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**CONTESTING DEMOCRATIZATION IN GUATEMALA:
WOMEN'S POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

by

Cathy Blacklock, M.A.

**A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements of the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Political Science

**Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
13 May 1996**

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**CONTESTING DEMOCRATIZATION IN GUATEMALA:
WOMEN'S POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

submitted by

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Chair, Department of Political Science

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June 25, 1996

CONTESTING DEMOCRATIZATION IN GUATEMALA:

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Abstract:

The central concern of this dissertation is to explain the emergence of the considerable number of women's popular political organizations at the national level of politics in Guatemala through the 1980s and into the 1990s. This growth of women's political organizing has coincided in time with processes which are generally subsumed by the label of democratization. The dissertation thus analyzes the correspondence between these two phenomenon. The argument is made that democratization in Guatemala is a phenomenon deeply rooted in the economic and fiscal crisis which emerged in the 1970s and the consequent severe repression and violence of the early years of the 1980s. The theoretical argument is further developed to show that this political process has been gendered in nature, in that both the socio-economic crisis and violence entailed in democratization have had a differential impact on women's lives and have consequently created the potential conditions for women's politicization around gender issues. The dissertation also maintains, however, that the pervasive culture of fear in Guatemala has inhibited the development of a grass-roots mass-based mobilization of women.

Drawing on the empirical findings of a year and a half of field research it is argued that the women's organizations under consideration emerged through the leadership initiatives of a small group of women of the popular classes who came to be politicized as a result of their location in institutions where feminism was beginning to have a political effect. Thus the analysis insists that the historical moment of potential for women's politicization created by the contradictory effects of democratization actually led to politicization in a very small group of women and only as the result of their exposure to the conjunctural impact of regional and international forces of feminism.

The dissertation then presents the field research findings to illustrate the actual specific processes whereby various women's organizations came to form and the hierarchical and narrow organizational character and structure of these organizations. In this discussion the ongoing role of key women leaders is emphasized. The nature of the work of these organizations is then illustrated through a series of vignettes which present a range of typical popular education activities. The longer-term goal of these activities to build the ability of women of the popular classes to participate politically and create additional layers of women's leadership capacity is analyzed through a consideration of the short-term objectives of the popular education work. The difficulties which the women's organizations have encountered in working cooperatively is finally considered through a discussion of the unsuccessful effort to build a network in support of gender-sensitive popular education amongst the women's organizations.

Having reviewed the research findings the dissertation analyzes the broader meaning of the work of the women's organizations. A consideration of the feminist literature on women and politics in Latin America leads to the conclusion that the women's organizations are best understood in terms of citizenship. Consequently, the argument is developed that their popular education activities comprise a collective political practise of building citizenship capacity in women of the popular classes by constituting women as subjects of rights. An historical analysis of the political strategy of the popular movement in Guatemala illuminates why it is that the discourse of human rights has been mobilized to contest democratization. By way of conclusion the dissertation considers what the women's organizations are contributing to this popular struggle. It is argued that their work helps to expose the gender biases in human rights.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my son Carl, con la esperanza de un futuro guatemalteco sin violencia.

CONTESTING DEMOCRATIZATION IN GUATEMALA: WOMEN'S POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation analyzes the relationship between what has been called democratization in Guatemala and the unprecedented growth of popular women's political organizations.¹ In the early 1980s there were very few women's political organizations.² From the mid-1980s through to the present, however, an upsurge in popular women's political organizing has taken place.³ At the conclusion of my field research in late 1993 there were approximately 20 such organizations located in Guatemala City, a growing number of poor women's neighbourhood associations in the marginal, shanty-town areas of the city, and a significant number of women's organizations and collectives in the countryside. In general, this upsurge in women's organizing has drawn little attention: empirical information about the phenomenon as well as theoretical perspectives are very scant.⁴ While the mothers' group of the disappeared, GAM [Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (Mutual Support Group of Relatives of the Disappeared)], and the indigenous widows' group, CONAVIGUA [Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala (National Coordination of Widows of Guatemala)] have been the subject of some scholarly work⁵ and are known internationally through the interest of solidarity organizations and the popular media, the existence of the women's organizations is virtually unknown.

Despite their virtual anonymity outside Guatemala the women's organizations have played a significant role in the effort of the popular forces to contest democratization and are organically linked to the popular movement. To fully appreciate the significance of this location of the women's organizations within the politics of the popular movement

and the nature of their politics which stems from this connection it is useful to consider the broader relationship between political liberalization, democratization, human rights, and citizenship in Guatemala and the implications of these dynamics for the nature of recent popular struggle. Before doing so, however, it is important first to clarify what is meant by political liberalization and democratization.

As will be elaborated in Chapter One democratization in Guatemala has been a process composed of repression and political liberalization. The complex relationship between repression, liberalization, and democratization has held significant implications for the nature of recent popular struggle in Guatemala. As will be discussed further below, the present imperative facing the popular movement is to contest both liberalization and democratization simultaneously. Since the early 1980s the military has pursued a strategy to put in place limited institutions of representation such as electoral processes for the selection of president, members of congress, and municipal officials. The military has attempted to construct this strategy as a transition to liberal-democracy. Nonetheless, the maintenance of ongoing repression and human rights violations severely curtail the extent to which such liberal-democratic institutions are actually representative. Furthermore, the military and the ruling class have packaged and marketed ideologically this limited transition as democratization. In no way, however, have the structures of power in Guatemala been altered through the process of transition.

Several political repercussions for the popular movement have arisen from the strategy of the military. On the one hand, the popular movement must seek to make effective the institutions of liberal-democracy which have been nominally put in place but

which remain outside popular political control and hence do not actually function as broadly incorporative or inclusive institutions for representation. In this aspect of their struggle it can be said that the popular movement is contesting the extremely circumscribed nature of political liberalization. At the same time, however, the popular movement must also seek to challenge the discursive and ideological claim made by the military and ruling class that Guatemala has now been democratized by exposing how the real restrictions on broad-based political participation and the constriction of civil society function to maintain intact the historical structures of power.

These challenges have been taken on by the popular movement not through a linear strategy which attempts to deal first with the issue of liberalization and at some future point in time with the question of democratization. It has rather been necessary for the popular movement to contest both liberalization and democratization at the same time for its ability to challenge the limitations of liberal political institutions is premised on widespread and mobilized political support of the pueblo. Only with the "power of the people" behind such contestation is it safe for activists to pursue court challenges, run for political office, etc. The political imperative which the popular movement confronts is then to contest both the form of regime and the structure of the state in Guatemala.

I have chosen to discuss this struggle of the popular movement in terms of contesting democratization. This choice reflects the weight I attach to the fact that while democratization has been a process of repression and liberalization it has been constructed discursively and ideologically as democratization. This "packaging" has had real political effects in Guatemala in that it has demarcated the discursive terrain of

contestation. Indeed, the popular movement itself refers to its current struggle as that of challenging democratization. Furthermore, in terms of the women's organizations with which this dissertation is concerned, their work is driven and directed by the strategy of the popular movement to contest democratization by building the participatory capacity of the pueblo. The choice to use the term democratization is not intended, however, to imply a conviction of my part that there presently exists anything approaching democracy in Guatemala. It rather asserts that discursive and ideological claims are real --in the sense that they have real effects and consequences-- and that this reality should not be suspended in quotation marks.

I. Democratization, Human Rights, and Citizenship: The Challenges and Opportunities for the Popular Movement in Guatemala:

As a beginning point then it is important to examine more closely the political work of the popular movement in contesting democratization, for as will be substantiated in subsequent chapters, the women's organizations are embedded in this movement. In brief, in Guatemala the popular struggle to contest democratization has been constructed in and through the discourse of human rights. In broader terms this means that the popular movement is working to gain the right to entitlement based on their identity as human beings. While this struggle is fundamentally about expanding political inclusion and political participation --and hence, citizenship-- it is nevertheless the case that contestation has not been framed in terms of citizen rights claims. As will be expanded on below this is because broad-based political inclusion and participation have historically

never been allowed in Guatemala nor has the discourse of citizen rights claims been given any legitimacy. The consequence of this has been that there has never existed the basis for a struggle for inclusive citizenship.

Political inclusion and citizenship has been foreclosed because the ruling class has been able to maintain its power and preserve the structures of power in Guatemala through coercion and domination. In the present moment, however, the broader forces of globalization have meant that the political economy which has undergirded domination is now in severe crisis. They have, however, also created the possibility that popular struggle waged on the terrain of the nation-state for inclusion and participation can appeal to an alternative discourse of rights to --that of universal and inherent human rights-- to legitimize this contestation. In effect, globalization has altered the construction of the international system by rendering permeable the boundaries of the nation-state. Because state sovereignty is now being threatened by global forces citizenship is no longer delimited either discursively or politically by the construction of the nation-state. For this reason, then, the popular movement has appealed to the discourse of universal and inherent human rights in its internationalized struggle to broaden political inclusion --or citizenship-- in Guatemala.

In that the popular struggle to contest democratization in Guatemala has been about achieving membership in the nation-state through inclusion and political participation it is, therefore, a struggle about citizenship. This raises the issue that it has been the discourse of human rights which has been mobilized in this struggle. To understand more clearly why the discourse of universal and inherent human rights has

been used to contest a political struggle on the terrain of the Guatemalan nation-state it is helpful to consider the very important insight of Jane Jensen. She argues that across space and time different social movements have raised citizenship claims --that is, the claim to the rights associated with the citizen subject identity-- in different ways." Following this argument, the major point to be made is that the current popular struggle in Guatemala to promote effective inclusion and political participation (and, hence, ultimately broadly inclusive citizenship) has followed a trajectory different from the historical pattern which has been the mobilization of the citizen rights claims to achieve citizenship: it has rather been the discourse of human rights which has been articulated as the basis for the deepening of democratization. This necessarily raises the question, however, as to why the Guatemalan popular struggle for democracy and citizenship should in this way be "different"?

To answer this question a brief overview of two dynamics which have shaped the present Guatemalan conjuncture is necessary. The first such dynamic is that of the historical dynamic of the development of capitalism, both at the international level and at the level of the Guatemalan nation-state. In very general terms the "different" path to citizenship being contested in Guatemala reflects the fact that this popular struggle is being waged not in the 19th and early 20th centuries, but rather at the end of the 20th century. This historical moment is characterized above all by the crisis of advanced capitalism and the related processes of globalization, dynamics which have had real effects for the nation-state.

In general, the nation-state is a very different entity than it was in earlier struggles for citizenship. The nation-state of the late 20th century exists in a new global order where processes like the internationalization of capital and transnational modes of production challenge the economic and political bases of national sovereignty. One consequence of this is that the legal, discursive, and ideological boundaries which have served to delimit the national from the international or global --and in this way define sovereignty-- are increasing permeable and fragile. This trend is even more pronounced in places like Guatemala which, having been "discovered" through colonialism, have had a long history of penetration by foreign powers and, concomitantly, weak sovereignty.

Related to this is the fact that Guatemala has experienced a process of insertion into capitalism drastically different than the experience of the (now) advanced capitalist states. Jenson elaborates on the underlying historical processes which laid the base for the citizenship struggles of the last century and the early part of this century. "The concept of the citizen as we use it today" she states, "depends upon the achievement of three large social changes which worked themselves out in Western Europe after 1500." She continues

[o]verall, a citizenship of liberty and equality could exist only in a context in which hierarchical forms of social organisation --such as feudalism-- had lost most of their legitimacy. ... Secularisation was a second important factor in the move toward modern citizenship. ... [T]he development of a non-particularistic, non-ascriptive and formally rational legal system was the third change which made it possible for actors to imagine, first, the notion of citizenship and then dispute over who belonged within its boundaries.⁷

In effect, the processes identified are those generally understood to have attended the emergence and development of capitalism. Indeed, they are usually considered to

have been the social changes necessary to the emergence and consolidation of free market relations, wage labour, and the contract --in other words, the key underpinnings of capitalist social relations of production.⁸

As will be elaborated in Chapter One, Guatemala's insertion into capitalism occurred through colonial penetration, and it has concomitantly followed the trajectory of dependent capitalist development. One consequence of this different historical path of development has been that Guatemala has not experienced in the same way the three large social changes described above. For example, while Guatemala has undergone a process of industrialization this has been superimposed on an agrarian structure of production. And importantly, in many sectors of the agrarian economy social relations of production persist in near feudal form. Similarly, while Guatemala is formally a secular country the Catholic Church --until very recently an extremely conservative force- - has historically wielded tremendous power through both its cultural influence (perpetuated, for example, in the predominantly private school system) and political power. Finally, while Guatemala does have a formally rational legal system it has been emphasized that this system is violated with impunity, and extra-judicial as well as state violence are rather the norm.

The major repercussion which stems from this is that there has been a very different articulation between democratization and citizenship in Guatemala in comparison to the advanced capitalist states which Jenson considers. One key difference is that the class structure and social system in Guatemala have been premised on domination: a process of legitimation has not occurred, and hence, hegemony has never been

constructed. In other words, the social structure has not developed historically as one dependent on inclusion and political participation for legitimation: rather the power of the capitalist class has been maintained through coercion. Consequent to this the subject of the citizen has therefore not emerged as a central political identity nor has there developed a culture of citizenship. Furthermore, the state has not played the role of guarantor of rights, but has been the institutional vehicle for systematic violations of rights.

That the subject identity of citizen has never been a legitimate political identity in Guatemala does not mean, however, that no rights of citizenship exist. The political right to vote is, for example, enshrined in the constitution. It is to say, however, that such citizenship rights exist only on paper, for without a state to guarantee these rights they are meaningless. The Guatemalan state has never developed the role of guarantor of rights because of the long history of oligarchic and authoritarian control of the state. While elections have periodically been held such control of the state has meant that they entailed little more than intra-ruling class factionalism. And more recently, in the post-1954 period when the military as an institution came to dominate the state, the elections which it staged were highly exclusionary and fraudulent: often even members of the armed forces viewed such elections as farcical and occasionally refused to accept their outcomes.

This history of oligarchic, authoritarian control of the state has also had deep cultural implications for Guatemala. In effect, it has prohibited the development of a culture, tradition, or discourse of citizenship.⁹ There is virtually no popular belief in

the nation-state as an expression of community founded on equality, and little sense of belonging or membership. In contrast, deep feelings of alienation predominate, and are most particularly pronounced across the divides of class and ethnicity. This history has meant, then, that the idea of citizenship has little resonance in Guatemala, and the citizen rights which formally exist have little real meaning. As a result, the main subject identity of liberal democracy, namely, the citizen, and the discourse of citizen rights which attend this identity, have not been available for political articulation in the popular struggle to contest democratization.¹⁰

It is also important to consider briefly the present dynamic of democratization in Guatemala. In the extreme repression of the early 1980s and the subsequent repression stretching now into the 1990s, the state, as a systematic violator of human rights, has reached its pinnacle of achievement. This systematic violence was given ideologically expression in the doctrine of "national security". Crucial to the nature of the repression has been the fact that vast numbers of people were liquidated, murdered, tortured, disappeared, etc., in a manner disconnected from political identification or level of activism.

In effect, the military closed down civil society in Guatemala, not by withholding citizenship rights through the imposition of a state of siege, but rather through the generation of a culture of terror maintained through the extremely violent liquidation of even the potential of political opposition. It has not, then, attained control over civil society by repealing the political and civil rights attached to citizenship, that is, by imposing a state of siege. In reality, this would have

been a strategy with little effect in a country where the popular classes have never obtained effective membership in the nation-state as citizens. The military strategy of violent repression has rather targeted the elimination of the pre-political right to exist or right to be, which is the most fundamental human right: in the authoritarian search for absolute social control the pre-political identity of human being thus became the target of state violence.

As part of the military's long-term strategy, political liberalization was superimposed on this generalized environment of repression in the mid-1980s, thereby making politics an extension of war.¹¹ While violent repression continued through the latter half of the 1980s,¹² a number of events related to liberalization had significant political implications for the popular movement. These were the events that allowed political liberalization to be discursively and ideologically packaged and sold to the world as democratization.

The holding of elections in 1985 which led to the inauguration of Vinicio Cerezo of the Christian Democrats as civilian president in January, 1986, was a clear example of such an event in the early period of liberalization. Subsequently, in 1987 the Cerezo government was centrally involved in the regional peace talks held amongst the five Central American presidents. These talks led to the Esquipulas II peace accords which were ratified by Guatemala in August 1987. While the actual outcomes¹³ of these accords were much more limited than envisioned, they did signify to the popular movement the potential importance of representation in such political forums that might be established, as was an incipient national dialogue through the National Reconciliation

Commission.

Events such as the holding of elections and the participation of the Guatemalan state in regional efforts to realize peace have thus made necessary a broader, amplified, and diversified strategy of resistance and contestation. In effect, these events signified that the emergent Guatemalan conjuncture was to be a moment characterized by the ascendance of politics. The popular forces have realized that the battle for Guatemala had also to be fought on political terrain: this meant that they had to become proactive politically, and that armed insurgency could no longer be the only strategy of struggle.¹⁴

At the same time the military's control of the political opening signified by the 1985 elections was evidenced in the inability of President Cerezo to implement promised social change: in effect, the military retained ongoing, unofficial behind-the-scenes control of the presidential office.¹⁵ The limits to political liberalization were furthermore made clear to the popular forces through ongoing violent repression. In effect, liberalization necessitated political struggle, while at the same time it limited the scope for such struggle. Democratization in Guatemala has been of such a limited and controlled nature that while the political issue being contested by popular forces is that of inclusion or citizenship the subject identity underlying this struggle has not been the citizen "bearer of rights" but rather the human being as bearer of human rights. This implies that in Guatemala democratization has not made available for political articulation the identity of the citizen: it has rather made imperative that the struggle for inclusion through citizenship --or the deepening of democratization-- be waged in terms of human rights.

To summarize then, there have been at play dynamics in Guatemala which have made both possible and imperative the mobilization of the discourse of human rights, and made necessary political struggle for the human being as the subject identity bearing rights. These dynamics have then had contradictory effects, both circumscribing or closing off the possibility of struggle for inclusion framed in terms of citizen rights claims, while at the same time creating a new --in the historical sense of this term-- option for the mobilization and contestation of rights claims. In particular, the military's national security plan to decompress civil society has proved to contain profound contradictions. The effort to control the possibility of popular opposition through seemingly arbitrary, wanton violence has had the effect of politicizing the social relations of the family and generating a popular political reaction premised on the issue of human rights. In this highly politicized yet simultaneously demobilized conjuncture of the 1980s, recognition of and respect for the pre-political identity of human being and the attendant right to be, or to exist, emerged as the necessary, and at the same time, the only possible, identity for contestation. Human rights, then, emerged as the discourse with and through which the popular movement has framed its contestation of democratization: the realization of human rights has been the necessary and, at the same time, the only possible site of political struggle for popular forces.

As was highlighted above the work of GAM activists played a central role not only in the recomposition of the popular movement in the second half of the 1980s but, furthermore, in making human rights central to reemergent popular struggle. It quickly became clear to all Guatemalans concerned with social justice, however, that human

rights was necessarily the fundamental organizing principle for all popular forces. In that the basic right to exist was at stake in Guatemala the overarching goal of the popular movement necessarily became to develop a belief in, and respect for, human life as inviolable. In the conjuncture of the 1980s, then, the political struggle of the popular movement developed as the battle to gain political recognition of, and respect for, the pre-political status of humanness, and the attendant right to be. In this way the mobilization of human rights in the popular contestation of democratization has emerged as a result of what was both historically possible and politically necessary in the present conjuncture in Guatemala. It is important to highlight at this point, however, that there is something about the idea of human rights itself which made this discourse a viable and potent one to mobilize in the contestation of democratization. Indeed, the nature of human rights, as a concept, as a discourse, and as an ideology or moral vision, has also had real implications for the shape this struggle has taken. Most importantly, "human rights" has created a window of opportunity for the popular movement by opening space for contestation in the interstices between the political terrains of the nation-state and the international system. The popular movement is engaged in a multifaceted effort to internationalize its political struggle, and it is this strategy which undergirds and makes safe the pursuit of other tactics on a national terrain. Embedded in this effort to internationalize the struggle for human rights is an exploitation of the contradictions which stem from the intersection of "human rights" as a concept with metatheoretical claims, as a moral vision which orients the international system, and as international law. To clarify this point, let us consider briefly each of these personas of "human rights"

before turning to a consideration of the political strategies of the popular movement which human rights informs.

The fundamental idea of human rights is that rights stem from, attach to, and define a common humanity which is independent of any political identity. This common humanity adheres to each and every person as an individual human being --that is, it has individualized expression-- but it also serves to unite people in its function as a fundamental ontological, and hence, universal, identity. This is to say that the concept of human rights is based on the idea that "humanness" --or that which defines our common humanity-- is ontologically prior to society. In other words, at the conceptual level, human rights are ontological in status, and are universally valid. They are therefore not granted by any particular society but are rather recognized, and, as such, human rights transcend the political ambition or desire of any state.

As well as having this conceptual persona, "human rights" also has historical and ideological significance. Historically, the concept of human rights has, in the 20th century, developed into the principle underpinning the international system. This has been referred to as the moral vision of the international system which defines justice and proper state behaviour. Whether understood, however, as a moral vision or an ideological imposition of the West, human rights have been central to the character of the international system since the end of Second World War. The post-war repugnance at the atrocities committed during the war made the world ripe for the Wilsonian recipe for world peace, key ingredients of which included the United Nations as the institutional, legal, and governmental framework for the international system, and the

international declaration of respect for human rights. Importantly, the role of the United States as world hegemon in this period contributed substantially to ensuring that this moral vision of human rights predominated.

Because human rights are codified in international law and entrenched in post-war international organizations and institutions, the moral vision embedded in human rights transcends the political terrain of any particular nation-state. Yet at the same time a nation-state which is a member of this international system --like Guatemala-- is compelled to uphold this moral vision by virtue of its membership status. This situation of simultaneous transcendence/articulation of the member-state creates the potential for political space for actors on the side of the moral vision. As will be seen below, the popular movement in Guatemala has attempted to claim this potential political space. When the Guatemalan state violates human rights it places itself in a contradictory position vis a vis the international system, for as a member of organizations such as the United Nations and the OAS and signatory to the conventions which underpin this system, it claims to the world to recognize and respect human rights. Thus, when the Guatemalan state transgresses human rights in its effort to repress the reformation of the popular movement, and the political participation of the pueblo¹⁶, it makes itself susceptible to international condemnation for its failure to respect its international agreements and consequent responsibilities as a member of the international system.

It is this contradictory position of the Guatemalan state in relation to the international system which the popular movement has attempted to exploit: to specify, the contradiction is that while in the international arena the Guatemalan state claims to

uphold human rights, in actual practise it violates them with impunity. In lobbying for international condemnation of Guatemala the popular movement strives to legitimize and undergird its effort to realize human rights in Guatemala through the generation of international pressure to respect the international norms of state behaviour. By appealing to international public opinion and the norms embedded in the institutions and laws of the international system, the popular movement works to create a safety net for its human rights work at other levels, that is, the other political strategies pursued at the local and national levels of politics in Guatemala. In effect, then, this internationalizing strategy¹⁷ is necessary to all others, in that without the protection which has been generated at the international level there would exist no freedom or safety in Guatemala to pursue any other tactics.

Before turning to a more precise consideration of the nature of this popular political struggle, it is useful to briefly summarize the argument developed above to answer the question as to why the contestation of democratization through the realization of citizenship should be constructed through the discourse of human rights. I have argued that two dynamics have affected the nature of the present conjuncture in Guatemala. One of these has been the dynamic of capitalism, understood in broad historical terms. As argued, the crisis of advanced capitalism and the concomitant processes of globalization have generated an international environment in which the boundaries of the nation-state are increasingly permeable and distinctions between the national and the international increasingly difficult to make. At the national level, the colonial mode of insertion into capitalism and its concomitant trajectory of dependent

capitalist development has meant that any possibility that struggle for citizenship in Guatemala could follow the earlier historical path of western liberal democracies has been virtually eliminated. This is fundamentally because the state has not developed into the role of guarantor of rights but has rather been the vehicle for systematic violations of rights, reflecting the fact that the capitalist class in Guatemala has maintained itself in power through domination rather than hegemony.

The second dynamic I have suggested that needs to be considered in seeking an answer to the question at hand is the conjunctural dynamic of democratization in Guatemala. As will be elaborated in Chapter One, democratization --stemming as it has from economic crisis-- has been a process of repression and liberalization, and this dynamic has had political consequences. This is to say that democratization in Guatemala has generated political imperatives while at the same time circumscribing the possible: it has then determined the terms of its own contestation. On the one hand the extremity of the repression has moved far beyond closing off the possibility of citizen claims by closing down civil society, to an annihilation of the basic human right to exist or be. The nature of the repression has necessitated, then, that contestation be about human rights, which is, in effect, a struggle about the retrieval of an identity both ontologically and discursively constructed as pre-political

II. The Political Strategies of the Popular Movement to Contest Democratization

It was highlighted above that the popular movement in Guatemala confronts a two-fold political imperative in its struggle to contest democratization. It must strive to

make effective those representative institutions of liberal democracy. At the same time, this struggle to substantiate liberal democracy requires an expansion of popular political participation in order to legitimate the demands for such a deepening of democratization. In its effort to meet these dialectically related political imperatives the popular movement has pursued several strategies. Before discussing these, however, it is important first to note several points about the character of the popular movement in Guatemala.

In his discussion of the popular movement in El Salvador since 1980 Mario Lungo Uclés also devotes some space to specifying the meaning of this term. Because his consideration is useful and valid for Guatemala also, I have chosen to cite it at length. He says:

The concepts of "popular movement" and "popular project" are commonly used in El Salvador and just as commonly understood to mean many different things. The terms, as we use them here, warrant some explanation. Popular in its sense in Spanish is not just an economic or social class distinction. Rather popular is characterized by an identification with social transformation in economic, political, cultural, and social terms that benefits the marginalized. Those who act for social justice identify with and make up the popular movement. It is the political option, not their economic status, which defines the participants in the popular movement, although participants are as often motivated by Christian values, moral indignation, personal and class interests as by political orientation. Popular organizations are the organized representation of the interests of the poor and working classes. Some, such as labor unions and student groups, have long histories of struggles. Others, notably women's organizations, refugee organizations, marginalized community associations and even environmental groups, are more recent expressions. The popular project is the collection of goals of the popular movement. While not a final blueprint for a "new society," the popular project is based on relations among people which promote social justice and the common good.¹⁸

I would emphasize that in the case of Guatemala it is extremely important not to reify the popular movement as a homogenous actor with a straightforward and easily

discernible politics. In Guatemala, the popular movement consists of a broad array of political actors, including organizations, associations, unions, working groups, mini-movements, and individuals. The structure of the popular movement is also complex, and extremely divided along ideological lines.

These actors claim to represent various sectors of civil society and have loosely grouped themselves into a structure to reflect these sectors. At present the popular movement has structured itself into six sectors: the women's sector, the labour sector, the student movement sector, the religious sector, the indigenous sector, and the NGO sector. Not surprisingly, given the diversity of interests represented in this structure, it has been a great challenge for these sectors to act as a whole, that is, as a broader popular movement. The popular sectors have had more success in promoting their common interests in the early 1990s, however, especially through the formation of the *Asamblea de Sectores Civiles* (Assembly of Civil Sectors) to challenge the exclusionary nature of the peace negotiations. It is still an open question how the returned refugees and the organizations representing peoples still in the refugee camps in Mexico will be incorporated into the popular movement.

Within each sector there are commonly several associations which represent different political positions and these sometimes have very acrimonious relationships with each other. For example, the religious sector is divided primarily between the Catholic Church and evangelical churches. The NGO sector is extremely divided between conservative and progressive organizations, a division which is further exacerbated by their competition for diminishing international funding. The indigenous sector is

composed of a variety of organizations, including those which have taken on different indigenous rights issues such as language rights, land rights, squatters rights, etc., and the issues which predominantly affect indigenous peoples such as the safety and integrity of communities in resistance, the civil patrols, forced recruitment into the armed forces, etc. It should be noted, however, that this sector is predominantly controlled by activists schooled in the Academy of Languages who tend to promote a politics of autonomy and who are very actively supported by a number of North American anthropologists. Other indigenous activists who do not subscribe to this political line have generally attempted to represent indigenous concerns within other sectors of the popular movement.

This observation about the representation of indigenous concerns necessarily raises the issue of the extent to which the popular movement as a whole has taken on the problem of ethnicity. The issue of ethnicity becomes particularly salient when it is borne in mind that approximately 60 percent of the population of Guatemala is indigenous. On this it can only be said that with respect to the ethnic composition of Guatemalan society the popular movement is probably not representative. Since Rigoberta Menchú was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize there has emerged some recognition that this is an issue which the popular movement must address. For the moment, however, the fundamental problem which continues to drive the popular movement is the class structure of Guatemala. Little serious attention has been paid to developing an understanding of how the cleavages of class and ethnicity are mutually reinforcing ones.

At the same time, however, it is the insistence on the predominance of class as the fundamental issue facing the pueblo which allows the various popular actors to be

referred to as a movement. For despite the sectoral divisions and factionalism which characterize the popular sectors there is, nonetheless, a common sense of the class enemy and the prevalent absence of social justice. Stemming from this deeply entrenched popular view there can be identified common political strategies. Thus, it is the class logic which allows the popular forces to cohere as a movement, and this collective identity is one which popular activists attach to themselves.

Bearing in mind these remarks about the internal challenges facing the popular movement it is now possible to return to the issue of the political strategies of the popular movement to contest democratization. As highlighted above, one such strategy undergirds the others and for this reason must be discussed first. This is the strategy of internationalizing the struggle for human rights.

In general terms the internationalization of the struggle for human rights is an effort to promote the international condemnation of ongoing human rights violations and impunity in Guatemala. By developing international awareness of the human rights violations in Guatemala the popular movement seeks to focus international attention on Guatemala's ongoing human rights record. The desired effect inside Guatemala is that such international scrutiny will provide a safety shield for those political activists working on other areas of contestation in Guatemala. The popular movement has mobilized international solidarity, and international public opinion, and has used the vehicles of international law, and international institutions to pressure the Guatemalan state to recognize its own international commitments to respect human rights.

Organizations in solidarity with the Guatemalan people developed in the 1980s in many countries around the world, but particularly in North America and Europe.¹⁹ It is important to note that many such organizations have been founded and promoted by Guatemalan political activists in exile, a reality which speaks to the fact that the popular movement of Guatemala is an international movement which transcends national borders. The solidarity groups and organizations are working to generate broad public awareness of the human rights situation in Guatemala, and through such heightened comprehension to mobilize international public opinion in condemnation of the Guatemalan state.

In this work a number of political tactics have been employed. For example, important organizations like Americas Watch and Amnesty International have documented human rights abuses, and collected, analyzed, and published this data in yearly reports. This information is used by other groups in their lobbying efforts to influence their country's foreign policy towards Guatemala. More specifically, many solidarity groups have lobbied to have foreign assistance to Guatemala cut off, and to have their country vote in the UN General Assembly to have Guatemala listed under agenda item 12 --the so-called list of "international pariahs"-- by the UN Human Rights Commission. Many members of the United Representation of the Guatemalan Opposition (RUOG [Representación Unida de la Oposición Guatemalteca]) --the international diplomatic arm of the URNG composed of important Guatemala exiles-- have played a crucial role in fomenting and coordinating this lobbying work.

The condemnation of the Guatemalan state has also been pursued through the venue of international law. One organization particularly active in such work is the

Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH [Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos]) --a human rights organization now based in Guatemala. It was formed and has been financed by the Center for Human Rights Legal Action in Washington, DC, a solidarity organization in which Frank LaRue (a Guatemalan labour lawyer and highly active member of RUOG) has until recently played a central role. Frank LaRue has now returned to Guatemala and directs CALDH, which has as its mandate to document and develop human rights cases to take before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS).

The effort to provide safety for popular political contestation inside Guatemala through the internationalization of struggle is, however, still far from a fail-safe strategy. As a result, the popular movement seeks international support within Guatemala to reinforce the pressure applied through world public opinion. Again international solidarity organizations are crucial in this backup work. Groups like Peace Brigades International and Project Accompaniment have a very active presence in Guatemala and their volunteers use their status as "untouchable" foreigners to provide witness and escort vulnerable Guatemalans. In effect, they provide a corporal international shield for Guatemalan political activists and other vulnerable Guatemalans, such as returning refugees. Finally, when these international safety shield measures fail, solidarity groups in other countries as well as international organizations like Amnesty International all play a crucial role in protesting human rights violations by sending "urgent actions" and letters of protest to their governments, key Guatemalan officials, diplomats, etc.

This multi-faceted strategy to internationalize the struggle for human rights has provided the foundation and safety-net for the two other strategies of the popular movement to contest democratization. One of these is the strategy of the popular movement to use, and simultaneously expose the limitations of, the representative institutions and processes of liberal democracy ideologically claimed to exist in the "new democracy". This strategy seeks to explore the potential for social transformation in the institutions which are claimed to underpin the rule of law, while at the same time illuminating their limitations or outright impotence. For example, since the failure of the Cerezo government to implement its electoral promises the popular movement has worked to promote voting dissension in elections, and often advocates widespread spoiling of ballots or active voter abstention.²⁰ It has also attempted to expose the military's effective ongoing control of the presidential office, the corruption which plagues congress, and the petty clientelism which characterizes most political parties. These have been important issues for the popular forces as they provide clear evidence that elections in no way signify a truly competitive political process nor the effective rule of law. In effect, exposing military power, corruption, and clientelism enables the popular movement to challenge the claim to democratization and illuminate that key conditions for human rights do not yet exist in Guatemala.

The popular movement has also attempted to use the legal system to expose continuing impunity and violations of human rights, and the pervasive culture of terror - all of which negate the possibility of effective political representation of interests and political participation.²¹ Exemplary instances are the ongoing efforts of GAM and

CONAVIGUA, and most recently, Jennifer Harbury,²² to obtain court orders for the exhumation of clandestine graves. Another example is the effort to use the courts to prosecute military personnel implicated in high-profile cases of human rights violations such as the murder of Guatemalan anthropologist, Myrna Mack, and the torture and rape of the American nun, Diana Ortiz. The movement is especially interested in exposing and prosecuting the high-level "intellectual authors" of human rights violations.

The third political strategy widely promoted by the popular movement --and the one of fundamental concern in this dissertation-- is the political conscientization of the pueblo about human rights. This strategy is of central interest here because the work of the women's political organizations under consideration in this dissertation forms part of this popular education project. There are many similarities between the specific work of the women's organizations and this broader formation of the pueblo. For example, as with the women's organizations this conscientization work is done at the community level, and focuses on raising an awareness of what rights are, and who has them. In general, the international covenants, agreements, etc., around human rights such as the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights are employed to educate communities about their rights. Thus, the work of the women's organizations fits clearly into this strategy to constitute people of the popular classes as subjects of rights, as well as to generate in them a sense of entitlement to human rights.

This popular education work is generally undertaken by the more progressive Guatemalan NGOs --both ladino and indigenous-- which are particularly concerned to do such conscientization work in the countryside. In part, this reflects the fact that such

NGOs are keenly aware that the process of constituting people as subjects of rights tends to be a very politicizing process. For once aware of their human rights --and the fact that in practise they do not have them --individuals and communities desire such rights and begin to struggle for them. In this way the strategy of popular education work seeks in the longer-term the formation of the pueblo as a political subject able to protest the ongoing transgressions of human rights, and demand recognition of, and respect, for human rights. This work of conscientization is thus also about building both pressure in civil society for the institutional and political requisites for a deepening of democratization, and the capacity of communities to participate politically to demand them.

