gemeinde purchased land entitled Spanish Lookout from Olga Burns (Spanish Lookout 2008:36). The British colonial government cancelled immigration fees, provided a five-year tax exemption to assist with the relocation, and cleared some acreage (Spanish Lookout 2008:20, 26). The soil in Belize, differing from that in Mexico, left the Mennonites in a financially frantic daze in their first years. Not only did Spanish Lookout hire indigenous workers to clear the land, but they also learned from the Maya about milpa agricultural practices (e.g., slash and burn, or swidden) (Spanish Lookout 2008:68). Unlike Mennonites, the Maya were not offered opportunities for economic/agricultural development of Belize, despite being natural citizens and maintaining great familiarity with the landscape. The intentional selection of the Mennonite for Belizean economic development highlights the element of race and emphasizes the complicity of the Colonial Government of Belize in the suppression of the Maya. As a result, the success of Spanish Lookout is greatly attributed to two players: the indigenous community, and the Government of Belize.

Mennonite settlement assistance from the Colonial Government of Belize historically situates Spanish Lookout as a colonial extension, or hybridity, of oppression over the Maya. The purchase of archaeologically rich land, and its subsequent cultural defilement subverts Spanish Lookout in a dual colonial position. I use the term dual colonial to refer to the Mennonite status as a vulnerable and historically persecuted group of people in a newfound position of power, whereby they harm or suppress another group of people. The acknowledgement of dual-coloniality is critical to a Post-Colonial framework as it centers the vulnerabilities of the Maya and Mennonite populations. Thus, the future discussions of conservation and stakeholder mitigation outlined here do not seek to harm or oppress the Spanish Lookout community, but rather secure rights for the Maya.

Post-Colonial Theory in Archaeology

The Post-Colonial lens is not new to archaeology (Gosden 2008:167, 176; Wilkie and Bartoy 2000). The call for a critical archaeology began in the 1980's and has led to important disciplinary reforms, including the rise of community involvement (Gosden 2008:162). Now, within social archaeology, it is recognized that the pasts studied often have ties to living populations and that project interests should aim to partner and/or serve such communities (Politis and Gollan 2008:365). In concert with these ideas, this research focuses on improved outcomes for deceased Maya within the South Block and the living Maya in Belize.

The Initial Environmental Impact Assessment acknowledged that many Belizean land parcels contain Maya Cultural Heritage and discussed the social impact of the South Block purchase by SPLC in terms of importance and value (Department of Environment 2014a). A Post-Colonial lens inspires the following questions: 1) Who is delineating the valuation and the hierarchy of importance?; 2) What purposes does this specific structure serve?; and 3) What

would equitable and inclusive outcomes look like? These analytical questions will be addressed throughout the discussion section on alternate pathways.

Collective Action Theory

As demonstrated through their migration history, Mennonites rely on concepts of community cohesion and hegemony to function. Hegemony is “the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” (Gramsci 2005:12). The societal fundamentals of mass consent and community cohesion is evidenced throughout the initial community purchase of Spanish Lookout and consecutive land purchases such as the South Block, and requires a closer look to properly understand the merits of using collective action theory within this paper.

Collective Action Theory relies on the assumption that groups function to achieve common interests (Olson 1965:7). While emotion and ideology can be large drives in group function, the idea of benefits (e.g., provision of collective goods) is the central element (Olson 1965:12–15). How a group operates is dependent on the unification of individuals, which generally seek individual benefit. Action-oriented groups tend to be smaller, whereas larger groups are more productive for generative purposes (e.g., assessing points or view) (James 1951). Small groups are ideal because larger groups lead to more divergent ideas, and thus less is achieved collectively (Olson 1965:57). Small groups also tend to be more durable or long-lasting (Homans 1950:468). Thus, Collective Action Theory not only serves to understand how SPLC operates but also as a guide in mitigation efforts.

Mechanization as Collective Action

An example of collective action within the Mennonite faith is the transformation of Spanish Lookout Village from a traditional group upon arrival in Belize to a mechanized

community in 1961. Mechanization refers to the degree of technological advancement that is incorporated into the Mennonite lifeworld, or daily life. Old Order Mennonites are very traditional and socially castigate any adoption of technology, whereas Modern or Mechanized Mennonites utilize a variety of technology including tractors, and cell phones (Redekop 1969:43; Roessingh and Boersma 2011). Categorization operates on a spectrum and is recognized at the community level.

Due to unfamiliarity with Belizean land practices, the Spanish Lookout Mennonites experienced many poor harvests in their early years, creating a financial crisis around the lack of funds and the debt to Olga Burns (Spanish Lookout 2008:36). In 1961 Hurricane Hattie struck Belize, destroying many buildings. This created an extensive need for wood, which Spanish Lookout could supply with the land and sawmill purchased from Olga Burns. It should be noted that Spanish Lookout did not achieve agricultural success until 1963 (five years after arrival), when the Loewen brothers produced a bean harvest which tremendously increased community output. As such, the looming debt and the sudden call for timber in 1961 led to Spanish Lookout mechanization with the purchase of the first tractors and trucks (Spanish Lookout 2008:32, 35, 39). The years thereafter saw the Spanish Lookout adoption of other technologies including washing machines, and refrigerators (Roessingh and Boersma 2011; Roessingh and Mol 2008). This technological transition, like any other change, had to be agreed upon by the entire community. Disagreements in the adoption of technology produced schisms within the Spanish Lookout Community (Roessingh and Boersma 2011; Roessingh and Plasil 2009:104). Schisms can be thought of as structural maintenance of small group size, thereby retaining group cohesion and optimal productivity.

The modern use of the mechanical plow is of utmost concern as it is the primary tool of the destruction of Maya sites. “Best Management Practices” or BPM, a method implemented by SPLC, ensures maximum yield and therefore maximum financial gains (Department of Environment 2014a). The Modern Belizean Government encourages Mennonite business development because of the \$200 million average of food importation and the ability of internal agricultural pursuits to diminish the dependence on import (Peedle 1999:47; Sutherland 1998:161). Currently, Mennonites are the largest food producer in Belize, despite comprising less than 6% of the population (Sutherland 1998:25). The present encouragement of Mennonite expansionism binds the Modern Belizean Government to the Colonial Belizean Government in its complicity of Maya suppression. I argue that the social evolution experienced within Spanish Lookout and the drive for monetary productivity is driven by the necessity to maintain the historical agreements withheld in the Privilegium, as evidenced by statements of “obligation” included in the Environmental Impact Assessment Volume II Annexes (Department of Environment 2014b). Furthermore, BPM is constituted by clearing, burning, and incorporating burned tillage into the soil – a practice better known as Swidden agriculture, which the Mennonite adopted from the Maya upon arrival (Spanish Lookout 2008:68). The cooptation of Maya environmental knowledge as a tool for success, and a roadmap to cultural erasure marks Mennonite practices as violent and demands reparations.

