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PARTICIPATORY POLICIES IN LAND TENURE REFORM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA

BY

ALVARO MAURICIO MORENO

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCES

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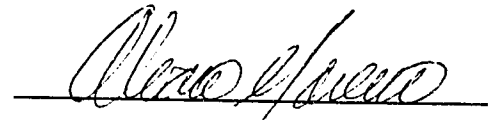

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THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THEY HAVE READ, AND RECOMMEND TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH FOR ACCEPTANCE, A THESIS ENTITLED **PARTICIPATORY POLICIES IN LAND TENURE REFORM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA,** SUBMITTED BY **ALVARO MAURICIO MORENO** IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCES IN RURAL SOCIOLOGY.

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ABSTRACT

A common practice in most Third World governments in response to organized rural opposition, has been the introduction of some reforms of the traditional land tenure systems. The general assumption behind this practice has been that the redistribution of land will contribute to the social and economic development of all sectors of rural society. Because agriculture is the economic base of the majority of developing countries, the redistribution of land resources would necessarily imply a modification in the nature of the allocation of wealth and power among people.

Using documentary data, the present study compared the participatory policies designed by the governments of El Salvador and Nicaragua for their land tenure reforms implemented in the early 1980s. The general objective of this study is to look at the way these two countries view the dynamics of their rural social systems and the participatory potential of peasants in the development of their economies. The land tenure reforms of the five Central American countries are reviewed as part of the study setting. A theoretical framework of the concept of participation is provided, as well as recognized international development principles of participation.

It was found that the philosophical principles of participation in El Salvador and Nicaragua are very similar. In spite of the ideological differences between the two governments, they view the peasant as an active subject in the reform process. Both governments developed policies oriented to facilitate the participation of peasants in the management decision-making of productive activities. The difference is found in the methodology selected to implement participatory policies and in the actual results obtained from the implementation of such policies.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, most national and international policies for economic and social development are now focusing on the participation of people in such programmes. Among the most commonly used strategies found in these policies are the active participation of the local people in production projects and extension education programs, promotion of cooperative action, and promotion of the participation of women in agricultural projects (CIDA, 1984:5-7). Accordingly, similar policies are developed by Third World countries, often in response to international trends, towards the promotion of participatory development in their societies. The target group in these types of policies is the sector of the population with the least power in society derived from property, wealth, education, and other sources not widely shared (Haque, *et.al.*, 1977:14). This is of relevant importance in revealing the actual content of development policies in a given country.

Land distribution patterns play a crucial role in defining the scope of these policies. The magnitude of any strategy for human development can be entirely different when the population has been given previous access to land and other resources. Without this pre-condition, any organizational and participative action that may eventually result in improving the living conditions of peasants in society can be considered incomplete.

In Latin America, regardless of the land-tenure pattern prevailing in a given area, it is the landless and the near-landless who are on the

bottom of the social and power structure (Eckholm,1979:7). Their participation in the decision-making process related to the socio-economic activities of the community is often insignificant. Such marginalization has usually resulted in peasants participating in organized opposition actions. These actions are often oriented to radically change the socio-economic structure that maintains them isolated from progress.

A common practice in most Third World governments in modern history in response to organized social opposition, has been the introduction of some reforms in the traditional land tenure systems. The general assumption behind this practice has been that the redistribution of land will contribute to the social and economic development of all sectors of rural society. Because agriculture is the economic base of the majority of developing countries, the redistribution of land resources would necessarily imply a modification in the nature of the allocation of wealth and power among people.

Thus, understanding the participative potential of the peasant in a reform process becomes a task of considerable importance. Their participation in the community, regional, and national power structures of any country implementing a land tenure reform program, would certainly provide some insights for the planning and design of future policies and strategies of development. More specifically in Central America, the case of Nicaragua offers interesting insights in this area, as it is the most recent case of land tenure reform in the region, and the only one implemented without technical and financial assistance from the United States of America (U.S.).

The participation of the researcher in various development projects associated with land tenure reform in El Salvador between 1984 and 1985 is also one of the motivating factors for conducting this research study. Personal experience suggests that the Salvadoran land tenure reform did not alter the traditional role of peasants in the power structure dominating rural areas, as it was mostly limited to the distribution of marginal lands, and the peasantry remained isolated from the expected benefits of land tenure.

The Nicaraguan experience may provide some interesting contrasts when comparing both types of land tenure reform programmes, and their policies and strategies for peasants' participation in that process. Therefore, understanding the impact of land tenure reform in the social structure of rural communities in both countries will provide some important perspectives, often underestimated, for the development of future strategies for social change in the Central American region.

Statement of the Problem

On the conventional per capita income criterion, Latin America appears to be quite highly developed when compared with Asia or Africa, but still, most scholars place it indubitably in the Third World. The fact is that such generalized indicators as mean per capita income and gross national product hide many important distinctions concerning the distributive nature of resources and production. King (1977:77) supports this argument when noting that one hundred million poverty-stricken rural people coexist with a concentration of wealth and a relative abundance of natural resources.

In Central America, history has shown that eventually, social tensions arise as the poor sectors of society demand changes in the distributive structure. Changes in policies for resources allocation have been introduced either by reformist governments or by a revolution.

On the international scene, most agencies promoting rural development in the Third World have recently agreed to introduce some changes in their policies and strategies towards economic and social progress in the developing nations. The Program of Action adopted by the U.N. sponsored *World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development* (WCARRD) in 1979, concluded that economic growth *per se* was not sufficient to promote development.

Until approximately the beginning of the 1970's, the theory and practice of economic development focused on an increase in the economic productivity of the nations, with the assumption that a large Gross Domestic Product would benefit all elements in a society (FAO,1979:3).

Since such a strategy had substantially failed, the 1979 WCARRD concluded that development had to be achieved through equity and peoples' participation. It was argued that sustained improvement of the rural areas required more equitable access to land, water, and other productive resources. This implies a sharing of economic and political power with the rural poor, as well as in the production and distribution systems of a society (Saouma,1984:v).

In line with the United Nations' programme, most recent scholars appear to agree with the need for a redistribution of power in the societies of the Third World. However, the socio-political implications of such a structural change is an issue that is not being fully confronted by the political power forces in charge of the process of

Third World development. Unless the current national power structures are effectively modified, sustained development becomes a difficult task. As stated by Taruk:

> "In any society, the haves are as powerful as the have-nots are powerless, so that perpetuation of power in the hands of a few will always result in the perpetuation of poverty among the majority of the people." (Taruk,1981:134).

All Central American countries have implemented land tenure reforms in different ways, in an attempt to modify economic and social polarizations in their societies. Some participatory structures were introduced to facilitate the development of these reforms. A noteworthy change in the land tenure system occurred in Nicaragua after the 1979 revolution. Thousands of landless *campesinos*[1] were given access to farmland, either directly as individuals or indirectly as members of the state farms and cooperatives promoted by the *Sandinista*[2] government. Community organizations have often been reported to have a considerable degree of power and direct participation in all aspects concerning the development of the land tenure reform process. Such an accomplishment would be in agreement with international policies of development. With political support from the Sandinista government, popular organizations apparently grew in numbers and strength, particularly along the Pacific coast, and the central region of the country.

A few months after the revolution in Nicaragua, El Salvador also experienced some modifications in its land tenure structure. A reformist

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[1] The term *Campesino* is usually translated into English as *Peasant*. The definition of the term for the purposes of this study is provided in Chapter 2.

[2] In general terms, every person or institution associated with the Nicaraguan Sandinista Front of National Liberation (FSLN), is called *Sandinista*, a term derived from the early 1930's revolutionary Augusto César Sandino, after whom the Party was named.

government introduced a land tenure reform program in 1980 in which the participation of peasants was stimulated through the creation of rural organizations and cooperatives. The results, however, are often considered not as successful as expected, since many conditions, particularly a widely spread armed conflict, limited the amount and quality of peasants' participation in the Salvadoran reform process.

Several differences can be found between the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran land tenure reforms, primarily in terms of the active role that peasants appear to have in the development of the programs. Policies towards peasant's participation in both countries may not have many differences, since both countries have faced similar socio-economic conditions in their history, resulting in analogous restrictions for development. Moreover, both countries can be considered to represent two different ideologies and practices towards economic and social progress. The comparative analysis of the policies and programs found in each model may provide new alternatives for pacification and economic growth.

Significance of the Problem

In spite of the massive rural-urban migration, and the dualistic nature of development that dominates most Latin American societies, the number of rural inhabitants is still significant. Agriculture still plays a crucial role in the economy of these countries.

The social organization of the agrarian structure that has prevailed in Central America has never allowed peasants to participate in the decision-making process associated with agriculture, nor to share the socio-economic benefits derived from agricultural production.

Therefore, their roles in all levels of society have always been marginal.

Upon implementation of a land tenure reform program under this framework, the outcome is usually analyzed in economic terms. Many conventional economic theories have been drawn to explain a reform's failure or success (see for example: De Janvry,1981:chapters 1 and 6; Todaro,1977:13-21,57-73). However, little attention has been given to the effect that the participation of new landowners and cooperativists may have in the political and economic structures of the reformed system. The redistribution of land appears to be only a symbolic transfer of power. Moreover, a new bureaucratic class usually emerges to control and administer the new land tenure system, and the participation of peasants in the new socio-economic structure remains stagnant.

Nonetheless, scholars continue to support and promote the benefits of participation. Sandoval (1973:53) enumerates some advantages that can be attained through the organized participation of peasants in a reform program. These are:

Advantages in social and economic aspects

a) the working organization becomes a social organization that works for the welfare of the community;
b) the production of food for domestic consumption is planned, and an improvement in the food in-take of the community is achieved;
c) rapid increases in per capita and per family incomes are obtained;
d) better utilization of national resources is achieved;
e) economy of scale benefits are also obtainable.

Advantages in terms of production techniques

a) advanced technology, especially mechanization for land clearance and preparation could be easily adopted;
b) certain crops could be produced efficiently and economically only through large plantation cultivations;
c) the exploitation could be oriented towards producing crops for the external market; crops could be grown in accordance with world

market needs at competitive prices, in sufficient quantities, and following acceptable quality control practices.

Advantages in Supporting Services

a) credit could be easily obtained and administered;
b) extension services could be provided in a more economic and effective way;
c) marketing systems and mechanism could be established;
d) participation and processing in agro-industries is facilitated, allowing peasants to sell at least part of their product already processed, instead of selling it as raw materials.

All these advantages are in harmony with most theories and practices for economic and social development. It appears obvious, therefore, that most international and national institutions promoting such development would encourage the participation of peasants in all aspects of the development of a land tenure reform program, as an alternative role for this isolated sector of society.

Nicaragua represents the most recent revolutionary change in Latin America. The development of different aspects of this process are important to analyze and understand since similar forms of social change may eventually occur in other Latin American countries. The Nicaraguan land tenure reform, fully supported by a revolutionary government, appears to have succeeded in favoring the organized participation of peasants in the process, a fact that may have contributed considerably to the empowerment of the peasantry.

The land tenure reform program in El Salvador has been often compared to the Nicaraguan reform, especially in its initial stages. Peasant organizations and cooperatives were promoted within the general development of the reform, and peasants came to play a new role in the political and economic aspects of rural society. There are important differences in the ideological background behind both types of reforms. An analytical comparison of their policies, objectives, and actual

implementation of strategies for peasant's participation, may provide important insights for the implementation of future strategies for social change in Central America.

Objectives of the Thesis

The general objective of the present study is to carry out a comparative analysis of the policy-making background supporting the participation of peasants in the land tenure reforms of Nicaragua and El Salvador. This would provide some general information on how both governments view the dynamics of their rural social systems. Policies are important indicators of the potential participatory role of peasants in the development of the two countries.

The specific objectives are:

1. To analyze and compare the policies and strategies developed by the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran land tenure reforms in the promotion of peasant's participation in the process.

2. To analyze and compare the nature and level of access to land and other resources that peasants received in the land tenure reforms of Nicaragua and El Salvador.

3. To define and describe the level and quality of the organizational structures promoted along the land tenure reform programs in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

4. To identify, describe, and compare possible constraints for the successful implementation of policies towards peasants' participation in both reforms.

5. To provide some insights for the planning and implementation of future stages of the land tenure reform process, particularly in terms of peasants' participation, and other services towards development.

Study Hypotheses

On the basis of the consultation of relevant literature, the following hypotheses were formulated in relation to the theoretical study of the objectives mentioned above.

1. The Nicaraguan peasants were given more access to land and other resources through land tenure reform, than the Salvadoran peasants.

2. The Nicaraguan land tenure reform was more successful than the Salvadoran land tenure reform in promoting the participation of peasants in the process.

3. There are not significant differences in the philosophy supporting policies towards the promotion of peasants' participation in development programs between El Salvador and Nicaragua.

4. There are significant differences in the actual participation of peasants in land tenure reform between El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Research Methodology

The general objective of this research study is to compare the laws and policies supporting two different land tenure reform programs in Central America, in relation to their strategies for peoples' participation. In order to fulfil these objectives, this study calls for the review of a sample of the available publications, both governmental and non-governmental, describing such policies.

Methodology Design

The methodology that has been selected as the most appropriate for this study contemplates a combination of two unobtrusive measures: Content Analysis and Comparative Analysis (Babbie,1986:266). Content analysis proves useful when the possibility to use other methods is not feasible, and the investigator's data is limited to documentary evidence (Holsti,1969:15). Also, given the theoretical components of this research project, the application of content analysis will be appropriate, as careful interpretation of the policy-makers' own language is crucial to the investigation.

Once the necessary information in the two countries has been gathered, a comparative analysis will then be required, in order to find the common patterns and differing characteristics observed in both national programmes. At this stage, the research will take a more qualitative form, and the criterion for analysis will be mostly based in the personal skills and expertise of the researcher in the field of land tenure reform in Central America.

While quantitative research methods allow one to draw numerical conclusions, the theoretical nature of this research is to be based on more hermeneutic interpretations (Babbie,1986:294), in order to provide a satisfactory understanding of the values and beliefs involved in a policy-making process. As such, these interpretations could be subject to more debate.

Nevertheless, when the content analysis findings of one particular case study are compared to at least one additional case, the interpretations and meanings aimed at by the researcher can be considered to be more accurate and valid.

In this sense, the design through which the hypotheses described in this study will be tested is based on an analytical comparison of messages (published policies and strategies) of the two sources (the governments of El Salvador and Nicaragua), during the period between 1979 and 1989.

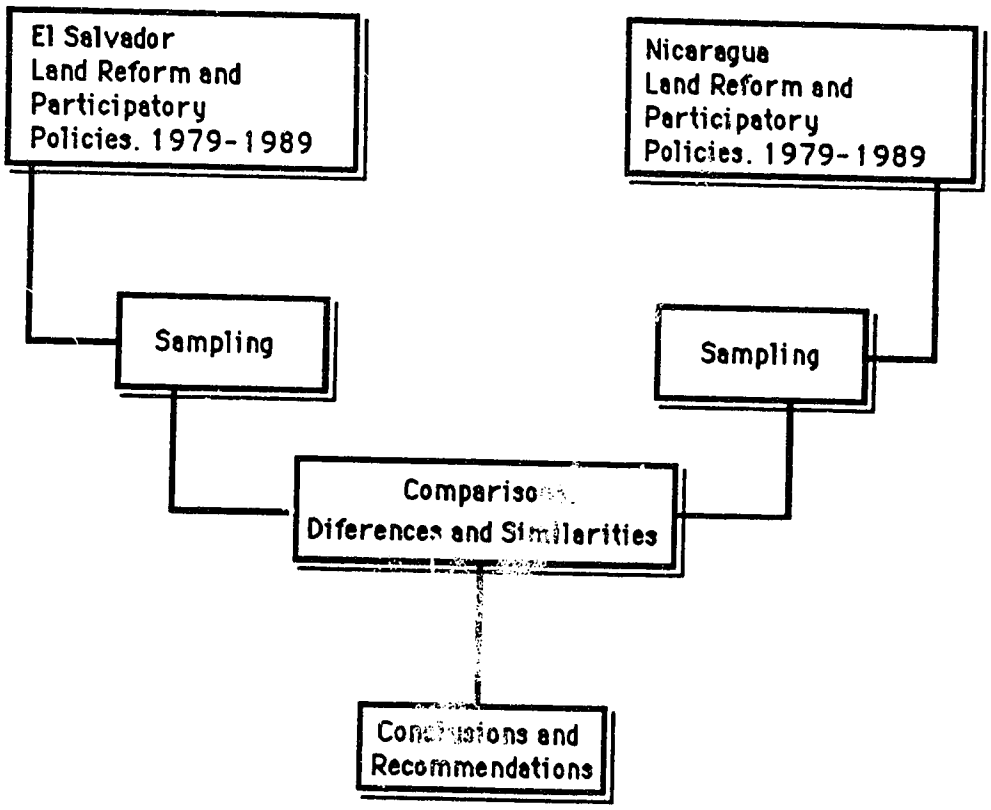
The criteria for the selection of a specific time period correspond to the fact that no major changes occurred in the political power bases of both countries during that ten-year period. A *coup d'état* and a revolution established a new political base in El Salvador and Nicaragua respectively by the end of 1979; by the end of 1989 and beginning of 1990, new governments took power in both countries through presidential elections. These new political elites have different views and policies towards land tenure reform. In fact, individual ownership of land is now being encouraged in El Salvador (Proceso,1990:12); in Nicaragua, official claims are being processed to return expropriated land to its former owners (La Voz Summary,1990:3). Assessment of such

policy changes, although relevant to the social and economic development of both countries, is beyond the objectives of the present study.

Based on the models for content analysis elaborated by Holsti (1969:30), the design developed for this research is grafically summarized in the following figure.

FIGURE 1

RESEARCH DESIGN



Units of Analysis and Sampling

It is expected that the availability of documentation will be sufficient to provide all the necessary information for this study. Besides official government publication, sources of data will include non-governmental publications, and other documents and articles where authors have attempted to analyze the content of land tenure reform policies in the two countries being reviewed in this research. Therefore, given the documentary nature of the sources of data required for this study, the selected sampling methodology is Multistage Cluster Sampling.

Cluster sampling involves the repetition of two basic steps: listing and sampling (Babbie,1986:164). When applied to content analysis, cluster sampling has the advantage that it permits the reduction and classification of the available material into smaller elements, allowing the researcher to focus more accurately on the units of analysis (Babbie,1986:163).

The units of analysis in the present research are the laws and policies for the participation of peasants in land tenure reform in El Salvador and Nicaragua between 1979 and 1989. This means that the sample will have to be drawn mostly from official government publications describing general national laws, policies, objectives and philosophy for the two governments in the specified period of time. From this primary sample, a second sample will be produced by selecting those documents enumerating policies and laws related to land tenure reform and other agrarian issues. The following step will be to select those

policies and articles relevant to the participation of peasants in land tenure reform. Thus, the following variables will be the focus of attention when analyzing the available data:

a) Number and content of laws and policies dealing with the participation of peasants in the reform.

b) Definition of the philosophy supporting policies for peasants participation in land tenure reform.

c) Definition of the level of participation expected from peasants, i.e., level of participation in decision-making, management, implementation of projects, etc.

d) Design of programs and strategies for the promotion of peasants participation in land tenure reform.

e) Creation of official structures to support the organized participation of peasants in land tenure reform.

f) Nature of the organizational structures promoted along the land tenure reform, i.e., types of unions, co-operatives, community organizations, etc.

g) Nature and amount of the access to land received by the peasantry in the reform policies.

h) Legislation of the access to credit, technology and other production and social services to the peasants facilitated by the government or other agencies.

Additional variables that might provide valuable information on the problem at hand, will be taken from secondary sources other than governmental and official publications. This would allow the researcher to reduce the bias, usually present in official documents, that tend to

exaggerate the positive aspects of a given official political action. Some of these variables are described as follows.

a) Documentation of the presence or absence of organized demands from the peasantry, and the nature of those demands.

b) Documentation of the response of the governments to the demands of peasants.

c) Documentation of the attitudes and opinions of the peasants towards their participation in land tenure reform.

d) Surveys, censuses, and statistics documenting the land reform, and the actual participation of peasants in the process.

e) Presence and size of other peasant organizations not participating in land tenure reform, or their absence.

Data Processing and Analysis

Once the above information is properly collected and classified for both case study countries, the comparative stage of the research will be initiated. Other variables may be added according to the information available, provided that they are relevant to the objectives of the study.

There are no easily listed steps to follow in the analysis of content-comparative data (Babbie,1986:294). The criteria for the comparative analysis in this study will be based on the following rationale: first, both countries' policies will be compared using the set of variables listed above; second, each country's policies will be compared to the ideal conditions expected to develop through the implementation of those policies, based on the information provided by the country's government regarding the philosophy and ideology

supporting their policies; third, a comparison of both governments' ideological backgrounds will be made, to determine the differences and similarities between both countries; finally, the results arising from the implementation of these policies in both countries will be compared.

This type of comparative analysis will provide information for the final elaboration of conclusions and recommendations for the implementation of participatory policies in the two countries under study. These conclusions and recommendations can safely be applied to other countries with similar social and economic conditions whose governments may be interested in changing the role of the peasantry in their societies.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Research

Several assumptions are made in the present comparative sociological analysis of the participation of peasants in the land tenure reforms of Nicaragua and El Salvador. The first assumption is that land ownership is the main source of social power in a rural community. Once the peasants have access to land, they are more able to secure access to other services and resources that contribute to modify their living conditions, and therefore, to improve their status and roles in rural society. The second assumption is that land tenure reform has substantially modified the social structure of rural communities in Nicaragua and El Salvador, facilitating the change of peasants' role in society. This change occurred as the economic and power bases of the community, particularly land, were redistributed among the rural population.

A third assumption is that immediate political changes in the region will not substantially alter the direction of rural development policies. This assumption implies that the new government in Nicaragua will not attempt to revert the land tenure reform process; however, some changes can be expected to occur in the structure of social power at all levels, including the community level. Given the political instability of El Salvador, a similar assumption applies to the study of its rural development process, as the future course of the land tenure reform process and other political issues in this nation is uncertain.

Any attempt to conduct a research project in the area of social policy decisions and actions is obviously based on the assumption that such policies can, in fact, make a vital contribution to the social change they claim to promote.

In regards to the limitations of the study, the most important one is that secondary data will be used to gather all the necessary information. The most important source of data is government publications. The quality and quantity of available documented information will determine, to a large extent, the validity of the study.

Nicaragua represents the most recent social revolutionary change in Latin America. El Salvador may represent the most successful reformist attempt to maintain the traditional social structure. Many views and opinions concerning both processes are expressed by several opposing sectors. The available literature can be easily classified in two different groups: those against a revolutionary change in the region, and those in favor. Therefore, a strong bias either in favour or against land tenure reform has been found in the literature reviewed, a

bias that might have been transmitted to this research, since it deals with sensitive socio-political issues.

This research project will be limited to the period between 1979 and 1989. Important changes took place in the political power base of both countries at the beginning and the end of this period, and some degree of continuity was observed in the nature of policy-making in land tenure reform for both countries. New political power elites may attempt to modify the trend maintained by the previous government, making a comparative research beyond this period, more difficult to accomplish.

Other disciplines are to be considered in the study of any social system; Sociology, Economics, and Political Science are the most important disciplines. This research attempts to provide an introductory base to the study of peoples' participation in the most recent and controversial land tenure reform programs in Latin America. Economists and political scientists may find many areas in this study where their theories and concepts do not fully apply.

Plan of the Thesis

The final report of the present research is organized in seven chapters as follows:

The First Chapter will include an introduction to the general concepts associated with the problem of land tenure changes and peoples' participation in development. The statement of the problem will be followed by the objectives and hypotheses of the research, and the research methodology. The Second Chapter will summarize the historical development of the agrarian structure in Central America, the

development of the agro-export model as it refers to the social conditions of the peasantry, the latifundio/minifundio complex, and a brief summary of the socio-economic conditions of modern Central America. This chapter has the objective of providing a general background in the socio-economic development of the study settings - Central America. A definition of peasant, and the description of their traditional role in Central American agrarian structure, as part of the conceptual background for this study, will also be included in the second chapter. The Third Chapter will contain the literature review in the areas of land tenure reform, its definition for the purposes of this research, and general typology. This chapter will also present a review of land tenure reforms in Central America, and the most relevant aspects of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran reforms to the present study. The Fourth Chapter will concentrate on a review of the theoretical background of the concept of Participation. A review of the international strategies and policies for peasants' participation will be also presented in this chapter, including the policies designed by the Canadian Agency for International Development (CIDA). Chapter Five will present the policies and strategies for peasants' participation in land tenure reform in El Salvador and Nicaragua, for the period 1979 to 1989. The comparative analysis of these policies, as described in the methodology, will be contained in Chapter Six. Finally, a summary of the study, and the conclusions and recommendations derived from the present comparative analysis will be presented in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STUDY SETTINGS: AGRARIAN STRUCTURE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Historical Review

Before the conquest, northern Central America had a substantial population living in well-developed, complex societies. Many of its inhabitants were descendants of the Maya civilization, whose center was in the Petén regi. of northern Guatemala, in western Honduras, and on the Yucatán Peninsula. The accomplishments of this civilization in the sciences and mathematics, art and architecture, and commerce and construction often rivaled those of contemporary Europe (Brockett,1988:14). Earlier civilizations developed and declined in the Mexican plateau. Natives migrated into Central America from the north, intermixing with the local indigenous population. The Quiché Empire dominated this region, and developed advanced techniques in agricultural production, where the cultivation of maize played an important and sacred role in their civilization (Lockhart & Schwartz,1983:34). The Quichés expanded their domain over most of Central America, predominantly through military force, and by the time of the Spanish conquest, they were engaged in a number of conflicts with several local tribes (Stern,1985:10).

The colonial period brought forms of social organization to Latin America which still persist in many areas, particularly in the relationship between the landlords and the peasants. The Spanish *Encomienda* was the institution that played one of the most important

roles in determining the economic and social relations of Latin America as a whole. The original purpose of the *Encomienda* was to assign a Spaniard colonizer a given extension of land and population; it was his responsibility to "protect and evangelize the Indians, and to provide them with employment" (Birou,1971:18)[3]. In Spain, this institution apparently fulfilled the function of protecting the Spanish peasants in the feudal system dominating Europe at that time. In Latin America, however, the *Encomienda* was used to exploit the local resources for the personal benefit of the colonizers (Singelmann,1981:43). As a symbol of prestige, Spaniards were not to do any physical work; and in order to attain wealth, many colonizers used natives to work the land and exploit mines. The original mandates of the *Encomienda* were obviously quickly forgotten (Birou,1971:19), and the *Encomienda* came to be considered as the Spanish institution which conferred the right upon the *conquistadores* to exploit the labour and resources of the native population "as a recompense for their loyal services to the Spanish Crown" (Kay,1974:72).

The process of land accumulation among Spaniards, both as a symbol of prestige and status, and as a source of personal wealth, evolved continually during the Spanish occupation of Central America. The most significant change occurred when estates based formally on tribute and labour rights specified by the *Encomienda*, were modified to estates based formally on land ownership. The *Hacienda*, as opposed to the *Encomienda*, became an important development in the mature period of the Latin American-Spanish economy (Lockhart & Schwartz,1983:134).

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3 All references taken from documents in Spanish have been translated by the researcher.

In their origins, the *haciendas* may have been oriented to provide subsistence necessities for the mining centers (Frank,1969:337). Apparently, with the decline of the mining industry, the *haciendas* were converted into very autonomous production centers surrounded by a given number of peripheral communities. These early *haciendas* operated largely outside the money economy, and tended to remunerate its laborers in kind or with token coins (Singelmann,1981:45), known as *Fichas* in Central America, that could be exchanged in the *hacienda* store for food and other basic products. Finally, the growing demand for certain products by the international market -cocoa at the beginning, followed by indigo-, was the most important factor in determining the development of the current agrarian structure in Central America, based on large estates known as the *Latifundio*.