III. Women's Political Organizations:

It is, then, my broad purpose to examine and analyze the work of women's political organizations in terms of the strategy of the popular movement to build the participatory capacity of the pueblo to contest democratization through the discourse of human rights. The empirical research presented in Chapters Two, Three, and Four includes material related to the process of individual women's political conscientization.

It is offered, however, not in an effort to consider and analyze the process of women's politicization or the formation of women's consciousness at the individual level but rather to give specific content to the process of formation of the women's organizations, the nature of their activities, and the challenges they face in their work.

The analysis built on this research is concerned with the significance of women's conscientization in terms of the implications it holds for: 1) the formation of women's organizations; 2) the nature of the women's organizations; and, 3) the nature of the involvement of the women's organizations in the struggle of the popular movement to contest democratization through the mobilization of human rights. The unit of analysis of this dissertation is, then, popular women's political organizations, with the analysis of their organizational and political character based on extensive field research conducted primarily through participation observation.

To anticipate the conclusions drawn, it is argued that these organizations are not mass-based grass-roots organizations, but are rather hierarchically structured, and have been formed through the efforts of a small group of highly politicized women leaders who continue to control the organizations. It is also shown how across the spectrum of organizations, the work in which the women's organizations are engaged is very similar in content despite the fact that there is very little cooperative activity. The difficulties which the women's organizations face in working together are discussed in detail. As suggested above in the discussion of the politics of the popular movement, the work of the women's organizations can be characterized as popular education aimed at building the capacity of women of the popular classes to participate politically. It is further argued that this work constitutes a collective political practise which has the broader significance of building citizenship capacity. The dissertation concludes with a consideration of whether the contribution of the women's organizations to the struggle of the popular movement is in any way distinctive. In general terms it is emphasized that

the work of the women's organizations is integrally related to the politics of the popular movement. It is also suggested, however, that in certain respects a differentiation along the lines of gender can be identified and that such differentiation reflects the particular impact on women of the processes entailed in what has been called democratization.

IV. Research Questions:

The field work project in its initial conception was developed on the basis of two major research questions. The first was: what has been the process of women's organizing and political participation? The second was: what has been the impact of women's organizations and political participation? These two questions led to the elaboration of four substantive research objectives. These were: to investigate the formation of women as collective actors; to investigate the development of collective identity; to investigate the relations of women's organizations with other political actors; and to investigate the institutionalization of women's organizations.

In reality, however, the research questions which are reflected in the present dissertation evolved during my time in the field as I came to a deeper understanding of both the nature of women's organizing and the politics of the popular movement. Some of the most significant larger questions considered are as follows. What does democratization mean in Guatemala? What has been the specific impact of democratization on women of the popular classes? How can we explain the upsurge of women's organizations precisely in the inauspicious context of the 1980s? What are the limits to women's politicization when their political identity is constructed in terms of

their relationship to a male or their reproductive roles in the family and private sphere? How have the women's organizations come to form? What are the women's organizations doing? What are they doing in political terms? What is the nature of the relationships between the women's organizations in Guatemala? Why is human rights the discursive framework of the popular movement if its agenda is that of citizenship?

V. Chapter Structure:

The organization of the chapters reflects my coming to terms with these questions and ordering the answers into an account of popular women's political organizations in the context of democratization in Guatemala. Chapter One begins with a theoretical discussion of the nature of democratization in Latin America which focuses on the issues of regime form, the state, and civil society. This discussion leads to the elaboration of a theoretical framework for the political economy analysis of the specificity of democratization in Guatemala which follows. This analysis is necessary in order to answer the question "why the upsurge of women's organizations at this particular historical moment?" The argument is made that while the contradictions embedded in the process of democratization created the potential conditions for women's politicization, this potential was not transformed into a widespread mass-mobilization of women due to the pervasive culture of fear in Guatemala. Rather, owing to the growing influence of feminism and the demonstration effect of other women's political organizing initiatives in the Latin American region, a small cadre of women was politicized, and these women emerged as leaders who took the initiative to form women's organizations.

In Chapter Two, through a presentation of empirical information, the question is addressed of "what were the actual processes whereby the women's organizations formed"? In brief, it is argued that conjunctural constraints dictated that this would be a top-down process of formation, which to this day remains tentative --owing to resource problems-- and fragile --owing to the difficulties the women leaders face. The fact that these women's organizations are hierarchically structured, highly centralized, and effectively controlled by a small handful of women in the key leadership positions is also discussed.

Chapter Three considers the question of "what are the women's organizations doing"? Through the presentation of a series of descriptive vignettes of activities of the organizations, it is argued that they are engaged in a political project of formation and skills training. This project has as its objective enabling women of the popular classes to participate politically in order to challenge the implications of democratization for their daily lives. It strives to realize this objective by pursuing three immediate goals: promoting women's self-esteem and self-valorization, conscientization, and the development of organizing skills in women of the popular classes. In general terms, it is observed that this project of formation and skills training is consistent with the broader work of the popular movement to reconstitute civil society and develop the ability of the pueblo to contest democratization.

The question of "what is the nature of the relationships amongst and between the various women's organizations?" is the concern of Chapter Four. This issue is addressed through a discussion of the various efforts made to establish working groups, coalitions,

networks, etc. The rather tortuous history of the effort to build a network to address women's popular education needs is chronicled to illuminate the problems and difficulties the women's organizations have faced in attempting to work collaboratively. It is contended that most importantly these problems reflect two realities. One is that the sense of identification and allegiance which the women's organizations feel stems from their particular sectoral location in the popular movement, rather than any sense of sisterhood with the other women's organizations. The second is that the popular movement itself is significantly cleaved by ideological differences and the relationships between the women's organizations mirror these divisions. Reflecting these two realities, the women's organizations are far more focused on their organic location in the popular movement than they are by any desire to form an autonomous women's movement.

Chapter Five is devoted to an interpretive analysis of the broader political meaning of the work of the women's organizations. The recent feminist literature on women's political participation in Latin American is overviewed and the conclusion drawn that most of it is not helpful in understanding the historical specificity of the Guatemalan case. The similar work of two authors, Elizabeth Jelin and Veronica Schild, is, however identified as containing useful theoretical constructs. In particular, their ideas about the construction of women's subjective identity and the building of citizenship capacity in women as a collective political practise provide key analytic insights into the Guatemalan case. In the second section of the chapter the work of Schild is examined and built upon to make the argument that the work of the women's organizations in Guatemala must be understood as a collective political practise of citizenship building in

women of the popular classes. The chapter --and dissertation-- concludes with some final reflections on what may be distinctive about the work of the women's organizations, bearing in mind the fundamental argument that they are organically related to or located in the popular movement. It is suggested that a gender-differentiated struggle around human rights can be identified in certain aspects of their work, and that this differentiation stems from the gender-biased contradictions embedded in the processes of democratization.

CHAPTER ONE

DEMOCRATIZATION IN GUATEMALA AND ITS IMPACT ON WOMEN: THE GENDERED EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC CRISIS, REPRESSION AND LIBERALIZATION AND THE POLITICIZATION OF WOMEN

Introduction:

This chapter analyses the historical context of the growth of women's organizing in Guatemala. The central argument made is that the upsurge in women's organizations has been integrally related to the process of democratization in Guatemala. The argument presented makes three major points. The first is that democratization -- understood as a two-phased process of repression and controlled political liberalization-- has been fundamentally rooted in economic crisis. The second is that democratization has affected women's lives in gender-specific ways, creating conditions for the potential politicization and mobilization of women --collectively, and around issues affecting their gender identity. The third point is that the ongoing and pervasive culture of fear in Guatemala has inhibited the spontaneous combustion of this potentiality into mass-based organizing. The growth of women's organizations in the 1980s and 1990s has reflected instead the influence of several phenomena, such as the demonstration effect of other mothers groups in Latin America, the international and regional impact of feminism, and the developing strategic position of the popular movement in contesting democratization. The combined effect of such forces has been the creation of a cadre of women leaders

who initiated the formation of women's organizations in a top-down manner.

To locate the analysis of democratization in Guatemala developed below it is helpful to examine the broader literature on the nature of democratization in Latin America more generally. It is argued that this literature does not offer a fully satisfactory understanding of democratization in the region. The neo-Marxist work on the relationship between state and civil society is then assessed in light of both the strengths and weaknesses of the pluralist approach which characterizes the democratization literature. From this critical review an alternative theoretical framework is elaborated which provides the framework for the specific analysis of democratization in Guatemala.

I. Democratization in Latin America: An Overview of the Literature:

One of the predominant perspectives on democratization which has emerged through the latter half of the 1980s and the 1990s is generally referred to as the regime transition approach.¹ It argues that the process of democratization underway in Latin America is best understood as a process of regime transition. As the label indicates, the approach begins with the concept of regime.² The content given to this concept reflects the pluralist assumptions which frequently underpin the approach.³ Regime is understood as the mode of governing relations between the state and civil society. In abstract terms there are two main modes of regulating relations: rule or governance by law, and rule or governance by decree. The former mode articulates a liberal democratic regime where the juridico-legal branch of the state is dominant, while the latter mode

articulates a military regime where the repressive branch of the state is dominant.

This approach, then, understands democratization in Latin America as a process of change or transition between two forms of regime: from military-authoritarianism to liberal democracy. The central problem considered in this approach is that of governance, as the mode of regulation of civil society by the state. The main question of this work with respect to the phenomenon of democratization is thus to understand how the mode of governing in Latin America is changing. This question gives rise to two more specific issues: how the military-authoritarian regimes broke down, and how liberal-democratic regimes have been emerging.⁴

These specific issues, and especially the second one, are approached in a way which reflects the normative assumptions embedded in a perspective grounded in a pluralist framework. As pluralism privileges liberal democracy as the best regime form the mode of governing characteristic of this regime becomes the yardstick by which to measure the success of transition. Consequently, it is held that competitive political processes are significant in that they determine the alteration of political power. Civil society is understood both as a political sphere and a realm of private relations. As a political sphere it is composed of a body of citizens whose relations are characterized by equality. Institutional actors are understood to aggregate the interests of the citizenry and compete to represent these interests in the state.

Politics is thus conceptualized in institutional terms: competition occurs between institutional actors, through institutional practises and processes such as elections, for control of the state which is an institutional regulatory body. Given these assumptions

the question of how a new regime form is emerging in Latin America is tackled by analysing the role played by institutional political actors such as political parties,⁵ the military, and organized labour, by addressing the significance of new processes of electoral competition,⁶ and by assessing the degree to which an appropriate political culture has emerged to sustain liberal democracy.

With respect to the Guatemalan case the regime transition approach to understanding democratization is problematic in a number of respects.⁷ Firstly, while the perspective clearly accords significance to regime form in its understanding of the relation between state and civil society, it overestimates the degree of change which has occurred in Guatemala through the formal transition from military-authoritarianism to liberal democracy. This occurs because it does not pay adequate attention to the relations of power underlying civil society which are reflected in the structure of the state.⁸ As a result it cannot account for the reality that a dependent capitalist state like the Guatemalan state can take many different forms of regime, and consequently, that a new regime form may not mean significant change in the structures of power.⁹ Thus, because it begins from the concept of regime rather than power, the approach generally suggests that significant change occurs with a transition to liberal democracy. It does not recognize, therefore, that the pact of domination congealed in the structure of the state may remain unaltered. In the case of Guatemala, then, the regime transition approach has difficulty explaining that elections have not fundamentally altered the relations of class nor have they corresponded with a cessation of violent state repression.

Secondly, the understanding of civil society as a political space dominated by institutions and institutional processes makes it difficult for the regime transition approach to adequately account for the significant politics which have occurred outside and underneath the dominant institutional spaces of civil society. For example, in Guatemala the extra-judicial violence perpetrated by the death squads, as well as the ongoing military actions of the armed insurgency continue to define the parameters of democratization. Furthermore, political acts of resistance and struggle both at the community and international levels have helped to legitimize the place of non-traditional sites of politics in the contestation of democratization. In effect, then, the weight assigned to the institutional terrain of politics in the regime transition perspective makes it difficult for the approach to understand the significance of other spaces of politics in the Guatemalan case.

Thirdly, the regime transition approach does not pay attention to the political processes entailed in the emergence of new, non-traditional political actors in the context of democratization.¹⁰ Again this inattention reflects the institutional focus which characterizes the approach. While it is concerned with institutional political actors and problematizes their actions in institutional political processes, their institutional durability and capacity for representation, and their potential for impact on state policy, it tends not to question their presence. It does not, then, problematize the existence of political actors nor the construction of political identities. As a result the role of non-traditional political actors which has been so crucial to shaping and contesting processes of democratization in Guatemala is not given significant recognition. This is a fundamental

silence with respect to the case of Guatemala for the political contestation of democratization has been profoundly affected by the emergence and actions of new political actors such as the women's organizations and indigenous organizations.

To recap, then, what is problematic about the regime transition approach to understanding democratization, especially in Guatemala, is the understanding of power and the political it contains. It pays inadequate attention to structural power, new spaces of politics, and the role of non-traditional political actors in contesting democratization. It must be stressed, however, that the approach does have important analytic strengths. Most importantly, it recognizes the importance of regime form, understands civil society as a political space, and gives the relation between state and civil society central theoretical importance. The significance of these insights to an analysis of democratization will be revisited below.

Considering the silences in the regime transition approach identified above, I contend that an alternative perspective is necessary to build a fully satisfactory understanding of the phenomenon of democratization in Guatemala. The argument developed below suggests that, in particular, the neo-Marxist work on the relation between state and civil society is helpful in addressing some of the weaknesses of the pluralist approach. By demonstrating that the strengths of pluralist and neo-Marxist work can be complimentary the argument is further made that elements from each framework can be utilized in building a more satisfying approach to understanding democratization.

Both pluralism and neo-Marxism accord central prominence to the problematic of state/civil society relations, but pluralism does so in a way which privileges regime

and the political space of civil society while neo-Marxism focuses on power and the state. As such pluralist and neo-Marxist approaches concentrate theoretical attention on different dimensions of the state/civil society problematic. Pluralism focuses on the political spatial nature of the relation embedded in the concept of regime while neo-Marxism focuses on the historical dimension of time congealed in the form of the state. To highlight the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation it is helpful to overview the neo-Marxist work, in order to assess its strengths and weaknesses with respect to the problem of understanding democratization.¹¹

As was demonstrated above in the critique of the regime transition approach to democratization, the conceptualization of the state in pluralist thought as regime contains an understanding of the relation between state and civil society, for the idea of regime is itself relational, denoting the mode of regulation or government, by the state, of civil society. Although initially it may appear less obvious, the literature which is usually referred to as the neo-Marxist literature on the state also contains an understanding of the relation between state and civil society.¹² This is sometimes obscured because there is often a greater fluidity presumed between the state and civil society than in the pluralist approach.

In general civil society is conceptualized as the economic sphere of production, a narrower understanding than found in pluralist work. For neo-Marxists, the economic sphere is class divided, reflecting the nature of the relations of production in capitalism. Due to the inequitable patterns of control over the means of production such class relations entail, these are also relations of power, and the economic sphere as civil

society is thus understood to be hierarchically ordered. These relations of class power are understood to form a structure which is the state. The state is thus the political condensation of these class relations of power, and it is this idea which is articulated when the state is referred to as a pact of domination. As a political structure of class relations the state arches back into civil society from whence it emerges.¹³ It does so through its role in the regulation of class relations through, for example, socio-economic policy, and the facilitation of capitalism through the underwriting of accumulation and commodification.¹⁴ In this way neo-Marxist work theorizes dialectically at the structural level across the state and civil society.

In some neo-Marxist work the state is also theorized at the institutional level¹⁵, and it is at this level that the state as a structure of power assumes a specific form. The state may be, for example, a relatively autonomous state or an exceptional state¹⁶. These distinctions refer to the relationship which exists between the state as an institutional entity and the class relations in civil society which prevail in a given historical moment. As capitalism develops, class relations change, and particularly the relations among the various fractions of the capitalist class. Thus the capitalist class can look very different in different historical moments and the form of the state will reflect the moment of class relations. For example, during the exceptional periods of "regulation" a hegemonic relation among the various fractions of the capitalist class is likely to prevail. At such times the state may take on a relatively autonomous form as its institutional capacity expands, free from the control or domination of any particular fraction of the capitalist class.

There are a number of strengths to the neo-Marxist approach when weighed against the requirements of theorizing democratization in Latin America generally, and Guatemala specifically. As highlighted, the neo-Marxist understanding of state form which emerges from its theorization across the structural and institutional levels of analysis captures the dimension of time congealed in the state as an institution. This allows neo-Marxism to relate the historical developments of capitalism to the institutional form of the state, and thus gives an important historical dimension to such work. The ability to comprehend the situatedness of the state in historical processes is crucial to understanding the case of Guatemala where democratization is a phenomenon intimately connected to the present moment of crisis in capitalism.

In its understanding that the state is both a structure of power and an institution this approach allows a comprehension of the reality that while the institutional form of the state may vary across historical moments, reflecting realignment among the fractions of the capitalist class and movement in the relative power of classes, the state, as the structure of the power relations contained in the mode of production, remains systematically biased towards capitalism and the capitalist class and thus constitutes an ongoing pact of domination. This is a key insight for it provides a way of understanding that significant change can occur simultaneously with substantial stasis.

One of the weaknesses of the neo-Marxist approach is that in its focus on theorizing the state/civil society problematic across levels of analysis through the concept of time it gives short shrift to the spatial form of the state/civil society relation. In effect, while neo-Marxist work has an understanding of state form which captures time

it does not have an understanding of state form which encompasses the political spatial dimension of the relation between state and civil society. It is on this point that the neo-Marxist work can learn from the pluralist focus on the regime form of state/civil society relations.

Civil society in the pluralist view is understood to include, among other things, a political space in which political activity such as aggregation and representation of interests and political competition occurs. The state --in its liberal democratic form-- is the institutional space where the legal-political arrangements of civil society are centralized. The concept of regime refers to the mode of regulation which governs the relation between these two intricately connected spaces of politics. That is, while the state is a product of civil society it also in turn affects civil society. What is salient in this conception is the political spatial dimension of civil society it incorporates, an understanding largely absent in the more economistic view contained in the neo-Marxist approach. Reflecting its normative position the pluralist perspective is, however, silent on one point which is crucial to understanding democratization. While civil society is seen as a political space, this space is understood as one where equality characterizes the relations among the citizens occupying the space. Consequently, this approach is not very helpful in understanding Guatemala where the present political struggle is over the principles of equality and rights which are presumed to characterize a liberal democracy. These principles are simply theoretically assumed in the pluralist framework.

On this it is helpful to return to neo-Marxist work. While it has been argued that this approach to the state/civil society problematic does not speak adequately to the idea

that civil society is a political space, it does, however, understand that the state arches back into civil society not only in an economic manner as discussed above, but also in an ideological manner. This reflects its understanding that civil society is hierarchically ordered due to the unequal class relations of power it contains. Ideology, as one of the relations between the state and civil society, legitimizes the capitalist/class state and the relations of power it congeals by perpetuating the pluralist myth that civil society is a non-hierarchically ordered political space. Ideology thus functions to legitimize the hierarchical social order by obscuring hierarchy and inequality and thus limiting the scope for struggle against the unequal power relations of economic civil society.

This understanding of ideology, then, consolidates the neo-Marxist insight that the state is not neutral and that civil society is structured unequally. In so doing it can help to bring a critical perspective to the pluralist spatial conception of the relation between state and civil society by allowing us to see that the state is not a neutral referee or umpire regulating the relations among a body of equal citizens. Instead the idea of an unbiased rule of law governing civil society is understood ideologically as functioning to legitimate the unequal relations of power of civil society contained in the state.

From this critical encounter of neo-Marxism and pluralism thus emerges an understanding of the state/civil society problematic where civil society is conceptualized as a political space in relation to the state, but where it is recognized that the principles governing this space exists largely in an ideological form at the level of discursive claims. This is not to deny that the liberal democratic principles of equality, citizenship,

and rights to a political space for participation have a "reality". It is rather to argue that the reality of such principles is an ideological one, which does not make them any less real for in this ideological existence they have a tremendous political significance. For while they can be deconstructed to be revealed as ideological discourse, on the other hand, residing in their existence as ideologically articulated claims about the supposed relationship between state and civil society is the space for politics. At the level of discourse they make the claim that the prerequisites of political activity such as citizenship and rights exist, and in making this claim they create the potential space for the contestation of these claims. This critical reconstruction of the pluralist view of civil society as a political space is much more useful in understanding the political struggle which has been a central feature of democratization in Guatemala. For, as will be seen in the following chapters, the contestation of basic liberal democratic principles such as human rights by new political actors such as women's organizations has been a central feature of democratization in Guatemala.

II. Democratization in Guatemala: Economic Crisis, Repression, and Liberalization:

i) From Conquest to 1954:

To understand the importance of economic crisis in the process of democratization in Guatemala it is necessary to highlight briefly key features of the country's history since the time of conquest. Such a review will illuminate how the present economic crisis stems from the patterns of land ownership, exploitation of indigenous labour,

agricultural production, and industrial development which have evolved over the last 500 years.

The land area which is now Guatemala was conquered by Spanish conquistador Don Pedro de Alvarado in 1523. The indigenous Mayan population was devastated by European diseases and Spanish military penetration of the Central American region and fell under Spanish domination. Under Spanish authority, colonial institutions were developed to ensure access to Indian labour. As Guatemala lacked major reserves of precious metals, the Spanish crown concentrated on exploiting the indigenous population as a source of labour for agricultural production. Agricultural exports were viewed as the only source of wealth the colony could provide. The right of the Spanish to exploitation of the indigenous peoples was institutionalized with the New Laws of 1541, which also served to entrench the emerging pattern of land use and ownership.¹⁷

Guatemala's position in the international division of labour as an exporter of agricultural products changed little as first Britain and then the United States superseded Spain as the dominant world economic power. Cacao, and later indigo and cochineal,¹⁸ were the most important agricultural exports throughout the colonial period. When synthetic dyes were developed around 1850, Guatemala stagnated until coffee was introduced by German financial interests.

The introduction of coffee production coincided with the ascendancy of Liberal political domination of the state from 1870 to 1944. During this period the minifundia/latifundia pattern of landholding was consolidated: the vast majority of the Guatemalan people --the rural peasantry-- struggled for subsistence on small plots of

land, while a few owned vast plantations. The indigenous peoples were subjected to the further entrenchment of control over their labour, primarily through the establishment of debt bondage in 1894 and the Vagrancy Law of 1934. During the rule of Justo Rufino Barrios (1873-1885), the military was modernized and professionalised in order to better serve the interests of the coffee plantation owners.¹⁹

By the turn of the century commercial banana production was introduced to Guatemala by the American United Fruit Company (UFCO), thus inaugurating the involvement of the United States in Guatemala. The Vagrancy Law was passed by the dictator Jorge Ubico on behalf of the UFCO. This law, which further subjected the peasantry to extreme exploitation of their labour,²⁰ indicated the degree of control over the state the American company came to exercise. Through Ubico's period of rule (1931-44) --which coincided with the heyday of banana production in Guatemala-- the economy of the country came to be significantly tied to American interests.²¹ In 1947 banana production peaked²² and by the late 1950s was declining, due largely to the labour and land intensive method of production which had been used. This mode of production disregarded the importance of protecting the crop from insect infestation and plant blight, with the result that disease eroded the profitability of the crop.

During the 1950s cotton was introduced to Guatemala and as an export crop it quickly surpassed bananas in importance to the economy.²³ The production of cotton also brought capitalist modes of agricultural production to Guatemala.²⁴ This increased agribusiness activity generally did not bring new land under cultivation, however. As indicated by the large amount of land devoted to export in comparison to subsistence

production²⁵ agribusiness again reinforced the degradation of the peasantry to subservience and subsistence.

The pattern of production for export of a few agricultural commodities, which was established so early in Guatemala's history, has continued to the present day. In the 1960s sugar, beef, and cardamom were added to the list of products, thereby diversifying the limited agro-export economy to some degree. But Guatemala has remained heavily dependent on a few raw or semi-processed agricultural products to earn its export receipts.

In 1944 a nationalist movement comprised largely of students, intellectuals, and junior military officers overthrew Ubico. In the subsequent decade, which has become known as the "ten years of spring", two presidents were popularly elected. While neither Juan José Arévalo nor Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán were socialist in their politics, both attempted to implement social reform measures. The Agrarian Reform Law initiated by Arbenz in 1952²⁶ proved too drastic for both the dominant classes and American interests in Guatemala.²⁷ In 1954 the CIA engineered and organized "Operation Success" and ousted Arbenz from power. This coup effectively brought to an end the experiment with social democracy and led to the entrenchment of military rule.

ii) The Central American Common Market Experiment:

The decades following the "ten years of spring" have been described as decades of impoverishing growth, leading to social disintegration and upheaval. Writing more generally about this phenomenon in the region as a whole Xabier Gorostiaga and Peter

Marchetti argue:

The situation in the isthmus in the decades preceding advent of the crisis was exceedingly complex. The twenty years (1950-1970) of stable economic growth and superficial changes did not bring needed structural changes. The growth, far from being self-sustaining, was artificially engendered by external factors; as import-substitution industrialization was not integrated with agriculture and natural resources, no internal market sufficient to generate its own demand was created. Economic growth over a period of nearly thirty years did not result in the accumulation of funds because resources were concentrated in a small proportion of the population. The beneficiaries of the accumulation of resources indulged in excessive foreign-oriented and artificial consumption, a pattern that did not permit the growth to be transformed into permanent forms of self-sustaining development.²⁸

With respect to the specific Guatemalan experience, Piero Gleijeses describe this period as follows:

Guatemala's economy has experienced on average an adequate growth rate over the period. This growth has not been accompanied, however, by even modest social reforms. This pattern of economic growth without social reform has resulted in structurally weak economy with a limited internal market for domestic industry and, more importantly, has further exacerbated social tensions within the country.²⁹

Undoubtedly many factors have contributed to this phenomenon of impoverishing growth leading to economic crisis. The argument developed below focuses, however, on the social and political repercussions which have stemmed from the contradictions embedded in the superimposition of industrialization on the predominantly agrarian economy in Guatemala.³⁰

The overthrow of President Arbenz in 1954³¹ made clear that subsequent economic development was not to be achieved through land tenure reform and income redistribution.³² The idea of industrialization through import substitution industrialization (ISI) and regional integration advocated by the recently created United

Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) was thus seen to offer a strategy which would meet the demands for reform which had emerged in the "ten years of spring" without challenging or affecting the class structure of society.³³ Regional integration was particularly appealing as it provided a way to overcome the constraints to industrialization posed by the narrow market structure of each nation without having to expand domestic consumption. The industrial development of Guatemala was thus promoted through the structure of the Central American Common Market (CACM).

ECLA advocated a programme of regional integration and planned industrialization between the Central America countries which was designed to realize an even distribution of the industries requiring the largest economies of scale.³⁴ This strategy of planned, coordinated, and state-guided import substitution industrialization through regional integration proved, however, to be unacceptable to the United States, embroiled as it was in the politics of the Cold War. The United States perceived the ECLA strategy for Central American industrialization as overly statist and socialist in tendency.³⁵ As a result, it quickly intervened in the regional integration and industrialization programme through the Agreement on the Central American System of Integration Industries ECLA had helped to establish in 1958.³⁶

In 1960 the United States oversaw the signing of the Tripartite Agreement of Economic Association which established the basis for immediate free trade for almost all commodities originating in member nations, and which eliminated the mechanisms for regional planning and balanced growth contained in the earlier treaty designed by ECLA.³⁷ As a result, the Central American Common Market which emerged was

effectively a regional free market with a common tariff wall.³⁸ As John Weeks has stated, "[t]he effect on multinationals of the CACM was to induce these companies to stop exporting certain manufactures to Central America and to produce these within the region."³⁹

The longer-term effects of the common market experiment for industrialization in the Central American region have been the subject of some controversy.⁴⁰ There is general agreement, however, about several particular problematic aspects of regional integration. For one, the CACM proved to be, in effect, a political project to promote industrialization through regional integration in order to circumvent the need to address the main economic factor which had inhibited autonomous, self-generating industrialization, viz. inadequate levels of national demand and consumption capacity.

As a result, the CACM had the effect of reinforcing the skewed and narrow market structures of the member countries, while at the same time functioning to consolidate a pattern of production of luxury consumer goods which was irrelevant to the needs of the majority of the population of Central America. By subordinating the planned industrialization advocated by ECLA to the dictates of market pressures, the CACM seemed doomed to failure given the uneven process of industrialization and concomitant benefits which accrued across the member nations.⁴¹

When the CACM was established, Guatemala was the most industrially developed country of the region⁴² and thus was best situated to benefit from the unplanned industrialization initiated with the CACM. Indeed, manufacturing growth was rapid⁴³, as was general economic growth, with GNP averaging better than a 5 per cent per annum

increase through the 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁴ Yet the apparent success of the industrialization process indicated by such macroeconomic indicators soon proved problematic. Most importantly, this pattern of industrial development was unstable due to contradictory tendencies in the industrialization process. These contradictions stemmed above all from the lack of economic dynamism in the process of industrialization instigated by the CACM: in effect, industrialization was neither economically stimulated and generated, nor economically self-sustaining.⁴⁵

This is to say that industrialization in the Central American region did not reflect emergent market demand stimulated by rising consumption capacity. Rather, it occurred within the framework of regional integration, where the CACM was above all a political project. The regional integration process was designed to provide the market demand stimulus to industrialization at a regional level which the tiny internal markets of each country alone inhibited at a national level. The industrialization process in the region was thus built on a market created politically through regional integration --a market which thereby was also dependent on ongoing political will in order to be maintained.⁴⁶ This necessary political will quickly evaporated as some countries benefitted more than others from the CACM project⁴⁷ and by the late 1960s the CACM was effectively defunct.⁴⁸ Importantly, however, these tensions and instability in the regional integration process affected not only the viability of the CACM, but also the economic development of the member nations, as is illustrated by the pattern of industrial production which developed in Guatemala.

For example, the implications for Guatemala of the lack of economic dynamism underlying the process of industrialization in the region were serious. Guatemala's export earnings from manufacturing were significantly affected by the collapse of the market, given that it was second only to El Salvador in percentage of gross manufacturing output exported to the CACM.⁴⁹ As well, the initial constraint to industrialization in Guatemala posed by the small domestic market was not eliminated by the import substitution strategy of the CACM.

Furthermore, industrialization in Guatemala in the 1960s was almost entirely financed by the government of the United States, which was determined to make Guatemala a "showcase of capitalist development" in the wake of the overthrow of President Arbenz in 1954.⁵⁰ It thus did not entail a process of autonomous domestic capital accumulation. The industrial sector was dominated by a few large American-owned firms which, while comprising only 8.1 percent of the total firms, produced 49.1 percent of the industrial product in 1968.⁵¹

The industrial sector was characterized by chronic overcapacity averaging a utilization rate of only 38 percent of installed capacity in 1968.⁵² In addition, the industrial sector had a low labour absorption capability and consequently little income generation effect. The impact of this feature was exacerbated by the destruction of traditional artisanal manufacturing resulting from the industrialization process.⁵³ Finally, the saturation of the market was quickly reached by the late 1960s as was the exhaustion of the easy phase of ISI.

In general these problems arose because manufacturing production for the Common Market was largely composed of luxury consumer non-durable goods which only reinforced the distorted demand structure in each of the Central American economies.⁵⁴ In effect, industrialization did not entail a change in the socio-economic structure of Guatemala but rather was superimposed on the structure of an agrarian society geared to the export of agricultural products.

iii) From Import Substitution Industrialization to Maquila Production:

As the easy phase of import substitution dried up, the industrialization process in Guatemala subsequently moved into a second phase in the 1970s. Manufacturing in Guatemala developed into "finishing touch", "take-back", or maquiladora industry which took advantage of cheap labour to assemble basic goods --primarily garments-- for re-export back to the United States.⁵⁵

In that the CACM's common tariff wall had forced American multi-national corporations to establish branch plants inside the region, production in the 1960s had been oriented to regional consumption. As the 1970s progressed, production in the maquiladoras was geared for re-export to the American market. The establishment of maquiladoras in Central America benefitted from the increase in the minimum wage in Mexico in the mid-1970s.⁵⁶ Due to a number of factors, however, including escalating political violence, the region had difficulty attracting this type of industry. Consequently, industrialization generally slowed and by the late 1970s "the relative importance of manufacturing [was] about what it had been a decade before."⁵⁷

This changing pattern of industrialization through the 1970s reinforced another contradictory tendency in the industrialization process. The industrial sector became heavily dependent on imported inputs of two forms: basic materials to be assembled in the maquiladoras, and more importantly, capital goods and energy resources needed for industrial production. Thus the industrial sector in Guatemala never moved beyond the easy phase of industrialization --the production of light consumer goods-- and at the same time became increasingly dependent on imported inputs.⁵⁸ Furthermore, industrial production continued to be driven by external demand structures and thereby perpetuated the skewed internal supply and demand structure.

iv) The Emergent Crisis:

One important outcome of these contradictory pressures within the process of industrialization in Guatemala was that industrialization failed to decrease the economy's dependence on agricultural export production. In contrast, the industrial sector became increasingly reliant on the agribusiness sector to earn the foreign currency necessary for the purchase of imported industrial inputs. Thus, instead of the industrial sector generating dynamism --backward linkages and spilloff-- in the economy it reinforced the reliance of the economy on agricultural exports and concomitantly reinforced the susceptibility of the economy to the fluctuations of world markets. The dependence of the industrial sector on the agricultural sector and the general openness of the Guatemalan economy took on increasing significance due to developments in the global economy in the 1970s and 1980s.

In effect, for the foreign exchange needed to import these industrial inputs the industrial sector came to be increasingly dependent on the export earnings of the agrarian sector. At the same time, due to the nature of the goods produced and its still only slightly diversified nature the agrarian sector itself was commodity price dependent and thus very susceptible to the movements of world markets. Through the mid and late 1970s world commodity prices were low and consequently reduced the export earnings of the agrarian sector. This also served to limit the foreign exchange available to the industrial sector. Importantly, declining world prices corresponded with a high availability of dollars to borrow due to the medium term effects of the oil shocks. The outcome for Guatemala was that export earnings dropped dramatically at the same time that capital became increasingly expensive⁵⁹ but also readily available.

Such developments in the global economy hence had a significant impact on the Guatemalan economy. The extent of the crisis which emerged is illustrated by the increase in the negative balance in commodity trade (exports to imports in millions of current dollars) from -31.5 in 1975 to -173.3 in 1979.⁶⁰ The effects of declining commodity prices were exacerbated by large scale capital flight from the country though the 1970s.⁶¹ Importantly, due to the nature of the industrialization process, the dynamics of the industrial sector further exacerbated the susceptibility of the economy to the features of escalating global economic crisis. Fiscal crisis developed in Guatemala as the state turned to deficit financing to sustain the economy.⁶² It began to borrow heavily in the mid-1970s, and unlike other Central American countries, borrowing continued to increase after 1981.

The political situation through the late 1970s and early 1980s only served to escalate the fiscal crisis in Guatemala. International repugnance at the violence perpetrated by the military in response to growing social unrest served to dry up bilateral financial aid from donor countries. Given the emphasis of the Carter administration on human rights, Guatemala was targeted in US foreign policy. As Dario Moreno states:

In 1977 the Carter administration attempted to pressure Guatemala to improve human rights conditions by threatening to cut off military aid. The Guatemalan armed forces reacted angrily to Washington's demand. They renounced "for the sake of national dignity" all military assistance from the United States⁶³

The climate of social upheaval furthermore made financing from institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) difficult to obtain. As a result, Guatemala continued to increase its level of commercial borrowing, which has generally carried harder repayment terms and higher rates of interest. The percentage of publicly guaranteed debt rose from 54.1 percent in 1970 to 93.5 percent in 1986.⁶⁴ As Caballeros summarizes, the crisis has been profound. Describing the region generally he states:

even in relation to present commitments, it is unlikely that the region will be able to meet its obligation even if one makes optimistic assumptions about the recovery of export capacity and world prices. Indeed, it is probable that the region will need to contract further debt and that the terms of new debt will be less favorable than at present, thus worsening the structure of debt.⁶⁵

v) The Changing Nature of Class Relations:

To understand fully the transformation of economic difficulty into economic and fiscal crisis in Guatemala it is necessary to consider the changing configuration of class relations throughout the process. The above analysis has outlined how the strategy of

borrowing money to support imports was pursued rather than the implementation of policies of adjustment for the growing imbalances and distortions in the domestic economy. This stop-gap response to the emergent crisis reflected the serious cracks which were developing in the 1970s in the pact of domination in the capitalist class. Let us examine this point more closely.