The Government of Belize complicity is in contradiction with state efforts by the National Institute of Cultural and History to preserve ancient cultural heritage. In many modern nation-states, nationalism supersedes any local or tribal affiliations when concerning decision-making (Sutherland 1998:59). Belize nationalism functions similarly, placing the economy of the nation above indigenous rights and history. If only economically lucrative sites are

preserved, it garners the question of who is being preserved and for whom? Each alternative conservation method proposed attempts to address the questions of who and for whom by focusing on the Maya across varying scales (e.g., past/present, elite/commoner, etc.)

While literature concerning Mennonites is expansive, Mennonite communities can be highly variable because of the Mennonite propensity to migrate and/or split from other Mennonite populations (Roessingh 2007). Therefore, literature about the wider Mennonite community must be given less weight than that concerning the Spanish Lookout community specifically. Due to the fairly short period that Mennonites have occupied settlements in Belize, more coverage exists on the Mennonite populations of the U.S., Canada, and their eastern hemisphere counterparts. Limited ethnographic research has been conducted on the Spanish Lookout Mennonites (e.g., Roessingh and Boersma 2011; Roessingh and Schoonderwoerd 2005; Sawatsky 1969). As a result, this paper aims to grow the literature on the Spanish Lookout Community, introduce a discourse on Mennonites and archaeology, and expand conversations concerning critical cultural heritage conservation.

Collective Action Theory and Archaeology

Collective Action Theory has been utilized in archaeological research to understand past socio-political systems (e.g., DeMarrais and Earle 2017). More relevant to this paper, is the use of Collective Action Theory in cultural heritage conservation. A study done of historical building conservation in Italy used Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA), a methodology which serves to address conflicts in decision making during complex problems (Ferretti et al. 2014). The MCDA framework is designed to be constructive rather than resolute and takes into account both economic and cultural value. As stakeholder access was limited, this research does not concribe to the MCDA methodology but does follow the initial steps of the model: 1)

Define the fundamental objective (Maya Cultural Heritage Preservation), and 2) Identify Alternative Options (see Alternatives 1-5).

South Block Background and Maya Cultural Heritage



Figure 2 Google Earth Map of Belize, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador in relation to the South Block

The ancient Maya extended across Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador (Figure 2) (Coe 1993:21; Demarest 2004:8; Lucero 2006a:35). This land mass is further subdivided into the Maya highlands and lowlands by Chiapas and the Verapaz uplands (Hammond 1982:84). Ancient Maya civilization is primarily divided into three time periods, including the: Pre-classic (2000 BCE - 250 CE), Classic (250 CE - 900± CE), and Post-classic (900± CE - 1500 CE) (Coe 1993:24; Demarest 2004:13; Sharer and Traxler 2006:178, 287, 503). Pre-classic Maya sites see the development of permanent settlement, social stratification, and

increases in pottery production. Classic Maya sites provide glimpses of political centralization, population expansion, and craft specialization, as well as the political collapse during extended droughts within the Terminal Classic period (Lucero 2006a:200; Sharer and Traxler 2006:515).

Social complexity in the Maya Lowlands developed with the rising necessity for resource control and productivity (Ford 1996:297). The annual dry season called for the maintenance of water supply which rising elites took upon themselves to furnish (Lucero 1999a:40). Dispersed Maya settlements across the hinterlands are the result of the fragmentation of good soils (Fedick 1996:128). Elites thus capitalized on human thirst, utilizing water and the associated ritual to garner loyalty from a dispersed community by concentrating resources such as water (e.g., reservoirs) into elite centers (Lucero 1999a:39–41). As water provisioning and ritual gave way to tribute and claims of ancestral ties and supernatural abilities, charismatic elites segued into kingships, or the ruling lineages of elite centers (Lucero 1999a:43, 2006a:15). Through tribute and the use of *corvée* labor, centers grew to include elements such as palaces, ball courts, royal tombs, ceremonial architecture, etc., (Demarest 2004:95-96). When kings were no longer able to provide water due to extended droughts during the Terminal Classic period, the political system collapsed leading to center abandonments and the large population dispersals characteristic of the Post-classic period (Lucero 2006a:198–201).

Post-classic Maya sites are evidenced by a drop in monumental construction, site abandonment, and population dispersal. While European conquest of the Maya was not complete genocide, the introduction of diseases and new warfare did greatly impact indigenous populations (Sharer and Traxler 2006:762, 763). Those that survived were subjected to harsh treatment, including displacement and destruction of written text, or codices, and veneration figures.

Ancient Maya Society at Yalbac and Cara Blanca

Belize is located in Central America, with Mexico to the North, Guatemala to the West, and the Caribbean Sea meeting the Eastern coast (see Figure 2). The research presented here took place in the southern lowlands of the Orange Walk and Cayo Districts of central Belize, and focuses on a stretch of land straddled between the ancient Maya center of Yalbac and the pilgrimage circuit of Cara Blanca (Benson 2015, 2017). Cara Blanca, consisting of 25 water bodies, lies northwest of the Belize River at the base of a limestone escarpment. Vegetation in the Maya hinterlands or non-center settlement is considered Quasi-Forest, containing limestone adapted species and portions of marsh forest (Kinkella 2009). Belize, in the temperate zone, experiences two seasons: the dry season and the rainy season (Fedick and Ford 2016). Yalbac and Cara Blanca, major foci of research, are contextualized to provide a greater understanding of the importance of the hinterlands which connects them (e.g., Benson 2017; Larmon and Nissen 2015; Lucero 2002).

Research in the Yalbac region of Belize was limited to one salvage archaeology excavation prior to the creation of the Valley of Peace Village in 1981 (Awe 1984; Awe and Topsey 1984). Since then, tremendous research has been undertaken, revealing the sacred context of the Cara Blanca Pools and the socio-political make-up of the elite center of Yalbac (e.g., Baltus 2008; Larmon and Nissen 2015; Lucero 2015). It should be noted that elite centers amplified ritual performances, increasing the scale of dedication, termination, and ancestral veneration (McAnany 1995:125).

