

# **Unnatural Disaster: The Political Economy of Famine in Guatemala**

By

Andrew Dawe

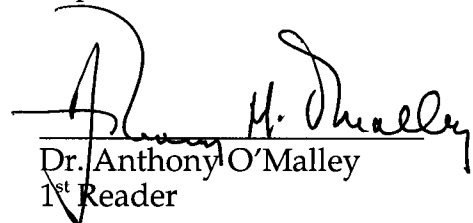
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## **Unnatural Disaster: The Political Economy of Famine in Guatemala**

### **Abstract**

Disasters have traditionally been thought of as acts of god. The reality is that they are acts of man, through the socially created conditions of vulnerability that expose people to hazards and limit their ability to cope with the impact of those shocks. Globalization, as a process of integration into a global economic system, is a human made construct that is making the majority of the earth's population increasingly vulnerable. It exposes people to new threats and limits their capacity to respond to them, or even survive.

Guatemala is a specific case that illustrates how increasing immiseration and concentration of wealth occur simultaneously with the integration of a country into the global economic system. This integration takes the form of orienting national production and development towards exports, while increasing its dependence on imports of both basic needs and luxury goods. The process is championed by the national economic elites that benefit from this globally integrated development. They promote and effect this orientation of the national political economy through their control over resources, particularly land, production, exchange and the state. This 'dependent' orientation of the economy towards export led development and the grossly inequitable socio-economic structure that is its foundation have systematically deprived the majority of Guatemalans of their very means of subsistence and survival. It has appropriated their means of production and destroyed their entitlements, resulting in widespread hunger and famine. The actual famine that occurred in 2001 was simply a system of this systemic crisis that has placed millions in Guatemala at risk.

This thesis shows how the political economy of the country is inequitably structured, how it concentrates wealth in the hands of a small economic elite while actively impoverishing the majority. It shows how this structure is based on an export led model of development, which itself serves the 'core' of the global economic system – Northern consumers, producers and transnational corporations. It shows how this structure and orientation resulted in the 2001 famine and further shows how this famine was not an exception event, but simply the normal state of affairs for millions of poor, rural and indigenous Guatemalans. It was a symptom of the much larger, constant and silent disaster that globalization has wrought upon the vast majority of people who do not benefit from its disastrous project of immiseration.

Andrew Dawe  
June, 2003

## **List of Abbreviations**

AGEXPRONT – Asociación Gremial de Exportadores de Productos No-Tradicionales  
ANACAFE – Asociación Nacional de Caficultores  
ASAZGUA – Asociación de Azucareros de Guatemala  
AVANCSO - Asociación  
BANDEGUA – Bananas de Guatemala?  
BANGUAT – Banco de Guatemala  
BID – Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo  
CACIF – Coordinadora de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieros  
CACM – Central American Common Market  
CAFTA – Central American Free Trade Agreement  
CEH – Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico  
CEPAL – Comisión Económica para América Latina  
ECLAC – Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean  
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization  
FOB – Free On Board  
FRG – Frente Republicano de Guatemala  
FLACSO – Facultad Latino Americana de Ciencias Sociales  
IADB – Inter American Development Bank  
IDNDR – International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction  
IDNHR – International Decade for Natural Hazard Reduction  
IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development  
IFPRI – International Food Policy Research Institute  
IMF – International Monetary Fund  
INCAP – Instituto de Nutrición de Centro América y Panamá  
ISDR – UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction  
MAGA – Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación (Ministry of Agriculture, Cattle and Food)  
MINUGUA – Misión de las Naciones Unidas en Guatemala / United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala  
MSPAS – Ministerio de Salud Publica y Asistencia Social (Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance)  
OCHA – Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
ODHAG – Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala  
OIM – Organización Internacional de Migraciones  
PAC – Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (Civil Self-Defence Patrols)  
PAHO – Pan American Health Organization  
PAN – Partido de Acción Nacional  
PMA – Programa Mundial de Alimentación (see WFP)  
PNUD – Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (see UNDP)  
REMHI – Reconstrucción de la Memoria Histórica  
SEGEPLAN – Secretario General de Planificación  
TNI – Trans National Institute  
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme (see PNUD)



UNDRO – United Nations Disaster Relief Office  
UNESCO – United Nations Education, Science and Culture Office  
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund  
UNRISD – United Nations Research Institute on Social Development  
URNG – Unión Revolucionario Nacional de Guatemala  
VESTEX – Association of Clothing and Textile Exporters  
WFP – World Food Programme (see PMA)  
WHO – World Health Organization

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Andrew Dawe  
June 2003

# Chapter I

## The Political Economy of Disaster

*“a pessimist is simply an optimist who’s well informed”*  
- Mario Benedetti, Haiku 213

### INTRODUCTION

The disaster of famine today stalks people around the globe. In spite of popular belief, famine has only disappeared from the sight of those who do not face it as part of their daily life. In reality, it has become the norm for millions of people around the world. Recent crises in Southern Africa, the Horn of Africa and North Korea have once again drawn media attention to its existence. The fact is that chronic and acute hunger continues to destroy lives and livelihoods throughout the so-called ‘Third World’. The wealth produced by economic growth and globalization has not ‘trickled down’. It is exactly this concentration of wealth that is one of the principal causes of hunger, poverty and vulnerability. Such is the case in Guatemala, a ‘Middle Income Country’ with sufficient wealth and resources, unlike other countries experiencing famine in Sub-Saharan Africa, to more than sustain its population.

This thesis is concerned with dispelling a number of popular, and erroneous, beliefs. These beliefs are, in and of themselves, factors in reproducing the problems that they supposedly explain. The first of these beliefs is that disasters are natural. The second is that famine is simply an event that occurs. The third is that famine is somehow separate from endemic hunger. The fourth is that hunger, poverty and vulnerability are themselves ‘naturally’ occurring conditions.

This thesis shows that disasters are not natural, but are anthropocentric crises that result from socially constructed situations. It shows how famines evolve from underlying causes that go much deeper than ‘triggers’ such as drought or war. It shows how the causes of endemic hunger are inseparable from the causes of famine. It shows how elite actors and the structures they dominate create poverty and vulnerability. It accomplishes

all of this by showing how a disaster is constructed, through the social creation of vulnerability and exposure to threat, all through the normal functioning of the political economic system. As such, this thesis is a study of 'structural violence'; of how the global economic system and the socio-economic structure of nations integrated into it cause poverty and vulnerability; of how these structures create hunger and form the mechanisms that are the foundation of the famine process. This is a study of how the wielding of power and wealth create disaster.

Famines are the most prominent disaster in all of human history.<sup>1</sup> They have not abated with time or 'development', having claimed more lives in the twentieth century than in any other in history.<sup>2</sup> Like all disasters, famine is the result of multiple and interconnected dynamic factors which affect a community. In all cases of famine and disaster, the social element of vulnerability is necessary for the catastrophe to occur. Drought, floods, market failure, communications problems, civil strife, to name a few, are each linked to famines, but are neither necessary nor sufficient as explanations for why famines actually occur. They are each items on a long list of 'triggers' that can precipitate crisis only when they interact with underlying vulnerability – exposure to the threat and incapacity of the community to cope or adapt. This is to say that disasters do not occur without pre-existing vulnerability. And vulnerability is a particular social or 'man-made' condition resulting from the collective economic, political and cultural actions of humankind within a specific environment.

While the number of deaths due to disasters generally, and famines specifically, peaked in the middle of the century, the incidence and numbers of people affected by both have increased geometrically throughout the last century. At the same time, attention has narrowed on Sub-Saharan Africa as the only area still affected by famines. While this focus of attention is absolutely warranted, it has neglected other parts of the world such as North Korea, southeastern Europe and, the focus of this thesis, Central America.

While widely recognized as being a disaster prone region, famine is not included with hurricanes and earthquakes as one of the disasters that plagues Central America. This study seeks to correct this error of omission.

It also sets out to advance a number of different yet, as we shall see, related alternative and critical positions. Foremost of these is that **disasters**, of which famine is but one kind, **are not natural**. They are caused by the actions and inactions of humanity, which create conditions of vulnerability for people. These conditions of vulnerability are largely based on the distribution of power and wealth in a society. This structure is the political economy of a country, which is where the dynamic forces of development (in this case capitalist development) converge. The principal dynamic in this structural balance is the polarization of an unequal society, where wealth is concentrated amongst the few and the many are concentrated in conditions of poverty. This active process of impoverishment is the process of immiseration, which accompanies the regular working of the capitalist global economic system.

What this thesis does is connect the various elements of this causal web through a case study that clearly demonstrates how they are all connected and integral to one another. The study comprehensively explains the case itself – the 2001 famine ‘event’ that occurred in Guatemala. By showing how this ‘event’ was but a symptom of a larger famine process, due to systematic immiseration, we see how the disaster was socially constructed and, therefore, how it can be addressed. The process of immiseration itself is based on Guatemala’s incorporation into the expanding global economic system. This integration consists of the orientation of the national political economy towards production for export and the import of basic needs and luxury goods. It is overseen by a national economic elite that profits inordinately from its, and hence the country’s, participation in the neoliberal project of globalization.

## THE CASE

Between August and October 2001, 123 rural, poor and indigenous Guatemalans died due to famine.<sup>3</sup> In total, international aid agencies considered 134,000 people to be ‘at risk’ of starvation due to the famine.<sup>4</sup> One year later, on World Food Day 2002, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations announced that two and a half million Guatemalans were ‘at risk’ due to food shortage.<sup>5</sup> By spring 2003 this number had grown another 300,000, to 2.8 million undernourished people.<sup>6</sup> In February (2003) the National Institute of Statistics (INE) announced the results of its national census, undertaken between November 24 and December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002. The result was a national population of 11,237,196, more than half a million **less** than the projected population.<sup>7</sup>

Separately, each of these facts requires explanation. Together, these facts indicate a larger situation of crisis. The aim of this thesis is to provide a clear understanding of the actual and ongoing situation of crisis in Guatemala, with a complete explanation of its causality. It responds the question ‘Why did this famine occur?’ In doing so, it shows that what is occurring is in fact a disaster, and an unnatural one at that. Further, it reveals that this disaster is both more widespread and deeply rooted than the 2001 famine. The famine event was itself a symptom of the larger structural disaster – constant, silent and unrecognized – that results from the country’s political economy.

The distribution of power and wealth in the country is among the most extremely inequitable in the world. The disparity is so severe in and of itself as to be considered “a serious barrier to economic development” by the UNDP.<sup>8</sup> This concentration of wealth is due, in the first instance, to the historic pursuit of export agriculture, and therefore the control of both land and production by an agrarian elite. This dominion over land and production is maintained by an oligarchic state, where shifting fractions of the elite rule, with the military governing on their behalf.

The pertinence of Guatemala as a case study stems from exactly this inequitable distribution of wealth and concentration of power. It serves to demonstrate the impacts and consequences of a path of development that both tolerates and even promotes such

inequity. Given how capitalism, especially in its neoliberal (or neo-mercantile) guise, effectively promotes inequality as the ‘natural outcome’ of free competition, it is important that we clearly recognize the very real consequences of the simultaneous immiseration and concentration of wealth that characterize and accompany ‘free competition’.

The case is illustrative of the disastrous consequences of the latest global phase of capitalist expansion. There is clear understanding and consensus that the internal inequality in Guatemala is the main source of its problems and conflicts. Therefore, it demonstrates how famine can happen in the midst of wealth and excess, when there is no equity, justice or redistribution of the national surplus. Further, all other ‘external causes’ (including the cynical position that the Guatemalan civil war was fought against a communist insurgency) are distinguishable from the systemic norm of ‘business as usual’, or readily identifiable as part of it. Finally, unlike the famines previously mentioned in Sub-Saharan Africa and North Korea, there are no immediately apparent ‘particular’ causes (such as drought, civil unrest, the sale of the national grain reserve or dictatorship) to explain this disaster.

## **THE PROBLEMATIC**

Events of the last two years around the globe, but particularly in the African regions, have brought famine back into the spotlight of development programming, policy and research. The aim of this thesis is to apply some of that spotlight on another region, country and people that are and have been continuously marginalized as well. This fact is ironically attested to by their non-inclusion in the scholarly consideration of the ‘New Famines’ presently on the humanitarian agenda. By remedying this neglect, this thesis also seeks to highlight a number of other key connections and relationships between fields of thought and action, namely political economy, food security and disaster prevention. The problematic of this thesis is to explain the causes of the famine of 2001. Through answering the question ‘Why did the famine occur?’ we are able to evaluate the different theories of disaster and famine, as well as the tentative framework that this thesis proposes to explain the crisis.

The famine was not an exceptional event – except for being reported as such – but rather an indicator of the extreme state of vulnerability, poverty and hunger that is the normal situation for millions of marginalized poor, rural and indigenous Guatemalans. Nor are the disastrous conditions new – 1570 saw the first major famine caused by Guatemala's insertion into the global economic system, through elite domination of the indigenous (peasant) population for the production of a primary commodity (cacao).<sup>9</sup> As such, we are dealing with the disaster of famine as it is produced by the normal functioning of the socio-economic system. This system is one that is extremely unequal, with a grossly disproportionate concentration of wealth in the hands of a very small elite, based upon their exploitation of the majority.

If the concept of immiseration were in some way novel it would to some degree mitigate the condemnation deserved by a system that produces such human tragedy. However, it is not. Therefore, what is novel is to hold those who control these political, social and economic systems, both locally and globally, responsible for the consequences of their operation and accountable for the deprivation and destruction that they cause. Further, to approach the entire issue of the political economy as a disaster, using the language and logic of disaster reiterates the fact – the reality – that it is a disaster, which kills individual humans on a regular and methodical basis. In this way we see disaster as an issue of power – a social and economic process – and not simply an 'act of god'.

On this basis, there are a number of distinct yet highly (inter)related ideas and arguments that this thesis advances. While they will be further elaborated in Chapter 2, it is worth highlighting them at this point.

- Disasters are (hu)man-made, not reified acts of God
- Disasters do not simply have natural causes; they are created based on human vulnerability;
- Disasters are anthropocentric events – there is no disaster without an impact on human communities;



- This creation of disaster is based on the social construction of **vulnerability**, which **exposes** people to natural and man-made **hazards** is an entirely human-caused act, generally
- Vulnerability arises as a result of socio-economic processes and therefore is a consequence of the functioning of the political economy;
- Natural hazards, such as volcanic eruptions, floods, hurricanes and the like are simply **natural phenomena** and only become, or ‘trigger’, disasters when they impact upon human communities;
- Famine is the ultimate ‘socially caused’ or (hu)man-made disaster;
- The logic of disaster prevention is appropriate to examining hunger as a constructed reality, placing it clearly within the sphere of the functioning of a system; and
- Understanding the social construction of vulnerability shows us how a disaster is actually created, and therefore how they can be prevented.

As such, this thesis explicitly promotes the application and adherence to a political economy approach to understanding famine, hunger and disasters but also in terms of creating appropriate policies for addressing and above all **preventing** them. It clearly advocates an interdisciplinary approach to several concepts and issues that are generally considered separately, given the nature of academic disciplines, hence also arguing their integral connection and indivisibility.

This logic, in turn, brings us to a series of positions and definitions regarding the political economy, both international and domestic, which are being advanced as the relevant processes of the social construction of vulnerability. The first of these is that the global economic system is nothing other than the world capitalist system that is currently being advanced by the agenda of neoliberal globalization. In this sense and for the purposes of this study, globalization is the process (and agenda) of integration into this global division of both labour and power. Integration can be understood as the degree of insertion, of interdependence or dependence on the global economic system, and the extent to which the domestic economy is oriented to servicing it (i.e. producing for export

markets and importing basic needs). Immiseration, then, is “The process by which poverty and misery are produced by the ordinary operation of a social system.”<sup>10</sup>

Domestically, this process is seen in the control of resources, particularly land, production, exchange and the state by particular classes and class fractions, and the distribution of wealth amongst those groups.

Finally, it is incorrect to exclude Latin America from the annals of historic, 20<sup>th</sup> century and present day famines.<sup>11</sup> One of the aims here is to rectify this error of omission and include Latin America with Africa and Asia as an area affected by famine. That famines actually transpire in Latin America is an initial point that requires reiteration, as the region is generally and historically considered to be free of such afflictions.

### **EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOCUS**

In disciplinary terms, the focus of this investigation is on the very interdisciplinary field of (so-called) ‘food security’ – including hunger and famine studies – each possessing its own particular literature, proponents and even epoch. However, I approach this field from the political economy perspective, in particular applying the analytical focus used by the school of disaster prevention studies.<sup>12</sup> This particular approach to disaster studies is a structural one that focuses on the social or human construction of vulnerability as the fundamental factor in creating vulnerability and, hence, risk and disaster. The argument is that “hunger [i]s a function of poverty and poverty [i]s a function of fundamentally inequitable power structures both within and between nations.”<sup>13</sup> Thus hunger, in many cases, has political economic causes; it is an effect of social organization and wealth distribution.

Political economy provides holism both in the approach to development and in the conception of what is in fact the object of study.<sup>14</sup> The political economy approach provides more than a mere static contextual analysis, but a fuller dynamic and historically informed conception of a situation that accounts for power, vulnerability and change in these factors and their distribution amongst actors.<sup>15</sup> This includes both micro, meso and

macro levels of analysis and their interaction with each other, connecting global processes to local realities and vice versa.

This study addresses the central issues of development – poverty and hunger, and more specifically their causes. Instead of exploring the relationship between the two, this thesis is approaching both conditions, together, as a systemic disaster. In this sense, it is a vertically integrated case study of the global, national and local levels that very clearly demonstrates the immiseration caused by the normal functioning of the global economic system and the regular action of the agents that both administer and benefit from that system. Only by understanding the fundamental causes of poverty, hunger and vulnerability can they truly be alleviated. This study is not simply concerned with remedial action or the alleviation of symptoms, but with exposing their causation so that those causes may be fully and finally addressed, for a development that is equitable, just and sustainable.

This thesis is based upon the Marxist thesis of immiseration – the impoverishment caused by the regular functioning of the capitalist system. Therefore, it also embraces the analysis of class and of the subsequent division of labour and distribution of wealth as the key areas of examination for understanding how this particular disaster in Guatemala has been generated. It further shares the same motivations underlying a variety of schools of critical thought. This includes Welfare Economics, the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and the economic anthropology of Karl Polanyi, all of which serve as theoretical foundations for interpretation and analysis. In addition to the key ideas and analytical tools that these theoreticians offer, and in spite of their many and significant differences, it is their unanimous identification of ‘the system’ as the problem (or source of the problem) that grounds this study.

There are three principal fields of thought informing this thesis – the already mentioned hunger / famine / food security field, disaster studies, and the political economy of development. Each is a highly differentiated field, with deep technical and ideological divisions permeating them. They overlap one another to varying degrees, in terms of

their scope. There is a wide range of perspectives in each field, running from alternative and critical political economy approaches to the technocratic paradigms that dominate policy-making in each. It is this former perspective that I develop throughout this thesis.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This case study<sup>16</sup> of the political economy of Guatemala demonstrates how the twin processes of integration into the global economic system and domination by national elites construct conditions of vulnerability in the country. As such, this case study is extending the thesis of immiseration to rural peasants in the third world, while synthesizing the theory of disaster studies, famine and hunger thinking and the field of the political economy of development as necessarily inter-related. Specific examination of the situation of ‘global vulnerability’ and the causes of the famine in the department of Chiquimula serve to illustrate the dynamic of the political economic processes and the immiseration they cause. The multifaceted confluence of factors stemming from integration and domination is then examined through the analytical framework of ‘global vulnerability’.<sup>17</sup>

In particular, the study combines quantitative and qualitative research by presenting the various data and statistics that reflect the conditions of reality and tying these indicators to the processes, causes, people and decisions underlying them. It is an idiographic study, given its interpretation of the famine in Guatemala. The study also makes nomothetic contributions to understanding famine and disaster as development issues, by developing valid generalizations from structural realities examined.

My criteria for analysis in this study are principally oriented around the structure of the economy itself, the conditions of participation in that economy and the distribution of its surplus. The impact of the nation’s political economy is then examined using the framework of the holistic or global vulnerability of a ‘community’.<sup>18</sup> This global vulnerability model considers the dynamic and interactive factors involved in the creation of vulnerability for a community through examining the different yet interrelated angles of vulnerability. These angles are the natural, physical, economic, social, political,

technical, ideological, cultural, educational, ecological, and institutional factors that together contribute to increase or decrease a community's vulnerability. The specific concern will be to see how these different angles affect '**access to food**', '**availability of food**' and '**utility of that food**' for rural Guatemalans.

This thesis makes use of a wide range of data from primary and secondary sources, many of which were collected in country at the time of the famine and the humanitarian aid campaign to alleviate it. As such, I make significant use of the reports and surveys produced by international and multilateral aid agencies as well as the statistics generated by government and multilateral agencies. Each of these sources are detailed here below.

The *Secretario General de Planificación* (SEGEPLAN – the General Secretary of Planning) is the principal body concerned with poverty issues in Guatemala. As such, they compile and publish the various statistics generated by the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (INE – National Institute of Statistics)<sup>19</sup>. These include the National Poverty Maps and a recent Socio-Demographic study. There are now five main national socio-economic surveys that underlie these studies and the statistics used by the government and international agencies for their calculations. These surveys are:

- The *Encuesta Nacional de Empleo e Ingresos*, ENEI (National Survey of Employment and Income) by MECOVI – INE, undertaken in May and June of 2002, sampling 12,000 households;
- ENCOVI – *Encuesta Nacional sobre Condiciones de Vida* (National Survey on Living Conditions) 2000, a survey of 7276 homes;
- ENS – *Encuesta Nacional de Salud* (National Health Survey) from 1986-87 and 1989;
- ENSMI – *Encuesta Nacional de Salud Materna Infantil* (National Survey of Maternal and Infant Health) from 1987, 1995, 1998-99; and
- ENIGFAM – *Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos Familiares* (National Survey of Family Income and Expenses) from 1998-1999, which surveyed 7500 homes.

Additional statistics include the population censuses of 1981, 1994, and 2002, although only limited results of the latter are so far available. The final and perhaps central source for statistics, particularly for the economy, is the *Banco de Guatemala* and its annual *Informes Económicos y Memorias de Labores* (Annual Reports), which detail the accounts and economic activity of the nation.

However, there is concern with the reliability and accuracy many of these surveys and the statistics derived from them. The Inter American Development Bank reflects an example of this concern in this commentary: “The last census was held in April 1994. Although it was completed, it was rejected by the municipalities affected by the armed conflicts that were ongoing at the time. This undermined the credibility of the results.”<sup>20</sup>

There have been three agricultural censuses, in 1950, 1964 and in 1979. Supplemented by an agricultural survey in 1996, the results of these studies are available, in different formats, in various secondary studies. The shocking inequality that reveal, however, has cast a shadow over the collection of agricultural information, making it highly politicized. Although a full agricultural survey is currently in the process of being completed (Summer 2003), its results will not be available until December 2003. With regards to the agricultural data available, it is important to note that agricultural farm units are classified by size<sup>21</sup> and not in fact aggregated according to owner. What this means is that the very small number of large estates, occupying the majority of agricultural land, are in fact controlled by even fewer individuals or families than the statistics would indicate.<sup>22</sup> Conversely, the *minifundia* or small plots of land, which comprise the overwhelming majority of the quantity of farm units, and the vast minority of actual agricultural land, are in fact occupied by an even larger number of individuals or families than statistics indicate.

The above concerns, and the fact that most of the studies are in fact surveys that have been extrapolated over the wider population should be kept in mind when considering the data presented in the UNDP’s Human Development Reports for Guatemala, which are

based on these materials. The national poverty maps and statistics are also derived from these surveys, as are virtually all socio-economic statistics.

A notable exception to this, and also of particular importance, are the national health surveys for undernutrition and malnutrition amongst school-aged children, conducted in 1986 and 2001, by the Ministry of Health in conjunction with the World Food Programme and UNICEF. While these statistics are vital to this study, it is also important to note the degree of school absenteeism and non-attendance<sup>23</sup> that therefore impact directly on these data. The most vulnerable populations are automatically excluded from these statistics, as is so often the case, because these poorest and most marginalized children do not in fact attend school.<sup>24</sup> Thus, while these statistics are indicative of situations, they are not necessarily fully representative of the realities in certain areas.

Furthermore, these institutions, along with the *Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería e Alimentación* (MAGA - Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food), are the principal sources of information on the actual famine, its evolution, events and the responses to it. In addition to these reports are the Vulnerability Analysis Mapping done by the World Food Programme (Gandarra and Associates) and the Zones of Risk analysis done by UNICEF. These two studies and their collected data serve as extremely important sources of data, covering all municipalities in the country.

The FAO is the primary repository of general data on agriculture, including volumes of production, area harvested, crop yields, quantities of imports and exports and food supply.<sup>25</sup> These data are assembled from national statistics, generally collected by MAGA and the *Banco Central de Guatemala*, and while there is some question as to their accuracy, they are generally reliable and certainly indicative of conditions and trends. MAGA also provides statistics on vital topics such as land concentration, although it has been some years since new or updated data has been developed – possibly given the very extreme polarization they indicate. As well, the ministry has a registry of agricultural producers and companies, categorized by department and product, including the number

of employees. While these records are detailed, they are incomplete, only representing the formal sector, and therefore only provide a snapshot of the sector at the time the information was collected. Given the instability found even in the formal sector, a wide margin of inaccuracy is both possible and likely.

For specific crops, such as coffee and sugar, I am relying on the information of the national producer associations of each. ANACAFE, the *Asociación Nacional de Caficultores* (the National Association of Coffee Producers), has the most complete and detailed information regarding all aspects of coffee production in the country (area, yield, production, employment). This is complemented by global statistics and price information from the International Coffee Organization (ICO). Similarly, ASAZGUA, the *Asociación de Azucareros de Guatemala* (the National Sugar Producers Association), has the definitive industry information for the country.

Generally, there are a number of problems with employment statistics in that they are largely statistical constructions. The only ‘official’ and as such empirically quantifiable statistics for employment are those for formal sector workers registered with the *Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social* (IGSS – the Guatemalan Social Security Institute). However, the vast majority of the fewer than one million workers registered with IGSS are urban workers and furthermore, this number represents less than a quarter of the ‘economically active population’ of the country and a mere 8% of the total population.<sup>26</sup> Alternatively, the International Organization for Migration has generated labour statistics for the coffee sector, based on the labour input requirements derived from the actual levels of national production of coffee as opposed to any kind of census of actual ‘*jornaleros*’ or day labourers.<sup>27</sup>

Given that a number of these surveys are increasingly dated, two of which were performed during the Civil War, there are any number of question marks surrounding the reliability and accuracy of these statistics. Even more problematic are the statistics derived from these studies, given the clear failure of the statistical models applied to previous census data in accurately projecting the real state of affairs. I am referring to the



national census completed at the end of 2002 that demonstrates an overestimation of the national population by 4.5% by these models. Such incongruence therefore casts long shadows over all such ‘derived’ statistics and the very models used in their extrapolation and production.

Furthermore, there is a fascinating and quite irreconcilable inconsistency between various statistics coming from different sources, particularly when comparing numbers provided by government ministries and agencies with those presented by international agencies. With this disclaimer in mind, this study relies upon data from the international agencies. General economic statistics come from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and *Comisión Económica para América Latina / Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean* (CEPAL/ECLAC), as well as the *Banco de Guatemala*. Where possible I am using these data directly from these international (and national) organizations. However, particularly for older statistics, I am relying on their presentation in secondary sources, particularly in the work of Brockett (1998), Barry (1989, 1986), Paige (1997), Dunkerley (1988, 1990), Vilas (1995), Painter (1987) and Handy (1984), to name but a few.

## THESIS

The overall logic of this study is one of uncovering underlying causes, specifically those of hunger. It sees hunger as a symptom of poverty resulting from the immiseration caused by the normal functioning of the global capitalist system. This normal functioning includes two distinct yet interrelated processes. First there is the external or worldwide integration and incorporation of countries and their economies into the global economic system. Within this process countries are transformed into producers for the global market, while their self-sufficiency, or even their domestically oriented production, is systematically undermined. The internal dimension of this process of global (inter)dependency is the complicity of the country’s elites. They are in fact the agents of economic and political domination which advance the agenda of global integration, reorienting their national economies to export production at the expense of nationally oriented and subsistence production. They simultaneously concentrate the

accruing wealth in their own hands while further and continuously marginalizing the poor, particularly the rural and indigenous, of their country. This marginalization is centered on the dispossession of the poor of their means of production, most notably land, for their own subsistence. For what was a rural majority population, this systematic marginalization is the mechanism for the proletarianization and urbanization of the peasantry. The net result of these human processes is the creation and intensification of a situation of extreme 'global vulnerability' that is so extreme as to be disaster. **My thesis is that the immiseration caused by the expansion of the global economic system, understood as these twin processes of global economic integration and national elite domination, is a 'man-made' disaster that results in the most unnatural disaster of famine.**

Several arguments are advanced as an explanation for the famine of 2001. The first point is that, as anything but the most superficial examination will bring to light, this famine was not a discrete event, but rather part of an endemic process inherent in the political economy of the nation. By understanding famine as a process, as opposed to a discrete event, the underlying factors of the political economy that coalesce to create disaster can be examined as the fundamental causes of the disaster. In this light, the shocks or hazards to which a population or community are vulnerable are seen as triggers for the 'latent' or hidden disaster. This approach also allows us to understand that the triggers are certainly not sufficient and in many cases not even necessary to cause disaster – these triggers simply draw attention to the reality produced by the normal functioning of the political economy. Through this reasoning we are automatically drawn to the structural realities in which people in crisis find themselves, and consequently the nature of those structures. This allows us to see the failure of the people themselves to adapt to or cope with the situation they are facing as principally a result of those structures to which they are trying to adapt. However, the analysis does not end by illuminating the situation of 'global vulnerability', but further examines how and why they ended up in this situation. The answer to the critical question of 'why' reveals who else is responsible for putting the vulnerable in that situation and who fails in helping them out of it.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS ARGUMENT**

This first chapter sets out the central issues of this thesis and the motivation for pursuing them. It outlines the case to be explained and interpreted, while providing the central definitions, working assumptions and epistemological grounding for the causal explanation and interpretation. The interdisciplinary thematic foci of disaster studies, food security and the political economy of development are highlighted. The political economy approach is explained in terms of its utility in examining the problematic of how hunger and famine are anthropogenic phenomena. The methodology and sources of data are detailed, noting the problems and concerns arising from them. The structure of the argument is then outlined, providing a synopsis of the eight chapters. The chapter closes with the thesis of the study.

The aim of the second chapter is to assemble both the tools for analysis and the relevant issues of discussion so as to proceed with an examination of how the global economic system has affected the poor of Guatemala. It begins by summarizing some key thoughts from different critical perspectives that all locate ‘the problem’ within the dominant (economic) system. The three main fields of thought are then examined – disaster studies, the hunger / food security / famine literature, and the political economy of development – noting their key ideas, thinkers and debates. The chapter concludes by demonstrating how ideas from the different critical perspectives are linked together. From these linkages a tentative framework is elaborated for analyzing the structures that systematically impoverish people, making them vulnerable to famine and ultimately destroying both their lives and livelihoods through the ‘famine process’.

The third chapter provides an overview of the conflictual political economic history of Guatemala. It begins with a brief geographic overview and a summary of the social structure of the country. The centrality of agricultural export production from colonial times to the present is examined, along with the coinciding concentration of wealth and land by local elites. The accompanying process of dispossession, marginalization and pauperization of the indigenous rural population is examined in terms of socially constructed vulnerability. The bulk of this chapter focuses on the last twenty years of

economic evolution and the 'integration' of Guatemala into the global economic system under military rule. The role of the United States and its economic, military and food aid are discussed as particular tools for the transformation of agricultural production away from subsistence and self-provisioning, towards an export-led development that neglects and impoverishes the majority. The roles of specific regional initiatives and the programs of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in this economic orientation are also identified.

The fourth chapter expands on the historical context discussed in the previous chapter by focusing on the economic structure of the country and its evolution. It identifies trends in production and trade, showing the extent to which Guatemala's economy is export oriented and fully dependent on these export markets. It also reveals Guatemala's external dependence on imported goods for industry, agriculture and consumers. The concentration of ownership of land and the companies responsible for production, processing and exports are also outlined. The chapter details the substantive elements of the economy that provide both livelihoods and employment for Guatemalans. It demonstrates the extent and nature of the country's food dependency, before concluding with an assessment of the economy's overall vulnerability, and the global threats to which the Guatemalan poor are exposed.

The next chapter elaborates on the situation of 'global vulnerability' in Guatemala, in terms of the socio-economic and human impact of the political economic structure and history detailed in the previous two chapters. As such, it illustrates the degree and distribution of poverty, undernutrition throughout the country. It outlines other indicators of social vulnerability, linking them to the specific processes that underlie them. This is followed by a full discussion of the economic 'externality' of the environmental impact of Guatemalan development and underdevelopment. The chapter concludes with a summary of global vulnerability across the different departments of the country.

Chapter six examines the famine itself. It begins by detailing the scope and breadth of the events of 2001, as well as the explanations of the disaster. It then proceeds to review

the value and limitations of these immediate trigger explanations by demonstrating that 'the event' was part of the larger process stemming from the global situation discussed in the previous three chapters. The larger famine process and its continuation over the next two years is exposed. The chapter concludes by reiterating the links between the famine process with the political economic orientation, evolution and structure outlined in the previous chapters.

Chapter seven ties together the general state of human vulnerability in Guatemala, as well as the famine of 2001/food shortage of 2002, through the history of immiseration, to the process of dependent integration into the global economy. Based on the evidence presented in Chapter 4 and the context presented in Chapter 3, it discusses both of these in terms of the social construction of vulnerability, identifying the key factors of national domination by elites and integration into the global economy as they 'create' poverty, hunger and famine. This structural connection shows clearly and concretely how, in fact, a disaster is created by 'globalization' and how globalization is itself a threat to the survival of the world's poor. This evaluation of the process of disaster and famine construction is used to demonstrate how the theoretical approaches to disaster studies, famine/hunger/food insecurity and the political economy of development are interconnected. It also serves to illustrate which of the perspectives introduced in chapter two are in fact most appropriate for the consideration of famine and hunger.

The final chapter summarizes my findings – the underlying structural causes of the process of famine in Guatemala and how these causes simply became manifest with the crisis of mass starvation. On this basis it reiterates how the structural causes of hunger and disaster can in fact be analyzed so as to orient development that is in fact sustainable and aimed at preventing both famine and vulnerability, through development practice that is effectively directed towards ending poverty and misery.

## Chapter II

# Constructing Vulnerability, Creating Hunger

*Follow not the footprints of the ancients;  
Seek that which they sought.*  
- Matsuo Bashoo

### INTRODUCTION

The expansion of global capitalism – neoliberal globalization as we know it today – is a disaster that has deleterious consequences for the poor that it marginalizes. It incorporates peripheral countries and societies, extending a world system that is dominated by ‘core actors’ and geographic centers while fostering human insecurity and mutual vulnerability.<sup>28</sup> This insecurity and vulnerability are the results of a general process of immiseration that is a famine process for those that are materially marginalized. Through growing hunger, poverty, and vulnerability, this economic system slowly, steadily, methodically and, ultimately, kills.

The aim of this chapter is to assemble both the tools for analysis and the relevant issues of discussion so as to proceed with an examination of how the global economic system has affected the poor of Guatemala. To that end it examines three main fields of thought – disaster studies, hunger / famine / food security and the political economy of development – their key ideas, thinkers and debates. It then shows how these ideas are linked together and form a tentative framework for analyzing the structures that systematically impoverish people and make them vulnerable to famine. These fields are examined in the light of the tradition of critical social theory, which further informs the analytical perspective synthesized out of this review.

The field of disaster studies is particularly disparate. The divisions and diversity of approaches within disaster studies are largely reconciled within the ‘school’ for the social science study of disaster prevention. This particular approach, with its holistic and political economy understanding of how disasters are human-made events, provides the framework for demonstrating how vulnerability is constructed. It emphasizes

vulnerability reduction as key to risk management and disaster prevention. This approach resonates and provides the analytical framework for the two subsequent fields of thought, Hunger / Famine / Food (In)security and the Political Economy of Development. Before that, though, this section defines the key ideas of vulnerability, risk, hazard/threat and disaster to be carried through this thesis. It also details the analytical framework of the ‘global vulnerability’ model, which underlies global vulnerability mapping and vulnerability analysis mapping (VAM).<sup>29</sup>

With the Hunger / Famine / Food (In)security literature I attempt to synthesize what is a truly massive and at the same time highly differentiated field. While it is debatable whether there are in fact three distinct fields on hunger, famine and food security respectively, they will be presented as such, in spite of their obvious connection. Many of the authors of these respective sub-fields do indeed differentiate themselves from each other. I continue to classify authors along the policy approach – critical approach spectrum<sup>30</sup> in order to make sense of the positions and debates on hunger, famine and food (in)security. At the same time I identify three trends or positions within and between these two schools – a conservative neo-Malthusian pessimism, a range of liberal reformism, and the structural and radical reformist positions of the critical schools.

The final broad field is that of the political economy of development. This field addresses the central development issues and perspectives underlying the current body of critical development thinking. The political economy of development examines the system as the problem, carrying on the critical tradition of the thinkers and schools that shape the epistemological foundations of this thesis. This literature synthesizes structural and post-structural perspectives, while providing greater definition and detail to key concepts and structural mechanisms like globalization, the international (versus global) division of labour (and power), capitalism and dependency in the global economic system, as well as class and domination. It also addresses such concerns class fractions, elite theory, and the role of the state – all central aspects and tensions within political economy.

The final section of this chapter then outlines my analytical approach, as assembled from the previous sections, as a 'global' political economy approach to the social (human) construction of vulnerability. It highlights and defines the terms and ideas that I am using in my analysis and restates the thesis of this study.

## **EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**

This chapter begins by examining the instrumental thesis that underlies this study, and the subsequent and related critical theories that share this orientation. The central concern is the thesis of immiseration, and the impoverishment and misery caused by the regular functioning of the capitalist system, as observed by Marx. Therefore, it also embraces the analysis of class and of the subsequent division of labour as the key areas of examination for understanding how this particular disaster has been generated in Guatemala. It does this by pointing out that the global division of labour, as opposed to the nationally bounded societal division of labour in Marx's writing, is the most apparent unit of analysis for observing the progressive impoverishment caused by global capitalism.

Given the way that so many substantive economic costs are externalized by dominant neoclassical economic thinking, passing them on to the environment or society generally, the end of the line for that theoretical and actual 'passing of the buck' is the poor of the so-called 'Third World', and their environment. As they are at the bottom of the political economic hierarchy, there is no one or nowhere else for them to shift the costs of unsustainable mass production and consumption. Like indissoluble contaminants in an ecosystem, they accumulate at the bottom of that system and slowly work their way back up the chain, affecting it in its entirety, ultimately destabilizing the whole. Such is the case with capitalism with the appropriation of all surplus at the top, at the cost of progressively increasing poverty as one moves down the socio-economic and political hierarchy.

Complementing this analysis is that of the Welfare Economists, namely Keynes<sup>31</sup> and Kalecki<sup>32</sup>, with their explicit concern for the economy to provide full employment. The



Keynesians find themselves in opposition to the elite theory<sup>33</sup> defense of capitalism that negates the possibility of full employment and in fact requires a level of unemployment<sup>34</sup> to maintain productivity and investment gains. Above all stands Keynes' and Kalecki's simultaneous 'discovery' of the concept of 'effective demand'.<sup>35</sup> This concept becomes of particular importance to poverty and hunger issues through the concept of entitlement (see below). Another central issue coming directly from Keynes is the irrelevance of the 'long-run', upon which neo-classical economics, and the structural adjustment policies they inform, rely. As we are all dead in the 'long-run', and those suffering from hunger and famine even sooner, the 'long-run' is effectively a material fiction – like tomorrow, it is always coming, but never arrives.

The Frankfurt School, or Critical Theory,<sup>36</sup> also shares the common motivation of making the economy work for people, rather than people work for the economy. The School is "bent on social transformation" and the liberation of the masses through the dialectical application of reason to the "present social process".<sup>37</sup> This is most clearly illustrated in the early work of the school, particularly by Horkheimer and his thesis that "the economy is the first cause of poverty".<sup>38</sup> The primacy of the economy in the dominant development paradigm is well displayed by this representative quote from a federal judge in Argentina: "Life and physical integrity have no supremacy over economic interests."<sup>39</sup> According to Horkheimer, the socially constructed world (society) in which individuals exist is the world of capital, i.e. is the capitalist system. The bourgeois economy – capitalism – necessarily polarizes society, concentrating wealth and power amongst the few and 'material and intellectual weakness' amongst the many. In an observation from seventy years ago that is equally relevant today, Horkheimer notes that:

"Production is not geared to the life of the whole community while heeding also the claims of individuals; it is geared to the power-backed claims of individuals while being concerned hardly at all with the life of the community. This is the inevitable result, in the present property system, of the principle that it is enough for individuals to look out for themselves."<sup>40</sup>

In a stinging condemnation of what this thesis characterizes as technocratic thought, he observes that “For the kind of thinking which simply registers facts there are always only a series of phenomena, never forces and counterforces; but this, of course, says something about this kind of thinking, not about nature.”<sup>41</sup>

This study shares these normative foundations of Critical Theory and its dialectical approach, while adopting an empirical methodology in order to critique capitalism. It also heeds the contrast that Critical Theory makes with the positivist approach, which, for instance, focuses on households as entities unconnected to a larger structural reality. Early critical theory emphasizes materialism and concerns itself with the well-being of ‘humankind’ within the material sphere, considering economic conditions to be responsible “for the totality of the established world and comprehended the social framework in which reality is organized.” However, critical theory is not limited by the disciplinary parameters of economics, as it claims “to explain the totality of man and his world in terms of his social being.”<sup>42</sup> The position of Marcuse is that the theory of society is economic and material, united by two normative assertions: 1) concern with human happiness and 2) “the conviction that it [happiness] can be attained only through a transformation of the material conditions of existence.” This project of transformation (development) is pursued “by analysis of economic and political conditions in the given historical situation.”<sup>43</sup> These aspects of the Frankfurt school presented here encapsulate most of the actual perspective taken in this study.

The other key early thinker whose seminal work is of particular import in orienting the analysis of this thesis is Karl Polanyi.<sup>44</sup> He is considered to have recombined politics and economics, recognizing their interactive and dialectical nature, into what has become international political economy and world systems.<sup>45</sup> His conception of the ‘substantive economy’, as distinct from the ‘formal economy’, sees the former as the total socio-economic process, and the resource base that supports it, of human activity for survival, wealth creation and distribution, while the latter is the much more limited conception of the economy as the reified market.

The 'market' is not in fact a reified entity, although it is treated as such in neo-classical economics. All of the above authors are clear in their criticism of the distortions caused by this reification of the market. They are also unanimous, in keeping with Lukacs<sup>46</sup> and his analysis of capitalism and its tendency to reify, that the market is very much a social construction, based on human relationships. This critique of the reified market and a clear articulation of the relationships that are its real foundation are extensively developed by the Regulation School.<sup>47</sup>

On these foundations and with this critical disposition, there are three areas of development thought that I am examining with regards to the problematic of systemic vulnerability, hunger and disaster in Guatemala. First is disaster studies, then the field of hunger / famine / food insecurity and the political economy of development.

## **DISASTER STUDIES**

The field of disaster studies is itself far from homogenous or without divisions. Alexander<sup>48</sup> notes six different schools of disaster studies - the geographical, anthropological, sociological, development studies, epidemiological and the technical. Other categorizations of the study of disasters are broader and perhaps more useful in limiting the field to three approaches or foci – those of the natural sciences, the applied sciences and the social sciences.<sup>49</sup> The natural science approach includes those from the disciplines of geophysics, seismology, meteorology, and geology, which focus on the study of the natural phenomena – such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, hurricanes – which are associated with 'natural disasters'. The applied sciences advanced the study of disaster a step further by examining their impact upon human society, particularly in terms of physical infrastructure. These applied sciences had two main concerns – improving building materials and techniques (to better withstand natural phenomena) and estimating potential damages caused by exposure to violent natural phenomena. The natural and applied sciences approaches form the dominant discourse in disaster studies and are principally associated with the various national and international disaster agencies. All of these institutions focus on disaster and risk management, which, for them, consists of preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery activities.

Mary Anderson, a World Bank consultant, is perhaps the most prominent disaster relief author and distinguishes the economics approach to disaster studies from both the applied and social sciences ones. It is thanks to her work that we have the empirical evidence that disaster prevention is in fact much more ‘cost effective’ than disaster preparedness, response and reconstruction.<sup>50</sup> She, however, pushes beyond the technical and economic delimiting of the field of disaster studies that typifies the dominant managerial approach, into the social and political issues of disaster prevention.<sup>51</sup>

The technologizing nature of disaster management, as opposed to prevention, is well illustrated in any text, practice handbook or policy guide. For example, the government of Canada defines **mitigation** as “sustained actions to reduce or eliminate the long-term impacts and risks associated with natural and human-induced disasters; activities that will reduce an area’s vulnerability to damage from disasters.”<sup>52</sup> The Canadian Government sees three approaches to disaster management – Risk Management; Knowledge Creation, Dissemination and Use; and Empowerment – Shared Risks, Choices and Futures. These are all technical and managerial approaches that in no way address the social and political dimensions of vulnerability. This is also a major drawback of the Northern domination of the disaster studies agenda, in that it ‘assumes away’ social and political ‘externalities’ which are very real and of overriding importance, particularly in the South.

Another such technocratic example comes from the 1987 US proposal for an International Decade for Natural **Hazard** Reduction, in lieu of the International Decade for Natural **Disaster** Reduction (1989-1999). Developed by the National Research Council, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the U.S. National Academy of Engineering, this proposal casts disasters as purely acts of God that can only be addressed through scientific means. Their outlook is encapsulated in the following passage from their proposal:

“The scientific and technical applications useful in mitigating the effects of natural hazards include: building structures to withstand the actions of the

hazards, preventing or changing the characteristics of hazards, predicting and warning of hazards, and identifying and avoiding sites where hazards are likely to strike most strongly. In addition, social strategies can mitigate the effects of hazards: restricting land use; developing emergency preparedness measures; spreading economic losses over a large population through insurance, taxation and monetary grants; and restructuring a community so that it is less vulnerable to hazards.”<sup>53</sup>

It is within the social sciences approach to the study of disasters that we see all of these elements and considerations tied together with the human element. This is seen specifically in the contribution of social sciences to the refinement of the concepts of vulnerability and risk.<sup>54</sup> Vulnerability is the condition and degree of being exposed to or endangered by a specific natural or human threat. It also expresses the capacity of a community to absorb shocks – economic, climatic, or otherwise - caused by threats and also to recover from that shock or the actual disaster that it produces. Risk is, most simply, the potential damage of the confluence of a hazard with a situation of vulnerability to that hazard, or the probability of such an occurrence. Hazard is used interchangeably with threat and as such represents the various human-made and natural phenomena that affect a community in a deleterious manner.

The vital contribution of the social science approach generally, and the ‘disaster prevention school’ in particular, is the thesis that ‘disasters are not natural’. The proposition that disasters are socially created through human vulnerability was first advanced by Ian Davis.<sup>55</sup> However, it was not until 1983 when Fred Cuny and Kenneth Hewitt published their respective works, *Disasters and Development* and *Interpretations of Calamity* that the position entered into wider circulation. The decisive work that questioned the very ‘naturalness’ of natural disasters, however, came from Anders Wijkman and Lloyd Timberlake in 1984.<sup>56</sup> While others have been identified with this position,<sup>57</sup> the banner is most prominently carried by La Red, the Network for the Social Study of Disaster Prevention in Latin America,<sup>58</sup> with its flagship 1993 publication, the edited volume *Los Desastres No Son Naturales* (Disasters are not Natural).<sup>59</sup>

There are a number of components to the above thesis, the first being that there is no disaster without human involvement or presence to make it a disaster – that they are entirely anthropocentric occurrences.<sup>60</sup> Related to this is that there can be no disaster without a ‘community’ being vulnerable to the specific hazard that triggers that disaster. Their key point, however, is that vulnerability is itself socially constructed, or human-made. There are even some members of the disaster prevention school that argue that a number of ‘natural’ phenomena, like flooding and drought, are actually pseudo-natural in that they are caused by humanity’s impact on the environment and, as such, are ‘man-made’ rather than natural disasters.<sup>61</sup> It is also important to note that this position is increasingly accepted by the international disaster community, as seen by this quote from John Twigg, and more importantly, its inclusion in the ISDR’s *Global Review of Disaster Reduction Initiatives*:

“Strictly speaking, there are no such things as natural disasters, but there are natural hazards. A disaster is the result of a hazard’s impact on the society. So the effects of a disaster are determined by the extent of a community’s vulnerability to the hazard (or conversely, its ability, or capacity to cope with it). This vulnerability is not natural, but the result of an entire range of constantly changing physical, social, economic, cultural, political and even psychological factors that shape people’s lives and create the environments in which they live. ‘Natural’ disasters are nature’s judgement on what humans have wrought.”<sup>62</sup>

It is also important to understand the school’s focus on prevention, as the reduction of vulnerability, rather than on disaster mitigation<sup>63</sup>, preparedness, response or recovery.

