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Global Movements & Local Reactions

**in
Guatemala**

by

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Minor Field Study

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Introduction

In the process of conducting my C-essay in ethnology, I interviewed young people who were active in different movements. These movements are associated with resistance to global changes. I conducted a similar study in Guatemala for my D-essay in ethnology. This report is the result of a two-month stay in Guatemala where I conducted my interviews. This study was made possible thanks to economic support from SIDA's Minor Field Study program (MFS) and Uppsala University.

The American marketing guru Theodor Levitt coined the term globalisation when he said, "The globalisation of the market is now within reach" in May 1983. Since then, there are mobile phones, Internet and computers. Supermarkets have abolished seasons since fruit and vegetables from all over the world are available all the year around. Earlier, almost half of the world's population was living under communistic rule. Now they live in market economies. The world has become smaller and the people are closer to each other. The distance between citizens of the world shrinks through IT and the opportunities of cheap airfares. But this goes only for certain citizens of the world. For those who cannot afford a flight or the use of Internet the distance has rather grown.

On the one hand, it is possible to travel without hassle to most parts of the world. You can stay at the same chain of hotels almost everywhere, which guarantees a similar experience. The same continental breakfast is served in all hotels and the supply of movies on the internal TV-network is the same. You can access the Internet everywhere and you can easily call the other side of the globe with a mobile telephone. You can also be reached everywhere. There is a McDonalds in almost every town, which guarantees an identical Big Mac and a Coca-Cola everywhere. A visit to IKEA will soon be possible everywhere. There is the same currency in almost all of Europe. All countries want a world heritage site and cultural heritage because it is something great and makes us visible on the map. Nations and regions want simply to become more alike, a grey globalised mass.

On the other hand, many countries and peoples are regionally and locally very provincial and specific. There are strong traditions that are upheld at certain points in time and in certain places. You want to bring out your traditions and their origin as unique. And if somebody else has a similar tradition you still claim that you were first with this distinctive character. The fact that one can travel without hassle all over the globe both literally and metaphorically speaking, causes cultural currents, social movements and changes. Also, there is a constant exchange of information.

Global, National, Local and Glocal

Today's society gets continuously more and more complex. We live in times of globalisation. Above all, economic relationships and distribution of goods, behaviours and styles are associated with globalisation. I mean principally how the development of transnational companies has led to that the national economies have become more coordinated. Globalisation in politics refers usually to the fact that national freedom of action decreases and the political power changes to a more supranational level than the earlier national. Those in power in national level get a decreased influence. The concept of globalisation can be interpreted as a process of change where dependence, exchange and contacts between states and societies all over the globe increase.

The Polish-British sociology Zygmunt Bauman gives another description in his book, *Globalisation*, which deals with how globalisation has become a fashionable word in many areas. He thinks it has changed into a catchword; something magical or a password, which will open the doors to more and better opportunities. He means that globalisation seems to be must for us to be happy, but it can be the cause of misfortunes at the same time. Nevertheless, it is a process of change for us all; either it is good or bad. What is globalisation for some people means localisation for others. It can mean freedom for some people, but appear as something nasty and cruel for others. Bauman also writes that the global is serving as a model to the local and at the same time something unreachable, elevated and worldly. He says, whether we want it or not, we are constantly moving. This transportation takes place even if we physically stand still since immobility is impossible in a constantly changing world like this. Since the global sets the norms, the game of life is not easy for those who are arranged at the local level and never fully succeeds in taking part in the globalisation.

Furthermore, Zygmunt Bauman means that globalisation separates as much as it unites. At the same time as the global growth of companies, finances, trade and flow of information increase, another process is agitated. This process attains a localising form and is more defined in the conception of space. The global and the local processes are closely united with each other, says Bauman. When discussing the local and the global, the one does not exclude the other; the local must be looked upon as part of the global (Bauman 1998:6). Bauman writes about the concept "glocalisation", a new word derived from globalisation and localisation and complete the one-sided concept of globalisation.

One of the persons I interviewed in Guatemala describes how he as a Maya in a poor country experiences the globalisation:

The globalisation is very comprehensive and extensive. Processes were you think that everyone should think and reason in the same way and consume the same things and that we would have a worldly vision. It is a process which thinks that the world should become one and governed by somebody. In one way we are involved, even if we don't want to we are apart of it. What we have to take a look at is how we take part. We are in the worth part. The Maya-people are not consumers. We have our own medicine. The poor countries have more to loose on globalisation than to win. It is the affluent countries that have something to win. With whom should we compete? It is the forest areas in this country where the Indians live. Due to globalisation, all the trees will be cut down to build factories. We will loose values and natural resources. I cannot see that it brings any advantages.

Purpose and Issue

The purpose of SIDA's MFS program is to make it possible for Swedish students to gain knowledge about development countries and development issues. Another purpose is to make it possible for students, teachers and institutions at universities to establish contacts with institutions, universities and organisations in development countries.

The mayor purpose and aim of this study is to collect material to my D-essay in ethnology and to exchange experience with organisations and people in Guatemala. In my essay I intend to investigate how persons involved at local levels reacts and meet people at a global level and phenomena and conditions such as; free-trade agreements, sweatshops, peace-agreement, aid, tourism, McDonalds, world heritage and the Internet. I study these phenomena in a local-global context. The empirical basic is from Guatemala but there is some compeering with an earlier study of similar issues in Visby, Sweden.

The problems mentioned below are the main issues in my essay. All of these problems have not been dealt with in my MFS-rapport.

- Which are the involved persons at the different levels, locally, regionally and globally and how do they act and position themselves?
- To what extent do these persons trust society institutions at a local level?
- What structural conditions, limitations and possibilities are there for the involved persons in the different fields?
- What similarities and differentials are there at the different levels and in the different fields?