As the research on Cara Blanca and Yalbac is conducted in stages, previous findings are discussed separately to further illustrate the severe loss that would result from continued destruction of the dispersed Maya settlement. Yalbac is considered a medium or secondary

center, indicating substantial architecture and class differentiation including archaeological findings of iconography, water and agricultural systems, ballcourts, plazas, temples, and an acropolis (Kinkella 2009). Secondary centers tend to be more grandiose in scale than minor centers but not as large as regional centers such as Tikal and Calakmul (Lucero 2006a:46). Throughout the Classic period elites would utilize water ritual as a means of solidifying their right to rule (Lucero 1999a:40, 1999b). Power legitimization becomes increasingly critical during prolonged drought periods in the Terminal Classic period (Kennett et al. 2012; Medina-Elizalde and Rohling 2012). It is during the prolonged drought periods that an increase in ritual activity at Cara Blanca is seen (Lucero and Kinkella 2015). Thus, Yalbac can be directly linked with Cara Blanca through a display of power (ritual power) over residents in the surrounding areas.

With tremendous contributions from Yalbac Ranch, the sustainable logging company who owns Cara Blanca, VOPA has continually been granted access and logistical support for excavations at Cara Blanca. Cara Blanca contains a combination of lakes and cenotes, or steep-sided groundwater fed sinkholes. Cenotes were considered sacred spaces for the ancient Maya, often associated with the underworld and the gods (Lucero 2018; Lucero and Kinkella 2015). The presence of a water temple (Str. 1) and a ceremonial platform (Str. 3) at Pool 1, as well as a nearby sweat-bath (M186), further suggest that Pool 1 was deemed sacred and would have been part of a larger pilgrimage circuit connecting the other pools (Harrison 2015; Larmon et al. 2019; Larmon and Nissen 2015; Lucero 2015). Human remains found enclosed within Pool 1 ceremonial construction are buried in materially different ways than those found in the hinterlands or rural areas, highlighting an important distinction of the ritual spaces made by the ancient Maya. VOPA has focused primarily on Yalbac and the Cara Blanca pilgrimage

landscape. Little research has been enacted in the hinterland settlement of Yalbac, stunting our knowledge of this cultural landscape (Figure 3).

Archaeological excavations have demonstrated that rituals of termination and dedication were an embodiment of the Maya worldview; animated, and cyclical around concepts of life, death, and rebirth (Garber et al. 1998: 125). The household group, consisting of wattle and daub structures on raised floors of clay and stone, are sites of ancestral veneration (Demarest 2004:113, 176). Maya ancestral veneration was a common ritual practice within the domicile, often burying the dead underneath homestead floors (death), and reconstructing in the same



Figure 3 Google Earth Map of Deforested Mound Fields in South Block

location (rebirth) (Coe 1993:170; McAnany 1995:100; Sharer and Traxler 2006:201). The practice of home burials highlights hinterland settlement as an ancestral cemetery, and further elucidates the landscape as a unified ritual gradient rather than three related but separate spaces. Although lineal descent is deemed important within modern Maya communities, more distant untraceable ancestors are connected with occupation of particular landscapes (Sharer and Traxler 2006:693). In light of ancestral ties to land, hinterland burials can be thought of as an ancient

Maya establishment of land lineage (McAnany 1995:10). Considered as a single unit, the lack of preservation of the Maya hinterland settlement near Yalbac leaves researchers with a fragmentary understanding of the ritual landscape, breaks ancestral pathways connecting the charged arenas of Yalbac and Cara Blanca, and erases tangible indigenous land claims/rights.

Research on Maya hinterlands have been carried out extensively throughout Belize (e.g., Chase and Chase 2000; Fedick 1989:231–245; Willey et al. 1965: 1–29). While encompassing broad similarities such as political structure and economies, the ancient Maya were highly variable (Sharer and Traxler 2006:93–94). The high level of variability across ancient Maya settlement speaks to unique local practices (Fedick and Ford 1990). Yalbac and Cara Blanca have been marked as significant and have institutional protections in place to avoid damage (Department of Environment 2014a). The Maya hinterlands has not been afforded such protections despite connecting elite and sacred landscapes, containing information about local quotidian life, and embodying Maya ancestry via numerous burials scattered throughout (Carbaugh 2017). UNESCO defines cultural heritage as groups of buildings and archaeological sites (1972). Regarding this definition, the rural settlement is an extension of Yalbac and Cara Blanca as a group of archaeological sites. The permissive destruction may speak to larger issues concerning the allure and exoticism of grandiose architecture often required in preservation for touristic purposes.

In the 1990's, archaeologist Scott Fedick conducted a soil quality assessment of the Belize River Valley, ultimately typifying the soil into different categories ranging from Class I (highest agricultural potential) to Class V (lowest agricultural potential) (Figure 4) (Fedick 1996:112–122). Class I and Class II soils coincided with ancient Maya settlement locations