The disaster prevention school (La Red) sees the symptoms of underdevelopment as conditions of vulnerability and risk. This underdevelopment reduces the coping capacity and resilience of a population. Disaster prevention means addressing these conditions of underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, ill health, and general social, political and economic exclusion. It is this struggle, for development that is sustainable

and inclusive, that is the best way to reduce vulnerability, risk and therefore prevent disaster.<sup>64</sup>

Returning to vulnerability, the disaster prevention school makes a number of other key points. First, vulnerability is tied to a lack of development and underdevelopment. Poverty is not a synonym for vulnerability, but is rather a condition of it.

“Vulnerability is a pervasive socio-economic condition; it is the reason why the poor and disadvantaged are the predominant victims of disasters. The day-to-day vulnerable condition, comprising marginalization, poverty and deprivation, is the context and cause of vulnerability to rarer and more extreme hazards; which themselves exacerbate vulnerability to the day-to-day condition in their aftermath – a cyclical process.”<sup>65</sup>

The disaster prevention people have also found that, statistically, disasters ‘choose’ their victims from amongst the poor, both globally and locally. A disproportionate majority of the poor comprise the population of those affected by disasters, of any type. They also stress that each famine is unique in terms of its causation, resulting from a time and space specific combination of dynamic interactive factors. This is in keeping with the dominant Pressure and Release Model of disasters, where a progression of vulnerability factors, from root causes through dynamic pressures to unsafe conditions, are exposed to hazards that results in the disaster.<sup>66</sup>

With the close of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) in 1999, the disaster prevention school has come to dominate the spheres of policy and action around the world. The most notable testament to this is the new consensus on disaster studies emerging out of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR). The emphasis on vulnerability as the key factor in creating risk is now accepted, thereby emphasizing the social, or human, element in disaster creation. While not ignoring or neglecting in anyway the real technical issues arising from the natural and applied sciences, it grounds them clearly in social, economic, cultural and

political realities. This consensus is best illustrated in the newly accepted definitions for disaster terminology put forth by the ISDR (see Annex 1).<sup>67</sup> It is clearly summarized in the statement that “Environmentally unsound practices, global environmental changes, population growth, urbanization, social injustice, poverty and short-term economic vision are producing vulnerable societies.”<sup>68</sup>

The final **tool for analysis** that I am drawing from the disaster prevention school is that of global (in the holistic sense) vulnerability.<sup>69</sup> ‘Global vulnerability’ examines a complex, dynamic and changing process from the point of view of various different ‘vulnerability factors’. Wilches-Chaux outlines eleven different yet interrelated aspects or angles of global vulnerability – natural, physical, economic, social, political, technical, ideological, cultural, educational, ecological and institutional. It is the aggregate of these factors and the dynamics of their interactions, including a community’s capacity or incapacity to adequately respond to a risk, that constitutes global vulnerability. The division of vulnerability into separate ‘angles’ is for heuristic purposes only and they should not be taken as static elements, but as dynamic and interrelated features of a larger system.<sup>70</sup> Global vulnerability is a framework for the comprehensive consideration of disasters, but is not an ‘explanation’ of them; like entitlement and interdependence, it is a model that guides analysis. The explanation lies in the focus on vulnerability and the emphasis on its social construction, through the processes of the political economy.

## **HUNGER, FAMINE AND FOOD (IN)SECURITY**

The extensive literature on hunger, famine and food security has gone through a number of phases, with a number of different positions being championed, throughout its very long history. While literature on food and hunger certainly predates him, Thomas Malthus is the first key figure in the discourse on famine. His shadow continues to loom over food and environmental issues in development, demography and population studies, and is generally associated with neo-classical economics. He returned to the fore of the food security debate in the 1960s and 1970s amidst the fear of food crisis that spawned the neo-Malthusians, most prominently represented by the Club of Rome, Lester Brown and the World Watch Institute, and Paul Ehrlich. At roughly the same time, a counter



discourse arose in preparation for the World Food Summit of 1974. The earliest proponents of this critical position were Susan George, Francis Moore-Lappe and Joseph Collins.

The late 1970s and 1980s saw a further evolution of these positions and divisions, including the emergence of a dominant policy paradigm.<sup>71</sup> Nef and Vanderkop<sup>72</sup> describe this dominant paradigm as generally neo-Malthusian and informed by neo-classical growth-oriented economics. There is a clearly identifiable range of opinion in this dominant policy group, from a conservative pessimism to a liberal reformist outlook. In addition to the Neo-Malthusians mentioned above, the group broadly includes such institutions as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), as well as the authors associated with them.

Many within the policy school do indeed cross the illusory boundaries that circumscribe the group of authors that I am classifying as liberal reformists. However, for the sake of classification, this dividing line is drawn according to institutional affiliation. This is to say that those authors who belong to the aforementioned institutions form the dominant policy school. Those that are not attached to these organizations and not explicitly opposed to their views are considered either neo-Malthusians or liberal reformists. Those that are opposed to the positions of the dominant school, or the limitations that they place on analysis and action, are hereafter considered as the critical school, of which the 'New Famine School' is a particular branch.

The critical school, taking a largely systemic or political economy approach to food and hunger issues, as opposed to the technical orientation of the dominant policy paradigm, flourished in the 1980s, albeit in the margins. However, by the time of the 1996 World Food Summit, this critical school was rather less prolific than previously, particularly given the expanded liberal reformist element of the dominant policy paradigm and the rising 'human right to food' approach. As well, the academic study of the Sahelian famines of the 1980s, and the continued occurrence of Sub-Saharan African famines in

the 1990s saw the rise of the 'New Famine' school. Continuing in the critical and political economy approach tradition, although with no apparent connection to the previous proponents of the critical approach, this new group of scholars come largely from a humanitarian practice perspective and seem to be reacting, in large part, to the incompleteness of the analysis of even the liberal reformists in the dominant policy paradigm. All of these authors emphatically contest the definition of famine, particularly it being solely applied to mass mortality.

### **Malthus and the Neo-Malthusian Fear of Scarcity**

The well-known thesis of Thomas Malthus in his 1798 *Essay on the Principle of Population* is that the human population increases geometrically while our capacity for food production increases only arithmetically. As such, population control mechanisms are required to check population growth to keep them in balance with the productive capacity of the earth. Famine, along with war and disease, is such a check – a purportedly natural one, which will occur when any population expands beyond its means to feed itself. Thus are we presented with the economic fear of scarcity and the inherent limits to growth imposed upon us by our environment. However, both of Malthus' premises have been proven wrong. Food production, due to technology, is not limited to increasing arithmetically and famine does not actually curb population growth beyond the short term. Within two decades of the Chinese famine that accompanied the Great Leap forward, claiming 30 million lives, the population growth trend had not only recovered but increased. The 3 to 4 million lives lost in Bangladesh in 1973-1974 were entirely replaced within two years.<sup>73</sup> Regardless of his false assertions, Malthus continues to inform the debate on famine and hunger in a number of ways.

The first impact of Malthus is less obvious, although far more widespread for its subtlety. As Alex De Waal<sup>74</sup> explains, apart from the debate that Malthus initiated surrounding famine as the 'great population leveller' is his conception of famine as mass mortality starvation that has been even more enduring, distorting and difficult to defeat. De Waal considers Malthus to be the turning point in the English language with regards to solidifying the definition of famine, thereby ignoring the complexity and

interconnectedness of hunger and poverty issues by focusing solely on but one of the end results of these processes – death.

Malthus returned to the fore of the food security debate in the 1960s and 1970s amidst the fear of food crisis that spawned the neo-Malthusians, most prominently represented by the Club of Rome, Lester Brown and the World Watch Institute, and Paul Ehrlich. The 1970s were filled with reports to the Club of Rome, pessimistically decrying the imminent doom facing mankind. Of particular note with regards to food were *The Limits to Growth* and *Mankind at the Turning Point*. The other doomsayer, and simultaneous champion of the green revolution is Lester Brown and his World Watch Institute. Garrett Hardin and his ‘lifeboat ethics’ was another key figure in the population crisis literature, while Paul Ehrlich’s *The Population Bomb* (1968) is a classic neo-Malthusian goad.

There are four main lines of argument, all stemming from population growth, that arise out of the neo-Malthusian camp. The first is that population growth creates excess demand that cannot be satisfied by production. The second is that ‘death control’ has outpaced birth control, creating demographic surpluses. The third is that population density becomes too great for the land to support and the final is that population growth outpaces economic growth, resulting in diminishing per capita returns. The result of all these demographic pressures caused by ‘surplus population’ is famine.

Oddly, the more salient points arising from these positions are actually advanced by critics explicitly opposed to Malthusian views. In proving each of them false, worthwhile insight has been gained, particularly with regards to points three and four. The issue of population density – compare Holland with Sudan and its 8 people per square kilometer – is patently not the cause of famine. However, the concentration of land in the hands of a few makes this Neo-Malthusian argument ‘effective’ by tying a specific (poor) population to the actual land resources to which they have access for survival. This, then, is not a demographic issue but purely one of the distribution of power and wealth within a society.

Further examination of how population growth undermines economic growth shows how there are valid points there as well. Firstly, a growing population, which is by definition younger, is also dependent on adults, without immediately increasing the labour and income generating force of the household. It can also lead to the fragmentation and micro-parcelization of land by peasants, which eventually undermines production. Thirdly, it decreases the share of national income going to labour, while also increasing the surplus labour supply, which further dampens or reduces wages. However, none of these are simply demographic laws, but rather they are issues of the political economy and how it is structured.

Finally, famine and hunger policy that is informed more directly and exclusively by neo-Malthusian thought tends to be very Darwinian. Such policy positions include the 'let the weak die' position that is the unstated complement of 'the survival of the fittest'. It also encompasses the 'triage' approach of aiding those most likely to survive and thrive. Also included is the 'lifeboat ethics' position, that trying to save everyone will only sink the boat, killing everyone instead of leaving a few to survive. The other non-Darwinian policy position stemming from Neo-Malthusian thought is to reduce Northern consumption. This position, however, has the weakness of ignoring the problem of entitlement and effective demand, inherent in the capitalist global economic system emanating from the North.<sup>75</sup>

### **The Dominant Policy Approach**

The policy approach differentiates itself from the main line of Malthusian reasoning largely through its appropriation of the work of Amartya Sen and the entitlement approach (see below). This change in direction also represents a shift towards the more liberal reformist approach that dominates the policy paradigm. However, as will be noted in the criticisms from the New Famine School, this policy paradigm continues to be heavily influenced by the neo-Malthusians and in fact only represents a partial break with previous food supply concerns.

This is in large part because the authors of food security's dominant policy school, with their scientific, technocratic and very apolitical approach, are responding to the inevitable crisis foreseen by the neo-Malthusians. Their collective answer to Malthus is that technological innovation, such as the Green Revolution and now Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and their associated industrial inputs, can produce more than enough food to meet demand. As such, their analysis is informed by supply side economic analysis, while Sen's is largely demand side. The central institution behind this approach is the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), as well as the bulk of the organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme. The most prominent authors circulating between these institutions and representing this approach include Alberto Valdes<sup>76</sup>, Per Pinstrup-Andersen<sup>77</sup>, Uwe Kracht, Manfred Schultz<sup>78</sup> and, especially, Joachim von Braun.<sup>79</sup>

The orthodox common line of all these authors and institutions is that food security is a technical issue, which can be solved by science and technology. They have adopted the household and micro-level as their primary focus of concern, effectively co-opting the entitlement approach (see Sen below). The household is also the main level at which they acknowledge social and political concerns as being food security issues, especially the concept of gender. It is worth noting that increasing scholarship from within the dominant policy school has indicated that presumed disparities and vulnerability along gender lines and for children are generally false or that there is no universal generalization that can be made regarding specifically vulnerable groups, aside from pregnant mothers.<sup>80</sup> For those that do in fact acknowledge structural issues of power beyond the household, they still fail to address them at the policy level. This household entitlement emphasis now complements the earlier (and continued, particularly for the FAO) focus on aggregate levels of food availability, usually measured in calories (and sometimes protein) available per person for the country in question. Previous mainstream acceptance of land reform as a policy option is strictly denied by the current dominant policy school.

Other key figures and positions include Martin Ravallion<sup>81</sup> of the World Bank, who is the chief proponent of the thesis that market failure is the cause of famine. This is contrasted with the position of the Bank itself, which, since the mid-1980s, has considered hunger to be a problem of purchasing power.<sup>82</sup> Also straddling the line between the dominant policy school and the category of liberal reformism are the proponents of ‘food as a human right’, with Asbjorn Eide<sup>83</sup> being the most notable representative. While technically and repeatedly enshrined and invoked in various United Nations charters, declarations and conventions, the right to adequate food and the right to be free from hunger continue to be ephemeral as there are no mechanisms for enforcement of that right. This is even the case for most of the twenty-two nations, including Guatemala, that have enshrined the right to food in their constitutions.

### **Liberal Reformists**

No theorist on famine and hunger in the twentieth century looms larger than Amartya Sen. His *Poverty and Famines* (1981) represents the seminal work in this field and in large part shapes the dominant policy paradigm from that point on, differentiating it from the neo-Malthusians. With the opening lines of *Poverty and Famines* he dispels the Malthusian emphasis on food availability and makes hunger and famine issues of **access** to food. As he explains, “Starvation is the characteristic of not *having* enough food to eat. It is not the characteristic of there *being* not enough food to eat.” (Original emphasis) Sen effectively defeats the food *supply* emphasis of Malthus through demonstrating that hunger and famine are issues of ‘effective demand’ or access. Using the ‘entitlement approach’ he elaborates how people acquire food, or fail to do so, through four entitlement mechanisms: trade-based, production-based; own-labour entitlement; and transfer entitlement.<sup>84</sup>

The first involves selling or trading what one owns in order to acquire food, the second producing ones own food, the third working for wages with which one can then acquire food or working directly for payment in food itself, and the final being food that is willingly given to someone, through inheritance, aid, charity or other similar channel. Sen further explains how these entitlements revolve around two concerns – what one

owns (property, labour power, etc.) and what one can effectively exchange what s/he owns for, called exchange entitlement. He lists five “influences that determine a person’s exchange entitlement”:

- 1) whether he can find an employment, and if so for how long and at what wage rate;
- 2) what he can earn by selling his non-labour assets, and how much it costs him to buy whatever he may wish to buy;
- 3) what he can produce with his own labour power and resources (or resource services) he can buy and manage;
- 4) the cost of purchasing resources (or resource services) and the value of the produces he can sell;
- 5) the social security benefits he is entitled to and the taxes, etc. he must pay.”<sup>85</sup>

Thus, Sen is clearly concerned with market and exchange based economies and how one is able to satisfy their basic needs within those market-based systems.

Sen also states “Famines imply starvation, but not vice versa. And starvation implies poverty, but not vice versa.”<sup>86</sup> It is in large part exactly this relationship that I am exploring – how poverty leads to starvation and famine and therefore understanding famine as a result of the impoverishment of people. However, it is the process of immiseration that is of concern to me in this study, demonstrating how the ‘abstract’ workings of the political economy create poverty, hunger and death.

The importance of Sen’s work is several fold. He exposes the Neo-Malthusian argument of excess population exceeding ‘the means of subsistence’ as false and also dismisses the traditional conception of famine as a natural disaster due to food production failure. By demonstrating that access, rather than availability, is the key issue, he also:

- 1) “stressed the need to examine each famine in its own particularity” – he presented not a general theory of famine but a framework for examining famines

- 2) moved the object of consideration from macro populations to individuals and households
- 3) “focused attention on relationships. In order to understand starvation it is necessary to look at the structure of ownership relations and other forms of entitlement relations within any particular society.”<sup>87</sup>

Further, in addition to dealing with Malthusian pessimism, he also draws attention to the even more serious dangers of Malthusian optimism. “In focusing attention on the extremely misleading variable of food output per head, ‘Malthusian optimist’ has been indirectly involved in millions of deaths which have resulted from the inaction and misdirection of government policy.”<sup>88</sup> The underlying problem with such a macro level approach is the assumption that food supply is in fact distributed evenly, which, given the distribution of wealth and consumption patterns, we know is patently not the case.

With all of this, Sen disproves what he termed the Food Availability Decline (FAD) argument that characterizes the dominant policy approach, supplanting it with his own Food Entitlement Decline (FED) explanation of the causation of famine. While there have been many critics of Sen’s work (see the New Famine School below), he is responsible for revolutionizing the conception and study of hunger and famine. His later work has extended the entitlements approach further into the area of political economy by arguing for the role of democracy, through the accountability of free elections and a free and functioning press, as they together function as famine prevention measures.<sup>89</sup> Together with his collaborator Jean Dreze,<sup>90</sup> Sen is the main representative of the liberal reformist approach to food security.

### **The Critical Approach**

The critical school, taking a largely systemic or political economy approach to food and hunger issues, as opposed to the technical orientation of the dominant policy paradigm, flourished in the 1980s, albeit in the margins. Susan George and her work with the Trans National Institute<sup>91</sup>, and Frances Moore-Lappe and Joseph Collins and their ‘Food First’ Institute for Food and Development Policy.<sup>92</sup> Solon Barraclough, the Land Tenure



Centre and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)<sup>93</sup>, both of which he at one time headed, represent this school into the 1990s, along with other authors such as Brewster Kneen,<sup>94</sup> James Bakker,<sup>95</sup> Jorge Nef<sup>96</sup> and Keith Griffin<sup>97</sup>. However, by the time of the 1996 World Food Summit, this critical school was rather less prolific, particularly given the expanded liberal reformist element of the dominant policy paradigm and the rising ‘human right to food’ approach. The rise of Genetically Modified Organisms has also supplanted the general issue of hunger in the debates, as this particular ‘cure’ brings with it an even wider array of biological, social, legal, economic and political problems.

The very political economy approach of these writers to hunger led them to either larger or more specific issues within the political economy of development, all of which were in some way related to hunger and famine, although this ceased to be their focus. Among the first tendency, George and Food First both have become increasingly involved in globalization and issues of transnational corporate dominance.<sup>98</sup> Nef has continued to develop the idea of human security.<sup>99</sup> Along the other trend, Latin Americanist’s such as Barraclough (who did indeed begin in the agrarian field) and Brockett have focused on land and land tenure issues.

Barraclough offers a definition of food security that usefully expands on the official definition of the FAO. Their policy definition sees food security as “all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”<sup>100</sup> For Barraclough and Scott, “Food security can be defined as assured access by all social groups and individuals to food adequate in quantity and quality, to meet nutritional needs. A food system offering security should have five characteristics:

- 1) capacity to produce, store and import sufficient food to meet current and expanding basic food needs for all;

- 2) maximum autonomy and self-determination, reducing vulnerability to international market fluctuations and political pressures (without implying autarchy);
- 3) reliability, such that seasonal, cyclical and other variations in access to food are minimal;
- 4) sustainability such that the ecological system is protected and improved over time;
- 5) equity: meaning, as a minimum, dependable access to adequate food for all social groups.”<sup>101</sup>

They also discuss food autonomy and self-determination, which they liken to dependency, in that they are concerned with “power relationships and the presence of alternatives”. This is seen through examining “the importance of food-system imports, such as food and other agricultural products, and of agricultural inputs in relation to food-system exports.”<sup>102</sup>

Keith Griffin, the Oxford Economist, writes specifically to challenge the technocratic approach of IFPRI and their position “that accelerated growth of food production will suffice to eliminate malnutrition and acute poverty in the Third World.”<sup>103</sup> In a form reminiscent of Sen’s clarification of famine being the condition of not having enough food, rather than there not being enough food, Griffin makes the point that “there is no world food problem, but there is a problem of hunger in the world.”<sup>104</sup> While related, food and hunger are not the same issue – an increase in the amount of food in and of itself is never sufficient to fully address the issue of hunger. Similarly, self-sufficiency is not necessarily or even always the answer. His central position is that “The fundamental cause of hunger, then, is the poverty of specific groups of people, not a general shortage of food. In simple terms, what distinguishes the poor from others is that they do not have sufficient purchasing power or effective demand to enable them to acquire enough to eat.”<sup>105</sup>

## **The New Famines**

There is some overlap between what I am terming the “New Famine School”<sup>106</sup> and some of the authors mentioned above. In particular, I am referring to the role of Sen in providing a fundamental starting point for the New Famine School, and the quasi-inclusion of Von Braun and Patrick Webb as the central famine theorists of the dominant policy school, which is where I, and those of the New Famine School, continue to classify them. Amongst the identifiable tenets of the New Famine School is the position, in keeping with Sen, that each famine is unique. However, from there they diverge in terms of an actual definition of famine, noting Sen’s resistance to offer a definition. Von Braun has no such compunction, stating “A famine is a catastrophic disruption of the social, economic and institutional systems that provide for food production, distribution and consumption.”<sup>107</sup> In sorting through the multitude of definitions from the various literatures, Devereux proposes a definition from Walker as the most adequate to accommodate the complexity of the issue and diversity of opinions. Although it is an ‘outsider’ perspective,<sup>108</sup> this definition sees that:

“famine is a socio economic process which causes the accelerated destitution of the most vulnerable, marginal and least powerful groups in a community, to a point where they can no longer, as a group, maintain a sustainable livelihood.”<sup>109</sup>

Thus, the alternative approach is in direct contrast and even opposition to the understanding of famine presented by Von Braun, in that famine is not simply an externally generated event that arrives and disrupts some natural state of harmony. As we will see, famine itself is the catastrophic product of the social, economic and institutional systems that provide for production, distribution and consumption. Their tendency is to disrupt access to food for the vulnerable – the poor and marginalized.

The first key contributor to the New Famine School is Amrita Rangasami<sup>110</sup> who contested Sen by asserting that “mortality is not a necessary condition of famine but only its biological culmination. Famine should be seen as a protracted politico-social-economic process of oppression comprising three stages: dearth, famishment and

mortality. The culmination of the process comes long before the final stage of disease and death. If the process is halted before people die, it is nonetheless still a famine. Second, famine cannot be defined solely with reference to the victims. The process is one in which ‘benefits accrue to one section of the community while losses flow to the other’. To study only the responses or coping strategies of victims, while paying no attention to the action (or inaction) of the rest of the community is to miss what is going on.”<sup>111</sup>

Keen<sup>112</sup> picks up on this last point examining the beneficiaries of famine, and their strategies in his *The Benefits of Famine: A Political Economy of Famine and Relief in Southwestern Sudan, 1983-1989*. Jenny Edkins goes even further, stating that famines and their outcomes “are enormously beneficial to the perpetrators: they are a success not a failure, a normal output of the current economic and political system, not an aberration.”<sup>113</sup> She is particularly radical in arguing that famines are “acts of mass-starvation committed” by persons that must be brought to justice for their responsibility,<sup>114</sup> differing from Devereux who merely contends that “famines occur because they are not prevented: they are allowed to happen.”<sup>115</sup> Again, Edkins position is that “It is also unfortunately the case that famines occur because they are made to happen.”<sup>116</sup> In keeping with the disaster prevention approach, she also believes that “[t]o treat mass starvations as political processes is to pay attention to them as processes that involve relationships between people (not just between persons and commodities, as in entitlements theory). Social relations are inevitably power relations.”<sup>117</sup> She concludes that:

“In many, if not most cases, they (famines) are the result of deliberate actions by people who can see what the consequences of those actions will be. If they (famines) are not produced deliberately, then they are often allowed to progress beyond the state of ‘famishment’ to that of ‘morbidity’ through deliberate or negligent inaction on the part of those who could intervene to save lives and livelihoods.”<sup>118</sup>

Elsewhere, Edkins argues “that famines are a product of modernity and specifically a part of modernity’s transformation of political action and participation into biopolitics.”<sup>119</sup> She defines this latter concept as the biological reductionism of technocratic approaches to hunger and poverty, which see food as nothing other than “fuel for the human organism”. It is a struggle for power where the object of politics is “the biological existence of human beings”.<sup>120</sup>

Alex De Waal is another key figure in the ‘school’ initially questioning the definition of famine and the entire ‘northern’ or aid agency approach, which considered famine a discrete event, in favour of ‘local’ and much more appropriate conceptions of famine.<sup>121</sup> He explores in great depth the different conceptions and definitions of famine with the particular aim, in keeping with Rangasami, of detaching famine from its sole conception as a mass mortality event. He has subsequently proceeded along similar lines with Edkins in establishing that “famine is caused by failures of political accountability”.<sup>122</sup> He also makes the point that hunger, destitution and death are not simply “stages through which famine victims pass, but rather three co-present aspects of famine, with complex interactions.”<sup>123</sup>

The central figure of the New Famine School, however, is Stephen Devereux. His *Theories of Famine* (1993) and “Famine in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” (2000) are the central compilations of famine thinking and incidence, respectively. His explanation of famines identifies two ‘explanation clusters’ – those concerned with ‘trigger factors’ and ‘underlying causes’, noting that most famines “can be explained as the complex product of a combination of both ‘technical’ and ‘political’ issues.”<sup>124</sup> In addressing the Malthusian ‘population monster’ he notes “rapid population growth and famine are linked more closely to their common causes, poverty and vulnerability, than to each other.”<sup>125</sup> Another key observation that illustrates the complexity of famine as a process is that “Rationing food consumption is an immediate and universal response of the poor to livelihood shocks.”<sup>126</sup> Finally, his conclusion is that “Any serious effort to reduce a community’s vulnerability to famine requires a more fundamental attack on the social, economic and political mechanisms which generate poverty and inequality”.<sup>127</sup> Along

with De Waal and Edkins, Devereux sees famine as an intensely and inseparably political issue.

‘Hidden famines’ are another extremely important and particularly relevant concept discussed by Michel Garenne. He presents these hidden famines as revealed through the detailed examination of census and death records, noting that they can and do occur during peacetime, with no ‘exceptional’ circumstances (like drought or war), such that the famine is not ‘detected’ until after the fact, if at all. In his study of Madagascar he finds that liberalization of domestic food production and markets after state regulation was the underlying cause of famine, concluding “It seems that the combination of poor economic policies together with extensive poverty was the main immediate reason for the famine.”<sup>128</sup>

The third element in famine theorizing, in addition to definition and identification of components, is that of famine typology. Early typologies divided famines according to their causes – economic, natural (environmental), political and social.<sup>129</sup> De Waal also sees four types of famines in our current era – pastoral, agrarian/smallholder, class-based/occupational and wartime.<sup>130</sup> Gazdar presents another useful classification of famines as pre-modern, modern and post-modern where:

“‘Pre-modern’ famine refers to the breakdown of modern administrative and market institutions, leading to a sharp decline in local food availability. Situations where food entitlement failures occur within the context of functioning modern institutions have been labeled as ‘modern’ famine. ‘Post-modern’ famine refers to excess mortality in spite of protected food entitlements but due to non-food crises: notably, the stresses of macro shocks on relatively sophisticated health and welfare systems.”<sup>131</sup>

Similarly, Sylvia Brunel offers a “Typology of famines in relation to international politics and the international aid business.

- 1) famines ‘hidden’ by local political powers, primarily to avoid criticism of their own policies
- 2) famines ‘exposed’ by political leaders, in order to maximize the amount of food relief and international aid, which may also be used for other purposes
- 3) famines ‘created’ by political groups, in order to provoke international aid – aid on which some guerilla movements are totally dependent”<sup>132</sup>

All of these latter concepts extend and combine with the earlier work and ideas of the critical school, providing a useful and holistic link between the technical issues of food security and the structural factors arising from the political economy. As Devereux notes, the complexity of explaining famines, their interdisciplinary (or multifaceted) nature and the confusion surrounding triggers and vulnerability (or underlying and proximate causes) confounds famine theorizing. The return to complexity and synthetic holism is both useful and needed. However, given that these developments are lead by Von Braun, there is clear need for a non-apolitical approach to complex systems.<sup>133</sup> In this way the disaster prevention school approach to vulnerability succinct, unified and politically informed framework for analysis. Thus, by combining the logic of disaster prevention, with the concepts from hunger, famine and food security, they can all be fruitfully tied together with the underlying elements of the political economy for the analysis of hunger and vulnerability.

### **Food Security in Conclusion**

The main divisions between the different perspectives summarized above is not so much their conception or perception of hunger and malnutrition – although there are and have been heated technical debates on various issues – but rather on the levels of analysis at which they are addressing hunger and its causes, and correspondingly, the policies and strategies that they elicit to confront the problem. Regardless of the depth or extension of the political analysis on hunger, there are real technical issues, just as whatever the technical issues, there is a much larger and multifaceted context in which the concrete situation is located. The problem, or conflict of perspectives, stems from the delimitation of that context. That delimitation more often than not follows ideological lines, as there

is no rational reason to limit the scope of analysis, although there are reasons of expediency for doing so.

This is particularly true when it comes to action – it is always easier to mobilize to address symptoms of a problem than to identify its root causes and undertake the structural changes required to stop a crisis and further, prevent it from reoccurring. This generalization is also characteristic of development thinking and policy – that which dominates is that which is most easily oriented towards concrete action. This has the political ramifications of maintaining the status quo, through patching the leaks where ever they spring up, as opposed to refitting the boat or changing its course so that it no longer suffers from these leaks. The Washington Consensus (see below) is a clear and straightforward policy agenda that ignores larger or complex contextual issues, including the ramifications of its direct prescriptions in different settings. Similarly, the dominant food security approach is a one-size-fits-all, growth through new and increased technology answer that does not listen to the different questions that are asked. Even while this approach has become increasingly sensitive to local and cultural realities, it continues to willfully ignore the structural terrain and analysis presented by the more critical approaches. The policy people are at the tiller and refuse to change course.

## **POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEVELOPMENT**

The political economy of development is considered by some “to constitute a synthesis of modernization and dependency approaches.”<sup>134</sup> As such it serves as both an approach to development and a field of thought in which the sum total of development thinking is at play. As a comprehensive review of the past half-century of development thinking and critical social science is somewhat beyond the scope of this both this chapter section and the entire thesis, I will here only touch on the key ideas and concepts that I am bringing to bear upon the structural causes of hunger and famine in Guatemala. These include political economy as an approach, and some of the larger issues of development as a western project of capitalist expansion and integration into the global economic system, including the blurry line between what is considered development and what is called globalization. More specifically, I outline the concept of the global division of labour



and power, the interdependence of the current world system and the mutual vulnerability and insecurity that both generate.

Political economy provides holism both in the approach to development and in the conception of what is in fact the object of study.<sup>135</sup> As Collinson explains, the political economy approach provides more than a mere static contextual analysis, but a fuller dynamic and historically informed conception of a situation that accounts for power, vulnerability and change in these factors and their distribution amongst actors.<sup>136</sup> This includes both micro, meso and macro levels of analysis and their interaction with each other, connecting global processes to local realities and vice versa.

The field of political economy, at least its critical wings, sees ‘the problem’ as being or emanating from the system itself. The post-development literature<sup>137</sup> is very clear in its condemnation of development as a Western or Northern project designed to incorporate the South into its global capitalist system.<sup>138</sup> This criticism is no less the case, and by no means any less emphatic, for the collected works of structural development thinkers, from Marx to the present, with their emphasis on economic domination by the capitalist centre.<sup>139</sup> From this Post-development group, Rist offers a very pointed definition of development:

“‘Development’ consists of a set of practices, sometimes appearing to conflict with one another, which require – for the reproduction of society – the general transformation and destruction of the natural environment and of social relations. Its aim is to increase the production of commodities (goods and services) geared, by way of exchange, to effective demand.”<sup>140</sup>

The latter, particularly the *dependencistas*, have been equally clear in their consideration of development (as it has been realized in practice) as nothing other imperialism.<sup>141</sup> This has also been the thesis of more recent criticism against globalization.<sup>142</sup> In the latter case, this position has the secondary implication of reducing globalization to the current ‘state of capitalist development’ (i.e. the name of capitalism’s current stage, also called

‘late capitalism’ or ‘monopoly capitalism’) and to some extent dismissing the ‘development versus globalization’ debate<sup>143</sup> as erroneous. Both these fields of literature, the Post-development and the structural, are also clear on the mechanisms of incorporation into the global economic system – debt, structural adjustment, ‘free trade’, liberalization and privatization, foreign direct investment – and their very negative impacts, particularly upon those that are already the most marginalized.

James Mittelman<sup>144</sup> presents us with the Global Division of Labour and Power (GDLP), where he elaborates beyond the core-periphery simplicity of the New International Division of Labour<sup>145</sup> as well as overcoming its economism by integrating power and culture into the analysis. He focuses on the regional elements of ‘globalization’, disputing its totalizing influence by emphasizing its construction and promotion, led by the US, of regional blocs, following the neoliberal agenda, and thereby weaving a larger tapestry of globalization, one piece at a time. He also notes that, at certain levels, this new regionalism is also a reaction against globalization, however he is clear in asserting that both regionalisation and globalization provide spaces for US hegemony.<sup>146</sup>

Specifically, the GDLP sees globalization as “a syndrome of processes and activities”<sup>147</sup> consisting of an unequal global division of labour and power, ‘new regionalism’ and subsequent resistance that furthers an agenda of power and wealth, and their concentration in the hands of a transnational elite. Further, it is a phase of capitalism, sharing ‘continuities and discontinuities’ with past phases.<sup>148</sup> He presents the ‘courtesan state’ as a policy direction that has been adopted, or forced upon, most states, as they attend to the interests of transnational capital.<sup>149</sup> This is coupled with the ‘polyarchy’ of institutionalist democracy and its elite oriented complementarity with neoliberalism where “[t]he liberal-economic conceptualization of globalization allows for tolerance of social inequality...”<sup>150</sup> In keeping with the structuralist and post-development perspectives, he sees that “globalization is an attempt to achieve the utopia of freeing the market from social and political control.”<sup>151</sup> One final concern that he voices is that “Sponsored by powerful interests as a form of cooptation, the concept of civil society may be promoted as an aspect of neoliberal ideology that constrains the state”.<sup>152</sup>

For Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye,<sup>153</sup> the political scientists that brought us the concept of ‘complex interdependence’, their understanding of ‘globalization’ is that of an increasing and diverse series of asymmetrical linkages. This ‘tapestry’ of interdependence – which means mutual dependence (the quality “of being determined or significantly affected by external forces”<sup>154</sup>) – creates both sources of power (leverage) as well as weaknesses for all parties. It is largely a critique on, or expansion of, realist conceptions of power based solely on military might, by illuminating other ‘liberal’ avenues of ‘power’ in international relations. Their model is very much an analytical one, as opposed to being interpretive,<sup>155</sup> which provides us with the concepts of sensitivity and vulnerability (of nation states) in international political economy. These two terms express the relative severity of the negative impacts of interdependence.<sup>156</sup> The result of the unrestricted growth of this interdependent capitalist world system however, is mutual vulnerability and human insecurity in both the north and south.<sup>157</sup>

### **Structural Adjustment**

The best that can be said about structural adjustment, in terms of food security, is that “Food production has increased in some structurally adjusted economies.” This observation, and the studies supporting it, fail to demonstrate how structural adjustment in those economies have in fact contributed to that increase. It is more an issue of those production increases being **in spite of** structural adjustment. An equally erroneous observation is that “Structural adjustment can have positive effects on food security in the long run.”<sup>158</sup> When hunger and the famine process are impinging on survival in the present, the long-run is irrelevant. However, in spite of these observations by DeRose and her colleagues, they concede that structural adjustment is one of the main factors in creating food insecurity.<sup>159</sup>

Courade,<sup>160</sup> on the other hand, is clear in his condemnation of structural adjustment and its policies of liberalization as a source of food insecurity. The socio-economic and political inequalities that adjustment and liberalization further exacerbate are, for him, the roots of both poverty and food insecurity. Even Pinstrip-Andersen concedes “that

adjustment policies either had negative nutritional effects or were unable to counter negative effects caused by other factors.”<sup>161</sup>

### **Structural Adjustment and Neoliberalism in Latin America**

The Washington Consensus – first coined by economist John Williamson in 1989 – is considered the guiding policy agenda of neoliberalism. While there is a lack of consensus regarding what exactly comprises the Washington Consensus,<sup>162</sup> the ten prescriptions that Williamson<sup>163</sup> cites are representative of its scope and direction:

- 1) Fiscal discipline
- 2) Redirect public expenditure
- 3) Tax reform
- 4) Financial liberalization
- 5) Adopt a single, competitive exchange rate
- 6) Trade liberalization
- 7) Eliminate barriers to foreign direct investment
- 8) Privatize state owned enterprises
- 9) Deregulate market entry and competition
- 10) Ensure secure property rights

In spite of the economic, social, and political crises affecting Central America, this agenda, as advanced collectively by USAID, the IMF and the IBD, had been widely implemented in the 1980s. “Deliberate deregulation has been largely confined to prices and wages, the financial sector, and the surrender of control implied by privatization.”<sup>164</sup> Moves have also been made to simplify bureaucratic procedures, but overall deregulation has been sporadic and unsystematic. However, the problems arising from the subsidizing of Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and Non-Traditional Agricultural Exports (NTAEs) are being noted, even by members of the Washington agencies that are promoting the Consensus.<sup>165</sup> There are none, at least amongst those that concern themselves with the rigors of reality, which would deny that neoliberal structural adjustment has been, in the best of cases, problematic for Latin America. There are many that consider it to be an outright disaster.

## **Class, Social Groups and Domination**

With the attack on ‘the great narratives’ generally, and Marxism in any of its forms specifically, by both neoliberalism and post-modernism, class has been largely removed from or ‘toned down’ in intellectual discourse. Where it is seen, it is considered an indicator of the unreformed ideological allegiance of the author. Seabrook argues that the sterile ‘politically correct’ term that has replaced class is ‘inequality’ – a statistical concept devoid of people and relationships. There has been a systematic, simultaneous mutually self-reinforcing attack on both the working class and the entire concept of class itself. This latter attack has used ‘identity politics’ as the principle mechanism for that attack.

Further, what remains of the (popular) conception of class has moved from Marx’s emphasis on production, through Weber’s emphasis on both production and consumption, to become purely an issue of consumption as the determinant of identity. At the same time, capitalism enshrines the insecurity of the class that depends on its own labour power, effectively ‘disappearing’ this issue from the realm of class considerations. Seabrook argues that there are two consequences of this shift to consumption and inequality. The first is that, tautologically, growth becomes the answer to the poverty found in inequality and globalization is dissolving national class structures and reconstituting them on the global level, where the generation of wealth is creating a global, yet fragmented, working class.<sup>166</sup>

However, there are two specific issues of class that are of concern to this study – the peasantry and its proletarianization, and the fractions of the bourgeoisie. Specifically, it is concerned with the class dynamics, particularly concerning these two groups, in an agrarian society. Although modernizing, the socio-economic and political hierarchy is entirely based and derived from the very vertical structure of this agrarian society. ‘Modern’ class fractions continue to exist and function within the agrarian framework, even though they work to alter it, or at least, its composition.

In terms of the bourgeoisie, this thesis is not concerned with the petit bourgeoisie – the small capitalist class – but rather the large capitalists of the industrial, financial and landed fractions. However, given the particularity of Guatemala, the latter of these three classical fractions is further disaggregated into the agrarian (traditional), agro industrial (modernizing) landed fraction. As well, a commercial and a military fraction must also be considered in order to accurately reflect the composition of the ruling oligarchy. This signifies a very complex ruling class, with constantly changing dynamics reflecting the changing strengths of these different fractions. These dynamics are usually consolidated in a *concertación*, or elite accommodation, that they collectively establish, or fail to do so, in order to maintain the stability of their domination of a society.

The peasantry is an equally complex and highly differentiated ‘class’. By definition it is a rural and traditional social group, characterized by social and economic organizing around the household and dependence on the land for livelihood. It further includes traditional culture based on life in small communities and a subservient position in the agrarian socio-economic hierarchy.<sup>167</sup> While this seems straightforward, any further examination shows that it is anything but. Peasant existence is predicated on autonomy and self-reliance. However, the entirety of rural populations by no means exist according to these definitions, particularly in a region like Latin America that experienced over three hundred years of colonialism and, arguably, is continuing two hundred more of quasi-feudalism. The conditions of the *campesinado* have changed little since its first incorporation into the global economic system – they are still poor, agrarian based and subservient in the socio economic structure. Peasants can be differentiated between subsistence cultivators, sharecroppers, labour tenants, landless rural labourers, the rich peasant / agricultural entrepreneur and the other dimensions of the rural proletariat – seasonal workers, migrant workers.

This differentiation brings us to the even more complex issue of the multifaceted peasantry’s confrontation with modernity and capitalism. Proletarianization is not a painless, reified process. The transformation of the rural peasantry into a working class, for both urban and rural industry, is predicated on the destruction of their subsistence.

Early development theorizing had little compunction about the real and human implications of the process of transforming the peasantry into a surplus army of labour, which would suppress wages allowing further capital accumulation for investment in industrial development.<sup>168</sup> ‘Bloodless’ economists of all political persuasions fail to comprehend the human elements involved in the destruction of rural subsistence in the name of proletarianization for development. A Guatemalan woman, whose husband was hacked to death by the military before her and her children’s eyes for the subversive act of teaching fellow *campesinos* how to raise rabbits, explains the structural inequality that underlies this development:

“the plantations down along the coast grow export crops that are owned by generals and rich men who control the government. A big part of their profit comes from the fact that we peasants are so poor we are forced to migrate to the plantations each year and work for miserable wages in order to survive. If we could feed ourselves, through raising rabbits or any other activity, we would never work on the plantations again. If that happened, the bosses would lose the source of their riches. So, given this system, helping peasants learn how to raise rabbits is subversive.”<sup>169</sup>

This quote explains in very clear terms the systemic violence of modernization, demonstrating the issues of power and culture inherent in transformation that destroys ‘pre-modern’ social, economic and political structures. This is evidence of both the methods and consequences of ‘proletarianization’, framing it as anything but a benevolent process. The options for peasants are to integrate themselves into ‘the market’ because of either direct violence or the indirect violence of hunger and deprivation. Another consequence of capitalist integration and its proletarianisation of the peasantry is urbanization.<sup>170</sup>

## **ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

From reviewing the different literatures, it is clear that there are political aspects to all of them, which necessarily arise from extending analysis into the social sphere of human

action. This makes it clear that ‘technical’ or science-only approaches, theorizing and literature, as relevant and important as they are and can be, are incomplete. This is the message and impetus – to go further than symptoms and understand fully the causes – that stems from critical social science. It is, therefore, this thoroughness of theory and methodology that informs the framework for analysis and interpretation of this study.

My theoretical position is clearly informed by a political economy approach to development, and as such the structural issues and realities revolving around hunger and the creation of vulnerability. The entire thesis of immiseration comes from Marx’s analysis of capitalism (and its expropriation of surplus value), which is itself echoed by the welfare economists and the critical theorists. It is, ultimately, the same thesis that I am advancing in this both instrumental and intrinsic case study of famine.

The central ideas that I am drawing generally from the field of the political economy of development, in addition to those already mentioned, are dependency, interdependence the so-called ‘comprador bourgeoisie’ that is the national elite. I am choosing to use the first two ideas interchangeably, as it is the vulnerability of interdependence<sup>171</sup> that is my focus, and this is indeed the idea expressed by dependency. However, as a concept, I am using dependency literally to refer to the unhealthy and disproportionate economic reliance of a country or community on a particular (or very small set of) crop(s), product(s) or sector(s), as well as on a single (or very limited number of) market(s) or supplier(s).

The central theme that arises from the various literatures is that of vulnerability. The general consensus from both famine and disaster studies is that there are no constant factors other than that vulnerability. Triggers and hazards, while generally necessary, are particular, whereas vulnerability is more homogenous and apt to generalization. This is not to deny that vulnerability can be disaggregated, but rather that conditions of vulnerability to one threat are common to various other hazards, as is seen in the ‘global vulnerability’ model. This synthetic approach underlies my linking and uniting of literature that is normally separated by field, discipline and perspective, in order to apply



their relevant components together. This theoretical synthesis can then be usefully applied to a holistic situation – the case. The case itself cannot be understood on its own, separated from its context and structural reality, or from only one perspective.

Hunger and poverty are conditions of vulnerability, just as they are aspects of famine. However, not all who are vulnerable are both hungry and poor; although this is often the case. Vulnerability and poverty are not synonyms. Thus, it is understood that when referring to hunger or poverty that vulnerability is implied, but not necessarily the reverse, while referring to famine implies both hunger and poverty. Similarly, famine is a disaster in and of itself, and is often a component of other disasters. In keeping with the disaster prevention school, the ‘New Famine’ school and the political economy approach generally, famines, like disasters, are **processes** and not simply the ‘discrete events’ that we observe, as ‘newsworthy’ for the media. As the WHO points out, those aspects of famine that we are able to observe, like “Real weight loss, mortality and migration of the population tend to occur at a relatively late state in a nutritional emergency.”<sup>172</sup> Furthermore, they are viewed as ‘man-made’ or socially constructed processes for which real and specific individuals, groups and their actions are responsible.

Famines, like all disasters, do not simply occur on their own, ‘naturally’. They are ‘made’ – socially constructed, in the same way that the economy and the market are social institutions built and maintained by human actors. What we see is that famines are a part of the economy, as they are a substantive economic phenomenon *par excellence*, concerned with the production and availability of food and people’s access to it. This latter measure is one of power, which clearly demonstrates the inseparability of the political from the economic. This is further, albeit somewhat tautological, justification for why this thesis takes a political economy approach – because the issue it is examining is one of the political economy.

This thesis takes the global economic system to be a synonym for the global capitalist system – the actual product of a half millennium of stages of capitalist development and in particular the current stage of evolution of transnational monopoly capital with its

neoliberal economic policies and pseudonym of globalization. As such, this thesis considers globalization to be, ultimately, the agenda of United States hegemony or imperialism. There are a number of specific mechanisms of incorporation that underlie this agenda (debt, structural adjustment, aid) as well as national and international actors that implement it (national elites, TNCs, IFIs, IGOs, USAID etc.). The GDLP model provides the specific analytical tools and categories, in keeping with the positions advanced by the Post-Development and structural thinkers, to examine the particular and evolving situation of a country in the context of globalization.

As such, I am approaching the Guatemalan famine as a structural issue of development, to which there are no simple technological or management solutions. While there is a role for technology and policy in resolving the ongoing and silent processes of famine and disaster, the fundamental problems are structural and that is where this thesis will look. The holistic array of components that comprise the reality of a 'community' and its environment, economy, polity, and society – the institutions and organization of actors, the policies that they have applied or been subjected to, their capacities for analysis and action – are the dynamic and interacting features that together dictate the conditions of a people. When those people live in crisis and constant disaster, it is to those factors we must look to both understand why and to truly address the situation, putting both an end to it and ensuring that it does not occur again.

Given the tendency to react to disaster and in particular famine after the fact,<sup>173</sup> when the damage and destruction is in fact done or well underway, it is important to work preventatively. Hence the political economy-disaster prevention-New Famine school approach. It is preventative analysis that is required and that, by definition, requires the examination of structures. However, this thesis is not so much directed at finding the way to improve these structures, but rather to emphasize that these socio-economic and political structures are in fact the problem. Given that the dominant managerial approach to development and food security, it is necessary to show how the disaster is a systemic creation and, therefore, the complicity of all those that do not in fact act beforehand to prevent disaster.<sup>174</sup>

As class and class analysis are central to this thesis, and are a central element to all that has so far been reviewed, it is necessary to be clear regarding the definitions and concepts to be used. The classical Marxist division between bourgeoisie and proletariat is not appropriate in this case, masking the multiple fractions, divisions and cleavages both within and between these two classes. Instead, it is more appropriate to speak, on the one hand, of an elite<sup>175</sup>, or an oligarchy, which is highly differentiated. For the purposes of this thesis, oligarchy will be used to refer to the collective bourgeois class in Guatemala, while elite will be used to identify the various fractions within the oligarchy, namely the economic elite, as opposed to the political elite, which is similar the division between the ruling elite and the governing elite. The military elite, as separate from and yet member of both, must also be included, as well as the divisions within, in particular, the economic elite, between its landed and industrial fractions. As such, elites will be used to refer to the collected fractions mentioned here.

The complexity of what comprises the proletariat is also substantial. All the more so given that Guatemala is such an ethnically divided country, overlaying indigenous and mixed race dimension onto the class analysis. Further, as the emphasis is on the rural poor, and not the urban proletariat, we are here concerned with peasants,<sup>176</sup> proletarianization and the semi-proletariat. While the vast majority of peasants are indeed indigenous, not all are. Similarly, the vast majority of indigenous are also peasants, but again this is not universal. Even more complicated is the issue that most peasants are not in fact simply peasants, but also engage in other productive activity and work as labourers, albeit generally on a seasonal or occasional basis. In the same vein, there is also a very substantial rural population that is in fact landless, or are sharecroppers, and although involved in agriculture are technically not peasants either. However, for the purposes of this thesis and simplicity, all of the above-mentioned groups will be considered as peasants, and it will be assumed, unless otherwise stated, that the peasants are in fact indigenous.

