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‘Prefiero Andar en Mi Tierra Propia’*

A Case Study on Food Sovereignty in the Southern Coast of Guatemala

Author: Sandra Lannergren

Supervisor: María Andrea Nardi

** 'I Prefer to Walk on My Own Land' - The title is based on a quote from Juan María Gonzales Gonzales in the community La Verde. It refers to a preference many of the interviewed peasants expressed, that one of the pivot factors in their lives is to be able to live on and cultivate their own land.*

Abstract

This study explores the concept of Food Sovereignty on a local level among Mayan peasant groups from three communities situated in the southern coast of Guatemala. Drawing on the analytical concepts of Social Exclusion and Unfavourable or Forced Inclusion, it inquires into how food sovereignty can help overcome challenges experienced by the peasants. In addition, it inquires into how the challenges, which are: the land situation; information and knowledge scarcity; limited market participation; plantation employment; environmental effects from large-scale agricultural production; and inadequate response from the government, relate to the peasants' understandings of their development in terms of their cultural, economic and political situations. The study uses a multiple case study approach and draws on data collected through in-depth interviews and group discussions with peasants and organisations supporting food sovereignty. Findings point to that food sovereignty projects provide positive results on local level, but the large land limitation and unequal distribution negatively affect the projects results, thus the possibility to overcome social exclusion and unfavourable or forced inclusion. In addition, the understanding of what food sovereignty includes vary between some peasant groups.

Key words: Food Sovereignty, Mayan Peasants, Land Distribution, Social Exclusion, Unfavourable or Forced Inclusion, Large-Scale Agriculture, Guatemala.

(Word Count: 14,947)

Resumen

Este estudio explora el concepto de soberanía alimentaria a nivel local, entre los grupos campesinos mayas de tres comunidades situadas en la costa sur de Guatemala. Basándose en los conceptos analíticos de la exclusión social y la inclusión desfavorable o forzada, se investiga cómo la soberanía alimentaria pueda ayudar a superar retos experimentados por los campesinos. Además, se indaga en cómo los retos, que son: la situación de la tierra, la escasez de información y conocimientos, la participación limitada de mercado, el empleo de plantaciones, los efectos ambientales de la producción agrícola a gran escala, y la respuesta inadecuada del gobierno, refieren a los campesinos comprensión de su desarrollo en términos de su situación cultural, económica y política. El estudio utiliza un enfoque de estudio de caso múltiple y está basado en datos recogidos a través de entrevistas a fondo y grupos de discusión con campesinos y organizaciones de apoyo a la soberanía alimentaria. Los resultados apuntan a que los proyectos de soberanía alimentaria proporcionan resultados positivos a nivel local, pero la gran limitación de las tierras y la distribución desigual afecta negativamente los resultados de los proyectos, así como la posibilidad de superar la exclusión social y la inclusión desfavorable o forzada. Además, la comprensión de lo que incluye la soberanía alimentaria varía entre algunos grupos de campesinos.

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Abbreviations

CEH	Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico (Commission for Historical Clarification)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNOC	Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas (National Coordination of Peasant Organisations)
CODECA	Comité de Desarrollo Campesino (Peasant Development Committee)
CONGCOOP	Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas (Coordination of NGOs and Cooperatives)
CONIC	Coordinadora Nacional Indígena y Campesina (National Indigenous and Peasant Coordinator)
CUC	Comité de Unidad Campesina (Peasant Unit Committee)
ENCOVI	Encuesta Nacional de Condiciones de Vida (National Survey of Living Conditions)
FONTIERRAS	Fondo de Tierras (The Land Fund)
FS	Food Sovereignty
GTQ	Guatemalan Quetzal (National currency of Guatemala)
IDEAR	Instituto de Estudios Agrarios y Rurales (Institute of Agrarian and Rural Studies)
IGSS	Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social (Guatemala Social Security Institute)
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Institute of Statistics)
INTA	Instituto Nacional de Transformación Agraria (The National Institute for Agrarian Transformation)
LC	Las Cruces (community nr.3)
LV	La Verde (community nr.1)
MR	Monseñor Romero (community nr.2)
PBI	Peace Brigades International
PNDRI	Política Nacional de Desarrollo Rural Integral (Integrated National Rural Development Policy)
SE	Social Exclusion
SNDP	Sistema Nacional de Dialogo Permanente (National System for Permanent Dialogue)
UFI	Unfavourable or Forced Inclusion
USD	United States Dollar

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Problem

Since the colonization, the southern coast of Guatemala has been characterized by large-scale agricultural production (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2003, pp.2-3; Winkler & Alonzo, 2010, pp.13-14). Governments continue to promote these activities for the purpose of the country's economic growth, and are supported by landlords and large agriculture companies. While cotton was spreading on the coast during 1970s and 1980s, one of today's main products is sugarcane (Lovell, 1988, pp.44-45; Salvatierra, 2009), with fields covering approximately 2.15% of the country (Asazgua, 2013a).

Next door to the plantations live Mayan peasant¹ families. These peasants are experiencing the detrimental effects of the large-scale plantations, such as deforestation, water scarcity, contamination, increased land concentration, food insecurity and exploitative labour conditions (Salvatierra, 2009). Indigenous peasants in rural areas are among the poorest in Guatemala (Elías, 2012, pp.81-89; Rural Poverty Portal, 2013). Many are still living in the backlog of colonization and the armed conflict, excluded through discrimination, unequal access to land and little political influence (Lovell, 1988; Viscidi, 2004). Land is central for Mayan peasants as agriculture and cultivation of milpa, traditional maize and bean production, is a part

¹ In this study I have chosen to use the word peasant. The debate about choice of an English word representing a 'campesina/o' (the Guatemalan equivalent) is large and this is no space for a plentiful commentary, only a minor one. One considered option is to continue using the already imported word 'campesino'. However, from a grammatical point of view campesino is the masculine gender form, thus excluding the female peasant, campesina; the feminine form of grammatical gender. Peasant is, based on found information, the closest English translation to campesino or campesina, except the direct translation of 'person of the country' (Loker, 1996, p.71). A peasant mainly produce for self-sufficiency and if possible a smaller part for the market. The aim is not to create a business, as it is for a farmer, but reproduction of the family (Martinez-Torres and Rosset, 2012). Peasants are defined by their tradition of family integration, knowledge of agriculture practices, cultural values and adaptive strategies (Madera Pacheco & Garrafa Torres, 2010). This goes in line with what the respondents of this study has expressed. While in a European context, peasant can be argued as being a word of an obsolete time; it is commonly used in Latin America for describing campesinos and campesinas. It is highly important to understand that peasants are a dynamic group consisting of different social groups, not just agriculturalists.

of their culture and way of living. Peasants' connection to land and nature is strong, and for many, agriculture is their main activity (Isakson, 2009).

According to the Guatemalan civil society, composed by Mayan indigenous and peasants organisations, the governments are not committed to improve the land, food and environmental situation for peasants, and some argue that the policies even are opposing improvements (Barry, 2012; Granovsky-Larsen, 2013). This points to what Cristóbal Kay (2006) and Amartya Sen (2000) label as *Social Exclusion* (SE), being, 'an active process of exclusion brought about by the dynamics of the system' (Kay, 2006, p.461), and *Unfavourable or Forced Inclusion* (UFI), which is an inclusion based on "exploitation" or "deeply unequal terms" (Sen, 2000, pp.28-29).

Many peasant groups and communities are organising themselves to improve the policies through demonstrations, creating propositions or by strengthening themselves through informal education, new agricultural practices, seed workshops etc. Some local peasant groups are working with the idea of *food sovereignty* (FS), a concept promoting the peasants right to choose what they want to produce and eat, their right to equal land distribution, culturally appropriate food, sustainable methods etc. (interview CEIBA 12/12/2012; Via Campesina, 2007). This alternative is seen as closely interlinked with the Mayan worldview and indigenous culture of peasants, through more nature-friendly production techniques, and with peasants being the pivot, as they are the main local producers (Via Campesina, 2007; Windfuhr & Jonsén, 2005)

1.2. Research Aim

This study is a multiple case study, which examines how peasant groups in three communities in the southern coast of Guatemala, in their different ways, construct and practice activities of FS to overcome negative economic, political and cultural challenges.

Based on the above research problem, this study will inquire into following research question:

How can food sovereignty help overcome social exclusion and unfavourable or forced inclusion among Mayan peasant communities in the southern coast of Guatemala?

The research question will be answered by breaking it down to below three questions:

- *How do peasants perceive current challenges in their cultural, political and economic situation?*
- *How are these challenges related to social exclusion and unfavourable or forced inclusion?*
- *How is food sovereignty perceived and operationalized as an alternative to the challenges?*

Data has been collected through interviews and group discussions, from three communities: La Verde in the department of Retalhuleu, and Monseñor Romero and Las Cruces, in the department of Suchitepéquez, and analysed qualitatively. Through the later steps of the data analysis six categories became prominent. Thus, these categories form the main challenges perceived by the peasants and construct the foundation of the first part of the analysis.

1.3. Disposition of the Paper

Subsequent to this introduction, follows a background chapter describing Guatemala's historical and contemporary agricultural and land situation, and a small description of the local scene. Chapter three contains the analytical framework chiefly describing the concepts of SE and UFI, and FS. The methodology is presented in chapter four, and thereafter follows chapter five containing the analysis. The analysis is divided into two parts, the first one aims to answer the two first sub-research questions by presenting, one-by-one, the respondents perceived challenges. The second part aims to answer the third sub-question by analysing local FS, presented respectively in each of the three communities. Chapter six concludes the study, and thereafter references and appendices follow.

2. Background on Guatemala

Fifty-four percentages of the Guatemalan population live under the national poverty line² and in the rural areas the poverty headcount is 71% (INE, 2011). Poverty is especially extensive among the indigenous population and this can be observed in economic, social and political terms (Elías, 2012, pp.81-89; Rural Poverty Portal,

² The 2011 National Poverty Line was GTQ 9,031 (USD 1,152, current exchange rate 30/07/2012) and extreme poverty was GTQ 4,380 (USD 559, current exchange rate 30/07/2012).

2013). In the opinion poll *Latinobarómetro* 2000, measuring public opinions, indigenous groups³ were stated as the, with majority, most excluded group in the country (Behrman et.al. 2003, pp.2-3).

2.1. Historical Conformation of the Agricultural Sector

With the Spanish invasion in 1524 (Lovell, 1988, p.28), indigenous institutions were destroyed, and peasants forced into labour (Winkler & Alonzo, 2010, p.13). This was the beginning of a land inequality the indigenous population still is witnessing today. The indigenous population was relocated and indigenous villages created, followed by fiscal obligations, and labour responsibilities imposed upon the people (Viscidi, 2004, p.1; Winkler & Alonzo, 2010, pp.13-14). By 1871, a process of modernization was initiated which signified that communal land had to be sectionalized and privately titled. This resulted in *ladinos* and *criollos*⁴ seizing large parts of what had been indigenous land (Lovell, 1988, p.38). Indigenous people was evicted to less fertile farmland, while productive lands were monopolized and used as haciendas producing export products (Winkler & Alonzo, 2010, pp.13-14). Labour mainly consisted of indigenous peasants seasonally migrating from the highlands, but some peasants returned to their lands in the mountains, to which they were emotionally and physically connected, to cultivate their *milpa*⁵ (Lovell, 1988, p.33).

However, the Guatemalan president Jacobo Arbenz (1951-1954) turned the situation on its head. In 1952, an agrarian reform was presented; and expropriation and land redistribution based on community preferences implemented. These changes made the economic situation for large landowners as well as foreign companies unstable. Through a CIA-backed *coup d'état* in 1954, Arbenz was forced to leave the presidential post and several of the reforms were retracted (Granovsky-Larsen, 2013, pp.328-329).

³ Almost 40%³ of the Guatemalan population are indigenous (39.5% Mayan, 0.05% Garifuna and 0.14% Xinka), 60.4% *ladinos* (the term used for the non-indigenous population) and about 23 Mayan languages are spoken (INE, 2002; Minority Rights Group International, 2008).

⁴ In English Creole; locally born people of pure European ancestry (Metz, 2006, pp.184-185).

⁵ Milpa means 'to the field' or 'field' and is by Mayan tradition cultivated with maize, beans and squash.