Method and Material

The collection of material is to a great extent based on interviews in a conversation form. I consider my informants to be not just sources of information but also co-researchers. This becomes noticeable in the trust they show me. This has gained me a better insight into their organisations and networks and why they exist. The informants have also shared their acknowledgement and experience about the history of Guatemala and most of all about the population and the prevailing situation in the country. It has been fantastically enriching and educating to take part of all this information.

I have gathered a lot of my material through participation observation. I have observed demonstrations, been to meetings, elections, and parties, visited work places and lived together with my informants on a daily basis. I have collected important facts from newspapers, radio and television. I have also taken photographs of events, people and objects that I will use in my essay.

Informants

In total, I have interviewed 22 people of whom three are Swedes who have lived and worked in Guatemala. Two of the informants are Ladinos and the rest are Maya. The duration of the interviews were from 30 minutes up to one hour and a half.

Two of the Swedes I interviewed worked at the Swedish embassy for SIDA with aid and development issues. The third one lives in Antigua, the world heritage town, since a few years back in time. She runs an Irish bar with her husband.

The other informants were people who live in Guatemala and all are committed to work in one or more organisations, either through work, studies or in their free time. The initial organisation I contacted was AMEU (Asociación Maya De Estudiantes Universitarios). Its purpose is to support and encourage Maya who study at the universities. A lot of new contacts to other organisations and interesting people were created through AMEU.

One of the Ladinos I interviewed was my landlady. Through her I was rapidly introduced to many new contacts. I was incorporated in a natural way into the Guatemalan everyday life and events such as politics, culture, poverty, demonstrations and discrimination.

Guatemala

Where not other is specified, information about Guatemala is from *Länder i fickformat*, published by the Swedish institution of foreign politics.

The climate in Guatemala is variable and the scenery is beautiful. All of the country there is a rainy season between May and November. The temperature varies between fully 30°C at the pacific coast down to a few degrees below zero at night, up in the mountains in the north. A number of earthquakes and hurricanes have hit the country. The hurricane Mitch was the latest in 1998.

Population and Languages

There are roughly 12 million people in Guatemala (2000), and the area is a quarter of Sweden's area. Guatemala is the most densely populated country in Central America at the same time one of the most segregated population in Latin America. Roughly half of the population is Maya-Indians and the other half is mestizos that is a mixed between Indian and European descent. The majorities of the mestizos are the so-called *Ladinos* that have dedicated themselves the European culture of the white dominating class. 3-5% of the population is Caucasian and have been the elite of society since the colonial time and they rule the country still today. Another minority is *Garífunas*, a couple of hundred thousand descendents of Caribbean aboriginal inhabitants at the Atlantic coast. Another minority is the *Xinca-indians* who live at the boarder to El Salvador.

More than 40% of the population is below 15 years old and more than half of the population lives on the countryside. The official language is Spanish but many of the Indians do not speak Spanish but one or more of the over 20 Maya-languages. The most common is *k'iche'*, *mam*, *q'eqchi'* and *kaqchikel*.

Maya-Indian

The high culture of the Mayas flourished during the first thousand years AD and it embraced roughly five million people who lived in city-states in the area, which are southern Mexico, Guatemala and Belize today. Apart from art and architecture in holy centres such as Palenque, Tikal, Copan and Chichen-Itza, the Mayas are best known for their astronomic observations and progress in mathematic.

The Mayas was a deeply religious people and had a dualistic religion whether there was a struggle between good and evil, which was fought between several good and evil Gods even if there also was a supreme God, Hunabu-Ku. There was a belief in life after death and reincarnation. Life was a cycle of birth, death and reincarnation where sacrifice was an important part in the creation of new life.

The classic Maya Indians had abandoned their city-state in Guatemala and Chiapas approximately 800 AD. They also abandoned the cities that were late built in the north of Yucatan-peninsula a few hundred years later. When Hernan Cortez and the Spaniards arrived

with their Honduran expedition in 1525, the Mayas had ceased to exist as a high culture a long time ago.

Today, descendents of the classic Maya Indians distinguish themselves by their highly developed textile art, among other things. In many ways it looks like they have brought tradition from the classic period, but during the course of time transformed through the influence from the Europeans and Christianity. Only the Lacandon-group in the jungle of Chiapas can be considered to live traditionally. They make sacrifices to the old Gods at the ancient cult places and they apply polygamy. The northern part of the Yucatan-peninsula is very flat lowland, while Chiapas and Guatemala consist of areas of jungle partly situated in mountainous district. Most important foods are corn, beans and capsicum and the people also grow rubber, cacao and vanilla.

Political History

There was a breach between Guatemala and Spain in 1821 and a union was formed two years later that was split in 1838. Guatemala had its first leader, Rafael Carreras, who kept his position until his death in 1865. He was followed by a number of dictators and the economic power of the church disappeared after they sold big estates to private foreign interested parties. 1931 Jorge Ubico was elected president in 1931 but was forced to resign due to national rebellion in 1944.

Guatemala's first democratic period began the same years as the reform politician Juan José Arévalo was elected president. Arévalo and his successor Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán accomplished several social reforms and tried to free the country of the influence of the USA. One of the reforms meant that big estates should be confiscated and distributed between poor peasants which caused severe protests among landowners. Arbenz was thrown over in 1954 by a group of Guatemalan exiles who was supported by the USA, which was the start of more than 30 years of military rule.

Guerrilla warfare started in the beginning of the 1960s and the bloodiest period was under the rule of general Efraín Ríos Montt 1982-83, who seized power after a coup d'état. His minister of defence, general Oscar Humberto Mejía Víctores who started a change towards civil rule, overthrew him. Elections according to a new constitution were held in 1985. The Christian-democrat Vinicio Cerezo won this election. He re-organized the security-services but the violence from the military and the police forces continued. A plan for peace for all of Central America began in 1987. This was also the foundation of a peaceful solution for the civil war of Guatemala.