The following four chapters are largely descriptions of the Guatemalan reality, organized within this framework. They are the ‘proof’ from the case that demonstrates the validity of this tentative framework while at the same time explaining the causes of the famine. Chapter three provides the historical context in which Guatemala’s grossly inequitable political economy has evolved. Chapter four shows the actual structure of that economy, how it is vulnerable, and whom it makes vulnerable within the country. Chapter five details the condition of global vulnerability – the poverty, hunger and environmental destruction – that this history and orientation have wrought. Chapter six then explores the details of the famine event, and connects it to the larger ‘famine process’ resulting from the political economy.

## Chapter III

# The Creation and Maintenance of a Vulnerable Political Economy

*“Latin America is a slave economy masquerading as postmodern: it pays African wages, it charges European prices, and the merchandise it produces most efficiently is injustice and violence.”*

– Eduardo Galeano, *Upside Down*

### INTRODUCTION

From colonial times Guatemala's economy has been tied to the global economic system. Although its participation in the global economic system has changed over the centuries, becoming increasingly 'inserted' and (inter)dependent, it has always participated from a position of weakness. This is to say that its economy is dominated by export-led production, in particular of primary commodities. These non-processed agricultural exports have been losing their relative importance within the formal economy, in particular with the increase of light manufactures. However, they continue to be extremely important in absolute terms, and with regard to the livelihoods that they provide for, or have taken away from, so many Guatemalans.

The central aspect of Guatemala's participation in and integration into the global economic system is the domestic agency behind that participation. Namely, national elites – the oligarchy – dominate the country and are the principle beneficiaries of their nation's participation in the global economic system. This chapter shows how national elites in fact dominate the evolving national political economy by focusing on their control of four key elements. The first is their ownership and control of natural resources, particularly land. The second is their control of production, both agricultural, manufacturing and other primary resource extraction. Their control of exchange focuses on their control over trade, both national but especially international, concentrating its benefits in their own hands. The final area of domination is over the state, both controlling its actions and the policies that it pursues, all in the interest of the dominant class.

The argument is that it is exactly this participation in the international market that is literally starving Guatemalan people. The interests of Western industrialized countries are those that guide and frame the global economic system. There are specific mechanisms that accompany a hegemonic ideology that makes Guatemala – and all countries of the South – a less than equal player in the global economic system. At the same time, there is a dialectic between the forces of ‘neoliberal globalization’ that seek to fully incorporate all corners of planet earth into one capitalist system<sup>177</sup> and the national elites of the south – the comprador bourgeoisie of dependency theory – that together make this system work. The coincidence of interests between global and national capital – the global elites – serves them each profitably. This profit comes at the expense of the vast majority of people who are put at risk and made increasingly susceptible to hunger and other threats through the normal working of this international capitalist system.

On the basis of this thesis – that Guatemala’s increasing integration into the global economic system is in fact a process of immiseration that is leading to hunger and death for its people – we will examine the two sides of this process as they effect Guatemala. The first being Guatemala’s place in the global economic system and the various mechanisms of its incorporation (or subjugation) and the second being the role of the national elites in participating in and enforcing that insertion while capturing virtually all of the benefits of that integration.

To elaborate this first process, we identify Guatemala’s role within the global economic system as a primary commodity exporter, primarily and certainly historically of agricultural products, and secondly of light manufactures. This will be followed by an examination of Guatemala’s regional integration, foreign debt and the role of structural adjustment in tying it to policies not of its own creation nor, in effect, in the interest of its poorest peoples. Other specific mechanisms of economic integration, such as Plan Puebla Panama and the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and the regional and global hegemon lying behind all such initiatives, are also surveyed to establish their role in

Guatemala's integration into the global economic system, and hence the orientation they thrust upon the nation's economy.

This chapter is divided into five sections – the environment, the society, political history, the economy and global integration. The first section outlines the central aspects of the environment in Guatemala, the country's geography, ecology, natural resource base and predisposition to 'natural disasters'. The second section, on society, provides an overview of the demographic evolution of the country and also addresses the issues of ethnicity and class in the classification and 'construction' of Guatemalan society. The political overview is oriented to the historical evolution of the nation, specifically the political regimes that have governed it and their economic and development policies. It also highlights the role of such key actors as the military and the oligarchy, and puts the civil war and the Peace Accords into context. The section on economy examines the structure of the Guatemalan economy and the domination of the means and materials of production and exchange by a small segment of the population. Intrinsically related to the previous sections is the examination of Guatemala's place in the world economy and understanding the global context that includes living '...so close to the United States'. The final section concerns itself with the growing inequality that has accompanied the process of Guatemalan development and integration into the global economic system.

Together, these sections demonstrate Guatemala's marginalization in the world, as it is reduced to a satellite producer and exporter of agricultural 'cash crops' and assembler of light industrial goods, all for Northern, particularly American, markets. Domestically, this export orientation has been accompanied by an extreme socio-economic hiarchization of the population. This effective immiseration has seen the poor – largely rural and indigenous – being marginalized and impoverished through the ensuing and active process of alienating them from their means of subsistence and forcing them into the 'wage labour' economy that does not truly exist (at least at the scale necessary to support them), where they are exposed to the whims of the international market and local elites, while food self-sufficiency is 'forgotten' by both.

Having laid out these processes, this chapter concludes by showing how together they have increased the vulnerability of the majority of Guatemalans, particularly the rural and indigenous population - certainly the two poorest elements of the society. This will be done by showing how they have been denied resources and options in life, been marginalized from political participation and made bereft of the means of production and in fact been alienated from their very means of survival, which, in Guatemala, means land.

## **THE ENVIRONMENT**

The word Guatemala itself means “land of trees” and as such is a very apt description of the country, also touted as ‘the land of eternal spring’ due to its constantly mild climate and lush verdancy. In spite of this, it is home to a diversity of geographic regions, climatic and life zones, which are and have been significantly affected by the last half-century of development. This section briefly summarizes the geography of the country, this ecological and climatic diversity and its natural resource base.

Guatemala has a total national territory of 108,889 square kilometres, making it slightly larger than the island of Newfoundland. It shares borders with Mexico, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador. Altitude ranges from sea level on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts, as well as in the northern jungle region of the Petén, to 4,220 metres above sea level at its highest point.<sup>178</sup> The country is generally considered to have three natural regions – the coasts, the highlands and the northern lowlands. However, it is more exactly categorized into the southern coast or Pacific Slope, the Western and Central Highlands (running northwest towards Mexico), the East or Eastern Highlands, (running east towards Honduras and El Salvador), the Northern Transversal Strip – the transition zone between the highlands and the final region – the jungle lowlands of the Petén.

Guatemala has four major tectonic fault lines running roughly east to west, and has 38 volcanoes spread throughout the Sierra Madre mountains running Southeast to Northwest, parallel to the Pacific coast.<sup>179</sup> This makes Guatemala particularly prone to regular tremors and has caused a series of devastating earthquakes since colonial times.



The Cuchumatanes are the second mountain range, running parallel to the Sierra Madre, yet further north, descending into the Northern Transversal Strip.

Geopolitically, the country is divided into nine different regions, named according to their orientation on the compass, with the Metropolitan region of the capital as the centre point. It is also divided into 22 administrative departments,<sup>180</sup> containing a total of 331 municipalities. The capital is Guatemala City, located in the Central Highlands. It is also the largest city with a population of approximately 4 million, followed by Quetzaltenango in the Western Highlands with roughly 1 million people. The municipal governments are elected locally, with the municipal government of the departmental capital being the actual administration for the department, in spite of their being departmental governors appointed by the central government.

The different climatic zones of the country correspond with the geographic regions above, although great ecological and climatic variations occur within and between these regions. Of the 38 different 'Life Zones' specified by the Holdridge<sup>181</sup> ecological classification system, 14 are present in Guatemala. Rainfall varies between 500 mm per year in the Motagua Valley to more than 4000 mm on the coasts.<sup>182</sup> The Verapaces receive rain up to 210 days of the year, while the departments of El Progreso, Chiquimula and Zacapa can see as few as 45 days a year.<sup>183</sup> Finally, it has 60 different ecosystems, 7 biomes and 9 eco-regions. It is home to more than 8000 kinds of plants and 1966 different species of vertebrates.<sup>184</sup>

Land is the primary resource of Guatemala, with it being a primarily forest based country – some 79% of its surface area is naturally predisposed as forestland. With 10,843 thousand hectares of total land area, 82% of the land is considered sloping hillside or mountainous and two-thirds of it have a high propensity to erosion. Therefore, only a small proportion of the land (21%) is naturally suitable for agriculture.<sup>185</sup> However, since 1961 the agricultural frontier has almost doubled from 2,646 thousand hectares to 4,507 thousand hectares in 2000. Of this increase, pastureland has seen the greatest rise in area, from 1,110 thousand hectares to 2,602 thousand hectares.<sup>186</sup> Forest cover has in fact been

the primary loser in this advance of the agricultural frontier, falling from 77% of the national territory in 1960 to 26.6% by 1998.<sup>187</sup> While forestry is a notable sector of the Guatemalan economy, very little of this deforestation is due to direct economic exploitation by that sector.

Its volcanic soils in the highlands and pacific slope are very fertile, although highly prone to erosion. The shallow calcium rich soils in the lowland Peten region, while fertile, are very fragile, easily exhausted and also prone to erosion due to the heavy rains in the region. The subsoil mineral wealth of the country is less impressive, consisting of small yet significant (high sulfur) oil reserves in the Peten and nickel, in the highlands, as well as copper, lead, iron, silver and bauxite in exploitable quantities.<sup>188</sup> Guatemala also counts on fish stocks and a sizable fishing industry on its pacific coast.

Guatemala has a history of ‘natural’ disasters stretching back to the time of the Mayas. Recent evidence indicates that the sudden and inexplicable collapse of the Classical Maya civilization was in fact triggered by complete environmental collapse stemming from massive deforestation in the lowlands and the continuous drought that it induced by changing climatic patterns.<sup>189</sup> In addition to being highly sensitive to global weather patterns, Central America has always suffered the vagaries of El Nino, which mean droughts for most of the region, while La Nina brings heavy rains and flooding. As part of the Pacific Ring of Fire, the most recent of the devastating earthquakes hit Guatemala on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1976, causing an estimated 27,000 deaths, injuring over 77,000 and left up to 1.6 million people homeless after damaging or destroying 384,762 homes. It should be noted that nearly all of these victims were poor and mainly indigenous, in both rural and urban areas – industrial, commercial and higher-class residential areas in Guatemala City were virtually untouched.<sup>190</sup>

In addition to these natural hazards, Guatemala is also experiencing an increasing number of floods and landslides, generally as a result of deforestation throughout the country.<sup>191</sup> This litany of dangers is rounded out by seasonal frosts in the highlands, forest fires (usually caused by agricultural burning that escapes control) and hurricanes. While

normally visited by at least one hurricane per season, no 'natural' disaster has impacted Central America with greater malevolent force in the last century than hurricane Mitch in 1998. While the destruction it caused was greatest in Honduras and Nicaragua, it had a lesser human toll in Guatemala due to the advance warning that saw over 106,000 people evacuated. However, the destruction it wrought amounted to 5% of Guatemala's GDP, destroyed over one million *quintales* of unharvested maize and affected almost 100,000 houses and nearly 700,000 people.<sup>192</sup>

## **SOCIETY**

Historically and in the present, Guatemalan society is structured along agrarian lines. The basic division is between large landholders and peasant smallholders in what is typical of the bimodal agriculture of *latifundistas* and *minifundistas*, each dependent on the other. This interdependence revolves around client-based networks between the *latifundista patron* and the *colonos* (sharecroppers) that live on his land and work directly for him. This relationship is also extended to the *campesinos* (peasants) that live nearby his estate, or that travel seasonally to work for him. All of these peasants and agricultural workers traditionally depend on the *patron* for political and economic support, while the patron depends on them as the labour force for his agricultural estates. While much of this colonial system has eroded, much of it still remains and continues to be an important factor in understanding both development in Guatemala and the actors involved.

## **Demographics**

The trends in Guatemala's population have been volatile since the conquest. Equally, there has been great uncertainty regarding the actual measures, estimates and classifications of that population. The devastation of the conquest was wrought throughout the sixteenth century and saw up to 95% of the indigenous population in certain areas disappear. 'Less affected' areas of the highlands only lost 80% of their pre-conquest population. By the seventeenth century Guatemala's indigenous population slowly began to grow once more, but before independence had only recovered to 20% of pre-conquest levels<sup>193</sup> which were thought to be over 2.5 million in the national territory.

After independence in 1821, Guatemala had a population of roughly 595,000 people<sup>194</sup> and “[a]ccording to the 1880 census Guatemala possessed 1,244,602 people, 379,828 of them *ladinos* and 844,774 Indians.”<sup>195</sup> By 1930 the number was up to 1.7 million<sup>196</sup> and by 1950 – over four centuries later - had re-attained pre-conquest levels. However, by this time population estimates and actual census results begin to diverge by significant margins. Mayorga Quiros<sup>197</sup> reports 3,006,000 inhabitants in 1950, 14% of whom were urban, and 7,262,000 by 1980, 38% of whom were urban. Census results, however, are more conservative, recording 2,790,868 in 1950 then 4,287,997 by 1964, some 5,158,075 in 1973, then 6,054,227 by 1981 and 8,331,874 in 1994.<sup>198</sup> The current census indicates a population at the end of 2002 of 11, 237,196 – more than half a million people fewer than official projections had indicated.<sup>199</sup> Apart from the wide variety of problems underlying these disparities – from methodological issues with the actual censuses and projections, to the real demographic impact of economic and political events – they do clearly indicate an enormous increase in the population since the middle of the twentieth century. Population density has risen from 25.8 people per square kilometer in 1950 (using the conservative census result) to 105 people today, with the urban population standing at 38.6% of the total.<sup>200</sup>

### **Race and Ethnicity**

There are three major racial or ethnic divisions in Guatemala, spanning back to the conquest. At the top of this very clear and present social hierarchy are the *criollos* – the descendents of the Spanish conquerors and the subsequent *peninsulare* (Spanish-born immigrant) administrators that served the Spanish crown. The mixed blood descendents of the *criollos* and indigenous are in Guatemala called *ladinos* and have generally formed the bulk of the middle class, although there are many ladino peasants as well. It should also be noted that the term *ladino* is generally used to refer to all non-Mayan peoples, or people that prefer to not consider themselves indigenous. This is to say that it functions as both a cultural and a racial classification.

The bottom of this social pyramid is comprised of the twenty-one different Mayan groups, plus the indigenous (non-Mayan) Xinka and the Afro-Caribbean Garifuna

population. This adds up to a total of twenty-four different linguistic groups in the country and, according to official statistics, an indigenous population in 2000 of between 40.5% and 48.6%.<sup>201</sup> Added to this mix are important immigrant populations that also came to the country after independence. The most notable of these were the German colonists that settled primarily in the Verapaces region of the country. While many were expelled towards the end of the second World War, many were not and a significant number of those that were have since returned.

**Table 1: Ethnic Division of the Population**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Percent Indian</b>	<b>Percent Ladino</b>
1774	78.4	21.6
1880	64.7	35.3
1921	64.8	35.2
1940	55.7	44.3
1950	53.6	46.4
1964	43.3	56.7

Source: Van Den Berghe 1968: 515

### **Class**

One of the central issues facing Guatemala has been the proletarianization of the peasantry that has accompanied 'development'. All efforts at modernization, from the 'Liberal Revolution' and including Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI), have considered agriculture as a source of savings for investment (albeit this corresponds only to the landowning elites). At the same time the peasantry have been viewed as the army of surplus labour that can (and must) be forced off the land in order to supply industry with cheap labour it requires for its profitable development. Part of the complication of understanding Guatemala's peasantry is their ethnic correspondence with the indigenous Maya population.

The vast segment of the national population is the subsistence peasantry, at 44% of the population (and with a mere 6% of the land).<sup>202</sup> Other estimates put the rural population, or peasantry, at over 6 million, with between 50% and 59% of them being indigenous and the rest being *ladino*.<sup>203</sup> Even more complicated is the issue that most peasants are not in

fact simply peasants, but also engage in other productive activity and work as labourers, albeit on a seasonal or occasional basis. In the same vein, there is also a very substantial rural population that is in fact landless,<sup>204</sup> or are sharecroppers, and although involved in agriculture are technically not peasants either.

While the technical and bureaucratic middle class has been present since colonial times, it grew from the 1970s into the 1980s, while the dominant elite has itself, at least in relative terms, been further concentrated.<sup>205</sup> This oligarchy consists of various factions, including an economic elite, a political elite, a somewhat distinct governing elite, also differentiated from the ruling elite and the military elite. The economic elite is itself further divided between its landed and industrial fractions. Racially, the oligarchy has traditionally been *criollo*, with the German immigrants also finding themselves at home in this class. Wealthy *ladinos* have increasingly gained access to these ranks, while those few indigenous elites that have become sufficiently wealthy were first transformed into *ladinos* before joining the economic elite. The basic racial composition of the class structure, though, is a *criollo* (white) upper class, a *ladino* (mixed race) middle class and an indigenous (and black) lower class.

## **POLITICAL HISTORY**

This section focuses on the historical developments that shaped the Guatemalan economy, and thereby the nation's society and polity. It considers the various political regimes that have governed Guatemala and the development policies that they have adopted, as well as the institutions central to this development – the state, the military and the oligarchy. It then provides a brief overview of the economic roots of the Civil War and of the 1996 Peace Accords that have ‘formally’ brought thirty-six years of violence to a close.

### **Political Regimes and the State**

In the early years of Central American independence, the *ladino* president Jose Carrera imposed a conservative social, political and economic policy on the entirety of the region. This policy was relatively benevolent towards the indigenous and rural population in that

it was passive and therefore largely neglected them. However, this changed with the Liberal Revolution of the 1870s. In 1876 the liberal strongman, president Justo Rufino Barrios, re-implemented the system of *mandamientos* – the colonial system of forced labour that obliged indigenous communities to work for *criollo* landowners – through ‘*El Reglamento de Jornaleros*’ (the Law of Labourers). In 1894 the *mandamientos* were replaced with forced work brigades for public projects, exempting those who either paid an annual tax of 10 pesos, were *colonos* (sharecroppers) on a *finca* (estate farm or plantation), were in debt bondage (for more than 30 pesos) or held a work contract (for a minimum of 3 months a year) on an export crop *finca*.<sup>206</sup>

These laws and the mechanisms of debt peonage continued until the 1930s when another modernizing liberal strongman and president, Jorge Ubico, put an end to them by adopting the ‘Vagrancy Law’ “which abolished debt peonage, canceled peasant debts [and] barred any legal prosecution by landlords to enforce debts after a two-year transition period.”<sup>207</sup> He was a major modernizing force for Guatemala, which in fact set him in opposition to the landed elite on a number of issues.<sup>208</sup> As such, he saw debt peonage and *colonos* as backward institutions that inhibited national development by tying up a major part of the labour force that could be more effectively exploited if they were in fact more mobile. The Vagrancy Law, which in no way changed the lot of the *campesino*, simply saw their obligation shifted from the landlords to the state, who became their new *patron*, in keeping with Ubico’s centralization of power in the state, generally, and specifically within the hands of the president.<sup>209</sup> All that the Vagrancy Laws did was require *campesinos* to cultivate a minimum of land (which varied according to zone of the country) or show that they worked a minimum number of days on a *finca* using a passbook system. Given the illiteracy of the *campesinos*, this system was easily and widely abused by landowners (and their managers) for whom it was a concession granted by Ubico to ameliorate their opposition to his reforms. Failing to meet these obligations would result in forced labour on public works for peasants. The Vagrancy Law was also accompanied by the Transport Law, which levied a 2 *quetzal* (the national currency) tax on each male between the ages of 18 and 50 or face a similar labour requirement.<sup>210</sup> These laws lasted until 1944 when the October Revolution

brought a three member military and civil *junta* to power. Their brief tenure only lasted until they had overseen the election of Juan Jose Arevalo and the transition to his administration, during which time they framed a new constitution.<sup>211</sup>

The Guatemalan State has not been a simple 'handmaiden of the elites'. Certainly under Jorge Ubico (1931-1944) the state was acting autonomously of the 'immediate or short term' interests of elites, in its pursuit of liberal modernization.<sup>212</sup> Thus, there existed a modernizing state, largely allied with the German landowners who were concentrated in the Verapaces region of the country and were themselves the most economically dynamic sector of the both the country and in fact the region.<sup>213</sup> However, with World War II, the exigencies of the United States' government forced Ubico to abandon this elite faction, which supported his modernization efforts, and saw the bulk of German landowners dispossessed and expelled from the country. The Ubico regime saw the first systematic attack, through the Vagrancy Laws, on the landed class and the concentration and centralization of power in the executive branch of the state.<sup>214</sup>

While the German expulsion was a severe blow to the economy, especially given the 'backward' nature of the non-German elites in their agricultural and industrial endeavours, as well as the social hierarchy that they maintained, it also provided a sizable portion of the land subsequently used by the Arbenz administration in its land reform. The subsequent undoing of the Arbenz land reform saw this land once again returned to the state until finally disposed of by Ydigoras, most of it going to friends or highest bidders, but 16 of the 78 German estates expropriated under Ubico were in fact returned to their original owners.<sup>215</sup>

The 'October Revolution' began the Ten Years of Spring, which saw progressive reform under first professor Juan Jose Arevalo and then Jacobo Arbenz, a captain in the army (at the time of the October Revolution) and member of both the *junta* and the Arevalo cabinet. While Arevalo and his 'spiritual socialism' aroused the suspicion of the Guatemalan oligarchy, this was largely offset by his strong nationalism and unwillingness (or political inability due to a deeply divided congress) to institute structural or radical



reform in the country. The 'spiritual socialism' combined with nationalism was a particularly obnoxious combination for the United States, who, lacking 'concrete provocation' did not intervene. Regardless, many social advances were made before Arbenz was elected president, with the congressional majority required to institute 'revolutionary' change. The centre piece of this was the Agrarian Reform Law that saw 917,659 acres of land expropriated from large estates and, along with state owned land, redistributed to over 100,000 families, representing more than half a million people. The reform was politically unpopular both at home and in the United States, the latter due to the expropriation of 372,000 acres of unused United Fruit Company land (of a total of 550 million acres, of which it used at most 15%).<sup>216</sup> The redistribution of land itself was in fact a stable and economically successful process, which saw significant increases in basic grain production for domestic consumption.<sup>217</sup> Furthermore, the entire agrarian reform was in keeping with the recommendations of the World Bank's 1950 country assessment.<sup>218</sup>

With the fall of Arbenz through the CIA backed invasion, the Ten Years of Spring and the progressive reforms that it had brought came to an immediate end.<sup>219</sup> Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, the 'leader' of the CIA organized invasion from Honduras and American appointee as president, immediately halted and reversed the agrarian reform. By 1956 he had returned and reclaimed over 99% of the land redistributed under Arbenz<sup>220</sup>, leaving a mere 0.4% of the original reform beneficiaries, these being mainly church cooperatives, with their land.<sup>221</sup> With the exception of purges, particularly of the military, this regime accomplished little else with such efficiency, except for unraveling the newly consolidated food self-sufficiency stemming from the agrarian reform. This food crisis, revolving around reduced corn production, required the immediate and large scale provision of food aid from the United States, inaugurating the current period of external dependence on imports for basic food supplies.<sup>222</sup>

As a result of internal feuding within the '*liberacionista*' camp, Armas was killed in 1957 and replaced by General Manuel Ydigoras Fuentes. The Ydigoras period, in spite of his nationalist platform in the very 'controlled' elections that were to become the norm, also

represents an era of increasing US involvement in the Guatemalan state, both in terms of funding and policy direction. It was at this time that the US effectively took control of the direction the Central American Common Market (CACM) was to take. This trend continued until the 1970s when military nationalism began to strain relations with the US, reducing its direct involvement in shaping new government policy. However, given the opening for foreign investment created by the CACM, this was to a degree acceptable, in particular given the rising perceived communist menace in the form of the renewed guerrilla insurgency in the countryside.

One of the consequences of military rule and the civil war, with the gross violations of human rights that characterized it, was that Guatemala was excluded from the world community and unable to accede to foreign credit, either private or from multilateral or bilateral sources. This imposed self-reliance meant that it was in fact largely debt free, certainly in comparison to its neighbours and the rest of Latin America, until rapprochement in the 1980s.<sup>223</sup> However, these external financial limitations were reproduced internally, particularly with the growing costs of the war, given the intransigence of elites and their principal representative at the national level, the *Coordinadora de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras* (CACIF, the Coordinating Committee of Agriculture, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Associations) “the supreme council of all the different business sectors”<sup>224</sup>. While the dictator Efraín Ríos Montt was able to impose a tax increase on the elites, it was later overturned, as was he in a counter coup that was largely a result of this audacity,<sup>225</sup> rather than due to the fact that he was the bloodiest leader of the scorched earth campaign against the indigenous people in the highlands.

While the 1985 election of the civilian government of Vinicio Cerezo signaled the return to democracy in Guatemala, particularly for the Reagan administration, it was still very much a transition period for the military, which remained totally autonomous and in de facto control of the country. The elevation of Jorge Serrano to the presidency in 1990 marks the sea change that saw the ruling elites become the governing elites, with many of his cabinet members coming from CACIF and the economic elite. These included Alvaro

Arzu Irigoyen, the foreign affairs minister from one of Guatemala's richest families, who later became president in 1996, at the head of the very pro-business *Partido de Accion Nacional* (PAN – National Action Party). However, this neo-liberal tide has in many ways been checked, or at least stalled, by the current *Frente Republicano de Guatemala* (FRG – Guatemalan Republican Front) administration of Alfonso Portillo, which is in fact led by Rios Montt. The open tension and conflict between this military oriented party and the CACIF plays itself out daily, particularly with national elections due in the fall of 2003. It has also meant that the great majority of the population and their suffering are entirely ignored as this feud between competing elite fractions is the focus of most all attention and resources.

### **The Military**

The modernization of the military began under Ubico, and his work developing and professionalizing the officer corps. Central to this was the military assistance from the US, in the form of a new director for the *Escuela Politecnica*. The professionalism and pride thus inculcated into the military was profoundly impacted by the Castillo Armas invasion that drove Arbenz from power, without any opposition being mounted. These lasting impacts on the military have reconfirmed its autonomy and “both immunized the military against any serious reformist tendencies and engendered a form of shame that periodically rose to the surface in a belligerent institutionalism directed against the civilian right, and a reactionary nationalism that occasionally soured relations with Washington.”<sup>226</sup>

This institutional autonomy has grown and the military has increasingly become a prominent political and economic force in the country. Its economic growth stems from the 1970s when it saw a number of national enterprises pass into its control, providing it with an economic base. The *Banco del Ejercito* is one example of its economic diversity, while its munitions factory and armoured vehicle plant show its productive capacity. As such, moves towards privatization and liberalization in the 1980s were opposed by the military, given that most of the national industries to be privatized – electricity, telephone, the national airline and the international airport<sup>227</sup> – were under their control

and did not directly belong to the state. The military had become an economic elite unto themselves and were defending their interests, just as the traditional economic elite has done through CACIF. Their private colonization of the Franja Transversal del Norte (the Northern Transversal Strip), made senior officers into a landed and agricultural elite, at the expense of denying land redistribution to many peasants and actually expelling others.

Managing the economic crisis of the lost decade of the 1980s was one very real incentive for the return to democracy. A much larger one was the lure of the US economic and military cooperation (aid) and returned investment, after the Carter administration had cut ties with the Guatemalan military dictators and their bloody human rights records. The Reagan administration was only too eager to support 'democratization' in Guatemala, especially given that so-called democracy untied its hands from the restrictions still carrying over from Carter.<sup>228</sup> However, democratically elected governments in the 1980s in no way decreased the *de facto* control over the country exercised by the military. This power was certainly eroded in the 1990s and was in part co-opted by non-military economic elites, but the current Portillo and Rios Montt administration has reversed that trend and also opened divisions within the military.<sup>229</sup> These murky relationships are likely to elicit a new elite compact, or *concertacion*, with this year's elections. Failing that, it is probable that there will be a return to open conflict and repression, in concert with the current escalation in generalized violence and insecurity throughout the country.

### **Civil War and the Peace Accords**

The 1960 military uprising against the corrupt Ydigoras regime, led by Captain Marco Antonio Yon Sosa and Lieutenant Luis Turcios Lima, is considered the beginning of the thirty-six year civil war. However, it was not until news of the hosting of the CIA's Cuban invasion force sparked a military revolt in Zacapa in 1962 that the real insurgency began. It is also important to note that while the insurgency was developing in the departments of Zacapa and Izabal, it was in the department of Chiquimula that the initial massacres of peasants by the military took place in 1965 and 1969.<sup>230</sup> It is even more important to note that these massacres all took place in the municipalities of Jocotan and

Olopa, which along with the neighbouring municipality of Camotan, are the three focal points of the 2001 famine.

After numerous set backs in the late 1960s and early 1970s that proved the failure of the *foquista* revolutionary model, the insurgency established itself in the Western Highlands and in the Verapaces and Peten in the late 1970s. It was mainly in these areas that the scorched earth policies of the late 1970s and particularly the early 1980s were carried out on the indigenous population, as opposed to the more *ladino* population of Chiquimula.

There is no questioning that the roots of the Guatemalan conflict lie in extreme inequality, specifically within the ambit of the political economy and with regard to access to land. As James Dunkerley states “Nobody in their right mind could plausibly refute the view that the Central American conflict is rooted in the economic structure of the region.”<sup>231</sup> This ‘societal disequilibrium’ as the cause of conflict functions in accordance with the ‘cycle of violence’ model for “small, agriculturally based economies where landholding elites rule in alliance with professional militaries.”<sup>232</sup> This cycle of violence revolves around social and class conflict over the modernization of agriculture, which is characterized by increased land concentration, forced proletarianization of the peasantry, decreasing basic consumption and reactionary terror. The cycles in Guatemala correspond with periods of ‘economic innovation and expansion’, there being three overarching cycles in the country’s history – the conquest, the ‘Liberal Revolution’ and the military dictatorships with their ‘Liberal Restoration’.<sup>233</sup>

Although not at first, the Guatemalan civil war had extensive popular support. As such, it was exactly these popular sectors that were targeted by the violence. More than 200,000 peasants, union leaders and political activists were killed or disappeared, more than 400,000 fled as refugees (although only 45,000 registered themselves as such<sup>234</sup>) and up to one million were displaced internally.

The *Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala* (ODHAG – Human Rights Office of the Archbishopric of Guatemala) and their project the *Reconstrucción de la Memoria Histórico* (REMHI – Reconstruction of the Historical Memory), led by

Monsignor Gerrardi, and the Comision por Esclarecimiento Historico (CEH – Commission for Historical Clarification)<sup>235</sup> have extensively documented the violence of the civil war. The REMHI documents 422 massacres (although it identifies 443) for which 90.53% of the responsibility goes to the Guatemalan military and its allied paramilitary organization, including the civil patrols and the right wing death squads. It lays responsibility for 9.3% of the violations of human rights it documents on the various guerrilla organizations.<sup>236</sup> The CEH registered 626 massacres for which the state and the military were responsible.

This very bloody reactionary terror did effectively suppress the popular rebellion. As such, ‘the peace’, when it finally came in December 1996, was not so much the end of the conflict as a consolidation of the status quo. Edelberto Torres-Rivas provides the most succinct evaluation of the impact of the armed conflict and its resolution. “In Guatemala, the country lost the war; the right won the peace.”<sup>237</sup> “The end of the armed conflict involved a tacit acceptance of the existing economic and political system and in fact constitutes a contribution to the permanence of that system.”<sup>238</sup> “The peasantry remains largely landless. The essential class structure of an agrarian society has changed little.”<sup>239</sup> In assessing the social impacts of the peace, he states:

“We are emerging from a period of conflicts with a weak state and a corporatist business class that has concentrated wealth and accumulated capital at the expense of the impoverishment of society. The middle classes are more divided than ever due to the economic crisis that has resulted for many in downward social mobility. The segmentation of popular class has been aggravated by the spread of the informal sector, instability in urban employment and rising unemployment. The peasantry remains mired in rural misery due to the lack of land and is awaiting new opportunities that peace is unlikely to bring.”<sup>240</sup>

Unfortunately, the peace has not been particularly peaceful, even before the election of Portillo and the FRG.<sup>241</sup> The number of murders (separate from the violence of the civil war) recorded nationally peaked at 3657 in 1995. It declined to less than half that

number in 1999, but this trend has since reversed, such that in the spring of 2003, weekly murder counts of more than 80 victims had been recorded. If this 'trend' continues, it will set new murder records by mid fall.<sup>242</sup> Similarly, the number of *finca* invasions and occupations has almost tripled to 60 at the end of 2002,<sup>243</sup> in comparison with the 24 noted at the time of the Peace Accords.<sup>244</sup> The Economist<sup>245</sup> has gone so far as to rank Guatemala with Colombia in terms of civil unrest, violence and insecurity, as the FRG and Rios Montt seek to maintain their grasp on power.

This history all points to a fractured and internally incoherent oligarchy, that is still united the fact of lower class threats to its power. While state policies have never been perfectly and harmoniously meshed with all elite fraction interests, they have always served the dominant (ruling) fraction and the entire class and oligarchical structure generally. Into this structure has entered a military officer class that also functions as both an economic and a political elite, adding further complexity to the balance of fractions. In spite of fraction and middle class struggle, the agrarian structure of the society, stemming from colonial times, has been maintained. Although the state did in fact pursue its policies autonomously of the oligarchy, from the time of Ubico and even before, only under Arevalo and Arbenz did the development vision of the state consider or even favour the majority of the people, and in particular the peasantry, lower and working classes. All other governments pursued development strategies directly oriented towards specific elite fractions, actively excluding even the interests of those classes favoured by the Ten Years of Spring.<sup>246</sup>

## **INTEGRATION INTO THE GLOBAL SYSTEM**

From colonial times, Guatemala has been the seat of political and economic power in Central America. This has largely been the case since independence, and the emergence of the United Provinces of Central America in 1823. In spite of its regional power, Guatemala has always been a peripheral part of the global system, politically and economically. Further, it has always been outwardly oriented, at least economically, producing for the 'world market', first with cacao, then cochineal and indigo, then coffee. Coffee has continued to be 'king' right to the present day, but has seen the rise and in

some cases fall of other agricultural commodities, notably bananas, cotton, sugar and beef.

From the 1950s onward, stemming at first from the vision of president Arevalo, there has been a rise in the interest in and degree of regional integration. Regional integration and unity are traditionally a liberal platform and Guatemala is the traditional regional hegemon and promoter of this brand of unity. The Central American Common Market (CACM) was originally promoted as an alternative to US domination, first as an idea of president Arevalo and then by CEPAL with its push for regional import substitution industrialization. However, after CACM was formed in 1960, USAID officials had their way and the Common Market took the form of a free-trade association, under increasing US influence<sup>247</sup>, which eventually led to its virtual disintegration by the early 1980s.<sup>248</sup> However, the fall in exports to CACM member countries<sup>249</sup> bottomed out in 1986 and has been reversed to such an extent that by 2001 these four other countries together represent the single largest recipient of Guatemalan exports, surpassing the United States.<sup>250</sup>

There is however, a qualitative difference in the process of integration currently affecting Guatemala and Central America. CACM was an ‘inward’ oriented process of integration, creating economies of scale for multinationals – largely US – to exploit. Subsequent ‘neoliberal’ and globalization guided integration, however, has indeed been ‘outward’ oriented in the sense of creating a regional economy that is entirely ‘open’ (free of tariffs and duties) and therefore appealing to transnational capital.<sup>251</sup> Furthermore, the economic golden age of the CACM in the 1960s is considered by many to have been illusory – most all of the phenomenal economic growth experienced was due to the export of cash crops, with very little role played by industrialization. Additionally, it saw a substantial reduction in government revenues from import duties while no corresponding additional taxes were implemented.<sup>252</sup> That said, the majority of industrialization that did in fact occur under, or at the time of CACM did take place in Guatemala, who, along with El Salvador, gained the most from the trade arrangement. Qualifying this observation is the reality that many of these ISI companies were subsequently bought by American multinationals.



As the importance of CACM faded in the early 1980s, the fiscal austerity of structural adjustment had already been imposed by the military government, given its lack of international credit and its internal revenue crisis. Therefore, it was not until the mid 1980s that the majority of international financial institutions and aid providers (re)entered Guatemala. The World Bank has had Stand-By arrangements with the central government in 1988 and 1992, although the latter was not used.<sup>253</sup> Another Stand-By arrangement was made in 2001, although again it was not used, but rather renewed for 2002. So great is the IMF commitment to the country that it announced in the spring of 2003 that it will open an office of permanent representation in Guatemala to monitor the government's implementation of its new program with the IMF.<sup>254</sup> The Inter American Development Bank never truly abandoned Guatemala and has been the largest single supporter of its economy in recent years, disbursing US \$1.27 billion over the last 16 years.<sup>255</sup> Other institutions, such as Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, MIGA, and the International Finance Corporation, IFC, are also present, the former having guaranteed two projects for a total of \$123 million in the 1990s, while the IFC has invested \$172 million in 13 projects.<sup>256</sup>

What underlies this international financial involvement is their support for the same agenda that they are promoting throughout the world. Specifically, it is geared towards export-led growth, promoting the *maquila* sector and the growth of non-traditional agricultural export production. The national business counterpart organization behind the promotion of these non-traditional export products is AGEXPRONT, the *Asociacion Gremial de Exportadores de Productos No-Tradicionales* (Association of Unions of Exporters of Non-Traditional Products). These directions and policies are also in keeping with the designs of the United States, the principal market for and beneficiary of these goods.

### **The United States and its Eternal Vigilance**

Immediately following the coup the United States became **directly** involved in the internal administration of Guatemalan affairs. Departments such as agriculture, finance and public works were operated by officials from USAID, the World Bank and

representatives of Klein and Sak, while an entire parallel government was established, guiding policy into the 1970s.<sup>257</sup> The role of the US government and its agencies from the late 1980s to the present is once again difficult to overstate. USAID itself continues to formulate a number of the policies and action plans of the Guatemalan Congress and President.<sup>258</sup>

The next major US intervention in Guatemala was closely linked to Cuba, with it being chosen by the Kennedy administration to host the CIA sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion force during its training. This Cuban connection also brings to light an example of the alliance (or at least ability and willingness to cooperate) of national elites with foreign, particularly US interests. The CIA's Cuban invasion army was based on a finca near Retalhuleu belonging to the oligarch Roberto Alejos, who had previously worked for the CIA and United Fruit.<sup>259</sup> The same Cuban force was also used in Guatemala to suppress the military uprising that news of its presence sparked.

The US has been behind or a major influence upon all directions that the Guatemalan economy has taken. The CACM created a reduced tariff economy of scale for US imports, as well as for the mainly non-durable goods produced by US investments in the region. USAID has perennially been a major promoter of all aspects of export agriculture, supporting the agro industrial producers of cotton, sugar and beef. After the Cuban revolution, the majority of the Cuban sugar quota was shifted to Guatemala. The move to non-traditional agricultural exports – vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, snow peas and the like, destined for the North American market – has also received extensive AID support.

Through total direct economic aid to Guatemala from 1949 to 1998 amounting to \$1690.7 million<sup>260</sup> the United States has been able to promote the export-led development and regional free trade association that it wants. From CACM to the Central American Free Trade Area (CAFTA) currently under (re)negotiation, to Plan Puebla Panama and the Free Trade Area of the Americas the entire region is being pushed into the economic shape desired by the United States – providing it with cheap primary commodities and

doing its low value or 'dirty' assembly, while existing as a captive market for its own exports of manufactures, capital goods, services and, most especially, food. A region or country that cannot feed itself and that is wholly dependent on one supplier for that food is their effective hostage. This exercise of 'food power' has been embedded in US foreign policy for over half a century<sup>261</sup> and continues to be a central element in aid and trade.<sup>262</sup> Since 1970, the United States has provided 90.1% of all food aid received by Guatemala.<sup>263</sup> So successful has the transformation of the local diet, and the destruction of self-sufficiency in food production, that the United States is the *de facto* supplier of one third of the basic grains available in Guatemala.

## INEQUALITY AND IMMISERATION

In addition to placing Guatemalan reality in context, this chapter has two principle concerns. The first was to show how the national political economy is in fact subordinated to the global economic system and in particular the global division of labour and power, as headed by the United States and constructed to conform with its largely corporate interests.<sup>264</sup> The second was to demonstrate how this orientation of the national political economy is in fact governed by, promoted and profited from by national elites.

Guatemala's economy, like all of colonial Latin America, has always been oriented towards resource extraction for the world market, specifically the dominant imperial or neo-imperial power. Two of the main problems arising from this export-led development model in Guatemala are that all of the benefits from it are captured by a very small economic elite, while the export production occurs at the expense of production of basic grains and other necessities for the domestic economy, coupled with the extreme exploitation of workers.<sup>265</sup> With the fourfold increase in the population since 1950 and the increased concentration of land in the hands of the *latifundistas* of the oligarchy, land is something to which the majority does not have access. Those small producers (*campesinos*) that do have access to land are generally left with insufficient area for survival and very marginal land for cultivation. Further, many of these smallholders have very tenuous claim to their land, either squatting, renting or living as share croppers (*colonos*). The problem of landlessness affects another half million people.<sup>266</sup> With no

real possibilities for employment, simple survival is a problem for millions of Guatemalans.

The reality of Guatemala's political economy is thus extremely dependent and polarized. The meaning of dependency, particularly in development theory, has been particularly elusive in terms of its specific meaning.<sup>267</sup> However, if we consider the various aspects of what it means to be 'dependent' – relying on a single (or very limited number of) product, sector, market or supply source. This is indeed the case for Guatemala, in both economic and political terms. Historically, dependence has been on coffee, which until recently was the single largest contributor to national GDP. With the increased, albeit highly limited, diversity of products in the post-World War II era, it was the agricultural export sector that became central to Guatemala's economic well being and its participation in the world economy. Increasingly in the twentieth century, and particularly since World War II, the United States has been the principle market for all of these goods. Similarly, the United States has become the single largest importer of goods and services into Guatemala. It is the chief provider of development aid, military aid, basic grain imports, investment and if it is possible to separate its influence from these concrete (economic) factors, is the most important political counterpart of the Guatemalan state. If the language of dependency is problematic in categorizing these realities, that of 'interdependence'<sup>268</sup> shows Guatemala to be extremely 'vulnerable' (as opposed to merely sensitive) to both the United States and the whims affecting a very limited number of unstable and globally overproduced commodities.

At the same time, this incorporation into and participation in the global economy has not been a phenomenon without protagonists. In particular, it is the national elite – one that continues to be dominated or at the very least beholden to the agrarian fraction<sup>269</sup> – that has promoted this participation in the global economy, implemented it and profited from it. From the early independence coffee plantations right up to the present, and including all of the other agricultural commodities (sugar, cotton, beef, etc.) and the more recent non-traditional agricultural exports, it is this landed elite – agrarian and agro-industrial – that has profited most and in fact centralized its control over all such economic activity.

This concentration has been so extreme as to virtually eliminate small and peasant producers to a marginal or insignificant level of participation in the production of these crops. The 'modernization' of agriculture has further concentrated land-holdings within the elite class and progressively dispossessed the peasantry of its land, forcing them into the very unstable process of proletarianization without providing any economic outlets for employment so that the dispossessed can in fact support or sustain themselves. Private and state oppression, both under elite direction, has sufficed to silence the bulk of such peasant and landless worker opposition. In this way, the Guatemalan political economy has been oriented towards supplying the global market and integrated into the global economic system as a peripheral producer and westernized consumer of both basic needs and luxury goods. Internally, this orientation is managed by an oligarchy that profits from it, given their control over resources, especially land, as well as production, trade and the state. The following chapter details the structure of this economic orientation.

## Chapter IV

# The Political Economy of Vulnerability

*When the United States sneezes, Latin America catches a cold.*

- Latin American saying

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter details the structure and orientation of Guatemala's political economy. The characterization of it as dependent on a handful of primary commodities continues to be apt, although in need of qualification. Its dependence on a single market for imports and exports has clearly made it vulnerable to 'fluctuations' of both supply and demand from the United States. What makes it even more vulnerable than a simple lack of economic diversity is that the products it depends on are, and historically have been, notably volatile on the world market. The damage and danger of this volatility, particularly with coffee, has been experienced a number of times before, particularly during the Great Depression and during World War II.

As though this structural orientation of the economy was insufficient cause for concern, it is coupled with the very severe situation of declining terms of trade. The importation of necessary capital and consumer goods and a general lack of real production for the domestic market, as the national economy is predominantly service oriented, exacerbate the terms of trade by increasing the trade and current accounts deficit. This chapter provides an overview of these issues, as well as a review of Guatemala's growing debt. Its focus, however, is on the substantive elements of the nation's political economy such as employment, ownership and redistribution – specifically the contentious issue of taxes and government spending. Particular attention is given to the nation's food supply and the degree to which the country produces for its own domestic needs. It concludes with a summary of the fragility, vulnerability and dependence that the national political economic structure engenders.

Guatemala's economy grew substantially throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The Lost Decade of the 1980s was devastating for the country, with virtually all aspects of the economy contracting until the middle of the decade. Gross Domestic Product was reduced by a fifth its size from 1980 to 1986, while the external debt tripled between 1980 and 1985. Imports and exports each 'bottomed-out' in 1986 and 1987, respectively. Other economic indicators such as investment, open unemployment, inflation, and real wages also hit record lows in 1986.<sup>270</sup> It was also in this year that the CACM countries cut their common external tariff (CET) to less than half, while eliminating non-tariff barriers,<sup>271</sup> further 'opening' their economies while reducing central government revenue. In 1985 Guatemala untied the *quetzal* from the US dollar, resulting in rapid and overwhelming devaluation. The only positive aspect of the crisis was the reduction of non-essential imports.

## STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY

Against this economic background, agriculture has fallen to become the second largest contributor to the national economy today (as a share of GDP), after 'wholesale and retail commerce'. In 2001, agriculture accounted for 22.6% of Guatemala's GDP – a share that has been slowly decomposing from 28% in 1984 to 23% in 1999 and 22.8% in 2000. Manufacturing's share in the national economy is also slowly shrinking, accounting for 13.1% of GDP in 2001 (from 13.4% in 1999 and 13.3% in 2000).<sup>272</sup> At the same time tourism has eclipsed coffee as the single largest income earner for the country, bringing in US\$365 million in 2001, up from US\$300 million in 2000.<sup>273</sup> As such, actual production, which is itself largely bereft of any added value, given its reliance on primary commodity production and the assembly of unfinished goods in *maquilas*, is declining in the face of an increasingly service oriented economy.

Since their inception in 1982, *maquilas* have steadily grown as the central component of national industry. From the initial three (two of which were American owned), the number exploded to 235 by 1991.<sup>274</sup> By 2000 the number of *maquilas* in the country was 866 and increased to 937 in 2001.<sup>275</sup> In these two years they generated \$373.8 million and \$396.2 million in export revenues, respectively,<sup>276</sup> surpassing both coffee and

tourism. Virtually all clothing and textile exports go to the United States. However, this is a one-way relation of dependence as Guatemala provides only 2.41% of US textile and garment imports, by volume, and 2.84% by value.<sup>277</sup> Thus the US market is all important to Guatemala, while Guatemala is utterly insignificant to the US, especially given the multitude of other 'third world' export processing zones competing for the US market.

There is more to the utter irrationality of export-led development based on the *maquilas*. They represent an even greater substantive net loss to the Guatemalan people and economy, given that all imports of raw materials, machinery, equipment and spare parts for the *maquila* sector are duty free and exempt from the national value added tax (IVA).<sup>278</sup> When combined with the ten to twelve year holidays on income revenue taxes, the sector provides little more to Guatemala than the 46 cents (US) an hour minimum wage jobs they 'create'.

Additionally, as Table 2 (below) indicates, the single largest import for Guatemala are primary and intermediary products for industry, valued at \$1,735.8 million, representing 31% of all imports in 2001. Given the declining role of national industry generally, none of which is heavy industry or concerned with consumer durable manufactures, and the *maquilas*' increasing role within this sector, we can only assume that a significant portion of these imports are indeed destined for the *maquilas*. This means that they are an economic drain on the countries current accounts. The actual value of the apparel exports provides an interesting breakdown. According to VESTEX, 28% of the export value of clothing and textiles is covered by raw materials that originate in the US itself, 45% are raw materials from other sources, a mere 1% of raw materials are Guatemalan. The remaining 26% is the Value Added of assembly in Guatemala.<sup>279</sup> This is all without even considering the import of capital goods to supply the growing 'installed capacity' of the *maquilas*.