The process of industrialization in Guatemala led to a growing role of foreign capital and, to a lesser extent, a new class fraction of emergent industrialists in the domestic capitalist class. The growth of agri-business also produced new agrarian interests which challenged to a limited degree the long-standing power base of the traditional coffee oligarchy.⁶⁶ Finally, the historic reliance by the capitalist class on the military to maintain the inequitable patterns of ownership and control in Guatemala was beginning to reach its logical conclusion. Throughout the 1970s the military metamorphosed from being the repressive arm of the dominant class to an institution with a well entrenched political base and powerful economic interests. By using the power it was entrusted with to maintain control over society the military established an extensive economic basis, particularly in land and cattle ranching.

As a result of all of these developments the configuration of the capitalist class in Guatemala had changed dramatically by the late 1970s and was internally fragile.⁶⁷ Without hegemonic consensus or a faction of the capitalist class strong enough to impose its will, capital responded to the emerging crisis with a general failure to adjust and heavy capital flight from the country. As outlined above, this failure to adjust included the maintenance of an over-valued currency, the running down of international reserves,

and public sector borrowing --with a high percentage of commercial loans on hard terms-- to finance the growing fiscal deficit. Not surprisingly, the failure to adjust to the imbalances of the mid-1970s was an extremely myopic response which led to a rapid spiral downward into a severe debt crisis in the 1980s.⁶⁸

vi) Crisis, Resistance, and Repression:

By the late 1970s Guatemala was engulfed in a general societal crisis.⁶⁹ The huge majority of Guatemalans suffered a serious decline in their standard of living through the second half of the 1970s as a result of the emerging economic crisis.⁷⁰ But by this time popular forces were beginning to recover from the decimation of their organizations which followed the 1954 coup, and resistance and rebellion was once again on the upswing.⁷¹ Indeed, Gabriel Aguilera Peralta argues that the resurgence of popular struggle peaked between 1978 and 1980, and the strength of the armed insurgent forces increased from 1975 onward, reaching its height of military capacity between 1980 and 1981.⁷² The guerilla organizations had learned some painful lessons from the defeat of their foco strategy⁷³ of the 1960s. As a result, through the 1970s the different organizations worked to expand their base of support, especially amongst the rural indigenous population.⁷⁴ Labour was slowly regrouping after the liquidation of its leadership and demobilization of the unions,⁷⁵ and students were again actively engaged in fomenting popular protest.

The reemergence of resistance was, however, quickly met with a bloody clampdown. Faced with their own economic difficulties and weak internal consensus,

the capitalist class was extremely threatened by the reappearance of popular organizing and resistance. Furthermore, this growing perception on the part of the capitalist class of the need for increased control of society resinated with the consolidation of a military very capable of establishing such control. For through its role as the repressive arm of the capitalist class, not only had the military established its own economic base, it had also entrenched itself institutionally. Consequently, by the late 1970s the Guatemalan military was both economically and institutionally extremely powerful. Thus, paralleling its inability to pursue a proactive strategy towards the economic crisis, the capitalist class also capitulated in responding to the societal crisis rooted in the deteriorating economic situation by once again relying on the military to turn its repressive capacity on society in a pact of domination.⁷⁶

It is important also to recognize that this political crisis within the dominant bloc and the more generalized economic crisis gripping Guatemala corresponded with a significant shift in US foreign policy away from the emphasis on human rights of the Carter administration towards the Reagan administration's concern with US strategic interests. The return to geopolitical thinking led to a shift in American foreign policy which supported both counter-insurgency and so-called democratization, while tolerating increased violations of human rights.⁷⁷ In brief, the Reagan era was guided by a desire to reassert American leadership internationally. In terms of foreign policy, the Reagan years of the 1980s were characterized by both the support of forces opposing revolutionary movements and the condemnation of dictatorships of both the right and left.⁷⁸

The military responded to burgeoning class conflict by mounting a counterinsurgency campaign of harsh and extreme repression.⁷⁹ This strategy was clearly expressed in the April 1982 "National Plan for Security and Development" which detailed the key phases of counterinsurgency. This plan culminated with the third phase, "Stability 85", "the predominantly political phase in which electoral processes were initiated to provide for the election of a civilian government in an effort to reestablish political legitimacy."⁸⁰ The immediate objective of the military, however, was the annihilation of the basis of support of the armed insurgency. This meant "securing" and "pacifying" the country through scorched-earth tactics and terrorization of the populace to dry up potential guerilla support.⁸¹ By 1982 the military had gained the upper hand in the war against the guerillas, and by 1983 was moving toward the institutionalization of military control of the rural population through, for example, the forced population of model villages and the system of civilian defense patrols.⁸² By 1984 the military had begun implementation of the final phase of its counterinsurgency plan, which was the limited political liberalization or "opening" signalled by the election of 1985.⁸³

vii) Political Liberalization and the Relationship Between the Military and the Guatemalan State:

In the 1980s the apparent initiation of democratization through the holding of elections for a civilian president in 1985 seemed a striking event. This election, however, is best understood to have symbolized a limited and controlled political liberalization which was a key part of the military's counter-insurgency strategy. Initially

it seems contradictory that it was the military which implemented even this limited degree of political opening. It is, however, understandable when the relationship between the military and the Guatemalan state is considered.

Through the violence of the late 1970s and early 1980s an important dynamic in the relationship between state and civil society was set into play. As the repressive strength of the military was unleashed on society, the state became increasingly exceptional, more and more removed in its mission of pacification from control by the capitalist class. Furthermore, as the bloody annihilation of resistance proceeded successfully, the military came increasingly to control civil society. One implication of this growing control over civil society was that it led to the decreasing need of the military to control the state as an institution and political apparatus. In this contradictory dynamic, then, lay the seeds of the political liberalization which has been democratization in Guatemala.

Due to its virtual stranglehold on civil society, the military had less and less need formally to run the state in its institutional dimension of regime. In this is found the explanation for the apparent anomaly that it has been the military that initiated political liberalization which culminated in the election of a civilian president in 1985. For the military, formal liberalization has been understood to be part and parcel of its deliberate national security doctrine promulgated in the early 1980s which declared politics to be an extension of war. Because the military came to control both an exceptional state and civil society it could afford to allow --and indeed, would benefit politically³⁴ from doing so-- a change in regime form to formal liberal democracy. In effect then, for the

military, the limited political liberalization of the mid-1980s had as a necessary precondition the antecedent period of deliberate, brutal and extreme violence of the early 1980s.

In this contradictory dynamic are also to be found the roots of an explanation for the nature of the political struggle which has characterized Guatemala through the mid-1980s. Contestation is for both state, and civil society. Although it challenges the usual way of thinking about state and civil society as dichotomous, in the present moment of struggle in Guatemala the contestation for both state and civil society are not mutually exclusive nor contradictory processes. Indeed, in this historical moment to expand the space of civil society also means to transform the state. This is because in Guatemala the precondition for an enlarged space for politics is a more relatively autonomous state. Political struggle, and consequently, a space for politics, requires the underpinnings of democratic rights and freedoms, which are the hallmarks of a relatively autonomous state with a liberal-democratic form of regime. This is not to deny that such a state constitutes a pact of domination, but rather to assert that in comparison to the exceptional state the relatively autonomous state/liberal-democratic regime privileges the institutional dimension of the state, and especially the juridico-legal component. Entailed in this prominence of the juridico-legal are the rule of law and the respect for human rights.

In Guatemala, the formal existence of a liberal-democratic regime means that, formally, the rule of law prevails. This, however, is challenged by the fact that the state is not relatively autonomous, but rather exceptional, as the military retain pervasive and tight control. Consequently, what is presently at stake politically in Guatemala is the

realization of a relatively autonomous state, which would mean grounding the ideological claims, such as equality and rights, of the mode of governing or regime in institutional practises of the state. This means, in effect, realizing a real rule of law. Importantly, it would also mean a lessening of the grip of the military on society, and consequently a greater space for politics in an expanded civil society. It would then entail a changed institutional state form, from an exceptional to a relatively autonomous state, and a consolidation of the regime of liberal-democracy, that is, a deepening of democratization. In basic terms, what this means is that the present struggle in Guatemala is over whether liberalization will be democratized.

The central issue in this struggle is to decrease the militarization of society and the state: hence respect for human rights becomes a linchpin in this struggle. Historically the impunity with which the military violated human rights served to underline both concretely and symbolically the scope of its control and the circumscribed nature of the political liberalization it allowed. Thus to advance the issue of human rights stands as a direct challenge to the reality of military control. One contradiction of the present moment of struggle in Guatemala is that to engage in this struggle for human rights requires political space in civil society and such space has as its prerequisite a changed state where human rights are respected, a change that can only be achieved through political struggle. This is what it means to say that at present both state and civil society must be contested, for in Guatemala this is a dialectical struggle, rather than one in which the space of civil society is gained at the expense of a shrunken state.

In conceptual terms, then, this is the general nature of the political challenge which has confronted the popular forces since liberalization was initiated in the mid-1980s. The impact of the repression, however, on the bases of support for popular struggle and contestation has been enormous. Indeed, this impact must be considered in terms of genocide and cultural disintegration.⁸⁵ Thousands of indigenous and ladino peasants were murdered, or disappeared.⁸⁶ Thousands more fled across the border into Mexico⁸⁷, a huge number fled from their villages to safer areas of the country, becoming internally displaced persons, and many more took refuge in remote mountain areas or deep jungle, hiding out from detection.⁸⁸ As well, nearly a whole generation of popular movement leaders and progressive political activists was lost as student leaders, labour leaders, intellectuals, and so forth, were disappeared or forced into exile.

Morna Macleod summarizes the impact as follows:

The extreme repression let loose on Guatemala has signified an almost complete reduction, for various years, of the popular movement: not even the Christian and human rights organizations have been able to openly operate in Guatemala since 1980, obligated, therefore, to move their operations outside Guatemala.⁸⁹

III. The Impact of Democratization on Women:

Given the incredible decompression of political and civil society achieved through repression it is extraordinarily important to consider what new opportunities for popular resistance and contestation may have simultaneously been generated through the processes of democratization. This is, then, to evaluate if the contradictions embedded in these processes may have opened windows of opportunity for the popular movement to re-

emerge. In this vein, it is here argued that one such important contradiction is that the strategy of the military to found political liberalization on societal contraction realized through violent repression had the effect of creating a potential for a politicization and mobilization of women unprecedented in Guatemalan history.⁹⁰ This occurred because of the particular impact the repression and underlying economic crisis had on women's lives.

i) Women's Work in Guatemala: Caregiving and Caretaking:

To understand this statement it is necessary to consider briefly the social construction of gender in Guatemala. Women have historically been deemed responsible for the work entailed in the reproduction of the family as a social unit. This has meant that the family has been the locus of the social construction of women's identity. In this gendering of the family division of labour, Guatemala is not unique. Indeed, the Argentinean feminist Elizabeth Jelin summarizes this phenomenon through her description of the pattern of gender relations, social roles, and work which has characterized all of Latin America:

The Latin American cultural tradition is well-known for the way it defines the role of each sex. While the variations between countries and zones within the region may seem very considerable, when compared with other areas of the world, the situation of women in Latin America appears to be highly uniform with respect to their typical aspirations and to the cultural meanings given to concrete practises.

In the Latin American cultural tradition, the subordination of women is anchored to the strongly cohesive family group that constitutes the base of the whole system of social relations. The patriarchal family is seen as the natural unit around which daily life revolves. The household is the basic unit of reproduction. Within it, the relations between the genders and generations are hierarchical, involving a clear

division of labour and areas of activity. Women are in charge of the domestic tasks associated with the private sphere of reproduction and maintenance of the family; men are responsible for tasks relating to the public sphere of social and political life.

The cohesion of the family group has had very different implications for men and for women. For women, subordination is the result; for men, the outcome is a pattern of personal relations based on kinship solidarity, which is transferred to the public sphere of politics and productive activities. This is the basis of the patron-client relationships and paternalism that weigh so heavily on traditional public life in Latin America.⁹¹

Jelin's description well captures the gendered location of women in the private space of the family. I would suggest, however, that it is important to elaborate on the nature of women's work. Jelin states that women are "in charge of the domestic tasks associated with the private sphere of reproduction and maintenance of the family". Thus, the gendering of women's identity terms of the family gives rise to two general and related types of women's work: the caregiving work necessary to the maintenance of the social relations of the family, and, the caretaking work necessary to the physical maintenance of the family.

In understanding the construction of women's gender in Guatemala, the categories of caregiving and caretaking are employed rather than the more usual reproductive and productive work categories, for the latter tend to be correlated with the private and public spheres, respectively. This is not meant to suggest that the understanding of women's roles in terms of the work they perform as contained in the reproductive/productive schema is unhelpful or unimportant. Rather, in choosing to distinguish two broadly different types of women's work --caregiving and caretaking-- two key points about the Guatemalan situation are emphasized.

One is the blurring of the distinction between reproductive and productive work - and hence, of the private and public spheres-- which is emerging in the context of crisis and globalization. For in the case of Guatemala, women's responsibilities to maintain the family --usually understood as reproductive work in the private sphere-- has led to a large flow of women into the informal economy as the need for more income generation in the family unit has increased in the context of economic crisis and neo-liberalism. While this work may be understood within the framework of productive labour and the public sphere, this misses a crucial point which is that the women themselves understand this part of their work as integral to their roles in the family, and the private sphere.

Indeed this blurring of what constitutes reproductive and productive work also emerges in the great increase in the numbers of women engaged in prostitution in order to maintain their families. In this case the sexual work of women --usually confined to the private sphere of the family-- is commodified and takes on the nature of productive work, albeit in the informal sector. The women, however, understand this as work they engage in to support their families --and thereby perform their reproductive work.

Let us consider briefly the significance of the erosion of the socially constructed differentiation between the private and public spheres resulting from the complex processes of democratization. In general, this spatial differentiation between private and public has been demarcated in political terms: the private sphere of the family and household has been constructed as an apolitical realm, and the public sphere has been the realm of politics and the state. Consequently, this differentiation has provided both the

spatial location and political definition of women's gender identity, as women's lives and work have been constructed in terms of the reproduction of the family in the private sphere. The erosion of the differentiation between the private and public has consequently weakened the divide or boundary which has served to delimit women's lives as apolitical.

The second point is that in choosing the categories of caregiving and caretaking work the significance of women's attitudes towards their work and social roles is stressed. For as is discussed in greater detail below, it has been through the impact that repression and economic crisis had on the perception of and social relationship to their work and roles that the potential for women's politicization and mobilization was created. This potential then arises from the view that has emerged amongst women of the popular classes that both repression and economic crisis have negatively affected their lives by destabilizing their ability to perform their work. This is to say that the potential for women's politicization has been created through the ways in which women have interpreted the significance of, and concomitantly, attributed meaning to, the effects of repression and crisis on their lives.

ii) Democratization and Its Impact on Women:

Let us now discuss in more detail the impact of democratization on women by elaborating the specific effects of the two key dimensions of the process, viz., repression and economic crisis. To understand the implications of democratization for women, the analysis is constructed in terms of the gender identity and gendered work of women

highlighted above. This analysis suggests that the violent repression has held particularly significant repercussions for women's caregiving work, while economic crisis and neo-liberalism have entailed important implications for women's caretaking work.

a)The Violent Repression:

The period of repression had a specific impact on women, above all, because the violence perpetrated by the military in the late 1970s and early 1980s constituted an attack on the social relations of the family. Jean Franco analyses well the nihilistic logic underlying the seeming arbitrariness of this attack on the family. In her discussion of pain and fear as crucial dimensions of the repression unleashed by militaries across Latin America she states: "Despite the fact that the military constantly appealed to family values ... the holy war was carried out as an act of destruction against families." She then explains this targeting of the family: "[t]he military governments were determined to wipe out the historical memory that allowed the idea of resistance to be passed from generation to generation. In many Latin American countries the family has traditionally provided a protective network even to its politically aberrant members." As such she argues that "[t]he military recognized that the family did not always reproduce the dominant values but also reproduced dissidence, hence the severity of their attack."²

As in many other Latin American countries, the widespread and arbitrary atrocities committed by the military in Guatemala left virtually no one untouched or untouchable. They were perpetrated in a seemingly arbitrary manner which went far beyond reprisal for political involvement, to encompass an attack on people with virtually

no involvement in politics. Designed to terrorize the population into acquiescence, the repression succeeded in this goal. Importantly, however, the mass scale violence of the repression also appeared to the majority of the population as inexplicable and unjustifiable. This societal response has led to a politicization of the violence and repression, as political space opened through the political liberalization and created some scope for the expression of popular discontent.

In that they are predominantly responsible for the social relations of the family, the disappearance or murder of husbands, fathers, sons, and daughters, also threatened and undermined the ability of women to perform their caregiving and nurturance work in the maintenance of family relations. As the caregivers and nurturers of the family, women in their roles as wives and mothers were drastically affected by events which they were unable to rationalize or justify.⁹³ The impact was particularly marked for the women relatives of disappeared victims of the repression, for the ambiguity generated by the uncertainty of death prolonged their feelings of loss and grief. Jennifer G. Schirmer's analysis of the impact of the repression on women's roles is worth citing at length, for it well serves to substantiate this point. She states:

While these repressive states have invaded the sanctity of the family, destroying the very symbol of life, they still expect women to remain in their traditional roles as reproducers of life and guardians of death. Women are expected to be passive, individual 'witnesses to war,' as though repression has no effect on cultural traditions of life. The tactic of disappearance of the relatives, however, denies these women this traditional role of bereaver....⁹⁴

Thus, as a consequence of the uncertainty entailed in the disappeared, the restabilization of women's attitudes towards their caregiving work has been inhibited.

It is in this manner, then, that the extreme level of human rights violations entailed in the repression became a concrete, lived issue around which women could potentially be politicized and mobilized. Writing of Latin America more generally, of which the case of Guatemala is no exception, Elizabeth Jelin provides a succinct summary of this destabilization of the traditional boundaries of politics which occurred and the political effect this had on women:

The attempt of authoritarian regimes, which devastated the region (or which are still doing so) to redefine the limits of legitimacy of political action contributed paradoxically to the politicization of spheres traditionally considered non-political. This phenomenon has been particularly clear in the case of women, who in various cases organized themselves in new ways, having recognized the political profile of their family roles.⁹⁵

b) Economic Crisis and Neo-Liberalism:

The economic crisis underlying the process of democratization has also had particular repercussions for women's lives. In some ways these effects have been more complex, given the multi-faceted nature of the economic crisis and the factors which have intersected it, such as the violent repression, the policies of neo-liberalism which ensued in the later 1980s, and extant patriarchal structures. In general, however, the socio-economic effect of this crisis has been the severe impoverishment of the majority of the Guatemalan population. While this decline in the standard of living has had many societal repercussions, the family as a social unit has been particularly affected. For our purposes here, two general trends are worth highlighting. For one, as prices have risen and real wages have declined it has given rise to the financial need in families for more

than one income. Furthermore, these economic pressures have also led to the disintegration of family units as increasing rates of alcoholism, domestic violence, and abandonment have taken their toll.

Women have been acutely affected by these trends.⁴⁶ Both the increasing financial needs of the family and the disintegration of the family unit have contributed to a drastic increase in the work entailed in women's caretaking of the family. Indeed, the work of a great number of women as caretakers of the household has greatly expanded to encompass direct and frequently total responsibility for income generation and economic provision for the family.⁴⁷ In the case of families affected by abandonment, abuse, and alcoholism on the part of the husband, the women in these families have effectively become single heads of households. In light of the growing necessity for multiple family incomes this trend to family disintegration and female heads of households has meant that those who have fallen into the most extreme poverty have generally been women and children.

The stress experienced by women, entailed in this amplification of their work and responsibilities, has been further exacerbated by related dynamics. As discussed above, the period of repression and the economic crisis in Guatemala have been fundamentally related: repression was part of a broader strategy to control societal conflict without addressing the roots of the economic crisis which generated this conflict. One result of the violence has been that thousands of women were left widowed, another form of family disintegration that has left further numbers of women as single heads of households. Because of the loss of their spouses, these women were immediately forced

to take on the responsibility to provide for the economic welfare of the family. Importantly this dynamic between economic crisis and repression had repercussions for other women in the family unit as well. Very frequently older daughters came to be expected to contribute to the generation of family income, and were often sent off at very young ages to work as domestics in private homes. Again, this effect led to further dissolution of the social relations of the family.

The advent of a neo-liberal policy approach to economic crisis in the latter half of the 1980s has also exacerbated the effects of economic crisis on women. While the Guatemalan state has historically undertaken and supported extremely limited social welfare measures, it was nevertheless the case that some institutions and state policies existed which provided the populace some minimal social security: most of these were policies of the two democratically elected governments of the "ten years of spring", from 1944 to 1954. In the late 1980s even these limited institutions and policies came under attack. Susanne Jonas has summarized aptly the magnitude of the neo-liberal offensive

During the 1980s, the ... situation was made more acute by the turn toward neoliberal structural adjustment policies advocated by the United States and the IMF. Such measures included: successive devaluations, which raised prices for basic goods and services in order to 'control inflation'; imposition of real wage ceilings or 'discipline'; moves to 'open up' the economy by dismantling protectionist structures, privatization of various state-run enterprises; removal of state subsidies for social services; cuts in public spending; and a general reduction of the state's role in the economy. ... [N]eoliberalism and IMF-style 'adjustment' implied the dismantling of those state structures, as part of 'opening' the economy to the world market.⁹⁸

While many of the aspects of this rolling back of the state have had drastic repercussions for women, some changes have been particularly significant. Through the

1980s and into the 1990s the state has continued to retreat from a commitment to public education. The historical stature of the national university, the University of San Carlos, has been undermined by neglect, the exodus into exile or the murder or disappearance of many faculty, and the establishment of four rival private universities, all in Guatemala City. The public schools have similarly suffered from underfunding, resulting in a high level of absenteeism among teachers and a crumbling physical plant. The attack on public education has been a poverty issue of real concern for women, a fact which reflects their awareness that education for their children is imperative to an improvement of the standard of living of the family.

Other effects of the intersection of economic crisis and neo-liberalism have also had real repercussions for women's lives. Of particular concern here, however, have been the ways in which women's ability to undertake their caretaking of the family has been undermined as the crisis and neo-liberalism have together made more difficult every aspect of women's caretaking work. For example, through the 1980s and into the 1990s state price support for both fuel and transportation have come under repeated attack, with the result that transportation has become very expensive. Given that most women of the popular classes live in the marginal shantytown areas which ring Guatemala City they rely heavily on such transportation to get to work and for their children to attend school.

As well, in this same period the provision of basic services by the state has been continually cut back. Many shantytowns are virtually inaccessible in the rainy season due to extremely poor road conditions, most potable water must now be trucked in and purchased from private companies, and electricity is only sporadically provided.

Furthermore, the state-run hospitals have also fallen into disrepair and are grossly underserviced and underequipped. Added to the burden placed on women by expensive transportation and inadequate basic services is the fact that another key aspect of women's caretaking work --the purchase and preparation of food for the family-- has also been drastically affected. Skyrocketing prices for food staples such as beans, rice, cooking oil, and tortillas, as well as fuel, have meant that many families now subsist on a diet of tortillas and salt.

Finally, the impact on women of economic crisis, repression, and neo-liberalism has also been intensified by structures of patriarchy in Guatemalan society which have only served to limit the ability of women to respond to the increased pressures and work placed on them, as highlighted above. In Guatemala, patriarchy has historically been culturally constructed and expressed in machismo. The economic repercussions for women of machismo have been many and have all contributed to effectively exclude women of the popular classes from most paths to economic advancement. Among the most notable effects of machismo has been the historical legacy of the exclusion of women from education. The result has been a shockingly high level of illiteracy among women --and particularly indigenous women-- and a low level of socially and economically valued skills. Both the low levels of education and skills women have been able to achieve have severely limited the possibilities for women to improve their standard of living: most women have been limited to the margins of the economy in highly exploitative work and frequently physically dangerous work, such as the street-vending and domestic work in the informal sector, jobs in the maquiladoras, prostitution,

etc., at a time when their financial responsibilities for the family have been increasing. Again, this economic circumscription of women's lives has only served to further exacerbate the trend toward the feminization of poverty discussed above.

What have been the more general results for women of this intersection of economic crisis, neo-liberalism, repression, and machismo? These phenomena have held many implications for women's lives, but their cumulative effect on the ability of women to mobilize politically is important to the argument developed here. As with the impact of the repression on the caregiving work performed by women, these dynamics have had real effects on the ability of women to perform their caretaking work in, and for, the family. This has been caused primarily by the substantial deterioration in the quality of women's daily lives and their standard of living, and by their economic marginalization in the face of increasing economic responsibility. Women in the popular classes have to some extent responded to this erosion of the quality of their lives by mobilizing to take political action as has been demonstrated by the increasing participation of women in community protest against the lack of basic services, land occupations, etc. It is, however, the case that a number of factors have worked to inhibit the ability of women to respond politically to their deteriorating life circumstances and concomitant erosion of their ability to perform their caretaking work.

One such factor has been the very complexity and multi-faceted nature of economic crisis and neo-liberalism which has made the identification of a political target for protest difficult. Two other related factors have been the mind and body-numbing toll and time-robbing effect of women's work which have inhibited proactive responses

as women have simply struggled to cope and survive. These factors have been further exacerbated by the very real lack of visible options for poor women in a machista society. The outcome of these factors has been to constrain the ability of women to respond to the deleterious impact of economic crisis and neo-liberalism on their lives.

c)The Different Effects on Women of Violence and Economic Crisis:

The difficulties women have faced in responding proactively to economic crisis and neo-liberalism have only been further exacerbated by the implications of these processes for the spatial dimensions of women's socially constructed gender identity. The effects on the spatial nature of the private/public dichotomy have been more ambiguous than those which resulted from the assault on --and concomitant politicization of-- family relations entailed in the violence of the repression.

As women have been forced into the cash economy their gender identity has been altered to encompass work outside the home. In this way the traditional social definition of women's sphere as the private space of the home and family, and the attendant invisibility of women's lives, have been eroded. The further implication of this process has been that the traditional spatial boundary which delimited women's lives to the private sphere and which served to define women as apolitical has become weaker and more ambiguous. The economy has not, however, traditionally been defined as part of the public sphere, so this movement of women into the workforce has not been coeval with their movement into the realm of politics and the state.

The limits to these spatial repercussions have been further reinforced by two additional factors. The first stems from the fact that women of the popular classes have generally only moved into the margins of the formal economy. These margins have had a shadowland quality where both the economic activity and the workers who perform it disappear into the obscurity of the economic periphery. As a result, the historical invisibility of women confined to the home has been only somewhat challenged by the changing definition of their gender identity and their movement into these economic "shadowlands". Secondly, in contrast to the societal politicization of family relations and, hence, the private sphere, which ensued from the repression, there has been no similar societal politicization of economic crisis and neo-liberalism. Indeed, while the popular classes have been generally unified in their response of horror and anger at the violence, economic crisis and neo-liberalism have worked to divide and fragment the popular classes, thus making difficult a unified reaction. This divisive effect has again been further exacerbated by the multi-faceted nature of the crisis and neo-liberalism: analysis, deconstruction, and strategizing around the phenomena have hence posed a significant challenge.

To summarize briefly at this point, it has been argued above that the period of violent repression and the economic crisis underlying the process of democratization in Guatemala has had important implications for women. Women's socially constructed gender identity has been dramatically affected as their caretaking work in the physical reproduction of the family has expanded at the same time that their ability to perform the caregiving work in the family has been undermined. The net result has been that most

women in the popular classes have experienced, through the impact of violence and/or economic crisis, a destabilization of their socially constructed gender roles and identity. In that this impact has been overwhelmingly negative for women these processes of democratization have thus generated a population of women with a consequent potential for politicization. It has been argued, however, that for a complex of reasons women's ability to respond politically to the effects on their lives of economic crisis and subsequent neo-liberalism has been constrained by the very complexity of the dynamics involved in these processes. In addition, the pervasive culture of terror has more generally functioned to inhibit political participation, even for the desperate relatives of victims of human rights abuses and the disappeared. It is thus important to stress that despite the extremity of the impact of violence and economic crisis on women this conjunctural moment in Guatemala did not generate a spontaneous combustion of widespread, grass-roots politicization and mobilization of women.

IV. The Influence of International and Regional Dynamics on the Political Conjuncture of Democratization:

The potential for the politicization and mobilization of women did not then produce a necessary outcome. Indeed the potential created for the political mobilization of women may well have remained dormant if it had not been for the influence of other factors shaping the Guatemala political environment, two of the most salient of which are here considered.⁹⁹ These have been: 1) the influence of women's growing politicization in Latin America, and, 2) international and regional manifestations of feminism. The

argument developed is that the upsurge in the formation of women's political organizations which began in the latter half of the 1980s must be understood as an historically specific process. Let us highlight this argument before turning to a more in-depth discussion of these two factors.

In brief, the argument demonstrates that although the legacy of repression prevented a widespread politicization and mobilization of women, a small number of women in Guatemala were so situated that the influence of these two factors on their lives instigated their politicization despite the culture of fear. For example, during the 1980s international and regional forces of feminism were making modest inroads in Guatemala. For a few women whose life paths exposed them to this influence of feminism, it served to articulate their potential to be politicized into actuality. In this way a small cadre of women leaders emerged in Guatemala. The step from the emergence of women's political leadership to the formation of women's political organizations is one which was promoted by a new interest within the popular movement to encourage broader political participation. The cadre of women leaders were inspired by this environment which encouraged participation to act on their politicization and organize.

This was, then, the manner in which a handful of women leaders emerged and formed women's organizations which would undertake the work necessary to transform the potential for a widespread politicization of women into concrete mobilizing and organizing initiatives. The leadership skills and acumen of these women enabled them to access the international financing increasingly available for women's development

initiatives and use such resources for the establishment of women's organizations.

i) Women's Politicization in Latin America:

One phenomenon which had a demonstration effect in Guatemala was the growth of women's political organizing to protest the human rights violations perpetrated by military regimes in the 1970s and early 1980s.¹⁰⁰ For example, the mothers' groups which formed in Argentina, Chile, and El Salvador to contest those disappeared in the dirty wars quickly developed international reputations for their human rights work.

The actions of these groups of mothers struck a responsive chord in the conscience of progressive sectors in the North, with the result that solidarity support in the form of money and human resources was generated. One effect of such support was that the mothers' groups were able to consolidate their organizations. More generally, however, the success of the early work of the mothers' groups helped to legitimize women's political initiatives in a political culture traditionally dominated by strong male leaders and provided an example of the way in which women's political activism could make a significant contribution.

More particularly, the import of the work of the mothers' groups was not lost on the leaders within the popular movement in Guatemala which too faced a similar environment of blatant and extreme human rights violations and repression. They recognized the broad effect of the activism of the mothers' groups. In situations of extreme political repression these women had helped to open space for other popular organizing initiatives. As well they recognized that the civil war in Guatemala also

potentially held international interest. They consequently realized that elevating their struggle to the level of international fora such as the United Nations was an extremely important political tactic. The national and international impact of the mothers' groups in these other countries of the region thus had a significant demonstration effect in Guatemala. By their example these mothers concretely illustrated to women who shared their pain of loss their own potential to contribute to political struggle. Furthermore, by example they also generated an awareness within the popular movement of the scope for women's activism and a receptiveness to this possibility.

The new awareness of women's potential political contribution was reinforced by other regional political developments. For example, the Guatemalan situation paralleled that of Nicaragua in a number of important respects, where an armed insurgency has also struggled against a right-wing regime. As a result the promotion of women's political support of the revolutionary struggle by the FSLN in Nicaragua through the Association of Women in the National Situation (AMPRONAC) --which in 1980-81 became the Association of Nicaraguan Women "Luisa Amanda Espinoza" (AMNLAE) was observed carefully by revolutionary leaders in Guatemala. Over time the large participation of Nicaraguan women in AMNLAE had a demonstration effect on the popular movement in Guatemala, by illustrating the potential role to be played by women's political organizations in a revolutionary movement.¹⁰¹

ii) International and Regional Forces of Feminism:

The demonstration effect in Guatemala of women's politicization in the region was

further galvanized by the growing influence of feminism in Guatemala. Indeed, various dimensions of feminism --at the level of ideas, embodied institutionally and legally, and expressed in political movements-- all served to reinforce the growing awareness of women's potential contribution to the popular struggle.

The growing influence of the many faces of feminism reflected several related developments through the 1970s and 1980s, including the growth of an international women's movement and the work of the United Nations during the UN Decade for Women. Both of these forces of feminism helped to promote a growing international awareness of the specificity and importance of women's problems. In the field of international development one concrete political outcome of this growing interest in women's issues was an emerging policy prioritization of "women in development" on the part of both non-governmental development organizations and state donor agencies. This nascent interest also came to be politically symbolized in the elaboration and codification of the UN Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.¹⁰²

Underlying the emergence of the international women's movement was the development of national and regional women's movements. In Latin America the spread of feminism has been simultaneously evidenced and promoted through the series of Latin America and Caribbean Feminist Encounters (Encuentros Feministas) which began in Bogota in 1981.¹⁰³ Importantly, an increasing number of Central American women participated in these Encounters, particularly in the one held in 1987 in Mexico.¹⁰⁴

This participation heightened the exposure of Central American women to the growing force of Latin American feminism and generated a developing gender perspective on the political problems and issues they faced. Two related outcomes stemming from this gender politicization were that Central American women began to perceive and act on the need to develop a feminist position specific to their regional realities, and that they began to undertake joint action initiatives to address issues and problems of common concern.

For example, Central American women organized their first Central American Women's Encounter (Encuentro Centroamericano de Mujeres) in August, 1989 in which all five countries were represented. The purpose of this Encounter was to review and assess the Esquipulas II accords from a women's perspective. At this Encounter the women decided to form a Permanent Assembly of Central American Women for Peace (Asamblea Permanente de Mujeres Centroamericanas Por la Paz).

It is important to note that the establishment of this Assembly prompted the formation of the Coordination of Women's Groups of Guatemala (COAMUGUA [Coordinadora de Agrupaciones de Mujeres de Guatemala] in 1989. The purpose of COAMUGUA was to strive to create political space in Guatemala for women's specific demands and to coordinate the participation and representation of Guatemalan women in the regional Assembly.

Central American women more generally continued to recognize and address the specificity of their regional issues in subsequent Central American Encounters: encounters were held in Honduras in August, 1991, and in Nicaragua in March 1992.

Furthermore, Central American women undertook responsibility for organizing and hosting the Sixth Latin American Feminist Encounter, which was held in El Salvador in November, 1993.¹⁰⁵

iii) The Impact on Guatemalan Women:

It is useful at this point to consider who, more specifically, were the "women" in Guatemala who came to be influenced by this growing influence of feminism. Within the popular classes they were women so situated as to be exposed to broader political developments like the growing impact of feminism. In concrete terms, this has meant above all women of the popular classes who were able to attend the politically progressive and intellectually oriented environment of the University of San Carlos. In Guatemala, San Carlos, has historically been a site of radical political opposition grounded intellectually in Marxism. In the late 1970s and into the 1980s, however, some women within San Carlos came also to be influenced by these broader international and regional dynamics of feminism.