Peace negotiation between the government and the guerrilla began in Oslo in 1990. The political confidence in Cerezo began to give away both within the country and on the international arena. The centre right-wing candidate Jorge Serrano won the presidential election in 1990. He was accused for corruption in 1993 and the people protested against the economic cuts. He dissolved the parliament and the Supreme Court in an attempt to coup d'état but the army, that supported him at the beginning, let him down and he had to flee the country. The parliament appointed Ramiro de León Carpio to president but the confidence in his government decreased and the national progressive party (PAN) won the election in 1995.

The new president Alvaro Arzú put the main emphasizes on the work with the peace process and the final document of a 36-year civil war was signed in December 1996. A 150 000 people lost their life's and another 50 000 disappeared in this civil war.

Our Age

The implementation of the peace agreement was supervised by the UN forces for Guatemala, MINUGUA (*Misión de las Naciones Unidas para la verificación de derechos humanos en Guatemala*,) since 1994. Their reports are gloomy, especially concerning crime against human rights. In accordance with the peace agreement, a truth commission was appointed that published a report in February 1999. From this it may be concluded that more than 200 000 people had been killed or disappeared during 1962-1996, of whom the greater part were Indians. The military and the paramilitary were blamed for more than 90 % of the crimes and that US intelligence was involved in the crimes.

The two most central political parties are both rightwing and very person fixated and totally lack ideology. The largest party is the Guatemalan Republican Front, FRG (Frente Republicano Guatemalteco), and earlier lead by Ríos Montt, responsible for genocide. In the election in 1999, Alfonso Portillo won easily and Ríos Montt was elected speaker of the parliament. The second large party is the National Progressive Party; PAN (Partido de Avanzada Nacional) which lost power in 1999. Further opposition is weak; the former guerrilla has entered the political arena as the Revolutionary National Guatemalan Unit, URNG (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca). The peace agreement between the government and the leftwing rebels included an amnesty for the military and members of the guerrilla but the amnesty did not embrace massacres on the civilian population. The crimes of violence are incomprehensible many in Guatemala. 1600 persons have been killed by shots from firearms merely for the first half of 2004.

The latest presidential election was held in the end 2003. In a first election round in November, the conservative businessman Oscar Berger got most votes but not the majority. He joined in with the non-Socialist coalition GANA (La Gran Alianza Nacional). The traditional elite of businessmen and landowners support the party and the party has been in power before. In a second election round in December 2003, Oscar Berger defeated the leftwing politician Alvaro Colom with 54 % of the votes against Colom's 46 %. This was the second presidential election in Guatemala since the peace agreement in 1996. Approximately five million Guatemalans were entitled to vote but the participation in the election was only 46 %.¹

World Heritage

La Antigua Guatemala

Known as "La Antigua Guatemala" today, this colonial capital was founded at this site with the name of Santiago de Guatemala in 1543. The conquerors chose this location since the previous capital had flooded in 1541 and the valley provided a sufficient source of water plus offers one of the best climates in the world.

¹ DN, 29th of December, 2003

While this was part of the Viceroyalty of Mexico, Guatemala functioned separately as a Captain General and included what is now Chiapas, part of Yucatán, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. It was the cultural, economic, religious, political and educational centre for the entire region until the capital was moved to present day Guatemala City after the damaging earthquakes of 1773. Ironically, this preserved the abandoned capital. Much of the architecture today dates from the 17th and 18th centuries and provides us with a colonial jewel in the Americas.

Antigua is about the same size as it was in colonial times. One of the first planned cities in the New World, its urban design is a traditional. Here and in nearby areas, there are more than 50 monumental buildings including convents, monasteries, churches, chapels, and much more. The main buildings are located around the Main Square; the old University of San Carlos now houses the Colonial Art Museum. Many of the colonial houses have also been preserved. A new trend in Antigua blends the old and the new together in a tasteful fashion.

Almost forgotten throughout the 19th century, Antigua was declared a national monument in 1944 and architectural repairs and rebuilding were limited. Many of the monumental buildings had been used as quarries for other buildings up until this time. In 1969, Congress passed a Protective Law for La Antigua Guatemala founding the National Council for the Protection for La Antigua Guatemala. Through their efforts much of the city has been saved and much work has been carried out in the conservation and restoration of the historical buildings that give much of the city its colonial character. In 1979 it became a World heritage.

Religious activities and celebrations are still the centre of the city's cultural activities. Antigua hosts the largest celebrations for Lent and Easter in the Western Hemisphere. With more than 50 different holy vigils, processions and other activities, this city truly relives the passion and death of Jesus at this time. If the procession is due to come by one's house, that family prepares an elaborate carpet made out of pine needles, flowers, flower petals and/or dyed sawdust. Some of the designs are religious but most of them are decorative integrating the wide array of flowers that are used.

Antigua has truly come to life in the last few years. The late 80's bring an array of cultural activities that include art galleries and exhibits, performing arts, popular arts, films, forums, and cultural tourism in general. While almost everything revolved around traditional religious activities previously, today there is a new "awakening" in the city. This is due in part to the number of visitors they have today and, also, more than 80 Spanish schools that teach Spanish to foreigners and offer an economic base for part of the city's population.²

² Bell 2002: *Antigua Guatemala. The City and its Heritage*.

Participants

Local

Organizations

The organization AMEU was my initial contact in Guatemala, as I have mentioned. Furthermore, I have interviewed people that work at the Swedish development organization Diakonia in Guatemala. Other organizations that I have been in contact with is Mesa Global that is an opponent of the globalisations effects along with various other organizations that work for the rights and prospects of the Maya people and human rights in general.