Another real, although older, drain on the national economy is located in the area of investment. With the economic crisis of the 1980s, capital flight saw national elites exporting some US \$1.1 billion dollars in the first half of that decade.<sup>280</sup> This trend has



not halted and has actually increased such that flows of net investment are negative. In 2000 and 2001, \$407.3 million and \$396.2 million, respectively, exited the country while \$181.7 million and \$276 million entered.<sup>281</sup> This represents a total loss of \$345.8 million in just two years, coming from exactly the segment of the national population that is most able to productively invest in the country. By comparison, the ‘economic refugees’ that fled the country in order to find work in the North sent remittances back to Guatemala worth a net US\$524.3 million in 2000 and US\$571.3 million in 2001. This represents substantial growth in what had been a steady increase from the \$465 million that was remitted, on average, in the years between 1988 and 1993.<sup>282</sup> The only other mechanism balancing the net losses from the industrial and financial sectors that are supposedly developing that nation are the private donations entering the country, worth a net US\$402.6 million in 2001.<sup>283</sup>

What this economic structure shows us is that Guatemala is not simply another peripheral country in the New International Division of Labour. It is not entirely dependent on agriculture as a revenue producing activity, although the manufacturing sector is predominantly basic light industry. Like the North, it is the services sector that is the largest in the economy, a heterogeneity noted in the Global Division of Labour and Power. The diversity of financial services and even hi-tech pharmaceutical industries are contrasted with the ‘Brazilianization’ of labour that typifies other production activities, as demonstrated by the enormous informal sector, which accounts for 71.5% of employment in the country.

## **TERMS OF TRADE**

As is clearly seen in the import and export tables below, Guatemala faces a serious trade deficit from the unfavourable terms of trade, which affect all its economic sectors. This is the case even with the agricultural commodities that are exported and imported. For instance, the amount of agricultural products that Guatemala has imported since 1961 has increased by 14 times, while the value of those imports have risen 37.5 times over the same period. Conversely, both the total value and total quantity of Guatemala’s agricultural exports have each risen by a factor of ten over the same period.<sup>284</sup> This

means that the real unit value of Guatemala's agricultural exports has at best remained constant, while its imports have almost tripled in their real unit value. These are exactly the unfavourable terms of trade that cripple southern economies and their current accounts.

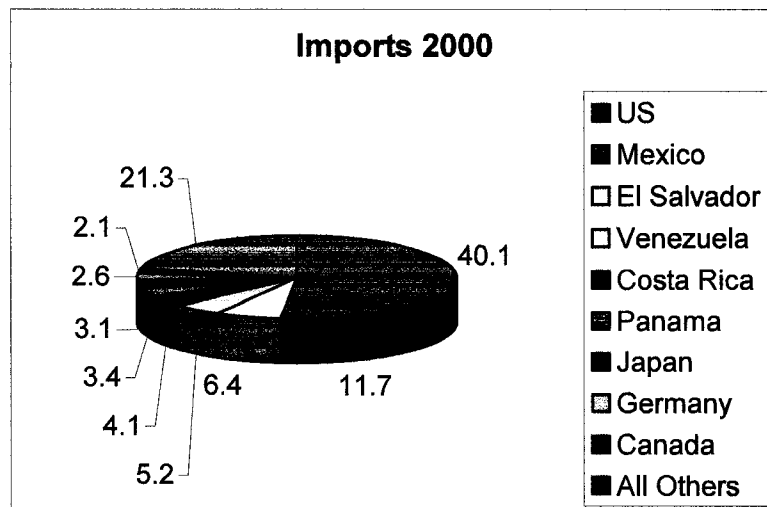
However, this disparity is only in terms of **agricultural products** and does not even address the truly enormous disparities in the terms of trade revolving around manufactured and capital goods. It also illustrates that the comparative advantage of producing agricultural commodities for export to gain foreign currency with which to import food crops is a regressive proposition, as even the imported food costs more (in the aggregate) than what is locally produced. These negative trends have only become more extreme in the 1990s, when imports almost tripled in quantity and more than tripled in value, while exports more than doubled in quantity, but rose by only 48% in value.<sup>285</sup> Trade is literally bleeding the economy through what Khor has described as the single largest mechanism for the transfer of wealth from the south to the north – the unequal terms of trade.<sup>286</sup> In absolute terms, Guatemala's exports in 2001 were US\$2,468.2 million, down 9% from 2000, while its imports totaled US\$5,606.6 million, up 8.4% over the previous year.<sup>287</sup> This US\$3 billion annual trade deficit is growing (at 27.6% between 2000 and 2001) and is entirely unsustainable.

### **Imports**

There are two primary considerations regarding Guatemala's imports – the country's of origin and the kinds of goods themselves. Examining Guatemala's trade partners demonstrates this first aspect of the economy's general lack of diversity.<sup>288</sup> The structure of imports in 2000, by country of origin, is representative of previous years. The United States is by far the largest supplier of goods and services to Guatemala (see Figures 1 and 2). The five percentage point drop in its share of imports in 2001, to 35%, represents an absolute decrease of \$110 million. However, it is important to note that much of the trade between CACM countries – the main beneficiaries of the change in import shares – involves local subsidiaries of US based transnationals. This reliance on the United States for imports, particularly of manufactured and durable goods, as well as consumer non-

durables like food (see below), is enormous. Finally, it indicates the destination of Guatemala's foreign currency reserves.

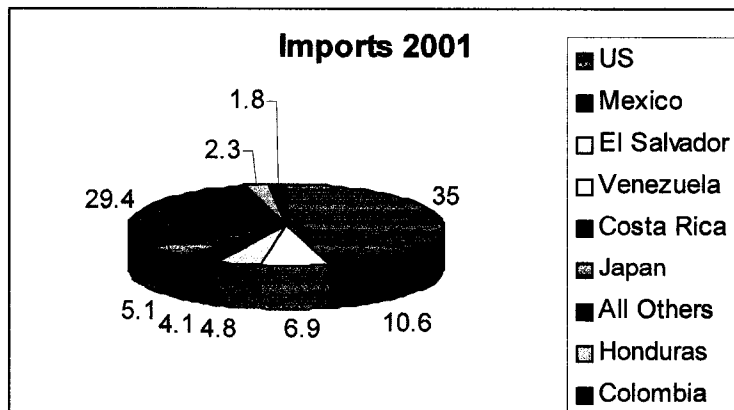
**Figure 1: Share of Imports by Country of Origin 2000**



Source: BANGUAT 2001

While there are notable year over year changes, particularly with smaller importing partners, the structure of importers has been fairly stable in recent years.<sup>289</sup> However, over the past two decades, there have been two notable trends – a relative reduction of the importance of imports from the United States and a relative increase of the share of imports from CACM countries.

**Figure 2: Share of Imports by Country of Origin 2001**



Source: BANGUAT 2002

The second consideration – the actual goods imported – is detailed in the table below. The trends that it indicates are an increasing reliance on imports for luxury and basic consumer goods, as well as the industrial inputs for virtually all sectors of the economy. In particular, there are the *maquilas* which are simply assembling unfinished textile products, as well as other light manufactured goods and even electronics, that have been fabricated elsewhere.

**Table 2: Structure of Imports (%) and Total Value (CIF millions US\$)**

	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
CONSUMER GOODS	<b>28.1</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>31.8</b>
Non-durable	21	20.8	21.1	21	24.2
Durable	7.1	8.7	7	6.8	7.6
PRIMARY MATERIALS & INTERMEDIARY PRODUCTS	<b>37.5</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>33.4</b>
For Agriculture	3.7	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.5
For Industry	33.8	32.4	31	32.1	31
COMBUSTIBLES & LUBRICANTS	<b>7</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>10.6</b>
CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS	3.2	3.2	2.7	2.8	2.8
CAPITAL GOODS	<b>24.2</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>21.4</b>
For Agriculture	1.1	1.4	1.1	1	0.9
For Industry, Telecommunications and Construction	17.4	18.7	20.8	18.7	15.6
For Transport	5.7	6.2	6.8	4.9	4.8
<b>Total US \$</b>	<b>3,857.9</b>	<b>4,650.9</b>	<b>4,560</b>	<b>5,171.40</b>	<b>5,606.60</b>

Sources: BANGUAT 1998 – 2002.

The nature of Guatemala's imports makes clear its absolute dependence on trade for practically all elements of modernity. The country produces virtually no durable or capital goods, meaning that all of these must be imported. Further, even those non-durable consumer goods that it does produce, especially food and textiles, are entirely insufficient to satisfy domestic demand. Even other primary products that it is able to

produce, like timber and wood products, are also imported. A clearer picture of exactly what Guatemala does produce emerges as we examine the country's exports.

## Exports

Coffee was the central pillar of Guatemalan production and exports up until 2001. It was joined by sugar, cotton and beef in the 1950s and 1960s as the other principal exports that fuelled the over 5% annual economic growth, that continued into the 1970s. While beef exports have virtually ceased, the stock of cattle in the country is at its highest level in history, currently over 2.5 million head.<sup>290</sup> From being the world's third largest cotton producer, and second highest yielding one, Guatemala's cotton industry collapsed in the 1980s and virtually disappeared in the 1990s. Sugar, although it too has experienced volatility over these years, is the only other major 'traditional' export that continues to be significant in Guatemalan trade.

**Table 3: Structure of Exports (%) and Total Value (FOB millions US\$)**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
PRINCIPAL PRODUCTS	49.1	45.6	42.3	43.5	38.6
Coffee	26	22.8	23.6	21.1	12.3
Sugar	10.8	12.2	7.5	6.6	10.5
Banana	6.8	6.9	5.7	6.9	7.8
Cardamom	1.6	1.4	2.3	2.9	3.9
Petroleum	4	2.3	3.2	5.9	4.1
OTHER PRODUCTS	50.9	54.4	57.7	56.6	61.4
CENTRAL AMERICA	28.6	29.2	31.7	30.1	42.9
REST OF WORLD	22.3	25.2	26	26.5	18.5
Total US\$	2,390.6	2,562.7	2,492.8	2,711.20	2,468.20

Sources: BANGUAT 1998 – 2002.

These numbers represent a decrease in Guatemala's dependence on traditional agricultural exports, from 84% in the early 1960s, to 56% in the late 1970s<sup>291</sup> to little

more than a third today. However, this understates their continued overall importance to the economy, first in terms of providing employment and second, in their particular volatility, which exposes the country and its workers to external shocks. This second point is part of the global structure of agricultural production, which is also the case for production generally. In the Global Division of Labour and Power, all of the countries of the South are competing in the same race to the bottom, producing the same commodities as each other.

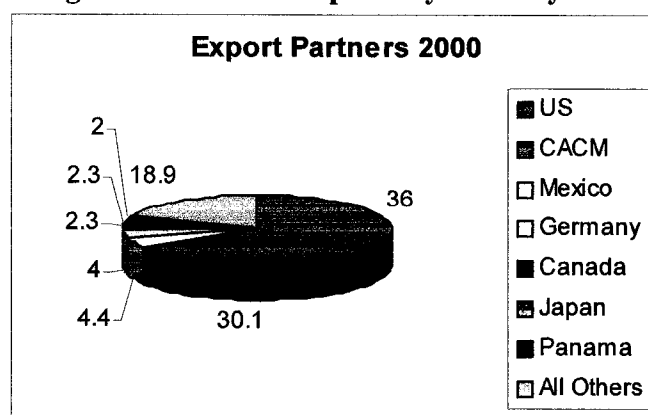
This is the structural reality that lies behind the collapse of 'traditional' export crops like cotton in previous decades, as well as the current coffee crisis that has seen prices fall from \$3.27 a pound in 1997 to \$0.97 in January 1999 and \$0.41 in September 2001. Guatemala depends on the US and Germany for over 60% of its coffee sales. Their imports of Guatemalan coffee (by value) fell 15 and 21% respectively in 2001,<sup>292</sup> accounting for a part of the decreased export earnings. The most telling feature, though, is the decrease in average price received, per quintal, in 2000 and 2001 - \$90.60 and \$56.84 respectively.

The coffee crisis has had a profound economic impact on Guatemala, as it has for other coffee producers in countries throughout Latin America, Africa and Asia. Since 1996, annual exports have been in excess of 5 million quintals (46-kg bags) and earned an average of \$605 million each year, until 2001. Even though the volume of exports totalled 5,758,000 *quintales* in 2001, the third highest quantity ever exported by Guatemala, they earned a mere \$338 million.<sup>293</sup> Unfortunately, this increased volume of production has occurred globally, with output up to 106 million 60 kg bags in 1998 and global exports of 83.5 million bags. Surplus inventories in both coffee producing and importing countries have remained above 32 million bags and by 2001 surpluses had grown to a record 48.5 million bags. While total exports had grown to 89.7 million bags a year by this point,<sup>294</sup> it was the manipulation of surpluses, rather than simply increased exports, that has caused the drop in prices for unregulated coffee production.<sup>295</sup>

Compensating for Guatemala's coffee losses were sugar exports which increased by almost 5 million *quintales* to 31.38 million, while its average price rose from \$6.75 to \$8.27. Similarly, cardamom saw its quantity exported rise from 315,400 *quintales* to 331,600, with a price increase from \$252 to \$290. Banana exports rose by 0.84 million *quintales* to 16.963, while average prices decreased marginally to \$11.38. The one-third drop in oil prices, exports fell by over quarter of a million barrels to 7.1 million in 2001.<sup>296</sup>

Within the country there is a geographic distribution of production. Coffee, while creating seasonal migration for employment that affects all departments, especially the Western Highlands,<sup>297</sup> is produced in 20 of the country's 22 departments. The two that do not engage in coffee production are Totonicapan and El Peten, while the level of production in Izabal is practically negligible.<sup>298</sup> Sugar production occurs in 10 departments, although 97% of that output is concentrated in three. Escuintla alone accounts for 72% of all sugar production in Guatemala. Similarly, four departments are responsible for 98% of the country's banana production – Izabal, Escuintla, San Marcos and Quetzaltenango. The first of these alone produces over half of the national output. Finally, 94.1% of cardamom comes from three departments – Alta Verapaz, Huehuetenango and Quiche. Alta Verapaz alone accounts for 74.3% of national production.<sup>299</sup> The importance of this productive distribution, and its correlation with concentration of land ownership will be discussed later.

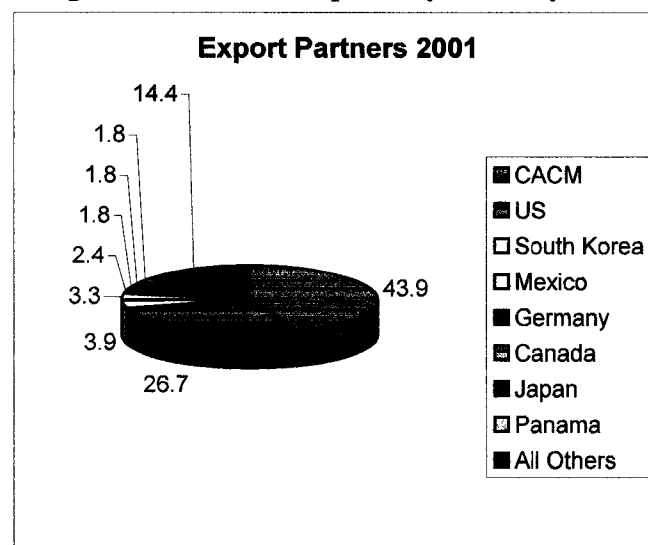
**Figure 3: Share of Exports by Country 2000**



Source: BANGUAT 2001: 72

In terms of export partners, in 2000 Guatemala traded with 129 countries, with the United States again being the largest single trading partner, receiving 36% of exports, followed by the CACM countries at 30.1%, and the other countries shown in the graphic above. The remaining 118 other countries received a combined 18.9% of total exports, representing significant export diversity.<sup>300</sup> In 2001, however, there were significant changes, as exports went to 122 countries, displayed in the table below. CACM countries emerged for the first time as the largest export partner, receiving 43.9% of Guatemala's total exports, replacing the United States in top spot.

**Figure 4: Share of Exports by Country 2001**



Source: BANGUAT 2002: 73

The ten percentage point drop in the US importation of Guatemalan goods accounts for the entirety of the almost \$250 million reduction in total exports between 2000 and 2001. Thus, in spite of the diversity of trading partners, this is a clear demonstration of the extreme vulnerability present in the structure of Guatemala's economy. Furthermore, considering that 90% of the decrease in exports stemmed from a reduction of its principal exports – most of which go to the United States<sup>301</sup> – we see how product and market dependence combine to devastating economic effect. In fact, the entire loss is due to the drop in coffee prices and revenues, with the decrease in coffee earnings (\$267.5 million) actually larger than the total drop in export earnings, indicating that other sectors



compensated for coffee losses. However, given coffee's overwhelming importance, it is impossible for these other goods and sectors to offset more than a fraction of the damage to national accounts, for at least the foreseeable future.

## **GOVERNMENT REVENUE AND SPENDING**

The various interest groups that oppose duties and taxes always complicate the challenge of revenue generation for any government. Under structural adjustment and liberalization, taxation is increasingly difficult given the restrictions placed on what is considered acceptable and appropriate to tax and what is not. It is also an administrative challenge, hampered by the lack of efficient and effective processes and systems for revenue collection. However, who is taxed and to what degree is also an indicator of a sector's importance to or power over the government, as they all seek to reduce taxes imposed upon them. As already mentioned, the CACM eliminated most of the central government's capacity to levy duties, leaving it with two principal sources of funding – taxes and borrowed credit.

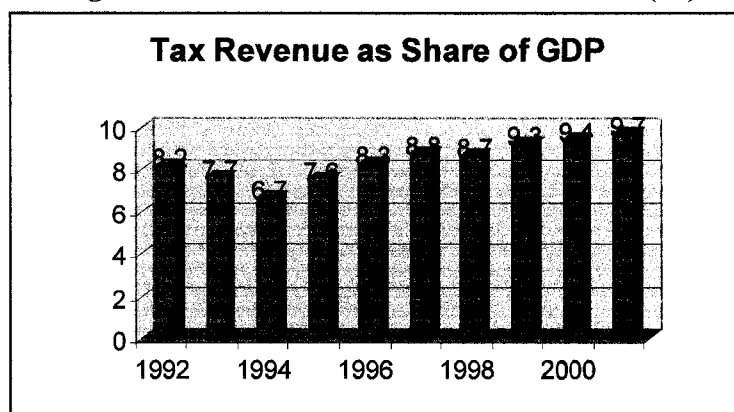
Government spending is accepted as the ultimate indicator of its priorities. Spending is the action of a government, along with tax treatment, that demonstrates its priorities, beyond any rhetoric as to what they may be. In the case of Guatemala, those priorities have almost never been social ones, but have centred on the military. The Peace Accords stipulated a reduction of the military budget from 1% of GDP in 1995 to 0.67% by 1999, a level not to be exceeded thereafter. The Arzu administration adhered to these budgetary goals.<sup>302</sup> However, these budget targets were immediately disregarded by the Portillo administration, which further overspent on the military beyond the elevated budget allotments they passed through congress. In 2001 this additional spending amounted to 88.3% of the approved defense budget, totaling over \$200 million for the military. This overspending, or over-investment, can be contrasted with failure of 5 social service ministries, including MSPAS, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance.<sup>303</sup>

Similarly, the credit and subsidies that the government offers to producers do not target small producers or peasants. They, as well as the credit programmes of ‘foreign aid’ agencies, particularly USAID, have gone overwhelmingly to large agricultural export producers. Originally this focused on cattle, cotton and sugar producers, but has since moved to non-traditional agricultural export producers, in particular the packagers and processors, most of which are in fact subsidiaries of US based multinational corporations. The *maquila* sector, which includes some of these latter processing plants, has been a recipient of both this government support and its advantageous tax options, which include 100% revenue tax exemption for 12 years, and no duties on all imported inputs and full exemption from excise and value added taxes.<sup>304</sup>

### Taxes

Guatemala has one of the lowest tax rates in the world, a fact that is of concern to both the IMF and World Bank, who seek to see tax revenues increased. As a share of GDP, tax revenues in Guatemala are the lowest in the region. In 1955 they amounted to 8.5% of national income, dropped to 7.6% in 1965, rose to 9.5% in 1975 and fell again to 8.6% in 1980.<sup>305</sup> By 1984 they had dropped even lower to 5.3%<sup>306</sup> and had only risen to 8% by 1996.<sup>307</sup> The Peace Accords, in particular the Fiscal Agreement, required the Guatemalan government to raise tax revenues to 12% of GDP by 2000. However, by 1998 it had only reached 9.6% and regressed to 9.4% the following year.<sup>308</sup> This revenue goal continues to hover below 10%, in spite of renewed commitments to meet the 12% goal coming from the Portillo administration at the Inter-American Development Bank Consultative Group meetings in 2002.

**Figure 5: Tax Revenues as a Share of GDP (%)**



Source: BANGUAT 2002: 141

The principal taxation mechanism is the regressive value-added tax (IVA – *Impuesto de Valor Agregado*), which accounts for 43.9% of all tax revenue. Given that 76% of all taxes are indirect, these revenues come directly from final consumers, disproportionately affecting the poor.

Since the 1961 CACM agreement new revenue generating measures have not been successfully developed. Economic elites have continuously blocked the efforts of governments since the 1954 ‘liberation’ to tax them, and have even rolled-back taxes affecting them, including those imposed by Rios-Montt in 1982.<sup>309</sup> CACIF has continued to be the primary and clearly most effective source of opposition to any tax increases that affect the economic elite, and in particular their profits from exports or their import of luxury goods. This means that the poor are left with a disproportionate burden of providing tax revenue for the state, as wealthy individuals and corporations have either eliminated or significantly reduced their tax obligations. This limiting of central government revenues – in 2001 taxes only provided for 78% of the central government budget – has two main consequences.<sup>310</sup> It reduces state spending, which effects social programs first and foremost, and it forces the state to borrow from domestic and international credit markets, creating debt problems for the country.

## **Debt**

The national public external debt, amounting to US\$2,846.9 million at the end of 2001, is entirely the creation of the last two decades of neo-liberal globalization. In 1977 due to its exclusion from international credit circles, the national debt stood at \$302 million. By 1979 it had increased by almost half to \$427 million. By 1981 it had almost doubled to \$549 million and in 1983 stood at \$1187 million, which was still the lowest national debt in the region.<sup>311</sup> The table below illustrates its growth over the past decade.

In terms of its internal public sector debt, it stood at Q9,281.5 million (roughly US \$1.16 billion) in 2001, an increase of Q651.9 million over the previous year. In relation to GDP, however, this is a decrease from 5.8% to 5.6%. Furthermore, this represents a significant relative decrease in the internal debt from 1992, when it stood at 8.6% of the

GDP.<sup>312</sup> What this serves to illustrate, in conjunction with the capital flight discussed above, is the existence of sufficient internal savings to fuel development, if they were in fact used for such. Loans to the government by the private sector (international or domestic) are, given the high domestic interest rates which governments are forced to support, acts of speculation on what is a guaranteed investment, rather than a risk-based investment in the productive sector. The debt trap is thus combined with the maintenance of high interest rates – a condition of structural adjustment – that end up serving speculative financial capital while further compounding government debt. It also affects the poor and small credit seekers, who see themselves forced to repay sums significantly larger than what they borrowed. They are further unable to benefit from these high interest rates, because they do not have sufficient savings to do so.

**Table 4: Public Sector External Debt**

	<b>Debt</b>	<b>Debt/GDP</b>	<b>Debt/Exports</b>	<b>Servicing/Exports</b>
<b>Year</b>	Millions US \$	%	%	%
1992	1,546.1	14.8	80.2	10.1
1993	1,489.7	13.2	72.4	8.6
1994	1,702.2	13.1	74.4	8.7
1995	1,726.7	11.8	61.2	6.3
1996	1,751.0	11.2	62.7	8.4
1997	1,926.4	10.8	60.4	5.2
1998	2,212.0	11.4	63.4	5.3
1999	2,504.4	13.7	72.0	5.7
2000	2,513.0	13.0	65.9	5.7
2001	2,755.6	13.2	72.2	8.2

BANGUAT 2002: 155. Note: Excludes the external debt of the central bank, which was 3.2% of total external public debt in 2001.

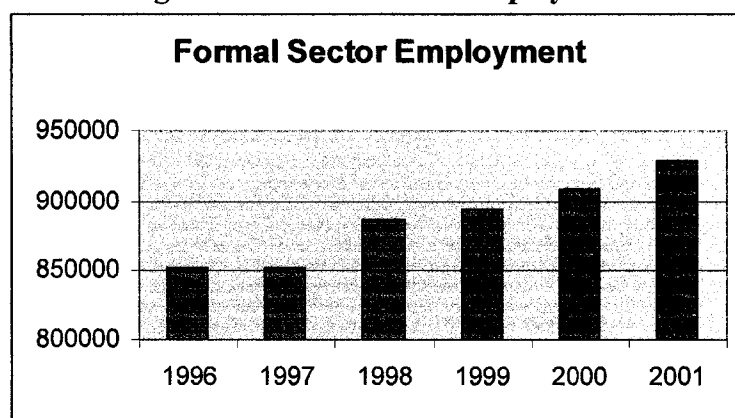
## **EMPLOYMENT**

Just as there is confusion regarding the population of Guatemala, there is also confusion regarding the Economically Active Population (PEA). The PEA for 2002 was 4,923,640<sup>313</sup> an unprecedented increase of over one million people from projections for the previous year.<sup>314</sup> The proportion of this population relying on agriculture for its survival, although declining in relative terms, is still enormous. In 1950 the agricultural share of the total population was 67.3%, and by 1980 was 57.3%,<sup>315</sup> which in absolute

terms represents an increase of almost 2 million people, to a total of between 3.5 to 4.1 million.<sup>316</sup> Currently, 38.7% of population is involved in agriculture, 22% in commerce, 15% in industry, 12.6% in services, 4.5% in construction, 2.2% in transport and communications, 0.7% in financial services, 0.3% in electricity and water, 3.9% in other activities.<sup>317</sup> At the same time, the ENEI 2002 indicates that 71.5% of the population work in the informal sector, leaving a mere 28.5% working in the formal sector. In rural areas work in the informal sector comprises 79.5% of all employment.<sup>318</sup>

Minimum wages, in real terms, are currently two-thirds of what they were in the early 1970s. Agricultural wages, which have always been and continue to be lower than the norm, have also followed in parallel the trend of non-agricultural wages. While there has been some marginal improvement since the mid 1990s, when agricultural wages in particular fell to less than half their level in the early 1970s, the fact is that the last thirty years have proved entirely negative in terms of income for workers.<sup>319</sup> However, by carefully choosing the time frame for comparison, a more positive interpretation can be manufactured. With 1980 as the base year, real wages had only fallen by a quarter in 1991, and by 1994 were once more on par with the 1980 level.<sup>320</sup>

**Figure 6: Formal Sector Employment**

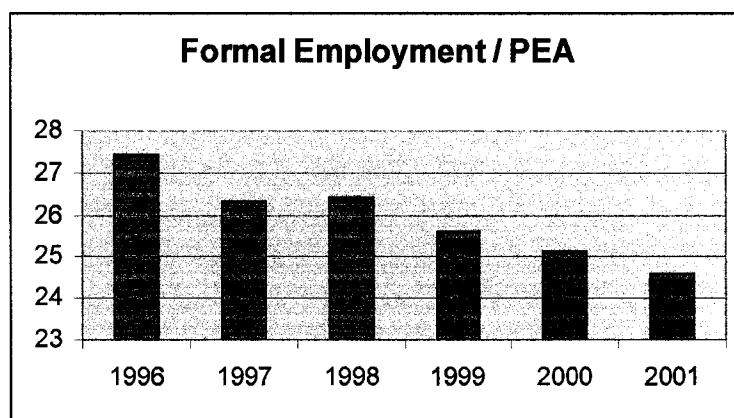


Source: PNUD 2002

The actual level of employment in the formal sector is recorded through an employee's registration with the *Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social*, IGSS. The first figure below shows the very slow growth of employment in the formal sector while the second

illustrates its relative decline against the population recognized as working and looking for work.

**Figure 7: Formal Employment as a Share of the Economically Active Population**



Source: PNUD 2002

Concretely, the legal minimum agricultural salary was Q4.50 as of 1988, and rose to Q10 in 1990, while actual wages remained between Q4 and Q5, half for women. It must be remembered that the quetzal had lost more than half its purchasing power between 1983 and 1988.<sup>321</sup> In August 2001, the minimum agricultural wage was raised to Q25.08 per day, although reports of coffee pickers receiving Q10, Q4 and as little as Q2 a day were published in the national press.<sup>322</sup>

Before the coffee crisis ANACAFE estimated that 3.5 indirect jobs are created for every direct job in coffee production.<sup>323</sup> By 1999 they reduced this estimate to 2 to 1. From an estimated 750,000 direct jobs in coffee production in 1999-2000, and the ensuing 1.5 million indirect jobs, the coffee crisis has seen direct employment fall to a quarter of a million in 2001-2002. Thus, in addition to the half a million direct jobs that disappeared, the economic foundation for 1 million other jobs also 'vanished'. That is 1.5 million livelihoods that the global market has erased in the space of two years. In terms of the wage bill in coffee production, it's maximum range in 1999 and 2000 was between US \$10-15 million,<sup>324</sup> a miniscule fraction of the \$572 million its export earned in 1999, or even the \$304 million in 2001.

ASAZGUA<sup>325</sup> claims that the sugar industry provides direct and indirect employment for a quarter of a million Guatemalans. This would make it the second leading employer in the country, albeit representing less than 10% of the livelihoods provided by coffee. The other key sector for employment is the *maquila*, which employed 93,300 in 2000.<sup>326</sup> However, given the feminization of labour, these jobs do not necessarily mean that additional families are being provided for, as work disappears in traditionally male dominated sectors.

SEGEPLAN has analyzed the source of livelihoods for the rich and poor and found that:

“Agriculture is the principal source of employment for the poor. Of every hundred poor people, 57 work in agriculture, 15 in the manufacturing industry, and 13 to commerce. Of the 15 remaining, 6 are employed in service related activities, 5 in construction and the rest in other services. In contrast, the non-poor are not concentrated in one specific type of activity: 22.6% are involved in agriculture, 26.2% in commerce, 18.4% in the manufacturing industry, 10.2% in services and 17.2% in other activities.”<sup>327</sup>

## **DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH**

In terms of the ensuing distribution of wealth, the profile is extremely and increasingly skewed. In 1986 the bottom 25% of the income ladder earned less than a 6% share of total income, while the top 5% received just under 24% of national income. By 1989 this disparity had increased, with the bottom quarter receiving just over 5% while the top 5% now received over 26% of the national income.<sup>328</sup> By the end of the 1990s, this division of income by fifths of the population is presented in the table below.

While Guatemala's Gini Coefficient for income was 0.59 in 1995 and estimated at 0.55 in 1998, the disparity presented in Table 15 has only increased. In 2001, the bottom quintile's share had fallen to 2.1% of national income, while the richest quintile claimed 63%. For low and medium income countries, Guatemala has the third highest level of inequality in the distribution of income in the world.<sup>329</sup> However, when we compare

income with assets, particularly as a function of landownership this already enormous level of inequity between the rich and the poor is demonstrably greater.

**Table 5: Share of National Income, by quintile**

Quintile	Proportion per Quintile	Accumulated Proportion
1	3.5	3.5
2	6.7	10.2
3	10.7	20.9
4	17.7	38.6
5	61.4	100.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: PNUD 2000

## Land

Increases in land concentration must be considered in light of the availability of land and its natural predisposition for use, as discussed earlier.<sup>330</sup> With this in mind, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 70% of the most fertile lands were in the hands of indigenous communities, albeit often without ‘official’ title.<sup>331</sup> Hence, the bimodal agricultural system of *latifundia* and *minifundia* that characterizes Guatemala was largely a creation of the post-independence Liberal Revolution of the 1870s.<sup>332</sup> It was at this time, with the rise of coffee plantations and production for export, that extensive land ownership became a major concern for Guatemalan elites. The expropriation of indigenous lands began, accompanied by various policies of forced labour for the indigenous population.<sup>333</sup>

In 1950 the Gini Coefficient for land concentration was 0.71.<sup>334</sup> By 1979 it had risen to 0.72,<sup>335</sup> with the top 20% of landowners controlling 90.1% of agricultural land, leaving the bottom 20% of landowners with 0.8%, for the highest concentration in world.<sup>336</sup> By 1982 the **Gini Coefficient** had grown further to **0.85** and “historical prolongation of the *latifundium-minifundium* scheme established in colonial times”<sup>337</sup> was truly unparalleled, both historically and globally. Yet the concentration became even more extreme such that by 1998, 0.15% of agricultural producers – those considered commercial – controlled 70% of all land. The next 3.85% of ‘surplus’ producers control 10% of the land, meaning that the top 4% of landowners control 80% of all agricultural land in Guatemala.



Subsistence producers, representing 59% of all producers, own 17% of the land, while infra-subsistence farmers, 37% of producers, control 3% of the land.<sup>338</sup> Thus while there is increasing concentration in ownership at the top, there is also a downward shift in landownership patterns at the bottom, as subfamily plots become *microfincas*. The polarization has been double, with an increased concentration of land at one end and of people at the other.

**Table 6: Land Distribution by Farm Size**

Farm Size	Number of Fincas (% of total number)			Area (% of total hectares)		
	1950	1964	1979	1950	1964	1979
Microfincas (less than 0.7 has.)	21.30	20.39	31.36 (166,732)	0.77	0.95	1.33 (55,430)
Subfamily (0.7 to 7 has.)	67.05	67.04	56.76 (301,736)	13.36	17.66	14.91 (623,160)
Family (7 to 44.8 has.)	9.48	10.46	9.31 (49,409)	13.45	18.85	18.68 (781,016)
Multifamily medium (44.8 to 900 has.)	2.02	2.02	2.48 (13,177)	31.38	36.56	43.48 (1,817,484)
Multifamily large (900 has. and more)	0.15	0.09	0.09 (482)	40.83	25.99	21.61 (903,156)
<b>Total (No., Has.)</b>	<b>100.00 (348,600)</b>	<b>100.00 (412,300)</b>	<b>100.00 (531,636)</b>	<b>99.99 (3,720,800)</b>	<b>100.01 (5,277,700)</b>	<b>100.01 (4,180,246)</b>

Sources: CEH 1999: 84; Painter 1987: 10 and Gandarra & Asociados 2000a: 14)

What this distribution of land means is that 88% of all 'farm units' belong to peasants – almost half a million families, or three million people. However, given that most of these plots are too small to support a family, as indicated by the categories of classification, this means that very few (10% at most) of these peasant families are self-sufficient.<sup>339</sup> Therefore, the bulk of these peasants are in fact semi-proletarians, forced to work at least seasonally and support themselves through other 'off-farm' income generating activities. In addition to those that actually have access to land is the 37% of the agricultural, or rural, population that have no access to land. This level of landlessness reaches 40.8% in

the central Region 6 (Sacatapequez, Chimaltenango and Escuintla) and 46% in the southwestern Region 7 (Solola, Totonicapan, Quetzaltenango, Suchitepequez, Retalhuleu and San Marcos).<sup>340</sup> These landless families total half a million Guatemalans.<sup>341</sup>

### **Production**

This concentration of wealth is not limited to land itself, but also includes both production and industry. As the land concentration data illustrates, the large landholders, by definition the landed elite, cannot but be the primary participants (by volume of production) and hence principal beneficiaries of the export agriculture regime. This concentration of production amongst the wealthy was most extreme with cotton, where **all** cotton-producing farms were larger than 92 hectares. These large commercial and estate farms further accounted for 95% of sugar production, 83% of bananas crops, 70% of beef production and 68% of cardamom production. With the exception of sugar and cotton, these majority producers represent a small fraction of the total of all producers of these commodities.<sup>342</sup>

This disproportionate control of production is even greater with coffee. In the late 1980s, 83% of all coffee production stemmed from large *fincas*, representing 3651 of the total 97,679 farms involved in coffee production. Over a decade later, coffee is still notable for this extreme disparity, with only 1507 large producers (operating on more than 45 hectares) and only 2425 working between 10 and 45 hectares, of a total of almost 100,000 producers.<sup>343</sup> These large and medium sized coffee producers are now responsible for 80.7% of national coffee production.<sup>344</sup>

Guatemalan industry was originally based on the processing of its agricultural products. The construction of infrastructure was also oriented by the need to extract these commodities from the interior for export. At the beginning of the twentieth century, until Ten Years of Spring, transport and communications infrastructure, both seagoing and terrestrial, was almost entirely developed and operated by the United Fruit Company. This was in addition to their monopoly on banana production in the country. The UFC finally sold the last of its interests in Guatemala in 1972 to Del Monte, which continues

to own the local subsidiary BANDEGUA, the largest single private employer in the country, with half of the 10,000 people employed by the banana industry in their employ.<sup>345</sup>

Similarly, coffee processing became increasingly concentrated, with the number of *beneficios* in the country falling from 4,243 at the beginning of the 1940s to 1,334 just over a decade later. All of these that remained were on *fincas* producing at least 220 *quintales* of coffee,<sup>346</sup> which means that this necessary part of production was increasingly concentrated in the hands of larger producers. While the number of *beneficios* has returned to the 4000 mark, only 100 of these are 'large' operations, with a processing capacity of greater than 50,000 pounds per day. These 100 *beneficios* are responsible for processing 60% of all of Guatemala's coffee.<sup>347</sup>

Control of sugar processing has been concentrated as well. There are 17 *ingenios* in the country,<sup>348</sup> all of which are owned by major sugar producers (the only kind of producers there are, with all sugar production occurring on plantations larger than 92 hectares), by sugar producing families or other members of the oligarchy and their increasingly complex webs of finances and ownership.<sup>349</sup>

Thus, while millions of Guatemalans are involved in the production of agro-export crops, the vast majority of them are marginal participants. Overall production, processing and export of all agricultural commodities are concentrated in the hands of the economic elite. With their absolute control over land, the elites are able to dictate what it produces. Overwhelmingly, those commodities are cash crops that are not consumed or of any use to the majority of Guatemalans. With the resulting insufficient domestic food production, other sources are required.

In terms of industrial production, including the *maquilas*, virtually all of this activity is concentrated in department of Guatemala. This one region accounts for 95% of all industrial production. The 3.4% of national industry in Izabal, and the 1.6% in Escuintla is principally comprised of the agricultural processing mentioned above.<sup>350</sup> This

‘decentralized’ industry is tied to export and shipping, as Izabal and Escuintla are home to the main Guatemalan ports for the Atlantic and Pacific, respectively.

Specific ownership of the *maquilas*, in 1991, was 65% national, followed by South Korean’s, who controlled a quarter of these export-manufacturing facilities. The initial US investment in this sector had only risen to a total of 11 facilities at this time, while other foreign nationals accounted for 4.7% of *maquila* ownership.<sup>351</sup> By the end of 2001, investment in the *maquila* sector had shifted overwhelmingly to South Korean capital, which represented 67%, compared with 22.9% national capital and 5.7% from the US.<sup>352</sup>

### **FOOD SUPPLY<sup>353</sup>**

By the mid 1980s, Guatemala only had access to 85% of the calories required to sufficiently feed its population, without even considering the distribution of that food.<sup>354</sup> Using the UNESCO classification of necessary food requirements,<sup>355</sup> by 2000 there was only enough food present in the country to feed 80% of the populace. The following table tracks the evolution of food availability in Guatemala.

According to World Food Programme estimates, the average daily intake of calories for Guatemalans in 2002 was 2074,<sup>356</sup> indicating a further decline in food availability in the country. Apart from this obvious and chronic shortage of food indicated by the above table, the other apparent issue is the transformation of the Guatemalan diet. Maize is the traditional food of the Maya, with deep cultural and religious importance tied to the crop and its cycle of production. However, Guatemalan’s are slowly abandoning maize in favour of wheat, rice and other modern and processed food. In 2001, roughly one-third of the country’s maize supply was imported, while 97.7% of its wheat was imported. Only in beans, the other traditional staple crop and food, particularly for the rural and poor population, is Guatemala reasonably self sufficient, producing 99.2% of its domestic supply.

**Table 7: Food Availability**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Calories</b>	<b>Protein</b>	<b>Fat</b>	<b>Maize (Calories)</b>	<b>Wheat (Calories)</b>
2000	2148	53.8	46.8	838	216
1999	2130	54.4	44.0	849	230
1998	2156	56.0	43.8	887	256
1997	2157	55.4	43.9	899	241
1996	2242	57.5	41.3	1047	209
1995	2303	57.8	42.4	1045	200
1990	2395	60.9	44.6	1145	179
1985	2238	57.6	39.9	1100	171
1980	2219	55.5	43.0	1033	211
1975	2186	56.4	39.8	1138	151
1970	2096	56.5	38.6	1146	144
1965	2033	55.5	37.3	1101	148
1961	1895	53.5	32.8	1088	137
Canada 2000	3178	104.4	126.8	19	650
World 2000	2805	75.7	76.3	152	527

Source: FAOSTAT – Food Balance Sheets

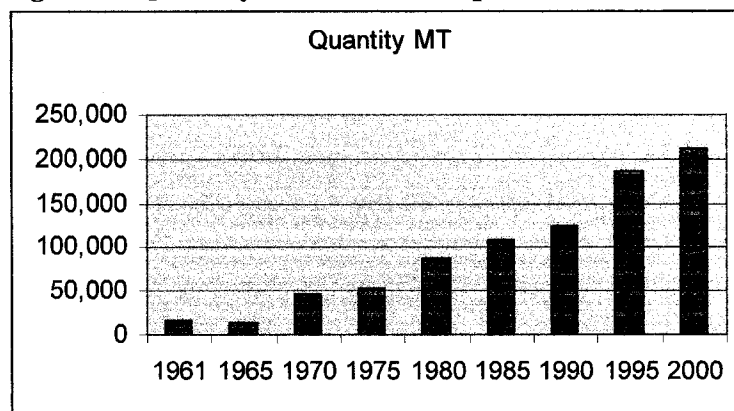
The following table traces the evolution of the maize supply over the last four decades. From the 625,000 hectares of land cultivated in 1961, the area dedicated to maize expanded quickly to 676,000 hectares in 1965, after which it has slowly and steadily declined to 546,000 hectares in 1995. Since then it has recovered to 620,000 hectares in 2002. The volume of production, on the other hand, grew steadily from 518,100 MT in 1961 to 1,272,240 MT in 1990, after which it dipped then rose to a record 1,336,380 MT in 1993. It fell steadily, then precipitously to 860,000 MT in 1997 due to El Nino, after which it has held between a million and 1.1 million tonnes through to 2002. Over the same period, the volume maize imports rose rapidly and enormously, while their cost became increasingly substantial, passing half a million tonnes and worth almost \$59 million in 2001. According to FAO trade statistics, the United States has repeatedly exported maize the Guatemala totaling more than 100% the amount imported shown on the table below. Additionally, exactly 90.9% of all recorded food aid to Guatemala since 1970 has come from the United States.<sup>357</sup>

**Table 8: Maize Production, Trade and Supply**

Year	Production (MT)	Imports (MT)	Exports (MT)	Domestic Supply (MT)	Area Harvest (Has.)	Imports - Val (1000 \$)	Exports - Val (1000 \$)
1961	518,100	2,963	1,823	519,240	625,300	296	128
1965	645,661	11,208	586	636,284	675,800	1,130	1
1970	785,846	19,154	1,110	756,889	661,870	946	17
1975	933,542	57,701	1,983	939,260	558,500	9,314	3
1980	902,419	84,207	18,504	968,122	659,200	13,210	3,142
1985	1,088,400	2,815	5,617	1,086,104	659,600	501	1,059
1990	1,272,240	118,947	138	1,283,518	634,480	18,374	110
1991	1,233,250	135,763	1,002	1,283,011	668,710	21,437	213
1992	1,366,380	94,474	1,373	1,309,481	725,620	15,009	261
1993	1,294,780	153,655	3,319	1,405,116	699,650	23,991	337
1994	1,187,692	161,449	4,715	1,374,426	606,925	22,933	839
1995	1,061,583	185,634	56,562	1,270,655	546,204	24,980	7,957
1996	1,046,795	223,709	28,005	1,282,500	575,132	43,729	4,474
1997	860,936	260,097	94,945	1,152,088	576,170	38,371	24,305
1998	1,068,779	277,508	16,047	1,404,239	628,906	35,995	4,837
1999	1,024,860	339,502	50,100	1,398,262	589,750	38,279	14,095
2000	1,053,550	351,252	16,376	1,438,426	591,500	38,400	4,357
2001	1,091,480	515,912	6,321	1,613,713	592,900	58,996	3,884
2002	1,100,000				620,000		

Source: FAOSTAT

The doubling of maize yields displayed on the above table has been achieved through the massive application of fertilizers, which were almost exclusively imported in ever-greater quantities. These imports effectively quashed the small domestic production of fertilizers by the early 1990s. Again, the source of these fertilizers is principally the United States.

**Figure 8: Quantity of Fertilizer Imports, Metric Tonnes**

Source: FAOSTAT

Wheat production, already substantial in the country, more than doubled from the early 1960s to the 1980s, to almost 60,000 MT. However, it has steadily declined since the mid-1980s to under 10,000 MT by 2000. Imports have exploded during this period, from over 50,000 MT a year in the 1960s, to over 100,000 in the 1980s, to quarter of a million tonnes in 1991. This rise continued to as high as 459,000 MT in 1998, but subsequently fell dramatically, to climb once more to over 400,000 MT by 2001. Only a fraction of these imports have come in the form of food aid (39,000 MT in 2001), the balance costing Guatemala some \$70 million. The United States and Canada are the two sources of these wheat imports, with the former providing the overwhelming majority.

Bean production, and the area dedicated to it, has fluctuated substantially over the last half-century. The area involved was 64,000 hectares in 1960 and 1980, compared with 160,000 in 1975 and 1985. The 1990s and first years of the new millennium have been more constant, averaging 130,000 hectares under production, (without double-counting for the two growing seasons). Variations in production, however, have not completely correlated with the area under cultivation. Generally, production tripled from the 1960s to the mid 1980s, arriving at a record 122,200 MT. These levels declined throughout the 1990s, to 72,680 in 1997 and rising again to 94,700 in 2001.

Potato production has grown dramatically throughout the last half of the twentieth century, multiplying by more than tenfold, from over 15,000 metric tonnes in 1960 to 172,000 in 1990 and to 226,000 in 2001. This increase in production is due primarily to the intensification of production, as the area harvested tripled in the first 15 years but has remained relatively constant from the 1980s to the present. At the same time, exports have also risen dramatically, peaking at 45,000 MT in the early 1980s and at 76,000 MT in 2000, although earnings from these exports have been rather insignificant (\$7.2 and \$7.6 million, respectively, in both peak years). Imports have fairly consistently averaged between two and three thousand tonnes, passing the 6000 mark in 1975 and 2000. In the last 4 years these imports have varied between none to over 5000 MT in 2000.

Rice production grew steadily from 8000 MT in 1960 to 28,000 in 1980. Since then it has fluctuated between 20,000 and 30,000 MT, while imports grew steadily from almost nil to 15,000 MT in 1990. By 1995 production more than doubled, and reached 43,000 MT in 2000. The area dedicated to rice production has varied between 10,000 and 15,000 MT from the late 1960s to the present. However, since the late 1980s, rice imports from the United States have almost paralleled domestic production, reaching 46,400 MT in 2000. During this last decade, virtually half of the rice available in Guatemala has come from the United States

Sorghum has been a significant staple crop in Guatemala since the mid 1960s, when it rose over 40,000 MT, continuing to expand to over 100,000 MT in the mid-1980s. The area involved during this time fluctuated from 48,000 hectares, down to 34,000 hectares and up to 66,000 in 1985. Since then, both area and total production dropped to roughly half in the early 1990s, stabilizing at 42,000 hectares and 50,000 MT by the end of the decade and into the new century. This is the lone food crop that is not a target of significant import or export activity.

If the market did in fact allocate 'efficiently', to meet peoples needs, it would provide sufficient food, the most basic of needs and hence the absolutely most demanded good (along with 'water') that exists. However, we see from the food supply table above, that the market does not allocate to meet needs, but only to satisfy effective demand. We can roughly estimate that merely four fifths of Guatemalans can exercise effective demand with regards to their food needs. But this is only if we assume that the effective demand is equitably met – an assumption that cannot be made given that we know that at least 2.8 million people (25% of the population) currently do not have sufficient food.