The unequal land distribution and reinstatement of the pre-reform land distribution were some of the main factors that initiated the 36 years long armed conflict⁶ (1960-1996) (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2003, p.2). More than 200 000 people were killed or disappeared, the majority being indigenous. During the four most violent years of the conflict, about one million indigenous persons were displaced (CEH, 1999; Lovell, 1988, pp.46-47). Land was given to wealthy landowners connected to the military, or military officers themselves. When Peace Accords were accepted in 1996, land ownership was an obvious but very controversial focus (Viscidi, 2004, p.1). However, no structural reforms were addressed in the accords, today few requirements have been implemented even though nearly 20 years have passed, and of the ones being implemented mainly market-led regulations were emphasised⁷ (Granovsky-Larsen, 2013, p.329). Two of these land programs following the “willing buyer, willing seller” principle, responsible for titling and selling land was the state-led *National Institute for Agrarian Transformation* (INTA) and the succeeding *The Land Fund* (FONTIERRAS) (Granovsky-Larsen, 2013, p.329).

2.2. Contemporary Land and Agricultural Situation in Guatemala

2.2.1. Government Policies and Sugarcane Production

In 2009, the government formed an *Integrated National Rural Development Policy* (PNDR), together with several national peasant and indigenous organisation. PNDR is an important development possibility for the civil society as it promotes FS; recognition, respect and promotion of different forms of organisations; interculturality and multiculturalism; sustainability; that human beings shall be the centre of the integrated rural development etc. (CONIC et.al. 2009). By May 2013, it had not been implemented and actors now disagree about the interpretation of the policy. According to the policy, also called initiative 4048, the government has responsibilities in terms of implementation, facilitation etc. But the governmental institution *National System for Permanent Dialogue* (SNPD) facilitating the policy, explains that it should not be confused with a land reform and the minister of agriculture denies its possibility to be implemented (Barry, 2012, pp.3-4). While civil

⁶ Armed conflict is the term used in this study as it is the most common term used in Guatemala (Granovsky-Larsen 2013, pp.325).

⁷ For a review of some of the land market programs initiated in Guatemala see Lastarria-Cornhiel (2003).

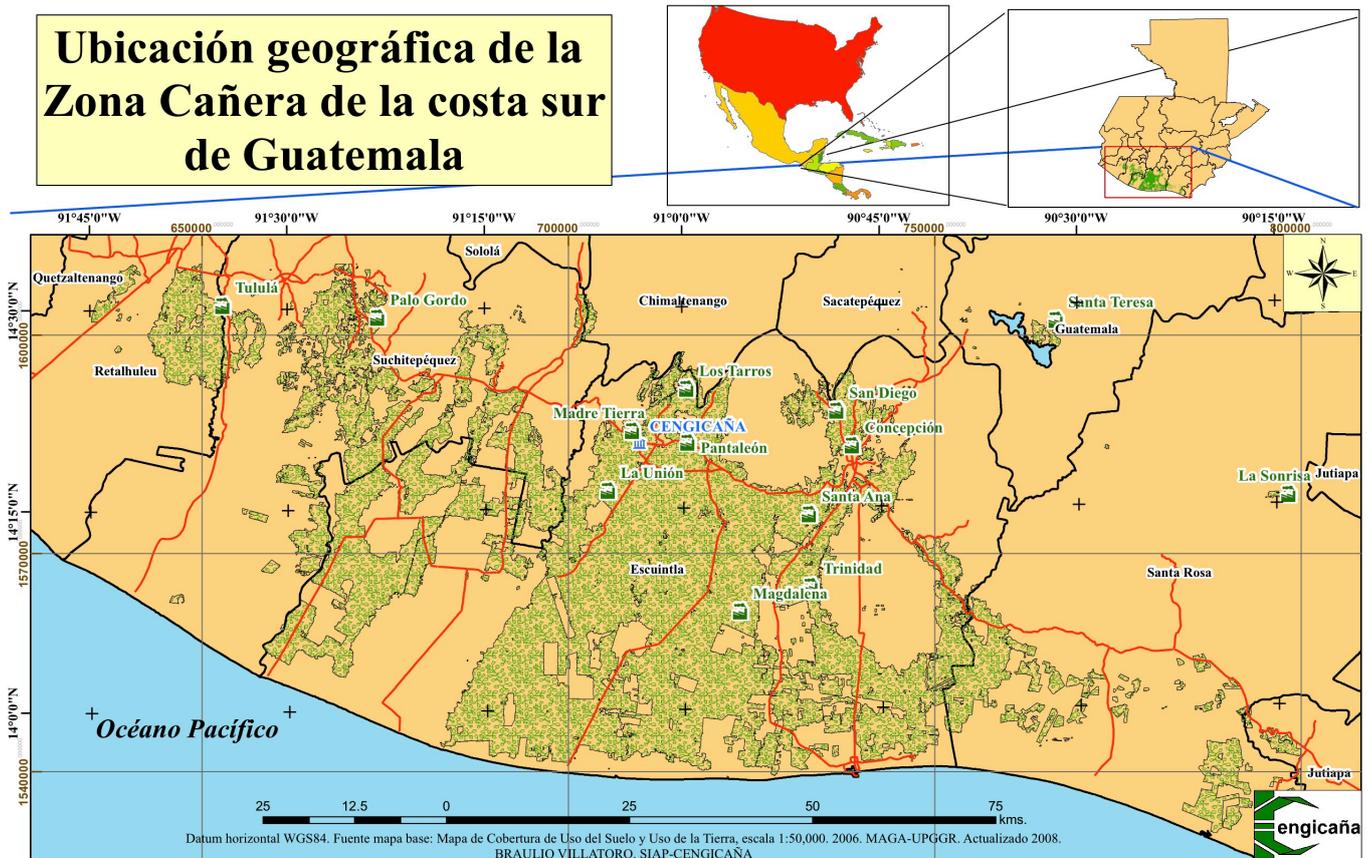
society continues their struggle for PNDRI and its suggested beneficiaries, evictions of smallholders⁸ without formal land certificates are justified by the use of other laws, like the Guatemalan Constitution's Article 39, assuring private property (ibid).

The most fertile land in Guatemala can be found in the coastal departments in the south, Escuintla, Suchitepéquez, Retalhuleu and Izabal in the north. Land rental from large landlords is very common in this southern area, both among coast habitants and highland migrators (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2003, pp.2-3). Large-scale plantations producing export crops can to a large extent be found in the southern coast of Guatemala and especially sugarcane plantations are large contributors to Guatemala's economic growth. The country is the fourth largest sugar exporter in the world and the second largest producer in Latin America and the Caribbean (Asazgua, 2013a, 2013b). There are 14 private-owned sugar mills in the country and about 70% of the sugarcane is exported (Tay, 2012, p.6). Approximately 2.15% of the country is covered by sugarcane fields (Asazgua, 2013a), and even though the manager of the Guatemalan Sugar Growers Association, stated in 2007 that they already had reached the physical limit, expansions continue in the southern parts of Guatemala (Quinto, 2007). The map (figure 1) below illustrates the geographical spread of sugarcane production in the southern coast of Guatemala in 2008.

According to Salvatierra (2009), the sugarcane production has negative environmental consequences. Producing canes demands open areas, thus forest and single trees are cut down causing deforestation and dry climate. Irrigation from canals and floods changes the natural course of the water, causing flooding during the rainy seasons and drought during dry seasons. Contamination affects surrounding villages, the terrestrial system and through floods it reaches the coastal marine ecosystems (ibid). A crucial part of the sugarcane production is the cane burning to reduce leafy materials, and facilitate harvest and processing, thus diminishing costs. Studies also show that respiration aggravates during burning periods, compared to non-burning periods (Álvarez, 2007; Cançado et.al, 2006).

⁸ According to the last census, smallholders are those with less than 7 hectares of land (Lastarria-Cornhiel 2003, p.2)

Figure 1 - Geographical Location of the Sugarcane Zone in the Southern Coast of Guatemala



(Cengicaña, 2008)

This map illustrates how sugarcane production is spreading (see the light green areas) in the southern coast of Guatemala. The majority of the production is based in the most southern departments, namely, from left to right, Retalhuleu, Suchitepéquez, Escuintla and Santa Rosa. The small dark green motives illustrates where the sugar mills are located.

2.2.2. Land Ownership⁹

The unequal land distribution continues being an issue for certain groups of the population. The last agricultural census was made in 1979 and by then about 64.5% of the land belonged to 2.6% of the landowners; the gini-coefficient for land distribution was 0.88 (Mauro & Merlet, 2003, p.5). A study made by *the National Survey of Living Conditions* (ENCOVI) in year 2000, indicates that the coefficient probably increased since then (ibid). There are approximately 400,000 landless households in Guatemala (Loker, 1996, p.72).

⁹ When land is discussed in the analysis of this study it not only include access to land. Ribot & Peluso (2003, p.153) defines *access* as “the ability to derive benefits from things”. This study also includes control over land and insurance of community survival, as demanded by la Via Campesina (2007).

It is argued that the institutions, responsible for land transfer processes, are not as transparent and efficient as they need to be, neither does Guatemala have a well-functioning land registry system, with the current one being complex, bureaucratic and lacking information (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2003, pp.8-9). Granovsky-Larsen (2013, pp.329-330) argues that the current market-based way of improving the unequal land distribution has failed. During eleven years FONTIERRAS completed 18% of the received solicitations, and it is argued that they only have fulfilled 1% of the people's demand for land. Of those provided with land, many experience the surroundings as inferior as they need to create new communities on earlier commercial farms without access to water, infrastructure etc. As a result, about half of the beneficiaries have moved from their purchased land, and approximately 37% are behind with debt payment. In this market-led process, large landlords took the opportunity to sell their land overpriced. Thirty-five percentages of the lands were sold in the southern coast where commercial agriculture (e.g. cotton) had exploited the soil though extensive chemical use, areas unsuitable for communal living indigenous peasants (ibid).¹⁰

Organisations such as the *Peasant Unit Committee* (CUC), *National Indigenous and Peasant Coordinator* (CONIC) and *Plataforma Agraria* (Agrarian Platform) etc. propose an annulment or 99% reduction of unpaid debts to FONTIERRAS. But the response from the government is poor, even though they at times have promised to 'take on the debt'. Peasant beneficiaries have to use their monetary income to repay the debts instead of improving their land (CONIC, 2012; PBI, 2012; Viscidi, 2004, p.2).

2.2.3. Hombres del Maíz¹¹

Isakson (2009, pp.726, 737, 749) argues that even though peasants are aware of the limited economic profit cultivation of milpa makes, it is still preferred due to cultural and social values. The cultivation of milpa, not only has its long tradition due to its resiliency, but also as maize provides a security system of a community, and it is used

¹⁰ According to the Land Tenure Centre (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2003, p.3), it is common that smallholders do not possess the formal title of the land. The study indicates that parcels sold between smallholders are decreasing in size and that large landowners, in general, are unwilling to divide their holdings to sell to small farmers or handling groups of small farmers that may wish to purchase large farms (ibid).

¹¹ "Men of maize", or "people of corn", refer to the practice of milpa cultivation, but also to *Pop Wuj*, the Mayan bible, where people are created from maize; red maize became the blood, white maize the bones, yellow maize the flesh, and black the bile and eyes (Isakson, 2009, pp.751).

as a form of communal aid (Isakson, 2009, p.751). Cultivation of maize is deeply rooted in the culture of the Mayan population and *tortilla*, made on the whole grain is the basic food consumed in the Guatemalan households, especially among the poor population.

Peasants mainly cultivate their land for self-sufficiency, and if harvest is large enough, some are sold on markets (Martínes-Torres & Rosset, 2010). But according to Jonsén & Windfuhr (2005, p.28), smallholders tend to experience problems accessing the market, due to lacking infrastructure and storage. This forces them to sell at harvest when prices are low, thus middlemen buying the products gain any possible revenue (ibid).

In the Guatemalan society, peasants are often perceived as backward and lazy, though they tend to work long hours on the fields. Isakson (2009, pp.731-732) rejects this, and explains that the milpa cultivation is dynamic and contributes to the country's food security, and diversity of *semillas criollas* (native seeds), thus, resilience of crops. Peasant use both native seeds and *semillas mejoradas*¹² (improved seeds) (ibid).