Discrimination

Apart from the organizations, there are more participants on the local level. Between Ladinos and the Maya people there are constant conflicts and a noticeable discrimination. These differentiations have existed more than 500 years, since the European takeover. But within both groups there are also distinct divisions. For example, among the Maya people exists a bourgeoisie that consider themselves more distinguished than others. For it is generally believed that it is finer to be Quiché than any other Maya.

Those in Power

Marta Carzauz Arzú, a Guatemalan anthropologist, has written a thesis about those traditionally in power in Guatemala. Her conclusion is that the same family names have in principle dominated the Guatemalan economy for more than 300 years. These families are traditionally in power and they own the big companies such as Pepsi, Pollo Campero (fast food chain) and Gallo (beer brewery) and others. Through marriage of convenience they have managed to concentrate and keep the concentration of all power, the economic power as a base, as well as the political and the military power. However, they do not live in Guatemala.³

The official power, the government, appears to be puppet government, bought and bribed by the wealthy "elite". More noticeable local participants are the police and the military that constantly can be found in the streets and in the shops. They represent a local threat for some people but security for others.

Peace Agreement/Fact-finding Commission

Another phenomenon, which is not so perceptible but very controversial within certain circles in Guatemala, is the peace agreement which was signed in 1996. Sotero Sincal who participated in the peace agreement process recounts some of the points of the agreement. None of them is fulfilled:

- A multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-linguistic country should be created.
- The peasants should take possession of the soil.
- Governmental institutions should be strengthened to be more democratic.
- Civil power should be strengthened - the army is now bigger than ever.

³ Joakim Olsson

However, Sotero points out some positive effects of the peace agreement. *"The greatest success is the end of the war and that the number of assassinations has gone down. Discrimination still exists but now we can talk about it. You start to notice that the Maya people exist even if they are still looked down upon. Maya have been somewhat successful within education. This success is very limited and with all the difficulties involved but there are advances slowly bit by bit."*

Unfortunately, not many Guatemalans know the meaning of the peace agreement except that the war is over. The peace agreement is forgotten according to Sotero. The government had promised to translate the peace agreement to all Maya languages but this has not happened so far. In conjunction with the peace agreement a commission was appointed which published a report about what really happened during the war. Also this report has not the support of the people principally because it has been published in Spanish only. One of the informants expresses with irony what most Mayas think of the peace agreement.

The only memory is the lamp in the Central Park but there were no results. [--
-] It is like a Christmas day when everybody hugs each other and is happy. I think that they used the peace agreement for economic and political purposes and not really to make changes for the country.

Another informant describes the truth commission as follows:

The work with the truth commission was very important. When we Maya go to school we learn that the Spanish came here more than 500 years ago and brought religion. They taught us Spanish and how good they are and that the Indians are idiots and do not have a soul. Everyone has to learn Spanish and go to mass because our religion is not good. The violence and the massacres took place during the war. The truth commission resulted in that the true story was documented. It is written down and the world knows. It is a political success for the country. It is the most important which is written and it is clearly written about each area about the political parties, the government and the military. It is very important.

Development Aid

Views on development aid in Guatemala vary depending on whom you ask. Aid workers have an insight into the matter while people in general have relatively negative views on both the peace agreement and aid. There may be reasons for this based on who is in charge of TV, radio and press. The conservative dominance is a very powerful instrument concerning influence on people's opinions. The people are daily fed with new liberal ideas by the TV-channels, which broadcast various messages on free time. The idea of the messages is often that the peace agreement is something that was established adversely within a small group between the then government (Arzú) and the guerrilla, together with that it is far too costly.

According to Joakim Olsson at the Swedish Embassy, the most efficient message is: *"Derechos Humanos sólo es para proteger a delincuentes"* (Human rights is only there to protect crime). He means that this is a message that works among the average person because people are so fed up with the widely spread crime. Human rights is pointed out as the reason to high crime rates and people mean that human rights do not want fast trials and the execution of murderers, rapists and kidnappers. What people do not think of, says Joakim, is that the criminals are not greenhorns. They have been doing this for 30 years and used to work for the state and the military. They were responsible for that people connected to leftwing activities, trade unions and the church disappeared. They have just changed their profession and turned commercial, says Joakim, and they never wanted any trials.

Sotero Sincal, who has been an aid worker for many years, expresses his views on aid in Guatemala.

During wartime, aid made common cause with people and those who gave development assistance were more reliable. The understanding of why aid was given was better. There was a much more horizontal relation in aid activities. After the signing of the peace agreement, there has been very interesting changes within development aid activities. One has to look upon it in from the neo-liberalism and globalisation. The terms of reference concerning aid were less earlier. With globalisation one starts to talk about the principal point in aid, results etc. There are very powerful and fast changes with the new officials working with aid. They come to see how you work, the check up on taxes, tell you what works and what does not work and how it should work. They see more results but cannot find the context and the context of the problem in Guatemala.

He continues to tell about the changes within development aid activities.

The vision has changed. There is peace now, the war is over and it is considered that there is no need to work with civilian organizations any more. The new vision is that they should work with the government. Almost everybody said so and started to give more money to the government. It became very obvious here. Today, more than ever, the civilian organisations need support due to the political situation we have. We need support to improve and strengthen the organizations and for further education.