The importance of feminism at the level of ideas and as a political movement slowly gained ground in the university milieu in a number of ways. As noted above, a growing number of Central American women had participated in the regional Feminist Encounters, some of whom were Guatemalans associated with the university. The dissemination of feminists ideas also occurred as both academic and popular Latin American feminist literature¹⁰⁶ gained a growing audience. These influences were further reinforced by resource support made available by international agencies operating

in Guatemala such as UNIFEM. Reflecting their own policy mandates to promote women in development, these organizations began to encourage popular awareness of gender issues and offer support in the development of gender analysis skills.

Reflecting this developing interest in feminism some women faculty members and students began to work collectively to develop an analysis which incorporated both class and gender, the better to promote awareness of women's issues. This occurred particularly within the faculty of social work and the discipline of sociology where both women faculty and students are concentrated. An immediate result of this process was the formation of women's study circles, feminist collectives or working groups, and the increasing effort of women to challenge the class-dominated ideology of the powerful university students' movement and the control of this movement by men students.¹⁰⁷ In the longer-term, however, the extremely important outcome has been the formation of a cadre of relatively highly educated women with an analysis of class and gender, politicized around women's issues as manifested in the Guatemalan context, with budding leadership skills which would enable them to form women's organizations, and the political conviction that such organizations were necessary to make the fight for women's issues a priority.

The impact of these developments on intellectual trends within the university hence had an important effect on the shape of the popular movement: it led to the political organizing of women around women's issues.¹⁰⁸ Such organizing occurred in several ways. For example, a number of the politicized and skilled women students very frequently came to work for development-oriented Guatemalan NGOs in order to fulfil

the practicum requirements for their university degrees. Through this work they gained practical experience in organizing and community development. They frequently also became frustrated with the lack of gender analysis informing this work and the discrimination they experienced personally in their work. Their dissatisfaction often led them to become involved in the formation of women's organizations where they would be free to control both the philosophical and practical aspects of their work.

As well, these ideas were often well received by women political activists, especially those in the trade union movement who were receiving similar stimulation from another direction at the same time. The union federations in Guatemala with ties to international unions¹⁰⁹ were experiencing the trickle down effect of the impact of feminism and the women's movement at the international level. Consequently, the promotion of female leadership was slowly being encouraged both ideologically and financially in some of the locals by union internationals. The result of these reinforcing influences was the generation of another body of women leaders within the popular movement. These women have been very active in forming women's committees within the union federations¹¹⁰ and various affiliated and autonomous unions.¹¹¹

To recap the argument made to this point, it has been suggested that the broad outcome of the intersection of the Guatemalan conjuncture by the demonstration effect of women's politicization in the Latin American region, and the influence of various feminist forces, has been the gradual generation of a cadre of feminist activists through the 1980s. These women were both capable of, and interested in, forming women's organizations in order to pursue their visions of the role for women in popular political

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struggle. Yet in order to fully understand their concern to promote women's politicization and mobilization through the formation of organizations, it is necessary to consider briefly the broader political context in which these women were located, that of the popular movement.

iv) Women's Leadership in Relation to the Popular Movement:

The discursive claim of democracy attached to the controlled, top-down process of political liberalization engineered by the military has had significant repercussions for the popular movement as it has struggled to develop a strategy to contest democratization. For while the military intended liberalization to be limited to electoral competition which they controlled, ideologically they also needed to frame this strategy in terms of democratization. Attached to the idea of democracy there is, however, the implicit claim to at least a minimal level of political participation of civil society.

As was discussed in detail in the Introduction, in this disjuncture between the political reality in Guatemala and the discursive political claims being made about democratization lay the possibility for political space for the popular movement. As already indicated, the popular movement has struggled to exploit this contradiction between democratic discourse and authoritarian reality by working toward the recomposition of civil society through the reformation of the Guatemalan pueblo as a political actor. The important point to be made here, however, is that in this period of political liberalization the new attention of the popular movement to building civil society generated a political environment conducive to politicizing, mobilizing, and organizing

efforts. This was the context then in which the new cadre of women leaders were located, given that they were formed from within the popular movement. And, as a consequence, the interest in expediting efforts at organizing defined, in general terms, the political orientation of these women leaders. The concrete processes whereby specific women emerged as leaders and began to promote women's political organizing initiatives are the focus of Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FORMATION OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction:

The previous chapter showed how the period of violent repression in the early 1980s and the cumulative effects of economic crisis and neo-liberal economic policies created in Guatemala a population of disaffected women ripe for politicization. This potential for women's politicization did not result in broad-based women's organizing, however. Rather, due to the deeply entrenched culture of terror it has been only a relatively small number of women who have been politicized in this environment. The demonstration effect of women's organizing elsewhere in the Latin American region as well as the influence of feminism intersected with the Guatemalan conjuncture and promoted the gradual generation of a cadre of women through the decade of the 1980s. These women were both capable of and interested in forming women's organizations in order to pursue their visions of the role for women in popular political struggle. As in a number of other Latin American countries, however, it was the formation of a group of mothers of the disappeared in Guatemala which set the ball of women's organizing rolling. It is thus to this historical discussion that the argument now turns.

I. The Historical Process of Women's Organizing:

To understand the historical specificity of women's organizing it is helpful to briefly recap the above discussion from Chapter One of how the broader political

processes underway in Guatemala in the 1980s produced a large population of disaffected women. As was argued, this occurred in two general ways: through the immediate loss of a relative, usually a husband or son as a result of the violence of the repression, and; through the impact of the related socio-economic crisis on the economy of the household and, concomitantly, women's roles as caretakers of the household.

It is not surprising that the politicization and mobilization of women first developed around the issue of the loss of a relative through the violence of the repression. The impact on women's lives of this type of loss was immediate, and deeply felt emotionally. But perhaps most importantly women could clearly link responsibility for the loss of a loved one to the political violence unleashed by the military.

Despite the immediacy of the issue for many women, however, it is imperative to recall that Guatemala at this time was still ruled by a military dictatorship and that while the violence had abated somewhat, repression continued to control the political environment. Consequently, despite the fact that a huge number of women identified strongly with the issue of disappeared relatives it was not until a strong woman leader emerged that an organization taking up this issue was formed and that a small base of women were mobilized around the issue.

This woman was Nineth Garcia.¹ Nineth became politically active at a young age through her involvement in the high school student movements. After high school she went on to study law at the National University of San Carlos (USAC) and continued to be a political activist in the university students' movement. This was in the early 1980s at the height of the repression in Guatemala: consequently, anyone involved politically

like Nineth was at very high risk. To avoid bringing risk by association on family and friends, Nineth --like many other activists-- was forced to live on her own in a small hotel. She had met her future husband in the USAC University Students' Association (AEU) and encountered him again while living in the hotel. They were soon married; then in 1982 her husband was disappeared. It was the experience of losing her new husband that politicized Nineth around the human rights issue of the disappeared in Guatemala.²

With the support of a small circle of other relatives³ of disappeared persons in Guatemala, in 1983 Nineth began organizing a group for relatives. The Mutual Support Group for Relatives of the Disappeared --GAM-- was officially formed in 1984 by this group of women who shared in common their search for disappeared husbands, fathers, and sons: the group allowed women a collective voice to demand an accounting of the disappeared.⁴ It was officially recognized by military dictator General Mejía Victores in May, 1984.

In the early period of its existence GAM bravely sought to take advantage of the opportunity for political activity promised by the election scheduled to be held in the fall of 1985. It organized activities such as demonstrations in front of the National Constituent Assembly, and occupation of the office of the Attorney General. Shortly after the latter event, two of the group's leaders were found murdered -- one, symbolically, with his tongue cut out.⁵ Such atrocities were the price GAM paid as the first organization to emerge in the wake of the violent repression. Yet despite this persecution GAM continued its human rights activities⁶ and paved the way for the slow

recuperation and rebuilding of the popular movement.

Compared to the issue of the disappeared, organizing women around the effect of economic crisis on their lives has been a more challenging task. While the relationship between the political process of repression and subsequent controlled liberalization, economic crisis, and women's changing economic roles in the household may seem apparent in retrospect and from an abstract intellectual level, this relationship and, concomitantly, the issue of responsibility for women's hardship, was less immediately evident to the women affected. Such women were, out of necessity, forced to concentrate their attention on basic economic survival, a mode of existence which does not allow much free time or energy for other activities.

Consequently, it was not until the national and international dynamics at play converged in the late 1980s, producing both a cadre of politicized women leaders and an increasing availability of funding resources for women's initiatives, that more organizations began to emerge. Indeed, 12 organizations formed between 1988 and 1992. An overview of seven case studies will help to illustrate the dynamics at play, as discussed above, in the formation of women's organizations.

II. Women's Organizations in the Labour Sector:

i)COMFUITAG:

The Women's Committee of FESTRAS/UITA of Guatemala (COMFUITAG) began to form in 1986 through the influence at the local level of UITA --the International

Union of Food and Allied Worker's Associations. Since 1959 UITA had been working to build the participation of women workers in various countries. In 1986 the Guatemalan labour federation affiliated with UITA decided to begin working toward this goal as well. In 1988 it organized a conference around this theme and invited women from the various unions in the federation to participate.

The outcome of this conference was a general realization on the part of the women participants that they needed their own space within their unions to address their specific issues and problems as women workers. More specifically the women in UITA had developed an awareness that as women workers they were doubly exploited, as workers and also as women.

The immediate result of this conference was the establishment of COMFUITAG, which at the time stood for the Women's Committee of the Guatemalan labour federation affiliated with UITA. In April 1991 the Union Federation of Workers of Food, Agroindustries, and Related and Similar Unions --FESTRAS-- was formed and while the acronym remained the same, the Women's Committee took on the name Women's Committee - FESTRAS - UITA - Guatemala. At the moment of its formal formation COMFUITAG had a base membership of approximately 365 women of all ages who were members of one of the unions of FESTRAS-UITA Guatemala.

Although the above illustrates how both the international and local levels of UITA played a role in the formation of COMFUITAG, it is important to note that the men within UITA Guatemala were in general resistant to the formation of a women's committee. They feared losing their privileged position within the union federation.

Within this environment, then, the activism of a few key women was crucial to achieving a women's committee.

In the early 1980s Rosa Marina Escobar de Obando was completing her high school diploma as a commercial secretary and was involved in the high school students' movement. Through her sister, who was involved in union politics, Rosa became interested in the trade union movement. By 1985 she was secretary of the Coca Cola union, which was a member of FESTRAS-UITA Guatemala. Over time she became aware of the unevenness of participation between men and women in the union. In early 1986 she approached two other women workers --one in the Adams union, and one in the Acricasa union-- with the idea of the conference on women's issues. While COMFUITAG did not form officially until 1988, according to Rosa the Committee of Women was informally started through this meeting of minds and efforts of several key women who already held leadership positions within the structure of UITA Guatemala.

The internal structure of COMFUITAG has two parts. On the one side there are the Secretaries of each of the unions which are members of FESTRAS-UITA Guatemala: these women are elected by the women members of their unions. In addition there is the General Secretary of Women's Affairs of FESTRAS. Again, this is an elected position for which only the women members of FESTRAS vote. On the other side is the Support or Coordinating Team, composed of Rosa and two other women. Effectively, however, it is this team of women which comprises COMFUITAG as a women's organization.

These two women are Lorena Robles and María Isabel Grijalva. Lorena is the daughter of Rodolfo Robles, head of FESTRAS-UITA Guatemala and an important trade

union leader.⁷ She was politicized through her relationship to her father and his work and was slowly incorporated into COMFUITAG. Maria Isabel studied for and completed her Bachelor of Social Work degree at the National University of San Carlos (USAC) during the 1980s and through her years of studying was involved in student politics through the Legal Aid Clinic organized by the student movement. She also worked in an NGO involved in development work in a shanty-town area of the capital, but eventually quit this work due to the discrimination and violation of rights she experienced. Beginning in 1987 Maria Isabel went through a process of gender conscientization. In her own assessment this personal process was substantially the result of her participation at the time with another women's organization, Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres (GGM [Guatemalan Women's Group]). Maria Isabel had been participating on an informal and volunteer basis with COMFUITAG and eventually was invited to work for the organization: in October 1991 she joined the Support or Coordinating Team.⁸

While officially the Support or Coordinating Team is composed of three women, in actual fact it has been Rosa and Maria Isabel who have formed the nucleus. Lorena does not share with them the same understanding of gender and has tended to work more broadly within FESTRAS-UITA. It is also important to note that none of the three women who form the support team are themselves factory workers. They have been politicized around the issues of class and gender through the national university, the high school and university student movements, family relations, work experience, and participation in other organizations.

COMFUITAG has as its general objective to seek the organization and active participation of women in unions in order to fortify the unions and to promote an understanding of the role that women need to play in their unions and in society at large. More specifically COMFUITAG's official objectives are as follows: to work towards a society where women's rights are recognized and where women are equal and have control over the direction of their lives; to achieve a level of development where women's traditional gendered roles are transformed and where women are free and able to work in any field they choose in the struggle for a just society for both men and women, and; to seek alternative strategies which will allow women workers to address gendered social issues while at the same time strengthening unions.⁹ To work towards these objectives COMFUITAG has a multifaceted plan which includes a programme of formation and skills training, a standing health clinic as well as mobile clinics, and participation in a national peace campaign with other women's organizations.

ii)CENTRACAP:

The Centro de Trabajadoras de Casas Particulares (CENTRACAP) is the Support Centre for Domestic Workers. The organization was unofficially formed in 1989 by two women, a Chilean, and a Guatemalan (CENTRACAP is not willing to publicly disclose the names of these women). The establishment of the organization has, however, been a process spanning at least three years.

The two women --not themselves domestic workers-- were conscientized about the state of gross exploitation of domestic workers through their study of the situation

and their more general politicization through, and location in, the popular movement. As a result of this personal experience they decided that an organization for domestic workers was desperately needed in Guatemala.

Through personal contacts they found six women domestic workers who were interested in being involved in the formation of such an organization. At this time the women had no resources and no physical space to work from, so initially there was much improvisation. For two months the small group met in the house of one of the founders. Then followed a period in which the group met on the street. After this they gained permission to use space in the building of the government's National Office for Women and did so for approximately five months. In March of 1990 they located a house for the growing organization.

The first work of the leaders was the conscientization of the domestic workers and the generation of further participation. Conscientization was pursued by giving talks about the condition of domestic workers in Guatemala, and offering mini-courses on topics of interest to them, such as first aid. Further participation was sought by visiting places such as the central plaza in Guatemala City where domestic workers gather on Sunday, their only day off, and announcing the organization publicly.

In 1990 a handful of women who had been participating regularly were selected to take a four-month pilot formation and skills training course in politics, economics, culture, and basic literacy. This course began in February 1991 and the women were able to leave their domestic work to study through financial support provided by "internal scholarships".

At the conclusion of the training course a general assembly of all the women domestic workers participating in CENTRACAP was called and a Directorate (Junta Directiva) consisting of nine women was elected. It was also in 1991 that CENTRACAP was officially formed as an organization. In January 1992 the newly elected women took up their elected positions and according to the three women interviewed (President, Vice-President, and Treasurer) at this moment the two founders handed over the organization to the domestic workers themselves. There is, however, significant overlap between the Directorate and the Working Team (Equipo de Trabajo): four members of the Directorate are also salaried workers on the Working Team and all four also received the pilot formation and skills training course in 1991.

The general objectives of the work of CENTRACAP are the conscientization of domestic workers, the formation of new leadership capacity, and the organization of domestic workers. CENTRACAP uses a multifaceted plan to realize its objectives. Most importantly is the very comprehensive programme of formation and skills training offered on Sundays at a local community centre. Formation focuses on education about and consciousness-raising around workplace and labour rights, health rights, and maternity rights. There is also a very strong technical skills training project, with an emphasis on literacy training, and sewing, typing, beautician, cooking, and handicraft courses. A special course is also offered for a selected group of potential organizers (promotoras) in organizing skills. In addition to formation and skills training CENTRACAP provides psychological counselling, the support of social workers, a drop-

in centre, special health clinics (such as PAP smear clinics), and a transition home for domestic workers temporarily out of work

iii)GRUFEPROMEFAM:

The Grupo Pro-Mejoramiento Familiar (GRUFEPROMEFAM [Group for the Improvement of the Family]) was the second women's organization to form in the 1980s, after GAM. Formally it grew out of UNSITRAGUA (Unidad Sindical de Trabajadores Guatemaltecos [Guatemalan Workers Labour Unity]), an association of 37 unions, and was founded by Ana Maria Monzon, Treasurer of UNSITRAGUA at the time. Through 1985 there was growing concern on the part of the male union leaders in UNSITRAGUA about their wives' lack of comprehension of their work in the trade union movement. Thus GRUFEPROMEFAM was initially conceived as a support group for the spouses of the union leaders. A general meeting was held on 14 November 1986 to organize these women --ten spouses were involved-- and it is this date which marks the official founding of GRUFEPROMEFAM.

Given her present day role as unofficial leader and official leader of GRUFEPROMEFAM, the manner in which Olga Marina Rivas de Arriaga came to be involved in the organization is important to understand. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Olga was studying library science at the National University of San Carlos (USAC). She was a member of the Directorate (Junta Directiva) of the Humanities Students' Association, which is part of the larger University Students' Association (AEU).

Along the way Olga also had some opportunity to study the issue of gender and with some other women students and professionals was involved in working with poor women and women workers in a marginal shanty-town area of Guatemala City. It was through this work that Olga began to develop an understanding of the specific issues facing women workers in Guatemala. In addition, she and the other women began to recognize the need to search for an autonomous space for women's organizing, and through these connections she learned of GRUFEPROMEFAM.

Olga came to know Ana María and in early 1987 was invited by her to participate in a meeting of the organization. At this meeting she was invited to be part of the Board of Coordinators (Junta de Coordinadoras): at this moment her involvement with GRUFEPROMEFAM began. At first Olga worked full time but on a volunteer basis for the organization until a minimal amount of international funding was secured: indeed, seeking funding was part of Olga's work at the beginning of her involvement. Reflecting her large role in the establishment of GRUFEPROMEFAM, Olga is considered to be a co-founder of the organization.

While the original mandate of GRUFEPROMEFAM was to be a support group for the wives of union leaders, a change in the orientation of GRUFEPROMEFAM occurred fairly quickly as it became an organization working in defense of the rights of women workers in Guatemala. There were two general causes for this shift: there was little interest on the part of the spouses of the male union leaders in participating in GRUFEPROMEFAM, while at the same time several women became very enthusiastic about organizing the women workers who were members of UNSITRAGUA.

In 1986 the political situation in Guatemala was still extremely difficult: no one wanted to be public about their politics, and previous efforts at the formation of women's groups had proved short-lived. For these reasons GRUFEPROMEFAM decided to concentrate its energies on internal organizational building, in order to consolidate the organization before entering more fully into public politics. In this way the leaders hoped to contribute to guarding the new political space for the popular movement which was just beginning to open in 1986.

In the early days of the organization GRUFEPROMEFAM worked from a class perspective. Slowly over time, however, an awareness developed of the need to understand and work from a gender perspective as well. The organization began this process by doing an internal analysis of the situation of women in Guatemala, posing the questions for reflection "who are we as women?" and "what do we want as women?". The organization now tries to work from a perspective which synthesizes class, gender, and more recently, ethnicity.

As GRUFEPROMEFAM has broadened its perspective the membership has also been broadened to include poor women, students, professionals, indigenous and peasant women, as well as the historical base of wives of union leaders and women workers. According to GRUFEPROMEFAM, approximately 80 percent of the members are single mothers. While it is based in the capital city, GRUFEPROMEFAM also has organized women in several rural areas.

GRUFEPROMEFAM has a two-sided organizational structure, although this structure has recently been going through a reorganizing process. There is a General

Assembly of all the women members, and this assembly annually elects a Board of Coordinators normally consisting of five women. The Working Team (Equipo de Trabajo) officially reports to the Board of Coordinators, although the organization is run and directed by the Working Team. There are generally five paid workers on the Working Team, which occasionally includes men. As well, GRUFEPRIMEFAM actively seeks human resource support and expertise from foreigners interested in solidarity work.¹⁰ GRUFEPRIMEFAM has had a CUSO cooperant working in its office.¹¹

GRUFEPRIMEFAM now states that its general objectives are: to promote greater involvement of women in union and popular organizations; to seek to unify the struggles of the popular sectors with the struggle of women and indigenous peoples; and, to struggle for women's rights to work, health, education, housing, and respect for human rights. It works towards its objectives with a multifaceted plan. At the centre of the work of GRUFEPRIMEFAM is the House for the Integral Development of Women (Casa Para El Desarrollo Integral De La Mujer), located in the downtown business section of the capital.

The house provides the physical space for the formation and skills training programme. Several important components of the programme are the use of popular theatre, the promotion of self-esteem, discussion and reflection on issues and topics of relevance to the women, as well as educationally-oriented celebration of events such as International Women's Day and Mother's Day. Technical training is offered in sewing

and handicrafts. All of these activities are supported by a childcare programme in the house.

GRUFEPROMEFAM also does workshops in unions for women workers, and actively engages in solidarity work with women workers, particularly in the maquila sector. It also occasionally offers its members low-cost access to women gynaecologists in its effort to promote women's health. Finally, the organization is trying to develop a documentation centre and to this end publishes a bulletin and clips newspapers. The GRUFEPROMEFAM office, which is located a short distance from the house, also serves as an informal drop-in centre where moral and emotional support and solidarity is always available,¹² particularly for a core group of women being promoted as potential organizers.

III. Women's Organizations in the Non-Governmental Sector:

i)GGM:

Unofficially Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres (GGM [Guatemalan Women's Group]) began to form in April 1988. At this time a support group of 12 women formed and held a discussion circle on Thursday evenings. The women were motivated by the need to talk about themselves, their problems and daily life challenges, and their situation as women in Guatemalan society. This was a unique experience for most of the women. For the first time they were meeting with other women not to "gossip and complain" --in the words of one participant-- but rather to share and collectively analyze their problems.

In general the women involved in the support group achieved very satisfying personal growth and many felt the need to expand the work of the group and share this experience of growth and development. The next stage was thus the official formation of GGM. In February 1989 they established themselves as GGM and determined their group objectives, structure, and activities.

Paraphrasing their own words, the general objective of GGM is "the conscientization of women to their essence as human beings with capabilities to develop and the ability to play a transformative role in society". Reflecting this objective the motto of GGM is that "the first step toward change is our own self-valorization".¹³ As described in its literature, the specific objectives of GGM are: "to discover who we are, what we want, what roles we play, and the degree of consciousness that we need to realize; to assume new values and from these values to initiate an active, creative, and transformative process in the family and community; to exchange experiences with other similar groups in order to unify efforts and create broader spaces for the work of conscientization of women, and; to support popular organizing processes of women which allow a real participation in the transformation of society and the realization of women's specific demands."

In striving to realize its objectives GGM initially focused on giving workshops for other organizations on themes of relevance to women's lives. The main goal of this work was to aid the personal growth of other women. As their group evolved it decided to expand its activities to include two new major projects.

One activity was aimed at women promoters working in typical types of skills training projects such as baking, cooking, and sewing courses. This activity was, then, formation for this specific group of women promoters and was motivated by the view that while such women were trained to teach technical skills they had little awareness of the broader impact --especially at the emotional and psychological levels-- that skills training had on the women who received such training. It aimed to impart to the promoters a more holistic understanding of the impact of skills training.

The second project was the establishment of a centre for women which would focus on four areas of work: mental health; formation; research on themes related to women; and, violence. The work of the centre reflects the belief of the group that women's mental and emotional health has been drastically affected by the ongoing civil war and socio-economic crisis in Guatemala. The Centro Marie Langer (Marie Langer Centre) opened in February, 1991, in the poor El Gallito barrio (district) of the capital. The Centre aimed especially to provide support in particular for the women of the marginal areas of this neighbourhood, those who lived without services such as water and electricity in the precarious housing on the slopes of nearby ravines.

The Centre provides individual and group psychological counselling and the support of a social worker for women of all ages, their partners, and children. It also does formation and skills training work. In the area of formation, an ongoing series of seminars are held on themes such as women's health, women's bodies and sexuality, violence, women's rights, communication and relations between women, and family relations (mother - child, wife - husband). In the area of skills training courses are

offered in basic literacy, handicrafts, and cooking. The formation and skills training work is supported by a childcare programme which strives to provide an atmosphere conducive to children's full development. More generally, the Centre provides a physical space for women to meet and experience solidarity with other women and is open daily throughout the week.

By the time the Centre was established in 1991 the original group of 12 women had diminished to three, and soon thereafter to two. Consequently, new women were recruited and GGM --which is now more or less coeval with the Support Team (Equipo de Trabajo) which runs the Centre-- now consists of six to seven members. There is one coordinator, and this responsibility is rotated annually. Otherwise GGM works as a collective. Two of the members of GGM work full time in the Centre, while the others have outside jobs and contribute their time on a volunteer basis. With the exception of one woman all the members have nearly completed university degrees in psychology, law, and social work and are continuing their studies on a part-time basis.¹⁴

ii)Mujer y Vida:

The formation process of Mujer y Vida (Women and Life) began informally in 1989 when Clara Luz Castillo, with the help of her partner at the time and a Dutch woman from a Dutch funding agency, undertook a study to identify the needs and problems of women involved in self-organizing initiatives in marginal areas of the capital. In that the story of this organization is so fundamentally the story of Clara Luz,

it is important to look farther back to her own process of conscientization in order to understand the formation of *Mujer y Vida*.

The beginning of this process dates back to 1979 when Clara Luz became a student in the Faculty of Social Work at the National University of San Carlos (USAC). She became involved in the Social Work Students' Association which, during the period of intense repression in the late 1970s and early 1980s, was one of the few student associations which remained functioning. Clara Luz was a member of the Directorate (Junta Directiva). As such she was in the company of highly politicized women,¹⁵ many of whom were members of GAM or trade unionists. The environment was one in which the women were very concerned about furthering their own conscientization. During her early days as a student Clara Luz also participated in a study circle of women formed by the students of the Faculty of Social Work which met every weekend. Together these two activities were highly formative for Clara Luz.

For economic reasons, however, Clara Luz eventually had to leave full-time study to find paid employment. The Faculty of Social Work was oriented towards community development and this aided her in finding a job working with an NGO in this field. In this first job Clara Luz worked with a committee from the community, with a group of women, and later, with a group of children and their mothers. Through this work she began to experience first hand the specificity of women's problems and to realize the inadequacy of the work with women conducted by the NGO. She came to see very clearly the discrimination women experienced, their inequality, and socio-economic marginalization, and the specific problems that prostitutes faced. In particular she was

very impressed and concerned by the extent to which the women and children in the community were abused, especially through physical violence.

In 1987 she was hired on a contract basis by an NGO working in the marginal shanty-town Mesquital¹⁶ to work on a skills training project for women. By this time Clara Luz had decided that she needed to deepen her understanding of the problems she realized that women faced and deliberately began to work toward this goal. In her job she worked with women from five different areas of Mesquital who were brought together by a women's group called Superandonos Juntas (Overcoming Together) working in the shanty-town. Again through her work she had the opportunity to experience personally the problems that the women faced.

By 1989 Clara Luz decided to leave the NGO because of internal conflicts and her own dissatisfaction with the way that the organization approached working on women's projects. By this time she had a completely different concept and understanding of working with women. It was at this point that she undertook the project of forming an organization to work with women's groups. The first step in this project was a study of women's needs and problems. For this project a meeting of some of the women's groups with which Clara Luz had contact was called: she dates the birth of *Mujer y Vida* to this meeting held in May, 1990.

Through her process of conscientization and the study she undertook, Clara Luz realized that while there were many self-organizing initiatives among poor women these women were isolated and had no broader institutional support.¹⁷ She learned that the biggest need women had was for economic and methodological support: they needed

resources to develop their projects of formation and skills training and support in analysis from a gender perspective. She also realized that the women needed solidarity and accompaniment to help challenge their isolation and marginalization.

Her goal thus became the establishment of a centre to support the organizing efforts of women in marginal areas both in the capital and in the countryside. In June, 1991 *Mujer y Vida* had its public opening and first began working with women's groups. The stated objectives of *Mujer y Vida* are: to support the initiatives of women's groups; to promote activities which enable women's self-valorization and which encourage the participation of women in solving their own problems and the problems of society; and, to bring to public attention the problems which women face. The more concrete, specific objectives of the organization are: to develop materials and undertake activities which promote understanding of women's problems; to accompany women and promote the development of their self-esteem; and, to write the history of the formation of the women's groups with which it works.

At present *Mujer y Vida* works with four women's groups in the countryside, and is in the process of trying to organize a fifth. The groups are composed of approximately 16-20 women each, who range from 25-65 years of age. Primarily the women are housewives who also pick coffee during the harvesting seasons.

One major thrust of the work of *Mujer y Vida* is to organize women and support women's groups to maintain themselves. Related to this organizing work *Mujer y Vida* has a project of formation and skills training underway with all of the women's groups. The focus of this project is on the development of self-esteem in the women participants,

the promotion of women's health awareness, and skills development. Much work is also invested in the development of educational materials which are relevant to the specific problems and issues faced in formation and skills training projects with women. *Mujer y Vida* is also in the process of developing a documentation centre to provide further resources for women.

There are three parts which together form the internal structure of *Mujer y Vida*. There is an Advisory Board (*Consejo Consultivo*) which fluctuates from two to five volunteer members who have experience working with women's groups. This body meets monthly to advise the Administrative Board (*Consejo Administrativo*). The Administrative Board is comprised of Clara Luz in the position of Director, the woman responsible for finances and administration, and the secretary. The Administrative Board meets every one to two weeks, as needed. These three salaried positions are supported more broadly by four other staff members. There is a woman in charge of the formation project, a woman in charge of the documentation centre, a woman in charge of communication (which includes educational materials), and a woman who maintains the office.

iii) Niña Madre:

Niña Madre is an organization dedicated to responding to the needs of young girls living on the street who are also mothers. The process of formation of this organization is very much the story of Julieta Soto Villagran, who is director of *Niña Madre*. In her late twenties Julieta experienced a personally traumatic event which germinated her

concern for children living on the streets of Guatemala City and ultimately led her to establish the group Niña Madre.

One day while returning from work Julieta was assaulted on a bus by a group of street children who tried to rob her of the necklace she was wearing. She carefully scrutinized one girl of the gang involved involved in the theft whom she could see. She found herself wondering how it was that little children could be so destitute and forced to survive through crime at such a young age.

As a result of Julieta's experience she decided to undertake an investigation of streetchildren in Guatemala City: this project came to be the topic of her thesis for her university programme. Gaining access to such children proved difficult and eventually Julieta shifted her focus somewhat and made young women working in a brothel the topic of her research. Partly as a form of protection in such dangerous work, Julieta was assisted by a foreign male friend who himself studied boys involved in prostitution.

Through their research Julieta realized that only a handful of institutions existed which worked with streetchildren. One serious problem with the two significant institutions (one private, one public) was that both dealt with both boys and girls. Neither was equipped to deal with the specific problems that young girls faced, and streetchildren also complained about the abuse they suffered in these institutions. With her knowledge of the hard realities faced by girls living on the street, Julieta was particularly concerned about the lack of any sexual education available to young street prostitutes who consequently ran an extremely high risk of becoming pregnant and thus young mothers.

Her research and growing awareness expanded into a voluntary project to work with streetchildren. Through word of mouth a Spanish woman heard about Julieta's work. This woman was in Guatemala looking for potential projects to generate international funding for. She became very interested in the work that Julieta was doing and together over an intense weekend of work in April 1990 they drafted a project proposal which was included along with other proposals the Spanish woman submitted for funding consideration. In June 1990 Julieta received a telephone call informing her that her project proposal had been approved.

Niña Madre officially formed a year later in August 1991 as the organizational embodiment of the proposed project. The general objectives of Niña Madre are: to work for the reincorporation into society of young girl-mothers living on the street; to provide a place during the day for their children; to promote change and development in the lives of these young girl-mothers, and; to promote the realization of their economic independence.

As the name of the organization indicates the clientele of Niña Madre is, in general, girls living on the street who are also mothers. The organization, however, further categorizes the women affiliated with Niña Madre. In total it counts approximately 27 young girls in its programme and another 15 or so who are not formally involved in the programme but who use some of the services of Niña Madre. One sub-category is the group of young girls between the ages of ten and 16 who are prostitutes or thieves and who may or may not also be mothers. A second sub-category is the group of slightly older girls between the ages of 15 and 23 who are all mothers as

well as drug peddlers, thieves, prostitutes, or who are working in the informal sector. A third sub-category is the group of young girls referred to Niña Madre from other institutions. This group is identified as being somewhat more advanced in self-development. Finally, as a sub-category, is the group of young women who are both thieves and companions of members of the street gangs which control the poor areas of Guatemala City. Julieta estimates that approximately 40 percent of the young mothers are lesbians, and without exception all have had sexual experience from a very young age.

The project for girls and young mothers living on the street run by Niña Madre is comprised of three related programmes. In general these programmes are designed to meet the health, educational, social, and psychological needs of these young women. One is the preventive programme for the children of the girl-mothers who have themselves been born and raised on the streets. This programme includes day-care and meals for children from birth to age six, development stimulation and training for the mothers in child development stimulation, and medical attention, including pre and post natal care, and nutritional evaluation. A hot lunch and vitamins for the girl-mothers is also provided.

The second is the educational programme for the girl-mothers. This programme focuses on addressing the psychological trauma which they have experienced in their lives through abuse, sexual abuse, and abandonment. A significant part of this programme is sexual education. The aim of the programme is to develop their self-esteem and, ideally, to reincorporate them back into their families. The programme also

generally strives to develop better interpersonal relationship skills, the state of which have been seriously affected by their lives on the street.

The third programme attempts to address the vocational needs of the girl-mothers in order to provide them economic alternatives to prostitution, robbery, and drug dealing and to enable them to develop economic independence. This programme includes vocational assessment and training in sewing, etc. The long term goal of this programme is to develop the skills set needed to establish viable self-employment.

In addition to these three central programmes Niña Madre is also developing a preventive project designed to build support groups for vulnerable young girls in the marginal areas of Guatemala City. As well, the organization also conducts research into the causes of the problems that girls and young mothers living on the street face, in order to develop useful and realistic preventive strategies.¹⁸ Finally, Niña Madre participates in the Pre-Feminist Encounter Commission and the Network of Violence Against Women.

Niña Madre has a three-part organizational structure. At the broadest level is an association of 17 members, 80 percent of whom are friends of Julieta and generally professionals. The other 20 percent are representatives of other organizations involved in the area of work with children which have been invited to participate. This association annually elects a Directorate (Junta Directiva) of six members from the association membership. The Directorate meets monthly to discuss and analyze the overall functioning of Niña Madre. The day-to-day work of Niña Madre is carried on by the Working Team (Equipo de Trabajo) which is headed by the Director, Julieta, who

has overarching responsibility. In addition to the Director, there are five other women employed. There is a doctor who has responsibility for the work of Niña Madre in health care, and who supervises the work of a nurse. There are two educators, one for the children's programme, and one for the girls/mothers programme. And fifthly there is a social worker who has responsibility for the social wellbeing dimensions of the programmes offered by Niña Madre.

IV. Women's Organizations in the Religious Sector:

i)Mujer de Esperanza:

Mujer de Esperanza officially formed in 1992. It has emerged, however, from the experience of a religious order in working with women: they have had ongoing for some time two projects for the promotion of women in Uspatán and El Quiché areas of the countryside. The formation of Mujer de Esperanza has in particular, however, been the project of one sister, Maria José. She spent a great deal of time working with women in the refugee camps in Mexico and through this experience came to know intimately the problems that such women face. Maria José initiated the idea of establishing a woman's organization to support women and has been instrumental to the development of the projects of Mujer de Esperanza.