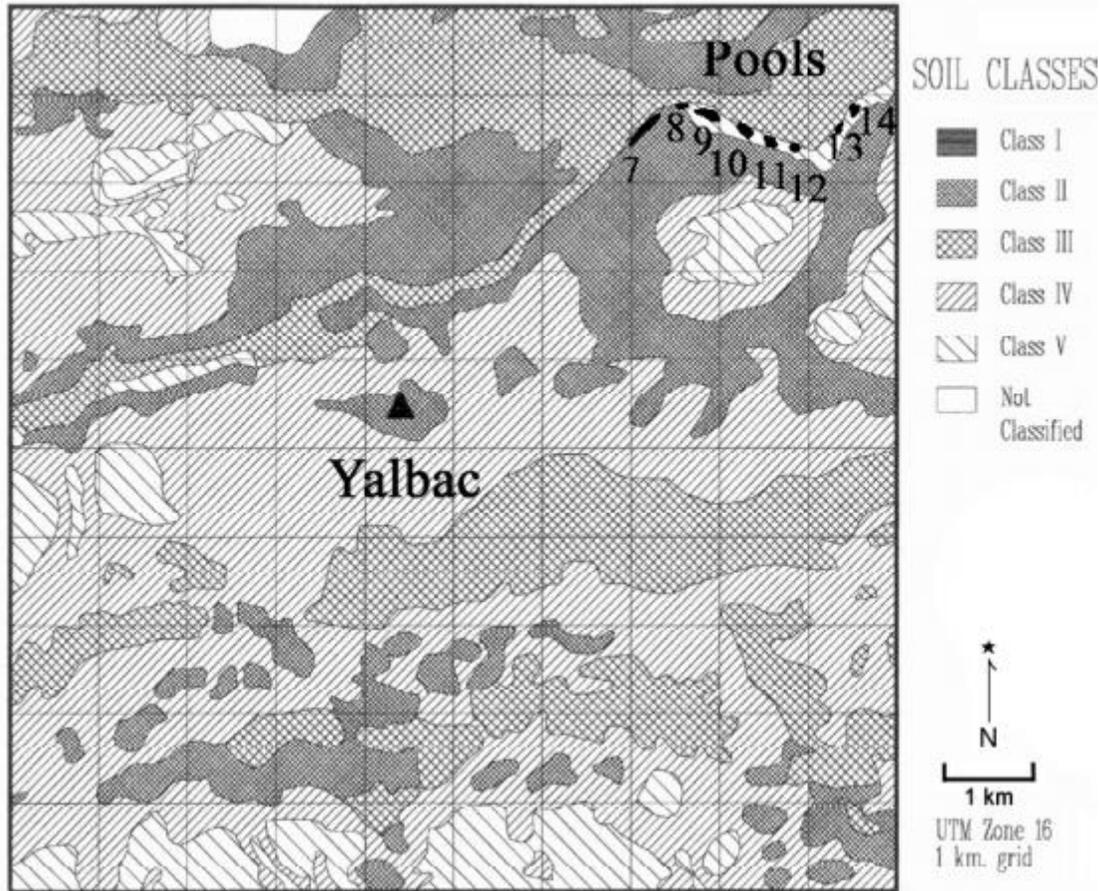


Figure 4 Map of Soil Classes in Yalbac region, Belize (Fedick)

identified by the Valley of Peace Archaeology Project, with the notable exception of Cara Blanca (Lucero et al. 2004:96). The known research conducted by Fedick, in conjunction with the Mennonite quote and written acknowledgment, act as a revelation of motivation for SPLC's active intent or target on Maya cultural heritage. A knowing and purposeful fixation on a specific group of people can be seen as a violent act, breaking with Mennonite principles of pacifism.

Urgency

A series of wildfires beginning in April of 2011, following the disastrous Hurricane Richard in 2010, severely impacted the Yalbac Hills forest, home to many Maya ruins in the karstic lowlands. The extent of the damage led to the sale of over 30,000 acres (spanning 3 blocks of land, including the East Block, Green Hills, and South Block previously owned by Yalbac Ranch) to the Spanish Lookout Corporation (Benson 2015). The South block, the focus of this paper, contains Yalbac, the Maya rural settlement, and abuts Cara Blanca pools 7, 8, and 9 (see Figure 3). Despite its rich abundance of cultural heritage, SPLC is developing the South Block agriculturally. This has spurred a dire call for immediate attention to the Maya hinterland which is now in danger of destruction and erasure via plowing.

In light of the rapid agricultural development of the South Block, Dr. John Morris of the Belize Institute of Archaeology requested that VOPA conduct surveys of the cleared fields beginning in 2014 (Benson 2015). Surveys of Mound Fields 1, 2, and 3 revealed 129 mounds categorized using a mound typology developed by UIUC graduate student Erin Benson, and numerous artifacts indicating a domestic context (Benson 2015). In 2016, with permission from SPLC, a Salvage Archaeology Program was launched (Benson 2017). The salvage archaeology program documented 28 additional mounds via survey in the east end of Mound Field Pool 7 and excavated 8 mounds across Mound Fields 2, 4, and Pool 7 (Benson 2017). Excavations revealed data which highlights a Late Preclassic (300 BCE - 250 CE) to Terminal Classic (850 - 1000 C.E.) occupation of the area (Kosakowsky 2017). A number of the excavated mounds contained human remains, but Mound Field 4 displayed a particularly high number of burials in Mound 1 (MNI=6), possibly indicative of an ancestral shrine as noted at other Maya sites (Carbaugh 2017). The volume of mounds identified within the field, the extensive window of occupation,

and the multitude of ancestral burials demonstrates the urgent need for this risk assessment and subsequent actions of intervention.

Slow Violence Quantification Methods

Part 1: Temporal Analysis of Deforestation

The Google Earth Time Series allows for a temporal look at the South Block through 1969, approximately 10 years after SPLC arrival in Belize. Google Earth contains images of the years 1969, 1989, 1991-95, 1998-2009, 2011-2016, half of 2018, and 2019. Any missing years are due to missing data or omissions due to poor resolution. The year 2018, though only showing half of the South Block, displays all areas in question (Yalbac, Cara Blanca, and hinterland or rural settlement) and was thus included in the data set. As the land was not acquired by SPLC until 2014, the 45 years prior act as a constant from which to compare SPLC practices. An outline of the South Block was obtained from Erin Benson, a Cahokian archaeologist involved in VOPA salvage program during the 2014 and 2016 seasons. The South Block outline was uploaded into Google Earth, framing the case study site. As Google Earth does not contain the ability to combine polygons, the polygon feature was utilized to trace annual deforestation within the South Block and compiled into folders by year. The folders were exported in KML format to import and convert within GIS ArcMap. Once in GIS ArcMap, the software was utilized to calculate the area and perimeter of each polygon of deforestation. The results were summed by year, and statistically compared using Excel.

Next, I identify agricultural plots on, abutting, or proximal to Maya cultural heritage within the South Block and highlight areas of overlap between Maya sites and deforestation/farm development. The highlighted plots are quantified with the same method of area/perimeter calculations in GIS ArcMap, and Excel statistical comparison. I then examine the order in which

deforestation occurs in relation to proximity to Maya cultural heritage to make visible the issue of slow violence via indigenous land profiling.

Part 2: Mound Documentation

Mounds contained within roughly five fields of the South Block were documented using a Phantom 3 Pro Drone, piloted by the author during the 2018 VOPA season. The drone was