Economically the cultivation is not enough for the majority of peasants who have to find other alternatives away from their land to gain income for consumption (Isakson, 2009, pp.726, 737, 749). Studies conducted by CEIBA (Raymundo Raymundo, 2010, pp.5-9) however show that the minimum salaries within the agricultural sector and non-agricultural sector are not large enough to cover the monthly cost of neither the basic food basket nor the vital basket¹³. In 2010, the salaries would have had to increase approximately 20% to cover the vital basket (ibid). Peasants working outside the parcels often take employment at the plantations. Even though some companies try to fulfil minimum standards, substandard working conditions are common.

¹² Native and improved seeds have different positive and negative effects. Native seeds supports natural diversity and resilience, but may not give as high yields as improved. Improved seeds are developed to give higher yield but have a genetic uniformity, which can increase plants vulnerability to pests (Isakson, 2009, pp.727).

¹³ The basic food basket is "the minimum amount of alimentations a Guatemalan family needs to consume daily to satisfy their energy and protein needs" and the vital basket consists of "a set of essential goods and services to satisfy the basic needs for the well-being of the family" (Raymundo Raymundo 2010, pp.3)

Institutions such as the *Guatemalan Institute for Social Security* (IGSS) are aimed to protect the workers, but rules are bended and rights “notoriously violated”, according to *The Peasant Development Committee* (CODECA) (2005).

2.3. Setting the Local Scene

This study is based on three cases of peasant groups in the communities La Verde (LV), Monseñor Romero (MR) and Las Cruces (LC), situated in the departments of Retalhuleu and Suchitepéquez (as indicated in figure 2 below). Each peasant group works together with an organisation, and each *community*¹⁴ is affected by one or more close-by large-scale agricultural plantation, elaborated upon in the analysis.

2.3.1. Case 1 – La Verde

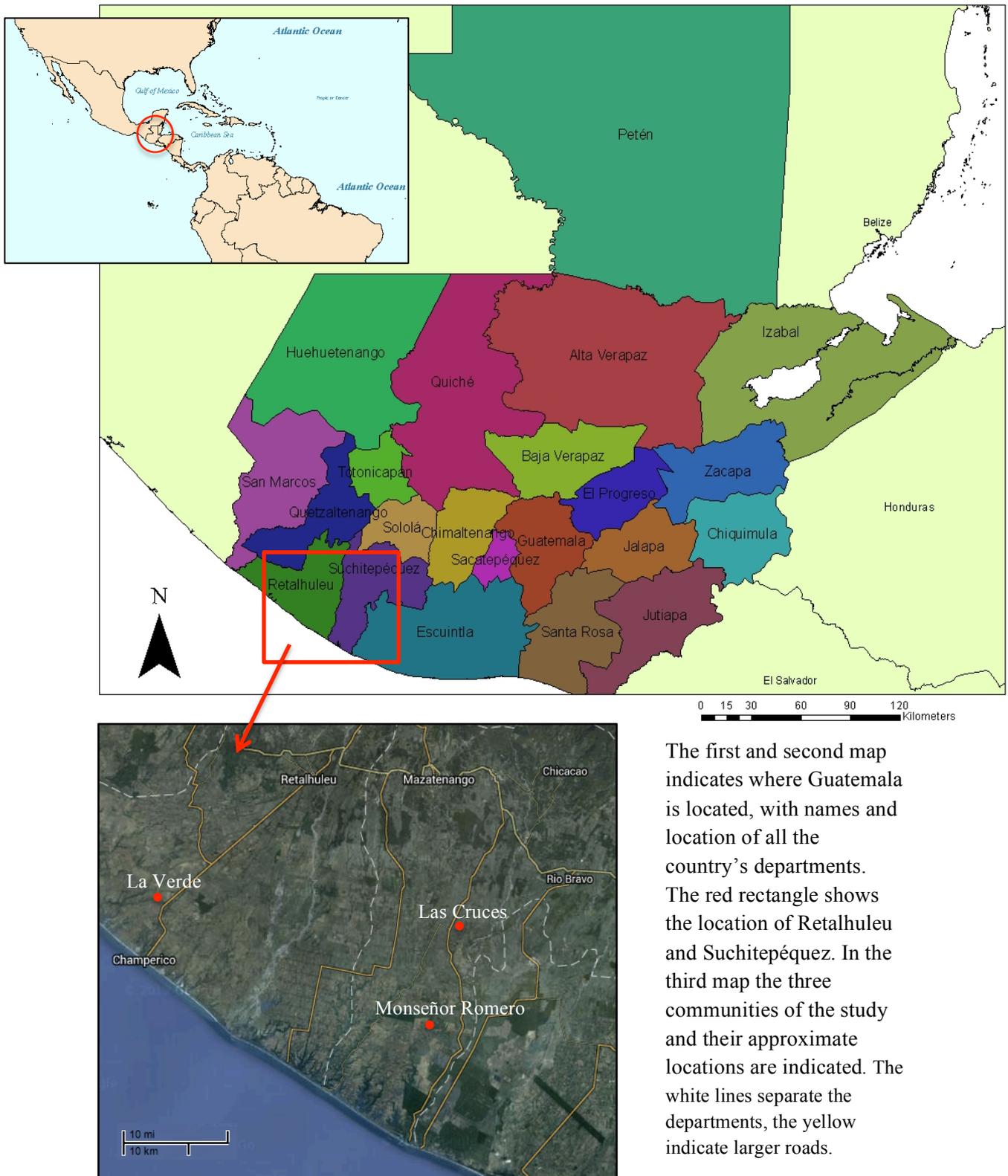
LV is a peasant community situated close to a larger road in the department of Retalhuleu, about one to two hours bus drive from the main commercial town, also called Retalhuleu. Winter in Retalhuleu generally gives somewhat good harvest and summer, for many, is limited to maize and sesame cultivation. This environment is very similar in the other two communities of the study, described below. LV is inhabited by 150 households, which members lived in the highlands before the armed conflict and settled down on the land in year 2001. When buying the land every household was given three *manzanas*¹⁵ for production and about four *cuerdas*¹⁶ for living. Twenty-one peasant households participate in the activities of *The Association for Promotion and Development of the Community CEIBA*, a national organisation supporting the Guatemalan social movement and community groups through technical, social, political and environmental involvement (CEIBA 2013). The peasant group receive workshops about their rights, agricultural production techniques and information about national policies.

¹⁴ In this study “community” is referring to a local community with geographical boundaries.

¹⁵ Three manzanas equals approximately 2.1 hectares (1 manzana \approx 0.7 ha) and can be compared to the national average farm size (200 hectares) from the last agricultural consensus (1979) (Lastarria-Cornhiel 2003, p.2).

¹⁶ Four cuerdas equals approximately 0.18 ha (1 cuerda \approx 1/16 manzana).

Figure 2 - Map of Guatemala, the Country's Departments and Studied Communities



The first and second map indicates where Guatemala is located, with names and location of all the country's departments. The red rectangle shows the location of Retalhuleu and Suchitepéquez. In the third map the three communities of the study and their approximate locations are indicated. The white lines separate the departments, the yellow indicate larger roads.

(All maps are constructed by the author. The two first maps are made in ArcGIS (2013), with information from ESRI (2013). The third map is made from maps from Google (2013).

2.3.2. Case 2 – Monseñor Romero

MR is a peasant community, created in the end of the 1980s, and situated in the department of Suchitepéquez, about two hours by local traffic from the main commercial town Mazatenango, also being the capital of the department. More than 150 households live in the community and the inhabitants are all from the ethnical group Quiche. After dividing the land, earlier a farm, every household received four manzanas to cultivate. Today the community members participate with various extent in capacity trainings and meetings of CODECA, a national peasant and indigenous organisation emphasising access to land, and technical capacity development activities and informing the members of national political issues (interview CODECA/*National Coordination of Peasant Organisations (CNOC)* 14/12/2012; CNOC, 2013).

2.3.3. Case 3 – Las Cruces

Just as MR, LC is a peasant community located in the department of Suchitepéquez. Even though the community is situated close to a larger road, it takes about 90 minutes by car to Mazatenango. There are slightly more than 500 households in LC and 175 of them are participating in CODECA's workshops and meetings. The peasants have been enrolled in the organisation at different occasions and the organisation has been in the community since 2001. None of the members own land for living or cultivation.

3. Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of this thesis is based upon the concepts of SE, UFI and FS. These concepts have been chosen as they could help explain the problems respondents of this study are experiencing. Several authors (Behrman, et.al, 2003; Buvinić, 2004; Kay, 2006) acknowledge the continued existence of SE among the people of Latin America. FS is also presented, as it is a promoted concept among the peasant groups and their supporting organisations.

3.1. Social Exclusion

SE is a concept, which from one perspective is considered as 'an active process of exclusion brought about by the dynamics of the system' (Kay, 2006, p.461); while among others it is regarded as 'a condition affecting certain individuals or groups

which is often seen in static terms' (ibid). This study applies the first mentioned explanation of SE, as it follows the original more "radical" meaning (ibid, pp.460-461), allowing the society's system to be partially responsible for the exclusion. Roberts (2004, p.196) states that SE is a matter of 'a second-class citizenship' acknowledging the states role in producing these disadvantages. Also Gacitúa et al. (2000, p.13) reflect upon SE as a process and not a constant state, and that this process in its turn can culminate in marginalisation, inequality and poverty. Buvinić argues that 'Social Exclusion is carved into Latin America's history' (2004, p.7) due to the colonial heritage of exploiting African slaves and indigenous labour.

Other researchers, such as Altamirano et.al. (2003, pp.22-24) and Gacitúa, et.al. (2000, p.12), divide SE into three sub-categories: cultural exclusion, economic exclusion and political exclusion. Cultural exclusion refers to "horizontal relations" between individuals and groups; identification, and social labelling of each other. It is mainly a question of discrimination of lower-ranked groups in the society. The components of cultural exclusion consolidate and are consolidated by economic and political exclusion. Economic exclusion concerns unemployment, underemployment, insecure employment, capital restrictions for self-employed and insurance constrains. It also includes material deprivation and market access. Political exclusion occurs when a person or a group of people experience violation of rights, and the democratic foundation of equal rights to take part of the society is not followed. This can lead to uneven dissemination of material goods, thus possibly reinforcing economic exclusion (Altamirano et.al, 2003, pp.22-23; Gacitúa et.al, 2000, p.12).

There is a deeper meaning of SE. Amartya Sen (2000, pp.9-10) exemplifies this by arguing that a *relational deprivation* is needed for the concept of SE to be fulfilled. For a situation to be classified within the concept of SE a deprivation, like involuntary food deprivation, needs to relate to another cause (ibid). For example, exclusion from market access due to economic boundaries can lead to a person being involuntary deprived of food.

3.2. Unfavourable or Forced Inclusion

Another concept, applied to guide the analysis and closely connected to SE, is Unfavourable or Forced Inclusion (UFI), a term introduced by Amartya Sen (2000).

UFI is, as the words explain, a situation of participation based on unfavourable or forced means. It can be represented by an inclusion based on ‘exploitation’ or ‘deeply unequal terms’, and is commonly discussed in relation to exploitative employment (ibid, pp.28-29). UFI can be a form of exclusion from equal and just inclusion, but it is pivotal to understand that SE and UFI are two different problems (ibid, pp.28-29). Even though the origin of an exclusion or UFI can differ, the two concepts need to be considered, as both can elicit deprivation (ibid, p.29).

3.2.1. Instrumental Importance and Constitutive Relevance

SE can be seen as having ‘instrumental importance’ or it can be of ‘constitutive relevance’. In this study, these two expressions of SE will also be applied for UFI. According to Sen (2000, p.12-14), ‘Instrumental importance’ is manifested when a relational deprivation does not affect one directly, but the causes can lead to deprivations of other kinds. If a person does not participate in the credit market, it is not necessarily a negative thing affecting this person’s life; some actually make their own choice not to participate. However, being involuntarily excluded from the credit market can elicit very negative consequences, causing other deprivations (ibid).

‘Constitutive relevance’ can instead be explained as affecting one directly through the exclusion, e.g. exclusion from participation of community activities; something that would make someone feel ostracized. With or without consequences it is a deprivation in itself (ibid, pp.12-13). Additionally, SE can be an active or a passive process, the difference being if the exclusion is intentionally made or not. If peasants are evicted from their land by the government, the exclusion from secure access to their land is active. If the exclusion is passive, it is not the intended result of an action but rather a result ‘of a set of circumstances without such volitional immediacy’ (ibid, pp.14-15).