The Latifundio System

The Latifundio system that dominates land tenure in Latin America is often compared to the Manorial and Feudal system that dominated land tenure structure in Europe in that epoch. The European Manorial system has been classified by Kay (1984:71) in two different categories:

(a) *Grundherrschaft*, where the landlord leased out all or part of the estate to peasants who paid rent in kind or cash; and

(b) *Gutsherrshaft*, where the landlord administered and cultivated the territorial unit, largely drawing on the cheap labour provided by tenants.

According to Kay, these two forms of land tenure and management were reproduced in Central America during the conquest, favoured by the *Encomienda*.

The Latifundio system evolved through history, basically according to the world market demands for products such as indigo, cotton, bananas, and coffee. These products required an extensive cultivation in order to be profitable, and rapidly absorbed the land held by the natives in the last remnants of their communitarian system, such as the *ejidos* [4].

The main characteristic of the Latifundio is, therefore, the accumulation of relatively large areas of land by one or few owners for the purpose of producing export crops. In the present, two main variants can be found in the latifundio system: the extensively cultivated estate or *Hacienda*, where cattle production is often the main activity; and the more intensively worked *Plantation*, designed to produce export crops such as the plantations of the *United Fruit Company* along the Atlantic coast of Central America.

As the latifundios grew, the production of basic grains and food crops for local consumption was finally relegated to very small marginal plots cultivated by the peasantry, that constitute the *Minifundio*. This *Latifundio/Minifundio* complex is currently found, with minimal variations, dominating rural life from one Central American country to another. Based on CIDA data, a 1966 FAO document (*Indicative World Plan*) summarized that there were 8,700,000 landless peasants in Latin America, 5,300,000 peasants who owned altogether four percent of the agricultural land (*Minifundistas*), 7,000,000 small and medium

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4 An *Ejido* can be defined as commonly owned land, granted by the Spanish Crown, originally at the exit of a community, where the natives could raise their cattle and plant their crops separated from that of the Spaniards.

farmers who owned 56 percent of the land, and a group of only 440,000 large landholders who owned 40 percent of the land (Huizer,1972:7).

Economically, the latifundio is considered by some authors as an inefficient system, where profits are obtained through the reduction of labour wages, monopolization of markets, and corruption (Collins,1986:91). The latifundios, however, are large enough to support the life-style and social status desired by the landlords. Therefore, the bulk of the population which forms the largest social segment of the nations under this semi-colonial system was largely deprived from the social and economic benefits of land tenure (Lopez,1978:993). Even more, the development of a middle class or any form of upward social mobility was usually restricted through means of political exclusion and institutionalization of violence, a situation that has prevailed over time in most Central American countries.

As a response to the extreme inequalities in wealth and power resulting from the Latifundio/Minifundio complex, most Central American countries have experienced violent social conflicts. This has resulted in revolutionary changes of governments in some cases, such as Nicaragua in 1979, or in the introduction of land redistribution programs by reformist governments, as in El Salvador in 1980.

The Social Organization of the Latifundio

Sociologically, autocracy has been a fundamental aspect of Latin America's latifundio since the Spanish conquest (Dorner & Kanel,1971:43). It affects all phases of the relations between employers and workers, and between the large landowner and the small holders. The power of the latifundio owners influences the entire

community in which they are located (Feder, 1971:122). The owner of large estates may not be directly responsible for the day-to-day operation of the farm, which may be left to a mayordomo or farm manager; however, major decisions on all important issues such as the labour force, what and how much to plant, and all marketing activities rest with the owner.

Other matters upon which the landlords have strong influence are those regarding the social welfare of the workers, which in industrial societies are taken over by public authorities or are resolved through cooperative and collective action. The power of the landlord, therefore, indirectly extends over the welfare of the workers and their families.

Very often, the activities of the latifundios also influence people who are only indirectly involved with the estate operations, such as the nearby farmers and neighbors. Their production and marketing decisions are often influenced by those of the latifundio.

Latifundios, except for those devoted exclusively to livestock, normally employ many workers on a seasonal basis. Significant mechanization of cultivation and harvesting operations is rare. Fairly extensive use of labor with costumary obligations, therefore, produces a complex social organization. Feder describes a generalized social structure in a latifundio as follows:

> Usually the labour force on individual estates includes several types of supervisory workers, each type being hierarchically endowed with a specific set of functions and range of activities on which to make decisions... The lowest class of workers -those who do the actual farm work- cannot make any decisions. They simply obey orders (Feder,1971:121).

A similar hierarchical system can be found on latifundios in any Central American country. It is worth noting that the proportion of administrative or supervisory employees is normally very high. The need for supervision and administration arises out of the fact that the productive workforce has no decision-making power, and therefore cannot take the initiative in executing the work. Also, this supervisory structure serves as a force of social control over the peasants.

Compared Socio-Economic Conditions in Modern Central America

Issues related to land distribution and the consequent wealth distribution are central to the understanding of the socio-political structure of El Salvador and Nicaragua within the Central American context. Under this rubric, the development of export-crop economies determines to a great extent the distributive nature of these societies.

Table 1 summarizes the most general social indicators for the five Central American republics. One of the first differences to be noted among these countries is in the percentage of rural population. El Salvador and Nicaragua appear to be more urbanized than the other countries, with rural populations below 50 percent. This characteristic may be considered an indicator of the priority for urban-based development policies in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Also, given the conditions of land tenure prevailing in these two countries, the apparently high rate of urban population may be interpreted as an effect of the displacement taking place in the rural population as the latifundios expand, forcing people to migrate into the cities.

TABLE 1

SELECTED SOCIAL INDICATORS. CENTRAL AMERICA, VARIOUS YEARS

Indicators	El Salvador	Nicaragua	Guatemala	Honduras	Costa Rica
Population(1985)	5.1 m.	3.4 m.	8.2 m.	4.5 m.	2.6 m.
Area (Km2)	21,000	130,000	109,000	112,000	51,000
Pop.Density	243 /Km2	26 /Km2	75 /Km2	40 /Km2	51 /Km2
Rural Pop.	49%	43%	67%	60%	51%
GNP per capita (US dollars, 1986)	820	790	930	740	1,480
Education[a] (1985)					
Primary	70%	101%	76%	102%	101%
Secondary	24%	39%	17%	36%	41%
LaborForce (1980)					
Agriculture	43%	47%	57%	61%	31%
Industry	19%	16%	17%	16%	23%
Services	37%	38%	26%	23%	46%
Health (1981)					
Physicians[b]	2,550	2,230	n.a.	3,100	1,440
Calorie supply[c]	2,155	2,464	2,345	2,224	2,807

Source: Adapted from the *World Development Report*. Washington: The World Bank, 1988.

Population density may be one of the most important factors to consider when analyzing policies for land tenure reform, as land scarcity is usually enhanced when there is a high population density. When compared to the other Central American countries, El Salvador presents the highest density in its population -almost ten times the population density of Nicaragua, and three times that of Guatemala. Honduras and Costa Rica present a relatively low population density.

[a] Percentage of age group enrolled
[b] Population per physician
[c] Daily calorie supply per capita

Education levels may serve as indicators of the access that the population has to this service, one of the most important for the development of human resource. According to the World Bank, a large percentage of the Central American population have access to primary education (see *Table 1*). Nicaragua, Honduras, and Costa Rica surpass the percentage of the age group attending primary school, while El Salvador and Guatemala are both above 70 percent. These figures drop considerably when it comes to secondary education, and the percentage of the age group attending secondary schools varies from 17 percent in Guatemala, to 41 percent in Costa Rica. Access to secondary education is higher in Nicaragua than in El Salvador.

An important difference can be pointed out in terms of the access of the rural population to education. A great majority of the rural people are illiterate in all Central American nations. In El Salvador, for example, 80 percent of the rural population was illiterate in 1981, compared to only 18 percent in the urban sector (Amstrong,1986:103).

In regards to the distribution of the labour force in production, it is clear that all Central American countries, with the exception of Costa Rica, have more people employed in agriculture than in other sectors of their economy.

El Salvador follows Costa Rica in the percentage of people employed in industries, a fact that is related to the apparently high urbanization rate in these two countries. After agriculture, most people in El Salvador and Nicaragua work in the service sector, a situation that is also observed in the other central American countries. This clearly indicates that industrial development in these countries is incipient.

Another relevant issue found in policies for the development of human resource is health services. All Central American countries present similar conditions in this area. When compared to the developed countries, the number of people per physician appears to be excessive. In Canada, for example, there were 550 people per physician in 1981, and the per capita calorie supply was 3,443 for the same year (World Bank,1988:279). The lowest number of people per physician in Central America is found in Costa Rica: 1,440, also presenting the highest daily calory supply per capita of 2,087. Nicaragua appears to have better health services than El Salvador. Again, important differences can be found in the access to health services between the rural and urban sectors in Central America, a difference that is not depicted in the general indicators of development.

Land distribution patterns in Central America are an important indicator of the social and economic conditions prevailing in these countries. Table 2 represents land tenure patterns in Central America. The disparities in land distribution in Central America can be considered significant. More than two thirds of the farms in the five countries under consideration are below 10 hectares, and they cover a relatively small percentage of the land. This may be considered an indicator of land scarcity in all Central American countries. In El Salvador, almost all farms (92.7%) are under 10 hectares, and they are found representing only about 27 percent of the total farmland.

Farms greater than 200 hectares alone, occupy 28.4 percent of the country's land. When compared to the other countries, it can be argued that El Salvador would face the most serious problems of minifundio, as almost half of the farms in this country are under one hectare.

TABLE 2

LAND DISTRIBUTION BY FARM SIZE CATEGORIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA. 1970s

Country	% of all farms	% of land
El Salvador	(1971)	(1971)
less than 1 Ha.	48.8	4.8
1 to 10 Ha.	43.9	22.5
10 to 50 Ha.	5.8	23.2
50 to 200 Ha.	1.2	21.1
more than 200 Ha.	0.3	28.4
Nicaragua	(1971)	(1971)
less than 0.7 Ha.	5.8	–
0.7 to 7 Ha.	38.0	2.2
7 to 35 Ha.	31.7	11.1
35 to 77 Ha.	12.3	11.7
77 to 350 Ha.	10.3	28.1
more than 350 Ha.	1.8	46.8
Guatemala	(1979)	(1979)
less than 0.7 Ha.	31.4	1.3
0.7 to 7 Ha.	56.7	14.9
7 to 44.8 Ha.	9.3	18.7
44.8 to 450 Ha.	2.3	30.7
more than 450 Ha.	0.3	34.4
Honduras	(1974)	(1974)
less than 1 Ha.	17.0	0.8
1 to 10 Ha.	62.0	16.0
10 to 50 Ha.	18.0	28.0
50 to 100 Ha.	2.0	12.0
100 to 500 Ha.	2.0	22.0
more than 500 Ha.	0.2	22.0
Costa Rica	(1973)	(1973)
1 to 10 Ha.	47.8	3.8
10 to 20 Ha.	14.0	3.9
20 to 100 Ha.	29.1	25.1
more than 100 Ha.	9.1	67.2

Source: Adapted from Brockett, C. *Land, Power and Poverty*. Boston: Unwin-Hyman, 1988: 73.

In Nicaragua, almost 47 percent of the land was under the control of farms larger than 350 hectares which, as of 1971, represented only 1.8 percent of farms. The remaining land appeared to be more evenly

distributed by 1971 when compared to the other countries; still, a considerable proportion of farms were under 7 hectares, and they were concentrated in only 2.2 percent of the land.

Similar observations can be drawn from the rest of Central American countries by looking at *Table 2*. Even Costa Rica, traditionally considered the most democratic country of the region, presents an accumulation of 67.2 percent of the land in farms larger than 100 hectares, which represent only 9.1 percent of the total farms.

This information on the nature of land distribution in Central America, however, does not take into account the quality of the land. Considering the historical factors shaping the agrarian structure of Central America, it can safely be argued that most of the larger farms in the region are occupying the most fertile lands, while the minifundios are relegated to the poorest lands, a fact that would have important implications in evaluating the deterioration of the living conditions of the rural population as a whole. The small farms are the ones that generally produce food crops for the local population, while many of the large holdings are exclusively devoted to the production of export crops and cattle raising. Therefore, the implications for the distribution of income among the rural population become obvious.

Another issue that is not addressed in a land distribution chart such as the one summarized in Table 2 is landlessness. Weeks (1985:112) estimated that the percentages of landless rural families in Central America in 1970 were: El Salvador, 26.1%; Costa Rica, 26.3; Guatemala, 26.6; Honduras, 31.4; and Nicaragua, being the country with the highest percentage of landless families, with 33.8%. It is interesting to note that El Salvador, with the lowest percentage of landless people, is the

smallest in territory and the one with the highest population density. On the other hand, Nicaragua is the largest and least densely populated country, and had the highest percentage of landless people.

Finally, the political situation of the Central American region comes to aggravate the socio-economic situation of these countries. El Salvador and Nicaragua in particular, have suffered the effects of armed conflicts with forces opposing their governments, which naturally have obstructed the advancement of any development practice. Guatemala, and Honduras are also confronting the development of rebel forces, specially in the countryside (Ellacuría,1986:883).

To conclude, it is necessary to recognize the fact that policies for land tenure reform and peoples' participation in development must deal with a necessary process of pacification. This situation is aggravated by a considerable number of landless people, as well as the large sector of *minifundistas*, since the inability of their small plots to provide subsistence forces them to look for other sources of income, usually in the *latifundios*. These particular conditions make Central America a region where land tenure reform becomes a crucial issue in any program of rural and national development. These considerations will be analyzed in more detail in the last chapter of this study.

Peasants in Central American Societies

The Concept of Peasant

The debate over an adequate sociological definition of the term *peasant* is abundant. From a very general perspective, the English term is defined by Webster's New World Dictionary as "any person of the

class of small farmers or of farm laborers, as in Europe or Asia." The second definition provided by the same source denotes an interesting assumption: "a person regarded as coarse, boorish, ignorant, etc." Both definitions, although from a very general source, contain the two areas of agreement that can be found in most authoritative definitions of the term.

Contemporary scholars regularly apply the term "peasant" to those who work directly with the land, regardless of the relationships of ownership to it. Included in this concept would be a separated classification of the peasantry, according to the type of work they perform, or by the different relationships of rent and ownership of land they present. Some authors, however, limit the definition of peasants only to those who own the land they work (Wolf,1966:11).

The geographical specification provided by Webster is important. The term originally applied only to European land workers, particularly those of the medieval period. The many similarities with European peasants found by western scholars in Asia, resulted in the application of this term to agricultural workers in Asia and elsewhere.

When looking at the social and economic conditions that create peasantry, some scholars claim that peasants emerged gradually as cities developed (Redfield,1956:29). Therefore, their position in societies as a whole is very much interdependent with urban settings. Early arguments in the definition of peasants revolved around this statement. Wolf (1966:11) replied that it is the nature of the state and not the physical existence of the city that defines the presence of peasants. Only when a cultivator is integrated into a state society and

becomes subject to the demands and sanctions of power holders external to his own genre, does he becomes a peasant (Wolf,1966:11).

The shift from rural-based to urban-based economies apparently created the conditions that differentiated peasants from the new urban labour force and other working classes emerging in the cities. Industrialization and specialization of work contributed to increase the complexity of social stratification, and peasants ended up occupying the lower strata under this model. Their lack of adaptation to the new industrial economic system may have resulted in their enforced adoption of the traditional rural way of life.

The second definition found in Webster constitutes the other important distinction made in the more specialized definitions of Peasant, that is, mentality and attitudes. When compared to the urban value system, peasant ideology is often viewed as primitive and stagnant.

Some of the attitudes generally attributed to peasants are: a) An intimate and reverent attitude towards the land; b) the idea that agricultural work is good, and commerce is bad; c) a revere[illegible] attitude towards habitat and ancestral ways; and d) a certain suspiciousness mixed with appreciation for the urban way of life (Gill,1985:5).

For Rogers (quoted by Brown,1971:189), the "universal subculture of peasantry" is characterized by attitudes such as mutual distrust, dependence on and hostility toward government authority, lack of innovativeness, and fatalism, among others.

Similar attitudes are attributed to peasants in other documents dealing with rural studies. In general terms, peasants are regarded as having very traditional and conservative values, and as being

"stubbornly passive people who must be persuaded to act in their own interest" (Brown,1982:29). Such perceptions about the peasants leave little hope for their successful integration in governmental programs of development, and participatory strategies may tend to become paternalist. This contradiction suggests the need to modify the perceptions that social scientists have about peasants.

In the Latin American context, the definition of peasant becomes more problematic, given the particular social and economic characteristics of this large sector of society. Most of the definitions found in western scholarship exclude agricultural wage laborers from this large group (Singelmann,1981:15). In the particular case of Latin America it is actually difficult to distinguish rural wage earners and peasants as two separate population groups, since part-time and seasonal wage labour is a prevalent characteristic among the rural low income groups.

In the Spanish language, the term *Campesino* applies to all rural inhabitants who work the land. Under this definition, *campesinos* would be sharecroppers, rural wage workers, small farmers, *minifundistas*, plantation workers, *colonos*, subsistence cultivators, landless agricultural workers, etc., *and* their families. This term is always translated into English as *Peasant*. However, the European background influencing the contemporary definition of the term *peasant*, usually leads to confusion.

Landsberger and Hewitt (1970:560), provide the following definition of the Latin American peasant: "any rural cultivator who is low in economic and political status." The advantage of such a general definition is that it does not assume any particular set of values or

agricultural practices as being a necessary characteristic of a peasant. For the western scholar this definition may not be sufficiently specific. Nevertheless, the Latin American *Campesinado* (peasant sector) is not a specific class in itself either, and many variations in social, economic, and cultural characteristics are invariably found from one region to another. The common characteristics to be found in all Latin American peasants are those included in the definition provided above: all *campesinos* are rural cultivators whose political and economic status is low.

The Traditional Role of Peasants in the Central American Agrarian Structure

There is considerable variety in the conditions of work of the peasants on the estates in different countries, but one of the common patterns through the history of the *latifundio* has been some kind of obligatory work. This obligatory work, which is called *Colonato* in Central America, consists of most of the normal agricultural tasks and supervision of a portion of the seasonal workforce. But in many areas, this includes all kinds of services in the homes of the estate owners both in town or on the estate (Huizer,1972:8). In exchange for this work, the peasant *colono* receives the right to cultivate food crops in a small portion of land within the estate, mostly under 5 hectares (Samaniego,1980:656), and usually consisting of a marginal plot. The number of working days differs from one estate to another, but generally it is five to six days out of seven (Areces,1972:9). In El Salvador, the common number of working days on the estates is six out of seven. There is no specific number of hours that the peasant must

work a day. The hours vary according to the type of farm and the season. In some estates, a small salary is paid to the *colonos*, depending on the amount and nature of work they perform.

Traditionally, there has been little resistance from the peasants against this form of work. The system, however, easily lends itself to abuses and such instances cause a great deal of resentment. For Singelmann (1981), who uses Social Exchange Theory as a framework to analyze peasant movements in Latin America, these circumstances result in either solidarity with the landlord (*vertical solidarity*) where dependency and paternalism are reinforced; or to solidarity with the other peasants (*horizontal solidarity*), which eventually results in the development of peasant movements (Singelmann,1981:12). According to Huizer, in order to control resentment among peasants and prevent the formation of *horizontal solidarity* and open resistance, the status quo is maintained by severe sanctions. Minor errors or offenses of peasants are frequently punished disproportionately (Huizer,1972:8).

The type of role described above tends to emerge particularly where the relationship of the peasants with the estate and the landlord is very close. Peasants under *colonato* arrangements rarely have sources of income other than the work they perform in the estate. Therefore, they have tended to develop a considerable degree of dependency upon the latifundio and the landlord.

Most documents studying the social conditions of peasants in Latin America appear to concentrate on the position that peasants occupy within the latifundio. Other roles are also important, given that *colonos* represent only one sector of the peasant population. In some areas, other peasants may receive seasonal access to different

plots of land for the cultivation of their food crops. These plots are usually areas that have been left idle for a long period of time, and the peasants receive access to them under the condition that they will clear the land before and after their crops. Once the land is cleared, the landlord can use it for the production of export crops or pasture. This kind of arrangement is more frequently found along the Pacific coast of Central America, where cotton production and cattle raising are common practices.

The number of peasants who can have access to an arrangement of *colonato* is obviously very small. The rest are landless agricultural workers and *minifundista* peasants, who represent the majority of the rural population. They depend indirectly on the estate for the seasonal work it provides during the harvest. This seasonal work is very often the only source of cash income for many rural families. It is common to find all members of a *campesino* family traveling together from the coffee plantations, to the cotton and sugar cane plantations, searching for work in the different harvest seasons. Thus, *colono* peasants have often been considered, particularly by local government workers, as one of the most conservative sectors of the peasantry, since the privileges and status they enjoy as such, are regarded as superior when compared to the other peasants.

As large scale agricultural enterprises continue to grow, more peasants and small farmers are displaced from their land, a phenomenon that can be observed not only on agrarian pre-capitalist societies, but in capitalist and socialist countries as well (Browning,1983:404), making rural-to-urban migration a worldwide phenomenon. Subsequently, the most important difference between these two social systems rests on

whether the political structure which caused or permitted these transformations is able to compensate those displaced. In Central America in general, the political system has allowed the restriction of the benefits of agricultural growth to a selected sector of its societies, and has disregarded the needs of the displaced majority.

The gradual expansion of export crops has also reduced the number of peasants working under *colonato* arrangements. In El Salvador, for example, 70 percent of the lands under this system had disappeared by the early 1970's (Samaniego,1980:655), as many families were expelled from the expanding coffee plantations. Subsistence cultivators were likewise displaced from their lands by sugar farming. On the coastal lands, peasant cultivators were displaced by the introduction of cotton farming. This displacement was intensified by the expansion of extensive livestock raising in preference to more intensive and high-yielding methods of food production. In some cases, displacement of wage agricultural laborers has been caused by modernization of farming by mechanization and more exclusive labour employment practices. Even policies of industrialization in most Central American countries since 1950 have followed a strategy which caused the displacement of an incalculable number of artisans in towns and villages (Browning,1983:405).

Population growth, often blamed as the main cause of land and food scarcity in the Third World, also becomes an important factor in worsening the marginal conditions of the peasantry. As early as 1798, Thomas Malthus recognized that population was increasing faster than the means of subsistence (De Blij & Muller,1986:39). Those who feel the weight of Malthus' concerns point out that the problems posed by

population growth must be attacked now with vigorous programs of population control and other strategies. However, neo-Malthusian approaches to this problem have rarely produced the expected results.

Concluding Statement

As the rural population is displaced from its traditional means of livelihood, it comes to occupy a disadvantaged and dependent position within the enforced agro-export structure. Those unable to be accepted as *colonos* in an estate join the increasing number of migrant landless workers, competing with each other in the search for temporary access to a plot of land for subsistence crops, or in the search for temporary seasonal employment on export-crop farms. A large percentage of these landless workers migrate to the slums surrounding the cities in search of work, increasing the rates of unemployment and under-employment in the urban sector of Central American societies.

It is this displacement of the population that comes to determine the marginal role of the peasantry in Central American societies.

The alienation of peasants from the production activities and their exclusion from the social and economic development of a community in the countries under study, invariably results in some kind of organized social action of resistance (Stavenhagen,1970:267). Unused lands are taken over by the peasants, organized demands are presented to the governments, and armed struggles and repression often arise, resulting in the final introduccion of total or partial changes in the socio-economic structure of the countries. In Central American societies, the most common change introduced in response to this rural-

based social action is the implementation of some kind of land tenure reform.

An overview of the different land tenure reforms implemented in the Central American region will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

LAND TENURE REFORM IN PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

History has shown that there has been a continuous struggle for land on the part of the poor, in order to satisfy their most basic needs, a struggle that often results in a violent confrontation between the landless and the landlords. It is therefore a delusion to think that the basic needs of the world's poorest people will be met without renewed attention to politically sensitive land tenure questions (Eckholm,1979:5). In sociological terms, the introduction of land tenure reforms over any system implies the modification of the social and power structures in that social system. Land reform should also be considered, at least in its initial stages, as a socio-political process. When this aspect of land tenure reform is not recognized, social scientists and policy makers tend to underestimate the difficulty of accomplishing reform, and the tenacity of the status quo (Brown and Thiesenhusen,1979:96).

Land Tenure Reform: A Definition

Depending on the motives and objectives of land tenure reform, this term has come to be understood as a term of bewildering variety of interpretations. However, the various meanings and definitions do appear to have two things in common: (a) land tenure reform is invariably a more or less direct, publicly controlled change in the existing

character of land ownership and use; and (b) it normally attempts a diffusion of wealth, income or productive capacity (Carroll,1955:35).

In some cases "land reform" and "agrarian reform" are used as straight alternatives; in other cases, careful distinctions are drawn. For some authors, reforms where the key element is the change in land ownership, or the transfer of possession of land from one group in the society to another, are "agrarian reforms" (Alexander,1974:2), while other authors (Ladejinsky,1977:354) apply the same definition strictly to "Land Reform".

In general terms, the main distinction between "land reform" and "agrarian reform" is that the first contains elements of change in land ownership. Agrarian reform is usually understood as reforms in production technology, and in marketing and services policies. Alexander (1974:2) emphasizes a distinction between agrarian reform and "agricultural reform" -which involves changes only in the way land is used, and the type of technology applied in agricultural production.

Most land tenure reforms in Latin America are known as "Agrarian Reforms", and the types and objectives that can be found among them are very wide from simple agricultural and marketing policy changes, to radical modifications in the land tenure patterns. Nevertheless, from a purely technical standpoint, almost any program that leads to change, presumably for the better, in the manner in which land is held *and* used, might be described as land tenure reform.

In general terms, as stated throughout this study, land distribution in Central America has been characterized by the accumulation of land in the hands of few landowners.

The main purpose of a significant land tenure reform would aim at the expropriation of land from the larger landowners, and its redistribution among the landless peasants. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, only those programs contemplating changes in land ownership will be considered as land tenure reforms.

Land tenure reform can then be defined as a process legitimated by a set of public policies oriented to modify the current land tenure system, aiming at a more equitable distribution of the land and other resources -natural resources, technology and capital, among the rural population, with the final purpose of improving their living standards.

Land Tenure Reform in History

Land reform is a very ancient idea. Changes in the agrarian structure seem to have been enacted in Biblical times. There is an Old Testament reference to redistribution of land every fiftieth year (Alexander,1974:5). Several of the most fundamental social changes that have occurred in history -the fall of the Roman Empire in antiquity, the Russian revolution, the French revolution, and the American revolution to name a few examples from modern times- have had land tenure reform aspects.

The French revolution radically changed an agrarian system based on almost total c... l of land and labour by a small feudal elite. After the French revolution various political groups developed ideas and policies on land tenure reform. The socialist ideal was the one that dominated the scene (Dovrin,1965:231), and significant changes were accomplished in land ownership and use in this period of French history.

The strongest ideology in more conservative French circles was the Catholic social programme developed after 1890. This programme gave strong emphasis to the value of an agrarian structure based on the small family farm (King,1977:33). This ideology reached North America in the early 1900's, defining the farmer as the most essential and stable type of citizen, and farming as the most desirable occupation, an ideology currently known as Agrarian Fundamentalism (Petersen,1985:6).

Agrarian Fundamentalism has strongly influenced the development of policies in North American agriculture. That influence can also be found in the North American policies for international development.