An even larger market distortion of food security was displayed during the period of greatest demand for maize in Guatemala – during the destruction of its harvest due to El Nino in 1997. This year saw the country export more maize than at any point in its history – 95,000 MT – almost twice as much as it has ever exported, either before or after. This exporting of 11% of national production, during a period of greatest scarcity,



shows how ‘effective’ demand is all that the market notices. As has occurred in virtually every major twentieth century famine,<sup>358</sup> food has been exported out of a region in need to one where profits are greater. This is the ‘efficient allocation’ of resources that characterizes ‘the market’ and capitalist profit maximization. People and their needs are clearly not a concern, certainly when weighed against profits. Given Guatemala’s outright dependency for food on the United States, it is also worth noting that 1997 saw imports from the hegemon reduced to almost half of the amount imported in previous and subsequent years. This clearly illustrates both the volatility and unreliability of this pillar of the Guatemalan food system.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is not so much the Guatemalan economy that is dependent on export agriculture and production, but rather the people of Guatemala who are dependent on those sectors for their survival. The political economy’s external orientation both excludes and ignores an enormous sector of its population – particularly the rural poor and the indigenous. This simultaneously leaves them without any means of subsistence and without sufficient means in order to subsist.

As we have seen, agriculture’s importance to the formal economy is decreasing. Even industry’s share of the national wealth is decreasing. The problem with this ‘post-production’ economy is that the majority of people were only ever tenuously incorporated into the pre ‘post-production’ economy in the first place. With their ‘pre-capitalist’ (or pre-modern) modes of production for subsistence incompletely destroyed, and their ‘modern’ means of subsistence as wage labourers also evaporating, the majority of Guatemalan’s are left in precarious vulnerability. They have neither their traditional means for survival, nor the modern ones, and are ill equipped to participate in the services sector, beyond the informal activities to which most are driven, selling whatever they can by whatever informal means at their disposal. The problem is that this is not a viable economic strategy for any kind of human development. It is a strategy for survival in a world that increasingly alienates people from everything – production, survival, stability, tradition, and even themselves.

Production no longer provides livelihoods for people. This is before even considering the structure of the global division of labour and power that sets the poor of the entire world competing against each other to assemble products for comparatively tiny markets. Domestically, there are simply not enough people of means – the rich, the landed – to employ the remaining millions of Guatemalans, as servants or in any other capacity.

This means that the crisis is more than one of dependence. It is a crisis produced by the global economic system that is neither concerned with people nor the substantive economy. Livelihoods have no place in the global division of labour and power as it is currently oriented. Subsistence does provide for livelihoods. Production, when rationally distributed, can provide for livelihoods. Services can only provide for livelihoods when there is a substantive base from the other two sectors to sustain it. The problem in Guatemala is that it has neither of the first two, leaving people desperately trying to survive in the third. Therefore, as there is no capacity to absorb labour, because the political economy is functioning at a level that does not even begin to approach full employment, any change in any of the sectors is one that undermines livelihoods, requires greater coping and saps both assets and resources, intensifying vulnerability, while triggering disaster for those who are most direly exposed.

Adhering to my injunction at the outset regarding reification, it is not the Guatemalan economy that is dependent on the exportation of its commodities and manufactures, but rather an enormous segment of the country's population. They are dependent on that production and trade for their livelihoods. A second dependency inherent in this export dependency is the need for imported inputs in for both manufacturing and agriculture. Furthermore, the goods upon which the people of Guatemala survive, their food, is to a significant degree imported. Even with these imports, there is still insufficient food in the country to feed all Guatemalans. This even without considering the estimated 15-30% of domestic production that is lost after harvest,<sup>359</sup> and other handling losses. The next chapter details the impacts of this political economy on the people of Guatemala, illustrating the 'human development' that it supports.

## Chapter V

# The State of Global Vulnerability

*The heresies we should fear are those which can be confused with orthodoxy.*  
- Jorge Luis Borges, "The Theologians"

### INTRODUCTION

The history of development in Guatemala has, for the last 130 years, focused on modernization and the production of exports. For the majority of this time, these exports have been almost exclusively agricultural. The 1960s saw the rise of some light industry and the last two decades have also seen the rise of the *maquila*. However, in both cases, the production has been for export and they have both depended on a large and cheap 'unskilled' labour force. This export led development model has revolved around land as the central issue in two ways. Land is the critical factor of production in agriculture and therefore has been concentrated in the hands of national and international capitalists over the past century and a half. This has meant the systematic dispossession of the rural and indigenous population that lived on that land. This process of dispossession that accompanied the concentration of land ownership in the hands of a very small agrarian oligarchy has at the same time produced an enormous workforce. The rural population has been thrust off the land, and thereby their means of subsistence, and into a market economy where all they possess is their labour. It is this single, yet dual faceted process of proletarianisation that underlies national development, through insertion into the global economic system as a producer of export goods.

While chapter three has outlined this historic process, and chapter four has detailed the structural changes and evolution of the economy to the present, this chapter details the impact of both the process and the structure on the people of Guatemala. These impacts include the absolute (and relative) growth of poverty and extreme poverty, and their extremely unequal distribution geographically, by race, class, level of education and gender. A second, almost inseparable impact is the growth of malnutrition and its concentration in rural areas. This distribution of inequity, between urban and rural, non-

indigenous and indigenous, is also true of education, literacy and practically all other social development indicators and the actual provision of social services. This chapter links these different situations of vulnerability to each other, showing how one form of social exclusion begets another, creating underlying conditions of vulnerability, but also exposing people to very specific hazards and shocks. It shows how these chains, or webs, of vulnerability compound themselves, creating greater vulnerability, particularly as social exclusion fosters greater environmental degradation and hence greater exposure to natural and man-made threats. The chapter concludes by summarizing the particular vulnerabilities of the population and their distribution, as well as the situation of 'global vulnerability' that exists, based on the historic processes and political economic structure discussed in the previous two chapters.

The developing mainstream conception of vulnerability to disaster sees it has having four principal aspects or dimensions – the economic, the social, the physical and the environmental. This study has already outlined the economic orientation of the Guatemalan 'political economy' and now addresses the impact of this material foundation on the lives and livelihoods of individuals. We begin with an examination of poverty, nationally, and its distribution.

## **POVERTY**

Poverty, its definition and measurement are not straightforward issues. Different criteria for measurement reflect different conceptions. The two main methods for measuring poverty are according to consumption or by income. While both imply a market economy, the latter absolutely requires one. Subsistence, self-sufficiency and non-formal economic practices make the income measure of poverty inappropriate in those circumstances. The satisfaction of basic needs is a third approach to conceiving and, therefore, defining poverty. Other conceptions of poverty include such social indicators as education and health. Each of these different indicators of poverty is presented here, as indicators of 'baseline vulnerability'.

Poverty itself is not synonymous with vulnerability, but it is closely related. Treating it as a specific condition of vulnerability, from which other particular vulnerabilities to specific threats are engendered, allows us to see how vulnerability is socially created. Poverty generally diminishes both the capacity of a people to adapt to hazards and their ability to cope with them. In this way they become increasingly vulnerable to any number of hazards, given their poverty. Through their struggle for survival, they are constantly exhausting the resources and assets they have with which to resist and adapt to difficulty. At the same time, they try to balance immediate survival against future destitution, in attempts to cope that maintain their assets by foregoing present needs.<sup>360</sup> However, given the different dimensions of poverty and the particular kinds of vulnerability, each situation of risk is unique in its specific combination of causal factors. Poverty is an underlying factor in most situations of risk. By identifying who is poor, and in what regions, then we are able to better identify those who are 'at risk'.

This overview of poverty presents all three measures, at the national and departmental levels, disaggregated according to the relevant variables of geographic region (urban or rural), ethnicity (indigenous and non-indigenous) and gender (men and women). As well, given the variation of these trends over time – and the very incomplete picture that a sample of only the last ten years provides – this section presents historical data for comparison. While this does present inconsistencies and incongruence, generally due to methodological reasons, it does allow for understanding and representation of situations and trends. This is particularly notable, for example, in that levels of malnutrition have (or had until recently) improved over the last ten years, but are in fact still worse than they were thirty years ago. Ignoring this historic reality is a disservice to analysis and, ultimately, a political act that distorts and actively misrepresents the impacts of current development policies and trends.

We saw in the previous chapter that the two aspects of wealth – income and assets, are highly concentrated in Guatemala. What we did not see was that this wealth is concentrated in the urban areas and amongst *criollos*, as opposed to the *ladinos*. The indigenous peoples are at the bottom of this socio-economic hierarchy. Furthermore,

women suffer from this disparity, at all levels of the ethnic and class hierarchy, to a greater extent than men.

As a middle-income country, Guatemala has a per capita GDP, by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) of \$3770 in 2000.<sup>361</sup> This figure has been slowly rising throughout the 1990s, from \$3410 in 1995.<sup>362</sup> While this figure is significantly higher than Honduras (\$2433) and Nicaragua (\$2142), Guatemala still has the highest levels of infant (41 per 1000) and child (52 per 1000) mortality in the region, as well as illiteracy (32.7%), unmet basic, sanitary and health service needs and the lowest level of life expectancy (64 years).<sup>363</sup> While this serves to demonstrate that poverty and vulnerability are not one and the same, it also reveals the superficiality of per capita GDP measures as development indicators, particularly at the national level.

As the disaggregation of per capita GDP by department shows (see table below), no area of the country has an income anywhere near this amount. The exception, of course, is Guatemala City, with a statistical level of income of 4 times the national average. This is also misleading, as the entirety of the country's economic elite – approximately 0.5% of the total population – as well as the other fractions of the oligarchy, and the bulk of the professional and bureaucratic classes, are based in the capital city. However, together they only total a quarter of a million people<sup>364</sup> – less than 10% of the Metropolitan Region's population. This means that slightly more than 2% of the entire country's population have high enough income to grossly distort superficial income figures for the primate city, and the entire country of more than 11 million people. This is an accomplishment when the real per capita GDP (non-PPP) breakdown demonstrates that 16 departments have per capita incomes of less than two dollars a day, six of which are below one dollar a day.

What becomes immediately clear from the table below is the correlation between indigenous populations, rural populations and poverty. While the absence of an indigenous population or lower level of indigenous population does not correlate with an

ensuing low level of poverty, high proportions of the former, particularly together do correspond with high levels of poverty (according to the consumption basket).

**Table 9: Poverty Levels, by Department**

Department	Population 2001 (a)	Indigenous Population 1994 % (b)	Rural Population % (b)	GDP (PPP) per capita 1996 (b)	General Poverty 1999 % (c)	Extreme Poverty 1999 % (c)
Guatemala	2,654,203	12.3	29.1	12668.2	11.73	1.34
El Progreso	141,193	2.1	72.4	2139.8	54.8	18.13
Sacatepequez	267,877	41.6	29.5	1731.5	33.45	4.62
Chimaltenango	437,649	77.7	58.4	779.9	57.92	13.46
Escuintla	489,227	6.4	62.9	907.9	35.15	4.32
Santa Rosa	325,479	2.6	75.9	1485.6	62.07	21.46
Solola	316,629	93.6	66.7	1000.7	76.36	32.62
Totonicapán	369,349	94.5	89.3	804.4	85.62	55.62
Quetzaltenango	694,590	59.6	60.2	1064.7	60.67	22.42
Suchitepequez	411,638	57.4	69.8	958	53.86	14.7
Retalhuleu	245,875	33.3	72.3	2227.2	57.57	14.93
San Marcos	863,164	42.5	87	501.8	86.66	61.07
Huehuetenango	906,033	63.8	85	583.8	77.85	37.15
El Quiche	602,383	83.4	84.8	601.7	81.09	36.75
Baja Verapaz	207,781	55.5	79.5	1453.5	71.56	31.01
Alta Verapaz	848,340	89	84.2	522.3	76.4	36.6
El Peten	346,805	26.2	73.3	1334.8	59.3	22.16
Izabal	340,532	22.8	80.2	1486.5	52.12	16.84
Zacapa	217,927	4.4	95.8	2229.7	43.78	12.53
Chiquimula	320,979	29.5	74.7	1682.3	49.27	13.91
Jalapa	277,486	37.4	72.7	1383.9	72.59	29.23
Jutiapa	391,272	5.1	79.7	1147.5	63.88	23.24
Total/Country	11,678,411	41.7	65	3626.3	54.33	22.77

Sources: (a) PNUD 2002; (b) PNUD 1998; (c) SEGEPLAN 2001a

To put these figures into a comparative historical context, in 1980 65% of households were in poverty and 33% were indigent. In urban areas poverty measured 41% and indigence 13%. In rural areas, poverty reached 79%, with 44% of households considered indigent. By 1986 this national poverty figure had risen to 68% - 54% urban and 75% rural. Indigence affected 43% of the countries households, 28% in urban areas and 53% of them in rural ones. By 1990 rural poverty had eased further to 72% of the populace,

while extreme poverty affected 45%.<sup>365</sup> When these figures from Rosenthal are compared with recent income poverty measures, they do indicate some measures of relative improvement. According to SEGEPLAN, at the end of the twentieth century the national poverty level was 56.7% and extreme income poverty was 26.8%. The urban to rural division was 7.1% extreme and 28.4% general, and 39.8% extreme and 75.3% general, respectively.<sup>366</sup> Thus, there was a relative improvement over the twenty-year period in all indicators except for rural poverty which worsened. However, given the population increased by roughly half over the same period, the only absolute decrease in income poverty was in extreme urban poverty.

As we can see from the table, consumption poverty levels are slightly better than those using income measures. For 1999, general poverty measured 54.3% while extreme poverty measured 22.8%. This works out to 3.8% extreme poverty in urban areas and 32.7% in rural areas. For general poverty it is 21.8% urban and 71.4% rural.<sup>367</sup> What we cannot see in the table is that 238 of Guatemala's 331 municipalities have poverty rates higher than 50%. Four of those municipalities actually have poverty rates above 98%. In terms of extreme poverty, 117 municipalities have rates of over 30%, 47 have rates above 50%. There are even 3 municipalities in the country with extreme poverty rates – levels of indigence – of over 90%. These are the 'normal' conditions of poverty in Guatemala, as it can be measured by the formal economy. It is important to note that from this poverty data the national government identified 102 municipalities – those with levels of poverty above 80% - as the focus of their emergency plan to overcome the 'rural economic crisis'.<sup>368</sup>

A different substantive measure is that of the satisfaction of basic needs. In Guatemala, Unsatisfied Basic Needs (UBN) are measured on the basis of six criteria: quality of housing, sufficient personal space (number of people per room of living space), education, relations of dependency (heads of family without education and 4 or more family members per employed member of the family), access to water, and sanitation services.<sup>369</sup> According to these criteria, 73.5% of the population has at least one



Unsatisfied Basic Need. In urban areas those with one UBN equals 55.3%, while in rural areas it is 85.5%. The percentage of the indigenous population with one UBN is 85.9.<sup>370</sup>

What is clear from all of the different measures and indicators of poverty is that it is concentrated in rural areas, amongst the indigenous population. Furthermore, it is specifically within the agricultural sector that we see the majority of the poor (57%) earning their meager livelihoods. There are also a number of consequences of poverty, in both rural and urban areas. As El-Masri and Tipple note, “poverty increases the vulnerability of human settlements” by such factors as:

- “dangerous and marginal sites – steep slopes, flood plains, industrial zones;
- inappropriate construction methods and building materials;
- overcrowding and squalid conditions;
- haphazard, uncontrolled settlement growth;
- lack of amenities and poor infrastructure;
- lack of disaster planning and mitigation measures; and
- lack of adequate systems for prediction, early warning and emergency.”<sup>371</sup>

As part of the process of proletarianisation of the peasantry, poverty is systematically created by the denial of subsistence. As rural subsistence is based on access to and exploitation of land, this de-peasantization is tied to the concentration of land ownership detailed in chapter four. One of the principal outcomes of the resulting subsistence poverty is increased migration to urban areas. This, in turn, heightens vulnerability and increases exposure to hazards in various ways. For instance, “urbanization induces natural disasters by upsetting the ecosystem.” Specifically, it causes:

- “Intense ecological modifications and various types of pollution;
- Land degradation, desertification, deforestation and loss of biodiversity;
- Encroachment and exploitation of natural resources;
- Overemphasis on industrialization, technological and commercial activities and ignorance of long-term effects.”<sup>372</sup>

Poverty is also a factor in malnutrition, at both the macro and the household level. The poor are unable to exercise effective demand, and are therefore unable to access food in the market. Because of their marginal social and political position, other entitlements that they could make use of given the failure of formal economic ones also disappear, just as traditional patronal obligations also erode with modernity and post-modernity.

Poverty is also directly correlated with education – the poor have an average of 1.9 years of schooling, while the non-poor have an average of 5.4 years. Illiteracy is 44% amongst the poor and 18% amongst the non-poor.<sup>373</sup> Poor families are also larger, having an average of six people while non-poor families have slightly more than four.<sup>374</sup> This web of mutually reinforcing vulnerability extends to undernutrition, as 46% of children of indigenous or uneducated women are stunted, while 24% of their children are underweight for their age.<sup>375</sup>

## **UNDERNUTRITION**

The impacts of undernutrition and malnutrition are many and often permanent. The first clinical problem is that of Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM), which, when chronic or occurring during key physical development stages of fetal development, infancy, childhood or adolescence, results in physical stunting. Acute protein deficiency results in kwashiorkor, while energy deficiency causes wasting, muscular atrophy and weight loss with marasmus as the extreme clinical condition. PEM makes people more susceptible to infections and parasites, while also slowing their recovery from any illness.

The three main micronutrient deficiencies afflicting peoples are those of iron, iodine and vitamin A. Iron deficiency is the most common, causing energy loss, anemia, and reducing physical and cognitive development. Iodine deficiency, the second most common results in goiter, while the physical and mental impacts of iodine deficiency, mainly cretinism (from gestation), is irreversible. Vitamin A deficiency occurs mainly in southern Asia, and can result in blindness. Other damaging deficiencies include those of niacin that results in pellagra, thiamine deficiency causing beriberi, vitamin C causing scurvy and vitamin D that causes rickets.<sup>376</sup>

Undernutrition is the condition of insufficient consumption of food, resulting in either weight loss or stunting. It can be chronic or acute. Chronic undernutrition is generally measured through height to age ratios, particularly amongst children under the age of 5, as an indicator of the state of nutrition of the larger population. Acute undernutrition is the process of starvation, a result of recent weight loss, which is measured as the ratio of weight to height. A third measure of general or global undernutrition is the ratio of weight to age of a person compared to a set standard. Malnutrition is the condition of having an inappropriate diet, which while sufficient in terms of calories and proteins is insufficient in terms of other key vitamins and minerals. This can result in the different illnesses and infirmities mentioned above. It should also be noted that there is no consensus on exact nutritional needs, particularly in terms of setting a universal standard for daily caloric and protein consumption.<sup>377</sup>

**Table 10: Child Malnutrition by Ethnicity, Region and Education 1998 (%)**

	<b>Chronic Malnutrition (height for age)</b>	<b>Global Malnutrition (weight for age)</b>	<b>General Poverty (consumption)</b>
Non Indigenous	34.1	18.6	41
Indigenous	67.3	33.6	74
Urban Area	32.4	15.6	21.8
Rural Area	54.4	29.1	71.4
<b>By Region:</b>			
<b>VII:</b> Quiché; Huehuetenango	69.2	33.4	79.2
<b>II:</b> Alta Verapaz; Baja Verapaz	56.7	19.4	75.3
<b>VI:</b> Quetzaltenango; Sololá; Totonicapán; San Marcos; Suchitepéquez, Retalhuleu	54.8	29.4	72.1
<b>III:</b> Zacapa; Chiquimula; Izabal; El Progreso	49.1	29.1	49.9
<b>VIII:</b> Petén	46.2	19.8	59.3
<b>IV:</b> Jalapa; Santa Rosa; Jutiapa	45.6	21.4	65.5
<b>V:</b> Sacatepéquez; Escuintla; Chimaltenango	45.5	21.7	43.1
<b>I:</b> Guatemala	28.6	18.9	11.7
<b>By Level of Education:</b>			
No Education	64.4	34.8	
Primary Education	44.5	22.5	
Secondary Education or more	12.7	6.5	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>24.2</b>	

Source: Encuesta Nacional de Salud Materno Infantil 1998–1999<sup>378</sup>

The above table illuminates the geographic and demographic distribution of chronic and global malnutrition, as well as consumption poverty. It also demonstrates an overall increase in chronic undernutrition from 38% of the population, or 2.9 million people, in 1980.<sup>379</sup>

While there is conflicting chronic undernutrition data from 1986, the 2001 data demonstrates clear increases when compared with both 1980 and 1998/1999. Table 12, below, presents the findings from these different studies of stunting amongst school children. Comparing the INCAP study with that of 2001 there are chronic undernutrition increases in all 22 departments.

**Table 11: Rates of Chronic Undernutrition and Illiteracy**

<b>Department</b>	<b>INCAP 1986</b>	<b>1986 Min. Education.</b>	<b>2001 Min. Education</b>	<b>Illiteracy 1994</b>	<b>Illiteracy 1999</b>
Guatemala	20.3	35.6	31.9	12.8	11
El Progreso	26.4	40.4	30.7	30.1	25.1
Sacatepequez	41.1	57.6	45.0	21.3	16.4
Chimaltenango	52	65.5	60.3	36.2	31.1
Escuintla	25.7	38.8	30.3	29.6	26
Santa Rosa	27.5	40.2	35.0	33	29.2
Solola	64.6	76.8	73.2	55.7	47.9
Totonicapán	60.9	75.4	73.2	50.2	43.3
Quetzaltenango	44.6	60.2	55.1	32	27.4
Suchitepequez	41.5	56.7	48.9	40.2	33.8
Retalhuleu	34.7	48.8	41.9	33.3	25.6
San Marcos	45.7	61.2	61.4	40.4	33.5
Huehuetenango	51.8	66.6	66.4	52.4	41.6
El Quiche	52.9	66.4	64.8	63.5	53.5
Baja Verapaz	38.3	54.1	51.7	50.3	41.9
Alta Verapaz	38.2	54.4	49.2	66.4	51.3
El Peten	29.7	54.1	39.7	40.9	31.6
Izabal	25.2	38.4	33.7	36.2	31
Zacapa	24.1	39.6	33.1	33.4	28.4
Chiquimula	33.5	49.1	47.7	47.5	39.2
Jalapa	37.5	52	52.3	44.4	36.8
Jutiapa	24.8	38.9	32.1	36.7	31.1
Total/Country		53.2	48.8	35.8	30.2

Sources: PNUD 1998, 2002

Comparing just the Ministry of Education studies, there has been an absolute increase of undernutrition in all but 6 of the 331 municipalities in the country, between 1986 and 2001, (including 9 of Guatemala City's 22 Zones). In all of the other 315 municipalities there have been absolute increases, which nationally was more than threefold. The total number of children under five survey suffering from moderate and severe physical stunting equaled 186,057 in 2001, up from 58,316 in 1986. However, overall there has been a relative decrease in chronic undernutrition, at least according to the two Ministry of Education surveys, as the sample population increased by almost three and a half times, outpacing the incidence of stunting. That said, 97 municipalities registered relative increases in their levels of undernutrition. In spite of the relative improvement, 171 of Guatemala's 331 municipalities (51.6% of them) had undernutrition rates in 2001 of over 50%. All municipalities register some degree of undernutrition, with 15% being the lowest. Thus, even the relative overall improvement still leaves the country in an abominable state of chronic malnutrition.

If representative, these studies mean that roughly half of the adult population of the country have suffered physiological damage due to malnutrition. Even if light, at certain sensitive times in human development, malnutrition can have serious negative impacts on physical and mental development. It also means that at least another generation of Guatemalan's will continue to suffer from these impacts. This makes their escape from the cyclical trap of poverty and hunger increasingly unlikely and absolutely more difficult.

## **SOCIAL VULNERABILITY**

### **Education**

While virtually all education indicators have been steadily improving over the last decade, this is largely an indication of how poor the situation was to begin. By 2001, only 85.1% of children began primary school, while 43.6% of youths entered secondary school and but 22% began post-secondary education. Levels of desertion continue to be high at all stages, as are the levels of repetition. The gender disparity is still significant, favouring boys, although this reverses at the post-secondary level. One of the major

problems associated with the expansion of the education system, in terms of its incorporation of more students, is that the initially inconsistent quality of the education is further deteriorating.<sup>380</sup>

There are also a number of dimensions of vulnerability that are associated with levels of education. As shown in Table 11, children whose mothers have secondary education or greater are more than 5 times less likely to suffer from chronic and global malnutrition. However, in Guatemala, given the conditions of poverty and the other aspects of vulnerability, even education is not a guarantee against undernutrition. The size of Guatemalan families is also clearly correlated with the woman's level of education. Fecundity is 5.0 per woman, nationally, 6.8 for a woman without education and 2.9 for a woman with secondary education or higher.<sup>381</sup> This, incidentally, represents an overall decrease in fecundity from 5.6 children per woman in 1987, although the patterns of change according to other variables are less clear.<sup>382</sup> ENSMI 95 recorded a strong correlation between incidence of diarrhea in children under 5 and its effective treatment with area of residence (rural-urban) and level of education of the mother (none, primary, secondary and up) with the former in both cases resulting in higher exposure and risk to the children. It also recorded better nutritional conditions for children in every category when correlated with increased levels of education.<sup>383</sup>

Another social indicator that is correlated with education is adolescent pregnancy. In 1994 it was significantly higher in rural areas (145.8 per thousand versus 85.6) and amongst indigenous women (140.7 versus 110.1). The difference is highest, though, when correlated with education – 179.4 for adolescent women with no education, compared with 19.7 for those with secondary education or more. The national level of adolescent fecundity was 122.7.<sup>384</sup>

### **Literacy**

Distinct from education, yet obviously closely related, is literacy. This is an indicator that has been increasing constantly over the past half century. In 1950 only 29% of the population were literate. By 1964 this had increased to 37%, growing to 43% by 1981.<sup>385</sup>

By 1990 there were 2.1 million illiterate people in the country. By 2000 there was an absolute decrease to 2.0 million illiterates, leaving 68% of population as literate.<sup>386</sup> There are, of course, differences in the distribution of literacy and illiteracy throughout the country, as noted above in Table 12. One of these inequities is found with the agricultural population, 40% of whom are illiterate.<sup>387</sup> By comparing Table 12 with Table 10, we also see the strong correlation between levels of illiteracy and the indigenous population of a department.

### **Health Care**

Apart from nutrition, most health indicators have also improved steadily over the last half-century. This is in large part related to the growing coverage of health services, and increased education. Mortality rates have fallen steadily since 1950, when they measured 22.4 per 1000, down to 7.4 in the period of 1995-2000. Over the same period, life expectancies have risen from 42 years to 64, although the gap between women's and men's life expectancy has increased from 1 year to 6 years.<sup>388</sup> Infant mortality rates have also fallen, from 141 per thousand in 1950 to 46 in the period of 1995-2000. There is, however, still a notable gap between male and female infants, the former having a mortality rate of 50.4 while the latter have 41.3.<sup>389</sup> Maternal mortality has fallen from 248 (per 100,000) in 1989 to 190 in 1995.<sup>390</sup> A clear urban-rural disparity is also present with all of these indicators. One worrying issue that has not seen notable improvement is that 16% of infants are underweight at birth.<sup>391</sup>

### **Political Participation**

Democracy, as Sen argues, is a defense against famine. As illustrated in chapter three, democracy does not have deep roots in Guatemala. Political parties are little more than vehicles for different elite fractions. This continues to be very much the case, with the possible exception of the URNG, the former umbrella organization of the guerrillas. However, since the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996, when it became a political party, it has been highly divided and largely absent from the national political stage. Testifying to national apathy towards formal democracy – the ritual of voting –

Guatemala has the lowest voter turnout for elections in Latin America, at a mere 29.6%.<sup>392</sup>

Most civil participation and political voice for the popular sector is to be found coming from civil society unions. The other voice is non-governmental organizations representing different civil society constituencies, as opposed to the populace at large. Both the unions and the NGOs are present in such arenas the Consultative Group. This body is the international forum, administered by the United Nations and the Inter American Development Bank, for the monitoring of the Peace Accords and the implementation of the development agenda stipulated therein.

The obverse of democratization is militarization. Increased military spending and increased participation in the military are both accurate indicators of the level of militarization of a country or society. Participation is by far the most significant of the two factors. It is high levels of militarization that cause low levels of democracy and not vice-versa.<sup>393</sup> The history of the military's control of Guatemala was sketched in Chapter 3, and recent increases in its funding was noted in Chapter 4. The level of participation in the military extends far beyond the 40,000 soldiers that filled the ranks of the army at its height. It is the 900,000 members of the PAC, the Civil Self-Defense Patrols, which the military state mobilized in the 1980s that are the true indicator of the militarization of the country.<sup>394</sup> While required to be fully demobilized under the Peace Accords, the PAC continue to be a considerable political and military constituency within the country. Their political mobilization has increased considerably since 2002, reflecting the very fragile space for real democratic participation.<sup>395</sup>

## **Migration**

The importance of remittances to the national economy has already been mentioned. What has not been discussed are the people and migration that underlie that crucial source of income for so many Guatemala. This section outlines the issues behind migration, and identifies both the source and destination of migrants domestically and



internationally. This allows us to see which regions are gravely affected by socio-economic crises, given how migration acts as an indicator of local conditions.

With the rise of such concepts as economic, but particularly environmental refugees, migration is an issue of global concern. It is also a very clear indicator of conditions in a particular area. The term environmental refugee is itself a bit of a misnomer, firstly in that it hides the economic roots and dimensions of the environmental problem. As famine is not simply the condition of their not *being* enough food, but rather of people not *having* enough of it, it is not the destruction of the environment that is the issue, but rather the fact that people are unable to support themselves and survive in their degraded environs. This is not to deny the environmental destruction, but rather to focus on its relationship with the human community. Secondly, the environmental destruction often ignores the economic roots, understood as the human relationship with (or exploitation of) the environment for a community's survival. Environmental degradation does not always or simply occur on its own, especially where humanity is involved. Degradation and exploitation are inseparably linked processes, which often have the social and economic roots outlined in chapters 3 and 4, and discussed below in the section on the environmental impacts. The point here is that migration is an issue of survival. Outside of situations of civil unrest and warfare, this is generally a purely economic concern, in the broadest of senses.

The first dynamic of migration to affect Guatemala, since the conquest and colonization, has been that of urbanization, which was briefly outlined in Chapter 3. The enormous growth of Guatemala City in the last half-century is testimony to this, as the Metropolitan Region is the principal destination of internal migrants. The second destination has been the Peten, which has been treated as the last frontier for colonization for roughly the last thirty years. Aside from Sacatepequez, with the country's capital of the tourism industry, Antigua, all other departments of the country are net sources of emigration.<sup>396</sup>

International migration is also a more recent phenomenon, largely occurring since the civil war. In addition to the estimated one million people displaced internally during this

time, over 400,000 fled the country as refugees, mainly to Mexico, but also to Belize, El Salvador and Honduras. Numerous others fled further afield to Canada and above all the United States. By 1980 there were 63,073 registered Guatemalan immigrants in the US and 225,739 by 1990, representing 78% of all international emigration.<sup>397</sup> There are currently an estimated one million Guatemalans living in the United States, roughly a quarter of whom are there illegally. The departments of origin of these Guatemalan emigrants and their distribution throughout the United States are as follows:

**Table 12: Guatemalan Migration by Origin and Destination**

Department	Percentage	Share % of Dept. Pop.	Destination State	Percent
Huehuetenango	23	26.1	California	64
San Marcos	18	21.3	New York	12
Quetzaltenango	14	20.6	Illinois	7
Retalhuleu	12	49.6	Florida	5
Suchitepequez	10	24.7	Texas	4
Chiquimula	9	28.7	Georgia	3
Santa Rosa	8	25.0	Oregon	2
El Progreso	6	41.9	All Others	3

Source: OIM 2001: 14-17 and own calculations.

What makes the percentage of Guatemalans in the US from Chiquimula even more impressive is that, with the exception of Retalhuleu, all of those departments with a greater share of the emigrants have populations that are significantly larger (by at least 100,000 people) than Chiquimula, some more than double. These 90,000 Chiquimulans in the US represent 28.7% of the entire population of the department. While this pales in comparison with the equivalent of half the current population of Retalhuleu having emigrated to the US, it is indicative of the difficult situations in these departments.

Finally there is a seasonal element to migration, when people move in search of work. Contrary to what would ensure livelihoods and subsistence for peasant families, the period of the coffee harvest – the main source of employment for peasant labour – coincides with basic grain harvests. The coffee harvest and related seasonal employment begins in November and extends until February. Maize and bean harvests, for subsistence farmers, while varying across the country, can extend from August to

January.<sup>398</sup> In addition to this conflict between subsistence and paid labour, there is also the six month 'lean season' between February and August, when peasant families have no possibilities for work and no hope for food production. They are left to survive on their production and earnings from the previous season. For most areas of the country, this food 'deficit' period is a regular yearly occurrence, regardless of the success of the previous years crops, given the limited area of land dedicated to production, and irrespective of the seasonal employment, given the low wages.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

One of the clearest direct impacts of the last fifty years of 'development' in Guatemala has been the destruction, degradation and deforestation of the environment. These three outcomes are also part of the dialectic process of marginalization and exclusion, which, through the concentration of land, particularly prime agricultural land amongst commercial producers, has forced the 'peasantry' to exploit marginal and sensitive agro-ecological areas. The impacts of both commercial and subsistence economies has been overwhelming.

Weinberg<sup>399</sup> discusses modernization's systematic destruction of tradition and the elaborate and religiously imbued 'culture of maize' of the Maya. He cites the military colonization, as a reward, of the Northern Transversal Strip, as being a direct attack on peasants, while the cattle industry, generally, forced Mayan peasants off the land, breaking their spiritual and reproductive link with it. The counter-insurgency measures themselves both directly, through chemical warfare, fires and the like, and indirectly, through displacement, marginalization and cattle ranching, attacked the Guatemalan environment generally and its forests in particular. The complex interaction of all these different factors – development, poverty and social justice, warfare – and their destructive impact on ecosystems in Central America is forcefully detailed by Faber.<sup>400</sup>

The table below illustrates these impacts through detailing current usage of land at the departmental level, the degradation of that land<sup>401</sup> and the remaining area of forest cover.

**Table 13: Land Use and Degradation, by Department**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Area (km2)</b>	<b>Correct Use %</b>	<b>Under Use %</b>	<b>Over Use %</b>	<b>Degraded %</b>	<b>Forest Cover %</b>
Alta Verapaz	8686	55.8	4.2	39.4	29.7	40.1
Baja Verapaz	3124	27.7	0.2	72.1	35.6	47.5
Chimaltenango	1979	26.3	3.2	70.5	43.9	38.4
Chiquimula	2376	59.1	0.7	40.2	67.7	16.4
El Progreso	1922	15.9	0	86.1	68.1	13.5
El Quiché	8378	42.4	10.5	47.1	20.1	16.9
Escuintla	4384	50.1	23.1	26.8	24	3.3
Guatemala	2126	8.8	4.8	86.4	77	19.8
Huehuetenango	7400	38.8	3.9	59.4	42.1	37.3
Izabal	9038	48.8	20.8	26.2	21.1	29.9
Jalapa	2063	47	53.1	0	77	11.5
Jutiapa	3219	6	5.8	88.3	62.3	3.6
El Petén	35854	70.1	12.7	16	14.5	48.9
Quetzaltenango	1951	49.1	10.8	40.1	52.3	24.8
Retalhuleu	1856	40.9	33.7	25.4	33.4	0.3
Sacatepéquez	465	52.1	4.2	43.3	30.1	24.1
San Marcos	3791	27.5	6.1	66.4	55.2	19.6
Santa Rosa	2955	8.4	13.9	77.8	60.5	5.9
Sololá	1061	79.9	1.2	19	48.3	18.7
Suchitepéquez	2510	27.8	30.9	41.3	30.8	5.0
Totonicapán	1061	26.2	0	73.8	17.5	60.6
Zacapa	2690	44.6	0	55.4	64.2	21.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>108889</b>				<b>31.5</b>	<b>35.5</b>

Source: UICN 2001: 40 and PNUD 1998: 224

There are two main issues in the misuse of land resources in Guatemala that are leading to its degradation – the grazing of cattle on land suited to agricultural production, and agricultural production on marginal land not suitable for cultivation. This cattle grazing, which now occupies 2.6 million hectares of land, over half of the agricultural frontier,<sup>402</sup> exposes land naturally suited to cultivation to increased erosion, while also compacting soils. This grazing land is further inappropriate in that it is incapable of supporting suitable grazing vegetation for more than a few of years, before being exhausted and requiring expansion into newly deforested areas. It repeats this cycle, leaving overgrazed, deforested, eroded and soil compacted land behind that is by this point unsuitable for cultivation due to the damage wrought.<sup>403</sup>

The cultivation of marginal lands is principally a phenomenon of poor and landless peasants. As they have no or insufficient land to produce enough for subsistence, due to the processes of concentration and appropriation of prime agricultural land in *latifundia*, they exploit whatever land remains. This survival strategy finds only marginal land, with poor or already depleted soils, usually on sloping hillsides, left available for exploitation. This land is therefore also sensitive to deforestation and erosion, which quickly compounds its marginality, eventually failing and forcing subsistence farmers to seek new areas to exploit. With no tenure to the land, or security over their usufruct rights, most peasant families are economically rational in not investing the time, labour or resources in maintaining or improving the land they exploit. Only when they have clear and unthreatened proprietary right to the land (not simply renting), do they maintain and improve it as an investment in their future subsistence and wealth.

Given the growth of the population, and the concentration of the majority of land in the hands of so few, the very determined defense of land that is claimed means that there is virtually no frontier left for expansion. All that does remain is in the Peten region (the Northern Transversal Strip having already been fully colonized). But this rainforest, with its shallow calcium based soil, is also very sensitive to erosion and easily exhausted by agriculture and cattle grazing.

The result is increased vulnerability of both the land itself and the people that survive on it. Both are now increasingly vulnerable to 'natural' hazards, many of which are significantly less natural, becoming pseudo-natural, due to human alteration of the physical environment. This changes the physical and biological dynamics creating greater exposure to, and hence risk from the destruction caused by flooding, erosion, desertification, landslides, hurricanes and the like. The very environment itself has its natural resistance to this hazards undermined, so that it is further degraded, while also impacting more severely on human settlements. The incredible destruction wrought by Hurricane Mitch is the prime example of this process, where deforestation exposed both land and communities to enormous damages, against which they were effectively defenseless.

There is also the plethora of thus far unmentioned problems of monoculture. This mode of production has several times exposed key cash crops, like bananas and coffee to devastation by diseases. The inappropriate and excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides has wrought massive ecological destruction, as well as elevating human vulnerability and mortality through poisoning.<sup>404</sup> This is particularly the case with spraying along the Pacific Slope, where cotton and sugar production are concentrated, depending on the enormous application of these chemical inputs. The Peten has also suffered from this misuse of fertilizer where tracts of its soil have been 'chemically burned' beyond use and possibly even beyond recovery.<sup>405</sup>

### **CONCLUSION: Vulnerability, Global Vulnerability and their Distribution**

While not necessarily factors of vulnerability for all types of hazards or disasters (particularly technological ones), the dimensions of poverty, malnutrition, social exclusion and environmental damage discussed above are all relevant factors when it comes to famine. Famine and hunger do not affect the rich, especially in Guatemala where the rich are not simply 'relatively' so, but are absolutely wealthy, in any context or country of the world. Therefore, knowing who is poor, and where they are is important to understanding and combating both poverty and hunger. Similarly, those that are already suffering from malnutrition, both chronic and acute, are likely to become poorer and more vulnerable to future hunger. The malnutrition that affects the rich (obesity, anorexia, bulimia and the like) is of their choosing. The poor are undernourished not by choice, but of necessity. They have only one choice in a socio-economic system in which, by simply being poor, they do not exercise effective demand. They can choose between present hunger and future destitution. The debt, poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and environmental degradation traps in which they find themselves are mutually reinforcing and regressive, each one compounding the other, as they all increase detrimentally with time.

The resulting political and economic weakness of the poor, the rural, the indigenous, the uneducated, those living in marginal areas, increases their vulnerability to practically all 'natural' and pseudo natural hazards. It is furthered by the extent to which they are a

semi-proletariat, effectively between worlds. This means they have lost or are losing both the social and technological means to survive and cope with threats, but also that they have not availed themselves of the protection of 'modernization' as they are not fully incorporated into the formal modern sector.

Given the limited nature of the modern sector, particularly in a peripheral export led economy, it is impossible for the masses of the rural poor, who in turn become the urban poor, to be incorporated. Economic development is not concerned with them, but rather with satisfying external markets. Further, this economic development is content to leave them in this 'grey area' of being a semi-proletariat, between tradition and modernity, as it sufficiently maintains both the labour market and the consumer market at a level acceptable to the dominant economic elite, without directly prejudicing their larger export interests. The difficulty of effectively developing and serving rural markets is understood and has been decided against in favour of the easier and more profitable (or at least perceived to be so) export sector. The pursuit of internal development means absolute losses for the economic elite in the short term, and relative ones in the long term. From the actions of history, it is clear that any such elite impoverishment is not acceptable.

And so the poor, the rural and the indigenous of Guatemala find themselves exposed also to the vagaries of the global market, where the profits of their labour are privatized and captured by the economic elite, while the costs and losses, the instability of those markets is socialized and bourn by the poor. In this way peasants and workers, both rural and urban, are made economically vulnerable through their exposure to international markets. The volatility of agricultural commodities can be enough to take lives, but it is never enough to raise them out of poverty. Similarly, the assembly of light manufactured goods, particularly clothing and textiles in the *maquilas*, can maintain people alive (although not an entire family), but can just as quickly leave them with nothing. It is this volatility and the human disaster it causes that are explored in the next chapter.

## Chapter VI

# Unveiling the Famine Process

*"When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. And when I ask why they have no food, they call me a Communist."*

– **Bishop Helder Camara** (Brazil)

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter reconstructs the famine event of 2001, demonstrating the limited immediate perception of the ‘famine event’. After outlining what actually occurred during the famine, this chapter unveils its actual and underlying causes. By treating the famine as a process with historic and anthropogenic roots, it is clearly connected to the historical context and political economic structure of the country detailed in the previous three chapters. As such, we see that the famine is very much a process, that extends far beyond the *canícula* of 2001 into the past and that has continued and intensified to the present day.

We begin with an outline of the evolution of the famine, from the perspective of humanitarian aid and its early warning systems. Continuing from this perspective, the actual scope of the famine, its impacts and elements are detailed. From there the actual underlying roots of the famine are systematically unveiled, demonstrating the evolution of the crisis as a process itself and not a sudden rain-related impact event. From the roots of the 2001 famine we move forward to consider how the disaster has continued and intensified over the subsequent two years. The chapter’s conclusion reemphasizes the links between the famine process and the political economic processes of ‘development’ that are the foundations of the disaster.

### THE FAMINE EVENT

The famine was officially recognized on September 3, 2001, when President Portillo declared a 30-day State of National Calamity. At that point, the focus of emergency aid became Chiquimula, the newly ‘discovered’ epicentre of the crisis. Problems in six other departments had been previously detected and were to varying degrees being addressed



by international aid and humanitarian relief agencies. A total of nine departments were identified by MAGA and the WFP<sup>406</sup> as being most affected by the *canícula*. None of these departments were Chiquimula. In fact, repeatedly in reports from July and August, Chiquimula's crop production was considered to be virtually unaffected by the drought. It was actually identified as a source of maize and bean production for export to the other affected departments, given that it is regularly the largest bean producer and second largest rice producing department in the country, while also providing surplus outputs of corn.<sup>407</sup>

### The Drought

In their analysis of rainfall behaviour for May, June and July of 2001, INSIVUMEH noted that in the country "the rains began normally in terms of time, however variations in the volume, intensity and distribution of these rains have been observed, factors which have without doubt had repercussions in provoking alterations in the different areas of agricultural and cattle production."<sup>408</sup> As their analysis shows, rainfall was in fact normal or above normal throughout the country in both April and May. There was, however, a slightly lower than normal level of rainfall in May for the departments of Chiquimula, Jutiapa and Jalapa.

**Table 14: Actual and Historic Average Rainfall (Litres/metre squared) for selected Departments:**

	April		May		June		July	
Department	Normal 2001		Normal 2001		Normal 2001		Normal 2001	
Guatemala	28	3	108	190	220	115	175	180
Quetzaltenango	42	8	116	212	152	75	96	101
Huehuetenango	50	14	100	222	208	115	107	216
Alta Verapaz	108	51	162	252	282	161	220	140
Izabal	145	308	164	186	265	306	421	251
Escuintla	18	0	140	150	282	153	107	216
Peten	50	111	112	191	180	256	185	131
Retalhuleu	145	151	384	390	474	293	434	250
Jutiapa	47	9	128	205	295	261	200	183
Zacapa	22	0	77	191	167	86	105	89
Chiquimula	48	50	160	142	328	119	260	380

Source: MAGA and PMA 2001 Appendix 2.<sup>409</sup>

Thus, as the rainy season drew towards its conclusion, and the famine crisis was becoming recognized, three departments actually experienced higher than normal rainfall during this period – Izabal (56 L/m<sup>2</sup>), Huehuetenango (102 L/m<sup>2</sup>) and El Peten (162 L/m<sup>2</sup>). Minor total deficits (of less than 29 L/m<sup>2</sup>) were experienced in four departments – Quetzaltenango, Escuintla, Jutiapa and Zacapa – and a significant deficit was recorded in Guatemala (43 L/m<sup>2</sup> – 92% of normal). Enormous total rainfall deficits occurred in Chiquimula (105 L/m<sup>2</sup> – 86% of normal), Alta Verapaz (168 L/m<sup>2</sup> – 78%) and Retalhuleu (353 L/m<sup>2</sup> – 75%).

However, it is the month of June that is critical for the main subsistence crops of maize and beans. In Chiquimula maize is planted at the end of April and throughout May and harvested at the end of August. Therefore, the rain in June, more than simply irrigating fields, also provides cloud cover that prevents crops from being withered in the field by the force of the sun. The most severely affected department in June was Chiquimula, receiving only 36% of its normal rainfall. Seven other departments received roughly half their normal rain in that month, while two actually received more rain than normal.

**Table 15: Maize Production Projections and Losses: (for affected departments)**

	<b>Anticipated Production</b>		<b>Damages to Production</b>		<b>% loss (volume)</b>
<b>Department</b>	<b>Manzanas<sup>410</sup></b>	<b>Quintales<sup>411</sup></b>	<b>Manzanas</b>	<b>Quintales</b>	
El Progreso	3,380.0	212,963.86	2,847.7	85,380.0	40
Santa Rosa	5,070.0	257,597.57	4,008.15	38,040.5	14.8
Retalhuleu	28,730.0	1,895,183.46	14,929.2	490,930.0	25.9
Izabal	3,380.0	269,474.61	40.04	1260.0	0.467
San Marcos	28,730.0	1,964,812.87	5.72	88.0	0.00004
Suchitepequez	29,575.0	1,800,648.37	10,407.54	436,680.0	24.25
Jutiapa	4,225.0	123,977.44	3,575.0	75,075.0	60.55
Zacapa	6,760.0	304,025.75	431.86	7,560.0	2.49
Jalapa	9,295.0	688,763.57	3,131.7	81,571	11.84
Huehuetenango	19,435.0	802,777.81	98.81	2,514.9	0.31
Baja Verapaz	2,535.0	60,152.02	1,012.44	7,494.0	12.458
Alta Verapaz	38,870.0	1,691,924.74	161.59	4,299.0	0.25
Escuintla	16,900.0	1,483,137.55	87.23	2,572.0	0.17
<b>Country Total<sup>412</sup></b>	<b>845,000.0</b>	<b>23,226,800.0</b>	<b>40,734.98</b>	<b>1,233,464.4</b>	<b>5.31</b>

Source: MAGA and PMA 2001

The impact of the ‘drought’ was greatest on maize production generally, bean harvests being acutely affected in only a handful of departments. The initial estimates of MAGA on the *canícula*’s impact on both crops are displayed in these tables, above and below.

**Table 16: Bean Production Projections and Losses (for affected departments):**

	<b>Anticipated Production</b>		<b>Damages</b>		
<b>Department</b>	<b>Manzanas</b>	<b>Quintales</b>	<b>Manzanas</b>	<b>Quintales</b>	<b>% Losses</b>
El Progreso	637.00	7,662.78	34.32	384.00	5.01
Santa Rosa	2,126.69	16,447.84	745.03	3733.00	22.70
Jutiapa	1,203.69	9,929.97	1072.50	8584.00	86.45
Jalapa	4,477.24	36,935.50	2838.55	18160.00	49.17
Huehuetenango	5,295.00	8,9790.55	9.01	74.20	0.08
Baja Verapaz	726.69	4,497.52	5.72	80.00	1.78
<b>Country Total</b>	<b>182,000</b>	<b>2,006,600</b>	<b>4,705.13</b>	<b>31,015.20</b>	<b>1.55</b>

Source: MAGA and PMA 2001

Overall cereal production for 2001 was 9% lower than in 2000. It is also worth noting that twice the area of corn production destroyed by Mitch was lost in this first harvest due to the drought.<sup>413</sup> The second harvest in 12 departments was also affected by the drought, but to varying degrees and generally to a lesser extent than with the first harvest. El Progreso was the most severely affected, with losses of up to 70% in some municipalities.<sup>414</sup>

By volume in 2001, Chiquimula was forecast to be the seventh largest maize-producing department (1,400,675.1 quintales) in the country and the third largest bean producer (306,668.97 quintales). Yet there were no crop losses recorded by the MAGA/WFP forecasts from August, in spite of it being the clear centre of the June *canícula* in the INSIVUMEH data. Thus, none of the first 12,702 families identified as food insecure as a result of the ‘drought’ were in fact located in Chiquimula.