3.3. Food Sovereignty

In Guatemala, several indigenous peasant organisations have started to frame their projects within the concept of FS¹⁷ as an alternative to the governments’ agrarian policies discussed above. FS is a concept developed as a response to the lacking

¹⁷ Food Sovereignty is a specific policy proposal and shall not be confused with *Right to Food*, which is a human rights concept, or *Food Security*, which is more of a development goal or vision (Windfuhr & Jonsén, 2005, pp.19-24).

debate on ‘social control of the food system’, and as a precondition to food security (Via Campesina, 2007). First presented in 1996 by the international peasant movement Via Campesina, FS became a new discourse for policy making. FS is stated as being an alternative to neo-liberal policies, which is argued to have increased peoples’¹⁸ dependence on importation of agricultural products (Patel, 2009, pp.663-665, Via Campesina, 2003). The definition of the concept is extensive but some of the most pivotal parts are covered in the below list:

- (a) Access to culturally appropriate food¹⁹ (b) produced through methods that are ecologically sound and sustainable.
- (c) People’s possibility to define their food systems and agriculture systems.
- (d) Priority of local agricultural production to feed people locally.
- (e) The rights of the local food producers (here peasants) to control lands, waters, seeds and local markets.
- (f) The right of peasants to produce food.
- (g) The right of consumers to be able to decide what they consume, and how and by whom it is produced.

(Via Campesina, 2003, 2007; Windfuhr & Jonsén, 2005)

Above FS-principles are important parts of the second chapter of the analysis as they, though FS projects are explored as possible alternatives to SE and UFI, aiming to answer the third sub-question. The specific principles are chosen as they can be worked with directly on a local level, among the responding peasants and the organisations.

People’s possibility to define their own systems and ways of living is especially pivotal. FS has a bottom-up, rural perspective (Windfuhr & Jonsén, 2005, pp.11-12, 19-24), and is not implemented as a fixed development concept from above, which is why it can take many different shapes.

¹⁸ The “people” Via Campesina are supporting are described as peasants, small and medium-size farmers, landless, fisher folks, women farmers, indigenous people, migrants etc. (Via Campesina 2007)

¹⁹ Culturally appropriate food is based on what the people themselves define as culturally appropriate. In this study, one pivotal part is the milpa.

In Guatemala several organisations are working with FS, but the policies of the governments do seldom agree with the alternative FS represent (Barry, 2012, pp.3-4). However, many peasants, negatively affected by government interventions or absence of interventions, are together with the organisations practicing FS-activities as an alternative.

Sen addresses economic disadvantages and exclusion in relation to food, markets and poverty (2000, p.43). People not having access to food in the market, even though foodstuff are not lacking, are due to their absence of purchasing power passively excluded from effectively demand what they need (ibid). This is something FS involves in by promoting possibilities for local peasants to take control of their local markets (Windfuhr & Jonsén, 2005, p.14). Thus, if peasants were able to produce enough of their own food in sustainable ways, they would improve their possibility to become empowered and active participants in these markets.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The meta-science position of this study approaches critical theory. This derives from the fact that this study is based on the idea that power structures need to be questioned. Critical theory is “characterized as an interpretative theory with an understanding of social phenomena as being historically constructed and strongly defined by power-asymmetries and conflicting interests” (Mikkelsen, 2005, p.136). The power I possess by being a white European woman, with other economic, social and political possibilities, shall therefore be acknowledged, as I am the interpreter of other peoples words. Changes in the world are needed to overcome power-relations, and this is guided by an interpretative approach and interest in knowledge acquisition (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, p.144). Using an analytical framework built upon SE, UFI and FS seems relevant in relation to critical theory, as knowledge can be spawn, enabling me to gain a more critical perspective on European mainstream development. This is however difficult, as I will always bring my cultural European background with me, and see other cultures and practices through my own cultural lens. I try to approach this with reflexivity and sensitivity of the study and other

cultures. This is consistent with the ontological and epistemological standpoint of critical theory, questioning positivism.

As Silverman and Marvasti (2008, p.9) suggest, the choice of methods for the study is throughout “based on the specific task at hand”. A qualitative study is appointed based on the method’s possibility to penetrate complex societies and situations, and its ability to answer the research questions. A combination between inductive and deductive analytical approaches is used, as I started without theory to take in data with an open mind and thereafter explored analytical frameworks in parallel with analysing the data. This iterative work has helped form the research questions and has brought theory and empirical data closer to each other (Creswell, 2007, pp.36-41; Mikkelsen, 2005, pp.168-169).

The research follows a multiple case study approach. Yin (2003) explains that a case study is preferred when ‘(a) "how" or "why" questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context’ (2003, p.24). These three points goes well in line with the study. I preferred to use a multiple case study before a single case study as it, according to Yin (2003, pp.56, 68), is more robust. The choice fell on specifically three cases, partly because of convenience and partly because of time constrains.

According to Bryman (2012, p.418), a unit of analysis is chosen to answer the stated research questions. In this study, the units of analysis are three Mayan peasants groups consisting of individual peasants (the respondents) from different households connected through their participation in FS activities. The Mayan peasant groups come from three communities.

Also, important informants are the representatives of five organisations (CEIBA, CNOC, CODECA, REDSAG, CONIC), which are promoting, researching and/or implementing tools (such as practical workshops, local projects etc.) to achieve an alternative development and FS. Representatives from CEIBA and CODECA worked as gatekeepers (Kalof et.al, 2008, p.116) as they are collaborating with the three

communities. They have contributed with information about their interaction with the respondents, how FS is received nationally etc.

4.2. Data Collection

The research is built upon primary and secondary data. The chief data source consists of formal interviews, complemented with informal interviews; documents such as reports from the organisations, their teaching material, national publications on FS, indigenous and peasant organisations; observations and transect walks in parcels. Especially the transect walks and the informal interview have enabled observations due to their closeness and their ability to open my eyes to new perspectives. To ensure that information is triangulated and a case study's advantages are properly use, evidence has been attained from multiple sources (Yin, 2003, pp.125-128).

Data collection took place between December 2012 and February 2013, with a total of four visits to the core communities of the study. The field research is divided into two phases; first an exploratory phase and then a second phase intending to elicit more comprehensive and detailed information.

4.2.1. Sampling and Sources of Data

The two gatekeeper organisations assisted the sampling of communities and peasant groups. Purposive sampling is used to identify organisations working actively with FS. Through interviews with some organisations I also used snowball sampling to find other organisations that could provide relevant information for the research. All three communities are purposively sampled (Bryman, 2012, p.418) through their location in the southern coast, their connection to the organisations and their experience of negative effects of one or more large-scale agricultural production with effects on FS. The southern coast was chosen, as large-scale plantations are highly present here. The peasants were somehow involved in FS activities provided by the organisations and the sampling procedure also ensured participation of both men and women.

Before one interview the gatekeeper explained that visitors had been ejected from the community or apprehended until reasons for the visit were investigated and clarified. This was due to earlier visits from companies trying to buy areas of communal land

from farmers without permission from the community leaders. Except the importance of having a gatekeeper, this knowledge enlightens some of the results of the clashes between locals and non-locals.

4.2.2. Interviews and Group Discussions

Interviews were conducted in two phases. The first exploratory phase included most of the organisation interviews as well as interviews with peasants to get a contextual background and an initial understanding of the possibilities and problems with their choice of agricultural practices. In total, four in-depth semi-structured and open-ended interviews have been made with four different organisations, each interview having one or two representatives participating. This interview structure was chosen as it allowed me to continue discuss relevant answers, and ask follow-up questions, thus “logical gaps can be closed” (Mikkelsen, 2005, pp.171-172).

Based on data from the first phase, the second phase was initiated. More interviews were carried out with peasants and the majority of data was collected from the three communities. The above mentioned interview structure was used for six interviews with peasants in LV. In MR and LC, group interviews were conducted. This allowed for ‘additional information’ through discussions between the participants (Mikkelsen, 2005, pp.172-173). It was also a possibility to receive different perspectives of the questions. In MR, about 17 persons participated and in LC it was 21 persons. Unfortunately, due to insufficient time, individual interviews were not done in these two communities. One possible deficiency with group discussions is that some express their opinions more frequently than others, and that the rest of the group do not participate to the same extent. This occurred to a smaller extent in both communities, but when the participants that did not talk were directly addressed with a question, they almost always had an opinion to expressed. For a table summary of interviews made see appendix I.

Interviews in LV took place during three occasions and the group discussions in MR and LC during one occasion. The interviews were made inside or outside respondents’ houses and the group discussions at established assembly points. In-depth interviews and informal discussions were also conducted with gatekeepers, peasants from other communities and other organisation as to improve the understanding of the cases and

validate information already acquired (Mikkelsen, 2005, p.180). All interviews were made by me in Spanish, only sometimes gatekeepers supported with smaller translations or explanations. For the themes discussed during interviews see appendix II.

4.2.3. Observations

Observations took place during parcel transects, and before, after and between interviews. It is a small but important contribution to the comprehension of interaction between peasants and their discussions, interaction between peasants and gatekeepers, how peasants took care of their land, how the land was affected by surrounding plantations. Sugarcane plantations as well as other agricultural fields were also observed. Parcel transects were conducted with one peasant in LV to provide a more comprehensive picture of the parcels, the crops and the environmental effects from the monocultures (Chambers, 1994, p.960), and with other peasants from other communities than in the study, for better contextual understanding. In LV, the larger parcels, situated outside the centre of the village, were never visited, only the smaller ones located in relation to the houses. Written notes document the observations.

4.2.4. Documents Review

Documents have been collected from different sources including publications from organisations, workshop and educational material, international reports, earlier empirical research and government documents. The analysis of documents ensures triangulation and is an important segment of the study. Documents also provide information on another level, contributing with other perspectives than interviews tend to do. Reading these documents gain more understanding of problems peasants can experience and possible suggestions about how improvements can be made. They were mainly from the organisations point of view and supported empirical understanding before going out in the field in the second phase.

4.3. Data Analysis

This section aims to explain the process of data analysis. The analysis was initiated when the data collection commenced, thus it has been a constant process. An important reflection that has been guiding the analysis is that “the social world must be interpreted from the perspective of the people being studied, rather than as though

those subjects were incapable of their own reflections on the social world” (Bryman, 2012, p.399).

First, the interview recordings were transcribed through true reproduction (some parts are not exact due to surrounding noises). This has contributed positively to the analysis as expressions and the respondents’ and informants’ ways of formulating themselves have not been omitted. In some cases editing has been done due to time constraints, e.g. when repetitions occur frequently.²⁰

Thereafter, following Mikkelsen (2005, p.182), data have been coded through certain concepts, sub-concepts, and sometimes inter-linked by categories based on the initial analytical framework. Other types of characteristics have also been noted. After this process of open-coding, data have once again been passed and axial coding have been used to relate categories with other categories, sub-categories and reconsider the coding done in the first step²¹. Thirdly, the analytical framework has been reconsidered and this has also been the phase of comparison and finding contradictory results. Through the analytic process, I found six main challenges perceived by the peasants: the land situation, information and knowledge scarcity, limited market participation, plantation employment, environmental effects from large-scale agricultural production and inadequate response from the government. These challenges are presented in section 5.1, where they create the structure for answering the first of my sub-questions.

All respondents and informants are presented with fictitious names in the analysis to ensure their anonymity. Possible describing characteristics that could reveal the respondents identity have been changed. Respondents are presented with names and, if needed, an abbreviation for the community they belong to. Informants are presented with name and title.

²⁰ Repetitions seem to be a way of expression among the Mayan peasants, thus edition did not change the data.

²¹ At first, concepts and sub-concepts were based on initial thoughts, an example being “thoughts about education”, which at first was added to a concept called “information exclusion”. With categories and revision this information finally became a part of the category, and sub-heading in the analysis, called “Knowledge and Information Scarcity”.

4.4. Ethical and Methodological Considerations

Before commencing the interviews, respondents were informed that participation is voluntary. They were informed about the study's purpose, the researcher's role and especially how material would be used. This was important as gatekeepers in some situations exaggerated the potential of the study. If respondent agreed, a tape recorder was used during the formal interviews.

Triangulation has been used in different ways throughout the study. Interviews following the same interview guide have been conducted with different respondents and, when possible, compared to existing research. The connection between research questions and interview questions has been reviewed during the process. New information has also been compared to the research questions during the data collection process.