Land reforms have also occurred in socialist countries. They can be differentiated from other reforms in that they clearly follow a Marxist perspective, aiming at more radical changes in the distribution of land as the central means of production. Socialist land tenure reforms put a strong emphasis on state control over the land and other natural resources.

Many important differences can be enumerated between socialist and non-socialist models of land tenure reform, the most important being that socialist countries have implemented land tenure reforms as a part of the general reforms in their political and economic structures. According to the Marxist perspective, this condition may be crucial for the effective implementation of any kind of land tenure reform.

Types of Land Reform

Kay (1977:857) roughly identifies two major types of land tenure reform in modern history: Reformist reforms and Radical reforms.

Reformist reforms seek to increase agricultural production through the introduction of advanced technology, keeping intact the socio-economic structure of the societies where they are implemented. This type of reform is in line with the liberal ideology of free enterprise, and equality of opportunity to participate in the market economy.

According to Kay (1977:858), the central objective of a reformist reform is to avoid a radical change in the economic base of society, by introducing superficial changes that do not alter the land tenure patterns.

Radical reforms aim for total change in the distributive system dominating society, and at the establishment of a new land tenure pattern that would sustain a more equitable income distribution. Clearly, this type of reform is based on the Marxist and Neo-Marxist ideology in which a new social order is promoted in order to change the exploitative relations of production dominating capitalist and pre-capitalist societies. If placed on a continuum, most Latin American reforms would be somewhere in the middle, but not in either extreme.

For Ladejinsky (1977:356), the types of land tenure reform can be differentiated using the following criteria: For whose benefit and for how large a group of beneficiaries is the reform designed? According to Ladejinsky, if a land tenure reform is designed to benefit the majority of the rural population, its specific content and its enforcement will differ substantially from a reform attempting to satisfy both landlords and landless.

Regardless of the ideological background of a land tenure reform program, its focus and typology in any region is directly related to the specific economic, political, and social-cultural characteristics of

the region where it is to be implemented. The differences between the three continents of the Third World, as emphasized by FAO in most of its studies (Shanin,1973:162), fall in the following categorization: in South Asia, land reforms focus on the problem of sharecropping and usury in an extremely densely populated region; in Africa, it is mainly the problem of customary land holdings and colonial plantations which are the focus of attention; and in Latin America, land tenure reform means mainly the breaking up of the *latifundios*.

Under this categorization, international policies of development appear to adapt their general objectives to the particular regional characteristics mentioned above, concentrating on the economic relations that hinder development. These economic structures correspond to a structure of social relations that any land tenure reform must necessarily take into account, as they are often more difficult to adapt into a national development program.

Land Tenure Reform in Central America

Both reformists and revolutionaries in Central America view the extraordinary concentration of land ownership and the domination of power institutions by a small and powerful land-based elite as one of the main obstacles for the sustained development of these societies.

The agrarian structure developed for the production of export crops since the early colonial period contributed to the polarization of agricultural development in the region. On one side, there are the large estates producing for the urban centers and the international market, having access to the technology and credit facilities required to

compete in the world market. On the other side most of the peasantry is producing for their own consumption on small marginal plots, using traditional materials and rudimentary technology. Consequently, the economic benefits of the agro-export model are enjoyed only by those in the top of the agrarian structure.

The gradual growth of this agro-export model of economic development and its unanticipated consequences is what basically constitutes the main source of political unrest in the region.

The introduction of land tenure reform is then viewed by most political sectors in Central America, both as an alternative for pacification, and an alternative for development.

Four major factors are described by Grindle (1986:140-142) in the establishment of land tenure reforms in modern Latin America. These are:

a) The influence of the structuralist economic analysis promoted by influential economists and liberal intellectuals in the 1950's and early 1960's, who argued that land reform would have a beneficial impact on national economic development;
b) Concern among local economic and political elites about the potential for rural unrest;
c) Development of a rural-oriented political leadership, as parties shifted from urban to rural-based campaigns to get electoral support; and
d) The influence of U.S. government concerned about the Cuban revolution.

Land reform in Central America received impetus from the initiatives of the *Alliance for Progress* program announced by U.S. President John F. Kennedy in 1961 (Barry,1987:107). It was clear for the U.S. that the traditional landholding pattern dominating Central and South America represented an obstacle for rapid economic development. One of the strategies promoted by the Alliance for Progress was to encourage the substitution of the latifundio and minifundio holdings by

"an equitable system of property" (Alexander,1974:42) in order to favour the positive results of the so called alliance. Even more, the domination of the *latifundio* system represented the potential for political unrest, which was one of the major concerns of U.S. policies towards the continent. The kind of land tenure reform promoted by the Alliance for Progress, however, was designed to take place within the framework of the established political economies of the countries, and did not challenge those structures.

In this sense, the *latifundio*, at the core of the agro-export model, still dominates the economic structure of the region, maintaining a highly inequitable distribution of resources, and social unrest is still a major concern for those interested in implementing an effective development program in the region.

In Central America, even the most superficial measures oriented to modify the land tenure structure have usually been enacted in response to the struggle by peasants for more justice. In Nicaragua, it took a revolution to institute a significant land redistribution program in 1979. In El Salvador, the more moderate agrarian reform program initiated in the following year, represents an attempt to reduce social tensions in the rural areas, and avoid a major revolutionary conflict. Pressure for land has forced the governments of Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica to adopt reformist programs as well.

In the following section, a general overview of the different reforms implemented in Central America will be presented, concentrating on policy making as the immediate indicator of the theoretical framework supporting these reforms.

Guatemala

From 1944 to 1954, peasant organizations increased in number in Guatemala, and the demands by native peasants for more land, resulted in a land tenure reform program that expropriated the idle land of the elite and the United Fruit Company (Barry,1987:138).

When the Law of Agrarian Reform was passed in June 1952, expropriation of estates over 664 acres, and land redistribution proceeded rapidly, the United Fruit Company being a prime target (Bulmer-Thomas,1987:116,141). The total area distributed equaled about 20 percent of the nation's arable land, and the program reached close to 24 percent of the population (Brockett,1988:100). Little was accomplished by the Arbenz government in providing the necessary complementary assistance to the land recipients, and two years later, a military coup virtually reversed the program.

With AID funds, the Guatemalan Institute for Agrarian Transformation (INTA), sponsored several land-titling and colonization programs over the following 30 years. According to Barry (1987:138), most of these programs took place in isolated areas, corresponding with the military objective of gaining control over the northern region. A comparison between the Arbenz agrarian reform and the one started in 1956 by the next government shows that the Arbenz reform distributed an average of 82,745 acres a month, while the following reform gave out 46,930 acres a year (Melville & Melville,1971:118), only half the land that Arbenz was distributing per month.

In 1986, peasant movements started to demand that government redistribute some unused public land, and to accelerate a *Commercial Land Markets* program sponsored by AID. The Commercial Land Markets

program is limited to buying lands made available in the public market, and selling them to small farmers at reduced interest rates, with the condition that they will grow non-traditional export crops, as indicated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (Barry,1987:143).

This type of agrarian policy appears to aim at the maintenance of the agro-export system, as it does almost nothing to either reduce the power of the landlords, or satisfy the demands of landless peasants. Under these conditions, the prospect of an effective land tenure reform, similar to the one initiated by the Arbenz administration in 1952, would require radical changes in the political structure of the country.

Honduras

Honduras is the second largest country by size, and the third most populated in Central America. It is also considered to be the poorest. Only 33 percent of the national territory is considered cultivable. In 1978, it was estimated that 90 percent of the rural population lived in poverty, and as of 1983, sixty five percent of Honduran households lived in absolute poverty (Safilios-Rothschild,1983:15).

The first attempt to introduce land tenure reform in Honduras that is worth mentioning took place under the administration of Villeda Morales in 1962. Since the late 1950's only about 10 percent of the plantations of the United Fruit Co. and Standard Fruit Co. were being cultivated (Barry,1987:145), and groups of peasants began to occupy the unused lands.

Increased pressure from the peasants and the influence of the Alliance for Progress persuaded the Honduran government to implement the modest land distribution program mentioned above. This program was

limited to the settlement of individual families on small plots, and despite its narrow scope it was suspended after a military coup in 1963, just one year after its announcement. Some authors stress that in the years following the 1963 coup, land tenure reform was carried out mainly at the expense of Salvadoran migrants who had bought land in Honduras (Bulmer-Thomas,1987:222). This decision by the Honduran government provoked the deterioration of the already weak relations between the two countries, and resulted in ne expulsion of approximately 100,000 Salvadoran migrants back to El Salvador, and in a short, but bloody armed conflict between these two countries -the "Soccer War"- in July 1969.

In the mid 70's growing concern about rural unrest stimulated the government to consider land tenure reform as an alternative for pacification. After the hurricane "Fifi" in September 1974, the larger landholders abandoned much of the land devastated by the storm (Pozas & Del Cid,1980:620), and many others turned theirs over to the National Agrarian Institute (INA). This gave the government the opportunity to implement a new land tenure reform in 1975 in which about 1.5 million acres were to be distributed among 120,000 families over the next five years (Anderson,1982:117). According to Pozas and Del Cid (1980), several concessions were given to the Honduran landlords: the land reform law was announced one year in advance, giving large landowners the opportunity to distribute their land among relatives and friends in order to reduce the size of the estate and avoid expropriation. The land reform law was to affect idle lands only. Landowners were granted a period of three years to start cultivating idle land, and avoid expropriation (Pozas & Del Cid,1980:623).

As mild as it was, this reform law confronted the opposition of the private sector. The National Federation of Farmers and Ranchers (FENAGH) argued that the new law "attacked private property, the democratic system, liberty, and individuality" (Volk,1981:20). Anderson (1982:118) reports that several large landowners resisted expropriation using force against the peasants. In view of the resistance presented by the landowner elite, the military government then backed away from the implementation of this law in 1977, and began to use repression more extensively to halt land invasions by peasants (Grinddle,1986:135).

Peasant occupations of idle land have continued in Honduras over the following years. In 1983, the entire province of Olancho, where many land occupations by peasants Unions were still taking place, was declared a counterinsurgency zone. According to Barry (1987:148), many peasants are now questioning the merit of the government programs, and of the expanded U.S. military presence in their country, as many communities have been displaced to give way to military bases.

Costa Rica

Apparently, Costa Rica is the only Central American country able to avoid the widespread repression and violence in the countryside which has been endemic in the region. For Rowles (1985:1), enlightened political leadership has been an important factor in maintaining peace by carrying out a systematic program of social reforms starting as early as 1948. However, land ownership in Costa Rica is becoming very concentrated and the signs of increasing polarization are everywhere in the countryside (Barry,1987:149).

The existence of an extensive uncultivated agricultural frontier has supplied a partial release for rural tensions. Peasants pushed off their lands by growing cattle ranches often cleared new land in isolated areas. The government's agrarian institute has also used this agricultural frontier for colonization projects that have resettled small numbers of landless peasants (Seligson,1980:165). The "Lands and Colonization Law" promulgated in 1961 mentions the need to avoid concentration of land, but also stresses the importance of private property in the economic development of agriculture in Costa Rica (Rowles,1985:215).

Under this framework, in the first two decades of the Lands and Colonization Law, about 16,000 landless peasants were relocated in isolated jungle regions as part of the colonization program, and land titling is reported to be limited to very small plots (Barry,1987:151). According to Brockett (1988:124) the colonization program settled only 1,272 peasant families by 1970, on 87,500 acres in often unsuccessful colonies.

This kind of legislation is not sufficient to supply the growing demands of peasants for land, and may indirectly increase the social tensions by reinforcing the inequitable land distribution. Costa Rica, by tradition the most democratic country of Central America is, nevertheless, experiencing the effects of a growing agrarian capitalism and its consequences in displacing the *campesinos*.

If, as in the other Central American countries, the compensation of the displaced peasantry is not addressed, Costa Rica may face growing peasants' demands and social unrest from its rural population.

El Salvador

The smallest in territory and the most densely populated country in Central America, El Salvador has a long history of rural struggles for access to land and other agricultural services monopolized by the latifundio and export-crop growers.

After the expansion of coffee plantations and increased domain of the so-called fourteen families resulted in a repressed peasant rebellion in 1932, where 30,000 indigenous peasants were killed (North,1981:39), modernization went on. The growth of export agriculture added to the production of cotton and sugar cane in the central and coastal valleys of El Salvador (Pearce,1986:24). Displacement of campesinos took place as in any other Central American country, augmenting the already strong potential for rural unrest.

An early land reform attempt was made in 1976 by the newly created Agrarian Transformation Institute (ISTA). Decree No. 31 of the "First Project of Agrarian Transformation" (the term "reform" was avoided), stated that a portion of state land which comprised about four percent of the agricultural land was to be redistributed among peasants in the form of cooperatives (Montes,1986:148). Strong resistance from the Salvadoran landlords resulted in the suspension of the program one year after its creation.

In 1979, few months after the overthrow of Somoza in Nicaragua, a military coup in El Salvador established a military/civilian Junta to run the country. One of the first announcements of this government Junta was the intention of implementing a significant land tenure reform. Social unrest at that time had reached its peak, both in rural and urban areas, and the junta government was attempting to restore peace, backed

up by the U.S. administration that feared another Nicaraguan-style revolution in El Salvador.

In 1980, three phases of the agrarian reform were officially announced, despite public resistance by the landlords, and the first phase started to be implemented through the Institute of Agrarian Transformation (ISTA) created in 1976, and with the intervention of the army in carrying out expropriations.

Phase I

The first phase of the reform involved the expropriation of 328 of the country's largest farms, to be converted into cooperative farms. The expropriated landowners would receive 25 percent of the land compensation in cash, and 75 percent in government bonds, that could be invested in industry only (Dunkerley,1985:158). Of the 328 expropriated estates, 262 were larger than 1,200 acres (Browning,1983:414), and together with the other 66 properties they covered about 15 percent of the agricultural land -about 240,000 hectares (Barry,1987:113). Most of these properties are located in the most fertile agricultural districts, with a particular concentration on the cotton and cattle regions of the coastal lowlands. ISTA was responsible for transferring these properties to the cooperatives organized from former estate employees to manage them.

The intended beneficiaries of Phase I were an estimated 178,000 workers and their dependents who were residents or employed on the expropriated estates. In order to participate in the reform, these workers were required to organize themselves into cooperative associations, and soon, most of the 328 estates were co-managed by ISTA

and a cooperative association. FAO (1983:84), reports an effective participation of 29,755 peasant members, a rough average of 90 members per cooperative farm. The transfer of land ownership to the cooperative took place when the compensation of the previous owner was paid by ISTA, and its amount arranged as an 'agrarian debt' to be paid with interests by the beneficiary cooperative. By August 1982, eighteen full titles had been granted under this arrangement (Browning,1983:417). Each cooperative was expected to assume responsibility for farm management and for expenditure of its income within the following order of priorities: production costs, basic needs of cooperative members, repayment of the agrarian debt, and community social welfare.

Phase II

As announced originally, Phase II of the land tenure reform would have affected holdings between 220 and 1,200 acres, and covered about 20 percent of the farmland (Barry,1987:113). This phase would have had the most sweeping effect on the Salvadoran society and the economy, involving the greatest amount of land, owned mostly by the rich, medium sized farmers, and coffee growers who accounted for 60 percent of the national coffee production (Dunkerley,1985:158). Phase II of the Salvadoran land tenure reform, however, was never implemented.

Instead of the original 1980 legislation, the government of Duarte announced in 1987 the implementation of 'Phase II of the land reform', which was reduced virtually to the creation of a land market institution administered by FINATA (*Financiera Nacional de Tierras Agrícolas*) and a Committee of Peasants' Organizations (COC) created for that purpose (ECA,1987:926-934). COC was formed by members of peasants' organizations

such as FESACORA, ACOPAI, UCS, and CCS (Proceso,1990:13). According to this new law, FINATA, ISTA, and COC would keep control of all land transactions in the country, buy those agricultural lands put in the free market, and sell them preferably to peasants, who would pay for the land over the next 30 years, at a 2% interest rate (Proceso,1990:11).

In June 1989, the newly installed government of Cristiani abolished the law creating the COC, replacing it with a Consultant Peasant Committee (CCC), formed exclusively by members of para-statal peasant organizations, which have made public their desire to promote individual farming (Proceso,1990:13), as opposed to cooperative farming. Under the new 1989 legislation, the new second phase of the reform was initiated in February of 1990, by transferring two farms of 14 and 26 *Manzanas* to the peasants who were renting them. It was announced by government officials that 38,000 peasant families were expected to benefit from this new phase (Proceso,1990:11).

Phase III

This phase of the agrarian reform allowed peasants who rented up to 24.7 acres[5] to take possession of the land through the institution established for that purpose -FINATA. This figure was reduced to seven hectares (17 acres) for individual farmers in 1986 (FINATA,1986:19), with no specified limits for cooperative and communitarian peasant associations. FINATA would pay the owner the claimed value of the expropriated property, and give the peasant a provisional title upon agreement of annual payments over a period of 30 years. This phase

[5] FAO (1983) reports this figure as 42 Hectares (about 103 acres), while Barry (1987), and Brockett (1988) report it as 17 acres (about 7 Hectares). The original legislature (FINATA: 1983), stipulated a ceiling of 10 Hectares (24.7 acres).

affected mostly land under sharecropping and rental agreements, and provided for 50 percent of the national food crops (Dunkerley,1985:160). By March 1983, the number of applicants had reached 49,517, with 194,895 acres affected (Brockett,1988:159); this represents a rough average of 3.9 acres per applicant. In fact, most plots claimed by the peasants under this phase are around one *Manzana* (0.7 hectares), which is the extension traditionally considered sufficient for the cultivation of subsistence food-crops for one family. For this reason, Phase III has been often regarded as a crucial factor in worsening the minifundio problem in El Salvador.

By the end of 1984, a Program of *Rural Integrated Development* (PRODERIN) began to be implemented as part of the third phase. About 20 communities of peasants' beneficiaries from the third phase of the reform were organized into "Community Organizations" in two of the provinces of the country to establish development poles. Given the failure of the cooperative movement in the First phase of the reform, the term "Cooperative" was intentionally avoided in this program in order to facilitate its adoption by the peasants. Individual land ownership was maintained, and strong emphasis was given to collective action in community improvement projects. Credit and services facilities were requested collectively by these organizations, but each member was individually responsible for his credit. These collectives were co-managed by a resident agricultural technician, who was responsible for the canalization of the community demands and needs to the appropriate public institution (FINATA,1984:12). As the demands presented by the recently created community organizations grew, the program quickly lost political support, and two years later it was officially cancelled.

Table 3 below summarizes the total area affected by the First and Third phases of the land tenure reform in El Salvador.

TABLE 3

THE TWO FIRST PHASES OF LAND TENURE REFORM. EL SALVADOR, 1987

Phase	Number of Hectares	% of reformed sector	% of national farmland	Number of Beneficia-ries	% of E.A. rural Population
Phase I	263,295	78.6	18.1	30,268	4.46
Phase III	71,600	21.4	4.9	47,001	6.93
Total	334,895	100.0	23.0	77,269	11.39

Source: Proceso. "Desnaturalización de la Reforma Agraria." *El Salvador Proceso. Informativo Semanal*, Vol. 10, No. 420. March, 1990: 12, 13.

Phase I affected significantly more land than phase III, accounting for close to 18 percent of the agricultural land. Phase III, on the other hand, appears to have benefited almost 17,000 more people than Phase I in a considerably lower area of land. This fact raises serious concerns about the adequate size of plots allocated to individual peasants in Phase III of the land tenure reform. Both phases have benefited only about 11 percent of the Economically Active rural population. It is not clear what sectors of the peasantry are included by the government in the "Economically Active" rural population.

It is important to point out that one of the major limitations for the agrarian reform in El Salvador, besides its narrow frame, has been the development of an armed conflict, often refered to as a civil war, that affects a considerable portion of the rural territory. Phase three is particularly affected by the armed conflict, as most lands under this

phase are concentrated in the departments of Chalatenango, Morazán, Cabañas, and Cuscatlán, where military activities are more frequent (Dunkerley,1985:160).

Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, the development of [illegible]on plantations and cattle raising after the Second World War were the factors that strengthened and enriched a small landowners elite. As the rural population lost land to give way to the growth of the haciendas, many migrated to the urban areas. Both the rural and urban poor attempted to make ends meet by joining the seasonal work force on the large commercial farms (Brockett,1988:166). In Nicaragua, in the period prior to the revolution, close to 40 percent of the economically active agricultural population consisted of landless wage workers, most of whom were employed only during the harvest season (Deere & Marchetti,1981:42).

Unlike the rest of Central American countries engaged in the production of export crops, Nicaragua's economy was dominated mostly by one single family: the Somoza family. The dynasty began in the mid 1930's after the United States withdrew its forces from the country, where it was protecting the previous regime. The vast economic empire that the Somozas built was based on unlimited political power, as three successive generations assumed the presidency of the country. The elder Anastacio Somoza García used his political position to acquire a number of the coffee estates owned by German families during the Second World War. By 1944, he was reported to be the largest coffee producer and landowner (Booth,1985:67), owning a total of 46 coffee estates, and 51 cattle haciendas (Galeano,1971:179).

By the late 1970's, the Somoza family also had a strong presence in commercial activities and in the agro-industrial sector of Nicaraguan economy. According to Baumeister (1986:16), the Somoza family controlled about 73 percent of the production of rice and sugar, and Somocista control over tobacco production was total.

In 1963, under the influence and directions of the Alliance for Progress, Somoza approved an agrarian reform law whose implementation was restricted to relatively minor colonization and titling programs. This early attempt at land tenure reform did provide land to 2,651 landless families (Núñez Soto,1981:77) through the formation of several new agricultural communities. However, it has been argued that this reform program was basically oriented to reduce the social tensions confronted by the state, as peasants in the new communities had often been moved out from areas of rural conflict, reducing, with their departure, the level of bargaining power peasants had in that area (Núñez Soto,1981:77). This interpretation would support Grindle's argument (1986:133) that Latin American agrarian reform policies have been primarily oriented to increase social control and manage political protest rather than the actual redistribution of land or improvement of living conditions among rural poor.

During the last decade of the Somoza rule, from the late 1960's to 1979, the repression carried out by the National Guard in the countryside increased dramatically. The National Guard provided the crucial force that enabled the Somozas to dominate Nicaraguan society until the revolutionary victory of 1979.

The Nicaraguan peasantry remained aside of any political development in the country until their passive attitude began to be

transformed by progressive church workers organizing Christian Base Communities in the rural areas, and by the increased number of military activities carried out by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) during the late 1970's (Brockett,1988:167). It is generally considered that *Liberation Theology* and its Christian struggle against injustice, was the popular ideology of the revolution (Rooper,1987:98). In addition, the fact that the struggle was directed against one single family, may have facilitated the formation of a multi-class coalition for resistance. Thus, although the eventual overthrow of the Somoza government was largely the result of the 'urbanization' of the armed conflict, the prolonged period of rural conscientization and struggle was a key factor in motivating the involvement of the urban population in the final stage of the liberation movement. Moreover, it must be pointed out that what makes urban populations grow rapidly in most Latin American countries is the massive migration of rural landless workers. As argued by Paige (1985:107), "to a surprising extent, Nicaragua's agricultural proletariat was urban."

The Sandinista Agrarian Policy

One of the major concerns of the new Nicaraguan government was the agrarian policy. A strong pressure for land redistribution was being put forward by the peasantry, which formed about one-half of the economically active population (Brockett,1988:169).

In the initial administrative aspects, the lack of accurate information in the collection of national land tenure statistics resulted in erroneous expectations regarding the amount of land confiscated in the first stage of the reform. As noted by Collins

(1985:10), the Sandinistas expected they had confiscated up to 60 percent of the total farmland, but when the land surveys were finished, they ended up with just over 20 percent. As a result, this lack of accurate documentation has been regarded as source of misinformation for the reform planners, who apparently committed many mistakes in the process (Lappé & Collins,1982:76).

Nevertheless, the response of the Nicaraguan leadership to these obstacles gradually emerged and appeared to contain a certain amount of pragmatism and flexibility, taking into account the experiences of other countries in their introduction of land tenure reform. Several international experts were reported to have provided assistance and advice, making of the Nicaraguan reform a unique process among the other Latin American experiences (Brockett,1988:169) and increasing the international attention to this process.

A comprehensive analysis of the land tenure reform policy in Nicaragua is provided by Collins (1985), and Brockett (1988, chp. 8). Based on these documents, the Nicaraguan reform can be divided in three stages, to be summarized in the following section.

Stage One: 1979-1981

The most important redistribution of land carried out by the Sandinistas took place with almost no difficulty, since the departure of the Somoza family and their supporters made confiscation of land an easy task. About 23 percent of the total farmland passed from the private to the public sector (Brockett,1988:169). The initial projections of the early land tenure reform estimated that of the total agricultural land, including non-confiscated properties, 40 percent would be held by

independent peasant credit associations and production cooperatives, 25 percent by the state, 5 percent by small individual owners, and 30 percent by medium and large individual owners (Collins,1985:89). Thus, many large landowners were not affected by the reform, since many of them opposed Somoza at the end of his rule, and their cooperation was viewed as necessary to maintain an adequate agricultural production under the new regime.

The number of estates dedicated to export crops confiscated in this stage reached about fifteen hundred. They were reorganized in state farms which, together with other confiscated properties, were collectively known as the *Area of Peoples' Property* (Brockett,1988:170). Maintaining these farms under control of the state was seen as the only way to avoid the creation of a new exploitative class (Kaimowitz & Stanfield,1985:73), as individualization of plots would have generated a rapid process of regional differentiation and inequalities. On the other hand, the proportion of export crop farms confiscated was viewed, along with the other large agricultural producers, as being the center of capital formation, modernization and growth (Kaimowitz,1986:111).

In this sense, the commitment to socialist transformations was put aside by the Sandinista government, given the need to reactivate agricultural production, and by the limited administrative capability of the state. By early 1980, new policies dealing with rental relationships and the provision of credit were initiated by the government, as a response to the discontent expressed by the peasantry through their powerful union, the Rural Workers Association (ATC). Land rents were lowered by 85 percent and all idle land and land rented within the previous two years was made available to their tenants. Credit

availability was significantly increased to small and medium-sized producers. Altogether, about one-half of small farmers received seven times more credit in 1980 than they had in 1977 (Collins, 1985:52). It was reported that about 10,000 peasants ended up receiving formal credit in the first year of the reform (Zwerling & Martin, 1985:125). A strong emphasis was given to the formation of cooperatives, encouraged by the provision of credit facilities. By mid 1980, about 60 percent of peasant households throughout the country belonged to a cooperative, while membership to the ATC climbed to about 120,000 members (Deere, *et.al.*, 1985:83).

In summary, stage one of the Nicaraguan reform consisted of the consolidation of the state farms, viewed as crucial to the economic recovery of national agriculture. Important steps were initiated in the formation of cooperatives of production, and individual land grants were minimal.

Stage Two: 1981-1984

As the pressure from the peasantry for more land continued, the state was facing the problem of decapitalization of private farms. Private landowners, fearing expropriation, were selling their machinery and leaving large areas idle. In the beginning of 1981 the workers organizations in both rural and urban areas, were demanding the confiscation of factories and agricultural estates where decapitalization was evident (Vilas, 1986:144). In July 1981, the Agrarian Reform Law was announced, basically attempting to reassure private owners of the right to private property by not setting any limits on efficiently used landholdings (Brockett, 1988:171). In August

1981, a final version of the *Law Against Decapitalization* was announced by the Sandinista government. This law included some of the proposals put forward by the workers organizations, such as confiscation, but it also prohibited any action taken by the workers organizations "to modify the relations of production in enterprises" (*La Gaceta*,1981, quoted by Vilas,1986:145).