More generally this religious order has been very supportive of the idea of Mujer de Esperanza. It has a long history of working with the pueblo in Guatemala and the sisters have, over time, come to understand the specificity of the problems that women face and the fact that little development work has been directed toward meeting the needs

of women in particular. Consequently, when the order was recently looking for new missions there was both strong agreement for the need to develop projects targeted at women and receptiveness to Maria José's initiatives.

Mujer de Esperanza aims to address the oppression of women in Guatemala. It holds that in general women are the most oppressed group in Guatemala, and, in particular, that poor indigenous women experience a double oppression. Through a full and complete promotion of women's development --which goes beyond technical training-- it hopes to see a recognition both of the dignity of women and of the role that women have played in history.

Given this orientation, the work of Mujer de Esperanza is directed by one general objective: to motivate women to participate. The organization is particularly concerned, however, about promoting women's participation at the community level, and therefore takes as a specific objective the formation of community leadership capacity in women. Other specific objectives are: to strengthen women's ability to perform their roles in their families, particularly as the primary educators of children; and, to improve women's ability to support their families economically.

To realize its objectives Mujer de Esperanza has developed a pilot programme comprised of four projects. Given the fact that it stems from a religious order and sees itself as a Christian organization, one project is evangelization. The goals of this evangelization project are: to denounce injustice; and, to work for the transformation of society. Literacy training is another component of the programme. It is strongly emphasized and encouraged due to the perspective of Mujer de Esperanza that illiteracy

is the major obstacle impeding women's participation. The teaching and promotion of natural medicine is another skills training project and was undertaken because women requested such training. This request reflects women's need for access to alternative healing sources: pharmaceutical drugs are largely beyond the economic means of poor women. More tradition technical skills training is the fourth project. This consists of teaching embroidery, sewing, crochet, and cooking. Of the four projects which form the programme of *Mujer de Esperanza*, all but the literacy training are obligatory for the women who participate. The skills training projects are done in the form of workshops, either one day per week, or in intensive week-long sessions.

Mujer de Esperanza has selected three sample populations in which to pilot its programme. One is a village in the countryside which is largely indigenous, and where 90 percent of the women participating speak an indigenous language. The second is an urban population --a marginal area on the outskirts of the capital. The third is a group of displaced persons --artisans who are originally from the countryside but who presently live in the capital as victims of the violence. While *Mujer de Esperanza* targets its projects specifically at the women in these populations, it does work with couples and families at the women's request, but always from the perspective of the women.

To support its women's programme *Mujer de Esperanza* has formed an organizational structure with three distinct but inter-related bodies. There is an advisory body comprised of two women, including the founding sister, Maria José. These women act in an advisory capacity to the Service Team (*Equipo de Servicio*) which actually carries out the programme and does the skills training workshops. There are five women

who work on a salaried basis and who each have a specific area of responsibility, and several of these women are indigenous. The Service Team works as a collective in terms of decision-making. Providing concrete support to the Service Team is a Collaborating Team (Equipo Colaboradora). The Collaborating Team counts 12 young women who are former students of the highschool run by the religious order. These young women perform such tasks as helping to develop educational material and marketing artesanía to return money back to the women involved in the programme.

V. General Characteristics of the Women's Organizations:

The presentation of the process of formation of seven women's organizations illuminates the specificity of the history of each organization. Despite their specificity, however, there are a number of features of this formative process which the organizations share in common.

One such common feature is the emergent nature of the organizations, a feature which reflects the processual nature of formation. As the examples illustrate, the women's organizations have formed over time: often a period of several years passed between the initial inception of an organization and its actual public establishment. Thus, despite the fact of official dates of establishment, it is important to recognize that the formation of these organizations has been generally a slow and ongoing process. This has most often been because of the time involved to search for and obtain funding for the organizational initiatives imagined by the women leaders.

On this point it must be recognized that without exception the women's organizations considered in this research are financially dependent on international funding. As the biographical sketches illustrate, such funding was often crucial to the actual establishment of the women's organizations. The degree of funding and support that the organizations have secured varies considerably and this has generated tensions and rivalry amongst the organizations. Often the reasons for the support of specific organizations have more to do with dynamics in the North, rather than realities in Guatemala.

For example, Tierra Viva, the one explicitly feminist organization in Guatemala, has garnered significant support from various feminist organizations in the United States because it reflects back to these organizations their own feminist principles, priorities, and identity. Tierra Viva is, however, criticized in Guatemala for its middle-class politics --that is, feminist agenda-- and for being out of touch with the realities of the pobladora --the women from the poor, marginalized sectors of the country.

The funding received by CONAVIGUA is also a source of tension between the women's organizations. Since the 1980s has been a decade of burgeoning Northern consciousness about indigenous peoples' issues and rights, the identity of CONAVIGUA is doubly appealing to funders in that it articulates both the issues of "women" and "first peoples". Not surprisingly, CONAVIGUA has received tremendous international support. In California the Marano County solidarity organization focuses its work specifically on CONAVIGUA and sends on a four-month basis American women with needed skills and expertise to support the organization. CONAVIGUA has also been the

focus of a huge solidarity campaign by women's organizations in Norway. This campaign raised enough money to buy a house in Guatemala City for the offices of CONAVIGUA. This is unprecedented amongst the women's organizations, most of which struggle to meet the rental payments on inadequate office space. Visiting the offices of CONAVIGUA is indeed an object lesson: it is completely outfitted with the latest high-technology office equipment, including FAX machine, an extensive computer network, paper shredder, etc., most of which the CONAVIGUA women themselves do not care to know how to use (they hire a ladina woman office manager).

It is also important to recognize that a publicly declared date of establishment and naming of an organization does not mean that the women's organizations are solid, dense, and firmly entrenched. The organizations are, indeed, still very much in a state of flux --or a process of becoming-- as their organizational identity evolves. This is indicated, for example, by the frequency with which objectives, mandates, etc., are redefined. It is important to note that, again, this common fluidity reflects the relationship between the Guatemalan women's organizations and the system of international funding and international donor agencies. In fact the fluidity of the organizations is provoked by the precarious financial situation of the organizations and their chronic need to seek and secure international funding. The ongoing state of financial instability makes both staffing and programming decisions very much contingent on successfully obtaining international funding, where such success is often determined by the ability of the women's organizations to perceive funding priorities and translate this into project proposals.

A chronological analysis of promotional pamphlets and other material of the organizations reveals sometimes subtle and other times dramatic changes in organizational identity. These changes are frequently driven by the perceived demands of international funding agencies in developing funding applications and proposals. The women's organizations strive to word what they want to do in the current language of the North. Whether it be WID, WAD, GAD, "the building of civil society", the "deepening of democracy", etc., the women's organizations must package their own ideas about what they want in a fashion which appeals to Northern funders. This is absolutely essential and recognized, since the women's organizations generally maintain themselves through project funding, skimming off such funds the bare minimum amounts of money necessary to maintain the operations of the organizations.¹⁹

Another related feature of the women's organizations is the top-down nature of their formation. This reflects the central role played by key women leaders in the formation process. In effect highly politicized and conscientized women have decided to establish women's organizations. As a consequence, the process of formation has not been an initiative emerging from a grass-roots base with a consequent mass mobilization of women.

This top-down process of formation has had implications for the general structure of the organizations, which in turn affects many other aspects of their functioning. The organizations are not built on a mass membership base, but are rather comprised of very small nuclei of fairly exceptional women --exceptional both in their relatively high level of education and their visible leadership role in a machista society.²⁰ The nature of this

small, elite structure has a number of ramifications: it affects the ongoing organizational development process, the nature and structure of decision-making, and the relationship between the organizations and the broader population of women in the popular classes.

The ongoing organizing process within each organization is driven and directed by this small cadre of women who feel ownership of, and responsibility for, the organizations which they have created. Their visions of an organization are highly influenced by the more general understanding in the popular movement of the need to develop participatory ability in the pueblo, and by their practical work experience in promoting such participation through the use of popular education strategies. Reflecting the vision of organization that the women leaders have, these organizations are primarily focused on building organizing capacity in a larger group of women at an intermediate level. This is to say that their effort is not immediately directed at mass mobilization: this is a goal assessed as too advanced given both the relative strength of the organizations and the need to slowly build participation in a society gripped by the culture of fear. The goal, then, is rather to build the capacity of an intermediate stratum of women to do further organizing work with women at the community level. The work of these organizations is, then, focused on developing the participatory abilities of women: this has involved, above all, the promotion in women of a sense of self-worth which will enable them to act politically on the anger that arises from their new feelings of self-valorization. Drawing from practical experience, the popular education project of formation and skills training is the manner in which all the women's organizations approach this work of developing women's political participation.

The organizational development of the women's organizations, then, is not about building a membership base. It is rather about developing and promoting women's participatory capacity, with the longer term goal of fomenting further, independent women's organizational initiatives, whether within the shantytown communities, the church, the union, etc. From this it can be seen that the work of the women's organizations to build the capacity of women to participate politically is part of the broad political strategy of the popular movement to strengthen civil society.

At times, however, this effort to promote women's empowerment and skills development assumes a clientelistic form. This is an important issue and warrants some discussion. The power relations embedded in the women's organization are complex. On the one hand, the nuclei of women leaders who formed the women's organizations have generally continued on to direct and control the organizations. Again this reflects the impact of their political formation within the popular movement. Here, as in broader Guatemalan society, the model of decision-making and authority is hierarchical. Strong leaders make decisions autonomously and issue directives which are followed.²¹ This is generally the process within the women's organizations as well. Decision-making is not democratically undertaken but rather reflects the ideas of the leaders.²² For example, within the all important process of generating funding, bare lip-service is paid to the idea of consultation with, or input from, the women affiliated with the organization.

On the other hand the thrust of the work of the organizations is toward the encouragement of self-valorization in women, with the goal of enabling the independent

exercise of agency, decision-making, and further political organizing initiatives by women. So although the projects designed to achieve this goal are determined and elaborated in an hierarchical manner, the projects themselves aim to foster in women the opposite process.

Another shared characteristic of the women's organizations is the political posture of double militancy. This, too, reflects the process of the formation of the cadre of women leaders. As has been argued above these women emerged out of the popular movement. Importantly, this movement is comprised of activists and organizations from a number of sectors of civil society; the labour sector, the student sector, the religious sector, the indigenous sector, the human rights sector, the non-governmental organization sector, etc. Thus, while these women have commonly taken on the issue of gender for themselves personally and in their political work, they have done so while located within a sector of the popular movement.

This political posture of double militancy reflects the impact this formation had on these women leaders. In effect their personal politicization --a complex intellectual, psychological and emotional process-- occurred in this sectorally structured environment in which a sense of allegiance is deeply embedded. Thus, this formation has generally produced in the women leaders a conviction about the necessity of this structure for the Guatemalan context. Furthermore, it has produced in the women leaders a conviction about the importance of this structure for the popular struggle. Consequently, rather than fomenting the growth of an autonomous, radical women's movement, the women leaders have tended to relate their understanding of gender to deepening class struggle, by

developing an understanding of the specificity of the problems of poor women of the popular classes.

Another reason for the willingness of the women leaders to work within this structure is their belief that the struggles for class, gender, and ethnicity are fundamentally interconnected, and that consequently the building of a women's movement must be as part of --rather than separate from or in opposition to-- the work of the popular movement to contest democratization. This belief is reinforced by their perception that in the present conjuncture in Guatemala it is imperative not to further divide an already fragile movement.²³ For these reasons, then, these women leaders have made a strategic decision to work within the structure of the popular movement for a recognition of women's problems and women's rights.

The implication of this conviction and political strategy is that the identity of the organizations created by this cadre of women are embedded in, or meshed with, the identity of the sector of the popular movement in which they are located. The women's organizations, then, are more accurately described as organizations of women workers, of indigenous women, or women students, and so forth.²⁴ This tie to the popular movement is one which binds tightly, given the long history of struggle for survival of the movement: as a result the women's organizations do not form an autonomous women's movement but rather reflect a politics of double militancy. The issue of whether the constellation of women's organizations in Guatemala cohere in anything resembling a women's movement is considered again in Chapter Four. The next chapter,

however, turns to a more detailed presentation of what, at the day to day level of activity, the women's organizations are doing.

CHAPTER THREE

THE WORK OF THE WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction:

The previous chapter outlined in very general terms the organizational nature of the women's organizations which emerged through the latter half of the 1980s in Guatemala. Their objective was not immediately that of building a mass base by promoting membership in their organization. The short to medium term objectives of these organizations rather have been to enhance women's self-esteem and feelings of self-worth, and to thereby promote in women a belief that they are entitled to be valued and respected as women. The further goal, which the leadership of the organizations recognizes will stretch into the longer-term, is to build women's organizational and leadership skills so that women can act on their new-found sense of self and participate politically as proactive agents to contest the negative impact of democratization on their lives. The common approach to realizing these objectives is through projects of formation and skills training.

This chapter provides an overview of the project of formation and skills training through a vignette-style presentation of a range of activities which together comprise this political practise. The vignettes included below emphasize formation, for several reasons. For one, the women's organizations focus most of their attention on formation. The methodological implications of this were that the opportunities for research were largely limited to participating in formation activities. As well, to the extent that the

women's organizations do offer skills training this is done with the overarching vision that the real purpose served by skills training is that of building women's self-esteem through the mastery of a skill or technique. In this way the women's organizations view it as an activity which contributes to formation. Finally, the women's organizations have a strategic motive in offering skills training: they clearly recognize that it serves as a "hook", attracting pobladoras (poor women of the popular classes) to their organizations. Women are interested in this type of activity because it fits with and reinforces their traditional self-images. The women's organizations thus see skills training activities as a way of bringing women into their organizations and providing opportunities for formation, which is the activity they are ultimately interested in.

The presentation of the vignettes provides the empirical basis about the activities of the women's organizations upon which the summary observations and comments made at the end of the chapter rest. These concluding considerations focus on the content and process of the activities. Regarding the former, the scope and variety of the information and analysis disseminated through the activities is considered and an underlying coherence is identified. With respect to the latter, the conclusion is drawn that formation and skills training as a process is both incipient and dialectical. The broader meaning of formation and skills training as a collective political practise is taken up at length in Chapter Five.

To provide a framework in which to locate and understand the vignettes, it is helpful to note two sets of issues which have shaped the nature of formation and skills training. For one, the activities of the women's organizations are not aimed to reach

women in mass numbers. Indeed, the number of women who participate is relatively small. This reflects the recognition by the women's organizations of several related issues. One is their extremely limited resources which determine in large measure what is actually feasible. At the same time, the leaders of the organizations are extremely cognizant of the mistakes made by the guerilla organizations in the early 1980s. In effect, there is a general awareness that the guerillas mobilized campesinos to support armed insurgency without sufficient capacity to protect adequately the pueblo from the military onslaught which ensued. As a consequence, there is a concern to foment forms of organizing which are not only self-sustaining in the face of ongoing leadership decapitation, but which also grow and spread from the base. As a result of these two considerations, the women's organizations focus on developing women's leadership "nodes": in other words, the cultivation of another level of women leaders who in turn will be able to promote broader women's organizing at the community level.

The women's organizations also face a second set of constraining factors. This is the huge complex of obstacles which inhibit women's political participation, erode their energy, and diminish their sense of self-worth. As discussed in Chapter One, a major obstacle is the enormity of the productive and reproductive work women do, constituting what one leader referred to as the "quadruple" day of women.¹ Many women in the popular classes work in the home and the factory, and additionally in the informal sector, as well as providing sexual service to their partners.

The deepening economic crisis has only further intensified the workload of women. The sheer grind imposed on women forced to survive on the margins of the

economy has meant extremely long working days. The exhaustion which comes from working such hours is exacerbated by the lack of childcare and poor transportation, both of which further increase the labour of women and decrease their energy and time for any activities beyond economic survival.

The phenomenon of machismo, which culturally defines and entrenches this sexual division of labour in Guatemala, has further negative ramifications for women's ability to be political. Machismo includes the male view that women are the property of men and that, consequently, women belong in the home. While economic reality has dictated that increasing numbers of women work outside the home, in off-work time they are expected to be at home to service men's needs. In contrast, men hold that their place is on the street, an attitude that has led to a very high rate of alcoholism and irresponsible paternity. The ramifications for women's lives are that a huge number of women face single motherhood and the increased workload entailed in caring for their families alone. Those women with partners also frequently bear the responsibility of childrearing alone due to the "absent presence" of their male partner. Alcohol abuse and the norm that women are the property of men has meant that violence against women in the home and on the street is rampant.

In developing their activities for women, the women's organizations have had to take into account the tremendous undermining effect on women at the emotional and psychological level of the sexual division of labour, economic crisis, machismo, discrimination, and militarization. As the following vignettes illustrate, many diverse activities are dedicated to the task of challenging women's self-perceptions while

presenting them the possibility of a different identity. The women's organizations also undertake two other basic "building block" types of work aimed to promote the longer-term goal of women's political participation, while taking into account the two sets of issues above discussed which affect the work the women's organizations can and must do.

In general terms, this building block work encompasses activities which focus on developing women's political "skills set" or "tool kit". More specifically, one type of building block work is proactive political education, or, in other words, conscientization. Critical issues addressed are: labour rights and trade unionism, the current conjuncture in Guatemala, women's lived reality, women's work, women workers, women's rights, violence against women, and women's sexuality. The other type of building block work is the development of women's organizing skills: this includes activities designed to promote critical reflection, effective communication, solidarity amongst women, and the ability to work collectively and problem-solve.

Very often the activities of the women's organizations follow a workshop or seminar format using popular education techniques. This means that the workshops are "facilitated" rather than "taught" and that the goal is to promote a process of self and group learning. As the vignettes illustrate, however, many types of activities (including health clinics, popular theatre, celebrations, drop-in places, etc.) are entailed in the work of challenging women's traditional self-images. The vignettes presented in this chapter include two activities undertaken by COMFUITAG and five activities undertaken by GRUFEPROMEFAM. This selection reflects my in-depth involvement with these two

organizations. Other vignettes presented include a series of workshops on women's issues given by GGM in the El Gallito neighbourhood, and the celebration of the Day of Non-Violence Against Women by the Coordinadora de Asociaciones de Mujeres de Guatemala (COAMUGUA [Coordination of Guatemalan Women's Groups]). Before turning to the vignettes it is important to highlight a further dimension of political work contained in a number of the activities described. This is the objective of broader outreach education encompassed in formation and skills training activities such as the popular theatre presentation by GRUFEROMEFAM, the presentation about the current conjuncture to GRUFEPROMEFAM, the Fourth GRUFEPROMEFAM Encounter, and the celebration of the Day of Non-Violence Against Women.

In addition to affecting the women directly involved, these activities also aim to have an impact on women and men from the popular sectors, and the women and men who comprise the popular movement. Conscientization of key actors in the popular movement, and the pueblo more generally, is a central goal of these activities. The women's organizations, however, are also working to generate broader public awareness of women's issues in order to begin to pave the way for organized women in the future to challenge and contest such issues. In effect then, formation and skills training is not only about enabling women to challenge the socially constructed barriers which inhibit their political participation and agency. It is also about beginning to challenge those barriers themselves by initiating a critical discourse about gender in Guatemala.

I. Vignettes of the Activities of Women's Organizations:

i)Organizing Workshop for Women of CENTRACAP:

This day-long workshop took place on 16 August 1992 for domestic women workers who were members of CENTRACAP. It was held in the offices of CENTRACAP (Centro de Apoyo de Trabajadoras de Casas Particulares [Support Centre for Domestic Workers]) and was conducted by Rosa Escobar and María Isabel Grijalva of COMFUITAG (Comité de Mujeres de FESTRAS-UITA Guatemala [Women's Committee of FESTRAS-UITA Guatemala]). Approximately 35 women were present (including a high proportion of indigenous women) as well as the four members of the Working Group of CENTRACAP.

María Isabel began the workshop by explaining to the women the themes of the workshop: the importance of women organizing, and how to overcome the obstacles to organizing. She then sub-divided the group. This was done by having the women count out one, two, three, and four in succession. This process of sub-dividing the group confused a number of the CENTRACAP women who would count out five, six, etc.

María Isabel then explained the task assignment to the participants. They were to imagine themselves as workers in a maquila producing dresses. They would have 15 minutes to design a dress pattern for the maquila. Beyond this the women were given no further explanation of the assignment. Each sub-group was given a large sheet of paper, pencils, and rulers.

The participants set to their task enthusiastically, but soon encountered difficulties. With the exception of one sub-group the women participants worked on the assignment individually, each using a small corner of the paper. In general the women had little idea of how to design a dress pattern so they focused instead on drawing dresses. Considerable effort went in to the elaborate decoration of these dresses with buttons, bows, and other designs. Many of the women continually erased what they had drawn. Several of them decided to trace pictures of dresses from magazines. As the time passed, many of the women procured separate sheets of paper to work on by themselves. At this point María Isabel interjected to instruct the women to choose a name for their maquila.

After 15 minutes had passed the workshop reconvened. The drawings were posted in front of the group. María Isabel then asked the women to think about how the exercise had made them feel. A spokesperson was chosen by each group and she expressed the feelings of the group members. The first group's spokesperson stated that they had felt nervous, surprised, had tried to do the best job, and collaborated. This group produced 16 dresses. The second spokeswoman stated that because they did not know how to design dresses most had decided to draw skirts. They did not have adequate materials, there was no collaboration, and they were nervous. This group produced three dresses, 14 skirts, and one pair of pants. The spokesperson for the third group stated that the women thought they did not know how to do the task but then saw that they did. They produced six dresses, six skirts, three blouses, and one jacket. María Isabel asked the woman why they had coloured their patterns, and the

spokeswoman responded that they thought it would make the patterns attractive. The spokeswoman for the fourth group said that they felt nervous, did not know how to do the assignment, had to see models, and had decided to call their maquila "Fabrica La Moda" (The Fashion Factory). They produced 17 dresses.

After the presentations María Isabel then asked the women as a whole why the exercise had made them so nervous. She emphasized to them that despite this nervousness they had been able to do the assignment, and furthermore, had done so in a very creative manner. She then said that the purpose of the exercise had been to get them thinking about how they organize themselves to work. She discussed strategies toward working, and stressed the need to divide up the work to take advantage of their individual talents. She then talked about how the women organize their working day when they get up in the morning and how they think about planning their day. María Isabel then asked the women what would happen with organization in a factory. The women responded that organization would lead to better production.

Rosa then explained that they were going to watch a slide show which would help them think about organizing. She spoke for awhile, discussing their fear of organizing. The women then watched the animated "The Gutsy Rabbit" ("El Conejo Berroca"). The story was of a number of animals living in a barren desert with the exception of a tiger who alone has arable land. All the animals but the tiger were starving and dying of thirst. Finally a rabbit screwed up its courage and raided the tiger's land. To its surprise, it discovered that the tiger was really made of paper. The point of the show was to highlight that when a community of people realized its strength in numbers, it

actually found that the rich person in the community did not have real power over and against the people, but was rather a "paper tiger".

After the screening, María Isabel led a step-by-step discussion of the story to help the women comprehend the message. They then watched the show a second time, with the objective of more fully understanding the message of fighting back against oppression.

María Isabel then drew a comparison between the slide show and the work of the women. She talked about a common problem the women faced, that of not having enough food. She emphasized that thousands of other Guatemalan women faced the same problem and yet were immobilized by their fear of the "paper tiger". She then led a discussion about organizing, utilizing a prepared outline she posted in front of the group of women. This included the statement:

The challenge of organizing ourselves as women workers. When women, with all our problems, decide to participate we realize that we become stronger, and more sure, we lose our fear and gain experience to speak and fight for our rights.

The workshop ended with a question and comment session. Rosa and María Isabel concluded by speaking again about the fear the women had of speaking out loud. They also discussed the place of the women in the economic crisis and asserted that they must organize to gain their rights and better salaries.

ii) Trade Union Seminar for Women in the Ministry of Public Finance:

This series of seminars was also led by the two central women leaders of COMFUITAG, Rosa Escobar and María Isabel Grijalva. It reflected a decision taken

in the executive committee of the union of the Ministry of Public Finance (SINTRAFIP) to begin promoting the participation of women in the union. At that time there were no women on the executive committee which was composed of nine positions. The implicit objective was that the seminar series would lead to the formation by the participants in the seminar series of a women's committee within the union.

There were five seminar sessions offered, each addressing a different topic.² They were held on five different mornings between August and December of 1993 in the union office space in the Ministry of Public Finance located in downtown Guatemala City. Women from all over Guatemala, representing regional branches of the union, attended the seminars. Consequently, a number of the women travelled several hours by bus in the early hours of the morning to arrive for the seminars. They were selected to participate at the local level because they had displayed some level of activism or interest in their union local. Participation levels in the seminars varied, from a high of 25 women in the second seminar to 14 women in the concluding seminar.

a)Seminar II: The Union, Its Functions, Objectives, and Principles:

While scheduled to begin at 8 am, this second seminar got underway at 9:45 am. When I arrived with Rosa and María Isabel the women participants were already beginning to assemble. They were seated at desks lined up in rows in a large room. Rosa and María Isabel immediately proceeded to have the women form their desks in a circle in order to foster a feeling of shared, collective participation. Rosa began the seminar with an "ice-breaker" exercise designed to inject a feeling of enthusiasm into the

morning. Following this, María Isabel led a physical warm-up exercise. The women then went around the room introducing themselves to each other.

After this introduction, the women were divided into four groups of six and given the assignment to discuss two questions: What is the purpose of a union?, and What is a union organization? Rosa and María Isabel wanted the women to consider both the nature and function of a union.

After a coffee break, the group of women was reconvened by a male member of the union executive who had been sitting in on the seminar. One woman from each group was delegated to present the work of her group to the whole. Applause followed each presentation.

After all the presentations Rosa interjected with a commentary on the answers put forward by the groups of women to the first question. She noted that the answers were similar in suggesting that "a union is a group of people". She stressed, however, that more particularly a union is a group of workers. She added that 20 people is the legal minimum for the formation of a union and that women have both the right and the responsibility to take up positions within the union executive.

Rosa then considered the answers to the second question which had in common that the function of a union is "to protect us". She noted that it was important to specify that a union protects workers against exploitation, work instability, and inadequate working conditions. She finally noted that a union is more than the executive committee, but is rather all of the members. Rosa's comments were further elaborated by María

Isabel, who discussed in general terms the role of a union and the place of women in a union.

The women were then show the slide show entitled "The Gutsy Rabbit" (El Conejo Berroca: see description above). The women discussed their observations about the slide show: they stated that the show depicted conformity, fear of an image, respect for others, little resistance, the decisions of one, a lack of understanding of the reality, an absence of organization, leadership, an absence of unity, and a lack of life objectives. The participants were by this time bored and restless.

At this point the male union executive member got up in front of the women to "say a few words". He noted that unions in Guatemala needed to be transformed from traditional to dynamic organizations, and asked that the women think about the need for more active participation of women in SINTRAFIP. He finally urged the women to change their attitudes as individuals: to make their needs and concerns known to the union executive and to take on a more participatory role in the executive. During the course of the seminar there had been a great deal of talk amongst the women, and Rosa and María Isabel, about the importance of childcare for the women. This point was not addressed, however, by the male union executive member.

The women were then shown the slide show a second time, with the idea that they view it again with different eyes after having reflected on it. The seminar concluded at 12:15 pm with the announcement by Rosa of two upcoming workshops by activists travelling from Mexico.

b) Seminar III: Magicians of the Crisis:

This seminar started at 9:30 am with seven women present. The workshop began with an introductory exercise: the women were divided into pairs and given a few minutes to share with each other basic information about their lives. The women then introduced each other to the larger group. By 10 am there were 16 women present, including one indigenous woman. María Isabel asked for a volunteer and had her act out what she imagined a magician did while the rest of the group was suppose to guess what was being portrayed.

The group then discussed what a magician does and what he or she uses in his or her work. Through this discussion María Isabel introduced the theme of the seminar: women working magic in a situation of crisis. She then asked the women to think about the situations in which they felt they acted like magicians. The general conclusion of the women was that they "made miracles happen" in almost every aspect of their lives.

María Isabel then asked the women to think about what they do in the morning before leaving for work. The women really responded with enthusiasm to this question and generated a huge list of their work before going out to work. María Isabel then pointed out to the women that they worked magic with their time and concluded that this reflected the fact that they were living in a period of crisis.

She then asked the women to think about what crisis meant. This generated three responses: a stage of conflict difficult to overcome; a stage of desperation; and daily economic and social problems. María Isabel then emphasized that the economic and social crisis in Guatemala very directly affected women, and asked them to think about

examples of this impact on their lives. Again the women very enthusiastically produced a list of examples: managing the household, stretching money and limiting themselves in what they buy, and purchasing basic staples. This led to a very animated discussion amongst the women about the pros and cons of sales on goods and whether they actually helped to save money.

María Isabel then facilitated a discussion of the cost to women of living and surviving through crisis. She spoke about the importance of women working together, of how women are forced to work also in the informal economy to survive economically, of how women never ask why their lives are so difficult, about the anxiety and guilt women experience about not providing well for their children, about how women minimize their problems in the same way they minimize the "problems" of children, and concluded by asking how women could participate in the midst of this crisis.

After a coffee break, Rosa introduced a slide show entitled "Would You Know Why?" (Sabías Por Que?) which was about Latin America in general and the social and economic disparity in wages, health and living conditions which characterize the region. The show also discussed how the armed forces maintain such systems. Before the workshop began María Isabel had edited the slides and narrative, which she thought were too radical for this particular group of women. The screening of the show was followed by a group discussion in which the women talked about exploitation in the maquilas, the situation in the Guatemalan countryside, etc. Rosa discussed the extreme situations on plantations in Guatemala, and commented that a very real problem is the lack of a labour code and the repression the unions face.

The women also discussed the possibility of change and Rosa and María Isabel challenged one woman who was very pessimistic about such a possibility. She argued that there was no utility in fighting for change because there would always be an unequal distribution of wealth. In response Rosa and María Isabel emphasized the importance of understanding ourselves as workers despite different occupations, how we must overcome divisions between workers in the city and country, and that, as women, we must work together.

At 11:50 am the women were divided into smaller groups for discussion of a different theme. The first group considered the question "What is the cause of crisis in our country?" In their own words the response developed by this group was: "The capitalists, now that they are incapable of giving anything to the majority of the population each day they accumulate more wealth and this further impoverishes the majority of us owing to the fact that the salaries that they pay us do not cover our costs of living, unemployment grows, each day inflation is higher, for the workers it only stretches to barely feed and clothe our children, now we don't have the resources to think of ourselves.

The second group considered the question "What problems do we face as women workers?" The following presents the answers the members developed, in their own language and with their own categories:

1) Private Sphere

- neglect of the children
- neglect of the house

2)Public Sphere

- discrimination against the woman worker
- abuse by authorities
- abuse of sex and power
- lack of respect
- lack of consideration
- devaluing of the work done by women

The third group considered the question "What steps can we take to solve the problems?" I participated in this group and we developed the following response:

1)Know the problem

2)Analyze the situation

Organize to:

3)Unite criterion

4)Enter action to achieve the solution

After the women presented their group work to the seminar as a whole, Maria Isabel went through each group's answers and amplified and discussed the points that had been made. The indigenous woman present stood up and said that a point that had been overlooked was the discrimination against indigenous women.

The women were then shown a second slide show entitled "Women: This Is Your Life, Friend" (Mujer: se va la vida compaera). This was a show accompanied by song about the daily unrecognized work of women. The workshop ended with Rosa and Maria

Isabel expressing thanks for the time of the women, and a relaxation exercise which entailed breathing and body work.

c)Seminar IV: The Union. Its Organization and Functioning:

The workshop began at 9:30 am with 16 women present. María Isabel began by leading an relaxation/stretching exercise. Rosa then introduced the topic of Women and Work by talking about the double work day of women which goes unrecognized and unpaid, and which makes it difficult for women to have time to participate in their unions.

After this introduction the women had an unofficial break because of difficulties with the slide show. During this time they chatted away amongst each other. At 10 am the slide show was ready. Entitled "The Union: Its Organization and Functioning", it was about unions and how they function and was prepared by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. The main focus was on emphasizing the importance of union statutes. The show also discussed the function of union general assemblies.

The role of the Executive Committee was also discussed and the point was made that this Committee is not a privileged class, but rather is composed of those responsible for the functioning of the union and responsible to ensure respect of and compliance with union statutes. A description of the composition of the Executive Committee was given. This was followed by a description of each Executive Committee position and the role of each position.

The slide show also emphasized the importance of the viewer questioning whether his or her union was functioning democratically. It then discussed how unions received their monies and how these were spent. The importance of members paying their union dues was also pointed out in that the strength of the union was built on union dues. The importance of fiscal responsibility was considered and the right of members to accountability was noted. The show also added that members would be more willing to pay their dues if they believed that fiscal responsibility existed in their union. The show finally considered the importance of the General Assembly.

Following the slide show at 10:30 am Rosa gave a talk about it. She noted that women often do not really understand how their union works, and then she asked for questions or comments from the women participants. One woman commented on how few of them knew their collective agreement nor respected their obligations to their union. While she spoke María Isabel wrote down her comments. Rosa then clarified the difference between a collective agreement and union statutes. The indigenous woman commented on how important it was for women to learn these things.

At this point María Isabel stated that it was important that the women not just think that the workshop was nice, but that they also begin to act on their new knowledge. Rosa concluded this part of the workshop by emphasizing how important it was for women to read and know their collective agreement and union statutes, and how important it was to support in an intelligent way the Executive Committee through active and questioning participation.

From 10:35 am to 11:05 am the women took a coffee break. During this break some of the women commented on how the number of women participating in the workshop had dropped off. The comment was also made that the purpose of the workshop was the formation of a Women's Commission in the union.

At 11:05 am Rosa led off with a little "pep talk" about how important it was for the women to participate in their union. Then a second slide show was shown to the women. It was entitled "Foundations of Trade Unionism" (Fundamentos del Sindicalismo) and was also produced by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. The focus of the programme was why it was important and beneficial for workers to organize. It noted, for example, that organizing combatted the exploitation of individual workers. The show also urged the viewer not to believe that employers would magically or voluntarily improve workers' conditions. It also emphasized that only through uniting forces could workers improve their conditions.

The show further discussed the relationship between unions, labour law, and the government, and noted that in reality in much of Latin America the legal rights of unions have not been respected. The rights of unions were specified as were the objectives of trade unionism. The latter included; higher salaries, better working conditions, full employment, political democracy, and economic democracy. It was further emphasized that labour law must exist more than just on paper, and that labour rights were only respected in authentic democracies.

The programme then considered the principles of trade unionism. These included; liberty, independence, union democracy, participation, unity, realism, solid position,

solidarity, and economic autonomy or independence. Many of the women took notes during this slide presentation.

At 11:35 am Rosa asked the women for comments on the second slide show. She further asked them if they had previously thought about what trade unionism really was. Due to the low energy and attention of the women at this point, María Isabel gave each of the women a piece of paper and asked them to write down what they had learned about the foundations, objectives, and principles of unions. She then emphasized that one purpose of the workshop was to build the capacity of women to participate.

At 11:50 am María Isabel asked each woman to come to the front of the group and present what they had written on their paper. The women were quite prepared to do this. In general, their answers showed that they had heard and retained a fair amount of information from the slide show.

María Isabel then pointed out to the women a saying which had been posted in the room: "A union without women is not half a union, but not even this ..." (Un sindicato sin mujeres, no es sino medio sindicato, ni tan siquiera eso ...) She then talked about how important it was to translate this knowledge into practise. Her comments focused on how difficult it was for women to begin to participate in a space dominated by men, and how challenging it was for women to move from the private to the public sphere. She ended her remarks with the exhortation that women must begin to fight for their rights as women workers.