Individuals from the Mayan population do not always relate to past and future in the same way as ladinos or white people do in Guatemala. Even though the person speaks Spanish, many respondents did for example talk mostly in present, as some Mayan languages do not use past and future tenses in the same extent as Spanish does. It was therefore important to understand the context during interviews. Questions have for example been shaped as examples and not as wishes about the future. This has shown to improve the understanding from the Mayan peasants. I have tried to constantly consider this also while reading through the transcripts. However, it is possible that cultural and linguistic differences still affected the communication.

The interview methods used are different in LV compared to MR and LC. It was initially planned to use individual interviews in all communities, but when that did not seem to work due to time limitations, group discussions were used as an alternative. However, as this study is not a strict comparative study, this has only a minor implication on the results. Compensating for this, I worked hard to integrate the participants of the groups, asking the same question several times to different respondents. The group interviews in MR and LC contributed with valuable information and afterwards I decided to keep them as a part of the study; omitting the cases would also omit depth to the analytic generalization.

Finally, I would like to address the possible influences the presence of the gatekeepers had during the interviews and discussions. Most of the time the gatekeeper supported the interviews by further explaining contextual background to a response of a respondent or translating small part of my questions to the local language, as Spanish was not the first language for many of the respondents. However, the presence of the gatekeeper could also influence the respondents' answers. In one occasion, it was first after a translation by a gatekeeper the respondent, like from a textbook, explained how she perceived the problems of the sugarcane production. These textbook-like explanations occurred at two other occasions (without translations), which made me consider the possibility that the respondents were repeating something they earlier learned, perhaps from the gatekeeper's organisation. When this happened, I tried to reformulate the question, allowing them to answer in other words or simply asking them if this was something that had happened to themselves or to someone else.

5. Analysis

This section presents the analysis of data collected. It aims to answer the main research question; *How can food sovereignty help overcome social exclusion and unfavourable or forced inclusion among Mayan peasant communities in the southern coast of Guatemala?* There are two parts; the first one inquiring into the first two sub-questions, and the second part aims to answer the third sub-question.

5.1. Perceived Agricultural Challenges

This first section of the analysis aims to give insight to: *How do peasants perceive current challenges in their cultural, political and economic situation? And, How are these challenges related to social exclusion and unfavourable or forced inclusion?*

The section is divided into six subsections, each representing one of the challenges perceived by the peasants. First the challenge of the land situation is presented, as it is a pivot area affecting many other factors. In addition it provides a good start to understand the living situation of the respondents. The following challenges are knowledge and information scarcity; and limited market participation, with focus on the interplay between income, costs and transparency. Subsections four and five present the perceived negative effects of plantation employment and their environmental effects. Last, inadequate government response is addressed.

5.1.1. The Land Situation

The land situations are different in all three cases, but all reflect Guatemala's unequal land distribution. Respondents in both LV and MR own the little land they are living on. The respondents in LV refuse to pay debts from when they bought the limited land, and in MR, lands are not enough for the increased number of household members. Respondents in LC do not possess land certificates for the land they live on and have to lease cultivation land from landowners, just like their parents did in the highlands.

La Verde

In LV, the land restriction affects some respondents more than others, but all oppose the debt. The respondents live lives built upon cultivation of land, and no one express a desire to do something else. For some respondents the land is not large enough, which leads to seasonal hunger or insecure alternatives²². With more land they could produce more food for their families. Other says they have enough, but they cannot cultivate the way they want (this will be elaborated on below). The land restrictions that some experience, seem to inflict with their cultural connection to the land, as they cannot live on subsistence farming.

The respondents in LV are opposing the debts they received when occupying the land. The peasant Daniel expresses proudly, 'We are still in struggle. We have not paid.' (Daniel-LV). Just as among other communities in Guatemala (CONIC 2012, p.3, interview CONIC 14/12/2012), it seems like the peasants, through the organisation, are showing a resistance towards the system, as they do not think it is a fair debt put upon them. The resistance seems to be due to two causes: first, the land they possess is not large enough; second, through colonization and through the armed conflict, the indigenous population was evicted from lands that belonged to them, they do not want to pay for something that once was theirs. I would argue that the debt system the respondents have to take part in, according to the government, pushes for an inclusion

²² One respondent express her family's alternative 'So sometimes when the grass [in the parcels] for our animals is used and when we are unburdened by work we go out to graze the livestock here in the asphalt (i.e. next to the trafficked paved road)'. (Petronella-LV)

into a system they do not want to be a part of. The inclusion was necessary for their survival, yet it was not an inclusion on their terms. Only by continuing the resistance the respondents have a possibility to oppose the forced inclusion.

Monseñor Romero

The community MR is almost completely surrounded by sugarcane production except a small road, which takes you out from the community through the field maze. INTA was responsible for the land distribution in the area, which first occurred after an extensive protest by several communities. The members of MR received land certificates and every household four manzanas. CODECA's representative Oscar, and other peasants in MR explain that, due to increasing number of household members, the land they possess is not enough for subsistence today. Not all, but many families experience this obstacle, which they believe will aggravate with the years to come (Olga-MR; Marielle-MR). The main negative effect of this is that some household members need to take employment at the plantations.

This points to that the land distribution system that INTA managed benefitted the group in MR as long as they were a few, but with the population increase, development limitations were implied. I would argue that inclusion into the earlier conducted land distribution was something positive for the respondents, but it does not allow for development in the long run and are therefore highly unfavourable. This accords with Larsen's (2013, p.328) critique of market-led land distribution in Guatemala and other countries, where much less land than demanded have been distributed, beneficiaries have not received support to benefit fully from the land and much of the provided areas have been over-used land (ibid). More land cannot be bought as respondents in MR have limited savings, and even if they could, the land would be located far away as sugarcane plantations are surrounding the community.

Las Cruces

In LC, the case of the landless peasants distinguishes itself from the two other cases, but is in general very common in Guatemala (Loker, 1996, p.72). They do not possess land certificates for the land they live on, thus the respondents and their families could get evicted if a company or individual decides to buy the land (Oscar, CODECA

representative). I argue, in line with Sen's (2000, pp.13-14) discussion, that the landless peasants in LC experience SE with both instrumental importance and constitutive relevance. Not only does the landlessness have economic and social consequences for the peasants, but the connection peasants have to the land can make landlessness "may seem like being without a limb of one's own" (ibid, p.14). The respondents are thereby also experiencing cultural exclusion.

Due to their situation, the landless respondents lease land for self-sufficiency. Edwin explains that the chief obstacle for the respondents is the high rent²³ to the landlords. When they cannot lease land, employment is found among monocultures surrounding the community. But due to the low salaries (discussed in chapter 5.1.4.), land rents are sometimes too high. Tomás, explains that sometimes they have to turn to the bank to ask for a loan, "But the bank is only friends with a person who has money, they are not friends with peasants, so sometimes they will not give me [a loan]" (Tomás-LC). The situation of the respondents indicates that they are experience SE of instrumental deprivation. I would argue that this also indicates exclusion of constitutive relevance, as the respondents experience that they are not always accepted to take loans only because they are peasants.

In addition, it is more difficult for the responding peasant to acquire land contracts compared to larger companies, such as those producing sugarcane.

'A poor person who goes to ask for his small manzana of land is not allowed, the landlord does not give to him. The big problem for us is the situation that we are suffering too much. Because we want to work but do not have land that enables us'. (Lucia-LC).

If acquiring a contract, they are always on a one-year basis, and the peasants do not know if they can lease the same land (or another) the year after. Larger companies producing sugarcane, African palm and bananas are allowed multi-year long contracts (José-LC; Lucia-LC). The respondents think the landlords treat them unequally compared to the larger companies. Edwin (LC) explains that they cannot pay as good rent as the companies, so the landlords prefer leasing land to the companies.

The respondents seem to be subjects to cultural and economic exclusion. From the landlords' point of view, it is understandable that they want to ensure a high and

²³ The rent is GTQ 1,500 (191.4 USD, current exchange rate 30/07/2013) per manzana for six months.

secure income. However, without insurance, due to lack of economic means, the peasants are not guaranteed an income when harvest is poor. Thus, they cannot assure payment due to the economic exclusion. But this also consolidates cultural exclusion of Mayan peasants, as they can be considered as structurally poor. Landlords securing long-term higher income indirectly seem to exclude these groups due to their economic deprivation and it can be carried out, as their political and economic voice is not as strong as the large-scale companies.

I would argue that insecure land situations in these three cases, are connected to SE in several ways: first political exclusion as they are experiencing unfair rights through their unequal access to land and living areas; second, economic exclusion due to insurance constrains and capital restriction for self employment. Furthermore, the responding peasants in LV and MR, and to a certain extent LC, mainly live on what their land produce, and it is a part of life the whole families are integrated in. Cultivation is a cultural expression of being a peasant, where the land and the family are life's central parts. It can be seen like their agricultural practices and cultural connection of the land are suppressed, as it does not correspond to the policies of the government. This is a form of discrimination of a lower ranked group, and the cultural exclusion this expresses seem to derive, just like Altamirano et.al. (2003) argue, from economic and political exclusion.

5.1.2. Knowledge and Information Scarcity

In LV, agriculture was and is the main activity, but information and knowledge about agriculture in this geographical area were scarce when the respondents settled the land they now live on. 'No one knew what you could cultivate. There were no seeds. /---/ When a community is new, we only know that we can cultivate maize.' (Rafael-LV). Some families in LV had to buy expensive *chipilín* (perennial legume) and *hierba mora* (night shade) from salesmen passing by their doors. 'When they [the salesmen] did not pass by, we did not eat' (Elisabeth-LV). Prices were very high, the situation unstable and much more difficult than later when the peasants started to organise themselves. To receive a somewhat good production, many chemicals were used, as many of the respondents did not know about organic production. But the chemical pesticides and fertilizers are expensive and much of the little money the respondent possessed went to these payments (Maria-LV). This knowledge and information

scarcity made respondents' families depend on employment at farms and plantations²⁴, as food or monetary income is needed.

In LC, many of the peasants are using chemical fertilizers for their cultivations. This is something they started to do to a large extent in the current generation (Oscar, CODECA representative). Oscar explains that during the 1970's the chemicals were not used in the same way, and Diego, a peasant respondent, explains that their parents never used chemicals. However, many acknowledge organic production as positive, but so far it is most used in communal projects. The costs for chemical production are high, and respondents allocate much of their income to it. The access and knowledge of seeds is similar to the one of fertilizers and pesticides, but are also an effect of other constrains.²⁵

These occurrences are due to what can be argued as passive SE. Through the replacements following the armed conflict and lack of access to appropriate formal or informal education, the respondents have at first not been able to gain information needed to cultivate for themselves and their families. The respondents are not directly excluded from taking part of education or increased knowledge, but nor is it well provided for them. Access to formal or informal education is crucial, if being able to make sound decisions about agricultural production and to gain e.g. good agricultural understanding.

5.1.3. Limited Market Participation – Income, Cost and Transparency

Many respondents buy products in the market, as their subsistence farming does not provide enough food. In the choice of food and view on how food is produced several aspects such as income and costs are important. One respondent in LV explains how his family, consisting of ten members, selects food in the market,

‘The family is large, so we see that the vegetables are more economic, on one hand. But we do use meat, chicken, beans. We know that all the products are increasing in price. [...] In the market you can find everything. [---] In the case of hierba mora, we use it frequently, because it also contains iron. [---] Sometimes we buy a bit of meat, but it is not daily. One pound of meat. Being economic. That is the way we see it in the family.’ (Rafael-LV).

²⁴ See below section 5.1.4.

²⁵ For more specific description of the peasants' relation to seeds, see appendix III.

The respondent touches upon several issues caused by SE or UFI that also are affecting others in the community. With increasing food prices but none or small salaries many families cannot buy all the necessary groceries to provide for the minimum need of a family. This goes in line with Raymundo Raymundo's (2010, pp.5-9) findings. Families are excluded from equal access to food and other products in the market. Some, but certainly not all, of the families in LV seem to buy only what they cannot produce themselves, such as soap, sugar, salt, clothes (Juan-LV). Income can be gained on parcels or outside parcels²⁶. Income on parcels can be generated through agricultural production above subsistence levels, which can be sold on the market in Retalhuleu. Sesame is a better source of income; the price is higher than maize and the peasants are praying for the sesame not to disappear, like they observe other plants doing since the climate started to change (Rafael-LV, Alejandra-LV). Several of the respondents in LV mainly live on two harvests per year; from maize and sesame.