The Agrarian Reform Law permitted the confiscation of all abandoned land, and legitimized the expropriation of all idle, underutilized, or rented land on holdings above 864 acres (500 *Manzanas*) in the Pacific Coast, and 1,728 acres (1,000 *Manzanas*) in the interior (Baumeister,1986:22).

Based on land use patterns, the types of agricultural properties subjected to expropriation in the 1981 Agrarian Reform Law included the following:

a) idle or deficiently exploited properties (all properties which remained uncultivated for two consecutive years);
b) properties with less than 75 percent of their total area in use;
c) cattle-raising properties with a low density of cattle per area (less than 0.5 per *Manzana*. in the Pacific, and less than 0.3 per *Manzana* in the interior) (Baumeister,1986:22).
d) Sharecropped land in holdings over 86.5 acres in the Pacific, and 173 acres elsewhere (Brockett,1988:171).

By 1983, most of the land granted through the Agrarian Reform Law was allocated to cooperatives, but also, thousands of peasants in the war zones received individual titles to the land they occupied. By mid 1984, about 32 percent of rural families had benefited directly from

land redistribution and titling (Deere,*et.al.*,1985:94). The political strategy under this individual titling appears to be one of national defense, especially along the border with Honduras, where military attacks by the anti-Sandinista forces were more frequent.

In summary, stage two of the Nicaraguan land tenure reform concentrated on the problem of decapitalization of private farms, and those sectors of agrarian capital that were not performing an entrepreneurial role. Again, the socialization of agricultural production through the formation of cooperatives was stressed, and individual land grants began to be made, particularly in areas of armed conflict.

Stage Three: 1985-1988

The difficulties of maintaining a coalition with the private landowners and national defense needs, resulted in the introduction of a new phase in the Nicaraguan land tenure reform. Dissatisfaction was being expressed by thousands of still landless peasant families, and many others were reportedly unhappy being part of the production cooperatives (Brockett,1988:172). Consequently, the Sandinista government began to lose support from the peasantry.

In response to such factors, a number of modifications were introduced to the agrarian policy in 1985 and 1986. Individual grants increased almost tenfold over the previous years. In addition, the ceiling on land that was free from expropriation was reduced from 850 to 85 acres (Brockett,1988:173), and price controls were lifted on maize and beans.

In 1985, new land titles for the year totaled almost 740 thousand acres (Collins,1986:284). The number of families projected to benefit from land tenure reform that year was only about ,893, but it is reported to have reached more than 17 thousand, most c them in the form of individual land grants. The majority of these ividual peasant farmers were incorporated into Credit and Services Cooperatives.

Table 4 summarizes the changes in land tenure structure in Nicaragua from 1978 to 1984. The importance of maintaining a coalition with the private landowners, as expressed by the Sandinistas, becomes obvious when noting that by 1984, more than half of the land was still being held by private owners of more than 86 acres, with 23 percent of them being farms of more than 345 acres. State farms accounted for 18 percent of the agricultural land for the same year, and cooperative production farms covered only 8.2 percent of the land.

Overall, private holdings of more than 850 acres represent the most affected sector of the Nicaraguan land tenure reform, as the percentage of land they covered was reduced from 36.2 percent in 1978, to 11 percent in 1984. Holdings below 850 acres also experienced reduction in the percent of land they covered, but this reduction is almost insignificant.

By 1986, the distribution of farmland by type of tenure was as follows: 70.1 percent individual holdings, of which 44 percent were between 18 and 350 acres; 11.6 percent production cooperatives, and 17.5 percent state farms (Gilbert,1988:103). These last figures reflect the continuation of the trend taken by the eform, towards the reduction of state farms, and the development of new policies to favor private farmers.

TABLE 4

CHANGES IN LAND TENURE STRUCTURE IN NICARAGUA, FROM 1978 TO 1984

Type of Ownership	1978	1980	1984
1. Private Property	% of land	% of land	% of land
Over 850 acres	36.2	21.5	11.0
345 to 850 acres	16.2	13.4	12.0
86 to 345 acres	30.1	30.1	28.9
17 to 86 acres	15.4	13.0	8.3
less than 17 acres	2.1	2.5	2.6
SUBTOTAL	100%	80%	62.8%
2. Individual owners of less than 345 acres in Credit and Service Associations	--	0.4	10.7
3. Production Coops	--	1.0	8.2
4. State Farms	--	18.1	18.3
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

Source: Adapted from Collins, Joseph. *Nicaragua: What Difference Could a Revolution Make?*. San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1985: 253.

The most important aspects of the third phase of land tenure reform in Nicaragua are the consolidation of the cooperative movement, and the allocation of land to individual peasant families as a response to the demands of the peasant organization, the ATC, for more land. Since 1979, Sandinista agrarian policy has moved, more or less steadily, away from its initial emphasis on the state farm.

Land Tenure Reform in Central America: Comparative Review

In general terms, three main issues can be pointed out by looking at the agrarian policies of the five countries as described above. First, the reforms in Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica fall far short of the general expectations for a serious plan for land tenure reform and rural development. Using the concepts reviewed earlier in this chapter, the reforms in these three countries can be safely defined as a set of reformist agrarian policies oriented to reduce and control rural unrest.

Second, the reform in El Salvador was a more carefully planned political strategy towards rural and national stability, but still it did not contribute effectively to modify the core of the latifundio system which obstructs development. Also, the Salvadoran land tenure reform was implemented during a period of significant popular unrest and regional political changes, when major political shifts were also about to take place in this country. Therefore, it can be considered to fall into the category of 'reformist' reforms.

And third, the Nicaraguan reform, because of the monopolistic nature of landownership throughout its history, and probably because of the opposition the Sandinista government faced from all Central American countries and the U.S., took a more radical approach. Some authors, however, define it as 'moderate reformist' (Baumeister,1986:23), since it does not affect the entire fraction of large landowners, nor does it foster land takeovers, or class confrontations in the countryside. Clearly, a state socialist model was initially being followed by the land tenure reform planners, but they met resistance from the peasantry and the private sector, and policies were modified to meet the demands for individual holdings. On the other hand, the maintenance of the

existing agro-export economic agricultural structure was considered important by the Sandinista government, in order to maintain capital formation. Nevertheless, when compared to the rest of Central American reforms, the Nicaraguan reform modified significantly the land tenure structure of the country.

Table 5 summarizes some comparisons between the land tenure reform in El Salvador and Nicaragua. The difference in terms of direct participation by peasants may represent one of the major issues as far as rural development is concerned. It appears that the Salvadoran reform has limited a certain amount of participation exclusively to those peasant members of the organizations created by the government along its reformist policies. Many other organizations presently active in the country have been excluded. The Nicaraguan reform, on the other hand, through the massive institutionalization of peasants appears to have facilitated their participation in the development of its reform.

Credit facilities and technical assistance have also been reported to be more efficient in the Nicaraguan reform. This particular issue appears to be one of the factors determining the direction that policies for land tenure reform in Nicaragua took after the second year. The bargaining power of the peasantry through the ATC gave them access to credit facilities and technical assistance. Lastly, the problem of landlessness has not been addressed by the Salvadoran reform. In this country, land tenure reform has clearly been limited to those sectors of society which, one way or another, have had access to land. Phase I concentrated on the *colonos* and permanent employees of the larger estates, and Phase II distributed land titles among those peasants renting or sharecropping a plot of land.

TABLE 5

LAND TENURE REFORM IN EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA. COMPARISONS

El Salvador	Nicaragua
Participation	
Imposed by U.S. Administration, with no peasant participation.Only U.S. backed peasant organizations included.	Government promoted growth of peasants and farmers unions. These groups successfully pressured changes in legislation.
Credit	
No adequate credit facilities. Lack of legitimate titling forced peasants to pay high interests.	Total credit increased ten-fold for small farmers. Low interests a priority for reform sector.
Government Assistance	
Technical and marketing assistance very inefficient. No attempt to improve living and working conditions.	National Marketing system organized. Health, education and nutrition services introduced.
Landlessness	
Land tenure reform did not address problem of landless.	State sector and cooperatives incorporated landless into steady employment.

Source: Barry, Tom. *Roots of Rebellion: Land and Hunger in Central America*. Boston: South End Press, 1987: 135.

The empowerment of people through their direct participation in peasant and workers unions in the Nicaraguan reform, may be a determinant factor in giving them a considerable amount of bargaining power in the political spheres. The Salvadoran reform, on the other hand, lacked a more stable support from the government and the military, a fact that made it fall short of its original projections.

For Close (1988:90) it is clear that the Nicaraguan land tenure reform was a democratic and anti-latifundista measure. It did not touch any medium producer or any efficient large farmer. The Salvadoran land tenure reform has set maximum limits of landholdings, regardless of the way land was being used. The imposition of this type of policy in El Salvador encouraged the great landlords to artificially divide their property in order to avoid expropriation; on the other hand, it affected someone who farmed in an efficient manner, for simply holding a lot of property.

For the 1979-1984 period, some authors also report many similarities between the Salvadoran and the Nicaraguan reforms, especially in terms of the amount and nature of the farmland affected (Barry,1987:134). Apparently that similarity ceased to exist after 1985, as the Nicaraguan reform changed in response to the peoples' demands. Even when the Salvadoran reform enjoyed generous financial support and technical assistance from the U.S., its' reformist goals limited the effective transformation of an agrarian system that perpetuates poverty among the bulk of the rural population; popular demands continue to arise.

Although the response of Central American governments to social unrest has been traditionally one of repression, at particular times peasant demands for land have partially resulted in the introduction of the land tenure reform programs described in this review. Land distribution was facilitated in Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica by the availability of public, unused land. The first stage of the Sandinista reform was made easier and inexpensive thanks to the flight of Somoza and his supporters.

The early attempts of most governments towards land tenure reform were good enough to hold rural discontent below the level that would represent a serious threat to the maintenance of the system: Guatemala in the 1950's, Honduras and Costa Rica up to the 70's. But by the mid 1970's, the increasing expansion of commercial agriculture and population growth especially in Guatemala and El Salvador, created pressures over land tenure and at the same time, a more serious opposition by the elites to any serious land tenure reform program that would meet the demands of the rural population. In Nicaragua, by contrast, the struggle was aimed at one particular individual, and the rest of the agrarian bourgeoisie did not at first perceive peoples' mobilization as a threat. Furthermore, many supported the struggle against Somoza.

All these factors are important to consider when comparing the accomplishments of the agrarian reforms of the five Central American countries.

Clear differences arise when looking at the amount of land affected by the Central American land tenure reforms. As indicated in *Table 6*, the most significant reform has been the Nicaraguan, followed by Guatemala under Arbenz, and then by El Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica in that order. The largest percentage of farmland was covered by the Nicaraguan reform, followed by the Guatemalan, the reform in Honduras being the least significant in this aspect. Similarly, the Nicaraguan reform appears to have benefited the largest proportion of the rural population, and the average land per beneficiary was also larger. When compared to the Salvadoran reform in terms of the role of the rural people, the Nicaraguan reform differs mostly in the average

area allocated per beneficiary, and in the percentage of the rural population benefited, a fact that may reflect the differences in population density between these two countries.

TABLE 6

A COMPARISON OF LAND TENURE REFORM PROGRAMS IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

Country	Years	Hectares per rural person	% of rural population	Area affected (acres)	Percentage of farmland
Costa Rica	1962-1984	0.37	1.1	637,000	13
El Salvador	1980-1984	0.34	3.3	789,000	24
Guatemala	1952-1954	0.44	4.6	1,800,000	27
Honduras	1962-1984	0.94	2.2	725,000	6
Nicaragua	1979-1984	1.15	7.9	385,4000	32

Sources: Costa Rica: Seligson, 1984: 34; Honduras and Guatemala: Brockett, 1988: 196; El Salvador and Nicaragua: Reinhardt, 1989: 10.

Major Issues Relevant to This Research

In order to fully understand the rural dimensions of the crisis of contemporary Central America, it is necessary to analyze its political dynamics in terms of their socio-economic context and from a historical perspective. It would be difficult to ignore the importance of the previous social arrangements in shaping the structure of Central American societies today.

To a great extent, a fundamental constraint that appears to have continually affected development policies has been the inadequate development of self-sustainable local economies. Therefore, the

orientation given to production by the elites has always been one of export commodities for foreign markets. The implementation of an agro-export model of development has been successful in bringing economic growth to the region, as export economies have expanded and diversified throughout the years. From a developmental perspective, it can be argued that incomes have grown, not only for elites but also for the middle sectors and part of the peasantry. On the other hand, it appears clear that the region's dependency on exports has increased, and consequently, its vulnerability to the fluctuations of the international market.

From the perspective of the rural population, the agro-export system has undoubtedly harmed this sector, as peasants were originally pushed off the land for the production of exports. This particular type of 'land tenure reform' also had its effect on the area devoted to the production of food crops. Production of food crops per capita has always decreased, aggravating malnutrition problems in a constantly growing population.

Although important political changes have occurred in the region, elites still retain their domain over the land and the economy. Nicaragua is an exception, since some substantial changes in the power structure during the decade under study, allowed for the development of a significant land tenure reform. The maintenance of elitist power structures prevents the possibility of significant changes, not necessarily in the agro-export system, since this would require drastic changes in the world system as a whole, but in the nature of the distribution of the benefits obtained from the production of export commodities, and the participation of the peasantry in the development process.

It seems to be clear that one of the most important motivating factors behind a reformist program in land tenure in Central America has been peasant mobilizations. The nature of the ideological conditions that contributed to the empowerment of the people, and of peasants in particular, now deserves some attention. Although the study and definition of such ideology would mean a full research project in itself, it can initially be argued that a certain amount of consensus must be present among all actors. The role of the non-hierarchical church may have played an important function in these circumstances. Central American people are predominantly Catholic, and the increasing popularity of the *Theology of Liberation* in the region at that time, particularly among the working classes, may have played a vital role in the development of an ideology of resistance, and in the unification of the peoples' objectives in their struggle. To comprehend the underdevelopment, mass poverty, and political oppression that Central American theologians found in the reality of the region, they drew on the Marxist-inspired class analysis and Dependency theory, and reexamined the scriptures from the bottom up (Gilbert,1988:132).

The conditions of oppression and injustice in which all poor sectors of Central American societies are immersed, can also be considered an important factor in determining the political nature of the peoples' struggle and their level of *conscientization*. The actual result of this struggle, however, is heavily dependent on the nature of each government's response to the popular threat to the status quo.

There are important differences in the political response of the three major land tenure reforms in Central America: Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. The Arbenz reform in Guatemala was perhaps

facilitated to a large extent by the availability of extensive unused lands. As a result, it could be implemented without affecting the important commercial farms. However, resistance from the United Fruit Company was a critical factor that may have contributed to the overthrow of the Arbenz government and the reversal of the reform.

In the case of El Salvador and Nicaragua, commercial lands were affected by the land tenure reform, but under very different circumstances in each case. The pre-conditions existing in Nicaragua previous to the revolution, and the 1979 revolutionary triumph itself make the Sandinista reform a radical process. In El Salvador, by contrast, a radical reform would not be possible without directly confronting the agrarian elites. Nevertheless, it can be argued that a substantial proportion of the commercial farms were expropriated in El Salvador, cotton and sugar cane in particular. But coffee, the central crop in the export economy of the country, was obviously excluded from any major expropriations, as the large majority of coffee plantations were contained within the Second Phase that was never implemented.

Finally, it is necessary to consider the role of the U.S. in the direction that Central American land tenure reforms have taken, as this world power has always exercised strong influence in the political outcome of the region. A determining factor in defining the type and objectives of the U.S. sponsored land tenure reforms in Central America was the Cuban revolution in 1959. The objectives of the *Alliance for Progress* program clearly indicate that U.S. policies of development towards Central and Latin America aimed at the reduction of a possible 'communist upheaval' in the region. Such a condition, according to U.S. policy-makers, would be a threat to the security of their country. The

Arbenz government in Guatemala was attacked because the nature of its reform reinforced the perception of U.S. politicians that Guatemala was falling to the communists.

To the Reagan administration, the situation in Nicaragua was similarly clear: the Sandinistas are communists and therefore a threat to the U.S. and Central America. More recently, U.S. policies towards Central America were superficially modified, and some contradictions arose. As pointed out by Rowles (1985:xii,xiii), a 1981 Congress amendment prohibited the use of any U.S. assistance to El Salvador for the purpose of carrying out a land tenure reform. At the same time, the law affirmed that U.S. assistance should be used to encourage the implementation of essential economic and political reforms, including land reform[6]. In the face of such contradictions from the U.S., land tenure reform attempts in Central America will lack the political support so much required for their successful implementation.

The other U.S. interests that have influenced the nature of land tenure reform in Central America are represented by the fruit crop Corporations. Particularly in Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica, these corporations have significant economic interests that have been traditionally protected by their base country.

The possibilities for major land redistributions in Central America continue to be constrained by the elites' desire to maintain their dominant position, and by the influence of anti-communism on U.S. policies towards the region. These social and economic conditions have

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[6] U.S. International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1981; quoted by Rowles: 1985, pp. xiii.

resulted in popular unrest and in the mobilization of people for resistance.

The development of significant armed and political forces in opposition to the official governments is perhaps the most immediate obstacle for the implementation of any kind of land tenure reform in rural Central America. Realistic alternatives for pacification connote a sharing of the political and economic power structures in these countries. Power holders do not appear to recognize this alternative.

CHAPTER FOUR

PARTICIPATION: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

Most theories and policies dealing with economic development have traditionally concentrated on natural resources and capital resources as two of the essential elements for development. Human resources, as part of this developmentalist model of growth towards capitalism, are viewed as the third essential component to attain economic progress, and have gained some popularity in recent years. Increased attention is now being given to the participatory potential of people in the implementation of development programmes, with the rationale that people are the base of any development plan.

As early as the beginning of the 1800's, Adam Smith, reputed to be the founder of economic science, acknowledged the economic importance of people, arguing that the quality and quantity of human resources constitute the wealth of nations (Ginzberg,1911:24). More recently, writers such as T.W. Schultz have characterized human resources as a form of capital -a produced means of production and the product of investment (Hayami & Ruttan,1985:123). This view of the role of human resources in development dominated the academic circles since the early 1900's. Therefore, theories for the development of human resources were strongly influenced by this approach, which focused on the expansion of infrastructure and capital resources, viewing people as another mean to reach such expansion.

The inaccuracy of this approach to development was later recognized, and new crucial approaches considering the human dimension of development started to emerge. This chapter reviews the concept of participation and its application for the integration of the human factor in economic and social development policies.

Participation in Historical Perspective

The initial development of participatory theories is found in what is called "People-centered development". Proponents of this approach have emphasized human development, equitable distribution of resources, and long term ecological sustainability as central concerns of development strategies (Brown,1985:69). Under the rubric of this type of development are found all strategies designed to enhance the effectiveness of human beings in their productive activities. These strategies contrast sharply with those of production-centered development, as they place a high premium on the development of human resources and social systems. The most important and perhaps the most obvious programs in this category are educational activities that create knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities related to the performance of occupational roles. In this context, literacy and arithmetics are as vocational as carpentry or weaving, and so are the other skills that enable an individual to function effectively and intelligently in the labour market.

Also included under the heading of human resource development in more recent theories of development are programs designed to create organizations, associations, and co-operatives. From an economic standpoint, development occurs as people establish social and cultural

institutions and organizations to plan and regulate their learning to the greater good (Apedaile, Desmarais, & Peterson,1989:51). The purpose of these organizations is therefore to facilitate the allocation of services and knowledge to a community, as well as to serve as channels to promote the effective participation of people in the desired economic and social development process.

This perspective becomes apparent in some land tenure reform programs, where a common philosophy is to promote the active participation of the peasantry in the development of the reform process. To achieve this goal, policies and strategies are applied to favor the participation of peasants, and this is often well institutionalized. In Mexico, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Guatemala for example, legal provisions existed linking land tenure reform to the formation of peasants' organizations (Huizer,1979:488). Similarly, the governments of Nicaragua and El Salvador have attempted to encourage the formation of peasants' organizations and co-operatives concurrent to their land tenure reforms. Depending on the final objectives of the reform, this institutionalization of participation can have different effects in the social relations developing in the community. In other words, being a member of a land tenure reform cooperative may or may not improve the status and living conditions of a person. In accordance with the hypotheses of this study, if a land tenure reform effort has been designed more into the reformist lines, peasants participating in it may find their role as participants circumscribed by the official channels. Moreover, there is always the danger that participation imposed in this way from the outside or from the top down, will only lead to other forms

of dependency (Jazairi,1988:58), and to the maintenance of the marginal role of peasants in society.

The Concept of Participation

Participation needs to be understood as a theoretical concept. Its practical application is often the source simultaneously of satisfaction and frustration, and of ambiguous interpretations (De Bal,1989:11).

The concept of power sharing and participation began to gain attention in the academic circles of the Western nations in 1930. Previously, the application of "Scientific Management" (control of management activities by a specialized group of individuals) dominated the emerging industrial societies of the early 1900's, and was finally questioned by Elton Mayo. He conducted some experiments in an American industrial company from 1929 to 1945, and in his publications pointed out some of the societal and corporate costs of the scientific management movement (Vroom & Jago,1988:12). Following the work of Mayo, Kurt Lewin conducted a set of experiments before World War II, which intended to demonstrate the efficacy of workers' participation in decision making (Vroom & Jago,1988:12). Based on the ideas of Mayo and Lewin, the concept of *Participative Management* (PM) or *Participative Decision Making* (PDM) was developed by a group of behavioral scientists in the 1950's and 1960's. Participation was then acknowledged as playing an important role in overcoming resistance to change, in motivating workers, and in introducing a sense of community throughout an organization (Vroom & Jago,1988:12).

Participative Management

When the concept of Participation is applied to any form of production involving people in a given structure, it comes to be essentially included in the notion that all workers should participate in making decisions related to the various aspects of their jobs. This would imply that such workers would be more satisfied with their jobs, and therefore, more productive (Massarik,1983:1). More recently, the theoretical base for this perspective of Participation is found not only centered in the general idea that democratic decision-making would increase productivity, but rather on the belief that it would be morally right (Vroom & Jago,1988:2).

Even though the concept of participation in decision making is used by many writers on economic management, they fail to provide an accurate definition of the term. For some, participation is viewed as a special case of delegation in which the subordinate gains greater control, and freedom of choice with respect to his own responsibilities, and has influence over matters within the superior's responsibilities (McGregor, quoted by Pateman,1970:67). Another interpretation views participation as any or all of the processes by which employees other than managers contribute positively in reaching decisions which affect their work (Sawtell, quoted by Pateman,1970:67). Therefore, participation was considered by these theorists as part of a more democratic decision-making structure. This concept was also limited to the economic-management aspects of a given production system. The final objectives of this type of participation was to achieve workers' satisfaction and increase productivity.

Theoretical Orientations on Participation

From a Functionalist perspective, which appears to be the ideological base in the original concept of Participation, the diversity of definitions focuses on the role of people in their work-place, with the final objective of increasing their productivity.

Two major interpretations of the theories of participation can be found in this literature. As representatives of these two interpretations, two authors can be mentioned: 1) Massarik (1983), who uses the term *Participatory Management*, and concentrates his analysis on the decision-making process and power structures of the industrial sector of North America; and 2) Moser (1989), who employs the term *Community Participation*, and essentially, applies these same concepts related to an industrial setting, to development projects in a Third World community.

The restrictive nature of this model of participation soon became apparent, and many authors pointed out the limitations in promoting complete and direct participation of people. Development projects were imposed from above and peoples' participation in decision-making was limited to aspects related to the physical execution of the projects.

Genuine participation in management should involve participation in all levels of decision making itself. For Ruchwarger, there are two levels of participation: *Partial Participation* and *Full Participation* (Ruchwarger,1987:260). Partial participation takes place when workers influence the decisions of management, but managers maintain the authority to make the final decision. Full participation occurs when all members of a production unit have equal power to determine the outcome of decisions.

From a Marxist perspective, private ownership of the means of production and the superior power of capital in the labour market are viewed as important preconditions in defining the nature of Participation (Schienstock,1989:146). For Marxists, the application of Scientific Management principles represents the conventional capitalist control over the labour process and industrial operation. This can be supported by looking at the most significant features of the model of Scientific Management. Here, planning and implementation are separate activities carried out by different people. Tasks are fragmented and differentiated to the maximum and qualification requirements for the workers are minimized. For Marxists like Braverman (1974:39), the adoption of such management and decision making structures represents a decisive step towards the elimination of behavioral identity as a possible disruptive factor.

From this perspective, the introduction of a certain amount of participatory techniques such as Participatory Management, would be viewed as a management style that maintains a restriction on the role of workers and increases managers' control over work behavior. These types of participatory structures are viewed by some authors as mere techniques used to persuade employees to accept decisions that have already been made by management (Ruchwarger,1987:260). At the same time, Marxists would also view participatory structures as practices introducing fixed regulations that create the illusion of a more free and democratic environment, in order to increase the productivity of the workers.

For Marxists, real participation would mean changing the structures of economic and political power. People could openly have a

share of that power, and influence directly the nature of decisions and changes to take place in the structure of society.

Community Participation

Some academics have more recently attempted to study forms of participation that would take into consideration the limitations pointed out by Marxists in the conventional operationalization of participation.

The concepts of *Community Participation* and *Participatory Research* would probably represent an effort to reconcile Marxist and non-Marxist views of participation. In this sense, an early definition of Community Participation provided by UNICEF may be depicted as part of such attempts:

> We take community participation to be defined as the involvement of the local population actively in decision-making concerning development projects or in their implementation. Finally, the involvement of the population in the physical work of implementing a project can hardly be considered as community participation unless there is at least some degree of sharing of decision with the community (UNICEF,1982:9).

Such a definition can be interpreted as enabling people to participate in social change and growth, through their participation in planning and decision-making, and therefore in development. This definition, without being specific enough, implies that participation should take place at all levels of the implementation of development projects, including decision-making in regards to the nature of the projects needed in their community. Therefore, the need for peoples' participation in evaluating the needs of their community, and in selecting the adequate development projects is acknowledged.

Participatory Research

A more recent trend frequently found in the literature concerning participation is defined as *Participatory Research.* The proponents of this school see research as a means of activating people for their own development, and not only as a scientific practice. This implies that the research activity itself is transformed into a socially viable methodology for bringing about peoples' development (Kiyenze,1983:6).

Participatory Research (PR) can be defined as a combination of community participation in decision-making with methods of social participation (Hall,1975:10). The method differs from the more conventional *Action Research* because the activity is directed by the participants, and the goals behind the activity are seen to be the development of the researched participants themselves (Kiyenze,1983:7). Some of the advantages of this method as a tool for promoting peoples' participation in development, as presented by UNICEF, are summarized as follows:

a) Participatory research can enable more positive results to be accomplished as a result of mass participation in project planning, management and administration. Reliance on the peoples' energies as the primary source of development has been applied consistently in countries with socialist economies.

b) The application of participatory research can be a catalyst for further development efforts. It is claimed that the organizational framework created for one project can provide both the means and stimulus for further efforts to implement other development projects.

c) When people take an active part in all aspects of a development project, they will collectively consider the project as truly their own. Therefore, participation creates a sense of responsibility and communitarian action among the people involved in a project.

d) Participation enables the various projects in a region to utilize indigenous knowledge and expertise to the maximum extent. In this sense, participatory research views indigenous knowledge as an important cultural heritage to be improved upon by adding into it some elements of modern technology. Indigenous knowledge is important because it is based on locally available resources rather than on imported inputs and skills.

e) Participatory research creates conscientization among the members of the community concerned. Participation can help people to better understand the conditions and nature of the constraints which militate against their development and to seek appropriate solutions (Kiyenze,1983:18-30).