### **The Scope of the Discrete Event**

By June the World Food Program (WFP) was warning of imminent famine conditions and in July MAGA announced that basic grain crops had indeed been affected by the drought. These two organizations began an initial food security evaluation in July,

which was presented on August 7<sup>th</sup> to various bilateral funding agencies, with a request for funding and food aid. By August 31<sup>st</sup>, the first food distribution to the identified 12,702 food insecure families was under way, using food stores already present in the country.

By the beginning of September, journalists investigating the famine uncovered 41 deaths, while the WFP reported hunger crises in 49 of the country's 331 municipalities.<sup>415</sup> Portillo's 30-day State of National Calamity to address the famine introduced an Intensive Action Plan to remedy the situation. On September 6<sup>th</sup>, the WFP announced the results of its Food and Nutritional Security Evaluation, raising the number of families at risk to 15,900, or 64,000 people.<sup>416</sup>

The first international bilateral responses came from Cuba and Venezuela, neither of whom were present in the August 7<sup>th</sup> WFP meeting. Cuba sent 27 doctors with tents, food and medical supplies to attend affected people in rural areas. Venezuela sent 17 tonnes of food aid, along with trucks and military personnel to distribute it, as well as a number of health care workers.

By September 8<sup>th</sup>, private emergency relief fundraising campaigns were underway in Europe, lead by non-governmental organizations such as the Red Cross and Carítas. However, September 11<sup>th</sup> effectively ended both these campaigns and international press coverage of the famine throughout Central America. However, by late October, the International Federation of the Red Cross and UNICEF had begun new emergency fundraising appeals to address the still growing famine. In early November, the WFP began its second distribution of food, this time to 20,312 families. World Food Program numbers from December state the number of people at risk from food insecurity from the famine at 134,000. An initial study completed by UNICEF and the Ministry of Health at the time estimated of up to 100,000 children under the age of 5 as at risk of death due to malnutrition.<sup>417</sup>

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002, the first death due to the famine since October was reported. This two-year-old boy brought the reported death toll of the famine to 124; a number that grew to 126 by the end of the January.

The government acted on the basis of its poverty mapping, orienting its Intensive Action Plan to coincide with its Strategy for Poverty Reduction. This meant that it was only going to address the famine in municipalities amongst the list of 102 in the country with a poverty rate of 80% or higher. Unfortunately, the ‘famine’ was not so considerate as to limit itself to these 102 extremely poor municipalities, or even appear in many of them.

Initial acute malnutrition surveys carried out by UNICEF in September and October 2001, in selected municipalities, demonstrated severe acute malnutrition in 14% of children under 5 in four different municipalities in Chiquimula – Camotán, Jocotán, Olopa and San Juan Ermita. Numbers above 2% in acute malnutrition usually indicate a nutritional emergency or disaster situation.<sup>418</sup>

In fact, the nutritional assessments undertaken in the wake of the ‘famine event’ (September to November) found other municipalities, entirely outside of the eastern highland region that the World Food Programme has christened part of the Central American ‘drought belt’, have even more extreme levels of malnutrition than those found in the affected municipalities of Chiquimula. Areas of Huehuetenango, Alta and Baja Verapaz and Quiche also had acute malnutrition levels ranging from 4.1% to 11.2% - yet none of these were the focus of substantial aid. A January 2002 survey of acute malnutrition amongst children in 129 municipalities, found acute malnutrition rates in 7 departments ranging between 21% and 31%. One municipality had an overall acute malnutrition rate of 61%, where severe acute malnutrition of children under five was 54%. This means that over half of these children weighed less than 70% the normal weight for their size.<sup>419</sup>

Food deficit estimates, based on total food production and consumption in a municipality, were performed to indicate how many months before the next harvest, in August, food

supplies and resources would run out. In 9 of the 12 departments, families would run out of food more than three months before the next harvest, which is to say by May of 2002. In El Progreso and Baja Verapaz, the deficit was four months, meaning supplies will last only until April. In Chiquimula, the deficit was six and a half months, meaning that food supplies for subsistence farmers were almost exhausted by the time this survey was undertaken in January.<sup>420</sup>

## **THE FAMINE PROCESS**

At this point it is worth reiterating that none of the official reports from any of the government or multilateral agencies record any mortality figures. As noted above the famine did not end in October 2001 but re-emerged in the press in January 2002, when three more famine victims were reported. By this time relief agencies were continuing aid operations and planning additional ones for the regular food deficit months until the next harvest. This all meant that the famine was far from over.

After initial state response in September 2001, which consisted mainly of seeds and fertilizer, it has been largely inactive in responding to the crisis. Many promises were made, but few delivered. School breakfasts and lunches are not being delivered, as supplies do not exist or are not being distributed by the government. By January 2003, its 'Plan de Emergencia Nacional' was still waiting to be executed. This plan would see "20 pounds of maize, beans and rice, one pound of salt and one gallon of oil" delivered to 50,000 families for six months.<sup>421</sup> However, these families represent less than ten percent of the 2.8 million Guatemalans considered to be facing the food crisis by this point.

## **The Causes of the Famine**

All of the various agencies involved in addressing the famine cite a list of causes for it quite separate from the drought. The coffee crisis is universally heralded as one of these causes, with the drop in price on the international market causing producers to scale back or cease their production. This has simultaneously reduced both employment and the wages for those still with jobs (seasonal or permanent) in the sector. Other general

economic factors cited include a reduction of jobs in the *maquila* sector, as well as a reduction of income from tourism and from family remittances.<sup>422</sup>

However, these are all proximate causes – triggers – that have unleashed the latent disaster inherent in the poverty and hunger of the country's political economic structure. These structural or underlying vulnerabilities are centred on the situation of land – its tenure and concentration, and its productive capacity. All of these trigger factors – drought, the coffee crisis, the recession, jobs losses, early warning systems and emergency response and land issues – are discussed in detail below.

### **Drought**

The *canícula* and the 'drought belt' should not be entirely dismissed, as they were proximate factors for the famine in some areas of the country. Chiquimula and the Eastern Highlands are the driest region of the country and frequently experience localized irregularities in rainfall that clearly affect crops. However, drought explanations must always be qualified as both proximate and partial. Rainfall was not an issue for the majority of the country, even those departments that suffered the greatest reduction in precipitation during the 2001 *canícula*, given that they regularly receive up to 4000mm annually. The other qualification is that it is not simply a generalized lack or reduction of rainfall that affects crops, and thereby agricultural livelihoods, but a lack of water, sun or shade for those crops at key moments in their agricultural cycle. Therefore, readymade answers, such as irrigation, only respond to one of these concerns, which represents only a fraction of the entire famine process.

However, the roots of the 2001 crisis stretch back to the entire political economic structure of the country. That said, other 'proximate' causes or triggers were already active in exacerbating the famine process. Before the drought ever became an issue – before the rainy season even began – the coffee crisis had already imperiled the survival of thousands of families. With the quarter million job reduction in the 2000/2001 harvest, up to 42,000 families saw their seasonal and permanent income vanish. The June *canícula* did not occur until four months into the 'lean season', when the previous

year's harvests were already exhausted or nearly so. Both the families that had lost their source of income and those that did not were desperately waiting for the next harvest to begin in August in order to fill their empty stomachs. Even if the 2001 harvest was exceptional, it still would have come entirely too late for those already lost to acute malnutrition from the previous year.

### **The Coffee Crisis**

The importance of coffee to the Guatemalan economy is clear. The impact of the coffee crisis has been devastating. Half a million jobs were lost within two years. More than \$200 million in export revenues 'disappeared' in 2001. This enormous reduction in revenues with the drop in coffee prices has had a very direct impact on Guatemalan coffee producers. As a result of increasing unprofitability some 2% of small producers and 3% of medium and large producers<sup>423</sup> have completely shut down. That is over 2000 coffee producers that have abandoned their operations. At the same time, a mere 10% of producers continue to operate at full capacity. Most producers are operating at half capacity, this being the case for 51% of small producers, 44% of medium producers and 40% of large producers.<sup>424</sup>

The direct impact of these closures and reductions in production is felt first and foremost by the unskilled labourers directly employed in the coffee sector. In the 1999/2000 coffee season they totalled 750,000 people – a full 21.5% of the country's work force that year. In 2000/2001, 20% of full-time direct jobs were lost, putting 63,461 people out of work, plus an additional 182,317 seasonal workers.<sup>425</sup> That is one third of the previous year's work force that disappeared, with a still uncalculated impact on indirect employment.

All estimates project a further reduction of employment in the sector by half in the 2001/2002 season. This means another 250,000 direct full-time and seasonal jobs vanished. For the estimated quarter of a million workers that remain employed, they will see their wages and benefits drop even further, in spite of the increased minimum wage for agriculture put into law in 2001.



The reduction of employment in coffee production and the general scaling back of operations intrinsically generates another cycle of problems. The reduction refers more to the elimination of parts of the cultivation cycle as opposed to the percentage of land being harvested. With the elimination of pre-harvest activities and other costly inputs in the production process, the quality of the coffee is reduced. With an enormous surplus of 'low quality' coffee flooding the international market, high quality coffee (gourmet, organic, shade grown, fair trade, hard-bean) through greater production of arabica beans, as opposed to the more common, lower quality robusta bean, is the only profitable option.<sup>426</sup> While one third of Guatemala's coffee production is already in specialty coffee, other countries are quickly moving to capitalize on this option as well.<sup>427</sup>

However, without the labour inputs to assure necessary certification and gourmet quality, these avenues of income, limited as they may be, are closed to Guatemalan producers. This further affects the 'national brand' of coffee, relegating all of national production to the low quality shelf. Only those with the marketing capital to promote their coffee as gourmet are able to tap these niche markets. Poor, small-scale peasant producers are notably lacking in these marketing networks.

The shift towards gourmet coffee production is sweeping the entirety of the world's coffee producers and producing countries. Even if attempts at the International Coffee Organization are successful in reducing or eliminating global production, and hence glut, of low quality coffee, the same situation will still occur for gourmet coffee. Given that these specialty beans are more expensive to produce, what is occurring is simply an expansion of the crisis to a new area, rather than the resolution of a problem in the global economic structure. Or rather, it is only a problem for those producing the primary commodity.

Another complication involves the small producers themselves, on two different fronts. Given that prices fell so dramatically, there is a belief amongst them that prices cannot drop any further and therefore must start rising again. This belief has fuelled the expansion of production in some of the poorest areas of the country. While their belief

has proved correct, the stabilization of the world coffee price at just over \$0.50 a pound is hardly enough to cover production costs. The gross inequity of the coffee commodity chain means that for every pound of coffee, those who pick it receive 14 cents or less. Producers in general receive between 35 and 45 cents per pound. Those at the other end of the commodity chain, selling coffee by the cup, earn up to \$9.00 for each pound.<sup>428</sup>

The second factor is that most small producers are subsistence farmers whose only income is derived from modest coffee production on their marginal parcels of land. All of these factors mean that they have no direct links to market their coffee and therefore sell to the intermediaries known as *coyotes*. Given the lack of other outlets to sell their production in a limited time and with no storage capacity, in many cases combined with previous debt, these small producers are forced to sell at the price dictated by the *coyote* or earn nothing at all.

Finally, there is the issue of the distribution of labour in coffee production, between small, medium and larger producers. Most small producers are peasant families augmenting their income by cultivating coffee on what little land they do possess. This means that 80% of all labour in the coffee sector is on medium and large plantations. However, these medium and large producers represent a small fraction of all coffee producers in the country. Of the roughly 100,000 producers, more than 95% are small scale, more than 2425 are medium and over 1507 are large in size.<sup>429</sup>

In Chiquimula, these medium and large producers account for 96.4% of all production in that department, the highest proportion in the country. This is all the more pertinent as Chiquimula has become the fourth largest producer in the country, and the second largest employer. In 1999/2000 coffee cultivation provided 33,554 permanent jobs and 43,406 seasonal ones – a total of 76,960 livelihoods<sup>430</sup> in a department with a population of 313,150. This is all the more significant considering the size of the rural population in the department (74.7%) and the size of the family that this implies (six members). On a per capita basis for the department, each family had 1.5 members directly employed in

the coffee sector during this season, illustrating the overwhelming dependence of the population of Chiquimula on coffee.

The following harvest of 2000/2001 saw permanent and seasonal employment in the department drop to 22,559, 29,181 respectively, for a total of 51,740 jobs.<sup>431</sup> This gives us a household dependency ratio of 0.97 for this season. With employment cut in half for the 2001/2002 harvest, it is entirely impossible that coffee production was able to provide labour incomes to anywhere near all of the families in need of employment, even after disregarding the fiction of dependence per family. With only 7020 formal sector jobs in the entirety of the department,<sup>432</sup> absolutely none of which exist in the municipalities of Olopa or San Juan Ermita,<sup>433</sup> the importance of coffee to the livelihoods of Chiquimulans cannot be overstated.

### **Economic Recession**

Global economic trends easily and deeply affect vulnerable economies like Guatemala's. The Asian Economic Crisis in 1998/99 combined with the economic impact of Hurricane Mitch reduced overall projections for real growth from 4.8% to 4.6% in 1998 and from 5.1% to 3.6% in 1999. Actual GDP growth for these two years was 5.0% (including foreign aid and loans for Mitch recovery) and 3.8%, respectively. This reduction in growth continued into 2000, with a 3.3% rise in the GDP, while the rate for the year 2001 was 2.3%.<sup>434</sup>

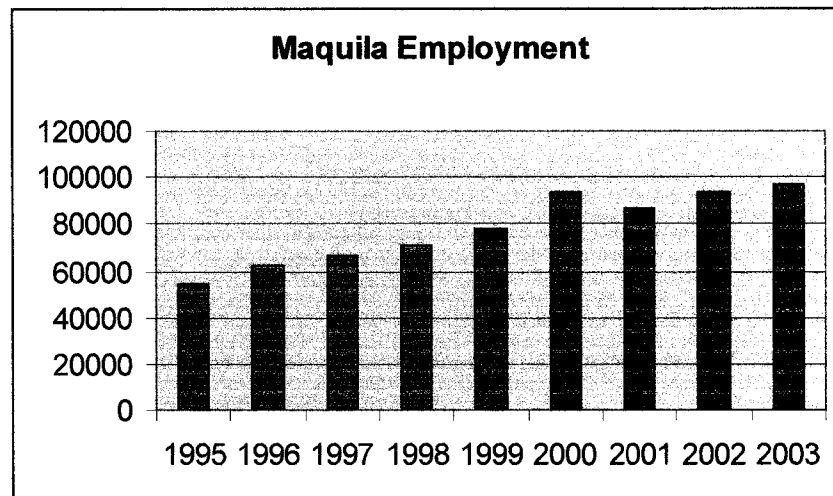
This macroeconomic data is significant because it represents the susceptibility of the Guatemalan economy to changes in international commodity prices for primary agricultural products and its vulnerability to climatic and natural phenomena affecting those crops. In fact, production of many export crops have still not reached pre-Mitch levels, while international prices have fallen drastically for coffee, sugar, cardamom and sesame, with lesser decreases in banana prices. Given that 22% of Guatemala's GDP is derived directly from agricultural production, this is more than relevant to both government finances, its social and development spending, and private sector employment.

The global economic recession of the last two years is thought to have affected Guatemala in a number of ways. Apart from the coffee crisis, only one of those impacts listed above as exacerbating the famine is manifestly evident. There was a clear drop in the level of *maquila* employment during the crisis. The evidence for the reduction in tourism and remittances, at least at the aggregate level, is contradictory for the first and simply not apparent with the second. All three are discussed below in greater detail.

### ***Maquila* Contraction**

While statistics from the *maquila* and textile manufacturing industry vary greatly according to their source, all agree that there were significant job losses in 2001. In spite of all the problems already noted with the *maquilas*, these jobs still represent livelihoods for those women and their families. As will be explained below at the end of the section on remittances, the loss of these 7000 jobs in 2001 had implications for the entire country, including Chiquimula.

**Figure 9: Garment Maquila Employment**



Source: VESTEX

### **Reduction of Remittances**

There are an estimated one million Guatemalans living in the United States, of whom some 20-27% are without documents. This makes them the third largest immigrant population in the country, after Mexicans and El Salvadorans. The vital economic link to

Guatemala that is provided by these emigrants, discussed in chapter 4, rivals coffee, *maquilas* and tourism for providing income in the national economy. It is of perhaps even greater importance than any other source of national income because this money goes directly and almost completely<sup>435</sup> into the hands of Guatemalan families. As such, this informal subsidy actually outstrips the annual disbursements (\$67.3 million) of the Guatemalan Social Security Institute (IGSS), its annual revenues (\$152.5 million) and even its total reserves (\$432 million).<sup>436</sup>

While remittances were thought to have decreased during the famine event in 2001, the statistics of the central bank indicate that they had increased over the previous year by roughly 10%, to \$571.3 million. However, while the aggregate amount of money remitted to the country increased, there is no data, nor any way of knowing with certainty, to whom this money was remitted. Another aspect of the distribution of remittances is whether or not they actually reach their intended recipients, it not being an uncommon occurrence that the remittances ‘fail’ to arrive.<sup>437</sup> Without knowing the distribution of this more than half a billion dollars, it is difficult to analyze its exact impact. Although it was undoubtedly important for families throughout the country, the best attempt we can make at understanding its distribution is to assume that it corresponds with the department of origin of Guatemalan migrants to the United States.

If this equal distribution were the case, then Chiquimula would have received 9% of those international funds sent home – roughly \$51.4 million. Even if this optimism did bear out, there is also the issue of who the international emigrants are themselves. Given both their capacity and resources to make their way out of the country, it is highly unlikely that any of these individuals, or their families, are the poorest, the most vulnerable or the most marginalized. To begin, these emigrants would have to at least speak Spanish, automatically making them less vulnerable than indigenous peoples that speak only their native language.

The final dimension of remittances is concerned with those from within the country itself. The high level of internal migration, principally to Guatemala City and El Peten, is

economically motivated. As Guatemala is the centre of virtually all industry (95%) in the country, including the *maquilas*, it is the principal source of internal remittances. El Peten still offers agricultural land for those wishing to settle, so livelihoods there are more oriented to subsistence than the wage based ones in the capital that provide money to remit. In spite of the meagre level of those wages, people do manage to save some to send to their families still living in 'the interior'.

### **Decline of Tourism**

Tourism has been of increasing importance to the Guatemalan economy, growing rapidly since the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996, when it earned over US \$238 million for the country.<sup>438</sup> According to the Guatemalan Institute of Tourism (INGUAT), in 2000, some 826,240 tourists came to Guatemala, leaving behind over \$535 million, making it the second largest source of income for the country, after coffee. Income from tourism for 2001 was down 8% to \$492 million, while the number of tourists was actually up by 1.1% to 835,000.<sup>439</sup> As noted earlier, BANGUAT shows the opposite trend and significantly different financial figures - \$300 million in 2000 and 365 million in 2001. The principal nations from which tourists come to Guatemala, firstly El Salvador and then the United States, Honduras and Mexico, saw significant reductions – 75,000 fewer Salvadorans and over 9000 fewer Americans visitors arrived.

What can be deduced is that tourism, like international emigration, is of little significance to the most vulnerable and marginalized. Tourism is limited to a handful of departments in Guatemala, and a restricted number of municipalities within those few departments. Generally, the majority of the poor are geographically removed from tourist areas. Those that are in the correct areas to profit from tourism are generally without the means to enter the cash-nexus that lubricates the tourism industry.

### **Land**

The IMF estimates that 12% of Guatemala's total area is arable land and that 42% of the total national area is in fact used for agriculture.<sup>440</sup> According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), 48% of Guatemala's surface area is natural dense

forest while another 25% is natural light forest, with 8% being jungle swamp. In 1960 the actual forest cover totalled 77% of the country's 108,889 km<sup>2</sup>, but massive deforestation since then, averaging up to 285,000 hectares per year in the Petén alone, has reduced that forest cover to a mere 26%. As most of this deforestation has been fuelled by expansion of cultivated land, it serves as an indicator of inappropriate land use, in addition to being a massive misuse of a natural resource. The change in the use of the soil with deforestation has increased the level of erosion by simply astounding proportions. In non-deforested regions, normal soil erosion ranges between 20 and 300 tonnes, per hectare, per year (t/ha/a), but in deforested areas this rate jumps to between 700 and 1100 t/ha/a. Thanks to deforestation, erosion has jumped by an average of 740 t/ha/a in some 3 million hectares of Guatemala. It is exactly this situation of deforestation and vulnerability to erosion that made Hurricane Mitch so destructive.

Another issue in the destruction of soils has been the overuse of fertilizers and pesticides, particularly in the Petén, as part of the policy of colonization and development of the jungle. This chemical burning of the topsoil has also affected both surface and subterranean water supplies, adding to the urban and industrial contamination through effluvial discharge already present. The issue of water is far greater and much more complex than simple contamination, as the very water cycle itself is being changed, with increased hydrological phenomena such as flooding and drought. Urban development and deforestation in areas of watershed recharging are also reducing water supplies by reducing both the area and capacity of the earth to absorb water.

All of these factors are contributing to the destruction of Guatemala's great biodiversity while at the same time threatening the human population by putting them at greater risk to natural disasters and reducing the soils productive capacity, heightening food insecurity. According to the UICN, the total area of environmental degradation in Guatemala, understood as "the physical, chemical and biological alterations of flora and fauna and the loss of soil through erosion thereby reducing the original conditions of a resource" is 31.5% of the country – 34,270 km<sup>2</sup>. According to this same report a full 1608 km<sup>2</sup> (67.7%) of Chiquimula's complete extension of 2376 km<sup>2</sup> is classified as

degraded. This is the highest proportion in the country, with the exception of the department of El Progreso. In Chiquimula, only 347 km<sup>2</sup> of forest cover remain. Both UNICEF and the World Food Programme also classify a number of municipalities in Chiquimula as suffering from extreme environmental degradation. UNICEF calculates that six of Chiquimula's eleven municipalities have more than 80% of their area degraded – Chiquimula (83%), San Jose La Arada (90%), San Juan Ermita (96%), Jocotan (85%), Olopa (92%) and San Jacinto (93%).<sup>441</sup>

This destruction of the environment is all entirely based on its exploitation, for profit and for survival. Each of these motives is representative of the actors at the poles of the land concentration spectrum. The wealthy agrarian and agro-industrial elite control and misuse the best agricultural land (e.g. grazing cattle where crops should be grown) while the poor infra-subsistence peasants with insufficient land super-exploit that to which they have access. These are two sides of the same process that is creating vulnerability both directly and indirectly. From the land concentration and degradation data presented for Chiquimula, it is clear that the land issue is at the heart of the famine.

### **Early Warning and Emergency Response**

In the lead up to the declaration of the famine, the early warning indicators were highlighting a number of areas, including Chiquimula. As already noted, immediate action was only taken in six affected departments, with Chiquimula identified as a source of food for shipment to these areas receiving the emergency response.

Thus, Chiquimula was entirely excluded from initial emergency response, through what can only be conceived as a total failure to interpret the early warning signs. The rainfall levels presented above are taken directly from the August 1st MAGA/WFP Technical Report on the irregular rains.<sup>442</sup> The WFP/MAGA Evaluation of Affected Areas<sup>443</sup> includes vulnerability maps which clearly indicate that four municipalities in Chiquimula are 'normally' extremely vulnerable to food insecurity, plus **a map and table** highlighting the six municipalities that suffer from extreme environmental degradation.<sup>444</sup> This latter report even includes the WFP VAM map showing that the entirety of



Chiquimula was the area of the country most affected by the *canicula*. Yet no action was taken in Chiquimula until the last day of August, after media reports of a famine outbreak in that department spread through the national press.

This failure of early warning systems, and to connect those systems with emergency response, allows us to make two further conclusions. First, as is obvious, the early warning systems and indicators are suffering from a number of problems and inaccuracies. Stemming from this is the second, that 'the famine' was undoubtedly affecting and claiming lives in other areas of the country, entirely ignored by both the media and relief agencies. As marginal as Chiquimula is, it is practically a cosmopolitan core and centre of the country when compared with other regions, such as the Verapaces, and especially Huehuetenango, Totonicapan, San Marcos and El Quiche. The indicators and conditions of vulnerability outlined in the previous chapter should make this, if nothing else, absolutely clear.

Flowing directly out of the failure of early warning systems is the second failure of emergency response. Most of this blame can be squarely laid upon the Government of Guatemala and the ministries and agencies responsible for the well-being of its citizens. I focus this blame on the state, as opposed to the international and multilateral agencies for whom it is their mission to detect and respond to humanitarian emergencies, because the state has clear, fundamental and primary legal responsibility for the well-being of its citizens. For the case in point, the Guatemalan state is specifically charged, by two articles of the country's constitution, with the provision of sufficient food and health for the population, including the guarantee of the right to food and public health.<sup>445</sup>

The specific failures of the government's response to the emergency has been a continuing process of failure and neglect over the last two years. The initial response to the famine consisted primarily of seeds and fertilizers, which were inappropriate and delivered too late for the second season's planting in any case. This is without considering the weakened condition of the population and difficulty of the intervening months that they would have to wait before availing themselves of the fruit of this aid.

The ongoing response failure that continues to the present day is that of the school breakfasts and lunches mentioned above. Even the extremely limited National Emergency Plan has yet to be implemented. While a complete issue unto itself, the principal activity of the Portillo administration, and certainly the one at which it has been most efficient, has been outright pillaging of the national treasury, which the *Prensa Libre* now estimates to total 3.6 billion *quetzales* – roughly US \$500 million.

If and when the government's Rural Poverty Reduction Strategy and National Emergency Plan are actually implemented, there is one unforeseen bright spot. As they are targeting the 102 poorest municipalities in the country, they are focusing on areas that were not seemingly targeted by famine, and therefore other relief efforts. While these municipalities were 'ignored' by the current crisis, these other poorer areas are all suffering from the same conjunction of disastrous factors.

### **THE CONSTANT DISASTER OF THE FAMINE PROCESS**

The 'famine event' of 2001 has led to the 'rediscovery' of hunger in Guatemala. In 2002 an estimated 2.5 million Guatemalans were considered 'food insecure'. In the spring of 2003, that number was 2.8 million. Chronic undernutrition rates were found to have absolutely increased across the country (although with an overall relative decrease). Acute malnutrition in excess of emergency thresholds was found in 48 municipalities in 12 different departments of the country.<sup>446</sup> The 'famine event' has grown and continued.

In the first four months of 2003, 22 children in the municipality of Santa María Cahabón, in Alta Verapaz died from hunger related illnesses. This is attributed to the coffee crisis and the collapse of the price of cardamom in the last two years. Both the aid, and the information available, is limited to communities that are readily accessible by the road network. Thus only 65 of the 166 communities in the municipality are actually being targeted by relief efforts and are included in this information.<sup>447</sup> In the opposite part of the country, near the Pacific coast, an emergency nutrition centre in Coatepeque has been attending malnourished infants and children since July of 2002.<sup>448</sup> This feeding centre was not even established until a year after the 'famine event' began!

The reason for this continuation and expansion<sup>449</sup> is because famine is not an event, but a process. As the WHO clearly recognizes, “In the majority of cases, a food emergency is not an acute situation, but rather one that develops over time.”<sup>450</sup> This evolution of a disaster over time is the construction of vulnerability. Poverty and vulnerability are not the causes of the famine process – they are a part of it. They are the destitution and desperation that sap assets and reduce resilience, heightening food insecurity. They are the underlying conditions that expose people to hazards; the latent disaster that those shocks and threats trigger.

The underlying conditions of vulnerability have been clearly detailed in the previous chapters, as have the processes leading to those conditions. This chapter has presented the interaction of all those conditions with the more proximate triggers that have unleashed a disaster. All that remains is to remind the gentle reader that the only thing unleashed by the drought and famine event of 2001 were perceptions. The vulnerability, the exposure, the latent disaster were all present long before the disaster ‘occurred’. Further, they have continued in both their presence and impact to this very day. The endemic hunger of an impoverished population has been slowly and less dramatically, and therefore less obviously, killing the rural and indigenous people of Guatemala for decades and centuries. An aspect of their marginalization is the very fact that this systematic immiseration is never ‘noticed’.

Thus, while there certainly was a crisis in Guatemala, and continues to be one, it is nothing new. It is the silent and unrecognized disaster that is the daily life for millions in that country. The question, then, is not ‘if a tree falls...’ but rather, ‘if a person goes hungry, is it a famine?’ The answer is ‘yes’.

One of the problems with relying on hazards and triggers is that they, just as the disasters they are considered to unveil, can also be less than spectacular events that go unnoticed. A large part of this problem stems from convictions as to what constitutes valid knowledge. For instance, the name (famine versus malnutrition or endemic hunger) matters, as the label – the definition – dictates the policy and action for the situation. One

of the great problems with policy and programming is, given its grounding in Newtonian science with its linear model for interpreting reality, is that it sees things in black and white, with clear categories. This failure to recognize the complexity of a reality often means that action is inherently limited, due to the limited understanding that guides it.

This problem becomes patently clear when we see the Guatemalan minister responsible for MAGA, the lead agency in dealing with the famine and food insecurity in the country, stating publicly that this year's deaths in Cahabón were due to 'malnutrition' and not famine.<sup>451</sup> People are suffering and ultimately dying from the same causes, as a result of the same processes, regardless of what they are called. As such, the fight for accurate language and understanding is a fight against both intellectual foolishness and the criminal behaviour that such thought, and speech, both tolerates and masks.

## Chapter VII

# The Recipe for Hunger

*"The modern conservative is engaged in one of man's oldest exercises in moral philosophy: that is the search for a superior moral justification for selfishness."*  
- John Kenneth Galbraith

### INTRODUCTION

This study began with a number of declared goals and positions, which all revolve around the thesis advanced. Two of them were that disasters are not natural and that famine is a process, which is not separate from the issue of endemic hunger. Another point was that hunger, poverty and vulnerability are not 'naturally' occurring conditions, but are socially constructed ones. These positions are all part of the argument presented in this thesis in answer to the question 'why did a famine occur in Guatemala in 2001?' The explanation is that the famine is a structural one. Further, the famine was not simply an event, but **is** a process that extends much further back than 2001, with its roots in the very colonial history of the country. The structure is the nation's political economy, itself the dynamic product of history and its actors. In this case, the actors are the Guatemalan elite who enjoy the wealth of the country through their participation in the expansion of the global capitalist system. This incorporation into the global economic system is based on the elites orienting Guatemala's political economy as a dependant supplier and consumer in the world market. They achieve this national economic orientation through their control of production, exchange, the state and the resources, or wealth, of the country itself. This wealth, principally the land of the country, is overwhelmingly concentrated in their hands, to make use of as they please.

The previous chapters have demonstrated each of these different elements and their evolution. They have shown the incredible concentration of wealth and power in the country's oligarchy. They have shown how Guatemala is dependent on global supply and demand, and who is made and maintained vulnerable by that dependency. This chapter begins with a review of the other goals laid out in the first chapter, before

discussing their relevance, and that of the thesis, in two different sections. The first concentrates on the findings and key observations regarding the case itself. The second summarizes the conclusions that we can draw from this case, regarding the three fields of disaster studies, hunger / famine/ food security and the political economy of development. The next chapter then closes the study with an overall conclusion.

Among the other goal stated in chapter one was to include Central America amongst the list of regions affected by famine. This seemingly trivial point, which I believe has been satisfactorily substantiated, is relevant in terms of its significance for the international humanitarian agenda. Whether you define famines as a process or a discrete event, it is undeniable that there has been a famine in Guatemala. The levels and extent of famishment, destitution, social breakdown and mortality satisfy all agencies' and viewpoints' criteria for identifying a famine. Thus, the generally recognized situation of hunger throughout Latin America can no longer be used as the sole category to classify the nutritional crisis in the region. This categorization is crucial in terms of focusing the international and development agenda on the problem of famine both in Latin America and as a process rather than an event. Acknowledged famine crises are significantly less tolerable than generalized poverty and endemic hunger. Therefore this classification is a political issue, with a substantial range and depth of implications. Apart from humanitarian activities, this classification affects development policy generally, as it calls into question development itself as a factor in disaster creation. Any cause for critical reflection on the trajectory of human 'progress' should be welcome.

## **THE ARGUMENT**

This thesis advanced an interpretation of the famine disaster in Guatemala as the result of the structure of the political economy. In chapter three it summarized the historical development of the political economy, whose structure it detailed in chapter four. Chapter five illustrated the extent of the poverty, hunger and vulnerability that this history and structure have created. Chapter six demonstrated how the 'famine event' itself evolved as merely the observable impact of the famine process. It also showed how the causal factors of endemic hunger and famine are the same.

Guatemala's economic history is undeniably agrarian, dependent and peripheral. From the active colonial underdevelopment of Latin America, the entire region has had its economy oriented towards the export of primary commodities and the import of manufactured goods. Since 1870, coffee has been 'king' in Guatemala. It has been the leading export at the centre of all elements of the economy – employment, services, infrastructure development, capital accumulation, foreign currency earnings, banking and finance, government revenue and ownership of the means of production. Initial industrial production in the country was based on coffee processing. Practically all other local production was artesanal and for subsistence, until roughly the middle of the twentieth century.

Until the coup of 1954, Guatemala was self-sufficient in its food production. Since then, it has become increasingly dependent on both food aid and food imports. Yet the food supply is still insufficient to feed the people of the country and has been declining (on a per capita basis) for the last fifteen years. While producing traditional and non-traditional agricultural export crops to earn foreign currency in order to import food, the terms of trade between these goods has been most unfavourable for Guatemala. The value of its products has been stagnant for the last four decades, while the food that it imports has almost tripled in index value. Then there are the costs of increased debt and even more unfavourable trade terms for the agro-industrial inputs that are imported for the production of Guatemala's cash crops.

This period is also when agricultural production diversified, into cattle, cotton and sugar, while the manufacture of non-durable consumer goods also arose. However, all of this economic growth came through international, which is to say US, intervention, in the form of credit for development, the provision of market quotas, investment in and outright ownership of local industries. Structural adjustment in the 1980s and 1990s saw an intensification of these trends, through the loss of what little economic sovereignty Guatemala's military rulers had preserved during their international isolation. Over all, the 1990s, while still registering growth, saw an increase in the concentration of land, and the deprivation of the populace, in spite of certain rising social indicators.

The resulting political economic structure is characterized by its integration into the global economy system, a process facilitated by national elite domination. There are two central aspects to this integration – export oriented production and external dependence, for markets, industrial inputs and consumer goods. There are four elements to the oligarchy's domination of the country – their control of production, exchange, the state and resources, particularly land. We have seen that the empirical evidence supports each of these points.

The empirical reality generated by this historic structure is one of hunger, poverty and vulnerability. The indigenous peoples and rural population have been, historically and presently, the most marginalized by the process of 'development'. The social and economic indicators of development, such as poverty, chronic undernutrition, education, life expectancy, infant and child mortality, satisfaction of basic needs and provision of services are all lower for them than their non-indigenous and non-rural counterparts. They have been the victims of open and direct violence, as well as silent and indirect structural violence. The famine process is their progressive daily destitution and hunger. While not consistent, given the seasonality of so many aspects of survival, the process is constant. This case, examining this process of immiseration is a lesson on the consequences of socio-economic and political inequality within a system.

## **THE FINDINGS**

It is difficult to accurately identify exact and reliable trends in many areas of Guatemala's human development. While indicative of many things, including the volatility of conditions for Guatemalans, it is primarily because of the unreliability, incompleteness and incomparability of much of the data that is available. It seems clear that a number of social indicators are in fact improving, or at least were until the end of the last century. Life expectancy, infant and child mortality, levels of education and literacy are, or at least were, all improving. In spite of these positive trends, there is still a seemingly insurmountable distance between the people of Guatemala and their human security. The situation in is best summarized by *Coordinadora Nacional de Indigenas y Campesinos* CONIC, the Indigenous and Campesino National Coordinating Committee:



“The hunger suffered by two-thirds of the Guatemalan population is the direct result of the concentration of land ownership and wealth in a few hands, the low salaries, and the inability of the government to put into practice the legal framework to protect the people, to guarantee justice, security, peace and development”<sup>452</sup>

The single most important underlying issue affecting everything examined in this study is land. While it is well known that “the uneven distribution of land is the primary cause of extreme poverty in rural areas in Central America.”<sup>453</sup> The degree of concentration of land ownership in Guatemala is simply unprecedented in the world, with Gini Coefficient of 0.85, and 0.15% of landowners controlling 70% of the country’s land. The obverse of this super-concentration of land is the dramatic increase in micro-parcelization of land amongst infra-subsistence smallholders.

Land lies at the heart of the explanation for why the famine happened in Chiquimula, even though it is not the poorest or most likely candidate for disaster and famine in the country. The combination of causal factors, in addition to the land ownership situation, also emphasizes the importance of environmental degradation in creating vulnerability. The role of coffee and the dependence of peasants, both landless and landed, on the jobs that it provides is enormous. The collapse of the international price of coffee is without doubt the single most important proximate cause of the crisis presently affecting Guatemala. However, it is only exacerbating the untenable conditions of poverty and hunger that exist there as a result of the political economic history and structure of the country’s development.

The issue of land cannot be repeated enough as the centrepiece of Guatemala’s political economy. Land is the wealth owned by the elite. It is land that is the basis of production for the agro-industrial crops that form the majority of Guatemala’s exports. It is land that is the source of wealth and subsistence for the country and its people. It is productive land that is not being used to feed the people of Guatemala. It is land that is being

degraded by human exploitation. It is land (the environment), in turn, that is making the country, its people, products and infrastructure vulnerable to disasters. It is also the dispossession of the rural population of land that is fuelling urbanization and providing the surplus supply of labour that ensures that the labour market remains 'flexible'.

The government has systematically, repeatedly and continuously failed to respond to the problems facing the country and its people. There has been a general failure to meet the needs of the people, and even a role in exacerbating the situation generally, in spite of the clear constitutional imperative for doing so. The previous administrations of Ramiro de Leon Carpio and Alvaro Arzu Irigoyen were significant improvements over the previous four decades of *de jure* and *de facto* military rule. However, they were certainly insufficient in both time and quality to establish both functional democracy and an effective civilian bureaucracy. The FRG regime of Alfonso Portillo has undone any progress that may have been made after the Peace Accords, moving the country back into situations reminiscent of the dark years of the civil war in terms of corruption, insecurity and violence. The situation of hunger and famine is perhaps more comparable with the cacao famines of the 1570s.

Given that the state is an object of elite competition, its work as a modernizing agent has always been in favour of the dominant elite fraction. The only points of unity between the traditional landed elites, and the agro-industrial, financial, manufacturing, military elites is their collective opposition to the subordinate classes and their general abhorrence of taxation. This elite unity and collective intransigence on the issue of taxes has continually forced the government into externally oriented policies in order to finance itself. International credit, foreign aid and structural adjustment have all come with the condition of greater export production. This has further increased the role and power of the US in Guatemala, a generally unintended and ironic consequence of nationalist elite unity. It has also increased foreign dependence for both consumer goods and inputs for production.

There are other problems arising from the externally oriented economy. The increasingly service oriented formal economy has grown out of the destruction of the previous substantive (i.e. subsistence) one without developing a new substantive base to support the majority of Guatemalans. This top-down orientation has made Guatemala a country with a formal economy but with only a marginal substantive one. That which exists revolves around nothing more than extraction through 'export led development'. As we have seen, this export-led development has left an enormous sector of the Guatemalan population behind. While certainly contested by those promoting export production, such an externally oriented political economy is 'all take and no give'. It actively undermines self-reliance and self-provisioning, while ignoring the development of internal markets, treating them as inconsequential sectors, except when it comes to distributing imported consumer goods.

Herein lies the problem of the structural inequality of the global political economy, which is oriented towards centre countries and core actors, through the grossly unequal terms of trade. While food imports may be cheaper in the strictest of neo-classical economic senses, there are a number of human 'externalities' – like actual survival – that it fails to account for. The obverse of food dependency, is the 'food power' that is granted to the supplying country. Food power has been a less than glamorous yet hugely important pillar of US foreign policy since the 1970s. Since the 1950s, food aid itself has been a very successful marketing tool in the openly espoused US effort to transform the world's diet.<sup>454</sup> Thus, given the ulterior motives of those promoting export led growth at the expense of any kind of food autonomy or independence, let alone self-sufficiency, one has to doubt the kind of food security that this development engenders.

The military are the main obstacle to democracy in Guatemala, and were the main source of stability. They effectively countered the instability created by elite competition for dominance and exploitation of the country's resources. However, this stabilizing influence seems to be rapidly dissipating. Furthermore, the military obstacle to democracy does not imply that the rest of the elite fractions are that interested in it either. Limited democracy is acceptable only as long as it does not interfere with their

primary interests of wealth, domination and themselves. At the same time, the culture of systemic violence has inhibited the 'dialectic of revolution' from expressing itself.<sup>455</sup>

This is to say that the general population, including contrary thinking members of the elite, are so thoroughly suppressed and repressed that they have been pacified as a force of resistance to the status quo. The result is disaster. Instead of 'rising up' in revolution and possibly dying for a cause, the people simply die, slowly and silently from hunger and poverty or as victims of the increasing violence and human insecurity.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this study I have attempted to connect and combine a number of concrete fields and approaches, and apply them to one case. This theoretical synthesis is in large part a reflection of the complexity of the problem being addressed. The interdisciplinary nature of the problematic has dictated the diversity of theoretical approach(es) required to examine it. The issue is structural hunger, the observable phenomenon was the disaster of famine, and its causes lay in political economic structure. Shared processes are what link the three different areas of literature to each other, and to the problematic itself.

This central theme that arises from the various literatures was vulnerability. The general consensus from both famine and disaster studies is that there are no constant factors other than that vulnerability. Triggers and hazards, while generally necessary, are particular, whereas vulnerability is more homogenous and apt to generalization. This does not mean that vulnerability cannot be disaggregated, simply that conditions of vulnerability to one threat are often common to various other hazards, as is illustrated by the 'global vulnerability' model. The model enables us to grasp the multiple facets of vulnerability. Similarly, political economy is concerned with the relationships, particularly the vulnerability that stems from dependence and interdependence.

In keeping with the critical epistemological foundations that underlie the analytical framework used in this thesis, the analysis has at every stage been concerned with deconstructing that which is reified and revealing the underlying processes and connections between elements. Famines, like all disasters, do not simply occur on their

own, ‘naturally’. They are ‘made’ – socially constructed, in the same way that the economy and the market are social institutions built and maintained by human actors. Similarly, events do not just occur, they evolve, just as famine is a process that develops. In this light, famines are clearly a part of the material economy, as a substantive economic process *par excellence*, concerned with the production and availability of food and people’s access to it. This latter measure (access) is one of power, which clearly demonstrates the inseparability of the political from the economic.

The discussion continues with epistemological issues, before turning to issues specific to political economy and the food security literature. The chapter concludes with discussion revolving around the synthesis of the three fields of knowledge. The general findings and conclusions of the study are summarized in the following final chapter.

### **Complexity and Complex Systems Theory**

The interdisciplinary complexity of famine has been repeatedly noted throughout both this study and the literature that has guided it. The global vulnerability model, with its dynamic consideration of multiple interacting factors, is an example of a specific analytical framework based on complex systems theory. It is useful in that it reflects and emphasizes the complex nature of development and disaster issues. It illuminates the multitude of variables involved in famine and disasters and the interaction between conditions of vulnerability and hazards. Complex systems theory accurately reflects the uniqueness of each famine and the particular combination of elements and time in the process of that disasters evolution. However, all this representivity means that complex systems theory does not explain, it simply describes, albeit with great detail, what is present or occurring. This means it can detail the interaction of elements, but it never explains why those elements are present, or why they react and interact the way they do.

While seemingly ‘objective’, human judgments are present at all levels of analysis using complex systems theory, as they are with all other theory. The theory is a ‘way of thinking’, it is not thought itself. What complex systems theory does is promote holistic thinking that does not divorce issues, like hunger or vulnerability from development.

Compartmentalized thinking can end up killing people because the issues it sees are inextricably linked to the realities it does not, given their 'theoretical' or conceptual separation. The dangers of 'false' objectivity and theoretical 'blindness' are discussed in this next section.

### **The Politics of Theory and Knowledge**

Theory is political. This is not an assertion but an observation. In political economy, nothing is apolitical, despite the claims of technocrats, scientists or managers to the contrary. Questions are political and so are their answers. These apolitical answers usually serve the status quo, and always serve the powers that be. As Susan George observes, "All social scientists are neutral, but they are more neutral towards some social groups than towards others."<sup>456</sup> Jenny Edkins echoes this position in her attack on the technologizing of knowledge, and hence responses to problems, through the epistemological nature of modernity.<sup>457</sup>

The use of terminology and language in development is also supremely political. As demonstrated by the comments of Edin Barrientos, the Guatemalan Minister of Agriculture, famine is the 'F'-word of the humanitarian community. It is the key to both international condemnation and wondrous quantities of aid. It is the code that unlocks programmatic action and that dictates policy responses.

To demonstrate that it is not simply tautological to 'play' with definitions, or that those definitions are themselves 'apolitical' we have this observation from Viola:

"...poverty has lost its essentially political character (inseparable from an unequal correlation of local and global forces) to convert itself into a technical problem, of assigning resources or of 'deficiencies' in nutrition, education and sanitation of a sector of the population. What is constructed as the object of analysis and for intervention, as the problem to eradicate, is no longer inequality, but rather the poor."<sup>458</sup>

This show how the citizens of the world, particularly the affluent ones, seem to forget, or not realize in the first place, exactly what the real costs of our society are, who in fact is paying for them and how. This is a lesson, as obvious as it may be, that cannot be ignored.

This apolitical ‘theoretical blindness’ is what underlies effective demand and its discovery. Similarly, the domestic economy does not produce for the domestic population or the poor because the political economy does not even consider them. ‘It’ – the economic and political powers that be, the impersonal structures, administrators and bureaucracies that mechanically serve their interests – is, due its own self-definition and perspective of the world (its theory), completely incapable of ever seeing them.

Where their existence is noted, they are ignored as unimportant and inconsequential. This is because, through the simple outlook of effective demand, they are inconsequential and unimportant. They do not matter because they are poor. To ‘the market’ they do not exist because they do not have the means – the money – to act as consumers, and in a market there is only buyers and sellers, consumers and producers. No market freedom or consumer rights will make any difference to someone that cannot exercise those rights and freedoms. In the reified market, cash-nexus economy, only money matters. Humanity, human life, does not, unless there is a dollar value attached to it.

This is all relevant to development because development is supremely positivistic in its epistemology – identifying problems and searching for answers to them. The concept of transformation inherent in development cannot but be positivist. If nothing else critical theory admonishes us regarding the shortcomings of positivism. This is particularly and directly related to the importance of tangibility to ‘positivist’ thinking in the dichotomy between prevention and response. The entire concept of prevention is a ‘positive’ impossibility in that, when successful, it effectively negates its object. This is one of the obstacles to disaster prevention, which is structurally oriented in its transformative efforts, and therefore can only work indirectly and not directly with the objects with which it is concerned. Thus apart from being political, this structural approach is a

challenge to policy makers and programmers in terms of being beyond their scope for action. Prevention is infinitely less appealing than emergency response in that it is less tangible, and hence less 'obviously humanitarian' than emergency aid. The hesitation to prevent is indicative of both ulterior motives that supercede any moral obligation, and the limitations of positivist thinking.

## **THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEVELOPMENT**

This study shares the perspective that development is a project that has been advanced by specific actors who have been constructing a world order. The Global Division of Labour and Power model thus provides the specific analytical tools and categories, in keeping with the positions advanced by the Post-Development and structural thinkers, to examine the particular and evolving situation of international political economy. Further, it elaborates in greater detail the simplistic categorization of the international division of labour and the 'new international division of labour' (NIDL). This has been seen in the regional integration of Central America itself, and its regional participation in successively larger international blocs. The model draws attention to the reality of the spread of services throughout the globe, and their supplanting production as the most important sector of the formal economy. It also accepts the duality of informal and formal sectors side by side in a national economy, and the role of the state in servicing the interests of monopoly capital, as opposed to those of its people.

The two theories of international political economy – interdependence and dependence – have also been useful in identifying aspects of the system and their consequences. While not clarified earlier, there is qualitative difference between the two, in that interdependence, as the product of political science, is much more politically oriented, while dependency, with its Marxist origins, is notably economistic. Similarly, interdependence is complex in its consideration of multiple actors, issues and interactions simultaneously. Dependency is dualistic, focusing on the relations between two actors or surrounding one issue, examining each independently. This makes them complementary tools in examining issues of power and material reality in the political economy.