Regional

Free Trade Agreement

TLC /FTAA

TLC (Tratado Libre Comercio) and FTAA (Free Trade Agreement of America) are two different free trade agreements between the USA and Latin America. FTAA is extension of TLC and both agreements are very unjust to the small countries in Latin America. 50-70 % of exports, and almost the same share of imports, goes to the USA that puts Guatemala, and all other countries in Latin America, in a state of dependence on the USA. As usual, the USA makes the rules and they are most often favourable to themselves. For example, the USA is not willing to leave hold of customs duties and internal subsidies on products offered by Guatemala, such as agricultural produce, coffee, corn and sugar. When speaking about globalisation, freedom and freedom to move anywhere, things are the same as when Sweden was joining the EU. It would be so fantastic because everyone in Europe should be able to move freely over borders without a passport. With the EU and the Schengen Agreement, this has never happened since there is no common identification document for the countries within the EU. It is the same thing in the agreement between Central America and the USA. The people in Central America ask themselves what kind of globalisation and free trade agreement is this when gringos can travel freely to Latin America but Latin Americans cannot go to the USA.⁴

Plan Puebla-Panamá

Plan Puebla-Panamá (PPP) is a mega project that includes more or less all of Central America, proposed by Vicente Fox, president of Mexico. The project has an influence on the region from the village Puebla in the south of Mexico to Panama. This project includes the construction of motorways, railroads, development of the oil and electricity industry and the marketing of the Maya culture to tourism.

The organization Mesa Global, strongly against PPP, asks the question why this project started and what the real purpose was. They adopt a more global approach to the problem; they do not think that the main purpose was to improve things for people who live in the villages. They rather mean that the main purpose was to improve things for the USA and its multinational companies. Trade between the USA and the Far East grows day by day and routes between these regions are very expensive. If it were possible to use Central America as a route, this would be both easier and cheaper.⁵

Besides, Central America is an area with a very rich plant life, which provides a very great potential for multinational companies in the pharmaceutical industry. Through patents they can become among the richest in Central America. Mesa Global considers this to be the main purpose of Plan Puebla-Panama and not the development of the villages, which the government wants to point out.⁶

⁴ Facts about TLC and FTAA come from the informants.

⁵ www.mesaglobal.net

⁶ www.mesaglobal.net

Mesa Global makes their opinion about Plan Puebla-Panama clear when they call the abbreviation PPP "Plan Para los Poderosos" (Plan for those in power). Rumour has it that Plan Puebla-Panama is built in the poorer parts of Mexico to get at the Zapatistas. Of all the subsidies to Plan Puebla-Panama only 15 % goes to the poor.⁷ The reinterpretation of the abbreviation made by Mesa Global is understandable.

Multinational Companies

A multinational company is a company that is an international group of companies having subsidiaries in several countries abroad. In Sweden, multinational companies are businesses that have exert an influence on other businesses through investments across national borders. Swedish multinational companies have a strong position in the world and Swedish industry is more multinational than both the American and the British. Direct investments of Swedish companies abroad increased radically during the 1980s. The inflow of foreign direct investments into Sweden increased strongly during the 1990s and grew almost to the size of Swedish direct investments abroad. In addition, many Swedish big multinational companies merged with or were taken over by foreign companies. In this connection, the head offices were located outside Sweden and ceased formally to be Swedish. Examples of such big companies are Pharmacia, Astra, Stora, Nordbanken and Volvo Cars.⁸

Sweatshops or maquilas (assembly plants) as they are called, have been established in Central America for the same reasons as in Asia and the former Eastern European states. Cheap and young workers are hired. They do not demand agreements and are not labour union members. Furthermore, there is a law in the country saying that maquilas are excepted for taxation in Guatemala. My informants express with mixed emotions their opinions about maquilas in Guatemala. Mainly young women work in the factories, which are looked upon with disapproval by the Guatemalan men.

There are 300 maquilas from South Korea in Guatemala that treat their workers worse than Guatemalan finceros (landowners). Work conditions are poor and wages are low. One good thing is that women have time-limited paid jobs for the first time in history. This is a great change, which has an influence on the social structures in the Guatemalan society.

For a woman from the countryside whose parents cannot afford an education this is probably a better alternative than being married to an older man who hopefully does not beat you up to badly to give birth to a great number of children. Those Women who work maquilas for some years become economically independent which is very rare for a 20-year old woman in Guatemala. This leads to that they do not get married when they are 15 and have eight children when they are 22. My male informants were all Guatemalan men negative to maquilas and looked upon them as a threat to exploiting young labour. On the contrary, the women saw both positive and negative consequences as they saw possibilities and choices available to women.⁹

⁷ Henrik Riby

⁸ <http://www.ne.se>

⁹ The information about Maquilas comes from the informants.

Global

UNESCO

UNESCO means United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and is UN's agency of cooperation within education, science, culture and communications/media. The purpose of the work of UNESCO, and all of UN, is to make peace through increased cooperation between countries. UNESCO was established in 1946 to work for peace and security through cooperation between countries within education, science, culture and increased respect for justice, human rights and freedom for all people regardless of race, sex or religion.¹⁰ There are three World Heritage sites in Guatemala; Antigua Guatemala (1979), Tikal National Park (1979) and Archaeological Park and Ruins of Quirigua (1981).¹¹

In Antigua, there are many people who want the city to be preserved the way it used to be. American conservative rightwing people moved to Antigua 40 years ago and they still are influential on a political level. The wealthy Guatemalans who live in Antigua accept tourism and the changes that take place. Principally because their children and grandchildren work in the economy and to a great extent earn their living by tourism. In addition, many poor families support themselves by receiving students. At one stage, the politicians planned to get rid of all the backpackers and students and replace them with wealthy tourists. Linn Reilly who has lived and worked in Antigua for some years describes the World Heritage City of Antigua.

It has a lot to do with sin and immorality. There was an article in the newspaper a year or so ago which said that Antigua was becoming Sodom and Gomorra. Apparently, they have not been anywhere else. Things have cooled down. They understand that it hits the economy. [...] The poor people do not give a shit about what the houses look like; it does not make a difference for their business. The rich people are comfortably off; their next project is to have beautiful surroundings. Others have as their number one project to get food on the table today.