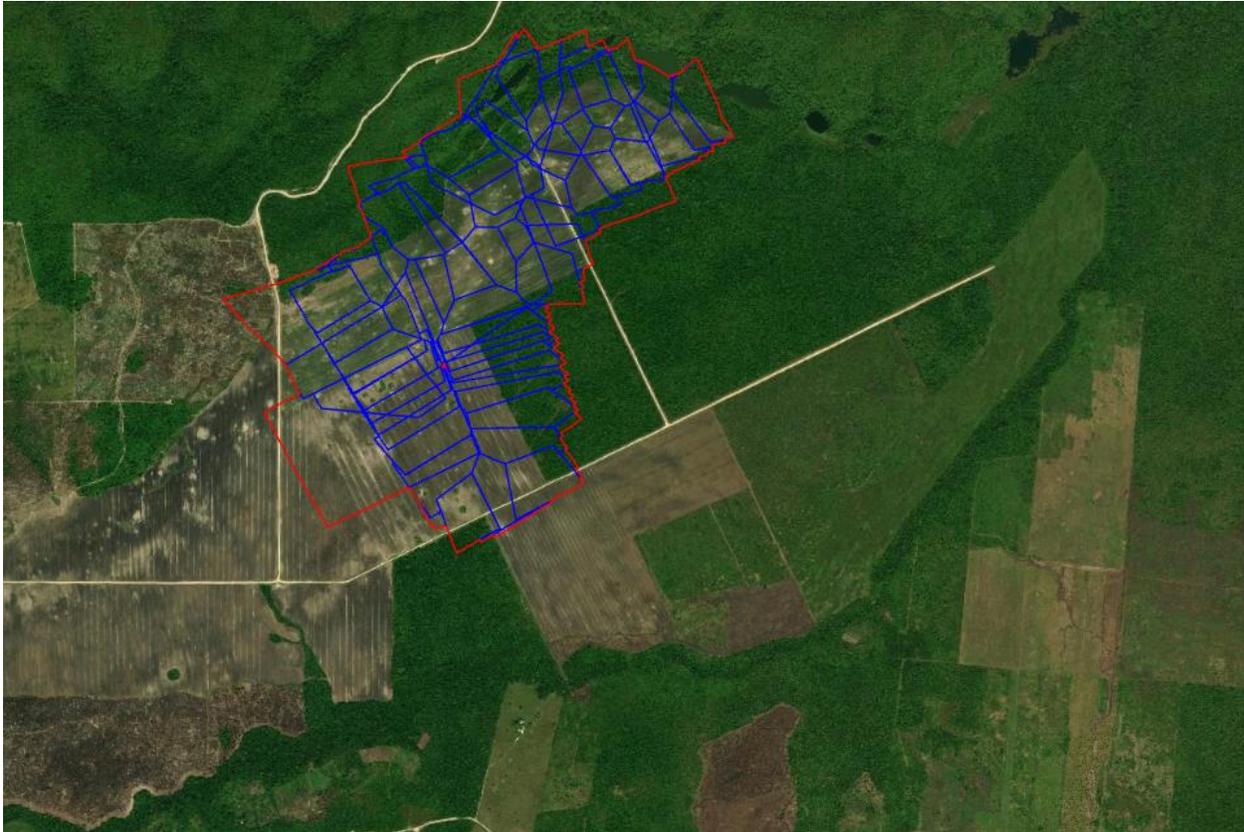


Figure 5 Agisoft rendition of aerial image coverage

piloted in a manual flight path with an average above-ground altitude of approximately 280 m., resulting in the collection of over 300 photos (Figure 5). Photos were logged in the field, recording altitude in meters, and latitude/longitude coordinates for each photo. Upon importing the photo collection into Agisoft Photoscan, I conducted a photo alignment producing a 3D model. The 3D model serves as an initial step in the documentation of the current state of disappearance of the hinterland settlement. The production of a 3D archive of the Maya house-

mounds visually preserves relational information of the mounds for future settlement studies. In past surveys, single structures, of equal to or less than 2m in height are typically identified as household mounds, but only additional excavation can illuminate this distinction (Kinkella 2009). Height of each mound was unavailable as most fields have been plowed flat, resulting in an ineffective digital elevation model.

Results: Temporal Analysis of Deforestation

Ninety percent of the South Block has been slated for agricultural development, with the remaining 10% contained within the restricted area of the Yalbac (Department of Environment 2014a). Thus, the risk assessment is not meant to quantify how much cultural heritage destruction is occurring but rather the rate at which it is happening to determine a window of urgency and action.

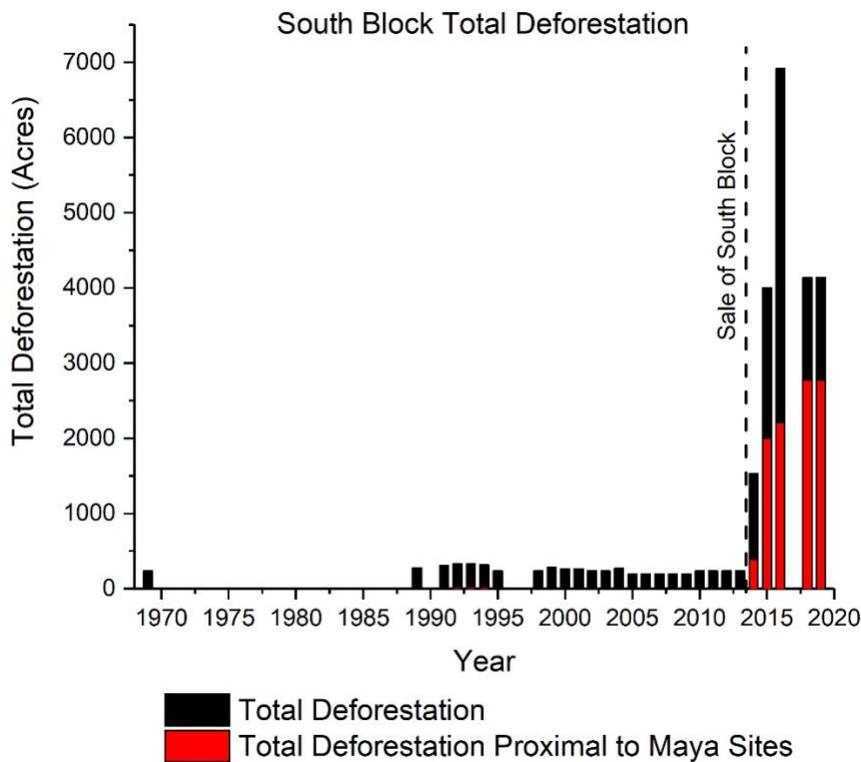


Figure 6 South Block Total Deforestation compared to Total Deforestation Proximal to Maya sites

Between the years 1969-2013, limited changes in deforestation occurred. A linear regression of the data indicates a negative deforestation trend pre-SPLC (approximately -2 to .8 additionally deforested acres per year), indicating that the previous owners, Yalbac Ranch, were maintaining a sustainable logging business. In the years 2014 and beyond, there is a reversal, demonstrating a stark positive trend with an approximate deforestation rate of 382 to 668 additionally deforested acres per year. Further projection of these estimates places the complete deforestation of the South Block within 8.5 to 10 years. The total deforestation decrease demonstrated between the years 2016 and 2018 (Figure 6) may represent forest recovery from the previous fires and hurricane season, or recoveries from bad harvests. Interviews with SPLC would be needed to determine the validity of such claims.