Rosa then talked to the women about the importance of solidarity. She stressed that it is both women's right and obligation to support other workers and other popular

sectors, both at the national and international level. She added that the women must not only take advantage of solidarity but also be prepared and willing to give it. She then discussed the statement "democracy: a state of right" (democracia: un estado de derecho), emphasizing to the women that they must fight for a real democracy and not just a democracy on paper.

Rosa then talked more generally about the importance of political participation and pointed out various significant dates in Guatemala such as October 20, the day of commemoration of the 1944 Revolution, and November 25, the day of non-violence against women. She also discussed the recent political achievements of two women in the popular movement in Guatemala, Rigoberta Menchú and Helen Mack. Rosa noted that their successes were just the tip of the iceberg: much valiant but unrecognized work was being done by many committed people throughout Guatemala. She then asked the women to reflect on how they could contribute to this struggle to realize real democracy.

At 12:30 pm María Isabel divided the women into two groups to consider the topic "Our Challenge as Women" (Nuestro Reto Como Mujeres). The first group was assigned the task of developing concrete objectives. They elaborated the following points:

- 1) Active participation in the union, accepting positions of responsibility in the union.
- 2) Support union decisions stemming from the statutes and rules.

The second group was to consider proposals to realize these objectives. They put forward the following points:

- 1) Develop consciousness in women of the importance of their participation.

2)The necessity of a special secretariat in the union for women.

At 12:50 pm the workshop concluded. María Isabel posted several statements for the women to consider as they wrapped up. These were:

1)"Our demands will be heard when our voices are raised. Organized and united."

2)"To know and exercise our rights is our obligation."

3)"To do politics is to fight against oppression, whether it be class, sexual, social,

It is to want to transform the relations of domination or subordination, that are expressed in specific form in the private ambit as well as the public... It is intended to transform relations of inequality."

d)Seminar V: The Role of Popular Education in the Alternative Organization:

The workshop began at 9:30 am with 14 women present. Rosa introduced the topic for the day by telling the women that they must try to challenge the way they learned in the school system. Noting that as Guatemalans they were not used to questioning things, she then went on to discuss the idea of popular education. She stated that popular education valued questioning, emphasized valorization, believed that everyone had the right to learn, and was dynamic and not rigid. María Isabel then added that popular education comes from what people have within them, and stressed that it is "part of the wisdom of the pueblo" and is "two ways: teaching and learning." Rosa further added that "if we learn it is to change" --or, in other words, that learning is about changing.

Rosa then asked for comments from the women. The oldest woman present said that what she heard from María Isabel and Rosa reminded her of the catechism classes of the Catholic church. Another woman commented that she had heard of popular education for health, especially dealing with the problem of cholera. At this point one of the male members of the executive committee interjected, and reflected on other examples of popular education.

At 10:15 am Rosa and María Isabel divided the women into smaller groups to play a "card game". The purpose of this card game was to introduce participants to the strategy of popular education. Nine cards were given to each group. The cards had printed on them one word or statement which were; activities, goal, time, those responsible, diagnosis, execution, analysis of resources and obstacles, evaluation, and, objectives. The task assigned to each group of women was to organize the cards in the proper order to reflect the logical flow of a popular education activity.

At 10:30 am the group took a coffee break. During the break Rosa told me that the executive committee was criticizing the workshop series --and Rosa and María Isabel-- for talking only about gender and consequently pitting the women in the union against the men. They asked me if I would be present in the evaluation with them to emphasize that this was not what had happened.

At 10:55 am each group presented the order of activities they had decided upon with an explanation of their reasoning. The three groups all suggested a different ordering, and this led to a very animated discussion about what the proper ordering

should be. The male executive committee member intervened to express his point of view and some of the women --in a joking manner-- told him he should not interject.

The women had the most disagreement about where to locate "time", "those responsible", and "activities". The male executive committee member again intervened with his opinion. The women, as a whole, finally decided on the following ordering: diagnosis, objectives, goals, analysis of resources and obstacles, activities, those responsible, time, execution, and evaluation.

At 11:30 am Rosa discussed the "game", relating it to the issue of union organizing. María Isabel also contributed to this discussion, drawing a parallel between union organizing and the process a doctor goes through with a sick patient. They both then encouraged the women to question the analysis they had developed. Rosa also asked the women what would happen if they did not go back to the doctor for an evaluation after a prescribed treatment. María Isabel referred to this logical strategy as the "scientific base" of popular education.

Rosa and María Isabel then facilitated a step-by-step application by the women of this strategy to their situation. They asked the women to first do a diagnosis of their problem. The women generated the following "diagnosis": little time, lack of union permission, lack of opportunity, repression by the boss, little interest on the part of the workers, lack of information about union activities, need to know the collective agreement, discontent with reclassification, lack of awareness of who were the directors, and little support from the bosses.

After the women developed this diagnosis Rosa commented that this was a general level diagnosis and that the women needed to attend to their specific issues as women. With this exhortation the women preceded to develop a "diagnosis of women". The points they identified were: little participation of women, little attention on the part of male members of the union to obtaining union permission to attend, little attention given to facilitating permission, lack of comprehension, apathy, rejection, bad coordination, bad communication, favouritism, and lack of solidarity among women.

While the women were developing this diagnosis, one of them challenged the male executive committee member about how information is disseminated in the union, and how participation is solicited. She referred to a recent conference which had taken place among various unions and how she had felt personally embarrassed about the poor representation of women in SINTRAFIP in comparison to some of the other unions involved. This comment led to a general round of complaints from the women --directed toward this man-- about how their union discriminated against women.

Rosa then reviewed the two lists the women had developed and discussed the various points. María Isabel tried to emphasize that as women they could not just expect to receive things from the union but must also contribute to the union, stressing the theme "I also am the union" (el sindicato también soy yo).

The women then turned to a discussion of their objectives. The objective agreed upon was to seek the active participation of women in SINTRAFIP. Rosa asked the women what method they would use to realize this objective. The oldest woman present suggested formation courses for the women members of the union. Picking up on this

comment, María Isabel tried to clarify the difference between objectives and method, and suggested that the idea of formation is better understood as an objective. She further emphasized that methods had to be quantifiable.

The women next considered goals. This was expressed in concrete terms: to achieve the active participation of 25 percent of the women of SINTRAFIP. Rosa then asked the women to do an analysis of resources and obstacles. They identified as resources: support of the directorate, written material, and 13 women "motivators" (the participants in the workshop). They identified as obstacles the following: little credibility, little time, lack of interest or indifference, lack of economic resources, lack of educational materials, bosses, lack of comprehension of husbands and families.

The women next considered the issue of activities and developed three suggestions: a get-together of women union affiliates, informative messages, and workshops of interest to the women affiliates. During their discussion Rosa suggested that they needed to think in the short, medium, and long term in realizing objectives. María Isabel added that this process of planning was only a beginning, was not rigid, and could be changed. When the women suggested workshops, María Isabel asked them to think about what they wanted from this. Rosa further emphasized the ability the women themselves had to give workshops.

The women next considered the question of who would assume responsibility for this work. Rosa and María Isabel stressed that at this stage in planning the women needed to think in a flexible manner. Rosa suggested the women keep in mind the image of ants working, and how they never let a rock in their path stop their work. Rosa also

asked the women what commissions they needed to form in order to organize a Christmas get-together. As the workshop closed the women discussed how they were going to realize the "informative messages" objective.

iii) Popular Theatre Production for Union Affiliates:

In May 1992 GRUFEPROMEFAM mounted a popular theatre production. It was originally intended to be part of their Mother's Day celebration aimed at the larger group of women loosely associated with GRUFEPROMEFAM. When I first made contact with the organization on 14 May 1992, however, they were still in the process of practising the play. This meant that their Mother's Day event was postponed until 30 May 1992. They also took the show "on the road", presenting it to two unions with whom GRUFEPROMEFAM has relations.

The play itself was written by a member of the AEU (USAC Students' Association) with ties to the organization. Written in popular vernacular and full of ribald humour, the play was about the lives of three women; a mother and two daughters. The theme of mother-daughter relations was deliberately chosen because of the intended Mother's Day production date. The mother in the story had seen her husband kidnapped and disappeared, and she herself lived in poverty as a single parent.

Her two daughters, both in their late teen years, were diametrically opposed in personality and lifestyle. Chepa worked in a factory, was very politically conscious and in solidarity with the pueblo. Due to her father's disappearance she had to leave school very early and had only completed her primary education. She was going out with an

indigenous man who was a construction worker. Her sister, Sandra, on the other hand, was an aspiring bourgeois. She loathed popular politics, "hung" with rich girls, and was very proud of the fact that she was studying an Executive Secretary course. The two daughters, of course, were constantly at odds.

The play had three scenes. In the first scene it was late at night and Chepa and the mother were still awaiting the arrival of Sandra. Chepa commented on her sister's behaviour and upbraided her when she finally arrived home. Chepa suggested that her sister was taking the birth control pill, which infuriated Sandra. She refused her mother's offer of a dinner of eggs cooked with herbs, having just eaten at MacDonald's. Chepa reminded her that the next day was Mother's Day and asked her what she was planning to do for her mother. Sandra responded that she had no present but "gave all her love".

In the second scene, Sandra was sitting with three friends in a restaurant and the women were generally bragging about their family wealth and the motorcycles that their boyfriends had. Sandra was made very uncomfortable by the conversation, especially when the women talked of all the travelling their fathers did. The friends asked Sandra when she planned to invite them over to meet her family. At that moment Chepa and her mother arrived in the restaurant: to honour her mother Chepa was taking her out for dinner on Mother's Day. They came over to greet Sandra. She was, of course, very embarrassed, for as they approached the table her friends commented on the "scum" approaching.

In the final scene of the play, Sandra arrived home as her mother was talking to Chepa, encouraging her in all of her political work. Sandra was extremely ashamed of her own behaviour and begged the forgiveness of her mother and sister. The play ended with a reconciliation between the three women. The women joined hands and the play ended with the women together reciting an uplifting and inspiring poem about a better future for Guatemala.

There were eight women who had roles in the play. Yesenia was a teenager of about 14 years. Etelvina, in her late 20s, and Teresa, in her 40s, were women who had worked in a shoe-making maquila. These workers were on strike and occupying the central plaza. GRUFEPROMEFAM had been involved in solidarity with these workers and had in this way established a relationship with these two women in particular. Alma was a mother in her 40s who was a street vendor. Conche and Flor de María, both in their late 30s, were also mothers. Marta Julia, 18 years old, was a single mother who lived with her mother. Finally, Gladys, a mother of four and in her 40s, worked in the office of GRUFEPROMEFAM. Sonia Escobedo, one of the members of the Working Team in GRUFEPROMEFAM, was responsible for the production of the play.

During the month of May the women met many afternoons to practise the play. This was a very informal process, with much improvisation, as inevitably several of the women were not able to make the practise sessions due to other demands on their time. I had an open invitation to sit in on these practise sessions and often filled in for parts when women were absent.³

Each of the women involved in the play was perceived by the leaders of GRUFEPROMEFAM to have potential as a mid-level organizer. Consequently, Olga, the main leader, had a much broader perspective on the purpose of mounting such a production. She saw it as an opportunity to encourage the self-esteem of the women, to further involve the women in the organization, and to further their process of conscientization and skills development.

Indeed the practise sessions almost always led to other activities. For example, one day, as the women were gathering for a run-through of their play at the GRUFEPROMEFAM house, Sonia involved them in decorating the house for the occasion of a visit from two representatives of the Quaker church, which financially supported the organization. Letting them take the initiative to decorate the house built confidence in their abilities, and led to informal relationship-building amongst the women. It also provoked a discussion about the significance of the universal female symbol (the orb and cross) that they were lettering and hanging from the ceiling by way of decorating.

On another occasion the house was already in use so the women practised their in the GRUFEPROMEFAM offices. While the women were converging, a male affiliate of the organization initiated an informal session of dynamical exercises designed to boost the confidence of the women in their speaking and public presentation abilities. The group exercises included reading aloud news and advertisements while pretending to be a radio announcer, a game where the women had to say something each time someone passed them a ball, and a dramatic recitation exercise. The women then practised their

play and this man made suggestions as to how they could improve their intonation and general presentation.

On a number of other occasions the women were invited back to the office after their play practise. This generally corresponded with the afternoon coffee break at 5 pm, when any number of affiliates of the organization would drop around and the general environment of winding down for the day was light-hearted, inclusive, and jovial. Bringing the women into this atmosphere served to draw them into the heart of the organization and to incorporate them into the core leadership group of women. It also gave several of the women enough confidence to join the skills training course in sewing, thus further involving them in GRUFEPROMEFAM.

The first presentation of the play was on Friday, 29 May, 1992 at Acricasa, a thread-producing factory where GRUFEPROMEFAM had links with the union. In preparation for this presentation the women met at the office in the morning to prepare sandwiches and to make little red paper hearts which were to be pinned on the union members in order to make them feel special and impart the sense that their attendance was important and recognized as such.

At 2 pm we left the office to go by city bus to the factory. The union space at the factory had been prepared for the festivity: the floor was sprinkled with pine needles, and chairs were set out in rows. Upon arrival the women in the play proceeded to devote great time and energy in dressing for their roles and putting on makeup. I stood at the door with Yesenia and greeted the women workers, pinning on them the paper hearts as they entered the room. A general invitation had been issued to all

women workers in the factory, so the audience included many women who were not affiliates of the union. Approximately 70 women arrived for this Mother's Day commemoration: most had collected their children from the daycare centre and brought them along to the presentation.

At 3:40 pm the activities for the afternoon got underway. A woman representative of the union introduced Olga Rivas, the leader of GRUFEPROMEFAM, and then Olga spoke. She emphasized that the play asked the women to reflect on their relationship as mothers to their children. Sonia then recited a poem which criticized the commercialization of Mother's Day. The play was then presented and well-received: the audience of women enjoyed the humour. Afterward, Sonia spoke for a while, initiating a reflection on the theme of the play. After a raffle was held (I was invited to choose the numbers), a man and a woman then played guitars and sang. The sandwiches and Cokes were distributed to the women and at 4:50 pm the activities were concluded with general thanks expressed to all who had participated. After cleaning up we walked to the main gate of the factory and boarded a bus which went downtown, dropping workers off at stops along the way.

The second presentation of the play was as part of the Mother's Day celebration held on Saturday, 30 May 1992. At around 11 am Gladys, Etelvina, Sonia and I went to the house to decorate it. The activities for the afternoon were scheduled to begin at 3 pm. Approximately 80 people arrived: they were women affiliated with GRUFEPROMEFAM and the extended families of the women in the play. All the women were pinned with hearts to honour them as mothers.

The event began with the introduction of Olga. Following this a woman affiliate recited a poem and then a raffle was held. The play was presented and then Sonia reflected on the theme of the play. Sonia then recited a poem and, following this, another woman affiliate sang five songs. Olga was then presented with a gift, as was Berta, in absentia. Some general concluding remarks were made by Olga: these included an invitation to all of the women present to participate in the theatre group⁴ and an invitation to all present to view the display of skirts in the nursery made by the women in the sewing course. Sandwiches and Cokes were then distributed to all present.

iv) Presentation About the Current Conjuncture to GRUFEPROMEFAM:

On 16 May 1992 in the offices of GRUFEPROMEFAM a journalist from Inforpress⁵ gave a presentation about the present political situation in Guatemala. He spoke from a prepared paper for approximately one and a half hours. I and 23 other adults --eight of whom were men-- as well as two children were present. Of these eight men, three were relatives of Sonia; her husband, and two younger brothers. Another man was the partner of Berta, also a member of the Working Team. A fourth man --at the time working as a collaborator in the capacity of psychologist-- was also present.

In brief, the points that the journalist emphasized were the following. Firstly, that politics and economics were very interconnected. Secondly, in terms of the dialogue between the military and the URNG (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca [National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity]) --the umbrella organization of the armed insurgent forces-- the challenge facing the popular movement was to validate the first

year of peace negotiations. He noted that information was being manipulated, and, in contrast to the situation in El Salvador, the guerillas did not have the military strength to gain the upper hand vis a vis the military. He then discussed the institutional crisis and the popular fear of a military coup. He stated that the problem stretched back to the years of Cerezo and his Christian Democratic government, and that the political parties were unable to attack the problem because they were tiny organizations plagued by clientelism. He also noted the problem of corruption at the local level of power. He discussed the situation of human rights and whether progress was possible, and finally turned to the question of the popular movement. He noted that the campesinos and students formed the two most dynamic sectors of the popular movement, and that on 1 May in their walk from Huehuetenango to the capital the campesinos had staged the largest demonstration since the early 1980s.

After a short coffee break there was a question period. This time was, however, predominated by commentaries. First two of the men spoke, giving lengthy commentaries on the presentation. Then a woman --who was not a regular participant in GRUFEPROMEFAM activities-- spoke. She took issue with the comments of the journalist about the labour movement. Sonia --of the Working Team-- then commented on this woman's comment, and asked for clarification about a point regarding human rights. She stated that she had seen a television documentary which claimed it was a human rights violation when women could not feed their children. Sonia's youngest brother --an active participant in the high school students' movement-- then also responded to the woman's comment about the labour movement. Olga then addressed

comments to the same woman. She noted that women generally did not know what the UASP was. Sonia's husband then gave an extended opinion on the presentation. This was followed by a comment from a young woman, a secondary school student, who talked about the high school students' uprisings.⁶ She noted that her family, and people more generally, were not supportive. Finally, another man present expressed his opinion of the presentation.

On 22 May 1992 a follow-up session to this presentation was held, again in the offices of GRUFEPROMEFAM and again later in the afternoon between 4:30 and 6:15 pm. I and nine other people were present: Sonia and Berta of the Working Team, Gladys of the office staff, Teresa, Etelvina, and two other women from the popular theatre group, Edgar (the psychologist), and Sonia's husband.

This informal meeting began with Sonia reading the first part of the transcript from the presentation given by the journalist. The group then discussed the significance of the recent wave of random bombings, and the meaning of democracy. This discussion was informally led by Sonia. She then presented the group with information about the Civil Defense Patrols. The discussion flowed on to the issue of human rights and the problem of drugs in the country. Sonia then suggested that the group read and study the URNG document released that week.

At this point Sonia's husband interjected to state that the discussion needed to be more dynamic. He suggested that everyone needed to read the document and then each person would be able to express an opinion. Berta also suggested that Edgar and Sonia talk less. Teresa --one of the maquila women on strike in the central plaza and a

member of the theatre group-- complained that the text was too difficult and that she could not understand it. Sonia's husband commented that he had a document which outlined the process of the peace talks: he thereby implicitly suggested that Teresa's difficulty was lack of familiarity with the topic, which could be helped by further reading.

Sonia also mentioned that there were differences in the group in that some were students and therefore were accustomed to reading while others were not. Teresa's final concern was that she was confused about what the group was actually reading. The meeting slowly dissolved and Edgar sat with Teresa and Etelvina and explained words and terms from the transcript that they had had difficulty understanding.

v) A Session of the GRUFEPROMEFAM Skills Training Course:

The main skills training course offered by GRUFEPROMEFAM was in sewing instruction. These classes were held on Saturday afternoons in the GRUFEPROMEFAM house and childcare was provided in the nursery facility. The group was comprised of approximately 12 women although attendance fluctuated. In general the women who participated were the women GRUFEPROMEFAM was trying to encourage as mid-level organizers. The sewing instruction was taught by a woman named Rosa, who had a long history of collaboration with GRUFEPROMEFAM.

On Saturday, 15 August 1992, I attended a session of the sewing class. The women began arriving around 2:30 pm and chatted amongst themselves while more women arrived. At 2:45 pm they began work on their sewing project of making blouses.

At 4:40 pm Berta came into the room where the women were working and asked them to sit down for a discussion. She stated that she had three items to discuss with them. The first was that she wanted the group to read over the statutes of GRUFEPROMEFAM and discuss them. The second was to encourage the women to take advantage of the medical clinic GRUFEPROMEFAM was in the process of setting up. She tried to allay their fears about having a PAP smear, and emphasized that they could go to the doctor for other medical reasons, and also bring their children for consultation. The third was that she wanted to find out about the interests of the women for the upcoming Fourth Encounter.⁷ She said that she wanted two women to volunteer to meet with the Working Team the following Monday to represent the views of the participants in the sewing course.

The women responded to Berta by expressing concern about how they were going to make time to get together to read and discuss the statutes. They also stressed that they did not think they would be able to read or comprehend them. At this point Olga intervened in the discussion. She drew a comparison between their learning to sew and working together as a group to understand their own organization. She explained that initially they had not understood all the sewing terminology but had gradually figured out what the different words and ideas were. She emphasized that working on political things was similar and that they could also learn to do it well.

Olga then announced that GRUFEPROMEFAM had invitations from three different organizations in the USA to send women workers there on a tour. She explained the time involved --over 24 days-- and discussed some of the difficulties this

presented for the women. In particular she explored how they could arrange to leave their work for this long. She also noted that it would not cost the women anything as all their expenses would be paid. Olga then said she would be looking for volunteers soon and asked each of them to consider the idea. She asked Etelvina and Sonia --both of whom had made similar trips-- to share their experiences with the group.

Berta then talked to the women about group process. She explained to the women the importance of listening to each other and not interrupting when someone else was speaking. The overall emphasis of this talk was on the need for the women to develop a democratic process of work and interchange amongst themselves. This afternoon concluded with my presentation of a cheque to the group from my own union local.

vi) Workshop for Women Members of CAMINOS Union on Protection of Maternity Legislation and Women Workers:

This workshop was held in the morning of 27 August, 1992 in the office space of the public roads and transportation union, CAMINOS. I accompanied Olga, Sonia, and a woman named Myte (from the Basque country) who was participating with the group. When we arrived there were 13 women assembled as well as a woman representative from the government National Office for Women (ONAM). One of the male union executive members was addressing the women, giving an introduction to the workshop. He then introduced the GRUFEPROMEFA women.

Sonia was the main workshop leader, and she began by giving an overview of the theme and agenda. She explained that the purpose of the workshop was to study the

International Labour Organization legislation on maternity and disseminate information about this legislation. Olga then outlined the work of GRUFEPROMEFAM. While she was speaking Myte, Sonia, and the male executive member passed around materials to the women. A large sheet of newsprint was also posted in front with the following questions listed:

- 1) What differences are there between the legislation of Guatemala and the benefits of Covenant 103 (related to the protection of maternity passed by the International Labour Organization in 1952).
- 2) What women benefit from the application of Covenant 103?
- 3) How can we advance the struggle for the application of this covenant?

The women were divided into four groups to read photocopies of the Covenant. The women read the material but did not then take the initiative to discuss the questions posted: instead they chatted amongst themselves. The male executive member served coffee and bread to everyone present.

Olga then passed out copies of the most recent information bulletin produced by GRUFEPROMEFAM and photocopies of a page from Diario de Centro America, the official government newspaper, dated 16 March, 1989. The photocopy outlined Decree 14-89 of the Congress of the Guatemalan Republic, which constituted official government approval and adoption of various ILO declarations including Covenant 103.

At this point a spokeswoman for one sub-group got up and presented to the group as a whole a summary of her sub-group's discussion of the ILO legislation. The following points were made:

- 1) The major difference is that our country does not respect the 12 weeks of maternity leave established by the Covenant (only ten weeks are given).
- 2) According to Covenant 103 all women eligible for the benefits should enjoy them: in Guatemala domestic workers do not.
- 3) Through organizations of ourselves, with the support of institutions like ONAM (National Office on Women) and GRUFEPROMEFA.

Suggestions: that the lactation period be two hours.

Following this presentation, a spokeswoman from the second sub-group summarized its discussion. The following points were made:

- 1) Our rights have been violated. The ILO legislation is not put to the public for consideration.
- 2) All women ought to be beneficiaries. The covenant is not respected. The covenant is not known.
- 3) Disseminate information and fight for the application of the law.
 - i)decide on a goal
 - ii)motivate ourselves
 - iii)research the topic
 - iv)disseminate information for public consideration

The third and fourth sub-groups made similar points. After all had presented the points of their discussion, Sonia reviewed the key articles of the Covenant, and informed the women that Guatemala became a signatory to the Covenant in 1989.

Olga then gave a speech which focused on what the women needed to do to fight to ensure that the Covenant be respected in Guatemala. She then exhorted the women to focus their discussion on this issue. One of the women present suggested that GRUFEPROMEFAM was the institution with the experience on the matter and best able to do this work. Olga responded to this woman's comment by saying that this was why GRUFEPROMEFAM was doing such a workshop.

An evaluation was then undertaken. The woman representing ONAM asked if there were other theme workshops to be presented. Olga responded that GRUFEPROMEFAM did cover other topics in its work, including gender, sexuality, self-esteem, social context, and class. Sonia asked for criticisms from the women so that GRUFEPROMEFAM could improve its workshop presentation. The women suggested that the workshops be oriented toward gender and feminism, and address the problem of violence against women. The workshop was concluded with a general round of applause and thanks to all present. Myte video-taped the workshop.

vii) Fourth Women's Encounter (GRUFEPROMEFAM):

This encounter was more accurately a one day seminar put on by GRUFEPROMEFAM for its affiliates. As with all events of this type, however, GRUFEPROMEFAM issued invitations to the other women's organizations and groups forming the popular movement, asking them to send a representative. It was held on 3 October 1992 in the large salon of the central post office building, and was scheduled between 8 am and 4:30 pm. The theme of the seminar was the presence of "reality or "actual

situation" of women in Guatemala. Child care was provided for approximately 50 children.

The women participants received a file folder of material which included a pamphlet outlining the seminar, and materials such as notepaper and pen. The pamphlet included a introduction to the theme:

With the realization of the IV Women's Encounter, the women organized in GRUFEPROMEFAM express their desire to create a space in which it is possible to reflect and analyze the problematic of women, as well as share our experiences in order to improve ourselves and advance together in the search for our identity as women.

On this occasion we take on the "Present Situation of Women in Guatemala", because we believe it necessary that we learn about and deepen our understanding of the causes which have brought our pueblos to the situation of political, economic, and social crisis, and that together we search for alternatives that help us improve our life conditions; to take one step more to recover and maintain a world without discrimination, justice, and peace.

During three years we have realized significant achievements in the Encounters which have been held, and for this reason we believe that this one will not be an exception and with your support we are going to overcome our problems.

The pamphlet also included an outline of the objectives of the seminar:

General Objectives:

- To create a space for analysis and reflection on the actual situation that women in Guatemala live and confront.
- To advance in the search for an identity as Guatemalan women, taking into account our differences, for comparison and to compliment ourselves with these differences

Specific Objectives:

- Through this interchange of experiences, to valorize what is signified by "being a woman".
- To promote consciousness of the responsibility that we have to participate actively in a world of liberty, peace, and justice.
- To create a space in which we, as women, can express our concerns and preoccupations that affect our daily lives.

Finally, the pamphlet included the agenda for the seminar:

8:00-9:00	Registration of participants
9:00-9:05	Welcome
9:05-9:10	Presentation by the Speaker
9:10-10:00	Meeting: "The Situation of Women in Guatemala"
10:00-10:15	Coffee Break
10:15-10:45	Organization of Working Groups
10:45-12:00	Work in Groups
12:00-13:00	Discussion and General Conclusions
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-14:30	Talk on Feminine Creativity
14:30-15:00	Work in Groups: Who Am I?; How Do I See Myself?; How Do I See Other Women?
15:00-15:30	Coffee Break
15:30-16:00	Conclusions
16:00-16:30	Evaluation of Seminar

The seminar started up a 9:30 am with approximately 70 women present, ten of whom were indigenous. These women were mostly affiliates of unions with whom GRUFEPROMEFAM had ties, and included some women from other parts of the country⁸ where GRUFEPROMEFAM had loosely-formed regional sub-groups. At 10:15 am the scheduled speaker --a history professor named Norma from the National University of San Carlos-- began her presentation. The focus of her talk was the absence of women in formal Guatemalan history, and the consequent need for women to reclaim their role and participation in history.

At 11:55 am the women were divided into working groups of about 12-14 participants each and given the task of considering, in relation to the presentation, the questions: "what does this have to do with me, and how and why am I affected? (tiene que ver conmigo; cómo me afecta y porqué?) In the group in which I participated at

least two of the women present were illiterate. A social work student from the National University of San Carlos took it upon herself to work orally with these women.

Each woman in the group was given time to think about the questions, and then each presented her ideas to the group. A number of the women articulated the issues of gender, class, and ethnicity in relation to the question of history. My group as a whole produced the following points:

- yes, I am affected
- because I am part of history since the creation of the world, although there is no recognition of this
- because my rights --as an integral part of society-- are not respected
- because for the fact of being a woman I am discriminated against
- because my right to participate in the social, economic, political, and cultural development of the country is prohibited.

At 1:15 pm the working groups reported their work to the audience. A number of the women who presented their group's work became very animated and enthusiastic and had the effect of rallying the women. The common theme of the presentations was the various forms of discrimination women experienced and lived. Areas commonly mentioned in which women are discriminated against were health, violence, education, and wages.

Several of the groups had generated a number of ideas for political action to challenge their situation as women. These included supporting the campaign of Rigoberta Menchú for the Nobel Peace Prize and making demands on the government.

While these presentations took a long time, all of the women waited very patiently for their turn to speak.

After a lunch break in which all present were served a hot meal, the seminar was reconvened at 2:45 pm. A number of women who had come to the seminar from places outside the capital stood up in front of the audience to thank Olga and Berta (another member of the Working Team in GRUFEPROMEFAM). Most of the women, however, did not know the name of the organization undertaking the Encounter. Following the mini-speeches representatives from other women's organizations and groups within the popular movement spoke: they included a woman from GAM, a woman from CENTRACAP, and several union representatives.

At 3:20 pm the "feminine creativity" part of the seminar began. Norma gave a talk on the idea of women's creativity. Then the women listened to music, with the instruction to focus on their feelings as different types of music were played. At 3:50 pm the women divided again into working groups. In the groups the women considered reproductions of different paintings. The idea of this exercise was to raise questions in the women's minds about perception.

The groups then were instructed to consider the questions (stated in the pamphlet) about women's identity: who am I?; how do I see myself?; and, how do I see other women? Each group was given a mirror so that each participant could look at herself. This prompted much preening. After surveying themselves, each woman spoke to her group about her ideas of who she was. In my group two common points were made; evangelicals, and, individuals. One woman who had distanced herself from the group

by sitting outside the circle where the women were seated commented that she was a woman who liked to put on makeup and dress well.

The seminar concluded with an evaluation done by the women participants. They were given a sheet of paper with questions about the day's work, and asked to respond in private. After these sheets were collected time was given over to the group of women as a whole for comments. The women asked for a talk more current, and suggested the topic of the Guatemalan conjuncture. They also suggested that the questions assigned for group work be more focused, and that a facilitator be present. And finally, they commented that they approved of the fact that the evaluation was private because this avoided the pressure of saying only good things about the day.

viii) Day of Non-Violence Against Women:

On 25 November, 1992, at 4 pm the Network of Non-Violence Against Women sponsored a public forum to celebrate the Day of Non-Violence Against Women. This special day was declared in 1981 during the Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Encounter. Invitations for the day's events had been broadly extended to all sectors of the popular movement, the press corps, etc. The activities took place in the offices of the Association of Guatemalan Journalists, and was attended by approximately 100 people.

The Network of Non-Violence Against Women was established by JGM (Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres [Guatemalan Women's Group]). It was comprised of five women's organizations (GGM, Niña Madre, Tierra Viva, Mujer y Vida, and the

Collective of Feminist Studies. The Human Rights Ombudsman's Office also participated in the Network.

The theme of this commemorative event was "Assaulted Women: Diverse Foci of Attention" and was publicized with the slogan "the rights of women are human rights". The afternoon began with a welcome given by Julieta Soto of Niña Madre and a testimonial given by a representative of the Collective of Feminist Studies. Following this a presentation was made by the moderator, Yolanda Aguilar, from the Defense of Women office of the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office. Her talk emphasized that Guatemala recognizes the violation of the human rights of men, in the form of disappearance, assassination, and torture. She stated that what has not been recognized, however, is the violence against women in both the public and private spheres. She then noted that the goal of the Network of Non-Violence Against Women was to bring attention to the fact that violence against women is a violation of human rights.

A panel discussion was then held. The participants included: Karla Lemus of GGM/Marie Langer Centre; Rosalina Fabian, a delegate from the national police, and Carmen Lucia Pellecer, leader of Tierra Viva but representing the Network of Non-Violence Against Women. Cruz Munguia, a male representative of the Human Rights Ombudsman Office was also scheduled to participate but was not present.

Karla stressed that violence against women emerged out of a society that permitted and condoned this violence, and that in effect, it was a societal problem. She spoke against the societal reluctance --manifested in the attitude of professionals such as doctors, social workers, psychologists, and priests-- to recognize the problem of violence

against women. She argued that the stereotype of women as "crazy" must be challenged and that we must strive for women to be respected and valued as human beings. Professionals, she stressed, must learn to look beyond the immediate words and complaints of women who seek help, to recognize the signs of abuse. She concluded by stating that the process of combatting violence against women was a societal one, which involved the re-education of both men and women.

Rosalina Fabian, the delegate from the national police, framed her presentation in terms of how violence against women affects families. She suggested that when police arrive at the scene of domestic violence the wife frequently does an "about face", turning to protect the husband. She concluded from this that the police were not at fault, but rather responsibility lay with women. She talked at length about the work of the police force: the gist of her comments was to defend the police as a protective force.

Carmen Lucia, representing the Network of Non-Violence Against Women, focused on the scope of violence against women, and discussed the violation of the human rights of women. She then summarized the history of the Network, and gave a description of the work of each of the member organizations.

After the panel discussion Yolanda Aguilar synthesized the presentations. This was followed by a general question and answer period. Many of the comments from the audience challenged the police representative and suggested that women had well-warranted reasons to fear the police, who had been repeatedly accused of perpetrating human rights abuses. The event concluded with a closing farewell. Coffee and

refreshments were served and during this time much informal discussion and debate about the afternoon occurred.

On 28 November, 1992, at 3 pm Tierra Viva held its own celebration of the Day of Non-Violence Against Women. The stated purpose of the event was to celebrate the conclusion of the campaign against violence against women they had undertaken during the month of November. The motto of this campaign had been "united with dignity and in solidarity for life without violence, we are constructing a new society". In its invitation Tierra Viva expressed its wish to share materials it had developed with others interested in the problem of violence against women.

The celebration consisted of a programme of activities led by key women in the organization who were members of the collective. After a welcome was extended to all present, a history of the 25 of November was given. A presentation of a study on violence against women was made, followed by an explication of relevant legislation. A number of poems were then recited, followed by a lecture discussing testimonials about women's experiences of violence. The leader of Tierra Viva, Carmen Lucia, then talked about violence against women. This was followed by a pledging session designed to encourage those present to commit to various steps to address violence against women. The afternoon concluded with closing remarks, coffee and refreshments.

viii) Workshop Series for Women in El Gallito Neighbourhood:

These workshops were offered by GGM for women in the poor El Gallito barrio of Guatemala City. The workshops formed an integral part of the larger formation and

skills training programme of GGM, and were an ongoing feature of this programme. They were held in the organization's Marie Langer Centre (Centro Marie Langer) in the afternoon, scheduled between 3 and 5 pm. The workshops were led by members of the Working Group, by members of GGM, or by women affiliated with the group with some expertise on the theme of the day, and occasionally, as in Workshop V, an "expert". I was a participant-observer in five of the workshops, which spanned a period of five months.

a) Workshop I: My Mother and Myself:

This workshop was held on 26 October 1992, beginning at 3:15 pm. The Coordinator of the Centre, one of the three founders of GGM, psychologist Karla Lemus, led the workshop. The agenda was posted at the front of the room: presentation of theme, dynamizing exercise, collage of magazine pictures, social drama, plenary session, and evaluation.