The viability of PR as a participatory strategy could be limited to the socio-political context of the society in which peoples' participation is being pursued. For Vío Grossi (1981:48), the hegemonic sectors of society will not necessarily offer resistance to a type of action like PR. Practice of this participatory strategy may then be framed within the limits imposed by the existing social structure. This, however, could allow the introduction of partial transformations towards global change in the political structure of a country.

Political Participation

Some of the participatory elements described above have also been applied in attempts to define the concept of political participation. According to Conge (1988:241), arguments over the meaning of the term *Political Participation* center upon six major issues:

a) Passive forms of participation (a feeling of patriotism, an awareness of political issues), and active forms of participation (voting, campaigning for a party, etc.) should both be included in a definition of political participation.

b) Aggressive behavior, such as civil disobedience and political violence, are forms of political participation as important as more conventional activities.

c) Political participation should not be limited to efforts to maintain or change governmental authorities and decision-making processes. Efforts to introduce structural changes in the form of government are also forms of political participation.

d) Political participation is oriented towards the institutions in charge of policy-making. However, activities outside the realm of governments are also important.

e) Behavior guided and sponsored by governments to promote its interests can be called political participation. The term, however, could be confined to behavior initiated by citizens in pursuit of their interests.

f) Behavior that has an unintended consequence for a government should also be defined as political participation.

As argued by Conge (1988:247), some of the components described above cannot be considered as political participation, especially if

they are not developing within the government structures and institutions designed for that purpose. This consideration would exclude neighborhood and community actions from the political context. However, it is important to point out that in countries such as El Salvador and Nicaragua some community activities and projects are viewed as a threat to the government. Community actions may result in the development of some kind of resistance towards political structures. Such actions have the potential to eventually lead to the introduction of change in the political framework, be it a set of economic and political reforms, or a revolution and civil war.

For policy-makers, the outcomes of social change should provide the necessary empirical base for the future design of policies and decisions affecting the population. The concept of political participation is usually restricted to activities that support or oppose state structures, authorities, and decisions regarding the allocation of public goods, within the means established by governments. Policy-makers must be aware of the impact that other activities, or lack of activities, occurring in a given community or region could have in policy-making.

Peoples' participation in projects containing some aspects of social awareness will eventually result in their participation in issues affecting policy-making and structural changes. Some agencies and policy-makers acknowledge this potential, and in their development programmes, they include some degree of participation in decision-making, and other activities traditionally restricted to the institutional levels of development programmes.

Participation: An International Development View

The following section will summarize the most important policies and strategies for peoples' participation, as endorsed by two international agencies for Third World development: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The role of international agencies in promoting Third World development is often crucial in determining the direction of these countries' participatory programs.

FAO's View of Peoples' Participation

The 1979 World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) sponsored by FAO, carried out a seminar on the participatory approach to rural development. In this sense, WCARRD concluded that "very little else causes as much of an outburst in rural development participation as access to land on a just and equitable basis" (FAO,1979:193). Taking into account this basic assumption, four approaches were presented by WCARRD in order to stimulate participation in rural development. They can be summarized as follows:

a) *The promotion of appropriate organizations among the rural poor*. This approach has the objective of facilitating the provision of public services. This would require full governmental support in establishing some form of multi-functional and decentralized organization.

b) *The reorientation of bureaucratic approaches to the poor.* According to FAO, the poor cannot be expected to change their behavior and attitudes towards government programs until government

staff change their attitudes and activities towards the poor. Several strategies are proposed by FAO in order to attain this change. Among them, changes in the reward structure, appropriate training for staff, and periodic evaluations are considered the most important measures.

c) *The use of paraprofessional personnel.* Local people, with modest formal education and limited technical training, can often promote development in a better way. Local organizational support greatly enhances the potential for success, because paraprofessional programmes tend to work better with community supervision, management and evaluation.

d) *The promotion of the farming system approach.* Traditional strategies for agricultural development have been based on a monocultural approach, reflecting the agricultural system of the developed countries. This concept must be modified to reconsider the activities of small farmers' production systems in order to help them better accumulate capital and enter the market economy. Emphasis must be put on farm families and on farming communities as the basic units of organization.

Finally, the WCARRD suggested that the basic cause of the deterioration of natural resources in the Third World is the lack of direct involvement of the people in the projects for the conservation and development of these resources.

In summary, the FAO approach for participation appears to be based on a general reversal of the traditional system of decision-making (Scientific Management) in rural development programs, adopting the framework of Community Participation theories. The recognition of the

failure of traditional economic strategies for development seems to prevail in these policies. The promotion of the farming system approach described above, strongly suggests the adoption of land tenure and management practices other than the large, highly mechanized farm, or in the case of Latin America, other than the *latifundio*. The equitable distribution of resources, including land, is initially stressed by FAO as a precondition for the adequate implementation of participatory strategies.

Assessment of Participation Success

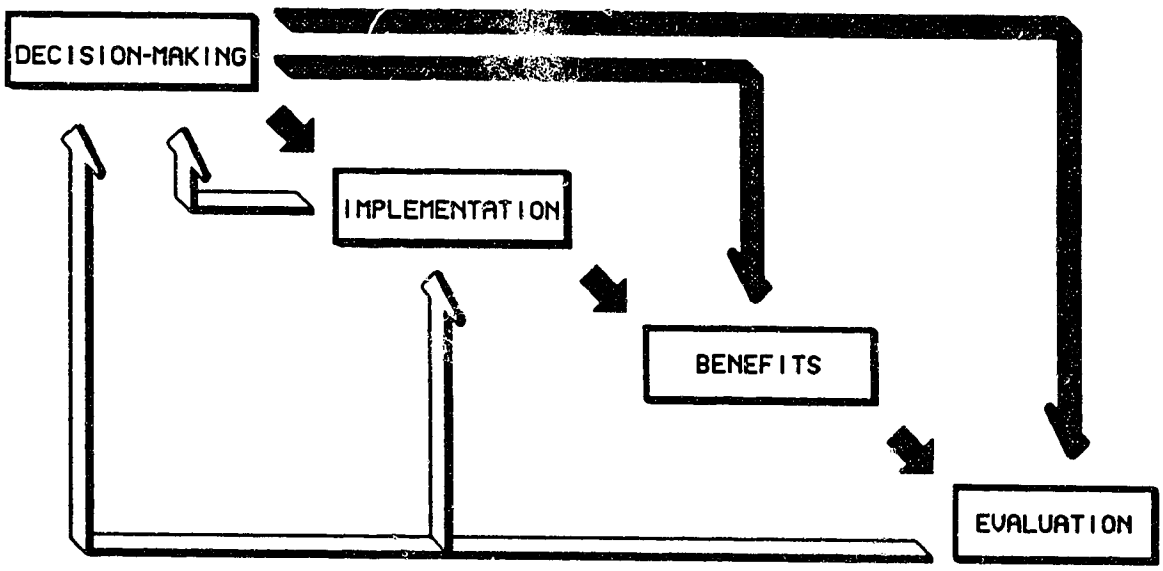
For the U.N. World Conference in Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD), the term *Participation* must be broken down into specific and concrete components along three dimensions: *what* kinds of participation are occurring; *who* is participating, and *how* are people participating. The first two dimensions can be studied along quantitative lines. Much of the information required to evaluate these two dimensions can be obtained by looking at the number of participants in development projects and their demographic characteristics, and by noting the type of activity they perform within the projects. The third dimension -*how* are people participating, is a more qualitative dimension and requires a more detailed definition.

According to FAO (1979:154), people must participate in four different kinds of activities in a project: Decision-making, Implementation, Benefits, and Evaluation. Evaluation is considered as valid and often as crucial a form of participation as the other activities. Such considerations suggest that institutions like FAO admit

the need for participation not only in the implementation of the development projects, but in their conception and planning.

FIGURE 2

THE FOUR MAJOR KINDS OF PARTICIPATION



Source: FAO. "The Participatory Approach to Rural Development." *WCARRD Follow-up Staff Seminar on Rural Development*, Rome: FAO, 1979: 155.

Figure 2 represents these four activities, which can be seen as an open cycle that allows participants to give feedback, represented in the figure by the white arrows. Each activity is composed of many different kinds of participation. There can be participation in initial decisions as to what is to be undertaken, who will participate in the different activities of the project, and so on (black arrows). Participation can

also occur in on-going decisions regarding modifications of the initial plan, represented in *Figure 2* by the gray arrows, and in operational decisions concerning budget, materials, schedules, etc.

According to the WCARRD analysis of participation, not all decisions may be practical for broad participation. The point is, continues the WCARRD document, not to lay down norms or formulas, "but to identify the scope for greater participation which government planners and administrators should at least consider". Since not everyone can participate in all aspects of a project, and since projects usually aim at involving and benefiting some groups more than others, it is essential to link any analysis and planning of *kinds* of participation with *who* specifically participates in them. Analysis of the *who* dimension is intended to sensitize government planners and administrators because this dimension is too often glossed over as "peoples' participation", even when the specific kind of participation is indicated. FAO suggests the elaboration of plans and assessments of participation according to who should and actually does participate, since there are almost always wide divergences in the rates of participation by persons with different roles, interests and endowments.

CIDA's Concept of Participation

The Federal Government of Canada pursues three major goals in its official assistance to agricultural development in the Third World: 1) Self-reliance in food -to secure food production for the local consumption and protect the environment; 2) Mutually beneficial economic relations -centered on international trade and competitiveness of

Canadian goods and services; and 3) Dynamic local participation (CIDA,1988:5).

In 1988, CIDA released a document outlining its major strategies in pursuing the three objectives mentioned above (CIDA, 1988). That document embodies CIDA's philosophy on Participation and Human Resources Development. This section will summarize the strategies and policies designed by CIDA to promote peoples' participation in Third World agricultural development, and the rationale behind each strategy.

Strategy 1: *Identify Target Groups as Participants*

The target group concept has its origins in the perceived need by developing-country authorities and donors alike to specifically identify the beneficiaries of development assistance, to help raise their consciousness level concerning their opportunities and to involve them in all stages of the project cycle. From the CIDA perspective, the concept applies particularly to bilateral programs and projects often elaborated at the central government level and delivered to a specific region of a developing country by government institutions.

The concept of "targetability" aims at defining a collective group of individual farmers, which the government agrees to support, with measures adjusted to respond to the needs they have identified. It is used not only to define the extent of government intervention but also to direct inputs and human and financial resources towards people who are really in need and who wish to participate in their use. According to CIDA, past development efforts pursued without the identification of target groups have often benefited pressure groups which were already in a privileged economic, and often political position. Regardless of the

aid channel used, the approach that generally seems to work best is building upon the expressed needs of the local population.

Farmers and farmer groups are considered by CIDA as "the ultimate agents of economic progress", and projects must be aimed at reaching them individually and collectively. The savings generated by their development is expected to remain in the rural milieu to allow credit systems to develop. That would reinforce local economies rather than support the expansion of cities.

Some of the relevant strategies designed by CIDA for this policy are:

> a) Emphasize bilateral projects that are target-group oriented, giving special attention to retaining savings in the rural regions where they are generated and creating rural-farmer credit schemes.
> b) Support agricultural credit schemes that protect farmers and cooperatives from disastrous harvest situations that do not allow farmers to repay their loans; develop credit insurance schemes for this purpose.
> c) Emphasize Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and small and medium-sized enterprise support projects using the support-to-local-initiatives approach.

Strategy 2: *Encourage Decentralized Local Initiatives*

The theoretical framework supporting this strategy is the consideration that local communities are often the best judges of what development activities are best suited to their needs. Local participation should be encouraged to identify in detail their potential, to decide on the approach to be used in developing that potential, and to plan and control their own development process. In this context, governments would play the role for which they are best suited, that is, according to CIDA, the role of catalyst and facilitator in promoting development activities. Once local farming communities have

organized themselves sufficiently to determine their needs, governments should be able to provide appropriate services in defining a strategy, supplying instruments and assisting in the establishment of mechanisms to ensure program and/or project success with full local participation.

One new initiative sponsored by CIDA's bilateral branch towards stronger local participation is the introduction of development assistance support to micro-project realizations in rural areas; another is providing financial support to local cooperatives. These two strategies are to take place mainly through NGOs. Such initiatives are considered to help improve opportunities not only for rural farm employment and income generation, but also for the non-farm micro and small-business sector. Another new initiative promoted by CIDA is known as "Country Focus" programs and projects. This strategy has combined bilateral projects (government-to-government) of a national or regional nature with NGO involvement at the local level. These types of ventures, according to the CIDA document, hold much promise for community development success, as they aim at the basic implementation level where all development must take root.

This policy is supported by several strategies, the following being the most relevant considerations:

a) Identify and define an appropriate mix of bilateral and NGO programs and projects as a coherent package.
b) Support the development of farmers and community groups and cooperatives through bilateral micro-realizations and NGO support activities, ensuring that sufficient funds are available for professional and technical assistants.
c) Promote a comprehensive regional development approach to agriculture development which responds to the needs of rural communities using an integrated multi-sectoral approach in preference to a disjointed sectoral approach.

Strategy 3: *Support the Role of Women in Development*

In order to ensure the complete integration of women as agents and beneficiaries of agricultural development, CIDA acknowledges that planners and policy-makers must recognize and support the contributions and responsibilities of women in production activities. This principle indicates that serious efforts must be made so that women are given as much consideration as men in the formulation and establishment of agricultural policies, in the strengthening of institutions, in agricultural research, and in extension.

Two basic issues have been identified by CIDA as fundamental to women playing a positive role in the development process of Third World countries. The first is the question of access and control over the use of resources by women.

The second issue supporting this CIDA strategy is the question of control over the benefits derived from the use of resources. Developing-country societies put the welfare of the community and the family above the welfare of the male in relation to the female. According to CIDA, studies have shown that women spend a higher proportion of their incomes on family welfare, providing supplementary food, medicines, schooling materials and clothes. By supporting women in the development of productive agricultural activities, planners would contribute directly to improving general family welfare.

Some of the most important strategies designed by CIDA for this policy are:

> a) Promote the consideration and integration of women in all agricultural programs and projects, specifically directing measures towards supporting the role of women in agricultural production, processing and marketing activities.

b) Promote policy dialogue on women in agriculture as part of the annual consultation with central planning and line ministries of countries where CIDA concentrates its programming.
c) Consult women and promote their involvement in decision-making, planning, implementation, monitoring, control and evaluation of agricultural programs and projects that generally require their participation, supporting the role they inevitably must play in the development process.
d) Promote the utilization of women as agricultural development agents in agricultural programs and projects.
e) Plan and implement programs and projects that take into account their impact on women and other members of the extended family in terms of access to resources and benefits from their use. Ensure that new programs and projects do not intensify the burden on women in relation to men.

Strategy 4: *Encourage Local Enterprise Initiatives*

The principles drawn to support this set of strategies are mostly based on development experiences in Canada. In Western societies, private enterprise plays a dominant role in the economy generally, though in the agriculture sector, governments are substantially involved. Such is the case in Canada: governments provide subsidies for products; they also provide training, extension, research, and farm credit in support of farmers; parastatal organizations control prices and deliveries of agricultural products. The most important role governments can play in developing countries, as they do in industrial countries, remains a role of "catalyst and facilitator" in the agricultural development process. However, CIDA argues that government and development aid can also support enterprises and increase competition by assisting in the establishment of infrastructure such as marketing and market information facilities, small enterprise extension services and credit.

For CIDA, agricultural cooperative organization in its most effective form is created from the identification of a problem by a collective group of farmers or rural people whose own interests are at

stake and who decide to support each other in seeking to solve the problem. The people involved must themselves identify a need and seek support to answer that need. The social aspect of cooperative organization is what makes assistance to cooperative development so difficult in developing countries; social aspects being so different from one area to another, cooperative organizations can rarely be replicated.

To implement this policy, CIDA elaborated the following strategies:

> a) Support rural farm cooperatives and private small enterprise in preference to government-supported projects, particularly for basic food crops.
> b) Encourage and support small joint ventures between Canadian enterprises and local artisans that will assist in processing of finished and semi-finished products, in preference to large joint ventures equipped to promote international trade, particularly in least-developed countries.
> d) Promote the use of networks among NGOs and small private entrepreneurs linked to government market-information centers.

Summary

In summary, the principles proposed by the international institutions to promote peoples' participation in development underscore the importance of organizations in order to facilitate participation. The role of governments is considered crucial for the positive development of these organizations, as they would require a reorientation of their bureaucratic structure, and a strong commitment from the governing elites to be prepared to deal with a mobilized peasantry. It is important to point out that these proposals work under the initial assumption that open access to land and other resources is a necessary pre-condition for participation.

Canadian strategies for peoples' participation in developing countries follow the principles proposed by the WCARRD in its 1979 follow-up staff seminar, mainly the promotion of organizations among the rural poor, and the reorientation of government services for the rural poor. CIDA stresses particularly the importance of including women as active participants of the process of development, and in the importance of NGOs as mediators between governments and people.

Similar to WCARRD's rationale, CIDA's policies may be considered to fit into the school of Developmentalism, which views the world as progressing from an 'undeveloped' state to a 'developed' one (Laite,1984:190). This development is expected to take place mainly through the introduction of modern technology and capital. Capitalist economy of the industrialized nations is regarded by Developmentalists as the final stage of development (Brewer,1987:141), and the policies and strategies described in this section appear to be aimed in that direction. In addition, it is assumed by these agencies that local governments will not have any objections to an increased participation by the rural population in the decision-making process concerning their expected development. Therefore, some strategies aim directly at improving the government structures in order to fit participatory needs.

An important difference between the WCARRD and CIDA principles is that the Canadian policies fail to mention any strategies or policies where changes in the land tenure systems are involved. It is therefore safe to assume that for CIDA, access to land and other resources is not a limitation for the promotion of peoples' participation in Third World development.

In general terms, both international sets of policies studied in this chapter appear to consider the participation of peasants in development from a top-down perspective. That is, by establishing legislative regulations concerning the formation and legitimation of rural organizations. This approach may be setting some limitations for the effective participation of peasants in their own development process. Such a view of Participation is limited to the concepts of Community Participation and Participatory Management described in this chapter. Participation is allowed by policy-makers and planners to the development activities designed a priori. A more radical approach, in the line with a Freirean philosophy, where all social action is expected to arise from the powerless in a dialogic process of liberation and humanization of both the oppressed and the oppressor (Freire,1981:5), may produce some more effective participatory action for social change. Such an approach may not be in accordance with more conservative views of development, given the fact that they concentrate on producing radical changes in the social structure dominating Third World societies.

The models of Participatory Research briefly described in the second section of this chapter, could also provide some viable alternatives for the promotion of peoples' full participation in development. By attempting to link popular participation and action with the intellectual circles of society, Participatory Research may provide some degree of legitimation to such social action. This legitimation may result in the gradual introduction of some changes in the prevailing structures of society, without representing an immediate threat to the dominating social groups.

Nevertheless, policies oriented to promote the participation of people in their own development are currently found dominating most development policies in the Third World. This situation certainly represents a positive movement towards a model of full participation of peasants in development activities, a condition that has been ignored in previous models for rural development.

Participation in Land Tenure Reform: A Conceptual Framework for Analysis

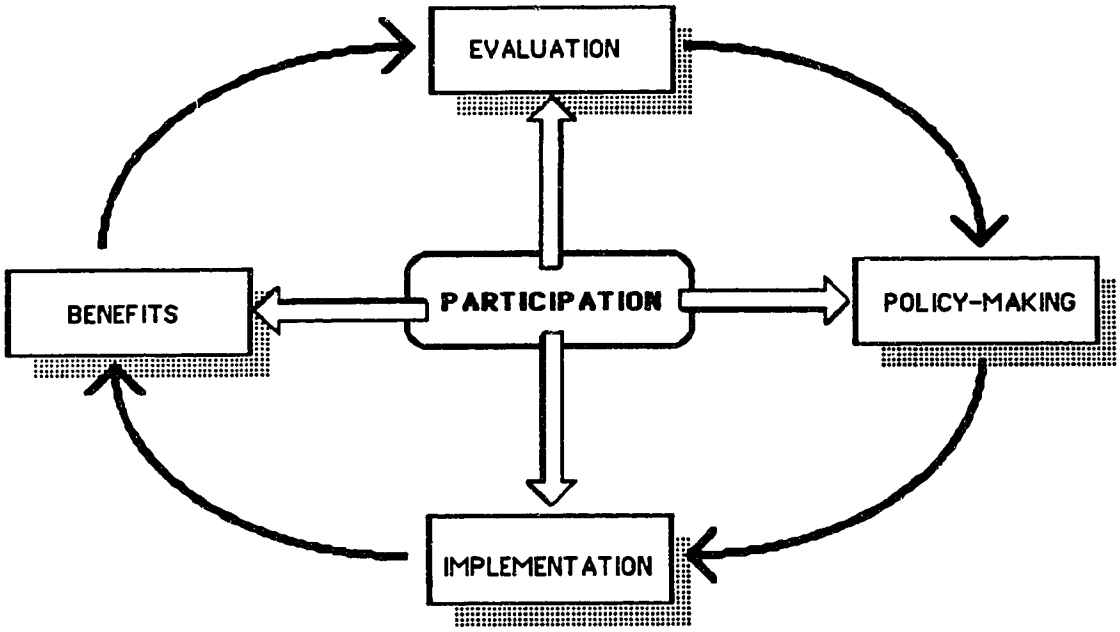
The model of participation provided by WCARRD, represented in Figure 2 in the second section of this chapter, contains important elements of participation. These elements are not often found when a participatory policy is implemented. These are: participation in decision-making and participation in evaluation at all levels of the projects. The WCARRD model implies decision-making in evaluating the needs of the community, prior to the adoption of any development project. Therefore, Participation in decision-making should not be considered to be limited to management and implementation decisions only.

In a land tenure reform program, the application of this model of participation would necessarily mean that peasants must participate in the design of the basic policies of the reform, such as land allocations and expropriations.

Based on the WCARRD model, Figure 3 represents the different participatory aspects to be found in a land tenure reform program.

FIGURE 3

PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION IN A LAND TENURE REFORM PROGRAM



Peoples' participation in land tenure reform would be encouraged, first of all, in the evaluation of the needs and limitations of the community regarding land. The following participatory steps are in the design of policies for the reform, in the implementation of those policies, in the distribution of benefits from the reform, and finally, in the evaluation of the reform. After the implementation of the initial set of policies, the needs and limitations of the community would probably be different. Therefore, a new evaluation is required, and a new participation-execution cycle is initiated. The main feature of such a participatory model is that participation of peasants is at the center of any activity of the land tenure reform process. Unlike the WCARRD

model, where participatory channels are opened by the policy-making agencies, this ideal model of participation views peasants as the prime executors of the reform program.

The following chapters will look at the policies and strategies designed by El Salvador and Nicaragua, in order to facilitate peoples' participation in their recent land tenure reform programmes.

CHAPTER FIVE

PARTICIPATORY POLICIES FOR LAND TENURE REFORM: EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA

El Salvador

The political context dominating El Salvador during the implementation of the 1980s land tenure reform can be defined as transitory. A civilian-military government *junta* came to substitute the military president in 1979, who was driven out of power by a coup. This *junta* faced the task of re-establishing the social and political stability that the country had lacked during the previous regimes. A provisional civilian president was named by the junta, elections were announced, and several structural reforms were initiated during this period, the most important being a reform in the banking system, and the land tenure reform.

All these changes represent an attempt by the power groups to maintain and consolidate the model of liberal democracy prevailing in the region, and to avoid a major revolutionary movement similar to the one that brought the Sandinistas to power in Nicaragua a few months before.

Under this framework, land tenure reform came to represent an attempt to reduce social tensions dominating rural areas at that time. Several worker and peasant organizations emerging over the previous years, demanded revolutionary changes in the political and economic structure of the country. The *junta* established after the 1979 coup adopted the discourse of a revolutionary option. It was called *Junta*

Revolucionaria de Gobierno (Revolutionary Government Committee), and its proposed policies attempted to show a commitment to radical changes in the political structure of the country. The agrarian reforms forewarned by this *junta* had an immediate impact on the development of the subsequent political outcomes of the country. The policies designed by the Salvadoran government for the promotion of peasant participation in land tenure reform are summarized next.

Policies for Peasant Participation in Land tenure reform

Policies for the promotion of peasant participation in land reform in El Salvador for the period considered in this study (1979-1989), were initially addressed in the Political Constitution published in December of 1983. Article 114 points out that the State will protect and promote co-operative associations, facilitating their formation, expansion and providing financial aid (ECA,1984:90). Article 116 on the other hand, makes reference to the promotion of small private rural properties, "facilitating small producers with technical assistance, credits and other services oriented to the better usage of their land". These two articles of the Political Constitution are the only ones making reference to the use of land, both by cooperatives and by individual forms of production.

Specifically, policies for peasants' participation in land tenure reform were formulated by the Consultative Council for the Land Reform (*Consejo Asesor de la Reforma Agraria*: CARA). This council was created by the Basic Law of Land Reform of 1981, and initially operated until April of 1982. During the first four years of the land tenure reform, policies regulating its development were not clearly defined, and the

first cooperatives of phase I operated under the existing models implemented previously through the official peasant organizations.

CARA was re-established immediately after the government of Duarte took power in 1984, to serve as the main consulting organism for the development of policies of land tenure reform (*Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería*,1985:i). This Council was formed by representatives of the following institutions:

1. Minister and Vice-minister of Agriculture;
2. Minister of Planing and Development Coordination;
3. Minister of Work and Social Welfare;
4. Minister of Defense and Public Security;
5. Minister of the Treasury;
6. Minister of Economy;
7. President of the Central Bank;
8. President of the Bank of Agricultural Development;
9. President of ISTA;
10. Director of FINATA;
11. President of Institute for Basic Foods Regulation;
12. One representative of ACOPAI;
13. Representative of the Association of Aboriginals, ANIS;
14. One representative of CCS;
15. One representative of FESACORA;
16. Representative of Union of Salvadoran Peasants (UCS);
17. One representative of the private sector; and
18. Executive Secretary of CARA.

The objective of this eighteen-member organism, as published in a document issued by the National Seminar of Land Reform and Rural Development of 1985, was to consolidate the participation of peasant organizations in the different levels of decision-making, in coordination with the specific government institutions (*Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería*,1985:ii).

Three of the ten policies formulated by CARA for the development of the land tenure reform program are of interest for the present analysis. The language used by the policy-makers is of importance in defining the ideological orientation of these policies. Therefore, the

following section will summarize the most relevant aspects of the participatory policies designed by the CARA committee[7].

Policy I. *Peasant's Organization in Cooperatives. First Phase*

The philosophy of this policy, as described by the CARA document, is "to promote the conscientization of the rural people, regarded as the active subjects of the process of land reform," by strengthening and developing the cooperative associations of the reformed sector at the local, regional, and national levels.

The following objectives were outlined for this policy:

> a. To attain the true conscientization of the peasant so he can identify with the process of land reform, and acquire a sense of commitment with his cooperative, the community and the country. This would eventually convert him in the builder of his own development.
> b. To rapidly promote the de-marginalization of the peasant so he can have an active participation in all decision-making processes related to the process of land reform.
> c. To promote change in the traditional attitudes of the peasantry that may obstruct the development of the land reform.
> d. To strength the development of cooperative organizations so they can become true self-sustainable peasant cooperative enterprises.
> e. To promote the cooperation among the different peasant organizations so they can develop projects of industrialization, marketing, services, mechanization, and others.

The following specific policies were designed by CARA to implement these objectives:

> a. ISTA will assume the leading role in the first stage of the implementation of this policy by being always ready to serve the interest of the peasants, free from pressures that may jeopardize its function as executor of the government policies for land reform.
> b. ISTA will promote models of social organization in accordance with the national reality. Areas of responsibility for ISTA and the peasant organizations in social promotion are to be defined later in each specific case.