In LC, the chief issue when participating in the market is also the gap between income and costs. James, from LC, explains that the income his family receives is low, 'When we cultivate we buy chemicals which they give to us very expensive /.../ We have no comfort, they give us a very high rent, and chemicals and seeds are very expensive. And we have to sell cheap.'

In MR, the main problem expressed by the representatives of the group and the gatekeeper is that the income peasants receive from selling their products is not enough to live a good life. Price transparency is low, thus leaving the peasant without exact price information. When the harvest is done, the *coyotes* (a word for middlemen) come and demand to buy all the maize to a price they decided in between them. The peasants are then forced to sell, as no one of the other coyotes will pay more (Andrés-MR). 'We have not got a market; we also have to leave what we sowed to be destroyed, because there is no other option. We have to sell it cheap', Nancy explains. She thinks the middlemen are using them. This goes in line with Jonsén & Windfuhr's (2005, p.28) discussion, which also explains that middlemen tend to gain most of the total revenue.

²⁶ Income from outside parcels is discussed in the section 5.1.4. .

All these obstacles, perceived in the three different cases indicate examples of economic exclusion. Firstly, the income needed to participate in the market is too low, both from on and outside parcel work. Secondly, increasing prices and little transparency make it difficult for the respondents to integrate on an equal level with middlemen and larger farmers who have more economic power. In addition, with little other options the respondents are unfavourably included in a system that depends on them.

5.1.4. Plantation Employment

Some respondents in LV have been working on the plantations and others have had their children work there. Even though the work pays for the food no one seems to appreciate the situation of being employed at a plantation. Working for a landlord is viewed as a burden and a choice of survival for all the peasants interviewed, as expressed by Rafael,

‘This part of Guatemala is full of plantations, and the people living from the work on the plantations have to sacrifice themselves, /.../ to be able to maintain themselves. The salary is a misery, compared to the food. Sometimes the prices increase but not the salary’ (Rafael-LV).

In LV and LC several respondents explain that the minimum salary for men is GTQ 50 (USD 6.38, 31/07/2013) per day for working on the plantations (Juan-LV; Elisabeth-LV; Gabriela-LC). This is GTQ 18 below the 2012 minimum salary for agriculture workers (Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social, 2011).

‘...“Salary of hunger” we call it. Because, to a man they pay 50 a day and to a woman 30-35, even though they complete the same work as a man, but for the misdemeanour of being a woman they pay them less. Then work tasks are exaggerated.’ (Oscar, CODECA representative)

What the workers experience I would consider as active economic exclusion, as the income is too low to support a family. Lastarria-Cornhiel (2003, p.4) explains that the gap between salary and land rent is growing in Guatemala, this does not only affect the ability to lease land, but also the ability to purchase land. The situation for female-headed households is thereby more vulnerable.

As earlier mentioned, Amartya Sen (2000, pp.28-29) typically discuss unfavourable inclusion in relation to labour. This discussion is highly applicable in relation to

above-mentioned information. Respondents are forced to take employment at the plantation, and they are included in the labour market structure as both companies and the government are dependent on their continued work as cheap labour. The inclusion is however not favourable for the labour, as has been stated above. The options are limited for the respondents, who view employment as the only solution to gain money to be able to lease the land and support the family.

Except the above experiences, several respondents in LC witness that IGSS, is not working as promised in the companies. The older respondents in LC also experience age discrimination. ‘I am already 55 years old; they are not giving me work anymore. They give work in the farm to the ones that are 18, 30, 40 years old’ (Edwin-LC). Thus, an older person cannot rely on employment to support the family, and it occurs that the children have to take over the burden. I would argue that exclusion due to age is a form of constitutive and instrumental deprivation.

5.1.5. Environmental Effects of Large-Scale Agricultural Production

Since 2012, the community of LV is almost surrounded by sugarcane plantations and the respondents say they already see what are typical negative environmental and health effects, as described by Salvatierra (2009), Álvarez (2007) and Cançado et.al. (2006). When the sugarcane is burned before harvest, the wind carries the smoke and the black particle residues cover homes and parcels. ‘The trash that come from the burning of the cane fall on the milpa and burns it’ (Petronella-LV). Moreover, some of the respondents, living close to the plantation tell of how the plantations’ aeroplanes pass straight over their house spraying chemicals. This results in damaged tomatoes, beans and maize. Several of the stories are the same in all three communities, when it is time to harvest the fruits cannot be used (Petronella-LV; Alejandra-LV; Oscar-CODECA representative LC) Looking back into history, pineapple plantations have been present and ‘always affected our health’ (Carlos-MR), as well as the crops and animals.

Respondents from all three communities have experienced decreased water levels since the sugarcane production was initiated. One reason could be the deforestation. The sugarcane production demands open areas without trees. Several of the peasants are worried about this, ‘The trees are terminating /.../ if there are no trees there is no

water.’ (Rafael-LV). In LV, some parcels are not fully cultivated during the dry season, as the peasants know they will not have enough water to take care of all the plants. All the respondents have their own well next to their house. These wells are hand-dug and reach approximately 12-13 meters. Summers are dry, but the water levels in the wells are this summer extraordinary low. The respondents think the low water level also is due to the mechanical pumps established to irrigate the sugarcane fields, and the respondents explains that the water scarcity worsened when the pumps were established (Rafael-LV; Elisabeth-LV). While 2012 was a very dry year for MR, 2011 brought inundations to the dry land and the community members could not leave the community for almost a month (Oscar-CODECA representative MR).

The companies’ and government’s lacking response to the environmental effects have implication on the cultural and economic possibilities of the respondents. The sugarcane production is a good example of passive SE, here made by the government. The peasants are not actively excluded from the economic benefits of the sugarcane production, but due to their location, commitment to their own land and inadequate working environment respondents are passively excluded from receiving the economic benefits the plantations could bring. Instead, the plantations have economic implications on their food intake and income, as their harvests are destroyed.

Before the sugarcane production became the main production on the plantations surrounding LV, land was leased for production of maize and livestock to and before that it was used for cotton production, like in MR (Juan-LV; Andrés-MR). The cotton production also brought environmental effects and the respondents see similarities between the sugarcane²⁷ and the cotton production. When the ten years long contract is over for the sugarcane companies, there is a possibility that the land will be even more overused then it already is, like when the cotton production left the area, as described by Granovsky-Larsen (2013, pp.329-330).

No one from the sugarcane company has ever integrated with the respondents in LV. ‘The rich one arrives with his crops and allows it to destroy our sowing’ (Petronella-

²⁷ Dalia from LC explains how she views the sugar cane plantations, ‘Now there is only sugarcane, and it almost reaches all the way to the ocean so now we cannot do more. There is no land to cultivate, we cannot eat’.

LV). ‘Because they are businessmen and they have a lot of money, they would never come here to us’ (Juan-LV). According to the organisation representatives and the respondents, no form of impact analysis was done in the community and no one has asked the peasants what they think about the plantations. None of the respondents know the name of the company producing the canes and the general perception is that they do not care about the peasants. The environmental effects of the sugarcane production seem to affect the peasants personally; it is a very important issue as it has direct effect on their lives. It is clear that the deprivation experienced is not only instrumental, but also highly constitutive.

5.1.6. Inadequate Response from the Government

The respondents are, discontent with the response from the government. One respondent expresses, ‘There is help for the peasants, but they do not help us. We are shouting and shouting, we want help, we want help, but nothing.’ (Lesbia-MR).

Through support from the organisations the communities of MR and LV sometimes organise themselves to demonstrate for change, but a positive response from the government is lacking and sometimes landlords employ private armies desorbing the manifestations. The CODECA representative in MR explains,

‘Guatemala has created this organisation of landlords to be able to resist the struggle of the peasant organisations. /---/ In November [2012], we did the last march where a list of demands was presented to the government, including the theme of food sovereignty, the right to land and the establishment of the rural development law [PNDRI]. And in December they just left it and now the political parties do not even have the intention to submit it in the congress plenary.’ (Oscar-CODECA representative MR)

Several organisations (interviews CNOC/CODECA 14/12/2012; REDSAG 28/01/2013; CEIBA 12/12/2012) point out that the response, to their demands, from the government is weak. There is no security for the respondents when they are maltreated and want to express their opinions. Instead they are oppressed, and based on the stories from the respondents, the government seem to prefer support of landlords and large-scale agricultural companies. The respondents did in several occasions express how they felt mistreated and excluded from decision making and that other rich individuals and companies were treated much better than themselves. The absence of supportive engagement from the government underpins both actively and passively political, economic and cultural exclusion.

According to respondents in LC and LV they have similar experiences. When the respondents of LV were demonstrating for preserving trees that the landlords wanted to cut down for the sugarcane they were met by the military, ‘And the landlords, for whatever cause... manifestations, they bring the military /.../ Therefore the people, at times they go to the manifestations, everyone... but with fear and everything.’ (Maria-LV). At first the landlords promised the community that only a few trees were going to be cut down, but then they signed a contract with the sugarcane companies and cut down all the trees. ‘The fight stopped there, and we could not do anything as they already had signed the contract.’ (Maria-LV).

Based on above discussions, the SE seems to be dynamic and structural as it takes different forms but appears to be repeating itself. Neither the government nor the landlords or the companies behind the productions seem to listen to the respondents. Not being heard does not only produce exclusion of instrumental importance, but also the feeling of being worth less, clearly expressed above. Thus the respondents also experience exclusion of constitutive relevance.

5.2. The Role of Food Sovereignty

To address the above challenges, this section of the analysis aims to inquire into the question; *how is food sovereignty perceived and operationalized as an alternative to the experienced challenges?* Each of the three cases is addressed separately, and the principles of FS indicated with italics.

5.2.1. Food Sovereignty in La Verde

As described in chapter 5.1, the main problems perceived by the respondents of LV are information scarcity, little monetary income, environmental degradation and water scarcity, and for some, limited land. These obstacles in turn create limited agricultural production, dependence on salesmen, chemicals and unfavourable employment.

Workshops to Increase Knowledge

As explain above, when settling the land the respondent had little knowledge of what could be cultivated. Through CEIBA’s workshops and materials the respondents are learning about appropriate crops and methods for coastal areas. Rafael desires a more

diversified cultivation and he believes FS is beneficial for the whole family as they can keep what they have produced. In addition, with FS his family can actually grow their own food (Rafael). Maria explains that she appreciates FS as it provides alimentionation that is beneficial for the poor people, like her family. Respondents have learned about differences between native and improved seeds, and natural and chemical pesticides and fertilizers. While some respondents almost only use organic fertilizers, or want to use more organic as it is perceived as more secure (Daniel), others mix the two of them. Elisabeth says that CEIBA would prefer people to work more organically but they understand if they cannot commit to it.

The above description of how FS has entered the peasant group indicates that FS mainly is perceived as positive. CEIBA's support has increased the participants' knowledge of what types of seeds that can be used in the tropical climate of the coast and thereby given them the opportunity to diversify their crops, which is a more *ecologically sound and sustainable method (b)*. The organisation sometimes brings improved and native seeds to the community. This should not only be rejected as short-time aid, as it also contributes to the group's *use and control of diverse seeds types (e)* (which can be difficult to find if you don't know where) and with reproductive seeds the group does not have to buy new seeds. As families now produce their own food to a larger extent, they are also more aware of *what they consume and the origin of the food (g)*.

I would argue that the respondents' work with CEIBA described above has given them the knowledge to confront some of the challenges they perceive, such as their limited knowledge of tropical agriculture, allowing them to increase their food intake. It is pivotal to add to this that information of different kinds are provided to the respondents, but it is up to each one of the households to choose what types of seeds and production methods (e.g. organic or chemical) they can and want to use. Organic production is certainly supported by CEIBA, and it goes in line with the ecologically sound and sustainable production FS promotes. However, it is also pivotal that the peasants *define their own food and agriculture systems (c)*.

Regaining Native Seeds

'About 15 years ago I had native seeds. /.../ But then I lost my seeds and when we arrived here I bought my seeds in the farming market. Then the organisation came and brought us native seeds. By now I only sow native.'(Juan-LV).