Coincidentally, the South Block reveals a steady rise of deforestation on, abutting, or proximal to Maya sites throughout SPLC years, where no deforestation was previously affecting archaeological sites under ownership of Yalbac Ranch (see Figure 6). Areas near Yalbac were selected within the first year and continually expanded through the present, in line with the correlation between good soils and Maya structures. These trends may indicate hinterland areas will be exhausted prior to continued deforestation elsewhere and suggest the visibility of slow violence. Due to the fairly recent purchase, only five samples were available since SPLC's purchase and more data is needed to assert confidence in such claims. (See Alternative 1 section for results on 3D Archive)

Towards Peace in Conflict

The Environmental Impact Assessment conducted by the Government of Belize at the time of the South Block purchase, suggests the following protocol (emphasis added by author) (Department of Environment 2014a: 6-24):

1. Significant Solitary mounds that exist within the area be avoided by either just clearing the vegetation if small or just **left as is and not leveled**;
2. That if any activity is contemplated in the immediate site, that this should **involve the Institute of Archaeology (IOA)**, and that caution should be exercised whenever any civil works are initiated on the property;
3. If any excavations or earth works are to be undertaken, care must be taken as the **possibility of encountering archaeological remains is possible**;
4. **If archaeological/cultural material shows up, operation must be stopped** and the Institute of Archaeology should be informed and consulted for further guidance;
5. That when surveying to construct roads, the SPLC will create cut lines only, and **then notify the IOA for them to verify that no mounds are in the roadway path**;
6. That where there are significant amount of mounds in a plot, that the area can be cleared of vegetation, however, **if planting is to occur it must be around the mounds** or to plant grass and utilize the area as a pasture for grazing cattle

Spanish Lookout is currently non-compliant with these suggestions (see Results section). As the outlined recommendations for archaeological resource conservation have proved ineffective, I utilize this discussion section to propose new methods of Maya cultural heritage conservation in relation to Mennonite agricultural practices.

Alternative 1: Technology and a 3D Archive



Figure 7 3D rendition from aerial image collection

The aerial images collected in 2018 produced a 3D representation of a portion of the South Block (Figures 7 and 8), namely Pool 7 East and West Mound Field, Mound Field 1, and Mound Field 7 (see Figure 3).

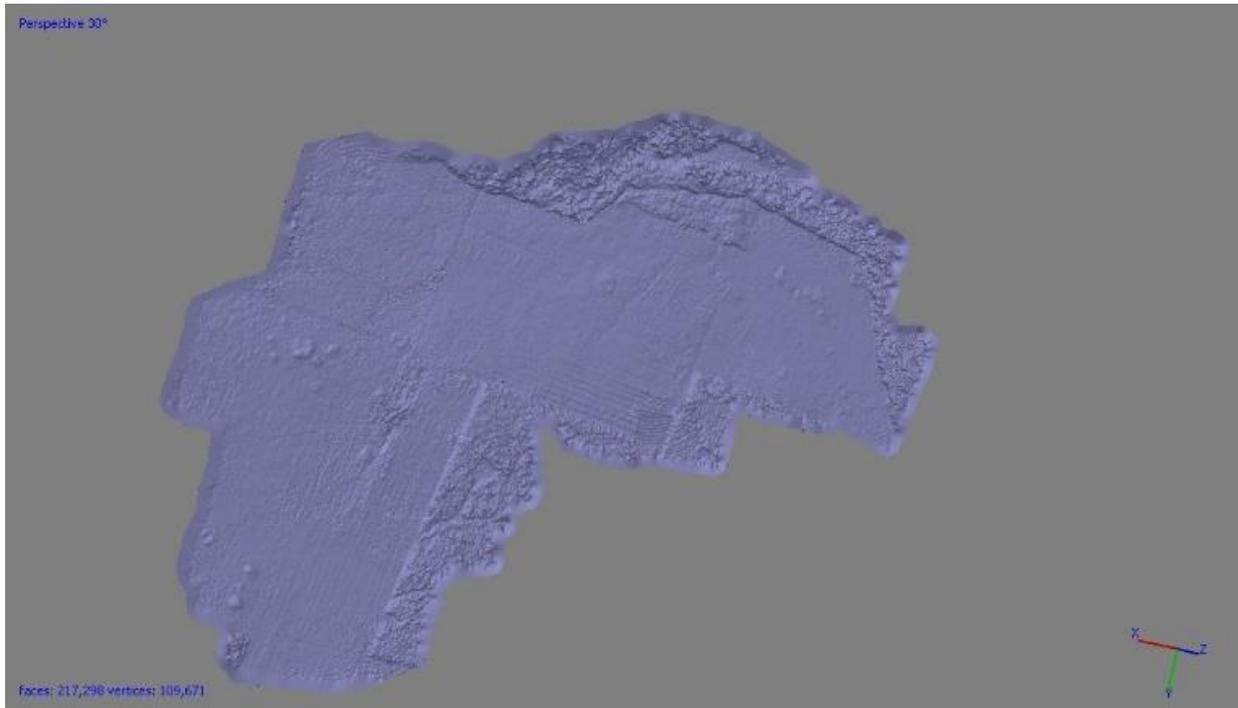


Figure 8 Solid rendition of aerial image collection

The rate of deforestation is much too quick, exhausting archaeological resources. Efforts to preserve Maya cultural heritage through traditional methods of excavation will not suffice in the case of the South Block. Drone imaging of visible mounds can be utilized to create a 3D archive. A 3D archive could benefit future generations of scholars by availing a visual environment from which to conduct network analyses, among other possibilities (Richards-Rissetto 2013). Additionally, LiDAR use across Meso-America is seeing tremendous growth, capturing Maya sites hidden by dense forest canopies (Garrisona et al. 2019; Inomata et al. 2018). Drone attachable LiDAR equipment is now available, though costly. If obtained, the LiDAR could serve as a precautionary device, identifying Maya sites prior to deforestation and enlarging the window for excavation before destruction, provided SPLC permits. Though this

option may be preventative in nature, it is reliant on external funding, time, SPLC cooperation, and ultimately does not address the indignant treatment of ancestral burials across the landscape. As such, while feasible, this alternative is not recommended.

Alternative 2: Reconciliation and Land Reparations

The South Block, almost completely forested at the time of purchase, lies within the unofficially recognized Central Belize Wildlife Corridor (Department of Environment 2014a). The Central Wildlife Corridor is meant to foster forest maintenance and encourage wildlife prosperity. Previous research demonstrates that the forest in Yalbac displays characteristics of a descendent forest of the Maya (Lindsay 2011). A forest configuration related to the ancient Maya implies a longstanding health and biodiversity that is the result of indigenous management practices (Lindsay 2011). The Environmental Impact Assessment outlines multiple moderate to severe deleterious effects of the South Block Development under SPLC, including land scarification, soil erosion, air pollution, species displacement/mortality and eco-system fragmentation (Department of Environment 2014a). The deforestation rate presented by this study amplifies the outlined effects on the endangerment of biodiversity and overall environmental health of the South Block, which can be considered a cultural remnant, or an artifact, of ancient Maya land management. The Mennonite environmental conservation focus is predominantly on the soil, which is directly related to production value (Department of Environment 2014b). Environmental mitigation plans are in place, but the non-compliance with archaeological mounds and remains brings environmental compliance under scrutiny.