The resemblance with Visby is evident. Signboards, house fronts, litterbins, lampposts and telephone booths cannot look the same way in a World Heritage city as in other cities. They have to look different and older. Not necessarily medieval or colonial, just older is enough. The older the better, which gives age a prominent value. The McDonald sign in Antigua is not the traditional luminous yellow red M of plastic; it is a beautiful M in mosaic build into the wall.

The "immigrants" possess the World Heritage and work for its existence and preserving. In Antigua, the rich "immigrated" Americans live in the centre of Antigua and the "immigrated" people from the mainland in the old town of Visby. Both groups in these World Heritage cities seem to be financially stronger than the indigenous population, which creates a division between those who can afford and those who cannot afford to live in the middle of the World Heritage— the centre. These other people are transplanted to the outskirts of town, where no one asks for preserving.

¹⁰ <http://www.unesco-sweden.org>

¹¹ <http://www.thesalmons.org/lynn/wh-guatemala.html>

Discussion

Movements and Position

In Guatemala, there are hundreds of organisations, consisting mainly of Mayas, which work for human rights and for equal right for the Mayas. The informants I have interviewed are active members of several of these organizations. These organizations constitute rather one single big network than several different organizations. They work on several different levels, but on the local level they are woven together by the fact that most of the participants are members of different organizations at the same time.

What I found in Guatemala seems to be an example of what Alberto Melucci describes as network. As early as in the 1980s, Melucci describes these models of collective acts, as he claims are based on "areas of movements". This means that these networks are sporadic, divided into pieces and hidden in the everyday life. He calls them "cultural laboratories". These networks experiment with the use of new cultural models, different forms of relationships and worldviews. They demand individual participation and personal commitment. It is common that a participant is a member of various groups simultaneously, but the commitment is very restricted and temporary. Melucci means that these hidden networks work as an exchange system where both individuals and information are constantly exchanged. Within these areas of movement new cultural codes are created and transformed into practice (Melucci 1991:73).

The informants give a clear picture of what Maya is and is not. One of the informants describes Maya as follows:

It is a person who has his/her own culture, history and always lived in this country, on this planet. Their h history is not that well known to the majority of people. We have our history and our outlook of the world, it is a person who has his/her own spirituality and we have our way of communication with nature. Above all, it is people full of hope. We know that the world is a process you cannot have an influence on. We are not that individual and we always speak in a "we" voice.

The picture of what Maya is *not*, is also a picture of how they think that those closest to them experience them. These are examples of what they absolutely not want to be regarded as: uneducated, violent, dirty, dangerous, illiterate. Here, it is very evident that they are conscious about the ignorance shown by those closest to them regarding whom they are and what they do. One of the informant s describes the Ladinos' opinion of Maya like this:

There is a lot of discrimination against Maya, poor people. But they do not say that they are competent. If you speak to rich middleclass Ladino they say that the Indians never have a bath, they do not speak Spanish, they are unintelligent, they are very troublesome, and they are work shy and indolent. That is the stereotype they have, a discriminating and racist mentality.

Structural Conditions and Limitations

For organisations in society to start to mobilize, special conditions are required. These conditions seem different depending on where one finds oneself both in time and in space. To live in an undemocratic developing country where one constantly is subject to discrimination implies certain limitations to the informants. But it is still not that limited that it feels meaningless to engage in different organizations.

All informants think that the biggest limitation is the setbacks they meet each time they try to accomplish something. It could be laws that suddenly emerge and the police or military that constantly watches their demonstrations. They claim that corruption is everywhere, at all levels and there is a constant insecurity in their work. The extreme poverty is of great importance to work of all organisations. One of the informants describes the sometimes-hopeless work:

When I go to the villages, people are starving to death and if they eat they do not eat right. People have to eat before they can participate. Poverty is very important in our work and is also the reason why progress is slow. Unfortunately, there is none at government level who understand this.

Several of the informants express their regret for that people in the government do not see or do not want to see the connection between the extreme poverty/illiteracy and the lack of democracy and commitment.

Another limitation for mobilization in Guatemala is the discrimination. Since way back in time there has been a division between Maya and Ladinos. Maya are subordinated to Ladinos and there is a feeling of inferiority in relation to them. Since way back in time, the power in Guatemala has come from abroad, from the Europeans, and still does today.

All informants think that the discrimination influences their work. There is no positive action from the government that gives Maya the same importance as the rest of the population, which does not simplify their work. These people are always at a disadvantage. When these people work, all texts and laws have to be translated from Spanish into their language. One of the informants describes his view of the discrimination:

Mayas do not live the same life and do not have the same outlook on life as the government, which is difficult. Maya women are in the worst situation. We men are better off though we are discriminated as well. Women are discriminated on all levels, even in her home. These are difficulties that take a lot of time to take care of.

Diversification, Good General View and Overlapping

In the book *Musik Medier Mångkultur*, the authors describe the multicultural Visby. They claim that there are three structural conditions, which strengthen the local social structure: *diversification, good general view and overlapping*.

My earlier study in Gotland shows that diversification has been a condition for survival from time immemorial and still is today. The diversification facilitates because it creates a wider circle of contacts crossing different boundaries. Another structural condition is a useful good general view. In this way, the participants can take in the different areas where they are active and it makes it easier to use the available opportunities. A third condition, overlapping, implies that often the same persons are visible in many different arenas. This makes it possible for many types of contacts. The ties between these persons become many and strong which leads to that people become more visible as individuals than as a member of a group. The person's competence and style is noticed rather than origin and culture (Lundberg, Malm, Ronström 2000: 107f).