What Juan describes is that with access to native seeds, given by CEIBA, he now has the possibility to sow like he was used to. Several respondents have similar stories; with the armed conflict or when moving to new unknown land, agricultural knowledge got lost or the conditions changed. This indicates that traditional methods and crops are starting to regain their value in the community. FS are supporting the respondent's access to *culturally appropriate food (a)* and increased production, allowing them to rely on subsistence farming to a larger extent. It is clear that this does not diminish the cultural exclusion experienced through the land or environmental discrimination, but I would say it allows for acceptance and expression of the respondents' traditions.

Diminishing Monetary Dependence

When the group started to apply the gained knowledge, money was saved. The respondents learned how to make their own organic pesticides and fertilizers by using e.g. animal dung. Many households started to use it and the results are mainly positive. Rafael express that FS allows them to grow their own food, and mainly with only small investments. The differences many respondents experience with the support from the organisation indicate that the life situations of the families have improved. This is how Elisabeth explains the change, 'The difference now, one can eat what one wants. Before, even though one wanted to eat one could not because there was no money. /.../ The difference now, there is a lot. A family eat more.' (Elisabeth). Juan says that FS help to give edible crops straight to their hands and it differs from situations when money is not enough to purchase food.

Access to and conservation of native seeds, and knowledge of organic fertilizers are important aspects of FS, as they diminish the local dependence on monetary income. The families, who now purchase less chemicals and improved seeds, and can provide themselves with more food, have experienced this. In addition, as the dependence on the bypassing salesmen and the unfair market involvement have diminished, this indicates a decrease of the indirect economic exclusion. Respondents are still

integrating with the market, but now the participation is more favourable and on their own terms as they also can sell their crops. This makes them able *to take control of the local market (e)* to a larger extent and oppose the passive economic exclusion they experience when, according to Sen (2000, p.43), they are lacking purchasing power.

Where FS is not enough

In LV, the work for FS has not been able to diminish the experienced environmental challenges the sugarcane productions are creating. This includes the immense water scarcity respondents are experiencing. Community organisation on local level could support this cause through e.g. demonstrations, but in LV people are not well organised. The respondents are however sure about that they want a change²⁸. These challenges are closely linked to land distribution and fulfilment of human rights, thus governmental engagement in the question is a necessity.

FS as an alternative or not?

The above paragraphs point to that FS is perceived positively in the community and the work is improving the respondents situation in terms of information and knowledge scarcity, and market participation due to decreased monetary dependence and regained traditional seeds. The peasant group's operationalization of FS thereby partly seems to be an alternative to the economic and cultural exclusion. There is also a possibility that continued increased production could diminish the family members need to work in the plantations.

However, with the devastating environmental effects the sugarcane productions are causing, parcel production could once again decrease and dependence increase. The positive effects respondents are experiencing could be short-termed.

5.2.2. Food Sovereignty in Monseñor Romero

The main challenge perceived by the respondents in MR is the lack of food or income to take care of the household members as the families are growing. This depends on the very limited access to land and a small demand from the local market for the crops the respondents sell. In addition, price transparency is low and water scarce. Almost

²⁸ As expressed by Rafael, 'But there has to be a moment when there is going to be a change. Like a revolution. That would open up minds, open ways.' (Rafael-LV).

all the community members of MR are organized locally, in close relation to CODECA. Through the work of the organisation, the peasant group has initiated several agriculture projects and receive workshops on agricultural techniques. The current chief project, production and sale of *loroco*²⁹, involves 10 households.

What is FS?

For the respondents of MR, FS includes several factors. Andrés summarize the main points and explains that in the community, FS is not so commonly known as FS but more as organic fertilizers, organic production, not to use chemicals, composting etc. This is where the FS work has started. Through FS-workshops and projects supported by CODECA, the peasant group has started to diversify their crops, decreasing the community's dependence on maize and sesame. As Andrés noted, the respondents have also learned about organic production, including homemade fertilizers and *lombricomposts*³⁰, and the differences between native and improved seeds. Most of the respondents' private agriculture still seems to be done with chemicals, but through the projects organic production has been initiated. The organic and diversified production is what would be called *ecologically sound and sustainable methods (b)*. Through the increased *control of seeds (e)* the peasants know *what they eat and by whom it is produced (g)*.

Some respondents recognize that they are more independent now as they can rely on the projects. The CODECA representative Oscar, also being a peasant in the nearby community, expresses that, 'We are focusing on this [FS] /.../ our population has to know that we need FS to survive' (Oscar, CODECA representative). One aim with the projects is to make the cultivation more efficient; this is appreciated as it supports the children's participation in school, when less labour is needed. Olga agrees, 'it helps the poor a lot /---/ The organisation fights for us and helps us a lot. We have to work and it is difficult, but the loroco is very good' (Olga).

Even though the initiated local projects have improved the living situation of the peasant group, the changes are not sufficient. After they started to cultivate more

²⁹ Loroco is a vine plant with edible flowers and buds, with origin in Mesoamerica.

³⁰ Another word for earthworm compost

diversified crops, the peasant group of MR seem to sell more of their products on the market than what they do in LV and LC. My interpretation is that it is due to the high land limitation the households need each crop to have a very high value. As LV occupied the land in 2001, the distributed four manzanas are still used by one family. In MR, four manzanas were distributed to each family in 1988; by 2012 the number of households had tripled. The explanation from the respondents of MR indicates that more can be gained by selling the crop than consuming it in the family. Even though the local projects are increasing incomes, the respondents say that they still are experiencing little demand in the market, too low prices and lack of price transparency. This points to that the projects mainly based on FS principles are perceived as positive, but it does not seem to have increased their production or food intake in a large enough extent, thus not being an alternative to experienced challenges. Therefore, the peasants have turned to other options.

Aiming for International Commercialisation

The loroco cultivation has given a large harvest, but due to continued experienced challenges, the respondents are aiming for international commercialization of the product. Victor, gatekeeper and organisation informant, explains that the choice of loroco was chosen since it gives good production during ten years with only one large investment. Through CODECA the households involved have received irrigation material from an international development agency, which is well needed as of the experienced water scarcity.

The respondents and the organisation representatives observe increased sales prices and exportation as a mean to improve the situation for the peasant group. The aim for exportation is an interesting aspect as it is not the common way to understand the concept of FS. FS supports that local people *define their own food and agriculture system (c)* and that is what the respondents of MR are doing by searching for ways, such as exportation, to increase their sales, and in the end their food intake and income. At the same time FS also *prioritize local agricultural production to feed people locally (d)*. What is important to note is that exportation of local products is not harmful per se; if at the same time enough food is left for local consumption. However, what could be harmful is exportation of local food to such extent that not

enough, healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food is left for the people. I would argue that the choice of exportation could, from a FS point of view, rather be seen as prioritizing production for the international market. Eventual exportation could certainly increase the income of the respondents, which to a certain extent would help them overcome their economic exclusion. But to which extent FS would be a part of this seems uncertain.

The exportation has not yet been implemented and many problems are found initiating this. One example is the certifications demanded by other countries. It does not seem like the organisation nor the respondents have an answer to how they will come about these problems. One reason could be that FS normally does not involve exportation of products, and respondents are then in need of finding other alternatives to operationalize these projects.

FS as an alternative or not?

The projects implemented on a local scale have helped the respondents of MR increase their income, and diversify their production supporting a more fair inclusion to the local market. As the respondents now have other alternatives for market participation, they feel more independent and their economic standard have increased to a certain extent.

But regarding the aim for crop exportation, I would argue that this is a limited solution to the economic exclusion, as it does not confront the peasants rights to land and food (political exclusion) and is based on their experienced discrimination from fair market participation (cultural exclusion). Which, accordingly with Altamirano et.al, (2003, pp.22-23) and Gacitúa et.al (2000, p.12), still could make them economically excluded as it can be reinforced by both political and cultural exclusion (ibid). Instead I would argue, in line with the above-mentioned argument, that exportation is a solution based on continued unfavourable inclusion in an unequal market. If international commercialisation really is a part of how the respondents perceive FS, it does not seem like an alternative to the experienced challenges.

5.2.3. Food Sovereignty in Las Cruces

Not owning the land they live off or the land they live on, clearly are the main concerns for respondents in LC. This creates dependence on landlords leasing out land, monetary income to be able to pay the land, non-sustainable expensive chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and costly improved seeds for a functional short-term production. For the respondents of LC everything relates back to the issue of land. Through the work of CODECA, the peasants have learned about their rights, how to defend these rights and sustainable agricultural practices. Three communal projects have been initiated and as they have had a satisfactory development the projects are now managed on individual level.

Positive effects of the projects

The respondents are collaborating in different projects initiated by CODECA, where they increase their knowledge of how to grow organically with natural seeds. ‘What the differences are between organic fertilizers and chemicals, that we know thanks to the organisation which has explained it to us’ (Gabriela). In a loroco project, with five respondents participating, they are cultivating with a mixture of organic and chemical fertilizers, and can already observe positive results, which have affected their lives. Lucia explains that, ‘Thanks to this project, you can sell a part and it works well. When we harvest we can always take some [of the crops] for us to eat in the house with our family’ (Lucia). She adds that ‘Thanks to this beneficial situation, we have had the opportunity to continue provide education for our children. I myself never could study, I could not even do the first year’ (Lucia). This indicates that the projects have improved their food intake and income. It also indicate that the principle of *ecologically and sustainable production (b)*, has been a part of the improvement.

FS without Land

The above paragraph indicates that the respondents are content with the benefits the projects bring. But to continue to work with the activities supported by CODECA, land is crucial. Some of the initial projects have discontinued when the peasant group has not been able to lease land. Dalia explains the situation for the current loroco project, ‘We have not been able to find money to lease land, the loroco is already here

and we do not know where in gods name we can sow. /.../ These projects of livestock, maize and loroco depends on if we have land' (Dalia).

Thus, this points to that the activities provided in accordance with FS, are dependent on the access to land and not stable on their own. Like the example of LV and MR, gained benefits from the projects can be negatively influenced by external factors. In this case the peasant group is dependent on land, and therefore dependant on monetary income from plantation employment to be able to continue working with FS. Information and knowledge are reaching out, but the phase of implementation is constrained because of the insecure land access. Even though they are trying, the peasant group cannot *define their own systems (c)*, nor *take control of the local markets, seeds, waters or lands (e)*.

Not all respondents participate in the project. This is due to economic limitations from CODECA. The ones that do not participate are not able to sell as much on the market. The aim is to include all group members, but it takes time. In one project 15 women received four cows for which they all had responsibility, when the cows started to breed more members could take part of the project (Ana).

Most respondents do acknowledge organic production as more positive than chemical in long-term. However, as explained in preceding chapter, organic production is most used for the communal projects, while on individual levels many continue with chemical products. This is an active decision among several respondents, and the organic production FS promote is rejected, as it is not a sustainable short-term solution for the respondents due to their one-year land contracts. 'The organic fertilizers /.../ is better but the process is longer, it takes more time to show results. On the other hand, the chemical is faster but /.../ we do not have our own land here' (Claudia). This is as said due to land insecurity. Not having the security of constant access to land seem to create a dependency on chemical fertilizers for the peasants in LC. This shows that even though FS is accepted and positively acknowledged among the majority of the respondents, they do not have the possibility to choose an *ecologically sound and sustainable method of production (b)* to the extent they desire.

The respondents are making choices based on the exclusion they are experiencing for not being able to own land or secure stable long-term contracts.

Increased Organisation

The respondents are to a larger extent now aware of their rights. Tomás explains it like this,

‘For me this is something new, as I am new in the organisation. As I did not organise myself before I did not know about my rights. /.../ The organisation has opened up the mind a bit, and before it was more closed, not seeing some things’.

The respondents discuss the need to organise to make a change. ‘[We organise] together with other communities, from Retalhuleu’ (José). ‘We have organised from here all the way to the beach. Just like we are organised, they are organised in other communities below [south, towards the beach]’ (Sebastian).

The above explanation suggests, that the work with FS has initiated the interest in organizing for their rights, together with other communities. This is not a direct change caused by FS itself, but a possibility to strengthen the respondents, as they are aware of their rights and how they should protect them. It gives them a possibility to confront the experienced challenges and the underlying SE or UFI.

Continue the work on plantations

Even though some economic changes have affected some respondents positively, they still need to continue the work on the plantation to gain an income high enough to pay the rent. Thus, as the local FS cannot directly change their wages, nor provide them with high enough income to only work on the leased land, the principle of *peasants right to produce food (f)* cannot be fulfilled. Once again the limitation of FS are due to the land situation.