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[7] The source of this section is the official document: *Politicas de Reforma Agraria.* San Salvador: *Seminario Nacional Sobre reforma Agraria, MAG,* January 1985. All policies were translated by the researcher.

c. The social worker representing ISTA will work free of any external pressures, respecting and supporting the cooperative organizations, guiding them accordingly, and avoiding the introduction of matters not essential to their wishes and necessities.
d. The renovation of the peasant enterprises will be promoted by identifying and forming local leaders.

Policy II. *Training of peasants involved in the land reform*

This policy focused on training of the peasants participating in the land tenure reform, as part of the strategy to reach the social, economic, and political development of the country. Consequently, land tenure reform being an instrument for development, training within this sector was to be oriented towards the development of the adequate attitudes and knowledge in peasants and all people involved in the process. This should result in a more active participation and in an awareness of the role they will perform in the different institutions, organizations and productive units. Such a condition, continued the CARA document, will contribute to the self-determination of peasant enterprises.

Some of the objectives formulated for this policy are:

a. To develop elementary and cultural education programmes in order to attain the literacy and adequate educational level of the peasant population.
b. To provide training in the understanding, interpretation and application of the land reform process to all direct and indirect beneficiaries, and to officials and technicians, so they can develop positive attitudes toward the land reform process as a tool for social, economic, and political change.
c. To provide training in the development of attitudes and knowledge towards the development, improvement, and strengthening of social peasant organizations.
d. To provide training in the knowledge and skills required to the efficient administration and development of the productive enterprises.
e. To provide training in the technical production knowledge that would allow higher production levels and higher productivity.

The specific strategies proposed by CARA for the accomplishment of the objectives of this policy are:

> a. A massive literacy plan should be established in order to make peasants aware of their responsibilities with the land reform process. This literacy plan would be implemented in close coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, and all institution involved in the Salvadoran Literacy Plan.
> b. Literacy and training programmes will be planned to take place simultaneously.
> c. Emphasis should be given to the administrative and technical training of peasants in the land reform, in order to improve the levels of production and productivity of the reformed sector.

Policy VIII. *Social Development*.

This is one of the most important policies outlined by CARA in terms of the participation of peasants in the reform. The philosophy of this policy was based on the argument that land tenure reform is one of the mechanism helping to establish the basis for a democratic society in El Salvador. One of the essential foundations of land tenure reform, as stated by the CARA document, is "to allow for the participation [of peasants] in the production and distribution of social and economic resources."

In addition to the structural modification of the land tenure, production, and productivity for the benefit of the peasantry through their active participation, land tenure reform must improve and secure the quality of life of beneficiary families. The humanization of habitat, health care, nutrition, and clothing were viewed as factors contributing to the personal fulfillment, and incorporation of the peasants in the new social and economic model being established by the land tenure reform process.

Some of the most relevant objectives found in this policy are described as follows:

a. To promote the organization and integration of peasants and their communities, so they can actively participate in the solution of their problems and the satisfaction of their needs. Peasants' self-sustainability will be developed through cooperatives, solidarity groups, and local and community organizations.
b. To establish the base for a participatory mechanism, by improving the income, work opportunities, and cooperative production, in order to minimize the levels of social differentiation.
c. To increase the efficiency of the State in the allocation of the basic social services.
d. To improve the living conditions of the peasant families involved in the land reform process by providing housing facilities, health care, food, nutrition, elementary education, and recreation.

Several specific policies were outlined by CARA for the implementation of the social development of peasants participating in the land reform. Some of the most important are:

a. To protect the development of human rights as established by the Political Constitution. This will be a permanent and prerogative action of the current government.
b. To link the social development of the reformed sector with the government strategies for pacification, by supporting the dialogue initiated by the President of the Republic.
c. To strength the peasant movement and its representative organizations, based on mutual respect, organizational pluralism, and the unity to confront the basic obstacles of the reform process.
d. To develop cooperatives and associative forms of organization at the community, municipal and regional level, to function at the base of the development process.
e. To strength the role of the Municipality as the social center in the programs of regional and local development.
f. To conscientisize and train the peasant family for their complete incorporation to the land reform process, and their participation as agents for social change at the local, zonal, and regional levels.
g. To establish and expand the systems for peasant unions, and labour and social rights in the reformed sector in accordance with the constitutional mandates.
h. To acknowledge, respect, and maintain the cultural identity of the peasant and the rural family, specially those of aboriginal nature.

Strategies:

a. To allow the participation of peasant organizations in the process of planning and implementation of development programs at the local, zonal, and regional levels, through the regional and provincial agrarian committees.
b. The adequate ministries and governmental institutions must coordinate their participation in the planning and implementation of social development programs.
c. To develop and implement the Salvadoran Program of Literacy in Phases I and III of the land reform, in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and peasant organizations.
d. To prepare the necessary regulations and legal channels to promote the development of peasant unions, in accordance to the Political Constitution.
e. To recuperate, maintain and promote the peasant and indigenous culture, by supporting different artistic activities and traditional festivities.

The remaining seven policies elaborated by CARA in its 1985 seminar on Land Reform focused on issues such as credit systems, production and marketing strategies, and technical assistance. Credit plans were to be elaborated by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Executive Secretary of CARA, to be approved by the financial institutions. Similarly, policies for commercialization and technical assistance were to be developed by the Ministry of Agriculture. Another policy issued by CARA refered specifically to the agrarian debt of the cooperatives of the First Phase. This was estimated at 700 million *Colones* (*Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería*,1985b:2), about $140 million U.S. at that time. Some of the policies and strategies also included in the three policies summarized above make reference to the provision of facilities to allocate government social services such as health, housing and education into the communities of beneficiaries of the land tenure reform.

Review of Participation policies of CARA

The design of policies for the development of the land tenure reform were formulated by the Consultative Council for the Land Reform (CARA), which was formed by representatives of eighteen organisms, of which twelve were governmental institutions. The official peasant organizations directly included in this council were: the National Association of Indigenous People of El Salvador (ANIS), the Salvadoran Communal Union (UCS), and the Federation of Cooperatives of the Land Reform (FESACORA). It is worth mentioning that the president of ISTA, the governmental institution in charge of implementing phase I of the land tenure reform, was at the same time the president of FESACORA; and the president of FINATA, the government institution implementing phase III, was the president of UCS.

A positive aspect of CARA was that for the first time in the political history of the country, it allowed for some kind of participation of peasant organizations in policy-making, although other large popular organizations which did not enjoy the support of the government were excluded from this process.

Also participating in the land tenure reform policy-making organism were the Ministry of Defense and the private agricultural and industrial sectors.

In general terms, the policies designed by CARA for the participation of peasants in land tenure reform acknowledge the importance of *campesinos* in society. Although the political connections behind this approach seem to be clear, given that organizations

representing the rural social base of the Christian Democratic party were given top government positions in the land tenure reform programme.

The role of the State in the coordination of any participatory structure appears to be emphasized in these policies. Many of them attempt to redefine the functions of government institutions to favor the interest of the peasant, and to modify the attitudes of government employees towards the peasantry. Nevertheless, government institutions continued to play a leading role in the definition, formulation, and possible application of policies towards the rural sector of Salvadoran society. The formation of cooperatives and other forms of community organizations seems to be stressed in the government policies, as the more feasible channel for the allocation of services and credit facilities by the government. Also, it is important to point out that the strategies outlined in *Policy I* were limited to those peasants participating in the First Phase of the reform. Similarly, the other two policies outlined in this summary apply only to peasants who benefited by the two implemented phases of the land tenure reform, that is, Phases I and III.

Government Organizations

As early as the 1960's, the Salvadoran government started to create its own peasants' organizations, the *Salvadoran Communal Union* (UCS), and the *Christian Federation of Salvadoran Peasants* (FECCAS) being the most important. The American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD, an affiliate of the AFL-CIO) initiated training of peasant leaders in 1962 (Brockett,1988:149), through an Alliance for Progress program. Both peasant organizations mentioned above were

created in the 1960's. By the late 1970's, FECCAS was joined by the *Union of Rural Workers* (UTC) (Brockett,1988:151) to form the Rural Worker's Federation (FTC), progressing to a more radical and autonomous group (Pearce,1986:159), while UCS continued to be the government-sponsored peasants' organization. Some authors view the transformation of FECCAS-UTC as a response to the government repression against the church people identified with the Theology of Liberation (Berryman,1984:108).

A third rural organization was created by the government parallel to UCS and FECCAS: ORDEN (*Organización Democratica Nacionalista* - Democratic Nationalist Organization). This group was a para-military force organized to control the countryside. Its membership was of about a hundred thousand peasants, but it is usually claimed that all but 5 to 10 percent had joined only as a means of self-protection (Montgomery,1982:207). In other words, as a means to guarantee before the authorities that "you weren't a subversive, and were to be respected" (Pearce,1986:147).

In 1980, a large majority of Salvadoran unions joined with peasants, students, professionals, and several former civilian members of the Government Junta to establish the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), which later came to represent the political arm of the FMLN revolutionary forces. Massive demonstrations, general strikes, and repression had reached high levels indicating that the country was heading for a full-scale civil war. In response to the FDR coalition, the government set up a rival formation, the Popular Democratic Union (UPD), composed of a number of government-backed unions. The AFL-CIO transferred over $2 million of U.S. government funds per year to the

UPD, making it the largest project of this nature in Latin America (Weinrub & Bollinger,1987:23). In 1981, UCS joined the UPD and the government appeared to have built a significant political and popular base, which eventually formed an alliance with the Christian Democratic Party, and supported the electoral campaign of Duarte in 1984.

During this period, UCS represented the largest peasant union in the country, and had obvious reasons to support the land tenure reform program. Following Duarte's 1984 presidential victory, UCS leaders received top agrarian policy-making positions in government institutions such as ISTA and FINATA, but disenchantment soon set in because of the lack of progress in extending the reform (Brockett,1988:162). In addition, UCS leaders and its cooperatives were victims of the repression which at that time was widely spread in the country[8] (Montes,1986:225).

Land Reform Cooperatives

The legislation of the land tenure reform clearly stated that the beneficiaries of the first phase should form cooperatives in order to avoid the division of the land, and maintain the same production structure (Basic Law of the Land Reform, quoted by Pleitéz,1986:213). These peasant cooperatives were brought together into the Salvadoran Federation of Cooperatives of the Land Reform (FESACORA), created in April of 1982 (FESACORA,1985:6). By 1986, of the 319 cooperatives formed by the first phase of the land tenure reform, 222 were affiliated with FESACORA. With a membership of 27,324 members and 170,000 beneficiaries,

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[8]In January of 1981, the president of UCS -Rodolfo Viera, who was also the president of ISTA, and two North American advisors were murdered in a hotel in San Salvador.

FESACORA represented about 69 percent of the total number of beneficiaries of Phase I of the land tenure reform, covering 76.3 percent of the total area affected by the land tenure reform (FESACORA,1985:6).

The general objectives of FESACORA are in line with those made public by the national policies for land tenure reform issued by CARA; i.e., to promote the social and economic development of the cooperative members, stimulating their active participation in the process, in coordination with the public and private institutions of the land tenure reform. FESACORA attempted to design programs of literacy, training in marketing and production techniques, and also established a committee to provide technical assistance to the affiliated cooperatives.

The most important objective of this federation of cooperatives was to give political support to the State (Pleitéz,1986:35). FESACORA was part of the official rural arm of the Christian Democratic Party, the National Union of Peasant Workers (UNOC), created by the AFL-CIO to substitute UPD as the only legitimate union federation in El Salvador (Weinrub and Bollinger,1987:24).

In a document evaluating the cooperatives of the land tenure reform, Pleitéz (1986:70) found clear work divisions among the members of the cooperatives. First, most administration and management decisions were made by the advisor appointed by ISTA. The next class was administration employees, most of whom performed the same job before the expropriation of the farms. The agricultural workers constituted the next class, and some sub-divisions were detected among them, such as permanent and temporary workers, and specialized workers (cattle workers, export crop workers). The final class was formed by specialized

workers such as mechanics, tractor drivers, and foremen. These work divisions were reflected in the salaries and status of the cooperative members.

In the Third Phase of the reform known as "land to the tiller", the government established some provisions for the allocation of services to the peasants participating in this phase. Each provincial office of FINATA -the institution in charge of the execution of this phase was to provide assistance in the following areas:

> a) Legal Services: established to study and resolve land claims presented by peasants during the period that decree 207 was effective;
> b) Technical Services, in charge of determining the measures and surveying details of each plot being claimed by the peasants;
> c) Credit Services: which function is to establish the cost of the plot, and specify the payments expected from the peasant; and,
> d) Development Services Area, created to inform the beneficiaries in how to obtain production advice, credits, marketing and organization training from other governmental or private institutions participating in the land reform process (FINATA,1986:21-22).

This clearly demonstrates that the role of FINATA was limited to the legal and technical aspects pertaining to the allocation of plots to the beneficiaries. Organizational and production advice was to be provided by other governmental or private institutions. However, FINATA claimed that, as of December 1986, it had promoted the formation of seven cooperative associations among its beneficiaries, with a total of 210 members, and three pre-cooperative groups with a total of 110 beneficiaries (FINATA,1986:33).

Popular Organizations

The background of the popular peasants' organizations in El Salvador is represented by a long process whereby many organizations had

emerged and disappeared over the years. This trend is complicated by government efforts to control the FMLN rebel forces that have operated since 1980 mostly in rural areas, by creating its own popular organizations under what many authors recognize as a "counterinsurgency program" (North,1981; Berryman,1984; Dunkerley,1985). Therefore, while policies towards peasant organized participation may contain effective elements of development strategies, it appears to some authors that their prime objective is to restrain the rural population from participating in major social movements, and restrict the benefits of development programs to only those members of the government-sponsored organizations. The fundamental nature of the conflict in El Salvador was never directly addressed by the government. Thus, other rural organizations have emerged, often in association with the rebel organizations. Even when they do not have access to the resources and programs controlled by the government, popular organizations are important indicators of the participatory potential of peasants in Salvadoran society. As such, they should be given some attention.

Table 7 summarizes the major non-governmental popular organizations that emerged in the early 1980's. These groups may represent the base upon which the participation of peasants and workers started to take a significant dimension in the political activities of the country.

The Popular Revolutionary Block (BPR), was able to become a strong political force in the late 1970's, backed by a broad social base. All popular organizations in Table 7 were able to operate more or less publicly between 1979 and 1980. They concentrated their activities on

the organized demands for the improvement of working conditions and salary of rural and urban workers.

TABLE 7

THE POPULAR AND ASSOCIATED GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS. EL SALVADOR, 1980

Guerrilla Organizations	Popular Organizations
1. Popular Forces of Liberation Farabundo Martí (FPL); founded in 1970.	1. Popular Revolutionary Block (BPR); founded in 1975.
2. Popular Revolutionary Army (ERP); founded in 1971.	2. Popular Leagues 28th of February (LP-28); founded in 1977.
3. Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN); founded in 1975.	3. United Popular Action Front (FAPU); founded in 1974.
4. Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers (PRTC); founded in 1979.	4. Popular Liberation Movement (MLP); founded in 1979.
Organizations 1-3, in combination with the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS), formed the Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU) in January 1980. PRTC joined later. In October 1980, the command structures were unified and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) was established.	Organizations 1-3, in combination with Democratic Nationalistic Union (UDN) established the Movement for Popular Unity (MUP) on January 1980. The Revolutionary Coordination of Masses was established by the top leadership of the various organizations. The MUP was joined by the social democratic MNR and the Popular Social Christian Movement (MPSC), and other associations and unions to form the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) on April 1980.

Source: North, Liisa. *Bitter Grounds: Roots of Revolt in El Salvador*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1981: 79.

From these structures, which were systematically repressed since their origins, popular organizations, some of them originally formed by

the government, started to take a more radical approach, perhaps in part as a response to the government repression.

In the areas of FMLN control, new forms of local government have been maintained since 1982 to administer the newly "liberated" areas (Pearce,1986:241). Some of the most significant of these government bodies can be found in the northern province of Chalatenango: the Local Popular Power committees (PPL). The primary task of the PPL is to administer and organize the population in the zone of control, and also to accomplish broader political objectives (Pearce,1986:242). Each PPL is democratically elected by the civilian population from among their own ranks. According to Pearce, PPLs represent the first opportunity for poor peasant farmers to organize their own communities and participate in their own government. The structure of the PPLs is described by Pearce as one that corresponded broadly to the old administrative units, the *cantones*. The highest power in each locality was the popular assembly, a general meeting of the whole population. Between popular assemblies, power rested with the *junta* or council of the PPL, made up of a president, a vice-president and secretaries for production and popular economy, for social affairs, for legal affairs, for political education, and for defense.

Many peasants, like the revolutionary organizations, see the PPLs as the base and model for future forms of popular government in El Salvador, and not simply as a necessary means of solving the immediate material problems arising from the war.

Some changes took place in the official peasant organizations towards a broader coalition of popular sectors to confront the government. Within months of the presidential victory of Duarte in 1984,

the social base of the Christian Democrats -the UPD, was publicly voicing criticism of the government, pressuring for negotiations with the FMLN-FDR, and to keep their promises to reactivate the economy (Weinrub & Bollinger,1987:23).

In February 1986, the country was to see the formation of the broadest labour alliance ever assembled in El Salvador, the *National Unity of Salvadoran Workers* (UNTS). Comprised of about 100 labor organizations, including UPD, the UNTS brought together an estimated half a million affiliated workers (Fish & Sganga,1988:118) Among its demands, UNTS urged the government to implement the original Phase II of the land tenure reform, and to clear all cooperatives from paying the agrarian debt, considered a major obstacle for the improvement of the peasants' living conditions (UNTS,1986:10).

The rest of the unions remaining loyal to the government were put together to form the National Union of Workers and Peasants (UNOC), which was recognized by the government as the only legitimate union federation in El Salvador (Weinrub & Bollinger,1987:24).

Efforts to discredit and undermine the UNTS were financially backed by AFLD, and by the end of 1986, UPD withdrew from the UNTS. New unions and federations were formed to support the government, and at the same time, to divide the popular movements in El Salvador (Weinrub & Bollinger,1987:26), particularly in the industrial sector, where the workers were putting together more organized pressure for changes.

The Catholic church also took important steps in the promotion of cooperatives. Both in the rural and urban sectors of the Salvadoran society, cooperatives were viewed as an option to help people in the immediate solution of their severe problems. The Church, however,

acknowledged its inability to introduce structural changes in the socio-political system (Montes,1986:214).

By the end of the 1960's the Foundation for the Promotion of Cooperatives (FUNPROCOOP) started to operate with financial aid from the German Church. By 1971, FUNPROCOOP had a total of 54 affiliated cooperatives throughout the country, and a school for technical training in Chalatenango (Montes,1986:215). According to Montes, the respectful attitude of the peasants towards the Catholic church and its priests, facilitated the promotion of cooperative forms of association in this sector of society.

Nicaragua

From a political standpoint, Nicaragua represented the fall of a long and powerful Latin American dictatorship. As such, the Sandinista experience was the center of attention for all political sectors of the Latin American countries.

The Sandinista model of popular democracy, although conceived during the insurrection, underwent substantial modifications during the first five years of the revolutionary process. By Democracy, the Sandinistas did not mean liberal, representative constitutionalism, but a broader and corporatistic participation under the leadership of the Sandinista vanguard, in political and economic arenas (Booth,1985:186).

In its agrarian policies, the analysis of the Nicaraguan agrarian structure brought by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) concentrated on economic issues. The FSLN analysis emphasized the dependent nature of the Nicaraguan economy, the role played by large

capitalist farms in agricultural growth and investment, the high degree of semi-proletarianization of the rural population, and the use of labour to produce low-priced foods (Kaimowitz,1986:101).

The influence of this situational analysis in the design and implementation of the land tenure reform policies appears to be very important. It may explain the direction that some of these policies have taken, especially in the application of the concept of popular democracy through the formation of new power groups in the rural sectors.

As the new regime consolidated itself, a loose set of goals was articulated for the rural sectors, particularly the rural laborers. The collegiate leadership of the FSLN, and the lack of coordination between different ministries, made it difficult to describe a definite declaration of policy goals towards the peasantry (Colburn,1986:107). However, the Sandinista goals towards the peasantry can be outlined to include the following: 1) increased wages; 2) improved working conditions; 3) greater access to social services, particularly education and health; and 4) Increased political empowerment (Colburn,1986:108).

The specific policies towards the peasant's participation outlined by the Nicaraguan government are summarized in the following section.

The FSLN Policies Towards the Peasant

The participatory role of peasants in the Nicaraguan land tenure reform is directly mentioned in the 1987 Political Constitution of Nicaragua. Article 111 states specifically that peasants and other productive sectors "have the right to participate through their own organizations, in establishing the policies of agrarian transformation (*Asamblea Nacional Nicaragüense*,1987).

The *Historic Program of the FSLN*, originally presented to the Nicaraguan people in 1969, included some political considerations towards the land tenure reform and the peasantry. The document was reprinted by the Sandinista government in June 1981, and among its agrarian policies stated that the government would expropriate the landed estates "usurped by the Somoza family and by the politicians and military officers who have taken advantage of the regime's administrative corruption" (FSLN,1981:183), and that it would establish workers' control over the administrative management of the expropriated and nationalized properties.

Some radical measures in the agrarian sector were originally intended by the FSLN, as published in its Historic Program. The land tenure reform was intended to carry out massive distribution of land, eliminating the capitalist and feudal estates, and turning the land over to the peasants, in accordance with the principle that the land should belong to those who work it. Peasants were given the right to three basic and fundamental services: timely and adequate agricultural credit, a guaranteed market for their production, and technical assistance (FSLN,1981:183).

The Historic Program also stated that the government would stimulate and encourage the peasants to organize themselves in cooperatives, "so they can take their destiny into their own hands and directly participate in the development of the country" (FSLN,1981:183). The FSLN also proposed to eliminate the forced idleness that exists for most of the year in the countryside, and it intended to be attentive to the need to create sources of jobs for the peasant population.

Social Policies

Among other policies, the Historical Document of the FSLN provided for the allocation of social services, literacy and health care campaigns. The literacy campaign launched in 1980 concentrated on the countryside, and was undertaken with participation of the ATC. Among the objectives of this campaign were:

> a) to carry out a census of the rural illiterate population;
> b) to incorporate agricultural workers and peasants into the literacy crusade; and
> c) to raise awareness and conscientization of the importance of literacy (CIERA,Undated:77).

In its policies for education, the Nicaraguan government concentrated on the social classes marginalized in the past, aiming at developing the national culture and "to root out the neocolonial penetration in Nicaraguan culture" (FSLN,1981:184). The objectives of the policy for the Adult Education Program correspond to the strategic interests of the Nicaraguan revolution. One objective was to develop a revolutionary *consciousness* among the lower sectors of Nicaraguan society, that would "permit them to understand the full meaning of the anti-imperialist struggle" that the Sandinistas were carrying out on the economic, political, military, and ideological levels of their country (CIERA,undated:80).

The Sandinista government also elaborated a specific set of policies on the provision of health care, to benefit the entire population. Popular Health Campaigns were organized in 1981, 1982, and 1983, having the following objectives:

> 1. To consolidate popular participation in health at all levels in an organized manner, structured by the Popular Health Councils;

> 2. To elevate the educational level of the people such that the people are the initiators and producers of their health, through the diffusion of basic knowledge and preventive activities;
> 3. To undertake the realization of collective movilizations that will permit the control and/or eradication of socially important illness; and
> 4. To provoke a substantial change in the peoples' concept of health, and to emphasize the importance of organized community support in the solution of health problems (CIERA,undated:85).

Among other issues, the Historical Program of the FSLN also supported the elimination of discrimination towards women, establishing economic, political, and cultural equality between women and men.

The Cooperative Movement

The Law of Agrarian Reform published in 1981 provided for the formalization of the first organized cooperative movement in Nicaragua. This movement was more relevant in the Pacific region, where communal forms of property developed rapidly due to strong influence from pre-colonial communal forms of production (Invernizzi, Pizani, & Ceberio,1986:223). The cooperativization program had three main goals: 1) to consolidate the peasant alliance with the revolutionary project; 2) to expand the efficiency of basic grains and vegetable production; and 3) to begin the development of socialist forms of agricultural production (Ruchwarger,1987:230).

The Law of Cooperatives made public in 1981, defines agrarian and agro-industrial cooperatives as "associative enterprises of social interest, formed freely by its members for the collective production of goods, or for the provision of services for its members" (FENACOOP,1990:3). The Law of Cooperatives of the Sandinista government also provided the basic norms and regulations to be followed by all

cooperatives in the agrarian sector. These cooperatives were to work under the governing principles of "voluntary enlistment, democratic participation in decision-making, and equality of rights without discrimination of race, sex, political ideology, religion, and any other type of discrimination" (UNAG,1981:3).

The first year of the reform process is of particular importance for this study, since the consolidation of the peasants participation in policy making was reportedly significant. The organization of rural workers and peasants by the Association of Rural Workers (ATC) was massive, and this union, originally organized by the FSLN in 1978, grew not only in numbers, but also in political strength (Deere & Marchetti,1981:68).

By 1983, the Nicaraguan land reform policies were modified to increase the number of individual titlings (Invernizzi,*et.al.*,1986:227). This modification was attributed to demands from peasant organizations and local FSLN leaders concerned with the needs of the peasant (Gilbert,1988:94). The increased number of individual peasant-farmers resulting from this new legislation were encouraged to participate in the formation of credit and production cooperatives. By 1985, the number of *Credit and Service Cooperatives* (CCS) was 1,275, about 45 percent of the total number of agricultural cooperatives (CIERA,undated:50). These types of cooperatives were relatively conservative in that members keep their land individually and receive credit and services in the cooperative manner (Close,1988:88), although the loan was negotiated and granted to the cooperative as a unit (Ruchwarger, 1987: 231). According to Close (1988:88), CCS's are actually quite similar to North American rural cooperatives.

Other major types of rural cooperatives that were developed in the country by the Sandinista government are presented in the following table.

TABLE 8

COOPERATIVES BY TYPE OF ORGANIZATION. NICARAGUA, 1985

Cooperatives	Number	Area (Acres)	Membership
CAS	578	365,799	7,573
CCS	1,275	831,065	43,971
CSM	375	171,183	10,042
OTHER	621	99,106	6,030
TOTAL	2,849	1,467,153	67,976

Source: *Participatory Democracy in Nicaragua*. Managua: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios de la Reforma Agraria (CIERA), Undated: 51.

The *Sandinista Agrarian Cooperatives* (CAS) reflect a higher degree of socialization. CAS are those cooperatives in which the members pool their resources, set their own work norms, and divide their products so as to provide for individual wages and future investments (Close,1988:89). They would include cooperatives running the State Farms, and in 1985 they accounted for about 20 percent of all cooperatives (see *Table 8*). These types of production cooperatives are formed mostly by landless peasants and semi-proletarian peasants who are not interested in having their own land (Invernizzi,*et.al.*,1986:230). As established by the law, CAS must maintain collective ownership of their resources (Ruchwarger,1987:231).

The *Dead Furrow Cooperatives* (CSM) represented about 13 percent of the cooperatives in 1985. CSMs are predominantly located on land granted by the land tenure reform, where mechanized services offered by the state are used collectively, but the parcels keep their individual character. Some small producers create dead furrow cooperatives to gain the advantages of cooperative labour and resource management. Similarly, some credit and service cooperatives establish dead furrow cooperatives as a step towards the creation of a CAS (Ruchwarger,1987:231).