There is a reason why dependency theory emerged from Latin America. The context of export dependency to a metropolitan power is an incontrovertible and defining aspect of the regions historic development. However, as we see with Guatemala, the primacy of that centre country has been diminishing with time and the increased complexity of trading relations. While the complexity of the global division of labour may in fact mean that ultimately and indirectly that trade all flows back to the United States, this is merely speculation that is quite beyond the domain of this study. That said, the critical role of the US as an export destination leaves Guatemala extremely vulnerable to any fluctuations in the US economy. As its two main exports – 60% of coffee and virtually all textiles and clothing – are directed overwhelmingly to the US, Guatemala is doubly exposed, to a single market and to extreme international competition, oversupply and price fluctuations.

The negative aspects of this dependency displayed themselves fully in 2001, when exports to the US fell by \$317 million, and the value of coffee exports fell by \$268 million. That Guatemala's total export reduction was only \$243 million is testament to its restructuring of importance of exports and export partners, as opposed to an increasing diversification of each. The actual number of export partners decreased by 7 between 2000 and 2001, to 122.

Import dependence has only grown since 1986, excepting minor yet significant decreases in 1992 and 1999, all the while outstripping export growth. This trade deficit grew to more than \$3 billion in 2001, which is all the more alarming considering the deficit is actually higher than the level of exports (\$2.47 billion) and the growing national debt (\$2.76 billion). Guatemala is an economy importing what it cannot afford and also what it absolutely requires. As chapter four illustrated, Guatemala now depends on the United States for fully one third of its basic grain supply. And this is still not enough to feed the population. With the *maquilas* importing materials worth three quarters of their export value, before considering imported capital costs, no element of the Guatemalan economy displays anything but general vulnerability.

The only conclusion that can be drawn from the state of the Guatemalan political economy, is that is not serving the interests of its populace. Its exports are of interest to Northern consumers and the transnationals that manage their marketing and distribution and therefore capture the real value of the export. In the case of coffee, the vendor of a cup of that Guatemalan product receives up 64 times more, per pound, than the person that picked it. The import of food, consumer goods (durable, non-durable and luxury), primary and intermediary materials, combustibles, construction materials and capital goods are all benefiting the foreign importer. Given the overwhelming poverty of the majority of Guatemalans, they are not even able to avail themselves of the benefits these foreign products may offer. Such a structure, with so small and insufficient a substantive base cannot address or reduce poverty, but only increase it. The global immiseration that we are currently seeing is testament to the equally brutal nature of ‘savage capitalism’ that comes after the pain of incorporation into that system, discussed in the following two sections.

### **Immiseration**

The dismissal of Marx’s thesis of immiseration by liberals was somewhat precipitous. The limiting of thinking about capitalism to the unit of the nation state would seem to explain the question of ‘where is the immiseration’. It had and has been externalized into the environment and the so-called Third World. Only with the full expansion of the capitalist system to encompass the entire earth can costs no longer be externalized, such that their socialization, or distribution amongst the poor, can be observed. The proverbial buck, from the privatization of profits, particularly those stemming from the exploitation of ‘the commons’, can no longer be passed. The bill for capitalist growth and expansion is being paid in full through the impact on the environment and the Third World. Immiseration is the ‘underdevelopment’ of the South, and also, as is being increasingly noticed, elements of the North. While not stated as such, this is the mutual vulnerability that underlies human insecurity. In a global system, all are affected. We can thank complex systems for showing us how that is indeed the case.

In the light of immiseration and mutual vulnerability, ‘environmental refugees’ are a concept that needs greater examination and disaggregation. Behind the name, these people are in fact economic refugees, in that they can no longer exploit their environment, or survive upon the substantive economic base that it provides. There are various, mainly economic causes for this environmental destruction, but in terms of the human disaster facing people because of environmental degradation, it is imperative to understand that the environment is the basis upon which the human economy is constructed. The economy is society’s relationship with nature, in the project of survival and creation of wealth. Failing to recognize this relationship, and to blithely continue ‘externalizing’ costs to the environment are the foundations of unsustainable development, which increases vulnerability and therefore the impact of disaster.

### **Proletarianization**

Depeasantization and proletarianization are two of the coincident systemic processes that accompany immiseration in the spread of capitalism. As processes of transformation aimed at incorporating the subsistence population into the capitalist economic system, they serve as mechanisms for the production of vulnerability. More than simply an economic process, however, the systematic destruction of the peasantry is also a social, cultural and political phenomenon, which erodes the institutions and relationships within all of these spheres. Thus, in addition to systematically denying people the material means of subsistence, proletarianization is also concerned with denying them their other ‘entitlements’ to security and well-being. This is the ‘incentive’ in a system that seeks to create a pool of wage labour; people are driven to work for others out of hunger.

The problems inherent in any development paradigm that use marginalization and dispossession to promote advancement cast long shadows on the nature of that development. Modernization’s need to ‘break’ feudal socio-economic structures in the name of development and to force the ‘tied’ labour force of the previous system into industry has costs. It is an outright disaster when there is no such industry (substantive economy) to ‘absorb’ these people. This modernization is not a ‘technical’ issue and **must** be ‘re-humanized’ and understood as a process of human suffering and coercion

and not a clinical, efficient and painless recipe for progress. The process of proletarianisation of the peasantry is not simply an abstract concept, but a painful human process of transition adopted out of necessity. It is a process fueled by hunger itself. Far from being a reified process itself, proletarianization has concrete actors and mechanisms. In Guatemala those actors have primarily been the state and the military acting on behalf of the oligarchy, through such mechanisms as the Vagrancy Laws and the suppression of ‘subversives’ promoting subsistence and self-sufficiency. It has not been the state alone, but also includes the private masters of debt bondage.

At any single moment there are only two ways in which such a socio-economic system accounts for people – as producers or as consumers (recognizing that at different times they can be one or the other). Because, by definition, the poor are what they are named, their lack of effective demand makes them invisible to the ‘reified market’ as consumers. However, people like Pralahad are indeed looking for effective ways to adapt the ‘market to these unseen consumers and ‘serve the poor, profitably’.<sup>459</sup>

On the supply side of the economic equation, the poor are useful for pushing down wages in the labour market. The more desperate people are to survive, and the more of those desperate people there are, the lower the wages they will accept – or rather, can be forced to accept. The poor are not simply a ‘reserve army of labour’ – rather they are an economic force that, by its very existence and mass, suppresses wages. This reduction of the wage bill serves the profit interests of owners and capital. Labour in any sector can be ‘disciplined’ when it exists in surplus. This is especially the case for semi- or unskilled labour, which is always available and, thanks to industrial deskilling (even under flexible specialization where it is the machine or system that is adjusted to a different job while the workers perform essentially the same tasks) can be treated flexibly. Workers are readily replaceable under such production regimes. That is what ‘flexibility’ means – low wages and replaceability, which concentrates power in the hands of buyers on the labour market – employers. This is a problem inherent in a socio-economic system where the main determinant of value is scarcity.

For this 'flexible' labour force to exist, its members cannot have any other options for survival or subsistence. They are forced into the labour market through their alienation from any other means of production. Land is the simplest, most basic of these means. As such, subsistence and self-sufficiency are anathema to the 'reified market' and free market dogma, i.e. capitalism, especially in its current stage of neoliberal globalization. Therefore, subsistence and self-reliance must be destroyed so that people are dependent on 'the market'. Once this dependency is cultivated, there is no 'going back'<sup>460</sup> – incorporation into the system is a one time event. Once you are dependent on the market for your survival you have no other option than to serve 'the market'. This is mainly done by selling your labour power, but survival or coping can first occur through the selling of assets. 'Disasters' are notorious for their impact in exhausting the assets of vulnerable people, trapping them in inescapable poverty and adding them to the 'surplus army of labour'.

With the resulting cash-nexus as the medium for relations, we see that modernity and post-modernity have freed people from all other social obligations. This is particularly the case for 'mutual aid' and communal work that have been the traditional systems of support and obligation for subsistence communities. Cooperation is based on reciprocity whereas the cash-nexus is essentially alienation from responsibility. While traditional cultures can certainly be problematic and discriminatory in themselves, the social obligations, the mores, norms and taboos of a society, are the social glue that holds communities together. The cash-nexus is hardly any less discriminatory than traditional social structures – it just discriminates in a different way, as does any social system. Regulation of the economy, and the welfare state, provide some mitigation against the effects of 'free competition' and the losers that it produces when other social networks and entitlements by this one dimensional system of exchange.

## **Trade**

Trade is not synonymous with capitalism. The latter is only indirectly related to the former, both living quite independent existences and the former predating the latter by thousands of years. Furthermore, trade is, at some levels, a necessary act, depending on

the ends, but in all cases, it is a means to an end. For globalization, trade, or what is called (free) trade, has become an end in and of itself. Those claiming that trade is an end and nothing more are leaving unsaid how it is that they benefit from that trade. While trade can be beneficial, and even mutually beneficially, it is not necessarily so.

Guatemala is a clear example of how the benefits of trade can be limited and enjoyed by a very few, to the actual detriment of the majority. This problem extends beyond just the orientation of the economy towards agricultural exports, traditional and non-traditional, as well as the *maquilas* and EPZ sector. Rather this orientation, and the policies and measures pursued to advance this orientation have destroyed pre-existing livelihoods and subsistence. Capitalism disrupts social, economic and cultural patterns that evolved over time, in which there was a balance (however inequitable) and real coping mechanisms were developed and capacities for adjustment had evolved. The pace of globalization, and the absolute lack of integral planning and the resources for their implementation to mitigate the side affects of that globalization, rends the socio-economic fabric before it can evolve, without supplementing it with anything to absorb the social costs. Rather, desperate attempts at adaptation and ultimately disaster are what remain for those excluded by the globalization project. Global exchange can be good for everyone, in that it serves their interests and improves, or at least does not harm, their well being. However, the current model and its basis on short term profits, long-run equilibrium and effective demand is not beneficial to anyone other than a small, wealthy, mainly northern, corporate minority.

### **Excess Liquidity**

One of the problems arising from the super-concentration of wealth in Guatemala, illustrative of the inherent contradictions of capitalism and its tendency towards monopoly, is the problem of excess liquidity. The concentrated accumulation of money acts as an enormous, volatile and distortional economic pressure. This results from financial capital, or rather its owners, search for profitable investment of that capital. When potential sources of profit are identified, they generate an uncontrollable flow of capital, which entirely distorts the 'market mechanism' and in fact unbalances it. By overemphasizing certain and often very speculative areas of the economy, excess

liquidity works to the direct detriment of the essential, substantive or productive sectors of the economy. This is because the speculative capital is driven by the profit motive that is not satisfied by the returns prevailing in the productive sector. In Guatemala, the most damaging speculation is in land, which simultaneously increases concentration, while robbing smallholders and peasants of the opportunity to acquire land, either directly or through land redistribution efforts.

One of the factors leading to this excess liquidity is that there is no redistribution of this wealth, through taxation of income by the state, to prevent its concentration and encourage its productive reinvestment. Furthermore, this super concentration of wealth, in addition to fuelling speculation, limits demand generally and specifically focuses it on luxury goods. This general reduction of demand is because the level of liquidity is too great to actually be used on consumption, particularly given the limits of luxury consumption. At the same time the mere existence of excess liquidity in super-concentrated form acts as an **inflationary pressure**. This is related to effective demand, in that the 'reified market' sees an oversupply of money. This creates a situation wherein the rich can either watch their wealth devalue or invest it.

Given the greater profitability to be found in speculative rather than productive investment, and the greater **stability** of both abroad, there therefore exists great incentive for exporting capital, which further destabilizes the national accounts, exacerbating the current accounts deficit, which luxury consumption has already boosted. To correct and prevent this flight of capital and to hold back domestic inflation, governments raise interest rates (Guatemala's has averaged 19.5% for the last six years) and sell bonds at rates competitive with speculative returns, in what amounts to guaranteed speculation, which is in fact now even more attractive for investment. This in turn further increases liquidity by increasing domestic wealth for those that had it concentrated in their hands to begin and attracting additional international capital.

This 'wealth trap' is an ultimately destabilizing cycle not unlike the debt trap, to which it is intrinsically related. Excess liquidity is the supply side of the debt trap. The example

of petro-dollars in the 1970s is the best example of this. An excess supply of money creates cheap credit that needs to be sold. As noted, the excess liquidity also creates inflation, which eventually makes credit scarcer and therefore more expensive, fuelling the debt trap. The other consequence is that excess liquidity compounds volatility. It creates the effect of a financial herd mentality, where, even if it is only one person shifting their investment, the impact can be enormous. These distortions caused by the movement of monopoly capital can then set off the stampede, as speculation is a game of nerves.

Finally, excess liquidity serves as an illustration of how inflation operates as the market mechanism (the aggregate realization) of collective greed. This is particularly notable as it relates to speculation, where money attracts other money, inflating values. A more daily illustration, coming from Guatemala, is the differential price ranges that market vendors have for nationals, ‘gringos’ and the group of Japanese tourists off the tour bus. The perception of money or wealth inflates prices. More specifically, the perception of the price that can effectively be charged for an item is the issue because there is not constant or foundational theory of value at work in dominant neo-classical economics. Prices are determined by the market, which, according to the intersection of supply and demand, is the equilibrium of perceived value, or greed. Prices are not purely, entirely or even generally based on the cost of production, in spite of the fact that profits are based on the cost of production. The entire complexity of this ‘wealth trap’ requires greater investigation.

### **HUNGER – FAMINE – FOOD SECURITY**

Having examined the case of famine in Guatemala, and the technical aspects of hunger, famine and food security, it is now easier to clearly illustrate the cleavage in analysis between the dominant policy school and the critical approaches, including the New Famine School. For the first, the problem is formulated as a negative – there is a lack of food, there is a lack of entitlement, there is a lack of utility of the food available – to which there is the immediate and positivist answer of filling that absence. The problem is then a technical or managerial one that can be addressed ‘apolitically’ because it is a



tautology. The critical thinkers, on the other hand, ask the dreaded question ‘why?’ Why is there insufficient food? Why do people not have access? Why is the food incorrect? And then they search for the root, and hence structural, causes that place people in these situations of vulnerability in the first place.

The first approach is nothing more than remedial. The second is oriented towards transformation; to not only remedy the problem but to ensure that it does not arise anew. It is this issue of recurrence that is the failure of remedial approaches. Given that famine is a process, that the crisis it evoked developed from a dynamic of complex causality, none of which is in any way addressed by the remedy, then there is nothing to prevent the disaster situation from returning. As has been learned from aid mistakes, which have been repeated to the point of seeming willfully committed, the provision of what is missing actually unleashes an entire chain of reactions that compound the problem. It is clearly understood the way food aid distorts local markets, hurts local producers and reduces production. Similar chains of problems have emerged with virtually all ‘technical’ solutions. The green revolution required greater inputs and therefore capital, damaged the soil and both depleted and contaminated water supplies. Irrigation depletes water supplies, creates water-rights conflicts, inherently favour the wealthy or large producer, and result in the salinization of the soil, even leading to desertification. Similar examples from apolitical ‘technical’ solutions abound.

The reality of famine is not as ‘clean’ and ordered as the models and theories that attempt describe and explain it. In ‘real life’ famine does not follow their (the models) progression and is not uniform. Nonetheless, Walker’s definition of famine is an entirely apt description of what has transpired in Guatemala. The elements of the process and their ‘progressive’ interaction are clear. While the three stages of famine development that Rangasami proposes are not appropriate, they do reflect aspects of the process, which she more appropriately identifies as social, **political** and economic. Her three stages are useful when not taken as linear, but, rather, as De Waal considers them – “co-present aspects of famine, with complex interactions.”<sup>461</sup>

After questioning the separation of famine from endemic hunger at the outset, I have demonstrated the sufficiency of their inseparability. However, I am not convinced that I have shown the necessity of their unity. To a large degree, this is mitigated by Walker's definition of famine as "a socio economic process which causes the accelerated destitution of the most vulnerable, marginal and least powerful groups in a community, to a point where they can no longer, as a group, maintain a sustainable livelihood." With famine a process, hunger becomes a condition – one element or state of being belonging to that process.

As has been demonstrated by this thesis, immiseration is a famine process. However, while immiserating, not all famine processes are based on the normal working of the socio economic system, i.e. not all famines are the result of immiseration. It is similar to the relationship between poverty and vulnerability – all who are poor are vulnerable, but not all who are vulnerable are poor. As such, it presents us with another type of famine to add to the list of typologies. However, this structural famine shares aspects of the hidden famine (of both Brunel and Garenne), and combines elements of De Waal's agrarian/smallholder and class based/occupational famine types. None of Gazdar's pre-, post-, and modern famine types seem entirely appropriate, the entitlement failure of modern famine ringing hollow considering the deeper structural causation of that loss of entitlement, and the effective absence of "functioning modern institutions". When it is the political economy, in its normal operation that is marginalizing people and putting them "at risk" of acute nutritional crisis, any typology based on failure seems inappropriate. This is the particular point made by Susan George<sup>462</sup> when discussing the negative impacts of neo-liberalism – they are not evidence of failure, but rather that the agenda is working as intended. Therefore, the Guatemalan famine was and continues to be a human-made disaster.

### **THE DISASTER OF HUNGER/FAMINE IN THE POLITICAL ECONOMY**

Taking a moment to compare Guatemala's social and economic indicators with those of Honduras and Nicaragua should be sufficient to demonstrate that the simple formula of growth is not the answer to poverty and hunger. The case of Guatemala presents solid

ground for arguing that growth is in fact a cause of poverty and hunger. Clearly, both issues are more complicated than these simple statements. However, this complexity and the inherent qualifications do not dissipate the underlying truths they express.

As such, this doubting of the growth as development formula brings into question the dominant policies affecting development, food security and disasters. Structural adjustment, or Poverty Reduction Strategies as they have been rechristened, hold the capitalist growth mantra at their heart. The ‘participatory growth process’ that Dreze and Sen propose in their *Hunger and Public Action* seems intrinsically naïve in its ignoring of structural inequalities that seemingly never fail to reproduce themselves with growth. The ‘management’ of problems that addresses symptoms rather than causes, inherent in both of these mainstream approaches to development and hunger, are also present in the area of disasters. Given that all three fields, in their respective mainstreams, have this technical solution approach

Having shown that the famine in Guatemala was in fact ‘structural’ – man-made – then there are a number of implications regarding responsibility and culpability. When ideas are owned, so too can systems. It is therefore with that ownership that responsibility lies. This is a technical legal discussion that is quite beyond the scope of both this thesis and its author, however, the implications and trends are clear. Extending the analysis of disaggregating systems according to their social construction, we can only conclude that people are responsible for the outcomes of their actions, including collective and systemic action, even where they are unaware of those outcomes, and where they are not intended. Neither intention nor awareness changes ‘the facts’ of material reality. However, they do certainly affect perception of those facts. Unfortunately, the common and collective perception, particularly in the North and amongst those that are ultimately responsible according to the web of complex causality, requires that these linkages constantly be demonstrated. The collective culpability that in indicates is simply overwhelming, in addition to be a threat to the entire ‘system’ that provides so well for ‘us’. As the common wisdom goes, none will fight so hard for their privilege as those threatened with losing it.

De Waal's position that famines should be and are best defined by those that experience them, rather than 'outsiders', has many implications. The first of these is that famine can occur without resulting in death, and hence, that there are different kinds of famine. Combining this broader perspective, and hence broader definition of what is a famine, with Edkins' position that famine are perpetrated crimes, for which specific persons are responsible and should be tried as criminals, presents us with the truly sobering need to reflect on the global economic system and our participation in it.

## Chapter VIII

### The Disastrous Conclusion

*“Neither the nonrecognition of the obvious nor the advocacy of the futile is a serviceable expedient. There remains a third choice... to accept the decline of the market.”*

**- John Kenneth Galbraith**

Guatemala's participation and insertion into the global system began with the conquest and colonization by the Spanish in 1520s. Since its beginning, right up to the present, it has been an economically oriented process, that has served to the enormous benefit of a very few while exploiting and marginalizing the many to inhuman extremes. Although the details and mechanisms of this extremely exploitative system, in both the economic and the abusive sense, have changed, the essential structure of the political economy has not in fact changed except to become more extreme in its polarization and inequity.

Liberalism and modernization have gone hand in hand with Guatemala's increasing (and increasingly more complex) insertion into the global economic system, particularly since the Liberal Revolution of the 1870s. This context of the extreme and racially based socio-economic inequality has resulted in a constant and silent disaster for the vast majority, who are rural and indigenous.

Modernity and industrialization have only been for the few and have either entirely excluded the rural poor by systematically expropriating their lands and exploiting their labour. The need for labour has fallen, particularly in the agricultural sector, where it has been reduced for many crops thanks to agro-industrial mechanization. The peasantry (including both the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat) has seen its options reduced to the bare minimum of labouring for the few remaining traditional export cash crops. Bereft of land, and hence their traditional means of subsistence, and with no substantive industrial growth creating labour demand (*maquilas* simply feminize the labour force without a necessary aggregate impact on family incomes and livelihoods, excepting the double work day facing these women) the political economy, oriented around primary

agricultural commodity exporting, non-durable consumer goods and assembly of light industrial products, has in fact created an enormous 'surplus population'.

The resulting danger of thinking that allows for the concept of a 'surplus population' has been clearly shown in Guatemala's history and present experience. By dispensing with people as being 'surplus', as 'other', as uncivilized and as useless, they can be utterly dehumanized. The brutality of the 36 years of civil war and the anything but peaceful years since it formally ended clearly illustrate the real human consequences of dismissing people as redundant. In a political economy that reduces relations to the cash-nexus, people without 'value' can be and are treated as valueless.

There is effectively no redistribution of wealth in the country, given the elite's quashing of that state's efforts to extract taxes from them. With the elimination of land reform from the realm of the politically conceivable, the continued concentration of wealth and above all land further ensures that no substantial internal market is created. This is because those few that do indeed have 'unskilled' employment in the formal sector are not provided with the reasonable wages required to support significant internal demand. When millions more are without even subsistence levels of income, the possibility of developing internal demand, and the benefits of servicing it, are negated. Without anything resembling the Fordist compact with the welfare state, the only value represented by the 'surplus population' is as cheap labour. The systematic impoverishment and misery created by this normal working of the Guatemalan political economy is clear.

The result of a political and economic system that constructs vulnerability on the one hand, and acts as a hazard on the other, can only result in disaster. By stripping the majority of the population of its means of survival, and continuously eroding their few and meager mechanisms for coping and adapting, the Guatemalan political economy and those that benefit from it are making the rural poor, and those that have been forced to migrate to urban centers, vulnerable to a wide range of economic, political and even 'natural' shocks. At the same time, given the political and economic dependence of the

country on a limited number of sectors and, de facto, one external market, the entire nation is thus made susceptible to a plethora of external shocks. These external shocks reverberate even more intensely within the dependent economy than their magnitude on the international level would seem to warrant, given the overwhelming importance of those markets or sectors to the country. There is no doubting that the peasants of Guatemala are dependent on coffee production for their livelihoods. That very dependence is not simply one of choice, but was manufactured through the historic process of ‘development’.

Thus, the absolute dependence of the economy on coffee, sugar, *maquilas*, tourism and remittances from abroad for income, foreign exchange and employment mean that Guatemala is entirely dependent on external factors (markets, demand and supply) that are beyond its control. Without any kind of substantive internal market, there is, at the same time, no functioning economy without exports, and no self-reliant production of basic necessities, particularly with regards to food, much of which is imported. This double conundrum – on exporting to earn for the import of basic needs, while not producing basic needs domestically because of the emphasis on exports – leaves the entire economy vulnerable to any external shocks. It is effectively without any (or sufficient) domestic reserves or even capacity to substitute for lost imports. When it comes to food in what is, for the majority of people, a subsistence economy, this means hunger and death.

## RESULTS

Examining the case of Guatemala shows us a number of things, in their very stark and harsh reality. To begin, there simply is not enough food present in Guatemala to feed its population. According to FAO statistics, there has not been enough food for the at least the last half-century. This is a testament to the fact that the reified market does not – cannot – distribute to the poor, because it does not recognize their existence, because they do not exercise the necessary effective demand to be considered. When considering that the market is a network of social institutions and interactions, it means that those with

power in and over those networks are not concerned with the hunger or survival of the poor.

The situation of indigenous peoples, and the rural population – not precisely the same, but with significant overlap – is the worst in the country. These two sectors of the population are the most marginalized and vulnerable, according to all social and development indicators. It is they that are the victims of this ongoing famine. For them, that famine process defines their daily life as a constant struggle to cope and survive, balancing present needs with future ones.

Humanitarian aid agencies successfully and incalculably averted greater acute malnutrition and mortality – open crisis – in various areas of the country. However, there was a near total failure, by both aid agencies and the government, to detect and address the emergency situation in Chiquimula. The state has continued to be negligent since the famine came to its, and public, attention. In this way, the press has had a significant role in responding to the crisis.

The state of the environment is a clear factor of vulnerability to disasters, of most all sorts. It is also an indicator of the dispossession and marginalization of the peasantry in the face of land concentration in the hands of the rich. Chiquimula is a microcosm of this polarization and the two types of inappropriate and unsustainable exploitation of the land. The *finca* owners and ranchers of the department are directly and indirectly complicit with the peasants living on marginal hillsides and slopes in degrading the environment.

In terms of the emergence of the acute crisis, the drought was the key trigger agent in bringing attention to bear on the situation. The *canicula* caused enormous localized losses in certain specific areas, and significantly affected maize production at the national level. However, neither of these impacts were felt or directly relevant to those experiencing the acute crisis in various departments, including, according to MAGA and the WFP, Chiquimula. While we know from other sources that Chiquimula's crops were



indeed affected by the lack of rain, this food availability decline explanation is neither sufficient nor necessary to defining the wider disaster.

This is because the single most important proximate cause of the disaster is the international coffee crisis. The global recession generally did have specific impacts, particularly on employment in the *maquila* sector, but other overall affects are not readily apparent at the macro level. Similarly, claims of reductions in tourism and remittances are not supported, or unquestionably supported at the macro level. However, particular micro level impacts are a certainty.

What is clear is that the total reduction of exports can be attributed to the United States and coffee. Each of these saw a total reduction, from the previous year's levels, of over 100% the total export decrease experienced by Guatemala. The consequences of this 'dependency' is that even exceptional growth in other sectors and with other export partners are not enough to offset losses to these pillars of the national economy.

The causes and processes behind underlying vulnerability are clear. The political economic processes of the country are direct mechanisms of impoverishment and marginalization. They create and maintain situations of poverty, hunger and vulnerability. Through various forms of dependence, on exports and the import industrial inputs and food, the country and its people are exposed to a series of external threats that are entirely beyond their control. The situation of 'global vulnerability', while varying throughout the country in its exact details, is extreme, given the generalized poverty, endemic hunger and social, economic and political exclusion.

The result is that the Guatemalan famine is a socially constructed disaster. It is a man-made famine, resulting from the normal working of the political socio-economic system. The basis of this grossly inequitable political economy and the disaster that it produces is elite control of the land and all that flows from that control, including the country's insertion into the global economic system. The empirical net result of this disaster is the

disappearance and displacement of half a million people, who have emigrated, died, or not been born.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

First, famine is not the result of drought, of market failure, or of any other single cause. They are all but triggers or elements of the complex process of the construction of vulnerability. Because vulnerability is a social condition – anthropogenic and anthropocentric – simple ‘act of god’ explanations for why people starve are insufficient or even pointedly false. People are made to starve by the social, economic, environmental and political reality that they face. They are allowed to starve by the failure of social, economic and political actors to react. Some argue that not only do real human actors fail to react to avert crisis, but are in fact responsible for the vulnerability to the crisis in the first place – that famine is an event of forced mass starvation.

It is worth exploring the avenue of legal culpability that Edkins proposes for the case of famines. With the apparent failure of accountability through other avenues, the path of international criminal justice for famine and disasters is in keeping with the current development of that multilateral sphere. While certain to elicit opposition from virtually all corners, particularly those closer to ‘power’ in the global hierarchy, in the absence of other mechanisms for ensuring responsibility and accountability, we must seize those that are available.

Secondly, we can draw several conclusions related to the analytical framework. The difference between famine and hunger is that the first is a process while the second is a condition. As such, they are inextricably bound, with hunger being a function of the famine process. Vulnerability, like poverty, to which it is so closely linked, is not a reified condition. It is one that is socially constructed, by human processes and human actors. Further, vulnerability has empirical measures, as do the aspects of poverty, that can be considered. As such, both are issues that we can always address.

Triggers, threats or hazards are all different in their complexity and import to disaster causation. Some are truly beyond the power of humanity to control – all that we can do is reduce or eliminate our exposure to them. Other threats are entirely or partially of our own making, and these too can be addressed directly. When the problem is the control and use of resources, it is an entirely social issue that is constructed and, therefore, that can be dealt with.

Third, any patently unequal political economy that serves as a producer for the global system before, or particularly without, concern for its domestic needs will result in disaster. Any such unequal political economy that is not regulated and redistributive, so as to ameliorate the concentration of wealth and rise of monopoly capital inherent in the capitalist system, will regularly and with time absolutely immiserate the majority of its population. The immiseration can be clearly seen as there is no longer anywhere left to ‘externalize’ these costs. This effective process of systematic impoverishment ultimately is the process of famine that leads finally to death, by starvation and hunger related illnesses.

The global capitalist system has now moved from a mass production and consumption society, to one of mass marketing and consumption. This disappearance, at least in terms of relative importance, of production in the global division of labour and power has very serious implications for the substantive economy. Humanity itself depends on the production of a substantive economy to meet its material needs. The non-essential nature of services, including areas like tourism, makes the sector extremely vulnerable to economic conditions. The same holds true for all wage and contract labour, generally, as well as luxury goods, although the line between what is now considered a luxury and what is a necessity has certainly been raised. In the global capitalist system they all depend on growth, or growthmania,<sup>463</sup> to sustain them. Without the constant inflation of the economic balloon, the entire system collapses.

Many of the multiple dimensions of the unsustainability inherent in this crisis prone ‘development’ have been detailed throughout this study. The link between this specific

case and the global political economy is that this famine occurred within, rather than outside of, that international political economy. A disaster in the so-called Third World is not just 'their' problem and only 'our' concern due to moral sentiment. Through the mutual vulnerability of increasing complex global interdependence, the expanding global economic system has made it a shared disaster, with common global causes and consequences. There are no longer barriers between the parts of the system, between what affects 'us' and 'them'.<sup>464</sup>

Modernity and post-modernity have freed us from all social obligations. Unless we can be legally held accountable for something, there is no concrete incentive, and therefore rational economic reason, for being responsible. The emerging international legal framework is a reflection of this fact, and of exactly where the priorities lie in terms of the promotion and defense of rights. The actual legal mechanisms for the enforcement of human rights, such as the right to food, pale by comparison – when and where they actually exist – with the real legal instruments that exist to defend so-called 'free-trade'.

Through the holistic application of the political economy approach, the human construction of disaster is clearly laid out. In this manner, we see that the Guatemalan famine of 2001 was in fact merely the observable symptom of a permanent famine process that is produced by the domination of the national political economy by elites, with their orientation towards integration into the global economic system. These are the mechanics of disaster, where natural hazards are little more than triggers or focal events that bring the crisis situation to our attention. It was not the 123 'excess' deaths in 2001 that were the famine, but the real structural processes that put 2.8 million people at risk of food shortage, that leaves 43.4% of the Guatemalan children suffering from chronic malnutrition, 56% of the population in poverty and 23% in extreme poverty.

This shows us how famines and disasters are necessarily neither events nor exceptions. They can be the product of 'normality'. These are the hidden famines and disasters that are not the result of a failure or a breakdown of any part of the system, but rather of its regular functioning.

## FINAL WORDS

This all presents a major challenge to development thinking. When disasters are no longer seen as the antithesis of development, but as the products of it, the unresolved problems of development, they act as a thermometer of its sustainability. Disasters are the most reliable indicators of the unsustainability of development.<sup>465</sup> As Allan Lavell puts it, “**the problem, ultimately, is not the disaster** but rather the development” because “at the end of the day what happens is that the historic profit based on the creation of vulnerability is, in general, **privatized**, while the vulnerability, the risk and the losses suffered during disasters are **socialized**.”<sup>466</sup>

In Guatemala, poverty, and many of the other aspects of vulnerability, ultimately come down to the issue of land. It is ownership and the control of its productive use that place land at the heart of immiseration, poverty, hunger and disaster. The history of Guatemala is one of disasters, caused by the distribution of wealth and power, and the processes that reproduce that dynamic structure. It is this history and these results that the chapters of this study have brought together.

The resolution of such a constant and continuing crisis involves real structural reform. It demands the redistribution of wealth, the prioritization of the domestic market and the substantive economy, with the creation of employment and paying of living wages to workers. It means the elites and their companies, as well as the transnational corporations they represent, paying taxes. It means ending government corruption, militarization, and general insecurity. It means diversifying foreign markets. It means greater domestic production of basic grains for the domestic market. It means land redistribution to peasants. It means massive reforestation and the end of deforestation. It means sustainable development that puts the economy to work for the people and not people to work for the economy – feeding human beings and not the reified market.

To reiterate, this evolution of a disaster over time is the famine process. Poverty and vulnerability are not the causes of this process – they are a part of it. They are the destitution and desperation that sap assets and reduce resilience, heightening food

insecurity. They are the underlying conditions that expose people to hazards; the latent disaster that those shocks and threats trigger.

In Guatemala, the processes of the political economy are systematically denying people access to land, while also destroying it, through both the act of denial and the outright 'abuse' of the earth caused by 'normal' activity. In this way, famine can be traced directly back to the land and our use of it. This constant, silent and unrecognized disaster is, in the words of John Twigg, "nature's judgement on what humans have wrought."

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> See, among others, Blaikie et. al. 1994; Devereux 2000, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> In the last one-hundred years famine has claimed more lives than all other disasters combined, and depending on estimates, more than all wars together during the same period. Devereux (2000) provides a conservative total of 75,254,500 famine deaths in the twentieth century. Estimates for the number of lives lost due to civil strife during that period range from 39 to 54 million. See Kent 1984: 25 and Brogan 1992: viii.

<sup>3</sup> These figures come from *Prensa Libre* (various dates), the leading and most dependable of Guatemala's national daily newspapers. ([www.prensalibre.com](http://www.prensalibre.com)) There are in fact no official figures for deaths or even a centralized process of death registration in Guatemala, and these numbers are the product of an investigation undertaken by reporters of *Prensa Libre* in Chiquimula, and their later inclusion of figures from Baja Verapaz. Official documents related to the famine, from government and United Nations agencies, studiously avoid including any mortality figures and only include estimates for numbers of people affected, at risk or registering a specific degree of malnutrition or food insecurity.

<sup>4</sup> World Food Programme – December 2001

<sup>5</sup> *Prensa Libre*, October 16, 2002

<sup>6</sup> Committee on World Food Security, CFS. 29<sup>th</sup> Session. May 2003. "Assessment of the World Food Security Situation – Annex 1: Food, Nutrition and Health Indicators." CFS, FAO. Rome.

<sup>7</sup> Kepfer, Crista, February 27, 2003. "Somos 11.237,196: Instituto de Estadística presenta informe de población del país" in *Prensa Libre*. Electronic Edition [www.prensalibre.com](http://www.prensalibre.com), Accessed February 27, 2003

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Veltmeyer 2002: 261

<sup>9</sup> Brockett 1998, p.15

<sup>10</sup> Young and Arrigo, 1999: 154.

<sup>11</sup> Mike Davis (2001) goes a long way to dispelling this misconception regarding historic famines, through his study of Brazil in *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World*. Verso. London.

<sup>12</sup> The 'School of Disaster Prevention Studies' is the name I am applying to both the group and approach of La Red de Estudios Sociales en la Prevención de Desastres en América Latina (La Red – The Network for the Social Science Study of Disaster Prevention in Latin America) and the scholars associated with it, principal of whom are Gustavo Wilches-Chaux, Andrew Maskrey, Allan Lavell, and Omar Dario Cardona.

<sup>13</sup> George, Susan. 1984. *Ill Fares the Land*. Institute for Policy Studies. p. 97.

<sup>14</sup> See Staniland, Martin. 1985. *What is Political Economy? A Study of Social Theory and Underdevelopment*. Yale University Press. New Haven and London. for a complete discussion of political economy and development.

<sup>15</sup> Collinson, Sarah. 2002. "Politically informed humanitarian programming: using a political economy approach", *Humanitarian Practice Network Paper 41*, Overseas Development Institute. London.

<sup>16</sup> Berg, p.229

<sup>17</sup> see Wilches-Chaux 1989 and Peduzzi 2000.

<sup>18</sup> I use the term community here in the broad sense, referring to the nation, its regions, departments and municipalities.

<sup>19</sup> The INE has recently been made a department within SEGEPLAN, under IADB and USAID assistance.

<sup>20</sup> IADB Feb 24, 2003; Accessed April 8, 2003:

[http://www.iadb.org/NEWS/display/WSView.cfm?WS\\_Num=ws01103&Language=English](http://www.iadb.org/NEWS/display/WSView.cfm?WS_Num=ws01103&Language=English)

<sup>21</sup> Land areas are recorded in no less than three different systems, according to the source – hectares and the metric system, acres and the imperial system, and *caballerías*, *manzanas* and *cuerdas* from the traditional Guatemalan system. The standard of these latter, however, in some cases vary according to the region of the country. A *caballería* equals 109.8 acres or 64.4 *manzanas*. A *manzana* equals 1.7 acres or 0.69 hectares. One acre equals 0.4 hectares.

<sup>22</sup> See Painter 1987: 38

<sup>23</sup> These statistics are examined and correlated in Chapter 4.

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<sup>24</sup> Similarly, as per 'Development Tourism' (see Chambers, Robert 1983. *Rural Development – Putting the Last First*. Longman. Harlow, Essex.), those that are the most isolated, marginalized and difficult to reach (socially or physically) are also the most vulnerable.

<sup>25</sup> FAOSTAT Databases. [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

<sup>26</sup> These numbers derived from statistics in BANGUAT 2002 and UNDP statistics for Economically Active Population (PEA).

<sup>27</sup> See OIM 2001 and 2002.

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of these concepts, see the analytical framework put forward by Nef (1995) in his monograph *Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability*.

<sup>29</sup> Which are discussed below in the Methodology section. For further information, see, for instance, UNICEF 2001, *Desastres naturales y zonas de riesgo en Guatemala*. UNICEF. Guatemala.; Pascal Pedruzzi 2000 "Insight on Common/Key Indicators for Global Vulnerability Mapping", a presentation made to UNEP/GRID-Geneva.

<sup>30</sup> See Nef and Vanderkop, 1989 and Devereux 2000 for overviews of this categorization of the hunger and famine literature.

<sup>31</sup> See especially Keynes, John Maynard 1957 [1937], *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. MacMillan. London.

<sup>32</sup> See Kalecki, Michal 1976. *Essays on Developing Economies*. The Harvest Press and Humanities Press. Hassocks and New Jersey.; Kalecki, Michal 1972. *The Last Phase in the Transformation of Capitalism*. Monthly Review Press. New York and London.; and Kalecki, Michal 1971. *Selected Essays on the Dynamics of the Capitalist Economy 1933-1970*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

<sup>33</sup> See Bottomore 1966 for a discussion of Elites and Society.

<sup>34</sup> "Capitalism is the only economic system in which there is a systematic elimination of workers, either by replacement by machines (to increase profits) or during a depression (in order to control costs). Capitalist economists say that a 5 percent unemployment rate is necessary in order to keep wages down and profits up. If there were full employment, profits would fall, capitalists would fail, and the economy would collapse." From T.R. Young and Bruce Arrigo 1999, *The Dictionary of Critical Social Sciences*, Westview Press, Boulder, p. 89.

<sup>35</sup> Effective demand is the observable or realized demand in an economy, as separate from actual or real demand, which is not observed and therefore not accounted for, particularly when the means to exercise demand are unavailable. Simply, the poor have real demands but cannot exercise them in the market because they do not have the means (money) to do so.

<sup>36</sup> For an overview of the Frankfurt School and their work see Bottomore, Tom. 1984. *The Frankfurt School*. Ellis Horwood Limited and Tavistock Publications. Chichester and London & New York.

<sup>37</sup> Hohendahl, Peter-Uwe. 2001. "From the Eclipse of Reason to Communicative Rationality and Beyond" in Hohendahl and Jaimey Fisher, 2001, *Critical Theory: Current State and Future Prospects*. Bergham Books. New York and Oxford. Pp. 6-7.

<sup>38</sup> Max Horkheimer 1937. "Traditional and Critical Theory", first published in *Zeitschrift fur Sozialforschung*. Quoted in Kuper, Adam and Jessica Kuper 1989, *The Social Science Encyclopedia*, Routledge. London and New York.

<sup>39</sup> Taken from the judge's eviction order for workers occupying and operating the Brukman factory in Buenos Aires. Quoted in Naomi Klein's article "Argentina's Luddite Rulers" in the *Globe and Mail*, April 24, 2003.

<sup>40</sup> Horkheimer in Kivisto 2000: 367

<sup>41</sup> Horkheimer in Kivisto 2000: 367

<sup>42</sup> Marcuse in Kivisto 2000: 357

<sup>43</sup> Marcuse in Kivisto 2000: 357-358

<sup>44</sup> See in particular Polanyi, Karl 1977. *The Livelihood of Man*. Academic Press. New York, San Francisco and London. (Edited by Harry W. Pearson); Polanyi, Karl. [Dalton, George (Ed.)] 1968. *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies: Essays of Karl Polanyi*. Beacon Press. Boston.; and Polanyi, Karl 1944. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Beacon Press. Beacon Hill, Boston.

<sup>45</sup> Hettne, Bjorn. 1995. "The International Political Economy of Transformation" in Hettne (Ed.) 1995. *International Political Economy: Understanding Global Disorder*. Ferwood Publishing and Zed Books. Halifax and London & New Jersey.



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- <sup>46</sup> See Lukacs, Georg. 1971 [1923]. *History and Class Consciousness*. Merlin Press. London.
- <sup>47</sup> For an overview of the Regulation School and its central authors (Aglietta 1979, 1982; Lipietz 1982, 1992; Boyer 1979, 1988 among others) see Alain Noel, 1987. "Accumulation, regulation and social change: an essay on French political economy" in *International Organization*, Volume 41, No. 2, Spring 1987.
- <sup>48</sup> Alexander, David. 1993. *Natural Disasters*. Kluwer Academic Publishers. Dordrecht, Boston and London.
- <sup>49</sup> Cardona, Omar Dario. 2001 "La Necesidad de Repensar de Manera Holística los Conceptos de Vulnerabilidad y Riesgo – 'Una Crítica y una Revisión para la Gestión'"
- <sup>50</sup> See Anderson 1990, *Analyzing the Costs and Benefits of Natural Disaster Responses in the Context of Development*. Environmental Working Paper No. 29. World Bank. Washington, D.C. Her seminal work, however, is her 1989 publication, with Peter Woodrow, is *Rising from the Ashes*, UNESCO and Westview Press. Paris and Boulder.
- <sup>51</sup> For her perspectives on these limitations, see Mary B. Anderson. 1995. "Vulnerability to Disaster and Sustainable Development: A General Framework for Assessing Vulnerability" in Munasinghe, Mohan and Caroline Clare. (Eds.) 1995. *Disaster Prevention for Sustainable Development: Economic and Policy Issues*. The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, IDNDR and the World Bank. Washington, D.C.
- <sup>52</sup> Government of Canada. 2002. *National Disaster Mitigation Strategy: Towards a Canadian Approach*. Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness. Government of Canada. P.16.
- <sup>53</sup> Advisory Committee on the International Decade for Natural Hazard Reduction. (1987) *Confronting Natural Disasters: An International Decade for Natural Hazard Reduction*. National Research Council, U.S. National Academy of Sciences and U.S. National Academy of Engineering. National Academy Press. Washington, D.C. p. 3.
- <sup>54</sup> Cardona 1991.
- <sup>55</sup> See Davis, Ian. 1976. *Shelter after Disaster*. Oxford Polytechnic Press. Oxford.
- <sup>56</sup> Wijkman, Anders and Lloyd Timberlake. 1984. *Natural Disasters: Acts of God or Acts of Man?* An Earthscan Paperback. International Institute for Environment and Development. London.
- <sup>57</sup> Authors from the English language world include Andrew Maskrey (1989), Piers Blaikie, Terry Cannon, Ian Davis and Ben Wisner (1994), James Lewis (1997) and John Twigg.
- <sup>58</sup> La Red de Estudios Sociales en Prevención de Desastres en América Latina is an international network multidisciplinary specialists in disaster studies. For more information see their web page [www.desenredando.org](http://www.desenredando.org). Key authors associated with La Red, aside from Andrew Maskrey, include Omar Dario Cardona, Allan Lavell, and Gustavo Wilches-Chaux.
- <sup>59</sup> Maskrey, Andrew (Ed.) 1993. *Los Desastres No Son Naturales*. La Red. Panamá City. Panamá.
- <sup>60</sup> Blaikie et. al. 1994; Maskrey 1993.
- <sup>61</sup> Quoting Alan Lavell, "Instead of demonizing hazards for their impacts on society, it would be probably more correct to demonise society for its impacts on hazards!" (ISDR 2002: 27) See also Maskrey 1993.
- <sup>62</sup> ISDR 2002: 22
- <sup>63</sup> Mitigation is here understood as impact reduction. There is much confusion and debate over the specific use of terminology in disaster studies, given the plethora of different approaches. Some people use mitigation as a synonym for prevention, however, in this study mitigation is used in the mechanical sense of reducing damage and is a separate and distinct concept from prevention, which is eliminating exposure to threat or hazard.
- <sup>64</sup> Lavell, Allan. 2002. "Local Level Risk Management: Concepts and Experience in Central America" Paper presented at the Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation Summit, 21-23 November, 2002. New Delhi.
- <sup>65</sup> James Lewis. 1997. "Development, vulnerability and disaster reduction" in Awotona, Adenrele. (Ed.) (1997) *Reconstruction After Disaster: Issues and Practices*. Ashgate. Adlershot, England. P. 46
- <sup>66</sup> See Blaikie et. al. 1994.
- <sup>67</sup> The ISDR consensus is detailed in International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, ISDR. 2002. *Living with Risk: A Global Review of Disaster Reduction Initiatives*. United Nations Inter-Agency Secretariat, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, UN/ISDR. Geneva.
- <sup>68</sup> ISDR 2002: 27
- <sup>69</sup> Wilches-Chaux, Gustavo. 1989. "La Vulnerabilidad Global" in Andrew Maskrey 1993, *Los Desastres No Son Naturales*. La Red.

<sup>70</sup> See Wilches-Chaux, Gustavo 1989. "La Vulnerabilidad Global" in Maskrey 1993, *Los Desastres No Son Naturales*, and Wilches Chaux 1998, *Auge, Caída y Levantada de Felipe Pinillo, Mecánico y Soldador o Yo voy a correr el riesgo – Guía de La Red para la gestión local del riesgo*. Red de Estudios Sociales en Prevención de Desastres en América Latina – La Red and Intermediate Technology Development Group, ITDG - Perú. Printed in Quito, Ecuador.

<sup>71</sup> The use of paradigm here adheres to Haas's interpretation of "Kuhn's broader social definition of a paradigm, which is an entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by members of a given community and which governs not a subject matter but a group of practitioners" this latter being "an epistemic community [which] is a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area". Cited in Reusse 2002, p. 6.

<sup>72</sup> Nef and Vanderkop 1989

<sup>73</sup> See Sen 1981, who is responsible for first demonstrating this fact.

<sup>74</sup> See De Waal 1989: 15-20

<sup>75</sup> These four paragraphs are a summary of Chapter 5 in Devereux 1993.

<sup>76</sup> See Valdes, Alberto. (Ed.) 1981. *Food Security for Developing Countries*. Westview Press. Boulder, Colorado.

<sup>77</sup> See, among others, Pinstrip-Andersen, Per and Rajul Pandya-Lorch (Eds.). *La Agenda Inconclusa: Perspectivas para Superar el Hambre, la Pobreza y la Degradación Ambiental*. International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Washington, D.C. 2001. Spanish edition, IIPA, 2002.

<sup>78</sup> See especially Kracht, Uwe and Manfred Schultze. (Eds.) *Food Security and Nutrition: The Global Challenge*. Lit Verlag and St. Martin's Press. New York. 1999.

<sup>79</sup> See, especially, Von Braun, Joachim, Tesfaye Teklu and Patrick Webb. 1999. *Famine in Africa: Causes, Responses and Prevention*. International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the John Hopkins University Press. Baltimore and London.

<sup>80</sup> For further discussion of these findings, see, amongst others, DeRose, Laurie, Ellen Messer and Sara Millman. 1998. *Who's Hungry? And How Do We Know? Food Shortage, Poverty and Deprivation*. UNU. Tokyo. and Webb, Patrick and Anuradha Harinarayan. 1999. "A Measure of Uncertainty: The Nature of Vulnerability and Its Relationship to Malnutrition" in *Disasters*, Volume 34, Issue 4.