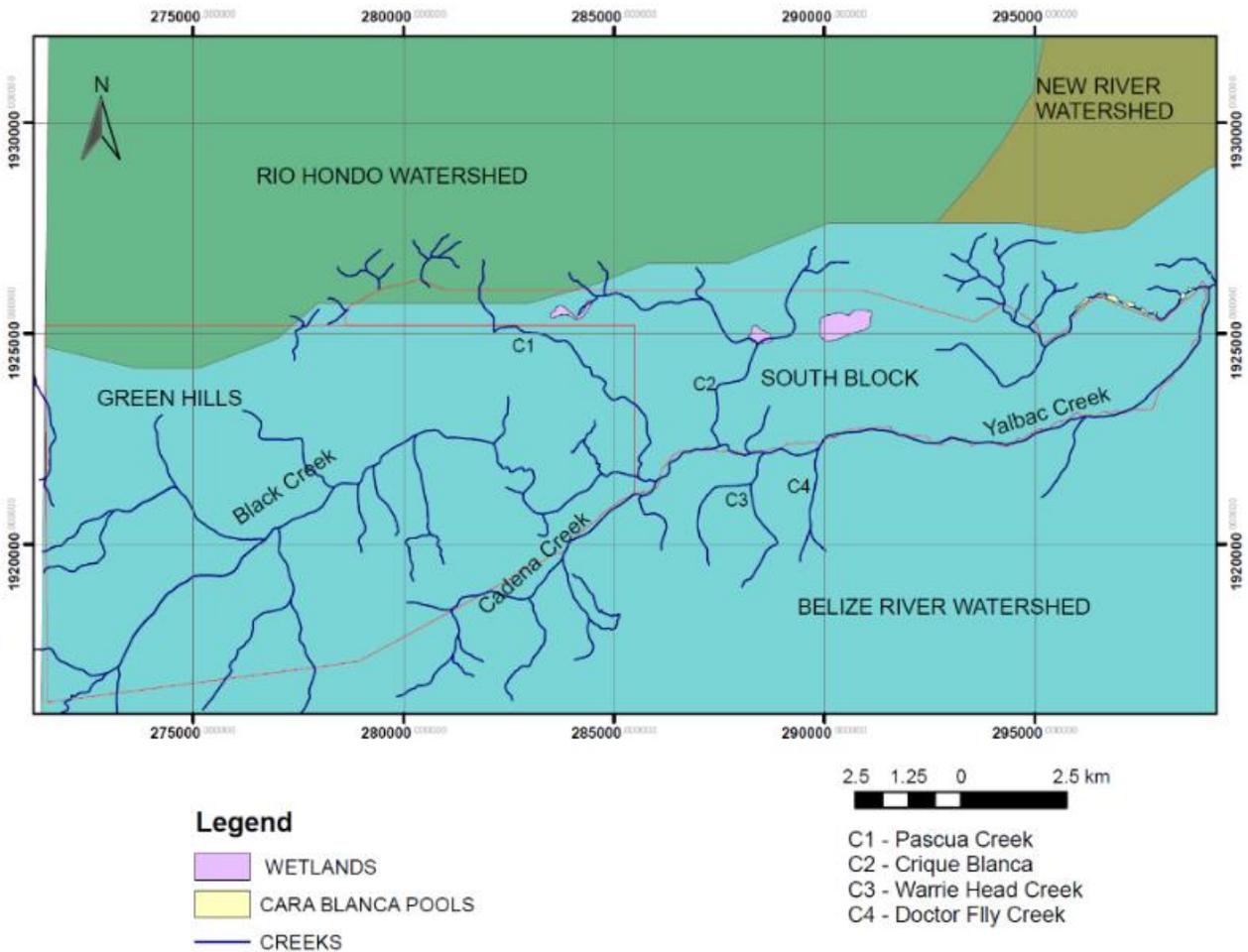


Figure 9 Map of Watershed in South Block from Environmental Impact Assessment

Further scrutiny of environmental compliance is critical due to the potential negative impact on modern Maya communities. SPLC has proposed the creation of an airstrip in the South Block for pesticide/herbicide spray plans. A look at the watershed within the South Block (Figure 9) illustrates the potential for harmful products to infiltrate local water sources, especially considering the use of spray planes and stormwater runoff during the rainy season. The Environmental Impact Assessment references complaints from the Valley of Peace citing the lack of water treatment/water potability (Department of Environment 2014a). The Valley of Peace, though historically a refuge village, has many Maya residents including some Maya VOPA workers (Lucero 2017). Chemical pollution of the local watershed could adversely affect

communities that lack access to potable water. In the assessment, SPLC indicates that water potability is the responsibility of the Belize Government (Department of Environment 2014b). The possibility of SPLC impacting modern Maya people via local water quality emphasizes the violent behavior of SPLC upon Maya communities. Bridging the negative impact of SPLC development in the South Block between past and present populations highlights this issue as critical and urgent.

Reparations are usually paid in acknowledgement of wrongdoing, and regained land rights are one way which indigenous communities seek reconciliation (Anaya 2012). In 1995, the Belize state attempted to undermine continuous Maya occupation in the Toledo District (Sutherland 1998:86). In 2007, the Case of Maya Communities v. Belize went to the Belize Supreme Court, regarding contested land rights, and won (Anaya 2012). In Bolivia in 1992, indigenous people argued legal rights to Mennonite settled lands and received monetary compensations for relocation (Loewen 2013:203). Similarly, alliance and collaboration with local Maya populations in entering a legal battle against SPLC for land repatriation could be fruitful in securing cultural heritage protection with advantages for living Maya populations. However, the legal process of land reparations would be timely, costly, and may not yield the concretely desired results. Another consideration is the lack of capacity for transferal to other archaeological conflicts. In other words, a success within the South Block would not outline a methodology for approaching conflict in other areas within and beyond Belize, rendering this alternative unsustainable and not recommended.

Alternative 3: Displaced Resting Ground

Along the line of land repatriations, the concept of a new or displaced resting ground should be considered. Belize has yet to develop the U.S. equivalent of the Native American

Grave Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which establishes Indigenous control over uncovered indigenous remains (Rose et al. 2002). Although NAGPRA does not demand reburial, reburial is the most common outcome (Rose et al. 2002). A displaced resting ground would serve as a location of reburial for any human remains uncovered during salvage archaeology excavations and plowing. Ancient Maya remains have appeared throughout many Valley of Peace Archaeology Project excavations (Carbaugh 2017). Recent practice has been not to exhume remains upon discovery, reburying them after documentation (Carbaugh 2017). In the case of the South Block, exhumation is a necessity to avoid plow degradation of ancestral remains.