Karla welcomed the 15 women present and then led an "ice breaker" exercise of musical chairs. This was followed by a role-playing dynamical exercise. The women were given numbers and Karla called out pairs of numbers to group women together. The pairs were then given a scene between a mother and child to enact. Following the role-playing, Karla asked why daughters do not talk with their mothers. One of the women responded that it was due to a lack of confidence. Karla and Irma, another woman from the Working Group, then played a scene depicting the typical poor communication between mothers and daughters.

The women were then divided into two groups and each group was given the task of creating a collage. The first group was assigned the theme of a mother's work and life, and the second group was assigned the theme of a daughter's work and life. After completing the collages one woman from each group presented the work to the group as a whole. Karla emphasized several times throughout the process the need for women to work on overcoming their timidity.

The collage exercise was followed by an individual exercise. Each woman was asked to think about her relationship with her mother and to answer two questions: what do I like about my mother?, what do I not like about my mother? The women were asked to share their thoughts with the group, but no pressure was applied to make women speak if they were not comfortable doing so. Answers to the first question included: comprehension, support (even in a situation of poverty), ability to communicate, love, and ability to share problems. Answers to the second question included: bitterness, shouting, hitting, she does not understand me, and made me work at a very young age.

The women were next asked to reflect on their relationships with their own families and to answer for themselves two questions: what things about me do my children and husband like?, what things about me do my children and husband not like? Answers to the first question included: clean clothes, lunch ready, play with and listen to children, keep a clean house, give affection to husband and children. Answers to the second question included: that I go dancing, that I shout at them, that I scold them, that I do not answer him directly, that I go out on the street, that I get mad, that I want to wear short skirts, and go out with women friends.

After the women presented their answers, Karla led a discussion. She emphasized that most of the things identified as "good" were the service functions that women performed, and that women are more than service providers. She also emphasized that as women we view these services as a way of giving affection because we do not have the money to pay for services. Karla then had the women compare their work in both their roles as mothers and daughters, to see that there was a repetition in the definition of "good" and "bad" things.

Karla next addressed the issue of women's anger, and made concrete suggestions about how women could safely express it, rather than hitting their children. She asked the women how they could break the patterns of behaviour they had learned from their own mothers. On this point she emphasized that the amount of time spent with children is not the most important thing but rather the quality of attention that women give.

The workshop wrapped up at 4:45 pm with announcements about upcoming events. The request of the women for a skills training course in handicrafts was also discussed. The women were informed that the teacher they had lined up was no longer available. They were asked to consider whether they had any skills they could share with other participants in the Centre. The women then talked about the T-shirts they had for sale. This was followed by a coffee-break and the announcement by Irma that they were starting a basic literacy course.

b) Workshop II: Rights of Women at Work:

This workshop was held on 2 December 1992 and was led by an associate of GGM named Yoba. It began at 3:15 pm with 13 women present. Irma began the session with a warm-up dynamizing exercise to help the women learn each other's names. She then gave a brief description of the purpose of the Marie Langer Centre, emphasizing that it existed to support women's mental health.

Yoba then posted a piece of newsprint with the heading "Work Rights" at the top. She asked women to come up and write down anything about this that occurred to them. Irma suggested that women could also draw pictures: in this way she acknowledged that illiteracy was an issue for some of the women present.

The women were quite willing to do this and together generated the following list of ideas: good treatment, regular salary, certain considerations, not being humiliated, respect, no sexual abuse (I contributed this point at the women's insistence), not being exploited, not being marginalized, and, that everyone was a human being with the right to exist and have rights.

Yoba then discussed their points and noted that all were in reference to a situation of formal employment. She stressed that the women also needed to think about their domestic work as work: that until the women themselves recognized the value of their "informal" work no one else would. She noted that we would have to pay someone else to do our domestic work but that we ourselves were not paid. She also told the women that in official ways, such as in census data, women's domestic work was not recognized as real work or as part of the economy.

The workshop leader next discussed what national laws and international conventions protected and legislated the conditions of work, and particularly of women's work. She posted this information:

International Standards Which Safeguard Women's Rights:

a) Universal Declaration of Human Rights

b) Declaration of Women's Rights (United Nations)

Article 10:

c) International Organization of Labour

Covenant 103:

Related to the protection of maternity, ratified by Guatemala 17/2/1989

Following the presentation of this information Yoba then turned to a discussion of "equal rights" or women's right to equality with men. As a specific example she explained the idea of equal pay for work of equal value. At this point she paused to ask if the women had understood what she said. Irma added that the women should ask if there were words being used that they did not understand. The workshop leader then explained to the women that it was illegal to fire a women for being pregnant. This discussion was framed in terms of the Guatemalan constitution and the labour code. She also explained that the women had the right not to do forced labour, and discussed this with them in terms of the work in the maquilas.

Next Yoba explained the pre and post maternity leave that women were entitled to, and stressed that it was the decision of the woman how to allot her allowed time. She

also considered the maximum legal working day and explained that any hours in excess of eight day-time hours or six night-time hours had to be paid as overtime.

The workshop leader then explained that women had to be conscious and aware of their rights, and prepared to denounce violations of these rights. She then presented the channels available for denunciation, explaining the Human Rights Ombudsman Office and the General Work Inspection Office (Inspección General del Trabajo).

She next spoke of the rights of minors as well as explaining that in a workplace with more than 30 women the Guatemalan law mandated a childcare centre. She commented, however, that women had also to fight against this law as it placed the responsibility for the education of children on the shoulders of women. She then talked about the discrimination against women in the social security (IGSS) system: if a man worked, his female partner also received benefits, but the reverse was not the case.

At 4:10 pm the women took a coffee break. During this break one woman asked about her husband's situation where the owner of the firm refused to pay his contribution to IGSS. Yoba responded that in a workplace with a minimum of three workers, the patron was legally obligated to pay social security. This generated a broader discussion of situations where the women had doubts or concerns about the legality of what was happening in a workplace. After the break, Yoba responded by talking about the importance of supporting unions and related this to the general process of strengthening democratic participation.

Yoba then posted a list of suggestions as to where women could go to challenge violations of rights. This list included the names and addresses of different government

offices, and included the Marie Langer Centre. She then turned to a broader discussion of the conjuncture in Guatemala and what rights and laws were not being respected. This included, she noted, the payment of legally mandated bonuses. She emphasized the need for workers to speak out and not remain silent. Then the women talked about the difficulties they faced in legal processes, especially in dealing with lawyers.

At 5:05 pm Irma decided to draw the workshop to a close. There was applause for Yoba, followed by an announcement of the next workshop on sexuality, and the cost and time of the class in handicrafts.

c) Workshop III: Rights of Women in the Couple

This workshop was held on 29 January 1993. It began at 3:30 pm with nine women present, four GGM members, as well as three other foreigners and myself. The topic was introduced by Irma, who then led a warm-up exercise. Grouped into pairs the women were asked to discuss the question "why are there couples?" Marta Julia, one of the women participants (also a law student who subsequently joined the Working Group of the Centre-- answered that there were couples so that we could share what we thought. She added that it was love with liberty. Each woman then presented her partner and summarized how she had answered the question.

As the women were making these mini-presentations, Lida wrote a big list of all their answers: no one wants to be alone, for love (with liberty), the law of God, chemistry, libido, procreation, points in common, to improve your economic situation, and company. Ligia, another of the GGM members present, asked the women to

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consider whether they could be part of a couple without living together. Rebeca, another one of the GGM members present, noted that living together had been the assumption underlying the answers given.

It was then explained that the focus of the workshop was to consider the dynamics of the couple. The women then listened to a cassette recording entitled "The Overturned Tortilla" which challenged the women to think about their domestic roles by describing them through role-reversal. Rebeca then asked the women to consider the division of labour in their own homes, and more specifically to think whether they did all the work or whether the men shared it. She emphasized that in making the decision to share your life with someone, you also committed to sharing the work involved. She further stressed that the women must talk with their partners and explain that the domestic work was both their work.

At this point the leaders of the workshop turned the discussion to the topic of decision-making. Various women described their personal experiences with their partners. The common theme in their responses was that men always had the power, and that women were the subjects of this power. The leaders of the workshop then talked to the women about how young girls in Guatemalan society are socialized to serve the men in their family. One of the women commented that women served their men as a gesture of love. In response to this comment, Karla talked about the gendered difference in how men and women express love. She noted that women showed love by doing domestic work, while men demonstrated love by bringing flowers, but that it never occurred to them to shop after work for the bread for dinner.

At this point another woman asked how they could change things in their relationships without facing the consequence of huge fights. Ligia suggested that as women they also had to begin challenging the belief men had that they were the ones who gave the orders. Irma further commented that as women one of their huge fears was that of being abandoned. Ligia then stressed that the women had to learn to think about themselves and not just about everyone else in their lives.

The discussion then turned to the issue of women having to ask the permission of their men to go out. One of the leaders of the workshop outlined the rights women had in a couple. These included: to have our own lives, and to develop ourselves. Returning to the woman's question about change, Ligia suggested that the fundamental place to start was to begin by talking with their partners.

She then discussed the hidden violence that women experienced in psychological abuse. After this she asked the women the question "if both the man and the woman worked outside the home, which one had the responsibility for the costs of maintaining the home?" In response to this question, the women agreed in general that the costs of home maintenance should be shared. At this point Irma interjected to ask one of the women who had not spoken in the workshop if she wanted the opportunity to say anything. The woman commented that she felt very sad. Another of the women present urged her to express to the group what she felt she could not say to her partner, and Irma supported this idea.

Ligia then returned to the topic of managing money. She urged the women not to see their financial contribution to the household as "help" but rather as outright

support. She also urged the women to have their own bank accounts. Addressing herself to the women present who did not work outside the home, she told them that they should expect their partners to give them some money for their own personal expenses.

At 5:30 pm the workshop concluded. Irma summarized the discussion, noting that a number of related themes had come up during the workshop which would be further addressed in subsequent workshops. She explained to the women the schedule of the upcoming workshops.

d) Workshop IV: Love:

This workshop was held on 15 February 1993. It began at 3.30 pm with 12 women present, five GGM members, and myself. The workshop began with an introduction of everyone present: particular attention was paid to the four new women in attendance. Following the introduction Karla gave a brief description of what the Marie Langer Centre did.

Karla then asked the women to consider the question "who do I love?" The answers of the women included; extended family, mother, husband, children, friends, everyone, brothers and sisters, and, God. Karla then asked the women the question "how do we show our love for these people?" The women answered; attending to the person --physical needs, telling them, respect, support, giving affection, through deeds - -giving attention, looking after them, kisses, listening, supporting, closeness, not rejecting, displays of affection, advice, with scolding and calls for attention, accepting, tolerance, forgiving.

After the women responded to her questions, Karla gave a synthesis and elaboration of their answers. She noted that few of the women had mentioned physical affection or love. She pushed them to think about the idea of making love, and explained that a sexual relation was a way of showing love. To this point the women responded that this was not always the case, but rather that it depended on the relationship. In response, Karla stated that only when both partners were willing partners in sex was a relationship constituted. Then she emphasized that to love was a two-way street: to give and to receive.

Rebeca then asked the women why they had not touched on the topic of God in responding to the questions. The women added that loving God was respecting him, following the commandments, and, serving him through service to others.

At this point one of the women spoke at length about her experience with her partner. She focused on how she could fight all day about things with him, but that when bedtime came things could be fine, and this would lead up to having sex. Rebeca then talked to the women about the difference between having sex and making love. Several of the women then spoke about their sexual experiences with their partners. Commenting, Karla emphasized that one central focus of the Centre was on communication, and how important it was for the women to learn to communicate verbally.

At this point the discussion turned to the issue of how we could love ourselves. Karla asked the women to consider "who comes first?" One woman responded that her children came first, but another woman in the group challenged her. Karla stressed how

important it was that the women feel good about themselves and asked the women how they could achieve this. In making this point, Karla gave a number of examples of how women consistently gave to others before they gave to themselves, and then emphasized the importance of the women learning to give to themselves. She stressed that giving to themselves did not have to involve money, but could also be about taking time for themselves. Karla then discussed with the women how they had to learn to overcome the guilt women have been taught to feel when they gave to themselves. She asked the women "in all of the world who, in reality, loves the most?" The women were quick and unanimous in their response that it was women.

She then asked the women to think about what they could do to change their situation: "what can be done to attain equal love?" The women responded: communication, forgive and forget, and please myself. Karla then pressed the women further on this issue, asking them, "how or what could we do to realize an equality of giving and receiving in our relationships, especially with our partners?" Rebeca also emphasized at this point that each of the women defined love differently, and, as a result, their needs in terms of love were very different. Karla told the group what she needed from a partner was that her silence be respected. Rebeca told the group that she needed someone willing to talk to her.

Karla then discussed with the women the commercialization of love in the mass media and the consequent stereotyping of women involved. She emphasized that commercialization objectified women and created them as objects for use by men.

In wrapping up the workshop at 5:30 pm Karla concluded that four things were fundamental in the question of love: respect, communication, acceptance, and dignity or healthy self-love. The women were then given some red paper and scissors and instructed to cut out a paper heart. Karla asked the women to write one word on the heart which summarized the idea of love for them. The words the women generated included: giving oneself over (not sexually), constancy, sentiment, silence, communication, and, reciprocity.

e) Workshop V: Sexuality in the Couple:

This workshop was held on 19 March 1993. It began at 3:30 pm with 15 women present. The workshop was led by a student of social work from the University of San Carlos, who had been assigned to the Marie Langer Centre to do a practicum. The workshop was initiated with an introduction of the three new women present.

The workshop leader had posted in front of the group a sign with two statements: "the best contact with humanity is through love," and, "in sex and love the couple shows its human character more than in any other way, through gestures that express communication, union, sexuality, and sharing." She introduced the theme of the workshop by discussing different perspectives about what sexuality meant. She considered, for example, the physical and social aspects of sexuality.

She next divided the women into three smaller groups and gave out paper and pens. The groups were asked to consider different questions and present their answers to the group as a whole. One group was asked to consider "sexuality and motivation?"

This group responded: communication in the couple. Another group was asked "what importance does sexuality have in the couple?". This group answered: procreation, fundamental base of love, the most intimate that there is, way of reconciling, and, mutual accord. A third group was asked "what do we understand by sexuality and sex?" This group generated the responses: it was to make love, sex, difference between men and women, and, climax.

After the women had presented their answers the workshop leader discussed the different questions they had considered. She made a number of points, including: sex should not be forced, desire was natural and not vulgar, that we had to satisfy this need, that we had the right to pleasure, and that it was something very important in our lives.

Irma interjected with the comment that the women's responses reflected a perspective that equated sexuality and sex. She also commented that men and women think very differently about sexuality and sex. She further noted that sexuality was much broader than just sex, and that women had the right not only to physical pleasure but also to emotional pleasure. She also stressed that the purpose of the workshop was to provide women space to begin reclaiming their right to their sexuality.

The workshop leader then noted that sexuality was also about giving, understood as giving love, comprehension, and taking care of each other. She stressed to the women that they ought to think of the word "sexual" to mean something broader than just sex. She also encouraged the women to speak out when they had not been sexually satisfied.

At this point one of the women asked what should happen when there was no longer affection and caring between the man and woman, and yet the man insisted on

having sex. In response, Irma commented that this was an important question for all women and warranted serious consideration. The women discussed this issue and concluded that such a relationship was effectively dead. The workshop leader then told the women that she thought it was very important that they let go of their self-recriminating attitude about this problem, overcome their timidity, and voice their opinion to their partner.

At this point the women discussed how the death of affection and caring often led to the further problem of infidelity. In general, the women were very vocal about this problem. One woman commented that infidelity was not surprising when the type of women the men encountered on the street were perfumed, made up, wearing lots of jewellery, and in general, very sexually appealing, whereas in the home they did not find their women like this.

At this point the workshop began to disintegrate as a number of conversations developed amongst the women, while the workshop leader had difficulty keeping the discussion focused and on track. The women were not listening to each other, and Irma intervened several times to remind the women to respect each other. The workshop leader then announced that a psychologist (a man with a Bachelor's degree) and expert in sexuality would arrive shortly to talk to the women. She then led the women through a short dynamizing exercise to try to refocus and renew the workshop.

At 4:50 pm the "expert" began a presentation about sexuality. His initial point was that in general sexuality is a taboo topic in Latin America, and consequently it was a very difficult issue for women in Guatemala to discuss. He then turned to talking about

how sexuality developed through childhood, and that the first sexual experience of the child was an oral one, at the mother's breast. He then discussed the guilt that women feel about giving their breast to their baby because they thought that they would lose their shape and that their husbands would not like this. He then talked about the next stage of child sexual development, and the feelings of pleasure that children experienced through urinating and defecating.

By this point the women were bored and restless. The "expert" talked over the one woman who tried to ask a question. At several points the GGM members present in the workshop asked the "expert" to leave behind theory and address the women's concrete questions. The man was unable to do this, however, and by 5:30 pm the workshop had seriously deteriorated. The women had completely tuned out at this point and began to leave.

II. General Observations About Formation and Skills Training:

A reading of the above vignettes may leave the reader bewildered by the broad array of activities and issues the women's organizations undertake. For this reason it is useful to return to the schema of activities outlined in the introduction to this chapter, which is a schema intended to highlight the political logic which allows these diverse activities to be called a project. It was suggested in the introduction to this chapter that the project of formation and skills training is constituted by three types of basic activities, developed to realize the short, medium, and long term goals of the women's organizations. These are: the promotion of a sense of self-esteem and self-worth in

women, the political conscientization of women, and the building of women's organizing skills. This comment perhaps conveys the idea that formation and skills training is a well-planned, consistent, and coherent project. Indeed participatory observation of these activities rather makes clear that the activities are often scattered, fragmented, and incomplete in terms of the themes, topics, and issues covered. The coherence suggested below reflects a long-term perspective, then, of the impact of formation and skills training.

With respect to the first category of activities it was suggested that the overarching problem facing the women's organizations is to challenge women's poor self-image while holding out the possibility of a different identity and way of being for women. A diverse array of activities try to communicate this message to the women participants. For example, activities like women's health clinics hold out the message that women's health is important and deserves tending. Other activities strive to make women aware of the work they do and thereby hold out the message that women make a valuable contribution to society. This message is further promoted by exploring with women the complexity of their work as mothers, and the needs they are expected to meet in the home. The partaking of food during coffee breaks --a routine part of all activities-- holds out the messages that women deserve to be fed, that women's needs deserve to be met, and that women deserve time to relax, to socialize, and to enjoy the company of other women. The drop-in centres and informal time promoted by many of the women's organizations also holds out the message that women's concerns are important and deserve time and attention. The discussions of motherhood, sexuality, sex, and love

both honour women's identity as mothers, while holding out the possibility for a broader, more encompassing self. This message is reinforced by the use of body exercises which put women in touch with their physical being and embodiment. The decorating, general beautification, and giving of token gifts which routinely accompanies the activities of the women's organizations holds out the message that women are beautiful and deserve beauty in their lives.

It is extremely important to note that the overarching theme common to all of these messages is that women are worthy and deserving: that is, they are entitled to respect, recognition, care, health, sexuality, and whatever else they might need to be whole human beings. These types of activities are part of a process of enabling women to believe they deserve to be self-confident, connected, critical, challenging women. It is, then, about the construction of a new identity for women in the popular classes in Guatemala which has at its core women's sense of entitlement.

From the vignettes it is also possible to identify some common themes which the political education types of activities take up. Many of these activities reflect a political economy analysis. Two such examples are the talk about the Guatemalan conjuncture given by the journalist from Inforpress, and the slide show about the relationship between military regimes and the general economic crisis in Latin America. In general, activities informed by the political economy theme aim to generate an awareness of the broad ideas of structures of power, relations of dominations and oppression, democracy, and the crisis in Guatemala (its structural dimensions, its regional dimensions, and the role of the military, etc.). More specific topics are the nature and function of unions, the repression

of unions, the Guatemalan labour code, the importance of political participation and the popular movement in social transformation, a critique of the traditional model of education and popular education as an alternative, human rights in Guatemala, and denouncing human rights violations.

Another theme informing the political education activities is gender relations in Guatemala. Examples of such activities include the seminar about women as "magicians" of the crisis given by COMFUITAG for SINTRAFIP women, the workshop on maternity legislation given by GRUFEPROMEFAM for the CAMINOS women, the talk given by the history professor on the absence of women in written history, the celebration of the Day of Non Violence, and the various discussions and seminars about women's roles in the family and home. More generally, such activities address the following topics: women's rights as human rights, violence against women (including emotional violence), the sexual division of labour, women as workers, women and trade unionism, women's identity and women's social roles, and women's sexuality.

A third theme taken up in the political education work is that of women's organizing. Importantly, conscientization work overlaps with the final category of activity identified in the introduction, which is the building of women's organizing skills. In effect, the educational activities and the hands-on skills development are integrally related and supplement each other. Some examples of the conscientization type of activity are the seminars for SINTRAFIP women on the nature and functioning of a union (seminars 2, 4) and the role of popular education in alternative organizations (seminar 5). In general, the topics which take up the theme of organizing include: the

importance of women's organizing, overcoming obstacles to women's organizing, fighting oppression collectively, speaking out, overcoming timidity, gaining self confidence, women in solidarity, and learning to plan women's organizing

Most, if not all, of the activities of the women's organizations promote the development of women's organizing skills. This reflects the fact that formation and skills training is a political project rooted in the Latin American alternative tradition of popular education. Thus, the methods employed in the activities aim to challenge hierarchical learning models, and empower the participants to be responsible for their own learning process by promoting critical reflection. This approach is reflected in many of the activities which stress group work and collective problem-solving. Some examples of this type of activity are the workshop given by COMFUITAG for CENTRACAP women which used the dress-designing exercise, the organizing strategy card game used by COMFUITAG in many of its seminars, and the promotion of popular theatre by GRUFEPROMEAFAM.

The above discussion of the three general types of activities of the women's organizations illuminates how these diverse activities actually have a logic and coherence which gives formation and skills training work its character as a political project. As the vignettes show, however, in practise many of the activities actually incorporate elements of all three types of activities. For example, many of the practical exercises used by the women's organizations involve women doing or making "pretty things" - hearts, flowers, butterflies, etc., are common motifs. As well, almost all the formal skills training activities involve making adornments. It is easy to trivialize this as women's "fluffy

stuff", but it is more appropriately understood as another way in which the women's organizations attempt to hold out the message that women deserve beauty in their lives. Thus, practical exercises --the content of which may be some political education issue-- also served to promote women's sense of self-worth. Conversely, beautification activities like the adornment of the GRUFEPROMEFAM house with the women's symbol provide a window of opportunity for an informal conscientization discussion of what feminism is about. The point to be made, then, is that while it is possible to identify three general types of activities, it should be borne in mind that most often the activities of the women's organizations are interconnected and address multiple, complimentary objectives.

It must also be recognized that this project of formation and skills training entails learning for all the women involved. It is, in effect, a political practise which is both incipient and dialectical. As the women leaders explicitly recognize, the methods and techniques used are far from perfect and, as the following chapter illustrates, they have a keen desire to make popular education more gender-sensitive and learning more relevant to women of the popular classes. They recognize that the women's organizations are often less than fully successful and that this problem has a number of causes.

For one, lack of success reflects how the socially constructed inhibitions to women's political participation are manifested at the individual level. The women who participate in the formation and skills training activities face the challenge of confronting their fear, timidity, passivity, poor self-esteem, and silence --the personal level effects

of the obstacles to women's agency discussed in the introduction to this chapter. At the same time, the women leaders who design and facilitate the activities of formation and skills training must confront the tendency to reproduce what they, too, live daily, namely, the societal norm of a hierarchical and elitist model of leadership as authority. This challenge facing the leaders of the women's organizations is further compounded by the reality that in rejecting the old they must also create the new. The alternative model of popular education also has limitations which are widely recognized by these women, namely, that it does not entail a methodology developed from a gender perspective and designed to meet women's specific educational needs. Consequently, the women's organizations must simultaneously work to redesign the popular education model: there is no alternative approach "ready to use". The continuing challenges posed by these obstacles is reflected in the fact that the women participants passively listen while other women --self-constructed as the experts-- lecture them.

The project of formation and skills training is then a process of challenging identities for all the women involved. It is not straightforward and direct but rather uneven, with steps backward as well as successes. In this way then, it is also a dialectical process of learning about learning. The following brief discussion of moments described in the vignettes will illustrate both the challenges and the hope, the frustrations and stumbling blocks along the way and the moments of growth for women as they work to build a different Guatemala.

Building the capacity in women to work collectively is a real challenge in formation and skills training. The dress designing activity in the seminar offered for

CENTRACAP members is one example of how the women participants overwhelmingly tend to approach the activities of the women's organizations in an individual manner. That they have little experience in group work and collective problem-solving is further highlighted by the women's anxiety about the task of reviewing the statutes of GRUFEPROMEFAM.

The women were often, however, able to break through their individuation during the many group exercises and tasks of the workshops. They often also challenged their isolation during the coffee breaks and lunches of the formation and skills training activities. Indeed these informal moments often afforded the women an opportunity to develop a sense of camaraderie with each other. The networking and relationship-building which thereby occurred is an extremely important aspect of their formation: in a light-hearted context women are developing useful political resources.

The fear that women have of speaking out is illustrated time and again in the vignettes by the virtual absence of their voices. The vignettes chronicle in detail the voices of the facilitators: the paucity of responses and commentary from the women participants is not a research flaw but rather reflect a deafening silence. Perhaps the most poignant moment of such silence emerged in the emotion of the woman participant in Workshop III (Rights of Women in the Couple) of the GGM Seminar Series; her sadness about her own awareness of her inability to confront her husband gripped the group.

The vignettes also, however, describe powerful moments when women did give voice to their opinions and concerns. The staging of the theatre production by women

involved in GRUFEPROMEFAM is one important example of this. Despite their fear and timidity these women acted and spoke on three occasions in front of live audiences and enjoyed themselves in the process. The courage of Teresa, in stating out loud that she did not understand what was being discussed in the presentation given to GRUFEPROMEFAM was another significant moment of women breaking their silence.

A good example of women's learning to speak out and work collectively was the moment when the women SINTRAFIP affiliates challenged the male union executive member about the discrimination they faced as women in their union. A final example of women learning to speak and challenge authority came when the El Gallito women brought up their experiences of being forced by their husbands to have sex and their husbands' infidelity. In this moment they effectively challenged the supposed knowledge of the workshop facilitator and the equation being presented between sexuality, sex, and love.

A number of the vignettes reveal the deeply ingrained acceptance --and indeed even expectation of-- hierarchical educational practises. The most educated and privileged group of women discussed in the vignettes are the women affiliates of SINTRAFIP.⁹ At the beginning of the seminar series, however, these women deliberately seated themselves in the traditional manner, in rows of desks facing a podium, thus clearly indicating an expectation of being taught. It was, however, astounding to see the ability of these women to perform their roles according to the traditional educational methods they had been schooled in, ie., memorization and recitation of information. During the screening of the slide show "Foundations of Trade

Unionism" in Seminar IV the women appeared to have little interest. Indeed I noted that one of the women was crocheting. Rosa and María Isabel were certainly frustrated by the apparent lack of attention and consequently, as the vignette details, asked the women to write down what they had learned from the slide show. Interestingly, the women were generally able to recapitulate the information quite accurately. The women in the CAMINOS workshop, however, did not demonstrate a proactive attitude toward the workshop. They were reluctant to do any work and waited passively until urged to think for themselves about the material and information presented.

At times the leaders of the women's organizations and others facilitating workshops reinforced rather than challenged this tendency to a hierarchical and passive learning process. They themselves have been educated in this manner and socialized in a environment which venerates status, authority, prestige, and privilege. Furthermore, the top-down structure of authority of most of the women's organizations also functions to reproduce the status quo.

Thus, in undertaking popular education work these women are "swimming upstream". Like the women participating in the activities they offer, they too are navigating unfamiliar and largely uncharted waters. Perhaps not surprisingly there is, at times, slippage on their part. Several of the vignettes describe moments when the workshop or activity facilitators lapsed into lecturing and instruction --often on topics and issues irrelevant to the women participants-- rather than facilitating a self-learning process.

The example of the "expert" lecturing the El Gallito women about Freudian views of sexuality is a case in point. This theory was entirely irrelevant to the lives of the women participants yet the "expert" was unable to provide accessible and pertinent information even when asked repeatedly to do so. The talk on women and history given by Norma, the history professor from USAC, to the women affiliates of GRUFEPROMEFAM during the Fourth Encounter is another example. While to an educated few the subject was interesting, it did not meet the needs of most of the women as they themselves pointed out during the evaluation of the day's activities. The presentation to GRUFEPROMEFAM about the current conjuncture also illustrates this problem. In this moment of informal formation the circle of leaders (and associates with similar privileged status) in GRUFEPROMEFAM were unable to move beyond their desire to voice their opinions in order to create a learning environment conducive to the growth and development of the women like Etelvina, Teresa, and Gladys.

While this consideration of aspects of the vignettes thus serves to highlight both the incipient and dialectical nature of formation and skills training, it is not intended to diminish the transformative potential entailed in such activities. This point will be considered more in Chapter Five. By way of conclusion here, it is important to comment on what "battery" or "energy" charges the ongoing work of formation and skills training. Given the obstacles and limited resources that women face it is indeed hard at times to understand what motivates them to keep going in the face of such challenges.

Interviews with women involved at all levels of formation and skills training made clear that this motivation is above a deeply felt commitment to self-improvement and

change. Despite the significant hindrances that women in the popular classes experience, they repeatedly express a desire to learn, grow, and improve themselves. And despite the often ridiculed and exhausting work that the leaders of the women's organizations take on, they express a deep conviction about the need for social change and a commitment to confront entrenched structures of gender, class, and ethnicity that continue to oppress women.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKING

Introduction:

The previous chapter was concerned with the work undertaken by the various women's organizations in Guatemala, and how this work related to the broader population of women of the popular classes. From the research presented it was argued that, in general, the activities of the women's organizations constitute a project of formation and skills training which is aimed at developing in women, over the longer term, the capacity to participate politically. In order to illustrate this point the vignettes described activities developed by the organizations for women with whom they are involved. There is, however, another dimension to the work of the women's organizations. As was suggested earlier, they are not only concerned to promote the ability of women to become political actors, but they are also interested in challenging the social conditions and obstacles which have historically served to limit women's political involvement in the public sphere. Needless to say, this second concern is of a very broad nature and the various women's organizations have approached the issue with different strategies.

A number of the organizations have worked at challenging the gender-biases and discrimination against women which is still rampant within the popular movement. The general reasoning behind this strategy again reflects the location of the women's organizations in the popular movement. Consequently, the women leaders are aware that

before there can be any hope of broader social change with respect to gender issues, the popular movement must first question and reform its own political posture towards women. As a result these women's organizations have sought a political voice within the fora of the popular movement in order to challenge the biases of the male leadership.

For example, many of the women's organizations have made an effort to challenge the discourse of the popular movement around the negotiations for a peace accord. The women have argued that the popular movement must insist that peace is more than the cessation of armed conflict, and that it must rather be understood in terms of social justice which recognizes the enormous social problem of violence against women. In effect, the women's organizations are attempting to broaden the understanding of violence which the popular movement has traditionally used, that of state violence occurring in the public sphere. In contrast, the women's organizations want the movement to recognize that violence in Guatemala is a larger phenomenon and includes violence against women in the private realm, and the violence of poverty brought on by economic crisis and neo-liberal economic policies.

This has been a major issue for COAMUGUA (Coordinadora de Agrupaciones de Mujeres de Guatemala [Coordination of Guatemalan Women's Groups]). It has mounted a campaign to raise awareness about the complexity of violence, and has pressed its concerns in the UASP (Unidad de Acción Sindical y Popular [Unity of Labour and Popular Action]), a major forum for the popular movement.

It is precisely this representation of COAMUGUA in the UASP which points, however, to some very difficult issues which the women's organizations have faced.

Most importantly it has raised the question: who can legitimately speak on behalf of the women's organizations? There is much tension and conflict between the different organizations around this matter. For example, COAMUGUA, by its very name, claims to represent women's organizations in Guatemala. This may have been a fair claim in 1989 when it formed to represent Guatemala in the recently established Permanent Assembly of Central American Women for Peace. At that time, approximately seven women's organizations participated in COAMUGUA, including CONAVIGUA; later CONAVIGUA withdrew, stating that the issues being taken up by COAMUGUA were not issues of priority. In fact, the general perception of this withdrawal was that CONAVIGUA was making the point that it did not identify nor agree with COAMUGUA's emergent feminist posture. Between 1992 and 1993 GRUFEPROMEFAM also withdrew from COAMUGUA, citing its need to focus on issues internal to its own organization. At the time of my field research membership had diminished to three organizations --Tierra Viva, COMFUITAG, and GGM-- although there was some hope that CENTRACAP would apply to join. Subsequent to their withdrawal from the network both GRUFEPROMEFAM and CONAVIGUA chose to represent themselves in the UASP. And indeed, it is important to note that CONAVIGUA, under the leadership of Rosalina Tuyuc, is widely perceived to be one of the two key leaders in the UASP (the other major player being Byron Morales, representing UNSITRAGUA).

After having attended several meetings of the network at the invitation of COMFUITAG, my presence in these meetings was challenged by Tierra Viva. This

challenge came at the end of a very long and difficult meeting in which the women representatives were trying to come to terms with the relative lack of success (especially in financial terms) of a cultural event they had mounted for their "peace" campaign. There was significant acrimony between the various organizations and it was evident that some participants felt that others had not carried their weight in organizing the event. The representatives of Tierra Viva were clearly uncomfortable with my witnessing this airing of "dirty laundry" and consequently decided that they did not want me to be present in future meetings. The other two organizations supported my participation, however, so it was agreed by the three groups that I should make a formal application to participate and that the organizations would decide amongst themselves in a private meeting. My application was rejected. I was informally told that while GGM and COMFUITAG both supported my participation, Tierra Viva did not, and its opinion was the deciding one.

What this piece of the COAMUGUA "story" makes clear is that there has been, and continues to be, significant disagreement and conflict between the women's organizations about representation of the women's sector, and the nature of the relationships between various women's organizations. Indeed, I would suggest that this is not an issue specific to the COAMUGUA effort to form a coalition to represent the women's organizations. During the length of my research there were several other efforts underway to build such linkages and networking between the organizations. As described in the previous chapter a number of organizations had formed the Network of Non-Violence Against Women. At the time, the major thrust of the network was the

public commemoration of 25 November. It is important to note here two points. The first is that this network is no longer operative. The second is that this was a network which Tierra Viva dominated, a fact which is illustrated by their own elaborate activity which they mounted to mark the day, subsequent to the public event. This activity was held in the offices of Tierra Viva and was by invitation only.

Another common space between the women's organizations at the time of my research was an informal working group set up to coordinate Guatemala's contribution to the Sixth Feminist Encounter to be held in El Salvador in the fall of 1993. Although I did not participate in this working group some "scuttlebug" circulated about how it was controlled by a few women's organizations, including Tierra Viva. As the event drew closer there was some discontent that the working group was controlling in an undemocratic manner the selection of Guatemalan delegates to the Encounter. Indeed, Mujer y Vida eventually chose to boycott the Encounter in order to protest this perceived control and manipulation.