<sup>81</sup> See Ravallion, Martin. *Markets and Famines*. Clarendon Press. Oxford. 1987. and Ravallion, Martin 1996. "Famines and Economics". *Policy Research Working Paper 1693*. World Bank. Washington, D.C.

<sup>82</sup> See World Bank. 1986. *Poverty and Hunger: Issues and Options for Food Security in Developing Countries*. A World Bank Policy Study. World Bank. Washington, D.C.

<sup>83</sup> See Eide, Asbjorn et. al. (Eds.) *Food as a Human Right*. United Nations University. Tokyo, Japan. 1984.

<sup>84</sup> Sen 1981: 2

<sup>85</sup> Sen 1981: 3-4

<sup>86</sup> Sen 1981: 39

<sup>87</sup> Edkins 2002, p.13

<sup>88</sup> Sen 1986, cited in Devereux 1993: 71.

<sup>89</sup> See Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Anchor Books. New York.

<sup>90</sup> See Dreze and Sen 1989, 1990.

<sup>91</sup> For more on the TransNational Institute, of which George is the Associate Director, see their web page [www.tni.org](http://www.tni.org).

<sup>92</sup> For more on Food First, see their web page [www.foodfirst.org](http://www.foodfirst.org). Other authors associated with Food First include, most notably, Walden Bello, who is also a fellow of the TransNational Institute.

<sup>93</sup> For more information see the UNRISD web page [www.unrisd.org](http://www.unrisd.org). Of particular interest are their research projects on the Green Revolution in the 1970s, on Food Security throughout the 1980s and the various globalization research projects that have dominated its research agenda in the 1990s.

<sup>94</sup> See Kneen, Brewster. 1989. *From Land to Mouth: Understanding the Food System*. NC Press Ltd. Toronto.

<sup>95</sup> Bakker, J.I. Hans. 1990. *The World Food Crisis: Food Security in Comparative Perspective*. Canadian Scholars Press. Toronto.

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- <sup>96</sup> Nef, Jorge and J. Vanderkrop. 1989. *Food Systems and Food Security in Latina America and the Caribbean: Politics, Ideology and Technology*. Centre for Food Security Studies, University of Guelph. Guelph, ON, Canada.
- <sup>97</sup> See Keith Griffin 1987. *World Hunger and the World Economy*. Holmes and Meier. New York.
- <sup>98</sup> See, among others, George, Susan. 1999a. *The Lugano Report: On Preserving Capitalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Pluto Press. London. And George, Susan. 1992. *The Debt Boomerang: How Third World Debt Harms Us All*. Westview Press. Boulder. For Food First see Bello, Walden 2001. Edited with a preface by Anuradha Mittal. *The Future in the Balance: Essays on Globalization and Resistance*. Food First. And Bello, Walden, Shea Cunningham and Bill Rau. *Dark victory : the United States, structural adjustment, and global poverty*. London : Oakland : Amsterdam : Pluto ; Food First ; TNI, 1994.
- <sup>99</sup> See Nef, Jorge. 1995. [1997]. *Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability: An Exploration into the Global Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment*. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. International Development Research Centre, IDRC. Ottawa. (Available online at [www.idrc.ca/library/document/103249](http://www.idrc.ca/library/document/103249))
- <sup>100</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO 1998. *The Right to Food in Theory and Practice*. FAO. Rome. p. 29
- <sup>101</sup> Barraclough 1991 and Barraclough, Solon and Michael F. Scott. 1987. *The Rich Have Already Eaten: Roots of Catastrophe in Central America*. Transnational Institute. Amsterdam, the Netherlands. p. 19.
- <sup>102</sup> Barraclough and Scott 1987: 20-21
- <sup>103</sup> Keith Griffin 1987. *World Hunger and the World Economy*. Holmes and Meier. New York. xiii.
- <sup>104</sup> Ibid. p.1
- <sup>105</sup> Ibid, p.5
- <sup>106</sup> The 'New' Famines was the title of the October 2002 *IDS Bulletin*, Vol. 33 No. 4 edited by Stephen Devereux and containing both an overview of the key theorists mentioned here, as well as contributions from many of them. See in particular the first essay by Stephen Devereux, Paul Howe and Luka Biong Deng. 2002. "Introduction – The New Famines" in *IDS Bulletin*. Vol 33 No. 4
- <sup>107</sup> Joachim von Braun, Tesfaye Teklu and Patrick Webb. 1999. *Famine in Africa: Causes, Response and Prevention*. IFPRI and John Hopkins University Press. Baltimore and London. P. 1.
- <sup>108</sup> See De Waal 1989 for a discussion of outsider versus insider definitions of famine, the relevance and applicability of each.
- <sup>109</sup> Devereux 1993: 181
- <sup>110</sup> Rangasami, A. 1985. "'Failure of exchange entitlements' theory of famine: a response" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 20 No.41 pp. 1747-1752 and 1797-1801.
- <sup>111</sup> Edkins 2002: 14 citing Rangasami 1985.
- <sup>112</sup> Keen 1994
- <sup>113</sup> Edkins 2002: 17
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid. P. 12
- <sup>115</sup> Devereux 2000: 27
- <sup>116</sup> Edkins 2002: 15
- <sup>117</sup> Edkins 2002; 14
- <sup>118</sup> Edkins 2002; 15
- <sup>119</sup> Edkins 2000: 14
- <sup>120</sup> Edkins 2000: 37
- <sup>121</sup> See De Waal, Alex. 1989. *Famine that Kills: Darfur, Sudan, 1984-1985*. Clarendon Press. Oxford.
- <sup>122</sup> De Waal, Alex. 1997. *Famine Crimes: Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa*. James Currey. Oxford. P. 85
- <sup>123</sup> De Wall 1989: 112-113
- <sup>124</sup> Devereux 2002: 70
- <sup>125</sup> Devereux 1993: 63
- <sup>126</sup> Devereux 2002: 70
- <sup>127</sup> Devereux 1993: 63
- <sup>128</sup> Garenne, Michel. 2002. "The Political Economy of an Urban Famine: Antananarivo 1985-6" *IDS Bulletin*. Vol. 33 No. 4, p.60
- <sup>129</sup> See Devereux 2000: 16, discussing Mallory 1926.
- <sup>130</sup> De Waal 2000: 8-9

- <sup>131</sup> Gazdar, Haris. 2002. "Pre-modern, Modern and Post-Modern Famine in Iraq" *IDS Bulletin*. Vol. 33 No. 4
- <sup>132</sup> citing Sylvia Brunel 2002. *Famines et Politiques*. Presses de Sciences Po. Paris. Quoted in Garenne 2002.
- <sup>133</sup> Devereux 2000: 15-16
- <sup>134</sup> Knippers-Black, Jan 1991. *Development in Theory and Practice: Bridging the Gap*. Westview. Boulder. P. 29
- <sup>135</sup> See Staniland, Martin. 1985. *What is Political Economy? A Study of Social Theory and Underdevelopment*. Yale University Press. New Haven and London. for a complete discussion of political economy and development.
- <sup>136</sup> Collinson, Sarah. 2002. "Politically informed humanitarian programming: using a political economy approach", *Humanitarian Practice Network Paper 41*, Overseas Development Institute. London.
- <sup>137</sup> For an overview of post development see Rahnama, Majid and Victoria Bawtree 1997. *The Post-Development Reader*. Zed Books, New York and London; University Press Ltd., Dhaka; Fernwood Publishing, Halifax and David Phillip, Cape Town.
- <sup>138</sup> See, among others, George, Susan. 1999. "A Short History of Neo-Liberalism: Twenty Years of Elite Economics and Emerging Opportunities for Structural Change" Paper delivered at the Conference on Economic Sovereignty in a Globalizing World, Bangkok, March 24-26 1999. and her Afterword in George, Susan. *The Lugano Report: On Preserving Capitalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Pluto Press. London. 1999.
- <sup>139</sup> For some overviews of these positions see Kay, Cristobal 1989. *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment*. Routledge. London and New York.; Roxborough, Ian 1979. *Theories of Underdevelopment*. The MacMillan Press. London.; Hettne, Bjorn (Ed.) 1995. *International Political Economy: Understanding Global Disorder*. Fernwood Publishing, Sapes SA, University Press Limited and Zed Books. Halifax, Cape Town, Dhaka; London and New Jersey.; Blomstrom, H and Bjorn Hettne. 1984. *Development Theory in Transition: The Dependency Debate and Beyond: Third World Responses*. Zed Books. London.
- <sup>140</sup> Rist, Gilbert. 2002. *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith*. Zed Books. London and New York. P. 13.
- <sup>141</sup> See in particular Rhodes, Robert (Ed.). 1970. *Imperialism and Underdevelopment*. Monthly Review Press. New York and London.
- <sup>142</sup> See especially Veltmeyer, Henry and James Petras. 2000. *The Dynamics of Social Change in Latin America*. Palgrave. Hampshire and New York. and Petras, James and Henry Veltmeyer. 2001. *Globalization Unmasked: Imperialism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Fernwood Publishing and Zed Books. Halifax, NS. and London.
- <sup>143</sup> For discussion of this debate see Bowles, Paul 2002. "Globalization and Boundaries: Is the 'Development Divide' Still Relevant?" in *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, Volume 23, Number 3, 2002.
- <sup>144</sup> Mittelman, James H. 2000. *The Globalization Syndrome: Transformation and Resistance*. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey.
- <sup>145</sup> For discussion of the New International Division of Labour, see Mittelman, James H. 1995. "Rethinking the international division of labour in the context of globalisation" in *Third World Quarterly*, June 1995, Volume 16, Issue 2. and Mittelman, James H. 1994. "The globalisation challenge: Surviving at the margins" in *Third World Quarterly*. September 1994, Vol. 15, Issue 3.
- <sup>146</sup> For discussion of globalization as an exercise of US hegemony see Tabb, William K. 2002. *Unequal Partners: A Primer on Globalization*. The New Press. New York.
- <sup>147</sup> Mittelman 2000: 225
- <sup>148</sup> Ibid p. 231
- <sup>149</sup> Ibid pp.25-26
- <sup>150</sup> Ibid pp. 28-29
- <sup>151</sup> Ibid p. 223
- <sup>152</sup> Ibid p. 225
- <sup>153</sup> Keohane, Robert O. and Robert S. Nye. 1989 [1977]. *Power and Interdependence: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Scott, Foresman Company and Little, Brown and Co. Boston. Glenview and London.
- <sup>154</sup> Keohane and Nye 1989: 8

- <sup>155</sup> The difference between analytical and interpretive made here sees the former as the classification and extrapolation from the study of process (as per the distinction made between traditional and critical theory by Horkheimer). Interpretive models and theories are concerned with understanding causality, in keeping with Weber's definitions (See Weber 1947: 88 – 102).
- <sup>156</sup> In addition to Keohane and Nye 1977 and 1989, see also Staniland 1984 for his discussion of interdependence in terms of 'developing' countries.
- <sup>157</sup> Nef 1995
- <sup>158</sup> DeRose, Laurie, Ellen Messer and Sara Millman. 1998. *Who's Hungry? And How Do We Know? Food Shortage, Poverty and Deprivation*. UNU. Tokyo. p. 80
- <sup>159</sup> Ibid p. 182 – "The main factors influencing food poverty are shortage, entitlement strategies that are not sufficiently remunerative and diversified, and macroeconomic policies, especially the early states of structural adjustment, that make food and other services less affordable."
- <sup>160</sup> Courade, Georges. 1998. "Ajustement structurel et ouverture des marchés: moins de penuries, mais de nouveaux risques alimentaires" in *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, Volume 19, Special Issue.
- <sup>161</sup> Pinstrup-Andersen, Per. 1989. "The Impact of Macroeconomic Adjustment: Food Security and Nutrition" in Commander, Simon. (Ed.) 1989. *Structural Adjustment & Agriculture: Theory and Practice in Africa and Latin America*. Overseas Development Institute. London. p. 91
- <sup>162</sup> See Naim 1999 for a discussion of the Washington Consensus throughout the 1990s.
- <sup>163</sup> See Williamson 1990
- <sup>164</sup> Saborio 1990: 295
- <sup>165</sup> Saborio 1990
- <sup>166</sup> See Seabrook, Jeremy. 2002. *Class, Caste and Hierarchies*. New Internationalist and Verso. Toronto.
- <sup>167</sup> Stavenhagen, Rodolfo. 1975. *Social Classes in Agrarian Societies*. Anchor Books. New York. p. 66
- <sup>168</sup> See Hunt 1989 for an overview of 'development paradigms' and their treatment of the rural population in the process of economic development.
- <sup>169</sup> Danaher, Kevin. 1995. "Getting at Hunger's Roots: The Legacy of Colonialism and Racism" in Shields, David L.L. (Ed.) 1995. *The Color of Hunger: Race and Hunger in National and International Perspective*. Rowman and Littlefield. Maryland.
- <sup>170</sup> See El-Masri and Tipple 1997 for a discussion of the problems of urbanization. Some of these issues are highlighted in Chapter 5.
- <sup>171</sup> See Keohane, Robert and Joseph Nye 1977. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. Little, Brown and Co. Boston.
- <sup>172</sup> WHO, quoted in Cabrera 2002. My translation.
- <sup>173</sup> See Devereux et. al. 2002, p. 7 regarding the salience of famines and hidden famines.
- <sup>174</sup> For the full elaboration of this position, with particular regards to famine, see Edkins 1996, 2000 and 2002.
- <sup>175</sup> For a discussion of elites and elite theory, see Bottomore, Tom B. 1964. *Elites and Society*. Pelican Books. Hammondsworth.
- <sup>176</sup> For a full discussion on peasants, particularly in this era of globalization, see Axel Borchgrevink 2001, "Agrarian Questions and Enduring Peasants: A Classic Debate Enters the Age of Globalization" in *The European Journal of Development Research*, Volume 13 Number 1, June 2001 pp. 181-192; as well as Tom Brass 2000, *Peasants, Populism and Postmodernism: The Return of the Agrarian Myth*, (Library of Peasant Studies No. 17), Frank Cass, London and Portland; Deborah Bryceson, Cristobal Kay and Jos Mooij (Eds.) 2000, *Disappearing Peasantries: Rural Labour in Africa, Asia and Latin America*. Intermediate Technologies Development Group. London.; and *The Journal of Peasant Studies* Volume 29, Issues 3 & 4 – Special Issue: Latin American Peasants.
- <sup>177</sup> Albeit exactly what type of capitalist system is debatable, especially if the rhetoric is taken at face value and not evaluated against how it has effectively advances the interests of monopoly or transnational capital
- <sup>178</sup> Global InfoGroup. *En Cifras: Guatemala*. Global InfoGroup. Guatemala. 1999.
- <sup>179</sup> Piedra Santa 2002. *Guatemala: Geografía Visualizada*. Piedra Santa Editorial. Guatemala.
- <sup>180</sup> The nine regions and their corresponding departments, in order, are: Región I – Metropolitana: Guatemala; Región II – Norte: Baja Verapaz, Alta Verapaz; Región III – Nor-Oriente: El Progreso, Izabal, Zacapa, Chiquimula; Región IV – Sur-Oriente: Santa Rosa, Jalapa, Jutiapa; Región V – Central: Sacatepequez, Chimaltenango, Escuintla; Región VI – Sur-Occidente: Solola, Totonicapán,

Quetzaltenango, Suchitepequez, Retalhuleu, San Marcos; Región VII – Nor-Occidente: Huehuetenango, Quiché; Región VIII – Peten: Peten.

<sup>181</sup> “The Life Zones were devised using three indicators: biotemperature (based on the growing season length and temperature); mean annual precipitation; and a potential evapotranspiration ratio, linking biotemperature with annual precipitation to define humidity provinces.” (<http://www-cger.nies.go.jp/grid-e/griddoc/holdride.html> - Accessed March 30, 2003)

<sup>182</sup> Global InfoGroup. *En Cifras: Guatemala*. Global InfoGroup. Guatemala. 1999.

<sup>183</sup> Piedra Santa 2002. *Guatemala: Geografía Visualizada*. Piedra Santa Editorial. Guatemala.

<sup>184</sup> Unión Internacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza y Recursos Naturales, UICN. *La Recuperación de Bosques en Centroamérica Utilizando un Enfoque de Ecosistemas – País: Guatemala*. Comisión de Gestión de Ecosistemas, CGE. UICN. Guatemala. August, 2001. p. 11

<sup>185</sup> UICN 2001: 4 -5

<sup>186</sup> FAOSTAT, Land Use – Guatemala.

<sup>187</sup> UICN 2001: 4

<sup>188</sup> Fraser, Peter D. And Mark Payne. 1987. *Central American Economic Handbook*. Euromonitor. London. P. 102.

<sup>189</sup> See Gill, Richardson B. 2001. *Great Maya Droughts: Water, Life and Death*. University of New Mexico Press. And Webster, David. 2002. *The Fall of the Ancient Maya: Solving the Mystery of Maya Collapse*. Thames and Hudson Ltd. London.

<sup>190</sup> Plant 1978: 6; UNDRO 1977: 2; and UNDRO 1982: 70. This latter source offers the higher figures shown here. The former two estimate deaths at 22,000 and those left homeless at over one million and 1.2 million respectively. Both include only 220,000 homes destroyed, although this figure was only for the urban area of the capital and did not include the 163,501 rural dwellings destroyed by the earthquake.

<sup>191</sup> See DESINVENTAR, the inventory of disasters compiled by La Red de Estudios Sociales en Prevención de Desastres en América Latina, available from their web site: [www.desenredando.org](http://www.desenredando.org).

<sup>192</sup> SEGEPLAN 1998; Trejo and Gonzalez 1998

<sup>193</sup> Brockett 1998, pp. 13-14

<sup>194</sup> Dunkerley 1988, p. 7

<sup>195</sup> Dunkerley 1988 p. 50, note 102, citing *El Diario de Centro America*, 19 April 1892, quoted by McCreery in “Debt and Servitude”

<sup>196</sup> Dunkerley, James. 1990 “Guatemala since 1930” in *The Cambridge history of Latin America*, Volume VII, edited by Leslie Bethell, 1990. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge and New York.

<sup>197</sup> Roman Mayorga Quiros, 1983, *El Crecimiento Desigual en Centroamérica*, pp. 11-12, cited in Dunkerley 1988, p. 172

<sup>198</sup> CEPAL 2001. *Boletín Demográfico. Edición especial. Urbanización y Evolución de la Población Urbana de América Latina (1950 -1990)* CEPAL, Mayo 2001. Chile.

<sup>199</sup> Kepfer, Crista, February 27, 2003. “Somos 11.237,196: Instituto de Estadística presenta informe de población del país” in *Prensa Libre*. Electronic Edition [www.prensalibre.com](http://www.prensalibre.com), Accessed February 27, 2003

<sup>200</sup> PNUD 2002. *Informe Sobre el Desarrollo Humano: Guatemala: Desarrollo Humano, Mujeres y Salud*. PNUD. Guatemala.

<sup>201</sup> ENCOVI 2000 and ENIGFAM 98/99, respectively, in UNDP 2001. Other estimates are 1989 = 36.1% and 2000 = 39.2% (ENS 1989 and ENCOVI 2000 in UNDP 2002; do not include children under 10 and 7 years of age respectively)

<sup>202</sup> Ghimire 2002

<sup>203</sup> See ENCOVI 2000 in UNDP 2002 and ENIGFAM 98/99 in UNDP 2001

<sup>204</sup> The landless population is estimated by some at 21% of the rural population. See Ghimire 2002. Estimates from the mid 1980s considered 420,000 families to be landless. See Painter 1987: 98. This issue is further addressed in Chapter 4, in the section on Ownership

<sup>205</sup> Gallardo and Lopez 1986, p. 188

<sup>206</sup> See OIM 2001. *Estudio sobre la crisis de la caficultura y su efecto en el empleo en Guatemala*. Cuaderno de Trabajo Sobre Migración No. 7 Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM). Guatemala.

<sup>207</sup> Berger 1992: 30

- <sup>208</sup> See Berger 1992: 26 for further discussion of Ubico and his regime as autonomous from the control of landed elites.
- <sup>209</sup> See Berger 1992 and OIM 2001.
- <sup>210</sup> OIM 2001B pp. 25-26
- <sup>211</sup> Handy 1984: 106
- <sup>212</sup> See Berger 1992
- <sup>213</sup> See Paige 1997 and Berger 1992
- <sup>214</sup> Berger 1992
- <sup>215</sup> Dunkerley 1988: 440
- <sup>216</sup> Handy 1984: 142
- <sup>217</sup> For further discussion see Handy 1984
- <sup>218</sup> Dunkerley 1990: 226 "Guatemala since 1930" in Bethell, Leslie (Ed.) 1990. *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, Volume 7. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- <sup>219</sup> For a full history of the United Fruit Company and its CIA coup in Guatemala see Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer. 1982. *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of an American Coup in Guatemala*. Anchor Books. New York. For a different perspective on the role of the United Fruit Company in Guatemala, see Stanley, Diane. 1994. *For the record: the United Fruit Company's sixty-six years in Guatemala*. Centro Impresor Piedra Santa. Guatemala.
- <sup>220</sup> Handy 1984: 187
- <sup>221</sup> Dunkerley 1988: 435
- <sup>222</sup> See Dunkerley 1988: 437 and 198
- <sup>223</sup> Feinberg and Bagley 1986
- <sup>224</sup> Barry 1989: 52
- <sup>225</sup> See Painter 1987: 32-33
- <sup>226</sup> Dunkerley 1988: 436
- <sup>227</sup> Barry 1989: 34
- <sup>228</sup> For discusión of this see, among others Danaher, Kevin, Phillip Berryman and Medea Benjamin. *Help of Hindrance? United States Economic Aid in Central America*. Food First Development Report No. 1. Institute for Food and Development Policy. September, 1987. and Central American Crisis Monitoring Team. 1985. *In Contempt of Congress: The Reagan Record of Deceit & Illegality in Central America*. Institute for Policy Studies. Washington, D.C.
- <sup>229</sup> For analysis of the political and military instability under Portillo, and the several coup attempts and military uprisings, see the Guatemala Canada Solidarity Network's situational analyses – www.gcsn.org.
- <sup>230</sup> See ODHAG's Guatemala Nunca Mas! And the CEH's Memoria del Silencio for full details of the human rights abuses in Guatemala during the civil war.
- <sup>231</sup> Dunkerley 1988, p. 171
- <sup>232</sup> May, Rachel. 2001. *Terror in the Countryside: Campesino Responses to Political Violence in Guatemala, 1954 – 1985*. Ohio University Center for International Studies. Athens. 2001. p. 23
- <sup>233</sup> Ibid. pp. 31-32 and 51-52
- <sup>234</sup> OIM 2001 A. *La OIM y el proceso de retorno/repartriacion de refugiados Guatemaltecos*. Cuadernos de Trabajo Sobre Migración No. 2. OIM. Guatemala.
- <sup>235</sup> See Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, CEH. *Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio*. CEH. Guatemala.
- <sup>236</sup> See ODHAG. 1999. *Guatemala, Nunca Mas!* Maryknoll, CIIR and the Latin America Bureau. New York and London.
- <sup>237</sup> Torres-Rivas in Chase-Dunn, p. 119
- <sup>238</sup> Ibid. P. 119
- <sup>239</sup> Ibid. p. 120
- <sup>240</sup> Ibid. pp-121-122
- <sup>241</sup> For an overview of the post-conflict violence see Moser, Caroline and Cathy McIlwaine. 2001. *Violence in a Post-Conflict Context: Urban Poor Perceptions from Guatemala*. World Bank. Washington, D.C.
- <sup>242</sup> These figures for murders come from PNUD 1998, PNUD 2002 and *Prensa Libre*, April 20, 2003.
- <sup>243</sup> Treat 2002
- <sup>244</sup> PNUD 1998: 232

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- <sup>245</sup> See The Economist, May 15 2003
- <sup>246</sup> See Berger 1992 for a thorough elaboration of this, her thesis, from Ubico to Cerezo (1990)
- <sup>247</sup> Handy 1984: 195
- <sup>248</sup> See Feinberg, Richard E. and Bruce M. Bagley. 1986. *Development postponed: the political economy of Central America in the 1980s*. SAIS Papers in Latin American Studies. Westview Press. Boulder.
- <sup>249</sup> The five members of CACM are Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. While Honduras joined the group later, and Costa Rica temporarily withdrew, all five are currently members.
- <sup>250</sup> See BanGuat 2002.
- <sup>251</sup> Robinson, William I. 2001. "Neoliberalism, the Global Elite and the Guatemalan Transition: A Critical Macrosocial Analysis" in Chase-Dunn, Christopher, Susanne Jonas and Nelson Amaro. 2001. *Globalization on the Ground: Postbellum Guatemalan Democracy and Development*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Lanham, Md. p. 193
- <sup>252</sup> Bulmer-Thomas 1987: 175-176
- <sup>253</sup> World Bank. 2002. *Guatemala: Country Assistance Evaluation* Report No. 25212-GT. December 11, 2002. Operations Evaluation Department, World Bank. Washington, D.C. p. 20
- <sup>254</sup> Dardon 2003, Prensa Libre April 5, 2003 [www.prensalibre.com](http://www.prensalibre.com)
- <sup>255</sup> Ibid. p. 20
- <sup>256</sup> Ibid. p. 21
- <sup>257</sup> Handy 1984: 189
- <sup>258</sup> See, for instance, the October, 2001 presentation to Congress and the President of the Republic by the Director of United States Agency for International Development, of the *Estrategia para Enfrentar la Desnutrición Aguda y La Crisis Económica Rural*.
- <sup>259</sup> Schlesinger, Stephen and Stephen Kinzer. *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. Anchor Books, Anchor Press/Doubleday. Garden City, New York. 1982. p. 238.
- <sup>260</sup> in nominal dollars
- <sup>261</sup> See, for instance, the discussion of US food aid and citations presented in Dzierzowski 1988.
- <sup>262</sup> Aid examples include the various instances of genetically modified food aid being distributed by AID and the World Food Programme throughout the world. The trade aspect is seen in the agricultural negotiations in GATT and the WTO, as well as the GMO and agricultural tariff dispute between the US and Europe.
- <sup>263</sup> Based on own calculations of figures from FAOSTAT.
- <sup>264</sup> See Mittelman, James. 2000. *The Globalization Syndrome: Transformation and Resistance*. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey.: for complete discussion of the 'global division of labour and power'.
- <sup>265</sup> Painter 1987; 19
- <sup>266</sup> Treat 2002
- <sup>267</sup> See Staniland 1984
- <sup>268</sup> See Keohane and Nye 1977
- <sup>269</sup> Paige 1997; Helweg-Larsen 2003
- <sup>270</sup> CEPAL Base de Datos <http://www.cepal.cl/DE/proyectos/eee/eee2002/index.htm> and BANGUAT Principales Indicadores Macroeconómicos 1980-2002 <http://www.banguat.gob.gt/menu.asp?id=136>
- <sup>271</sup> Saborio 1990
- <sup>272</sup> BANGUAT 2002, 2001 – *Memoria de Labores 2001 and 2000* and Painter 1987: 9 for the 1984 statistic
- <sup>273</sup> BANGUAT 2002. INGUAT and the national press report figures that are significantly higher than these, which indicate a reversal of the trend – tourism receipts of \$535 million in 2000 and \$492 million in 2001.
- <sup>274</sup> See AVANCSO 1994. El Significado de la Maquila en Guatemala: Elementos para su comprensión. Cuadros de Investigación No. 10. Asociación para el Avance de las Ciencias Sociales en Guatemala, AVANCSO. Guatemala.
- <sup>275</sup> BANGUAT 2002: 77
- <sup>276</sup> BANGUAT 2002: 87. Note that figures for production and export earnings from industry associations, such as AGEXPRONT and VESTEX, repeatedly indicate exports of in excess of \$1 billion, for each of the last five years.
- <sup>277</sup> VESTEX Statistics – December 2001



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- <sup>278</sup> See Decrees 29-89 and 65-89 – the Promotion and Development of Export Activities and Drawback Law and the Free Trade Zones Law, respectively, as well as the Investment Law, Decree 9-98)
- <sup>279</sup> VESTEX 2001 Statistics. The problem with using these figures to calculate the exact cost of imported materials is that VESTEX itself offers various annual export totals for clothing and textiles, which in some cases surpass a \$1 billion.
- <sup>280</sup> Painter 1987: 31
- <sup>281</sup> BANGUAT 2002: 87
- <sup>282</sup> SEGEPLAN September 2001: 58
- <sup>283</sup> BANGUAT 2002: 77
- <sup>284</sup> Derived from FAOSTAT Indices
- <sup>285</sup> FAOSTAT – Total Agricultural Product, Imports and Exports
- <sup>286</sup> Khor 2001
- <sup>287</sup> BANGUAT 2002
- <sup>288</sup> Of course, Guatemala is quite diverse when compared with Canada, who depends on the US for 62.5% of its imports, by value. (Statistics Canada, [strategis.ic.gc.ca](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca))
- <sup>289</sup> At least according to the BANGUAT statistics presented here. The IMF Direction of Trade Statistics indicates even greater stability, with uninterrupted increases in the level of US imports to Guatemala.
- <sup>290</sup> FAOSTAT
- <sup>291</sup> Vilas, Carlos M. 1995. *Between Earthquakes and Volcanoes: Market, State and the Revolutions in Central America*. Monthly Review Press. New York. P. 75
- <sup>292</sup> BANGUAT 2002: 30
- <sup>293</sup> ANACAFE; BANGUAT 2002
- <sup>294</sup> ANACAFE 2001a, 2001b; ICO
- <sup>295</sup> See the Oxfam report “Mugged: Poverty in Your Coffee Cup” for further discussion of the causes of the coffee crisis.
- <sup>296</sup> BANGUAT 2002: 91
- <sup>297</sup> OIM 2001c, 2002
- <sup>298</sup> ANACAFE
- <sup>299</sup> UNICEF 2000a
- <sup>300</sup> BANGUAT 2001: 72
- <sup>301</sup> Compare Guatemala’s dependence on the United States as an export market with Canada’s, where the US buys 87.12% (by value) of our exports. (Statistics Canada, [strategis.ic.gc.ca](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca))
- <sup>302</sup> PNUD 2002
- <sup>303</sup> For further discussion on the FRG’s increased military spending and overall execution of its budget, see CONADEHGUA 2002.
- <sup>304</sup> For complete elaboration on these tax incentives, and other Free Trade Zone benefits, the relevant pieces of legislation are: Decree 29-89, Promotion and Development of Export Activities and Drawback Law; Decree 65-89, Free Trade Zones Law; and Decree 9-98, Investment Law.
- <sup>305</sup> Vilas 1995: 109
- <sup>306</sup> Painter 1987: 32
- <sup>307</sup> Helweg-Larsen, Simon. 2003. “Guatemalan Peace Accords, Elites and Land Distribution” in *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* (forthcoming Fall 2003).
- <sup>308</sup> Minugua. “El Pacto Fiscal un año después” Resumen del Informe de Verificación de MINUGUA
- <sup>309</sup> Painter 1987: 32-33
- <sup>310</sup> CONADEHGUA 2002: 8
- <sup>311</sup> Dunkerley 1988, p. 212
- <sup>312</sup> BANGUAT 2002: 150
- <sup>313</sup> ENEI 2002
- <sup>314</sup> This is due largely to methodological changes, as well as an expansion of the definition as to who constitutes a member of the Economically Active Population. SEGEPLAN estimates that 34% of children between 7 and 14 years of age are working, and has lowered the minimum age of the PEA from 10 to 7 in order to reflect this. (SEGEPLAN 2001a: 19)
- <sup>315</sup> Handy 1984: 209

- <sup>316</sup> This variation in numbers corresponds to the varying population figures. It should also be noted that Painter (1987: 9) records 67% of the population in 1980 as being dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods – almost 5 million people.
- <sup>317</sup> MECOVI, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE) – Encuesta Nacional de Empleo e Ingresos (ENEI) 2002; <http://www.segeplan.gob.gt/ine/productos/mecovi/default.htm>. Note that while it is unclear whether these figures refer to the total population or simply to the PEA, it is likely the latter, which the ENEI 2002 places at 5 million people.
- <sup>318</sup> MECOVI – ENEI 2002.
- <sup>319</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a: 23
- <sup>320</sup> Rosenthal 1996: 32
- <sup>321</sup> Berger 1993: 207-208
- <sup>322</sup> OIM 2002; Prensa Libre
- <sup>323</sup> UNICEF 1999 Annex 3.1
- <sup>324</sup> Based on calculations of the estimates presented in OIM 2001c
- <sup>325</sup> Asociación de Azucareros de Guatemala. *El Mundo del Azúcar – Revista Informativa*. Vol. 1, No. 1.
- <sup>326</sup> VESTEX Statistics. [http://www.vestex.com.gt/statistics\\_archivos/frame.htm](http://www.vestex.com.gt/statistics_archivos/frame.htm)
- <sup>327</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a: 13. Author's translation.
- <sup>328</sup> Rosenthal 1996: 16
- <sup>329</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001b: 15
- <sup>330</sup> See Chapter 3
- <sup>331</sup> Dunkerley 1988: 14
- <sup>332</sup> See Painter 1987: 9
- <sup>333</sup> See Section 3.1
- <sup>334</sup> IFAD 1993 p. 36
- <sup>335</sup> IFAD 1993 p. 36
- <sup>336</sup> Ghimire 2002
- <sup>337</sup> IFAD 1993 p. 36
- <sup>338</sup> MINUGUA 2000, p. 6
- <sup>339</sup> There are different calculations as to the minimum area required to be self-sufficient, according to the era, organization and region of the country. However, for all three years of the agricultural census, the farm units that were under 3.5 hectares were 76.2%, 75% and 78.4%, respectively. (Brockett 1998: 74) No classification systems consider this to be sufficient land to support a family of six.
- <sup>340</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a: 15
- <sup>341</sup> Treat 2002.
- <sup>342</sup> Dunkerley 1988, p. 465
- <sup>343</sup> ANACAFE 2002. "El Café y El Empleo". ANACAFE. Guatemala.
- <sup>344</sup> Based on own calculations of data provided by OIM 2001c
- <sup>345</sup> Painter 1987: 52 and Prensa Libre March 18, 2002
- <sup>346</sup> Paige 1997: 79
- <sup>347</sup> Natural Resources Defence Council, NRDC. Coffee, Conservation, and Commerce in the Western Hemisphere: How Individuals and Institutions Can Promote Ecologically Sound Farming and Forest Management in Northern Latin America. NRDC. New York. Retrieved June 10, 2003 from <http://www.nrdc.org/health/farming/ccc/chap4.asp>.
- <sup>348</sup> Global InfoGroup 1999.
- <sup>349</sup> See Painter 1987.
- <sup>350</sup> UNICEF 2000a
- <sup>351</sup> AVANCSO 1994: 37
- <sup>352</sup> VESTEX Statistics
- <sup>353</sup> All information in this section based on figures from FAOSTAT, unless otherwise noted.
- <sup>354</sup> Barraclough and Scott 1987: 19
- <sup>355</sup> Sasson 1990: 34-35 for this classification and Chapter 1: Nutritional Needs for general discussion of this issue
- <sup>356</sup> WFP Guatemala - Country Over View. [www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)
- <sup>357</sup> Based on own calculations of figures from FAOSTAT
- <sup>358</sup> See Sen 1981

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<sup>359</sup> Gandara & Asociados 2000: 41

<sup>360</sup> Such coping strategies oriented towards the future include reducing food consumption for survival. For further discussion, see Chambers 1989 and DeWaal 1989b.

<sup>361</sup> Committee on World Food Security 2003, Annex 8

<sup>362</sup> PNUD 1998.

<sup>363</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001: 28

<sup>364</sup> This estimate is based on the class structure presented by Gallardo and Lopez, 1986, where the dominant class equaled 1.1% of the PEA and the technical bureaucratic class totaled 3.7% of the PEA.

<sup>365</sup> Rosenthal 1996. These figures are estimates based on income measures of poverty.

<sup>366</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a

<sup>367</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a

<sup>368</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a. This plan and the 102 municipalities it targets are discussed further in Chapter 6.

<sup>369</sup> See SEGEPLAN 2001a: 9 for full details of the criteria for measurement in Guatemala

<sup>370</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a: 10

<sup>371</sup> El-Masri and Tipple 1997: 10-11

<sup>372</sup> El-Masri and Tipple 1997: 10

<sup>373</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a: 18

<sup>374</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a: 17

<sup>375</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a: 20

<sup>376</sup> See Sassoon 1990, Warnock 1984, Foster 1992 and DeRose et. al. 1997 for further discussion of the issues and aspects of malnutrition and undernutrition.

<sup>377</sup> In addition to the four authors noted above, see also Dreze and Sen 1990 for further discussion of this debate.

<sup>378</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a: 21 and 11

<sup>379</sup> Sasson 1990: 46

<sup>380</sup> See PNUD 2002, Chapter 3 for a detailed examination of the education situation in Guatemala.

<sup>381</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a: 18

<sup>382</sup> See SEGEPLAN 2001b: 32

<sup>383</sup> See ENSMI 1995

<sup>384</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001b: 26

<sup>385</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001b: 14

<sup>386</sup> PNUD 2002: xiii

<sup>387</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a: 13

<sup>388</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001b: 12

<sup>389</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001b: 16

<sup>390</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001b: 17

<sup>391</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001b: 15

<sup>392</sup> PNUD 1998: 227

<sup>393</sup> Bowman 1996

<sup>394</sup> Barry 1989: 40-41

<sup>395</sup> A related and clearly anti-democratic trend is the criminalization of the state itself. Many civil society, non-governmental and human rights organizations, and less overtly, northern governments and their embassies, are seeing the incorporation of organized crime into the state infrastructure, at all levels. This includes gangs – the notorious ‘maras’ – that have become a force unto themselves, throughout Central America, narco-traffickers and money launderers. Their ties with, and the activities of, the Guatemalan special and military security forces are an open question.

<sup>396</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001b

<sup>397</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001b: 56-57

<sup>398</sup> For a visual depiction of these cycles, see Cabrera 2002

<sup>399</sup> Weinberg, Bill. 1991. *War on the Land: Ecology and Politics in Central America*. Zed Books. London and New Jersey. Chapter 8.

<sup>400</sup> See Faber, Daniel. 1993. *Environment Under Fire: Imperialism and Ecological Crisis in Central America*. Monthly Review Press. New York.

<sup>401</sup> This measure of degradation comes from the UICN classification, which defines degraded as “the physical, chemical and biological changes, alterations in the flora and fauna and loss of soils through

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anthropogenic and geological erosion which cause a change in these resources, reducing their original conditions” (my translation. UICN 2001: 3)

<sup>402</sup> FAOSTAT

<sup>403</sup> UICN 2001

<sup>404</sup> See PNUD 1998

<sup>405</sup> This information comes from communication with a FAO official in Guatemala.

<sup>406</sup> See WFP & MAGA 2001 and MAGA & PMA 2001

<sup>407</sup> Encuesta Agropecuaria, 1996 in Gandara & Asociados 2000a: 35-37

<sup>408</sup> My translation; MAGA and PMA 2001 Appendix 2 – Análisis Meteorológico.

<sup>409</sup> Note that these data are from the meteorological stations in the department capitals and therefore do not represent the actual rainfall received by the entire department, which can and do experience extremely elevated rainfall (and climatic) disparities from area to area.

<sup>410</sup> 1 Manzana = 0.7 Hectares

<sup>411</sup> 1 Quintal = 104 pounds or 46 Kgs.

<sup>412</sup> The Country Total for anticipated production includes all 22 departments, while the totals for damages only considers those departments shown in the table, which were affected by the drought.

<sup>413</sup> FAO – GIEWS. *Foodcrops & Shortages Reports 1996-2001*

<sup>414</sup> WFP, MAGA and UNICEF 2002.

<sup>415</sup> Victor Ferrigno 2001 “Cabildo abierto ¡Hambruna! En 49 municipios del país se padece hambre, según el Programa Mundial de Alimentos.” En *Prensa Libre*, September 1, 2001.

<sup>416</sup> WFP 2001a

<sup>417</sup> WFP 2001b

<sup>418</sup> USAID 2001

<sup>419</sup> WFP, MAGA and UNICEF 2002. This rapid evaluation states clearly that its findings are not generalizable for municipalities or departments, but are only representative of the communities surveyed.

<sup>420</sup> See WFP, MAGA and UNICEF 2002.

<sup>421</sup> *Prensa Libre* January 22, 2003

<sup>422</sup> For these different lists of causes, see USAID 2002, ACH 2002, and the various WFP documents.

<sup>423</sup> Small producers are those that operate on up to 10 hectares of land. Medium producers have 10 to 45 hectares and large producers are those with more than 45 hectares.

<sup>424</sup> ANACAFE 2002

<sup>425</sup> OIM 2001c

<sup>426</sup> Along with industry associations, such as ANACAFE and the International Coffee Organization, even the World Bank and the Inter American Development Bank are promoting these high quality gourmet coffee options.

<sup>427</sup> For instance, on February 13, 2002, Indonesia, the world's fourth largest coffee exporter in 2001, announced it would convert 20,000 hectares of robusta bean production to arabica in the next three years. (*Prensa Libre*, Feb. 14, 2002)

<sup>428</sup> OIM 2002: 8

<sup>429</sup> ANACAFE 2002

<sup>430</sup> OIM 2001c: 37-39

<sup>431</sup> OIM 2001c: 37-39

<sup>432</sup> PNUD 2002: 377

<sup>433</sup> UNICEF 2000c: Cuadro 2.5

<sup>434</sup> SEGEPLAN 2001a; *Prensa Libre*, Feb. 1, 2002

<sup>435</sup> Excepting, of course, the transaction fees charged by banks for the transmission of these funds.

<sup>436</sup> PNUD 2001. BANGUAT Boletín Estadístico.

<sup>437</sup> For some examples of remittances that go astray, and how, see the *Prensa Libre*, June 15, 2003.

<sup>438</sup> PNUD 1998

<sup>439</sup> *Prensa Libre* – Jan. 18, 2002

<sup>440</sup> IMF 2000. Country Staff Report No. 00/9: Statistical Annex. International Monetary Fund. Washington, D.C. February 2000. p. 3

<sup>441</sup> UNICEF 2000a: 78

<sup>442</sup> See MAGA and PMA 2001

<sup>443</sup> See WFP and MAGA 2001

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- <sup>444</sup> These maps and indicators stretch back to the studies of Gandara & Asociados from the previous year, and so were not presenting any sudden or new discoveries, but rather information about a situation that was clearly known and formally recognized.
- <sup>445</sup> See FAO 1998: 42 for an English translation of these Articles of the Constitution of Guatemala, Number 51 – Protection of Minors and the Elderly; and Number 99 – Feeding and Nutrition.
- <sup>446</sup> Of 55 municipalities sampled in this non-representative survey. See WFP, MAGA and UNICEF 2002.
- <sup>447</sup> These 22 deaths are from January to May 9, 2003. The price of cardamom paid locally has fallen from 7 quetzales to one quetzal, per pound. See Lorena Seijo's article. "Empieza a fluir ayuda: Crisis agrícola y sequía agudizan problema en Cahabón" in *Prensa Libre*, Saturday May 10, 2003. Retrieved May 10, 2003 from [www.prensalibre.com](http://www.prensalibre.com))
- <sup>448</sup> See "Atienden a niños con desnutrición en Coatepeque" by Edgar Octavio Girón in *Prensa Libre*, May 12, 2003
- <sup>449</sup> It is not so much that the famine has expanded, but rather detection and recognition of its expanse has increased.
- <sup>450</sup> WHO 1999. *Protocolos de Evaluación Sanitaria Rápida en Situaciones de Emergencia*. Quoted in Cabrera 2002. My translation.
- <sup>451</sup> See *Prensa Libre*, April 30, 2003
- <sup>452</sup> Cited in Treat, Jonathan 2002, "Guatemala's Landless Movement," Americas Program, Silver City, NM: Interhemispheric Resource Center, November 25, 2002. <http://www.americaspolicy.org/citizen-action/focus/0211landless.html>
- <sup>453</sup> IDB 1998 *Las economías de los países centroamericanos*. Cited in Gallardo 2001: 93
- <sup>454</sup> See George 1977, 1984, among others, and Dzieror 1988.
- <sup>455</sup> See May 2001 for a discussion of the dialectic of revolution, and its suppression, in Guatemala.
- <sup>456</sup> George 1984: 98
- <sup>457</sup> Edkins 2000
- <sup>458</sup> Viola 1999: 21 My translation.
- <sup>459</sup> See Pralahad and Hammond 2002
- <sup>460</sup> Except for the exceptionally wealthy or for those who maintain a means of production which is sufficient for survival, which makes them wealthy anyway
- <sup>461</sup> De Wall 1989: 112-113
- <sup>462</sup> See George 1999a and 1999b
- <sup>463</sup> See Daly 1995 for a discussion of growth mania and its unsustainability.
- <sup>464</sup> If nothing else, the events of the last two years should make this global indivisibility patently obvious.
- <sup>465</sup> Gamarra, Gellert and Morales 2002: 12-13
- <sup>466</sup> Cited in Gamarra, Gellert and Morales 2002: 13-14. My translation – original emphasis.

## Annex 1

### Selected Glossary of Disaster Terminology from ISDR<sup>1</sup>

**Hazard** – A potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity, which may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage social or economic disruption or environmental degradation. Hazards include latent conditions that may represent future threats and can have different origins: natural (geological, hydrometeorological and biological) and/or induced by human processes (environmental degradation and technological hazards). Hazards can be single, sequential or combined in their origin and effects. Each hazard is characterized by its location, intensity and probability.

**Vulnerability** – A set of conditions and processes resulting from physical, social, economical and environmental factors, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards. Positive factors, that increase the ability of people and the society they live in, to cope effectively with hazards, that increase their resilience, or that otherwise reduce their susceptibility, are considered as capacities.

**Risk** – The probability of harmful consequences, or expected loss (of lives, people injured, property, livelihoods, economic activity disrupted or environment damaged) resulting from interactions between natural or human induced hazards and vulnerable/capable conditions. Conventionally risk is expressed by the equation  $\text{Risk} = \text{Hazard} \times \text{Vulnerability/Capacity}$

*Beyond expressing a probability of physical harm, it is crucial to appreciate that risks are always created or exist within social systems. It is important to consider the social contexts in which risks occur and that people therefore do not necessarily share the same perceptions of risk and their underlying causes.*

**Disaster** - A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community/society to cope using its own resources.

*A disaster is a function of the risk process. It results from the combination of hazards, conditions of vulnerability and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce the potential negative consequences of risk.*

**Resilience/resilient** - The capacity of a system, community or society to resist or to change in order that it may obtain an acceptable level in functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organizing itself, and the ability to increase its capacity for learning and adaptation, including the capacity to recover from a disaster.

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<sup>1</sup> From International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, ISDR. 2002. *Living with Risk: A Global Review of Disaster Reduction Initiatives*. United Nations Inter-Agency Secretariat, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, UN/ISDR. Geneva.

**Coping Capabilities/Capacity** - The manner in which people and organizations use existing resources to achieve various beneficial ends during unusual, abnormal, and adverse conditions of a disaster event or process.

*The strengthening of coping capacities usually builds resilience to withstand the effects of natural and other hazards.*

**Risk Assessment/analysis** - A process to determine the nature and extent of risk by analysing potential hazards and evaluating existing conditions of vulnerability/ capacity that could pose a potential threat or harm to people, property, livelihoods and the environment on which they depend.

*The process of conducting a risk assessment is based on a review of both technical features of hazards such as their location, intensity and probability, and also the analysis of the physical, social and economic dimensions of vulnerability, while taking particular account of the coping capabilities pertinent to the risk scenarios.*

**Risk Management** - The systematic management of administrative decisions, organisation, operational skills and responsibilities to apply policies, strategies and practices for *disaster risk reduction*.

**Disaster Risk Reduction** - The systematic development and application of policies, strategies and practices to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society, to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) adverse impact of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development.

**Prevention** - Activities to provide outright avoidance of the adverse impact of hazards and related environmental, technological and biological disasters.

*Depending on social and technical feasibility and cost/benefit considerations, investing in preventive measures is justified in areas frequently affected by disaster. In the context of public awareness raising and education, prevention refers to attitude and behaviour leading towards a “culture of prevention”.*

**Mitigation** - Structural and non-structural measures undertaken to limit the adverse impact of natural hazards, environmental degradation and technological hazards.

**Preparedness** - Activities and measures taken in advance to ensure effective response to the impact of disasters, including the issuance of timely and effective early warnings and the temporary removal of people and property from a threatened location.

**Early Warning** - The provision of timely and effective information, through identified institutions, that allow individuals at risk of a disaster, to take action to avoid or reduce their risk and prepare for effective response.

*Early warning systems consist of three elements (i) forecasting and prediction of impending events, (ii) processing and dissemination of warnings to political authorities and population, and (iii) undertaking appropriate reaction to warnings.*

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