In some regions of Nicaragua, the peasants created a different type of cooperative which were known as *Self-defense Cooperatives*. These cooperatives came into being as a response to military aggression, in an attempt to organize both defense and production activities into one coordinated effort (CIERA,Undated:52). The members of these cooperatives were former members of *CAS* and *CCS*, and independent producers who were forced to organize for defense. These cooperatives existed in the three special zones of the Atlantic Coast, and in the regions of Segovias, Matagalpa, and Jinotega. By 1983, there were 184 self-defense coops, with a total membership of 6,815 members (CIERA,Undated:53).

The Sandinista Peasant Organizations

The implementation of the different socio-economic programs developed by the Sandinista government was facilitated to a large extent by the promotion of a variety of grassroot or mass organizations. These eventually involved approximately half of the adult population of Nicaragua (Walker,1986:107).

One of the goals of the mass organizations was to serve as schools for popular democracy (Central American Bulletin,1984:350), through

which people participate in the political, economic, and social decision-making processes. Over the years, changes and reorganizations based on day-to-day experiences have deepened their internal democracy. At their meetings, members asses the actions of their executive officers. Through their electoral process, all the mass organizations can ratify or reject their leadership in assemblies held at the base, zonal, regional, and national levels (Central American Bulletin,1984:350).

The major Nicaraguan grassroot organizations included: the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS), and the "Luisa Amanda Espinoza" Nicaraguan Women's Association (AMNLAE), that operated mostly in the urban sectors of the country. In the rural areas, two organizations promoted by the Sandinistas came to represent the majority of the peasantry and other rural sectors in the policy-making process of the government: the Rural Workers Association (ATC), and the National Union of Farmers and Cattlemen (UNAG). The main characteristics and accomplishments of these two rural organizations can be summarized as follows.

Rural Workers Association (ATC)

Apparently, ATC represented the Sandinistas' original efforts to incorporate all the rural poor into one mass organization. This put the ATC into the position of representing the potentially contradictory demands of cooperativized peasants, permanent rural workers, semi-proletarians, and even small and medium land owners among the 59 thousand members it had in 1979 (Close,1988:88). ATC membership

increased to 45 thousand full-time and 80 thousand part-time agricultural workers in 1984 (Rosset & Vandermeer,1986:355).

ATC managed to make its organized power felt in three areas crucial to a membership historically marginalized in Nicaragua. It managed to increase significantly the wages of agricultural workers, worked for an improvement in the social services, and raised the level of worker input in reviewing and approving production plans as well as raising their ability to understand the technical and financial aspects of the production process. One of the vehicles through which ATC stimulated production among its members was series of publications called the "Emulation Campaigns". The objectives forwarded in these campaigns were: a) to contribute to workers education; b) to increase the quality and quantity of agricultural production and lessen production costs; c) to contribute to saving primary materials, inputs and labor time; d) to foster a sense of solidarity among workers; and e) to stimulate worker participation in economic decision-making (Ruchwarger,1987:259). Therefore, ATC concentrated its programs within the rural working class.

ATC's inability to represent both small farmers and farm workers was effectively solved with the formation of the National Union of Farmers and Cattlemen -UNAG, in 1981.

National Union of Farmers and Cattlemen (UNAG)

UNAG became the representative of small and medium producers and received a seat in the Council of State (Close,1988:90). With over 100,000 members by 1984, UNAG brought significant weight to bear on agricultural policy toward the small and medium peasant sector (Rosset &

Vandermeer,1986:355). UNAG helped peasants gain access to land through its representatives on the National and Regional Councils of Agrarian Reform. UNAG also exercised power in decision-making through its participation in the different official policy-making structures created by the Sandinistas, which will be described ahead. The areas in which UNAG most effectively represented its constituency were those of production and commercialization (Rosset & Vandermeer,1986:355).

As a general policy, UNAG gave priority to small and medium producers. The focus of the organizational work of UNAG during its early years was the cooperative movement. The expansion and consolidation of the Nicaraguan cooperative sector is to a great extent a result of UNAG's efforts. Also, this organization played a decisive role in land adjudications because of the great number of peasants it has organized into cooperatives (Ruchwarger,1987:226).

The recruitment of large producers began in 1984, and was a mixed blessing for the organization (Luciak,1987:43). The inclusion of large producers was important to the Sandinista project of national unity; however, it also resulted in internal problems for UNAG, as it confronted the same dilemma that the Sandinista government faced in its own political project -how to ensure the participation of all sectors of the rural community while guaranteeing that the needs of the most marginalized groups were not neglected (Luciak,1987:43).

One significant effort made by the Sandinistas to accomplish this project was the creation of an organizational structure that would allow for the representation of people at all administrative levels, be it local, regional, or national.

Structures for Participation in Policy-making

By 1986, an elaborate organizational structure had been developed by the Nicaraguan government. Through this structure, peasant organizations were allowed to participate in all aspects and levels of the policy decision-making process.

First, the *National Council of State*, a body created in May 1980, is comprised of all political forces in Nicaragua, thus representing a true forum of discussion and decision-making in matters of national policy (CIERA,Undated:95). The peasant and rural organizations with members in the Council of State were:

Association of Rural Workers (ATC), 3 votes;

Union of Agricultural Producers (UPANIC), 1 vote;

Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS), 9 votes;

Nicaraguan Women Association (AMNLAE); 1 vote.

Union of Farmers and Cattlemen (UNAG); 1 vote.

Originally, the Council was designed to have 33 members. New political forces arising with the revolutionary triumph demanded to be integrated, so the total number of votes was increased to 51 (CIERA,Undated:95).

Other structures were created along with the implementation of the land tenure reform to allow the participation of all sectors and interest groups.

The official land reform research branch -Centre for Economic Research of the Agrarian Reform (CIERA)- provides a general description of these structures. They were apparently created to focus on decision-

making in different specific areas of the land tenure reform. The most important of these bodies can be described as follows.

National Council on Agrarian Reform (CNRA)

This institution was responsible for organizing the agrarian reform at the national level, and was coordinated by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform (MIDINRA). Its members included:

- Minister of MIDINRA;
- President of UNAG;
- Secretary General of the ATC;
- Director of CIERA;
- Director of the Financial Corporation of Nicaragua;
- Delegate of the Ministry of National Planning.

The duties of the CNRA included counseling the Minister of MIDINRA in the development of agrarian reform policies, and evaluating the application of the Agrarian Reform Law and regulations (CIERA,Undated:96).

Regional Council on Agrarian Reform

Each of the administrative regions of the MIDINRA had a Regional Council of Agrarian Reform (CRRA), acting as a consulting body for the regional director of MIDINRA, for all aspects concerning the application of the Agrarian Reform Law and the Cooperatives Law in the region. The members of the CRRA were:

- The regional director of MIDINRA;
- A delegate of ATC;
- A delegate of UNAG;
- Regional delegate of the Government Junta; and
- Representative of the Municipal Junta.

The responsibilities of the CRRAs included: a) to facilitate the coordination among the different institutions represented in order to implement the agrarian reform; b) to facilitate the participation of the institutions represented in the elaboration of the regional plans and projects of the agrarian reform, which were presented to the ministry for approval; c) to evaluate the achievement of plans and projects approved for the region.

The CRRAs were able to give opinions on the affectations or allotments of lands proposed by the regional director of the ministry. In addition, this organism would propose, in representation of each member organization, plans for distribution of lands specific for their region (CIERA,Undated:123).

National Credit Committee

The general objective of this committee was to coordinate the actions of the different government institutions and popular organizations in the implementation of credit policy. The National Credit Committee was responsible for the design of credit policies at the national level. In it participated the following institutions:

- Head of rural credit of the National Bank of Development
- Director of the General Department of Agrarian Reform;
- Executive Secretary of Production of ATC; and
- National representative of UNAG.

These regional committees, similar to the rest of mass organizations and government structures, also operated on a regional and local level, with the objective of identifying the immediate needs in each region and community (CIERA,Undated:123).

Agrarian Reform Tribunals

These were jurisdictional bodies in charge of processing and resolving in a definite manner the appeals made by those affected by resolutions dictated by MIDINRA. They were established as the only institutions for appeals. In these participated three members and three deputy members named by the government. One of the members was to be a fully authorized legal attorney.

Committee of the National Food Program

This was a coordinating body for the policies directed toward small producers. Its formation was based on the pre-existing structures of the National Committee of Small and Medium Production. The objective of the Committee of the National Food Program was to trace the guidelines for rural credit policy in the area of production of basic grains and other national food crops, which were given to the credit committees (CIERA,Undated:124) for revision and approval. Members of this committee included:

- Delegate of MIDINRA;
- Director of rural credit of the BND;
- Director of the General Department of Agrarian Reform;
- National secretary of production of ATC;
- Delegate of UNAG;
- Director of the National Basic Foods Company (ENABAS);
- Head of the Agricultural Department of MIPLAN; and
- Head of the General Department of Agricultural Services.

In addition to these participatory structures, there were National Production Commissions for cotton, coffee, beef and dairy livestock, sugar, sorghum, and rice. The objectives of the Production Commissions

were to endow the Ministry with an organic structure that would allow for the incorporation of suggestions in the elaboration of agricultural policies. According to CIERA (Undated:122), this permitted the inclusion of the knowledge and accumulated experience of the producers in the formulation of policies that adjusted to the concrete reality of the agricultural sector. The second objective of the Production Commissions was to permit the people involved in policy-making to get a global vision of the problems and accomplishment derived from a dictated policy. In this way, they could count with the necessary elements to reformulate policies in time, and correct the problems that hindered the development of agriculture (CIERA,undated:128).

The ATC Participation Pilot Project

In 1983, the Ministry of Agriculture and ATC selected ten state enterprises to participate in a workers participation project in the agricultural sector. The goals of the project were to upgrade worker participation in decision-making, and to improve administrative efficiency on the state farms (Ruchwarger,1986:270).

The project established three administrative councils, the Management Council being the main decision-making structure. This council was formed by the director and assistant director of the enterprise, one representative of the ministry of agriculture, two ATC delegates, and a representative of the Regional Council of Agrarian Reform. Monthly meetings were held by this council to evaluate the technical and economic plan of the farm and review the annual budget. The directors and intermediate technicians of the enterprises received training at the regional office of MIDINRA.

Some of the obstacles found in the promotion of worker's participation in management were related to illiteracy. Union leaders had a lot of problems understanding the technical plans and the figures discussed at the meetings (Ruchwarger,1986:269). However, the most important obstacles arose from the traditional social relations prevailing in rural Nicaragua before the revolution. Some of the attitudes observed among workers were: lack of confidence and unwillingness to challenge administrators; divisions within the working class; a fear of the rank and file by some union leaders; lack of discipline at work; and unfamiliarity with the technical side of production (Ruchwarger,1986:267). Some administrators were also found to have resisted meaningful workers' input into management decisions. Ruchwarger reports that while welcoming workers' contributions to maintaining labour discipline and raising productivity, some administrators often ignored worker's proposals concerning the operations of the production process itself.

Review of Participatory Policies in Nicaragua

The available documentation suggests that policies for peasant participation in the Nicaraguan land tenure reform were fundamentally influenced by the Sandinista concept of Popular Democracy. Mass organizations were encouraged to participate in the different organizational structures created for that purpose. These structures were directly responsible for decision-making in specific aspects of the land tenure reform policies, and all grass roots organizations created by the Sandinistas participated in that process at all levels of administration. At the community level, representatives of the national

mass organizations were allowed to influence the introduction of changes and amendments to the different policies proposed by the national administration.

Interestingly, there was no clear definition from the Sandinista government of the direction that its agrarian policies would take, even when a fixed set of policies was set up in initial documents of the FSLN, such as the Historical Program. This can be attributed to the flexibility shown by the Sandinistas in the development of the land tenure reform. Apparently, the Sandinistas responded to the different demands presented by the mass organizations, particularly the ATC and UNAG, or to specific problems arising in a given region due to the war or to economic conditions.

The formation of cooperatives received considerable attention in the development of land tenure reform, and many incentives were given to the peasants in order to encourage them to form cooperatives. As the programme evolved, new demands from the people were considered with high levels of pragmatism. Such is the case of the creation of UNAG in 1981, as it was demonstrated that the original purpose of ATC to represent all rural producers was unrealistic. Also, the changes from state farms to individual titlings favoured the formation of cooperatives that may have increased the levels of direct participation of peasants in the rural development of Nicaragua.

CHAPTER SIX

PARTICIPATORY POLICIES FOR LAND TENURE REFORM IN EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Introduction

Many differences can be pointed out between two countries that follow contrasting philosophies in their governments. Such is the case between Nicaragua and El Salvador for the period considered in this study (1979-1989). On one side, revolutionary Nicaragua followed a pragmatic approach in its model of participatory democracy, viewed by some authors as a Marxist-Leninist model. On the other side, El Salvador's *Revolutionary Junta* adhered to the liberal-pluralist democratic model prevailing in the rest of the countries of the region, enjoying the much desired support from the U.S. administration.

At the same time, some similarities can be found in the way these two countries responded to the social and economic demands and needs of their populations. The need for the implementation of a land tenure reform programme may be considered one of these similarities, as it responded to the historical conditions shaping the agrarian structure of these two countries.

This chapter will compare the policies promulgated by the two governments for land tenure reform at the beginning of the 1980's, as they relate to the participation of peasants. The results observed from the implementation of theses policies will also be compared in this chapter.

The Political Constitutions

The first and most obvious difference that can be found between the policies of both countries towards peasants' participation in land tenure reform is contained in the Political Constitutions. The Nicaraguan constitution makes clear definition of the right of peasants to provide input on policy-making regarding the land tenure reform.

The Salvadoran constitution on the other hand, does not include any articles specific to the peasantry. The role of the State is defined on this document as facilitator for the formation of organizations, and for the promotion of small rural properties, as described in Chapter Five. No article in the Salvadoran constitution makes specific reference to the land tenure reform programme.

In essence, the main difference that can be detected from these two documents is the nature of the policy-making processes adopted by the two countries. In El Salvador, the State designs the agrarian policies and is to provide the necessary services for agricultural production, without taking into account the right of peasants to participate in policy-making. In Nicaragua, that right is taken into consideration in the political constitution. This reveals the intention of the government to create and maintain a communication channel from the people to the policy-makers and vice versa, in line with their model of participatory democracy. In other words, the Salvadoran government maintains a top-down approach in its policy- and decision-making processes, and the participation of peasants continues to be limited to the role of recipients of the government's decisions.

The Structures for Participation

The structures designed by both governments to facilitate the participation of peasants in land tenure reform are some of the main differences found in this analysis. The Salvadoran government established one single body to design policies concerning land tenure reform -the CARA committee. Among its 18 members, 12 were representing government institutions and ministries, and the remaining six were representatives of the official peasant organizations, as well as representatives of the private sector, and the army. Their duty was to advise the Ministry of Agriculture in the elaboration and implementation of policies for the land tenure reform. Apparently, no other structures were developed for policy-making in land tenure reform, and this central committee was the only body regulating national policy-making in land tenure reform. The government institutions then, were in charge of implementing the CARA policies at the local and regional levels, without providing any input or feedback to the policy-makers. The policies forwarded by CARA basically consisted of a set of strategies to facilitate the implementation of the land tenure reform. Specific basic land tenure reform policies, such as land allocations and expropriations were not regulated by this body, as they were previously set up by the U.S. AID specialists, and the Government *Junta*.

The influence and input of the several sectors represented in the CARA council becomes evident when looking at the different policies they outlined. The peasant organizations may have put forward the policies dealing with the promotion of the "true conscientization of the peasant" and the promotion of the "de-marginalization of peasants so they could have active participation in decision-making"; the ministry officials

made sure that the government institutions were the ones "assuming the leading role" in the implementation of policies; and the military appeared to be concerned with ensuring that the social development of the reformed sector was to be "linked to the government strategies for pacification". These and other policies may be considered as examples of the diverse points of views and priorities forwarded by each sector represented in the CARA council. The careful distinctions and specificity found in the language used in the policies outlined by CARA suggest that controversial and contradictory concepts, such as "conscientization" and "pacification", were not profoundly debated.

In Nicaragua, a complex bureaucratic structure was established at the community, zonal, regional, and national levels, the most important being the National Council on Agrarian Reform. Similar to the National Council of State, this body was presumed to comprise all political forces involved in the land tenure reform, and it was considered a consulting body in all aspects of the development of policies for land tenure reform, including land redistribution policies. The other decision-making structures involved in the development of the land tenure reform in Nicaragua were the Regional Councils of Land Reform, the National Credit Committee, the Agrarian Reform Tribunals, and the Committee of the National Food Program. In addition, there were production committees established for each of the major crops in the country.

Allegedly, these structures allowed for the participation of peasants in policy-making in a manner which took into account regional and local differences in specific aspects of the reform. Also, clear differentiation was attempted in the establishment of organisms designed

to deal with specific problems in the land tenure reform process, such as land claims, credit policies, marketing policies, and production policies. At the same time, this complex structure was viewed as a source for policy-makers to get first-hand information on the results of the implementation of land tenure reform and agrarian policies in each region.

One criticism that can be applied to the Nicaraguan multiple structure of political participation is that it may have tended to create a highly bureaucratic system, where communications from one level to another, and from one institution to another, may have been inefficient. Therefore, the accurate elaboration and implementation of specific policies could have been hindered by this situation. On the other hand, this system of decision-making may have allowed for a rapid solution of the different problems arising at the community level in the implementation of the land tenure reform.

In the case of El Salvador, the formation of one national committee for policy-making resulted in the formulation of a set of specific policies that was to be applied in a straightforward manner on the entire reformed sector. This committee included some peasant organizations that, for the first time in the history of the country were allowed to provide some kind of input in policy-making. Nevertheless, as discussed in the previous chapter, these peasant organizations were in clear alliance with the Christian Democrat government. Other major popular organizations having a strong political presence at that time, were systematically excluded from this process.

The participation of the army in the CARA committee also indicates the powerful role that this institution played in all political aspects

of the country, and to an extent, justifies the labeling of the Salvadoran land tenure reform as being part of a nation-wide counterinsurgency strategy.

The Nicaraguan decision-making structures did include most of the peasant groups active in the country, as they all apparently were comprised into the two major Sandinista rural organizations: the ATC and UNAG. Therefore, probably due to the complexity of the Nicaraguan participatory structures, no specific national policies were apparently formulated for the land tenure reform. This can be demonstrated by noting that many policy changes took place through the development of the land tenure reform, depending on the demands of the peasants, or on the particular political, economic, environmental, or military conditions prevailing in each region. This flexibility was not present in El Salvador, and the basic policies for land tenure reform and land distribution were maintained without modifications through their implementation. Therefore, it can be argued that no participation was observed from the peasantry in the decisions and policy-making concerning the land tenure reform in El Salvador.

The Policies for Peasant Participation

Many similarities are found in the specific policies of land tenure reform and peasants participation between Nicaragua and El Salvador. This is probably due to the fact that the implementation of land tenure reform in both countries responded to the need of introducing structural changes in the distributive nature of land resources. The historical background of both countries is very similar, and the development problems they confronted are very much related to

this background. The differing political circumstances under which the two reforms took place appear to have little effect in the overall aims of the programs, as claimed by both governments. That is, to redistribute land resources among the peasant population, and to improve their living conditions.

Thus, the land tenure reforms of the two countries under study came to represent radical changes in the land tenure systems prevailing over the years. In Nicaragua, land reform was implemented after a revolutionary triumph that came to eliminate a powerful regime controlling a large proportion of the country's resources. In El Salvador, land reform also responded partly to the social and political pressures from popular sectors of the society, but it is viewed by many authors as part of a national counterinsurgency plan to avoid radical changes in the political and economic structure of the country.

Some of the main differences between the two reforms have already been discussed in Chapter Three. Therefore, this section will concentrate in the comparison of the specific policies for peasants participation.

Philosophical Orientations

The first policy of the Salvadoran government issued by CARA towards the peasants claims to have as an objective the promotion of the *conscientization* of the rural people, regarded as "the active subjects of the process of land reform." At the same time, this policy aimed at strengthening and developing the cooperative associations of the reformed sector.

Similarly, the Sandinista Historical Program stated among its agrarian policies that the Nicaraguan government would stimulate and encourage the peasants to organize themselves in cooperatives, "so they can take their destiny into their own hands, and directly participate in the development of the country."

These two policies clearly indicate the similar philosophies about the participatory role that peasants were expected to perform in both land tenure reform processes. Peasants' participation was considered by the two countries as a direct and essential element to the development of land tenure reform. Although both governments use the term *conscientization* to define the philosophical bases of their policies towards the peasantry (see *Chapter Five*), only the Sandinistas appear to apply it in line with the original term conceived by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. This term was used by Freire to indicate the gradual process through which people acquire knowledge of their own oppressive reality, and take action to change it (Freire,1981:5). For the Salvadoran government, conscientization meant a process of "identification of the peasant with the land reform" through the social models promoted by ISTA, "in accordance with the national reality."

The philosophical base for the participatory policies of both countries appears to be in line with the strategies of some major international development agencies such as the ones described in Chapter Four. FAO clearly indicates the need to improve government institutions to facilitate the allocation of services. The WCARRD stressed the importance of allowing peoples' participation in decision-making, implementation, benefits, and evaluation of development programs. CIDA makes similar reference to the importance of raising the consciousness

level of the people concerning their opportunities, and to involve them in all stages of the development projects cycle (see *Chapter Four*). Most of the concepts presented by these international agencies are in some way contained in the policies outlined by the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan governments.

Implementation Methodology

Clear differences arise regarding the methodology selected for the implementation of the policies towards the peasantry. In El Salvador, the task of promoting the self-sustainability of the peasant cooperatives was given to the government institution in charge of the implementation of Phase I of the reform -ISTA. In Nicaragua, the decisions and policies concerning the land tenure reform were shared by the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reform (MIDINRA) with the mass organizations Rural Workers Association (ATC), and National Union of Farmers and Cattlemen (UNAG).

This fundamental difference reflects the actual nature of the projections given to the participation of peasants. In one case, a government institution was to "assume the leading role in the promotion of peasants participation"; in the other, the peasants themselves were given more authority to provide input into the decision-making processes affecting them, through the mass organizations supported by the Sandinistas. In addition, the Salvadoran government limited the projected execution of this policy to the peasant beneficiaries of the first phase of the reform, as clearly defined in the CARA document; while in Nicaragua, participation applied to all peasants and rural workers of the country.

Education and Training of Peasants

The second relevant policy that can be compared in this analysis refers to education and training of peasants. For the Salvadoran government, land tenure reform was seen as an instrument for development. Training within the reformed sector would be oriented towards the development of adequate attitudes and knowledge consistent with the objectives of the program. This would result in a "more active participation and in an awareness of the role to be performed" in the land tenure reform process.

In this regards, the Nicaraguan government, as published in the Historic Program, promoted a different concept in training and education policies, i.e, to push forward massive campaigns to immediately wipe out illiteracy, and to develop the national culture and "root out the neo-colonial penetration in Nicaraguan culture." Clearly, a major ideological change was originally contemplated by the Sandinista policy-makers in their educational programs. In El Salvador, on the other hand, training and education policies were limited to promote the adoption of the land tenure reform process among its beneficiaries, as formulated officially, without attempting to introduce attitudes and knowledge beyond that objective.

In fact, one of the specific strategies described in the first basic policy of the Salvadoran land tenure reform clearly states that the social worker representing ISTA was to work "free of external pressures". The social worker would avoid the introduction of matters "not essential to the wishes and necessities" of the beneficiaries of the land tenure reform.

Social Service Policies

Social policies for the improvement of living conditions among the peasantry in both countries followed the same general approach, i.e., they focussed on the improvement of health, housing, food, and educational resources. The difference comes forth in the specific strategies outlined by the two governments to accomplish these goals. In El Salvador, the strategy selected for the implementation of social policies was in line with strategies promoted by the international agencies: to improve the State efficiency in the allocation of the basic social services. It was assumed that the living conditions of the peasant family would be improved *by providing* housing facilities, health care, and other social services. This would be attained through the coordination of the different government institutions facilitating those services.

Nicaragua, on the other hand, focused its social services policies towards the consolidation of popular participation in the execution of social programs. For instance, popular participation was to be encouraged in health at all levels, "in an organized manner and structured by the Popular Health Councils." (see *Chapter Five*). Also, in the National Literacy crusade of 1980, popular mobilization was the key factor in its development. The magnitude of the crusade surpassed the capabilities of the Ministry of Education, which relied on the massive involvement of the popular sectors, particularly the urban youth. This participatory approach in addressing social policies indicates that, along with acknowledging the peoples' right to participate in their own development, the Nicaraguan government allowed for the creation of

popular mechanisms through which the people were encouraged to take an active part in the development of activities such as the health campaigns and the literacy crusade.

Nicaragua's social policy sector shows some shifts and instances of mass consultation. However, government attempts to ensure greater participation in health care issues was only partly successful. Efforts by the Sandinista women's organization to have the state deal with the effects of *machismo* failed. Although AMNLAE, the Nicaraguan women's organization, did not win its points, it was able to raise them (Close,1988:162) without suffering major sanctions from the government. This shows a commitment from the Sandinista government to deal with issues such as the discrimination of women in its society, a point that was never raised in the Salvadoran policies for social development. In fact, CARA policies towards the beneficiaries of the land tenure reform refer specifically to the male peasant, and the role of women in rural development was never mentioned. Women do play an essential role in rural Central America. They are in many cases, the only ones looking after the social welfare of the family. In many areas, women play a leading role in matters regarding the improvement of the living conditions of the community.

While social programs were left to the official institutions in El Salvador, Nicaragua attempted to involve the population in the solution of these needs. However, the massive public health campaigns in Nicaragua seemed to some authors the means to tackle pressing problems quickly and cheaply, rather than effective instruments that the public could use to shape government plans (Close,1988:162).

The Implementation of Policies

Regardless of the many similarities found between both countries' policies for land tenure reform and peasants' participation, the implementation of such policies represent an important difference in the outcome of the programs in each country.

Peasants in El Salvador did not participate in the design and implementation of policies dealing with land distribution and allocation. The Basic Law of Land Reform was made public by the government junta, as designed by U.S. AID specialists. No input was received from the rural sectors affected by its implementation, in spite of the opposition they confronted from the private sector opposing the implementation of the reform, and from the peasant sector attempting to improve it. Phases I and III of the reform were carried out with no changes in its basic policies.

In Nicaragua, many changes took place in the direction of the land tenure reform throughout its implementation. Although the initial policies aimed at radical changes in land tenure and massive distribution of land among the landless, policies were periodically modified. This trend took place partly due to economic pressures, and partly because of the demands of the peasants who expected the government to carry out its initial promises.

In regards to the specific policies towards the peasants, some differences are found in their implementation. First of all, it appears obvious that the Salvadoran government was not truly committed to the type of democratic participation claimed in its policies. Participatory policies, although using a satisfactory language were, if applied, fundamentally limited to those peasant beneficiaries of the land tenure

reform. This actually included only one percent of the rural poor who benefited from the first phase of the reform, and only 1.4 percent who were directly benefited by the third phase (Pearce,1986:295). In fact, the cooperatives' memberships in the Salvadoran land tenure reform were limited to the number of permanent employees hired by the large farms before the expropriations of phase I took place. According to Lehoucq and Sims (1982:6) two types of beneficiaries were affected by the expropriations: one group has consisted of the managers, bookkeepers, tractor drivers, mechanics and others who were employed in the old farms; the other group consisted of the *colonos*. However, the leadership of the new cooperatives was established mainly by the former employees of the farms, and they attempted to exclude *colonos* from the cooperatives, or at least, they were never consulted or integrated into the reform process (Lehoucq and Sims,1982:7). In addition, clear social stratifications existed among the cooperative members. These differences were reflected in the salaries of the cooperative members, and therefore in their status.