FS as an alternative or not?

Working with FS on local level in the peasant group of LC does not seem to be an alternative to the experienced challenges. The only FS principle that are somewhat reached is to work with ecologically sound and sustainable methods. But the implementations do sometimes fail due to lack of income to lease land and due to conscious choices taken by the peasants themselves, as they have to make sound

short-term decisions due to the land insecurity. The land situation is a challenge that has to be acknowledged and changed on a national level. This is certainly acknowledged within CODECA, and even though government response is almost non-existent they are continuing working for the agrarian reform to be accepted in the parliament (interview CNOC/CODECA 14/12/2012).

6. Conclusion

This study has aimed to answer how food sovereignty can help overcome social exclusion and unfavourable or forced inclusion among Mayan peasant communities in the southern coast of Guatemala. Through this, it has given insight into how Mayan coastal peasants in Guatemala understand their development, and that national development plans including large-scale agricultural production and market-led land distribution can have negative effects for the peasants. Thus, FS has instead been approached as an alternative policy.

While it seems that the respondents, in many ways, feel trapped in a society forcing them to be included in a system they do not appreciate or support, the different perceived problems relate in many ways to active and passive unfavourable and forced inclusion, as well as cultural, economic and political exclusion; through instrumental importance and constitutive relevance. This diversity is repeated in the three cases, although the challenges are perceived to different extents. The dependency caused by the challenges and experienced by the peasant groups, is confronted by their work with FS.

Similar to how Windfuhr and Jonsén (2005) explain food sovereignty, deriving from a discourse on 'self-determination of local communities and allowing self-defined ways to seek solutions to local problems' (ibid, p.15), the three cases has their own local ways of perceiving and implementing FS. The respondents of LV learn about seeds and technics they are not familiar with, through workshops and material dissemination, to increase yields and gain increased independence. In MR the main aim is increased income through knowledge of more efficient production, market access and a plan of future exportation. Land is the pivot in LC, and with the national

struggle being on-going, small agriculture projects are implemented to increase income for the possibility to lease land and increase food consumption.

FS on a local level seems to be able to change local situations suitable for the respondents. In all of the groups respondents experience decreased periods of hunger and increased food production due to the FS projects. But even though the economic and cultural situations have improved through increased independence, much is still left, especially in terms of political exclusion. Many of the perceived problems need solutions on a regional, national or even international scale. The local ways of working with FS among the respondents are not alternatives enough for proper solutions on a larger scale. The respondents' possibilities to organise and e.g. demonstrate in the name of FS, is of course of pivotal meaning on a larger scale, but as have been seen in the above analysis, communities are not well organised, even though the respondents acknowledge its importance.

Access to, or control of land is a central problem in all three communities, and as explained earlier, highly recognized by Via Campesina (2007) and several indigenous and peasant organisations in Guatemala. However, it seems that FS on a local level cannot do much in that regard, except that the organisations are informing the respondents about their rights. In addition to this, the analysis indicates that the projects of FS provide better results in LV, a community owning their land, than in the landless LC where the land situation seem to affect all their decisions. MR is a case on its own as the focus on export not is entirely applicable within FS. But there is also the general uncertainty in the projects, because of the unequal land distribution. External factors like environmental degradation by the large-scale production are already causing negative effects on the parcels. With time, this could increase the deterioration of the projects' positive results.

Any possible land reform and subsequent support, initiated with a top-down or bottom-up approach, need to have the government positively involved. FS will not be fully implemented if the land situation does not change. This is LC a clear example of, as the land situation actually makes it economically infeasible for the respondents to apply organic agricultural practices.

To sum up, the study indicates that among the peasant groups, FS helps diminish local cultural exclusion through its acceptance and acknowledgement of organic and locally decided means of production; economic exclusion and inclusion through alternative and locally adjusted ways of production, information sharing and increased economic sovereignty; and to a smaller but still important extent political exclusion through acknowledgement of the respondents fair rights by sharing information. However, without a sustainable land reform and governmental support, FS cannot fully overcome SE or UFI.

7. References

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8. Appendices

Appendix I: Interviews Conducted

1) Peasants

Name	Identity/Title	Sex	Type of Interview	Date
La Verde – Case 1				
Petronella	Peasant	F	In-depth interview, transect walk	18/12/2012
Juan	Peasant	M	In-depth interview	11/01/2013
Rafael	Peasant	M	In-depth interview	11/01/2013
María	Peasant	F	In-depth interview	11/01/2013
Daniel	Peasant	M	In-depth interview	12/01/2013
Elisabeth	Peasant	F	In-depth interview	12/01/2013
Alejandra	Peasant, gatekeeper	F	Informal interview	11/01/2013
Monseñor Romero – Case 2				
Alex	Peasant	M	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Marielle	Peasant	F	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Nancy	Peasant	F	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Andrés	Peasant	M	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Lesbia	Peasant	F	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Olga	Peasant	F	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Carlos	Peasant	M	Group Interview	18/01/2013
María	Peasant	F	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Miguel	Peasant	M	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Antonia	Peasant	F	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Ximena	Peasant	F	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Martín	Peasant	M	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Lautaro	Peasant	M	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Andrea	Peasant	F	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Eduardo	Peasant	M	Group Interview	18/01/2013
Las Cruces – Case 3				
James	Peasant	M	Group interview	18/01/2013
Edwin	Peasant	M	Group interview	18/01/2013
Claudia	Peasant	F	Group interview	18/01/2013
Diego	Peasant	M	Group interview	18/01/2013
Dalia	Peasant	F	Group interview	18/01/2013
Sebastian	Peasant	M	Group interview	18/01/2013
Tomás	Peasant	M	Group interview	18/01/2013
José	Peasant	M	Group interview	18/01/2013
Lucía	Peasant	F	Group interview	18/01/2013
Gabriela	Peasant	F	Group interview	18/01/2013
Ana	Peasant	F	Group interview	18/01/2013
Fabian	Peasant	M	Group interview	18/01/2013
Javier	Peasant	M	Group interview	18/01/2013
Hugo	Peasant	M	Group interview	18/01/2013
Martina	Peasant	F	Group interview	18/01/2013
Valeria	Peasant	F	Group interview	18/01/2013

Sandra	Peasant	F	Group interview	18/01/2013
Álvaro	Peasant	M	Group interview	18/01/2013
Lucas	Peasant	M	Group interview	18/01/2013
Other interviews, conducted in the departments of Retalhuleu and Sololá				
Tomás	Peasant, much experience with FS	M	In-depth interview, transect walk	17/12/2012
Isabel	Peasant, managing a local seed bank together with her husband	F	In-depth interview, transect walk	18/12/2012
María	Peasant, using seed bank	F	In-depth interview, transect walk	18/12/2012
Joel	Peasant, sugarcane worker	M	Informal interview	18/12/2012

2) Organisations

Organisation name	Name/Title	Sex	Type of Interview	Date
CEIBA	Mateo: organisation representative; María: representative's assistant	M+F	In-depth Interview	12/12/2012
CEIBA	Mateo: organisation representative	M	Informal interview	17/12/2012
CNOC/CODECA	Victor: CODECA national representative /CNOC representative; Alejandro: CNOC representative	M+M	In-depth Interview	14/12/2012
CODECA	Victor: gatekeeper MR and LC, organisation national representative; Oscar: peasant, gatekeeper MR and LC, organisation informant.	M+M	Informal interviews, group discussions MR and LC	18/01/2013
CONIC	Hugo: organisation representative	M	In-depth Interview	14/12/2012
REDSAG	Andrés: organisation representative	M	In-depth Interview	28/01/2013
CONGCOOP	Ana: organisation representative	F	Informal Interview	06/12/2012

Appendix II: Interview Guides

Interview guides were used for all interviews (in-depth and group). Specific questions were developed for the different interviews and below sections present the themes discussed during interviews with peasants and interviews with organisations. As not all questions were asked during each interview, this overview of themes is a better description of what questions been asked.

Interview Structure - Peasants

Intro

- Name, location, about home, family, daily activities
- Participation in organisations, meetings.

Parcel

- Land situation. Land possession. Certificates, rights. Land history. Community history.
- Type of crops, diversity in parcel, origin of seeds and plants, native or improved.
- Fertilizers and pesticides, organic or chemical.
- Local consumption and production.
- Market access, sales, purchases. Sustainability.

Working situation

- Working situation, on-parcel/off-parcel. Other sources of income.
- Thoughts about working on parcel.
- Thoughts about sustainability and environment.
- Historical connection to land.
- If/how to improve the living situation.

About Food Sovereignty

- Perception of FS. What does it include? How received knowledge about FS?
- Opinion about own situation in relation to international definition of FS. Where the food is from, how it is produced, prefer to produce themselves etc. Is this of any meaning?

Collaboration with organisation

- Initiation of collaboration
- Work with FS, training, workshops, and capacity development.
- Necessary/unnecessary. Fulfilment of requests. What more is needed.

Large-scale plantations

- Effects: environment, positive, negative, health, parcel, crops etc.
- Thoughts about selling/rent out land to companies. Situation for other peasants in and outside the community.
- Knowledge about the sugarcane companies. Situation before they arrived.
- Involvement and communication with companies
- Plantations effect on FS.
- How would the situation be improved?

Possible improvements

- Possibility to continue their production. Possible changes. What is needed.
- Assure sustainability
- What changes are desired? Why? How?
- Other possibilities if production discontinues.
- Land changes.

Interview Structure - Organisations

Intro

- Name, age etc.
- Responsibilities within organisation
- Other experiences

The organisation

- General work done by the organisation, locations, impacts.
- Local, regional, national and international level. Collaboration with other organisations.

Food Sovereignty

- Definition of FS. Definition compared to other organisations' definitions.
- Specific work with FS in the organisation, examples.
- Community work. Initiation of cases. Relation to FS. Example of a case experiencing a conflict related to FS.
- Different steps in the FS process.
- What FS is locally. Ecologically sound and sustainable production.
- What the peasant groups receive and do not receive from the organisation. Disagreements of FS meaning. Response from communities. Define their way.
- Demands to policy makers, government. Response. National FS debate.

Development and Future

- About the social movement and civil society in Guatemala.
- Future of FS. What is needed.

- Land situation.
- Development conflict. What is development (according to organisation and communities)?
- Involvement of national and international NGOs and institutions.

Appendix III: Seeds

Access to, knowledge of, and choice of seeds are issues in LV and LC created by earlier mentioned economic, security, information and land constrains. Many of the families in LV wish to produce more crops, but they cannot do so, as they are not having enough seeds. The organisation gave some seeds (natives and improved) and others are native seeds taken from the plants themselves, or improved bought from the market. There is a small native seed bank within the community, but only two respondents mentioned it as a way to acquire seeds. Maize and sesame seem to be the main summer crops for many of the respondents in all communities but is certainly not enough for a healthy diet. The reason for this lack of seeds for cultivation basically depends on the extreme economic constrains many respondents experience, which allows them to buy improved seeds, and on insufficient information and organisation to use seeds from the seed bank and take seeds from their own non-improved plants.

In LC all cultivation depend on if land is secured or not. When asked about if they use improved seeds or native seeds one male respondent says, ‘If we don’t have *bolso* (purse, a common word for money) to buy improved [seeds], we have to cultivate native [seeds], because if we don’t have money we cannot buy the good seeds.’ (Fabian, LC). Another respondent adds, ‘... not all years are the same. There are windy years and years without wind. One year I cultivated native and the results were good.’ (Diego, LC). What the peasants are experiencing is that the plants from native seeds grow very high so they cannot stand strong against the wind. The choice of seed type depends on environmental aspects, but there is no security for the peasant so if the harvest is not as good as expected a time of impoverishment and possible seasonal hunger could follow. With low harvest, they cannot pay for renting the land, which puts them in debt to the landlord or the bank. The organisation representative, Oscar, explains the preference of seeds as a result of the country’s market system, ‘It is the neoliberal system that has given us the thoughts of that we have to sow certificate

seeds /.../ They implemented this system and we adapted, even though it harms us.’
For those preferring to use native seeds this seems very difficult, as they are insecure in the short run, even though the improved seeds are more expensive. Similarly to when the peasant choose fertilizers and pesticides types, the land situation is affecting their decisions.