Salvage archaeology thus generates knowledge of the rural settlement for locals and scholars, while simultaneously embodying a practice of care for the ancestral remains. VOPA has a long history of community partnering and includes Maya members (e.g., Lindsay 2011; Lucero 2017). Continued and/or increased partnership with local Maya on salvage archaeology excavations would invite Maya participation in the preservation process. Participation in any exhumations is completely voluntary out of respect for each individual. Potential problems arise when considering perspectives of both the archaeologists and the indigenous. From an archaeological standpoint, ethics in Belize must be assessed before attempting the feat of a new ancestral resting ground. Simultaneously, from the perspective of an indigenous Maya, conversations about perceptions of ancestry and whether the living community sees a new resting ground as a viable option should be had prior to any attempts. Discussions with Maya members should be open and malleable to their input, especially when regarding human remains.

The creation of a new ancestral resting ground devoted to the Maya would address the concern for Maya ancestral bodies, disregarding any other components of the Maya rural settlement. A resting ground for the displaced would need land in a low disturbance area –

perhaps proximal to Yalbac or Cara Blanca. While a major loss of knowledge would occur in the loss of the Maya hinterland, if compromise with SPLC cannot be reached to slow or deter deforestation and plowing rates, this is perceived by the author as a priority recommendation.

Alternative 4: Eco-tourism

The Environmental Impact Assessment proposed the alternative to convert the South Block into a Nature Reserve for Eco-tourism purposes, generating jobs and economic capital (Department of Environment 2014a). A Nature Reserve would have acted to preserve the environmental integrity of the area, the archaeological/ancestral history, and serve as homage to the many Maya alive and present in Belize today. In Belize, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of the Environment are one and the same (Sutherland 1998:99). While offering work for local communities, tourism can itself be seen as a form of imperialism because of the resulting power inequalities between visitors and residents (Nash 1989:40). As a result, advocacy for the conversion of land to a place of eco-tourism requires significant input from local stakeholders to ensure all are in support. Regardless, economic obstacles and the Belizean drive for agricultural productivity superseded this option, procuring the SPLC purchase against the option of a Nature Reserve. This is not to argue that this alternative is no longer a viable option, but rather that it has had minimal success rates in the hinterlands in the past and is a low priority choice.

Alternative 5: Re-education and Open Discussions

An understanding of collective action, and the possibility of its strategic utilization, has the power to shift Mennonite outlooks (Goossen 2017:15, 16). The attempt to highlight SPLC deforestation as a form of slow violence against the indigenous Maya aims to function as a Mennonite tool of reorientation towards justice.

As the Mennonite migration from Canada to Mexico demonstrates, education is a critically important tool of Mennonite community cohesion and enculturation (Kraybill 1977:2). Mennonite education is theologically centered, making the insertion of archaeological teachings difficult. However, studies of Mennonite involvement in indigenous displacement have been done, setting a literary basis from which to educate SPLC (Horst 2007:16, 94; Kroeker and Leclair 2010). Similarly, the Dismantling of the Doctrine of Discovery Coalition is a growing movement meant to inform the Mennonite population of the displacement of indigenous people in the U.S., which they unknowingly participated in (Houser 2017). The coalition's website provides a film on the subject of indigenous displacement, a study guide for biblical reflections and guided activities, and a method of contact for invited speakers. Tangible items, such as the Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery film, create entry points of justice that are easily translatable into the Mennonite lifeworld. Coordination with SPLC stakeholders may open the possibility for introduction of materials of reorientation specifically created by and for Mennonites. Knowledge transfer between Mennonite groups is considered ideal to ensure that harm is not imposed on the Mennonite community.

The Environmental Impact Assessment lists numerous activities which the South Block can expand, including but not limited to reforestation programs and rehabilitation of archaeological sites (Department of Environment 2014: 6-5). With education as a gateway to receptive collaboration, VOPA, SPLC, and the local indigenous community can collaborate on the creation of just and innovative outcomes that work to include suggested activities such as reforestation. With time, relationships have the potential to develop into more fruitful collaborations that uphold Maya justice and Mennonite peace principles. For example, a partnership that incorporates reductions in deforestation and destructive plowing with scientific

investigations on methods of improving crop yield is delineated by the shared outcomes of peace and justice. Such investigations would benefit the Mennonite communities by increased productivity, the VOPA community by informing on landscape potentials that can speak to ancient Maya survival in the area, and the Maya community by preserving ancestral burials and portions of the sacred landscape. Furthermore, if indigenous knowledge is to be elevated, the ancient Maya farming concepts of diversity and dispersal, including the method of intercropping can/should be incorporated (Demarest 2004:128; Sharer and Traxler 2006). As education and collaboration are the least aggressive and most inclusive alternative discussed throughout this paper, it is the primary recommendation to slow or diminish slow violence against the Maya.

Concluding Remarks

The aim of this paper is to draw attention to the present complexities of archaeological conservation, highlight stakeholder complicity in slow violence, and transform current preservation strategies. Timeline estimates presented in the Environmental Impact Assessment of the South Block cite a 10 to 15 year window for completion of total deforestation (excluding Yalbac) (Department of Environment 2014b). At the present 5-year mark this risk assessment introduces a new window of 8.5 to 10 years, correlates deforestation with Maya cultural heritage destruction, and introduces prospective mitigation options for combatting SPLC's slow violence.

Alternative 5 (SPLC Reorientation), being the most inclusive, cost effective, and transformative option, is the most prominent recommendation. Alternatives 1 (3D Archive) and 3 (New Resting Ground) can be completed in conjunction with alternative 5 but should not be the sole/primary mitigation methods. While the case study is conducted within the South Block of Yalbac, Belize, the presented methodologies and framework are transmittable elsewhere,

including Yucatan, Mexico where traditional Maya beekeepers are experiencing similar slow violence at the hands of Mennonite farmers (Strochlic 2019; Thompson 1970:152).

Statement of Reflection

I had never visited Belize prior to undertaking this research. I am not of Maya ancestry nor Belizean nationality and am not a member of the Mennonite faith. I conduct this research as an outsider to the aforementioned groups upon a stated need, and an observed urgency. My findings are not meant to replace or speak in place of stakeholder gatherings/debate, but rather elucidate aspects that may not have been readily articulated throughout past conversation. I was an active participant of the Valley of Peace Archaeology Project during the 2018 season, and believe this may contribute some bias, representing the sole interests of archaeologists. I did not conduct any interviews with locals to state otherwise, and suggest the outlined recommendations be discussed with indigenous communities near Yalbac to provide a holistic representation. As I acknowledge my removed positionality, I encourage the VOPA Principle Investigator, Dr. Lisa Lucero, to seek out local stakeholders interested in continuing my documentation and peacebuilding efforts.

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