Many of the institutional changes promulgated by the Salvadoran government in order to promote the integration of peasants in the reform movement were never initiated. For example, specific policies make reference to the promotion of basic education and training campaigns within the reformed sector. Such campaigns never took place. Credit facilities were often denied to cooperatives as they proved to be unable to manage the farms. Technical assistance provided by the government was often inaccurate, and was not improved in spite of complaints from the cooperatives.

With regards to phase III of the Salvadoran reform, known as "land to the tiller", it has been claimed that it excluded peasants in two very important ways. First, peasants were totally excluded from the design and implementation of this phase, an exclusion that applies to peasants benefiting from Phase I as well. The fundamental aspects of the "land to the tiller" strategy found in Phase III of the Salvadoran land tenure reform was originally conceived and applied in South Vietnam by an American advisor -Roy Prosterman (Lehoucq & Sims,1982:8). No studies on the Salvadoran conditions of tenancy were carried out, and local authorities were simply told what was to be done. As a result, the system of crop rotation developed by small tenant peasants to compensate for the marginalization and the poor quality of the soil was disrupted. Moreover, the beneficiaries of this program were tied through a thirty-year mortgage to small plots that often were insufficient to provide basic long-term subsistence (Lehoucq & Sims,1982:9).

A second manner in which peasants were excluded from the land tenure reform in El Salvador is that, with the exception of the government-sponsored *Unión Comunal Salvadoreña* (UCS), all peasant organizations were excluded from the reform policy-making structure - CARA. In addition, in order to become a beneficiary of phase III and I of the land tenure reform, a peasant had to be an *hacienda* worker, a *colono*, or a small renter. By utilizing this criterion the government and the U.S. AID planners failed to integrate the majority of the Salvadoran peasants into the reformed sector. This included the landless, wage-dependent, and agricultural workers, who by 1981 constituted 65 percent of the country's peasant population (Simon & Stephens,1981:38).

Regardless of its political or military objectives, the implementation of the 1980 land tenure reform in El Salvador was a reality, and it contributed to determining the socio-political development of the country in the following years.

For many authors, the Salvadoran land tenure reform was part of a national counterinsurgency program. According to Fish and Sganga (1988:121), the fundamental aim of the Salvadoran counterinsurgency plan was to create a sufficient level of support for the government to marginalize the rebel forces. Under this broad perspective, the organized participation of peasants in popular social movements or in official development programs took a dual meaning. Both sides in the struggle for power appear to use similar strategies to promote peoples' participation in their programs, and the objectives for organized action also appear to be similar. The difference is to be found in the channels used by the workers and peasants to attain these objectives. On one side, the legitimation of the government programs was reassured by providing a certain political space where peasants could present their demands, within the legal means created for that purpose. On the other side, workers organized through non-governmental channels, represented a "threat" to the political stability of the country, even when their demands and claimed objectives were similar to the government-sponsored unions, as they were often associated with the revolutionary forces.

In Nicaragua, land tenure reform policies and participatory structures attempted to integrate the totality of the peasant sector. The mass organizations UNAG and ATC exercised a considerable degree of autonomy and challenged both the FSLN and the State in order to meet the demands of the social sectors they represented. At the same time, the

FSLN demonstrated a disposition to encourage the autonomous development of these organizations. For example, a large demonstration in which 30 thousand peasants participated, was organized by ATC in February of 1980 (Close,1988:89). These peasants were demanding some changes in the nature of the land tenure reform. Sandinistas responded by lowering land rents and massively expanding credit for the rural poor, tenants as well as owners.

Cooperatives in Nicaragua became an important component in facilitating the participation of peasants in land tenure reform. Different types of cooperatives were promoted by the government, and peasants were encouraged to form cooperatives, mainly attracted by the credit facilities offered to these forms of production. These cooperatives, however, did little to satisfy land hunger of landless peasants. The Credit and Services Cooperatives (CCS) were formed by existing small holders, those who already had land; and while the cooperative members had access to easy credit, they did not get more land. The Sandinista Agrarian Cooperatives (CAS) did include landless peasants, but they covered only 6.7 percent of the state lands, or 1.3 percent of the national total (Close,1988:89). Nevertheless, the Nicaraguan reform attempted to include landless peasants among its beneficiaries, a situation that was never foreseen in the Salvadoran reform.

The Nicaraguan mass organizations made significant advances in democratizing their internal structures, and demonstrated their power to the extent that they were able to win some of the demands of their membership and influence certain revolutionary policies. Their rapid growth is all the more remarkable in face of objective difficulties. The

limited development of the productive forces in underdeveloped countries such as Nicaragua and El Salvador, act as a brake on the emergence of social organizations. The mass organizations are working with very meager resources of capital, technology, skilled personnel, and means of transportation and communication. The tremendous growth in membership and the influence of these organizations in Nicaragua, is one of the most important aspects of the quality, nature, and depth of the development of democracy in this country (Central American Bulletin,1986:356). UNAG enrolled about 120 thousand peasants and farmers by 1985 -about one quarter of the economically active population (Bugajski,1990:48); and ATC membership was reported at more than 150 thousand by the end of 1989 (Bugajski,1990:38).

At times, the Sandinista mass organizations, most notably UNAG, ATC, and AMNLAE, resisted government initiatives and acted as oppositional forces (Close,1988:127), demanding changes and improvements in the policies that most affected them. This situation did not take place in El Salvador, as the peasant organizations included in the land tenure reform process had clearly established strong political ties to the government of Duarte. Even if disenchantment for the lack of effective advances in the reform process took place, UCS -the official peasant organization, provided political support to the government of Duarte until the end of his presidential period.

Other popular organizations were systematically kept outside of the Salvadoran reform movement, even though their political presence was remarkable, in particular, UNTS. By 1986, UNTS was representing over 300 thousand workers, including industrial workers, public employees, farmworkers, organizations of unemployed, teachers, and students

(Weinrub & Bollinger,1987:24). UNTS constantly made public criticisms to the government of Duarte, and mobilized in a very effective way a large proportion of the Salvadoran rural and urban workers.

In Nicaragua, the most significant reports of popular mobilizations against the government were organized by the Sandinista organizations ATC and UNAG. The Sandinista government responded to these demonstrations by introducing changes to their agrarian policies to satisfy some of the peoples' demands. In El Salvador, the response of the government to popular mobilizations and demonstrations was quite different. Even when demonstrations and strikes were organized by the government-supported unions, they were immediately labelled as "anti-government leftists", and military attacks against striking workers were usually authorized by the president (Weinrub & Bollinger,1987:24).

Another indicator of the presence of popular organizations in El Salvador is provided by the revolutionary forces. In the northern provinces of the country, the FMLN had established its own structures of popular power -the PPLs (Local Popular Powers). By 1986 there were seven PPLs in the province of Chalatenango, each one responsible for about 500 people (Pearce,1986:243). In 1989, a group of about 9,000 refugees returned form Honduras to Morazán, establishing an innovative social structure in one of the areas under FMLN control. These two structures, in addition to providing a social base for the revolutionary forces, are considered by the peasants participating in them as the model to be followed in the whole country after the triumph of the revolution (Pearce,1986:243; FASTRAS,1990:4).

The ten-year old armed conflict in El Salvador has resulted in the maintenance of a "liberated" zone by the FMLN in the north-east region

of the country. This revolutionary organization appears to have developed a strong social base not only in the war zones, but also among peasants and industrial workers organized in the various unions and federations officially regarded as leftist anti-government. This development is similar to the one occurring in Nicaragua previous to the revolutionary triumph of 1979. The rural and urban social base developed by the Sandinistas provided the necessary support for a general uprising, a condition viewed as necessary by some Salvadoran revolutionaries in order to take power.

Content Analysis of Data

Several similarities were found in the philosophies and policies for peasants participation in the land tenure reforms of El Salvador and Nicaragua. The difference is detected in the strategies followed by both countries to implement, or not, such policies, and in the actual scope of their implementation.

The following section shows a content analysis of the main variables compared here, as described in the methodology of this comparative analysis.

a) Number and content of laws and policies dealing with the participation of peasants in the reform.

El Salvador: The Basic Law of Land Reform makes some reference to the formation of cooperatives as the most appropriate form of organization. The Policies outlined by CARA dedicate three

policies to peasant participation, educat on, and provision of social services.

Nicaragua: The Political Constitution makes specific reference to the participatory role of peasants in policy-making for the land tenure reform. The FSLN Historic Document also provides for the participation of peasants in land distribution, education and social services. Other documents dealing with participation are the Law of Land Reform, the Law of Cooperatives, and the Objectives of UNAG and ATC.

b) Nature and amount of the access to land.

El Salvador: 24% of farmland was distributed among 3.3% of the rural population. Specific ceilings for expropriation were established, regardless of land use. Coffee plantations were not affected. Phase III tied peasants to small marginal plots. No attempts were made to deal with the landless.

Nicaragua: 32% of farmland was distributed among 7.9% of the rural population. No ceilings. Expropriation was based on land use. All major crops were affected. Some attempts were made to allocate land to the landless in the form of cooperatives.

c) Legislation of the access to credit, technology and other services.

El Salvador: ISTA and other government agencies were to improve their structures in order to provide access to all services. No

new structures were created. Credit facilities were eventually denied to cooperatives showing deficit.

Nicaragua: National Credit Committee, Production Commissions and National Food Program. Credit was mainly facilitated through cooperatives. UNAG was allowed to influence government policies towards credit and services.

d) Definition of the philosophy supporting policies for peasants participation in land tenure reform.

El Salvador: Peasant conscientization to adopt land tenure reform process. Peasants regarded as the active subjects of the land tenure reform.

Nicaragua: Peasant conscientization towards changes in ideology. Peasants encouraged to take part in the land tenure reform and directly participate in the development of the country.

e) Design of programs and strategies for peasants participation in land tenure reform.

El Salvador: Specific strategies were outlined by the CARA committee to be implemented by government institutions in all reformed sectors.

Nicaragua: General policies in line with the model of participatory democracy. Peasant organizations ATC and UNAG were allowed to influence the development of participatory strategies.

f) Nature of the organizational structures promoted along the land tenure reform.

El Salvador: Some credit and services cooperatives and rural organizations promoted in both phases of the reform, in line with existing government models. Cooperatives of Phase I held the land collectively. All these cooperatives were comprised into the Federation of Cooperatives of the Land Reform (FESACORA).

Nicaragua: Mass organizations ATC and UNAG in charge of the promotion of cooperatives of various kinds, including collective property cooperatives.

g) Creation of official structures to support the establishment of organized participation.

El Salvador: Consultative Council of the Land Reform (CARA), a national council created to design supporting policies for land tenure reform. Official peasant organizations were part of CARA and were given top positions in the land tenure reform institutions.

Nicaragua: Several decision-making structures operating at all levels. These included: National Council on Agrarian Reform, Regional Council on Agrarian Reform, National Credit Committee, Land Reform Tribunal, Committee of the National Food Program, and Production Commissions for the most important crops in the

country. Peasant organizations participated at all levels in these structures.

h) Definition of the level of participation expected from peasants.

El Salvador: Peasants participation in the land reform cooperatives was to take place at the production decision-making level, and at the management level, in coordination with a government advisor. No participation in policy-making.

Nicaragua: Peasants participation expected at all levels, including [illegible] policy-making.

i) Documentation of the presence or absence of organized demands from the peasantry.

El Salvador: UNTS, an opposition union including the former official peasants organization UCS, organized several demonstrations and strikes demanding full implementation of the land reform and dialogue with the FMLN.

Nicaragua: ATC, the Sandinista peasants organization, arranged demonstrations demanding changes in the land reform and more access to credits and land.

j) Documentation of the response of the governments to the demands of peasants.

El Salvador: Demonstrators were labeled as anti-government leftist. The use of the army against demonstrators and striking

workers was authorized by the president. Official support was suspended to these organizations.

Nicaragua: Minister of Agriculture dialogued with demonstrators. Changes in land tenure reform policies were introduced to satisfy some of the demands presented by the peasants.

k) Presence and size of other peasant organizations not participating in land tenure reform, or their absence.

El Salvador: UNTS comprised 300 thousand workers, both rural and urban. FSLN formed its own government and social structures in the "liberated" zones.

Nicaragua: Aside from ATC and UNAG, no other peasant organizations were reported.

Review of Study Hypotheses

Based on the information collected in this analysis, the four hypotheses formulated in the methodology were proved. Although the nature of this study does not allow for a quantitative analysis, the hypotheses can be supported by the comparative-content analysis between the two different countries' policies.

This analysis will now be summarized for each hypotheses, concentrating on the most relevant aspects differeciating each country.

Hypotheses 1: *The Nicaraguan peasants have been given more access to land and other resources through land tenure reform, than the Salvadoran peasants.*

It seems obvious that the Salvadoran land tenure reform was limited to those peasants and agricultural workers who were former employees of the confiscated estates. Those participating in the phase known as "land to the tiller" were sharecroppers and renters who constituted only about 7% of the economically active rural population. Participatory policies were limited to these peasants only. Landless peasants, wage dependents, and other sectors of the peasantry who constituted 65% of the rural population were not benefited by the reform.

Hypotheses 2: *The Nicaraguan land tenure reform has been more successful than the Salvadoran land tenure reform in promoting the participation of peasants in the process.*

Although policies for participation in the Salvadoran land tenure reform were carefully drawn, they were limited to those peasants benefited by the land tenure reform. Nicaragua attempted to comprise all rural sectors into the land tenure reform, through the two major organizations ATC and UNAG, and created a complex participatory structure that gave peasants more opportunities to integrate into the revolutionary process.

Hypotheses 3: *There are not significant differences in the philosophy supporting policies towards the promotion of peasants' participation in development programs between El Salvador and Nicaragua.*

Interestingly, regardless of the different ideological backgrounds behind the two governments under analysis, policies for peasant participation show a similar philosophy. Peasants are at the center of the development programs, and as the active subjects in the implementation of the reforms. The term *Conscientization* is used by both governments, although the Salvadoran policy-makers limit the meaning of that term to conscientization towards the adoption of the reform process as presented. Peasants' participation, in addition, was limited to the execution of production activities in El Salvador, while Nicaragua showed a commitment to allow full participation of peasants in policy-making. Further analysis is required to confirm the actual level of participation accomplished by the Nicaraguan peasants in policy-making and decision-making.

Hypotheses 4: *There are significant differences in the actual participation of peasants in land tenure reform between El Salvador and Nicaragua.*

The documentary evidence suggests that, in spite of the similarities in the philosophical base between both reform programs, participation of the peasantry in El Salvador was limited to former estate employees in Phase I, and to sharecroppers and renters in Phase II. In addition, no structures were created by the Salvadoran government to facilitate the participation of these peasants.

Nicaragua attempted to include all peasant sectors in its rural mass organization, and created a comprehensive participatory structure in line with its model of participatory democracy. However, further research is required to specify the actual nature of the participation of peasants in both reform programs.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

From a political point of view, the participatory role of peasants in a land tenure reform process takes the form of strategies and programs designed in accordance with the development plans of a given country. Throughout this study, the policies and strategies towards the peasantry of El Salvador and Nicaragua have been analyzed and compared, in an attempt to find out how these two Central American countries conceive the dynamics of their rural social systems, and how they view the participation of peasants in development programs, including land tenure reform.

Policy-making is an activity traditionally reserved for those participating in the state structures, not only in Nicaragua and El Salvador, but in all societies of the world. The concept of allowing people to influence and participate in policy-making is somehow a novel and objectionable idea to some sectors, particularly those in power. In Nicaragua, even if specific policies acknowledge the right of people to participate in decision-making at the political level, the traditional bureaucratic structure of the state acted as a brake in the effective and full participation of people. Nevertheless, if within a conventional democratic state structure, measures are taken to direct policy-making according to the social conditions and social changes of a society, the impact of decisions made by policy-makers will favour the development of a just and democratic system. Participation in policy-making will eventually be a norm.

Land tenure reform in both countries studied was a response to social conditions arising over the development of the *latifundio* and the agro-export model throughout the history of the region. Nonetheless, the even distribution of wealth and power at which these two reform programs are theoretically aiming, should not be considered complete with the redistribution of farmland only. A government can have a well conceived, and well prepared land tenure reform program, but it will not be operationally successful if it does not have the participation of the rural people both in the design of the land tenure reform policies, and in the management and production activities of the agricultural units. After all, rural people have been the original force behind the reform program, and they are one of the main elements in the process of development of rural societies. Furthermore, the organizations of peasants should continue to be the driving force for the government's decision to carry out other development programs. On the other hand, through organized action, participation may constitute the base for the development of positive attitudes and experiences of the peasants, to consolidate the establishment of a new, more equitable social order.

Both countries analyzed in this study view the peasant at the center of their rural development programs and land tenure reforms, a principle shared by the international development agencies also reviewed in this study. The main difference is that land tenure reform in Nicaragua was part of a broader and revolutionary transformation in the economic and political systems of the country. This condition provided for the full political support of the land tenure reform from all government sectors, including the army. Therefore, the implementation of the desired participatory policies was easier than in El Salvador. In El

Salvador, land tenure reform was implemented and caused by the war, as part of a pacification or counterinsurgency program. It did not enjoy the full support of the dominant sectors of society, i.e., the landlords and the army. Therefore, even if the policies and development strategies contained some elements of participation, their implementation became more problematic.

The Nicaraguan land tenure reform was above all an experiment for Nicaraguans as well as for the world's land reform specialists. Many international experts and advisors contributed to its development, and a great deal of attention was given to the different outcomes arising from the implementation of pragmatic policies. In addition, the people were allowed to contribute and influence those policies directly affecting them. This is a positive step towards the full participation of people in policy-making.

It can be argued that both Nicaraguan and Salvadoran peasants were engaged in partial participation in management, particularly in Nicaragua, where they reportedly contributed to management decisions and could restrict what managers could do. However, the peasants did not exercise full participation in management, and faced formidable obstacles to such participation. Two of the most important aspects obstructing participation at the management level were illiteracy and tradition.

Given the technical aspects of development and production programs, illiteracy becomes the main obstacle for peasants' participation in the design and planning of these activities. In addition, those peasants who were literate enjoyed a special status in the communities, a status that often was reflected in better salaries

and living conditions, and contributed to reinforce internal class divisions.

Tradition, as an obstacle for participation, refers to the fact that peasants, especially those with no land, are accustomed to maintain a marginal role in development activities, and their primary concerns are those of day-to-day survival. This traditional backwardness resulted in them maintaining a marginal position, a position reinforced by many official development workers who did not understand the participatory potential of peasants. Similar attitudes towards peasants can be found in many rural studies. In general terms, peasants are regarded as having very traditional and conservative values, and as being "stubbornly passive people who must be persuaded to act in their own interest" (Brown,1982:29). Such perceptions about the peasants leave little hope for their successful integration in governmental programs of development, and participatory strategies may tend to become paternalistic. This contradiction suggests the need to modify the perceptions that both social scientists and policy-makers have had about peasants. Peasants and other rural workers must share in the key economic decisions facing the country. If they are unable to do so, productivity will decline because of the workers' disinterest and resistance (Vilas,1986:143).

Traditionally, land ownership is regarded as a status symbol. Many peasants express preference over this form of ownership and are reluctant to participate in cooperative forms of production. In this sense, land scarcity also creates some obstacles to the development of an effective reform program. The preference of individual ownership of land, both by peasants and policy-makers, in a country with limited land

resources or high population density, or both, is an attitude that must be changed.

In many cases, the failure of cooperatives to become self-sufficient and productive units is blamed on the lack of administrative skills of the cooperative members. This argument is often used by those against the cooperative forms of association to justify their preference for individual ownership. Education and training of cooperative members could easily solve this problem. The importance of education is not limited to the technical aspects of production and management activities. Comprehensive education programs must be developed by the countries implementing land tenure reform before the distribution of land takes place, or at least, along with land distribution, so the people participating in its implementation are ideologically prepared for it.

In sociological terms, the introduction of land tenure reforms in any system implies the modification of the social and power structures in that social system. Land tenure reform should also be considered, at least in its initial stages, as a socio-political process. When this aspect of land tenure reform is not recognized, social scientists and policy makers tend to underestimate the difficulty of accomplishing reform, and the tenacity of the status quo (Brown & Thiesenhusen,1979:96). If governments fail to acknowledge this close relationship, and do not take measures to reform attitudes and ideologies, land tenure reform will not produce the desired results, and will be nothing else than a political tool to reduce social tensions in a temporary way.

Although popular participation in policy-making in Nicaragua appeared to be highly developed, we must be alert to the possibility that the Sandinista government used the popular organizations to float controversial issues, thereby leaving the FSLN free to back away if there was too much opposition. Mass participation, however, appeared attainable only through Sandinista organizations, and then only in relatively non-specialized, highly politicized fields. One should not expect to find the same levels of openness in defense and foreign policy (Close,1988:162). However, the evidence suggests that the participation of peasants in land tenure reform policy-making was considerable, to the point that peasants were able to introduce changes throughout the process. With the new Nicaraguan government that took power in April 1990, peasant organizations will probably be forced to re-consider their objectives developed under the Sandinista government, and in case of attempts by the new government to reverse the land tenure reform, peasants' empowerment will be tested in full.

International policies for development and peasants participation have obviously influenced local policies, particularly in El Salvador, as its land tenure reform was designed by U.S. experts through the American Development Agency -AID. Land tenure reform in El Salvador was considered to be too complicated a matter to have people participating in its design. Being supported by the U.S., land tenure reform had to fit into the ideological requirements of that country, particularly so, because the U.S. provided financial assistance in all aspects. Most documents suggest that in El Salvador, peoples' participation in policy-making and in the implementation of the land tenure reform was never accomplished.

In El Salvador, the war created land tenure reform, but also prevented its effective implementation. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the fact that policies for land tenure reform and peoples' participation in development are linked to a necessary process of pacification. The progression of significant armed and political forces in opposition to the official government is perhaps the most immediate obstacle for the implementation of any kind of land reform in Central America. Realistic alternatives for pacification connote a sharing of the political and economic power structures in these countries. Power holders do not appear to recognize this alternative.

Another important limitation to an effective land tenure reform in El Salvador is a considerable number of landless people, to which the large sector of *minifundistas* are to be added. The insufficiency of their plots to provide subsistence, forces them to look for other sources of income, usually in the *latifundios*. These particular conditions make of the Central American region an area where land tenure reform becomes a crucial issue in any program of rural and national development.

From an economic standpoint, the implementation of an agro-export model of development has been successful in bringing economic growth to the Central American region, as export economies have expanded and diversified throughout the years. From a developmental perspective, it can be argued that incomes have grown, not only for elites but also for the middle sectors and part of the peasantry. On the other hand, it appears clear that the region's dependency on exports has increased, and consequently, it is vulnerable to the fluctuations of the international market.

From the perspective of the rural population, the agro-export system has undoubtedly harmed this sector, as peasants were originally pushed off the land in favor of production of export crops. This particular type of 'land tenure reform' also had its effect in an area devoted to the production of food crops. Production of food crops per capita has been decreasing in Central America, aggravating malnutrition problems in a constantly growing population.

The maintenance of elitist power structures prevents the possibility of significant changes, not necessarily in the agro-export system, since this would certainly require drastic changes in the world system as a whole. Changes could more realistically be expected in the nature of the distribution of the benefits obtained from the production of export commodities. Those against land tenure reform should at least consider this alternative as a way to achieve the participation of the peasantry in the development process, and maintain at the same time, control of political power.

Increased attention is now being given worldwide to the participatory potential of people in the implementation of development programmes, with the rationale that people are at the bottom of any development plan. The range to which policy-makers allow the population to participate in decision-making activities for development, including educational activities, may dictate to a great extent, the effective consolidation of a democratic society. However, institutionalization of participation can have different effects in the social relations developing in the community. In other words, being a member of a land reform cooperative may or may not improve the status and living conditions of a person. In accordance with the hypotheses of this study,

if a land tenure reform has been designed more on the basis of reformist lines, peasants participating in it may find their role as participants limited to the official channels. Moreover, there is always the danger that participation imposed in this way from the out side or from the top down, will only lead to other forms of dependency (Jazairi,1988:58), and to the maintenance of the marginal role of peasants in society. When this institutional dependency takes place, those peasants who were able to participate in government programs face the danger of being totally displaced by a new government that does not agree with the policies implemented by the preceding government.

As the concept of Participation is applied to any form of production involving people in a given structure, it comes to be essentially included in the notion that all workers should participate in making decisions related to the various aspects of their jobs. This would imply that such workers would be more satisfied with their jobs, and therefore, more productive (Massarik,1983:1). More recently, the theoretical base for this perspective of Participation is found not only centered around the general idea that democratic decision-making would increase productivity, but rather on the belief that it would be morally right (Vroom & Jago,1988:2). However, if morality is the issue, it would not be morally right to invite people to participate in activities for which they are lacking the appropriate skills and knowledge. Again, education becomes a crucial aspects in making this participation more effective. This education, however, must not be channeled only in one single direction towards the peasantry. Indigenous knowledge, skills, and social forms of organization should not be regarded as inappropriate by development experts. These forms of local knowledge may also provide

feasible solutions to immediate implementation problems, increasing at the same time, the motivation of people to participate in the desired programs.

Peoples' participation in projects containing some aspects of social awareness and conscientization, will eventually result in their participation in issues affecting policy-making and structural changes, once the adequate attitudes have been developed by all social sectors participating in this process. Some international agencies and policy-makers acknowledge this potential, and in their development programmes, they include some degree of participation in decision-making, and other activities traditionally restricted to the institutional levels of development. Unfortunately, progressive policy-makers have not been able to implement these policies to a satisfactory level, due in part to the opposition confronted from the power-holders.

The models of Participatory Research briefly described in this study, could provide some viable alternatives for the promotion of peoples' participation in development. By attempting to link popular participation and action with the academic circles of society, Participatory Research may provide some degree of legitimation to such social action. This legitimation may result in the gradual introduction of some changes in the prevailing structures of society, without representing from its origins, a threat to the dominating social groups.

In the long run, agrarian structures in Central America will inevitably change, regardless of what policies current governments pursue. Such policies are, however, crucially important for influencing the terms of participation in societies of the small producers and farm workers who make up the vast majority of the rural population. Without

question, past agrarian reforms in Central America have not benefited most of these rural poor. Such reforms were either distorted through their implementation, or the government promulgating them was overthrown by a military coup. Real reforms are indispensable, however, if the poor are to enjoy a minimum of human dignity, rights and satisfaction of their basic needs. Agrarian transformation and land tenure reform is prerequisite for democratic national development geared to meet popular needs and aspirations and not economic growth primarily benefiting small wealthy elites. The question is not one of land tenure reform or fiscal incentives, colonization programs, etc., but of mobilizing all these mechanisms and many more to support effective agrarian reforms. Such reforms, however require genuine political participation by these same potential beneficiaries. They cannot just be handed down from above or from abroad. Such participation was achieved through more conventional processes in Nicaragua during the period analyzed in this study. It is difficult to imagine how effective peasant and workers organization and participation could be achieved in El Salvador without major social, educational, and political transformations in the whole society taking place first. In societies such as this, elections are meaningless exercises.

The nature of social changes taking place around the world brings some hope that the U.S. policy-makers will modify their perceptions towards a social conflict that they have constantly viewed as a "communist menace". If such a transformation occurs, the Central American people may have a better possibility of enjoying more equity in the distribution of wealth and resources, and a real participation in

the economic and social development of their communities. Until then, land tenure reforms promoted within the current socio-economic structure, will continue to reinforce the exploitative relations of production dominating the agro-export model in operation, as well as increase the marginalization of the rural population, and will be contributing to sustain underdevelopment in the Central American region.

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