Furthermore, they write that increased variety leads to a greater potential when it comes to the choice of which groups to belong to. It also makes it possible to belong to several groups simultaneously. The means that different groups more and more depend on choices of the individuals. (Lundberg, Malm, Ronström 2000:381f).

The same conditions can be seen in Guatemala since many of the informants I interviewed seem to be active in many different areas and they are well informed about the activities and arenas of other organisations. However, origin and culture is of greater importance to these participants since the Maya culture and its origin is very important to them. Unfortunately, the competence of the Mayas is not noticed by the Ladinos since they have been considered of less value and competence for a long time. Consequently, their origin becomes a limitation in their work. The Mayas willingly emphasize their origin and they are very proud of their names and the village they come from. On the one hand they emphasize the importance of their origin and that they are special, on the other hand they want all Mayas to be treated equally and have the same rights as the Ladinos.

Paradoxically, tourism can be seen as a limitation. On the one hand, the number of potential listeners increases dramatically, on the other hand the competition for to make one's voice heard increases and more arenas are taken. Truism is generally a good thing for most places, but has a tendency of being an obstacle to other activities.

The World Heritage town Antigua is, just like Visby, a little special because the concept of "world heritage" has a tendency to change perspectives of both people and things. In Visby, the Middle Ages tend to overshadow other things and make them less visible. Similar characteristics can be seen in Antigua where the local politicians have tried to ban everything, which does not belong in a colonial World Heritage town such as backpackers, discos and manifesting organisations. Linn Reilly, who runs a bar in Antigua together with her husband, tells about the difficulties to get a permit.

Nothing can be changed. Antigua was a sleepy small town ten years ago. Then tourism increased and backpackers and students turned Antigua into a party town. The tourists themselves were not the big problem, it was the rich youths from the capital who came in their nice cars and sold drugs to the tourists. There was a change five years ago. The police raided restaurants and closed places where drugs were sold openly over the counter. Suddenly, it became important to have a permission to serve alcohol and several places had to close down. It is said that the police placed drugs in the toilets of some places to have them closed and that they stole the registration documents. No one gets a licence for alcohol and dance activities. There are many of our permits that we still do not have. We think that something will happen soon; because they have started to get lost in petty details like that our sign is 14 cm to wide. First we had a sign saying *Reilly's Irish Tavern*. Then we could not write in English if we did not write it in Spanish in bigger letters. When we took the English text away, they said that the sign was too big. Then you know that someone is fishing for a bribe but we have not understood that or they are just delaying it because they have to give us the licence now.

Alberto Melucci describes *the social conflict* as a part of a system of actions in the organisations. There, the organisations fight their opponents. The struggle is about material and cultural values. If cultural values in Visby deal with the Middle Ages and in Antigua with colonial culture, they are then emphasized and become visible. This is why it becomes hard for different movements not connected to the Middle Ages and the period of Colonialism, to be active on arenas like Visby and Antigua.

Visibility is also important on a national, trans-national and global level. The local for global markets produces cultural heritage –particularly world heritage–. A requirement of being visible globally is paradoxically that homogeneity has to be produced on local level to create distinctive character on global level.

Another limitation in Guatemala is the press. Almost all newspapers identify themselves with the people traditionally in power. This is also valid for most TV and radio channels. The people are fed on a daily basis with news controlled by those traditionally in power. Since such a big part of the population is illiterate, all the information they get is most often from TV and radio channels.

In recent years, there has been a prominent increase in tourism to Guatemala and it is one of the most important sources of income of the country. Backpackers were the majority of the visitors to the country earlier. They are still a great part of the visitors at the government's despair. The government has tried to attract more affluent tourists to expensive hotels and restaurants for many years. To attract this class of tourists, Maya culture is often accentuated as something genuine and original. At the same time, the government and those traditionally in power discriminate against Mayas at all levels, from the street to governmental level.

Three Levels

We live in a new type of society with a more and more increasing complexity and speed of change. Analogously, organisations arise and develop as reactions to changes. Alberto Melucci takes this as his starting point when he compares the organisations to *change* among other things. The change is noticeable regarding to the participant's horizons and goals, but is manifested most distinctively in their behaviour. They have the whole world as their field of work but the actions are different depending on where the participants are.

The organisations in Guatemala are both a part of the local and the global processes. The global organisations that are visible also at the local level have to assume a *glocal* form to be accepted. This also applies to the informants I interviewed. Due to their knowledge of the local, or *general view*, they can act in a way that makes them visible, however with a number of limitations.

Another way to study *currents* of organisations is to compare to the ideas of the author Mark Slobin about subcultures in music. In the book *Subcultural Sounds*, these subcultures are characterised by the search for cultural identity within multiethnic groups, which have become more and more involved in the global cultural currents. Slobin wants to illustrate these cultural currents in a coherent comprehensive picture.

His analytical discussion starts from the concept of visibility. By visibility he means the capacity as being recognised by an audience. He distinguishes between three types of visibility: the local, the regional and the transregional. The local music is only recognised by a small close audience. The regional music is more flexible and can extend over areas different in size. It could be a country, a part of the world, but also a group of people who create a spirit of community in their own well-known music. However, the transregional music is distributed over the regional borders and becomes global most often. Furthermore, Slobin writes that the music/the musicians have a tendency to move between these three levels and cross borders in this way. He means that big changes take place in this visibility, both in levels, contents and form (Slobin 1993:17f)

Like Slobin, I have chosen to divide the world into three horizontal levels. I call the levels global, regional and local (figure 1). By global level, I mean the world. By regional level I mean Central America. In this case, the local level is Guatemala and cities in Guatemala. In this perspective, I think the interaction of manifoldness and complexity will become visible and it can be easier to understand how the different participants are rooted in the three levels. The symbol also makes a hierarchic order more clear where the opponents of the organisations on a global level, as an example, have more power than at local level. Moreover, the global level is the level which is used the least for actions and the local is used most often. The participants use all three levels as their fields of activities but appear differently at the different levels.

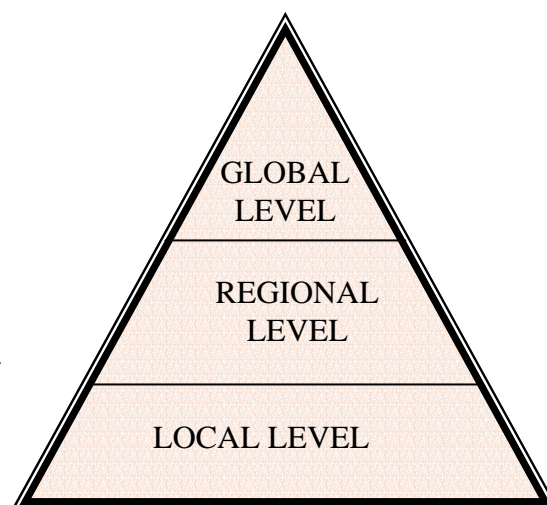


Figure 1: The world in three levels

At the global level, global movements are confronted with other global participants. At this level, all participants are global but they are in different power positions. The non-profit organizations are not only opponents of globalisation; they are also a part of it. Organizations fighting for human rights and minorities and fight for their own existence, exist in all parts of the world.

There is no physical global arena and this is why the actions of these organizations never can take place other than locally or regionally. At these two levels the global “rules of conduct” or the “ideas” are written into a local or regional context to be redefined as “trouble” and “riots”. However, the horizon of the participants can be global but take place locally and then are the “spectators”, who strike with the truncheon or discriminate them, local. In the book *Musik Medier Mångkultur* (Music, Media, Multi-culture)*, the authors write about how local forms of music spread globally through media and global and transnational forms assume local forms to adapt:

Another aspect is how global and transnational expressive forms assume local meaning. Even if a small number of styles, performers and genres have reached close to global spreading, they do not have the same meaning, significance or function everywhere. They become localized, that is they are interpreted and adapted into prevailing conventions in the local context.
(Lundberg, Malm, Ronström 2000: 63)

Each participant’s action and situation takes place against several parallel horizons and at several levels. In addition, they position themselves in different ways in relation to the different levels. What seems meaningful against one horizon becomes stupid, meaningless or dangerous against another horizon.

The participants are at asymmetrical levels, which make the acting harder and create frustration. This rests partly on that the participants in Guatemala at local level struggle without an opposition. When I say without an opposition I mean that there is no direct resistance. They arrange large protest marches but the police and the military do not intervene. They let them continue with the attitude that they cannot cause any trouble because they are only Mayas. A feeling of indifference and hopelessness appears. At the local level, the participants are redefined to rowdies, ridiculous figures and poor uneducated Mayas who you pat on the head and discriminate. Those organizations, which are successful in associating the three levels with each other, create symmetry and become meaningful at all levels.

This is why the FNL-movement grew strong and powerful in Sweden, it became symmetric at all three levels simultaneously. It fought different battles at the three different levels. There was one main focus at the global level, another at the regional level, the USA and Vietnam. At the local level, there were many people who always had sympathized with the USA of old and still did so. Among those USA-friendly people were the parents of the young people who were engaged in the FNL-movement. This is why the FNL-movement had such strong opponents home in Sweden. The war in Vietnam was a part of a whole. An important part of the struggle was fought on the home ground, where the young people rose in rebellion against their parents and the Swedish establishment.

In other words, a symmetric relation between these three levels is needed to be successful. On the whole, it is impossible to pursue local issues at a regional or global level. It would appear ridiculous at other levels. Also, it is complicated to fight for all the injustices of the world on a local level.

When some of the people I interviewed tell me that they have made changes through resistance, it has most often been at the local level. This depends on that they know both the environment and the people around themselves. By having a *good general view* applicable to their surroundings, they can identify the problems easier and use available resources. *Overlapping* is one resource, which is that they are members of several groups. This overlapping leads to another resource, which is *diversification*. By doing many different things they acquire competence and channels to other people having other kinds of competence.

The three prerequisites good general view, overlapping and diversification are aspects of a kind of transparency that makes it easier to identify and access available resources. Melucci discusses this using the concepts “visibility” and “latency”. He claims that complex societies bring forth “social movements” Which are limited in time and space. The participants are not visible until they get into contact with public politics. In other words, they are only visible temporarily. Above all, he forms the opinion that he thinks that it is important to understand that the latent state does not mean inactivity. When the participants are considered inactive, latent, they are really very active. The everyday life of these participants is permeated by constant activity in the way they live their lives, for example in their choice of life style. He puts it like this; “Paradoxically, the latency of a movement is its actual strength” (Melucci 1991:82f).

One limitation to keep up and preserve the World Heritage Antigua, unlike Gotland, is the lack of a political commitment on the local plane. None of the parties at national level have an explicit ideology interested in preserving Antigua. World Heritage is a global question that is hard to fight for locally and regionally. The big questions are hard to see locally since they do not have clear front locally, which the small questions have.

Finally, I would like to point out that the organizations that have been examined often begin and exist as a reaction to phenomena that the participants experience as unfair. The reason why these organizations often are fighting an uphill battle depends on an asymmetry between the different levels that creates frustration.

The conditions that seem to be a prerequisite for great impact for the organizations and the people I have interviewed are primarily:

- That there are clear fronts both locally, regionally and globally.
- That there is a symmetric relation between the three levels.
- That different action should be accomplished in different ways at the different levels since different questions have different meanings at different levels.
- That every movement should be enacted against several horizons simultaneously.
- That the movements consist of networks with transparency and latency as strong resources.

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