Reflecting on these various efforts to establish networking, coordinating, or coalition relationships between the women's organizations it seems clear that, in general terms, such horizontal linkage has proved to be a difficult challenge. This reality poses a number of issues which warrant some discussion, for it is a concern of many observers to discern whether there exists a women's movement in Guatemala. However, prior to turning to consider this question it is helpful to present in detail the effort of a significant number of women's organizations to work cooperatively and collaboratively on a problem of common interest, namely, methodological problems arising from doing popular

education with women. This empirical case will thus serve to highlight the nature of the difficulties the women's organizations experience in striving to work together.

I. Popular Education Network Between Women:

This network was formed in an initial meeting between a number of women's organizations held on 10 August 1992. The antecedent to the formation of this network was the Popular Education Network Between Women which exists in 20 Latin American countries as an integral part of the Latin American Council of Adult Education.

In November 1991, the Mexico and Central America coordinator -- Leonor Aida Concha of Mexico-- travelled to Guatemala. During this visit she met with women's organizations which had previously had relationships with the regional Network and other individuals and groups suggested to her. The women's organizations present were GRUFEPROMEFAM, the National Office of Women (ONAM), and GGM (also delegated to represent Tierra Viva). In this meeting it was explained that the purpose of the visit was to foment the formation of a national Network, which had not been done previously due to economic constraints.

In early 1991 the regional Network initiated a Latin American campaign, "Working for a Humane Non-Sexist Education", at their meeting in Colombia. Olga Villalta of GGM was sent an airplane ticket for a delegate from Guatemala to attend. A consultation was held between GRUFEPROMEFAM, Tierra Viva, and COMFUITAG, and it was decided that Olga should attend as an observer.¹ Upon her return from Colombia a meeting was held with all potentially interested women's organizations. Rosa

Paredes of the regional Network attended and provided information about the Network.

As part of the work of this campaign for non-sexist education the structure, objectives, and plan of activity of the network were reiterated in a document.¹ For this reason, the Mexico, Central America, and Caribbean coordinator --based in Mexico-- had approached the women's organizations in Guatemala with the idea of building a national-level network in the country.

I was involved in the formation of the Guatemalan network from the initial meeting, and attended all the meetings held from the inception in August 1992 to a peak moment for the network, a popular education workshop for women leaders in March and April of 1993. In this network I participated as a researcher affiliated with the research institute Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamerica (CIRMA [Meso-America Region Research Centre]), located in Antigua, Guatemala. During this period of nine months a total of 13 meetings of the network were held. Participation fluctuated between a high of seven and a low of two women's organizations. In general, the interest in the network reflected a concern repeatedly stated by leaders in the women's organizations: namely, that in the activities which comprise formation and skills training they did not have an adequate methodology for working with women. The following presentation of the series of meetings of the network illuminates the issues and difficulties the women's organizations faced in trying to build spaces of coordination amongst themselves.

On 10 August 1992 the first meeting of the proposed Popular Education Network Between Women was held in the offices of CENTRACAP. The meeting began at 3 pm and present were representatives of the following women's organizations:

COMFUITAG, Tierra Viva, GRUFEPROMEFAM, GGM, Mujer y Vida, Superandonos Juntas, and CENTRACAP. A total of 19 women, including myself, and two children were present.

This first meeting was a "get to know each other" session. Representatives from Mujer y Vida, GRUFEPROMEFAM, and Tierra Viva all made presentations about their organizations. In general the presentations were very elaborate and formal. Tierra Viva used audio-visual aids and distributed documents from meetings held with a women's community-level group they have been forming. A chart highlighting the philosophy of the organization was included in the Mujer y Vida presentation, and Berta from GRUFEPROMEFAM read a prepared text. In general the presentations covered organizational philosophy, purpose, objectives, activities, target audience, methodology, and difficulties in work.

After the presentations a question and answer period was held. The atmosphere between the women was guarded and at times openly antagonistic. One woman asked a representative from all the organizations to describe their internal structure. She was not, however, satisfied with the responses given. Another woman asked why one organization outlined its difficulty finding adequate materials, while another organization did not present this as a problem. She further pushed the women on this point, asking "what can we do to help each other with this problem?" Another woman asked "how do we produce good leaders?" She added to this question the comment that the organizations did not only face the problem of getting new members. A woman from GGM talked about a book she had read and suggested that the group follow the example

of the Network in El Salvador and study the book as a group. The meeting concluded with a discussion of process. It was agreed that the next meeting would be a continuation of the organizational presentations.

The second meeting of the Popular Education Network was held on 8 September 1992 in the office of Tierra Viva. It began at 3 pm with 16 women in attendance. The meeting began with a discussion of process: who would be secretary, who would lead the meeting, and how much time should be allotted for each presentation. GGM began the presentations, and Olga, speaking for the organization, made two key points: the fundamental work of GGM is developing self-esteem, and, that GGM is not a mass organization. Another leader from GGM then described the Marie Langer Centre. IDESAC was the next organization to make a presentation, followed by FUNDESCO.⁴ The FUNDESCO presentation was a collaborative effort of five women from Superandonos Juntas, which is the women's organizations which has been formed by FUNDESCO in Mesquital. These were the only women present who were not part of the elite leadership of the women's organizations. The final presentation for the afternoon was made by CENTRACAP, the organization of domestic workers.

The presentations were followed by a question and answer period, which again had a confrontational overtone. Berta from GRUFEPROMEFAM asked the women from CENTRACAP about the focus of their work, about the strategies used in this work, and how they promoted their centre. Olga then took the floor, giving a clarification of how GGM worked, and emphasizing that decisions were made collectively. Berta from GRUFEPROMEFAM then asked GGM what successes they had had, and why they had

adopted the name "Guatemalan Women's Group". She was angry about the name because, in her view, it contained an implicit claim to represent all Guatemalan women and therefore preempted or appropriated a political space which ought to be available for all the women's organizations.

The question and answer period was again followed by a discussion of process. The women were concerned about how to run the meetings, who would take notes, who would lead, where the next meeting would be held, and the purpose of the next meeting. Olga from GGM was named provisional coordinator of the network. She briefly explained the origins of the regional network and stated that the work was still undetermined.

The suggestion was then made that a document be put together which would outline the nature of the work of the different women's organizations. It was also pointed out that the network needed to develop a work plan. From this point it was agreed that each organization should bring to the following meeting a written outline of their suggestions for the work of the network. The final point was made that an organizational structure for the Popular Education Network Between Women also needed to be established.

The third meeting of the Network was held on 5 October 1992 at the GRUFEPROMEFAM house. The meeting actually began at 3:15 pm with five women present, representing Tierra Viva, IDESAC, GGM, GRUFEPROMEFAM, and myself. The women first decided upon the place and time of the next meeting and then discussed the agenda for the meeting of the day. It was agreed that they would read the CEAL

document on the non-sexist popular education campaign, and then review and revise the document. The final item of the agenda was a discussion of the structure of the Network. The document was first read out loud, with each woman taking a turn reading. Afterward, one woman commented that the Network must respond to the needs they faced as women. Another woman stated that the formation and training of leadership was very important. There was general agreement that the purpose of the Network was to be the promotion of non-sexist and humane education. The representative from GRUFEPROMEFAM asked how they would focus on non-sexist education if they were working only with women. Other women expressed the concern that the plan of activity outlined in the CEAL document was too large for them to take on. There was some discussion of doing mini-workshops to analyze existing documents on non-sexist education and promote the self-development of the organizations involved in the Network.

Concern was expressed as to whether the work of the Network would be considered feminist. It was suggested that the Network also mount mini-workshops to study the different types of feminism, and that Tierra Viva would be the appropriate organization to lead such workshops and provide materials on feminism.

The decision was then made to elect four women to develop a work plan for discussion. Three women and I were elected. Finally, the group agreed to postpone the discussion of structure and decided that each organization should come to the following meeting with a proposal. A time was determined for the first meeting of the newly elected commission. This first meeting of the "planning" commission was held on 23

October 1992 at 3 pm in the offices of Tierra Viva. In addition to the four women of this commission (representing GGM, IDESAC, and Tierra Viva) Olga from GGM was also present. She began the meeting by asking "what was popular education ?" and suggested that this question would be a good topic for a mini-workshop, working day, or study circle. Noemi, the representative from IDESAC, commented that it would be better to discuss whether there was a popular education specific to women.

The women then agreed that it was important to determine the objectives of the Network and with this purpose in mind reread the objectives outlined in the CEAL document. The end result of this meeting was the elaboration of an activity plan for 1993 for the Network. This plan included a "justification" of the Network, general and specific objectives, a calendar of proposed internal and external activities for 1993, and a number of points for consideration by the Network (resources, organizational structure, budget, and evaluation).

The "justification" stated:

This plan is put forward with the objective of operationalizing the internal and external work that the Network of Popular Education Between Women has proposed. It represents then the first step of the member organizations which form the Network of CEAL. It is suggested that the time-frame of activities contemplated be a period of one year.

The general objective established by the commission was to strengthen the Popular Education Network Between Women at the national level so as to work in sensitizing the population in non-sexist education. This was followed by three specific objectives: to work to sensitize and integrate the member organizations in the Popular Education Network Between Women; to be a space of reflection, analysis, exchange, and solidarity

in which successes and difficulties in both theory and methodology in popular education between women could be shared; and, to call upon the NGOs, popular organizations, unions, community organizations, religious organizations, and in general all programmes of non-formal adult education to take on popular education from a gendered perspective.

The suggested work plan distinguished between internal and external activities. The internal activities were: to create study circles; to elaborate a diagnosis of pedagogical needs in the work with women of the organizations; to work on the themes established by the diagnosis; and to elaborate an account of the work of the organizations forming the Network. The external activities were: to establish relations with the church, union, and institutional networks, with the objective of explaining the purpose of the Network; to develop a pamphlet outlining the objectives, and plan of action of the Network; to develop a poster for the non-sexist education campaign, with the focus of identifying sexist and non-sexist school textbooks.

The next meeting of the Network was held on 5 November 1992 at 3 pm in the offices of GGM. There were seven women present, representing FUNDESCO, Tierra Viva, IDESAC, GGM, and Mujer y Vida. The facilitator for the meeting --Irma of GGM-- began by giving a summary of the previous full meeting and the meeting of the commission. The group then decided on an agenda for the meeting. The three main items were to discuss the activity plan, the structure of the Network, and the details of the next meeting.

The group then read the proposed activity plan point by point, with discussion along the way. The wording of the objectives was the subject of much disagreement.

The proposed time-frame for the activity plan was also contested. The group agreed, however, that they should first come to an agreement on the content of the document and then discuss whether the time-frame was appropriate.

One point of contention was the proposal to form study groups. A representative from Tierra Viva asked what themes would be considered in the study groups. The answer forthcoming was that the study groups would have the purpose of developing the "diagnosis" (which, as the term implies, is a specification of the problem to be addressed). The other representative from Tierra Viva then pointed out that the proposed work was very diverse and included addressing non-sexist education, sensitization to the problematic of gender, and doing a diagnosis. She also noted that in the three months since the formation of the Network they were just developing a working activity plan. She questioned what the Network was going to achieve by doing a diagnosis. She also asked whether the purpose of establishing external relations was to address the issue of non-sexist education or rather the problematic of gender. She finally commented that the group ought to think about the time each organization had to contribute to the work and whether the proposed activity plan was realistic.

After much discussion of these and other concerns the group decided that the diagnosis was more important than the study circles. At this point Clara Luz of Mujer y Vida asked about the idea of a poster and suggested that it should accompany an activity. The group then considered further the suggested idea of a pamphlet.

The discussion then turned back to the idea of a diagnosis. A number of practical concerns were raised, in particular who was going to do it and how. Then the issue of

external relations surfaced again. The group was very concerned to decide whether it constituted an activity, and finally agreed that it was a political activity. The group then talked about the pamphlet and agreed that it was both propaganda and an internal activity. One woman suggested that it should be the first activity but this idea was challenged.

After a coffee break one of the women from Tierra Viva suggested that since together the organizations comprising the Network knew much about non-sexist education it could be possible to plan an internal workshop in six months and develop a poster for this activity. The group then discussed the "justification" and objectives: both generated much disagreement. In particular there was much discussion as to whether the third specific objective (establishing external relations) constituted an objective or was rather a political activity. Noemi from IDESAC suggested that they should think about short, medium, and long term objectives, and that this third objective should be understood as a long-term objective. Nineth from Tierra Viva then commented that realistically "short-term" meant not one month but rather a period of one year. Irma from GGM then suggested that the external work could be done in conjunction with a poster. Nineth then noted that they could write an article for Voces del Tiempo (a magazine of the church community) and in this way reach the religious sector.

In closing the meeting Nineth stated that the group needed another meeting to reformulate the working activity plan. Aida from Tierra Viva suggested that it should not be the same small group doing this work. It was agreed that the next meeting would be dedicated to finalizing the activity plan.

The next meeting was held in the morning of 10 November 1992 in the offices of *Mujer y Vida*. I and three women were present, representing FUNDESCO, *Mujer y Vida*, and GGM. The meeting again was given over to a broad and free-flowing discussion of various aspects of the proposed activity plan. Many questions were raised about how the Network was, in reality, going to accomplish the proposed work. The discussion began with a further consideration of the "justification", and it was agreed that Olga of GGM would prepare a summary of the historical antecedents to the formation of the Network in Guatemala.

The meeting then moved on to a consideration of the vision of the Network for the future. Questions were asked about how to realize the proposed work around methodology and the difference between short and long-term objectives and the issue of group process. The wording of the objectives was then revisited, as well as the proposed diagnosis. The group eventually agreed that the diagnosis had to be sub-divided into steps and that the first concrete step would be the elaboration of a guide outlining the purposed of a diagnosis. This was followed by a discussion of the proposed external activities. It was agreed that these activities should be: 1)production of a pamphlet; 2)presentation of the Network to popular organizations through a forum; 3)presentation of a workshop on non-sexist education; and, 4)preparation of a poster to accompany the non-sexist education campaign. With respect to the third objective, the discussion focused on how to reach the women doing popular education work within the popular organizations. The group then decided on a calendar for the activities planned.

The women next turned their attention to the topic of resources for the Network. This was dealt with quickly: it was decided that the human resources would be the women who form the Network, that physical resources would be the offices of the organizations which formed the Network, that economic resources would be the material of each of the organizations of the Network, that financial resources would be raised through donations, and that material resources would be produced by the Network.

The more difficult issue of the organizational or internal structure of the Network was then dealt with. The group decided to form working commissions, the staffing of which would rotate every two months. The women established commissions in four areas: systematization, public relations, methodology, and finances. Irma of GGM was not satisfied that this commission structure adequately addressed the question of how the Network was to work. She suggested that the Network meet monthly, rotating meetings between the offices of the member organizations.

The women then developed a budget for the Network for which they would have to raise funds which totalled Quetzales 11,330 (approximately US\$ 2,500). Finally, it was agreed that comprehensive evaluations would be done in June and November of 1993, and that each specific programmed activity would be evaluated.

The next meeting of the Network was held on 27 November 1992. The previously agreed upon purpose of the meeting was to present the finalized activity plan to the Network as a whole. In attendance, however, were me and four women: Irma and Olga from GGM, Vicky from IDESAC, and Clara Luz from Mujer y Vida. Consequently, after 45 minutes of informal chatting as the women arrived, the meeting

began with a discussions of who was and was not present, and the implications of the low participation for the planned agenda. The meeting proved to be very informal and free-flowing. Irma led off the meeting by giving a summary overview of the previous meetings. Olga then read the one-page handout she had brought, which outlined in brief the history of the impetus to a Network in Guatemala.

After this presentation there were a number of general comments and questions. It was suggested that a working day be held to exchange the information that each organization had. Further to this point the comment was made that the Network should establish an information and resource bank. Irma of GGM and Clara Luz of Mujer y Vida then both pointed out that a meeting was still needed to determine the structure of the Network. Olga of GGM then talked about the problem of the transmission of information among women.

The discussion then turned to the merits and drawbacks of teaching women sewing as a skills training activity. Clara Luz suggested that what this really accomplished was to prepare women to work in the maquilas. Olga talked about how training women in clothing design and sewing could have an alternative purpose: that of enabling them to establish collectives to produce clothing for the local Guatemalan market. This led her to comment on the difficulties in, and importance of, forming leadership capacity in women. The meeting concluded without a point-by-point consideration of the activity plan. It was agreed, however, that Irma, Clara Luz, and Vicky would get together to finalize the plan, which including revising the "justification" to include Olga's presentation.

The next full meeting of the Network was held on 27 January, 1993 in the offices of GGM. I and seven other women were present, representing CENTRACAP, Mujer y Vida, GGM, Tierra Viva, and IDESAC. The meeting actually began at 3:15 pm with a discussion of the agenda proposed by Irma of GGM. Concerns were raised about time, the budget proposed in the finalized activity plan, and participation (it was noted that CENTRACAP had not been present for many months). Despite the proposed agenda, the meeting actually consisted of another discussion of various aspects of the finalized activity plan.

One of the representatives of Tierra Viva expressed concern about the proposed budget. It was explained that the estimated costs reflected the experience of the different organizations in paying for similar things in the previous year. The same woman from Tierra Viva then questioned the line item for renting space for the Network. She wondered whether this meant that the Network was taking on inappropriate institutional and organizational aspirations. The answer was given that the Network was only trying to give a value to its costs and recognize the support that the member organizations were providing to the Network through the provision of office space, etc. The representative from IDESAC pointed out that if the Network was going to seek funding a concrete project proposal would have to be elaborated.

Another representative from Tierra Viva then raised a concern about the proposed activities. She noted that her impression of the fundamental purpose of the Network was to address the issue of methodology for women's organizations. She said she saw this reflected in the internal activities, but identified a contradiction between the internal and

external activities in that the focus of the external activities was a non-sexist education campaign. The representative from IDESAC suggested that these be seen not as contradictory activities but as parallel processes. Clara Luz then noted that in the meeting of 5 November 1992 three areas of work had been identified.

The same woman from Tierra Viva also raised the issue of how the internal and external activities would fit together in terms of a timeframe. She asked how it would be possible to do a workshop and poster if the diagnosis had not been completed. She commented that she was not trying to say that these activities were not important, but rather that the group needed to reflect on what was realistically possible for the Network to achieve. She further stated that it was not worthwhile to do a poster without developing a campaign around the poster.

A great deal of discussion was also devoted to the diagnosis and proposed guide. Imelda from CENTRACAP then suggested that every organization needed time to review the finalized activity plan, and that the next meeting of the Network be devoted to a discussion of the comments of each organization about the document. The representative from IDESAC suggested that all the organizations should be clear about the nature of their commitment to the Network.

The next meeting was held on 3 February 1992. Present were six women, representing GGM, Mujer y Vida, CENTRACAP, and Tierra Viva.⁵ The group discussed the diagnostic guide, the idea of a mini-workshop, and the need to further consider the proposed budget and calendar of activities. The major step of this meeting was the identification of a workshop facilitator from the educational programme of the

Archbishop's Human Rights Office. This suggestion was made by one of the representatives of Tierra Viva.

The next meeting was held on 18 February 1993 in the offices of CENTRACAP I and four other women were present, representing Mujer y Vida, GGM, IDESAC, and CENTRACAP. The meeting began with a notation of which women's organizations were not present. Irma of GGM then began developing an agenda for the meeting. Clara Luz of Mujer y Vida emphasized that it was important for the group to review the discussion of the previous meeting. Consequently, the agenda had three items: 1)reading of the minutes from previous meeting; 2)general information from previous meetings, and; 3)planning of various activities.

The events of the previous meeting were first reviewed and discussed. Irma of GGM explained how the idea for a mini-workshop had emerged, and elaborated the concerns that had been expressed about the budget. Then Clara Luz of Mujer y Vida advised the group that she was going to speak clearly about her own issues from the previous meeting. In effect she took issue with the questions raised by Tierra Viva about whether the Network was to become another organization and whether the idea of the Network had been to generate funding.

The discussion then turned to the proposed mini-workshop. A date set for 29 March 1993. The issue about the target audience of the activity was then talked about. The idea of calling all the initial participating organizations to determine whether they were still interested in the Network was considered. The discussion then returned to details of the mini-workshop.

After these details had been determined I asked for clarification about toward whom the workshop was to be directed. Clara Luz responded that she understood it was for only those organizations participating in the Network. The group then decided that all of the other women's organizations should be invited and Irma of GGM undertook responsibility for advising them of the mini-workshop.

After a coffee break Clara Luz noted that an outstanding detail was to decide who would be responsible for taking minutes at the event. Vicky of IDESAC --with the help of Irma-- volunteered to do this. It was then agreed that the establishment of commissions for the Network and the finalization of plans for the mini-workshop would be done at the following meeting.

As an aside Vicky brought to the attention of the group a recently published book from Nicaragua written from a gender perspective on NGO workshops. Clara Luz then informed the group that she had received a call from the new representative from Tierra Viva saying that she could not attend due to sickness. The group was obviously relieved by this indication that Tierra Viva intended to continue its participation in the Network.

At this point Clara Luz also stated that she wanted to return to the question of finances and budget so that the problem did not get lost and thereby generate more confusion. Vicky from IDESAC expressed the opinion that the funds should be generated and suggested a local NGO to approach. She also suggested that this question should be the responsibility of the finance commission, and emphasized that the next meeting should focus on the formation of commissions.

Irma of GGM then asked Vicky what ideas she had for the guide for the diagnosis. She responded that IDESAC had three related documents that she could bring. Irma then suggested that each organization should bring to the next meeting a proposal about what the guide should be. She also expressed her doubt that the mini-workshop would lead to the generation of a guide, but would instead perform the function of generating greater general knowledge about popular education. I asked if the group were in agreement about the question Clara Luz had posed. The group displayed general consensus that the Network should follow Vicky's suggested course of action, i.e., leaving the problem to the finance commission.

The agenda for the next meeting was then decided. The three items were: 1)commissions; 2)mini-workshop; and, 3)discussion and proposals for the guide. Irma then asked Clara Luz if she was going to take responsibility for arranging the mini-workshop. She also asked that everyone contribute materials and information on the general question of popular education. Vicky offered to review all the materials of IDESAC and pull together what would be useful for the Network. The group then discussed the level of equipment of each organization (photocopiers, FAX machines, etc.) and the very high cost of photocopying. The representative from CENTRACAP agreed to do copying for the mini-workshop if Vicky would put together a summary of material consisting of a few pages.

The mini-workshop was held on 29 March 1993 in the offices of Mujer y Vida. Scheduled to begin at 9 am, it got underway at 9:30 am. I and 17 other women were present, representing the following women's organizations: IDESAC, GGM, Mujer y

Vida, Tierra Viva, FUNDESCO, and CENTRACAP. The mini-workshop was conducted by Carlos, an activist from the educational programme of the Archbishop's Human Rights Office.⁶ He began the workshop with a task for the participants. He asked them to think about what people in their lives they associated with different body parts. He then asked the group to consider the purpose of the exercise and how it related to popular education. In this discussion Carlos emphasized two points. First, that our lives affect our work as popular educators by influencing how we relate to those we are trying to educate. And second, that traditional educators do not want to accept this point.

After a coffee break Carlos made a presentation about the different models of education. The first model he outlined was the model based in knowledge. He stressed that it was the oldest, most conservative model and the most predominant model in Guatemala. The method of this model was the transmission of knowledge through instruction, and that memorization was fundamental to the model. The ability to memorize could often be confused with intelligence. He stressed that the relation contained in the model was a vertical relation between subject and object.

The second model that Carlos introduced was the model centred in effects. In this North American model education was understood as changing behaviour through stimulation which produced a response. In practise, this model is behaviour modification and emerged out of the military's search for more effective teaching methods. He stressed that the model held the potential to be manipulative and dangerous, and discussed the power dynamics in the process of who decided what was good or bad behaviour. He also noted that in this model people were not protagonists in the changing

of their behaviour, with the result that people educated in this model had learned to be obedient and were dominated and uncritical. The relationship between subject and object contained in this model was one of manipulation.

The third model which Carlos presented --the model of popular education-- was centred in process. The purpose of this model was to transform reality, both at the individual and societal levels. The relationship contained in this model was horizontal and critical, that between subject and subject. At this point an indigenous woman representative from Tierra Viva asked Carlos how teachers can, in practise, use this model. She noted that in her experience it was extremely challenging to implement.

After a brief dynamizing exercise, Carlos continued his presentation about education. He stated that it was important to consider the relationship of education to the superstructure --or the location of education in society. Education in its global and institutional sense, as well as its political nature, were also important to comprehend. He stressed that education does not simply have a political dimension, but must rather be understood in its nature as political.

He then asked the question "on what basis do we make the judgement that a person is uneducated?" He noted that this depended on the model of education being employed. He then asked how the transformative power of a person like Rigoberta Menchú could be understood using the first, traditional, model. He then clarified that the different models of education were political for different reasons. Education, in general, he noted was political because it could serve to either maintain or change

society. Popular education was political because it clearly had as its purpose the transformation of society.

At this point, Clara Luz from Mujer y Vida asked how the women's organizations could educate women in self-esteem. Irma of GGM stressed that this was a fundamental preoccupation of all the organizations present.

Carlos distributed a hand-out which identified the traits or characteristics of popular education and the orientation or focus of popular education. He noted that the term "popular" was subject to great manipulation, citing the example of the use of the term by CACIF, the powerful agricultural, finance, and industrial coalition. He then asked what made popular education "popular"? He stressed that it was not popular because it was directed toward the people or pueblo. The popular classes, he stressed, can receive education that is not popular. It was rather popular in the sense that it was political.

In explaining this point he utilized the idea of "ignorance and knowledge: absolute or relative?" He noted that foreigners had a self-concept of absolute knowledge, while indigenous people had a self-concept of absolute ignorance. Anti-popular education --the first and second models-- had embedded in them the ideas of absolute ignorance and absolute knowledge. In contrast, popular education worked from the idea of relative ignorance or knowledge. Carlos then turned to a discussion of the previously distributed handout. He noted that popular education consisted of three elements: instruction --the transmission of knowledge; skills training --the transmission of technical abilities; and formation --the development of attitudes, habits, and values, or conscientization. He

further stressed that skills training could be a means of formation. The group then considered whether popular education had a gendered perspective. Through much discussion the women made clear they were very sceptical about this. Before the group had lunch, Carlos concluded the morning session by stressing that popular education is a political project realized pedagogically.

After beginning the afternoon session with a dynamizing exercise, Carlos began a presentation about the relationship of popular education to three related issues: power; organization; and culture. Education, he emphasized is against power, for power, and from power. With respect to the issue of organization he noted that a debate existed around the relationship between popular education and popular organizations. The crux of this debate was whether popular education should be for popular organizing --that is, lead to the generation of organizations-- or whether it should be from popular organizations. With respect to culture, he clarified that he was referring to the culture of daily life. After a discussion of the difference between dominant culture and popular culture, he stated that popular education had to work at the level of popular culture. He concluded that these were three fundamental components of popular education, and that it could not function without one of them.

At this point Clara Luz of Mujer y Vida stated that they had yet to discuss methodology which was a preoccupation of CEAL. This prompted a discussion of the events of day. The group agreed that a follow-up workshop would be held to deal with the question of methodology.

This second mini-workshop was held two and a half weeks later, on 14 April 1993 in the offices of Mujer y Vida. Carlos began the workshop with a discussion of five different methodological practises in education generally which reflect different attitudes or postures of the teacher toward the students.

The first he labelled the "ingenue" teacher. This teacher, out of naivete, could not view critically what people have said because of her view or belief in the essential goodness or rightness of the pueblo. The second he referred to as the "instrumentalizer". This teacher used the people for her own personal purposes, and in so doing converted them into instruments or objects. This technique, Carlos stressed, contributed least to the development of the people. The third type he labelled the scientific teacher. This educator had the idea that the people were very ignorant and believed that theoretical knowledge was more valuable than experience. The fourth type, the elitist, believed that a few people in a group made all the decisions. Consequently, this teacher directed all her attention to further empowering these select few individuals. At this point Clara Luz of Mujer y Vida interjected with the comment that NGOs in Guatemala have contributed to the perpetuation of this type of power structure through the perpetuation of the Board of Directors (Junta Directiva) as the organizational structural norm.

Carlos finally presented the fifth type of teacher, the "assistor". This educator over-managed everything and thereby deprived the people of their ability to develop through their own trial and error process of decision-making. He noted that this type of over-assistance took many forms, and included assistance in material things, attitudes, and knowledge.

Carlos then asked the women how they thought of themselves: "as activists? and/or as educators?" Irma of GGM responded for the group by stating that they conceived of themselves as transformers. Carlos then suggested that the five discussed attitudes and techniques of education were problematic. He emphasized that to transcend these types it was important to have a general vision of the path or process of education, its methods, techniques, and exercises. He drew a diagram to illustrate the dialectical relationship between practise and theory or the ongoing and interconnected chain between the two elements.

He then stressed that participation was incredibly important to popular education but that the idea had to be fully understood.

There are three basic types of participation, he noted, which represented increasing levels of participation. The first was active participation which, in itself, was not adequate. The second type and level was consultative participation, and the third and most profound, decisive participation. Carlos noted that this level of decisive participation included the other two levels.

The women were then divided into four working groups and the remainder of the workshop was devoted to small group discussion of four topics: animation and communication; analysis and general studies; development of processes; and personal and group development. The women received a number of handouts designed to facilitate this group work and provide more information about the political nature of popular education. At this point in the afternoon the workshop slowly wound down as the

women participants slipped away. Through the remainder of my research in Guatemala to August, 1993, there was no further meeting of the Network held.

Conclusion:

The above description of the effort of a number of women's organizations to create a functioning network illuminates the great difficulties they faced. Indeed, despite the real practical relevance of the issue of doing popular education for women the organizations were ultimately unable to overcome these difficulties and the Network eventually disintegrated. In part, several concrete issues contributed to its demise. For one, as the descriptions of the meetings highlight, there was often a lack of consistency in the attendance of the organizations, and frequently different women were sent by an organization to represent its interests. This led to a real problem with lack of continuity between the meetings and generated a high level of frustration in the women who did participate regularly. In fact, the inconsistency in participation levels and representation reflected the very real time pressures which all the women's organizations faced, and which all the women at the leadership level experienced acutely. Meetings within the popular movement are frequently tediously long and, thus, attendance always comes at the cost of less time for the women actually to do their work.

In addition to this problem of inconsistency the Network was also plagued by a very strong current of distrust amongst the women, and especially between key organizations like Tierra Viva, GRUFEPROMEFAM, and GGM. This lack of trust, and indeed some outright hostility, was evident in the preliminary organizational meetings.

A number of the women were clearly on the offensive and challenged others about their claims, intentions, interests, etc. It was also clear that there was a genuine lack of familiarity amongst the women's organizations. For many these meetings were the first occasion they had had to hear about the work of other organizations. Indeed, at a certain point there was some discussion of preparing a booklet outlining the constellation of women's organizations and their work: I felt that it was ironic that I would be the most equipped participant to undertake such a task, having been involved with all of the different organizations involved in the incipient Network. This lack of trust was also exacerbated at times by rivalry amongst the women's organizations and individual women, as well as personal conflict stemming from different individual styles.

The description of the Network process also reveals an inordinate concern with formal procedure. The worry that all the women's organizations shared to proceed according to the "book" led to virtual paralysis. As the description makes very evident, meeting after meeting was given over to planning and discussion about how to do things. In fact, this attention to procedure is not unique to the women's organizations but rather reflects the general emphasis within the popular movement on the need to follow protocol, rotating the place of meetings, the occupation of positions, chair, etc. The point to be made, however, is that the women's organizations themselves actively wanted a formal structure, a clear elaboration of a statement of purpose, committee representation, etc. Indeed, achieving this goal seemed to overwhelm the purported purpose of the Network and prevented anything concrete being achieved. The consequence was, then, that throughout the eight months of life of the Network the only

real activity accomplished was the holding of the mini-workshop. And significantly, this was not an activity undertaken or performed by the Network itself. It was rather only when someone from the outside was brought in to do the work that the Network could lay claim to a concrete achievement. In fact, the effort of the women's organizations in this event was limited to arranging lunch and deciding in whose office the workshop was to be held.

An additional comment needs to be made with respect to the actual workshop. Despite the fact that the women involved in the Network were very clear about what they wanted to learn, the workshop in fact fell far short of meeting this need. This is not to imply that it was uninteresting, but rather that it tended to be a theoretical presentation of a lot of information about popular education which most of the women participants already knew through their work experience. What the women had actually wanted was practical solutions and strategies to the problems they faced doing popular education work with women. To some extent this lack of correspondence between their need and what they were offered indicates a lack of communication between the Network and the facilitator. At the same time however, it also reflects the difficulty that even trained experts have in challenging the old models and ways of doing things. Indeed, Carlos is eminently qualified to do effective popular education: he is Guatemala's leading expert on popular education (his Bachelor's thesis on the topic having been published), and well known and highly esteemed from his actual educational work for the Catholic Archdiocese. The fact, then, that he tended to a lecturing style and the presentation of largely irrelevant material to the women thus illuminates again that those with a strong

ideological commitment to alternative politics and processes experience great difficulty in challenging the weight of their own socialization in an hierarchical, authoritarian, and elitist cultural tradition.

Returning to the issue of the collapse of the Network I have above considered the concrete factors which contributed to this outcome. It is, however, the case that the greater underlying cause of this demise was the invisible yet highly corrosive effect of the political and ideological tensions which permeate and divide the popular movement, women's organizations included. I have stressed in earlier chapters that the leadership of the women's organizations emerged from within the popular movement and that one consequence of this strong tie to the movement is the political posture of double militancy which the women's organizations have developed. This means, in other words, that the political identification and orientation of the women's organizations is with the sector of the movement in which they are located. Although to the casual observer this is difficult to perceive, it is nonetheless the case that the popular movement is very divided along ideological lines. And indeed, this is a problem which has plagued popular actors for a very long time, making a unified political position and real cohesive popular action very difficult.

With respect to the Network it is important to stress that the atmosphere was very charged from its beginning, a situation I attribute to the roles played by Leonor Concha and Olga Villalta. On the one hand, it is interesting to note that the background role played by these women in promoting the Network substantiates the point made in Chapter Two about the importance of the influence of regional forces of feminism on the

formation of women's organizations in Guatemala. As noted above, Leonor was from Mexico, a country which has had significant links with the popular movement generally. Olga Villalta is Salvadoran and was heavily involved in the popular movement in her country of origin before coming to Guatemala. The relative obscurity of her background made it very difficult for some of the women to trust the environment and impetus for the Network. As suggested, the reality of the current Guatemalan conjuncture is that the women's organizations are invisibly divided by ideological differences, and their general wariness and distrust stemming from such differences was only further exacerbated by the presence of unknown foreign elements.

Given all of these factors then, it was highly unlikely if not virtually impossible that the Network initiative would have any long term viability or success. And, as stressed above, this was the case despite the clear recognition amongst the women that they needed to cooperate, share resources, and work together to solve the common methodological problems they faced in doing popular education. In sum, the issues and differences dividing the women's organizations proved greater than their need to work together. This conclusion has significant implications for an understanding of the women's organizations in Guatemala. What it indicates is that the spirit of the political identification and consequent sense of allegiance which the women's organizations have is determined by their location in the popular movement. In the present moment, then, political orientation is not directed toward feminist solidarity, and the women's organizations demonstrate virtually no interest in establishing organizational and political autonomy from the popular movement. Most of the women leaders interviewed stated

that there did not exist a women's movement in Guatemala. As this chapter has demonstrated, this does not mean that the politics of the women's organizations is too underdeveloped or incipient to support a movement, but rather concrete political choices and strategies the organizations have made given their ideological position, experience, and analysis of the present Guatemalan conjuncture. The broader significance of this point will become clearer in Chapter Five when the issue of a women's movement is revisited in light of the feminist literature on women and politics in Latin America.

CHAPTER FIVE
WOMEN CONTESTING DEMOCRATIZATION:
HUMAN RIGHTS AND CITIZENSHIP

Introduction:

This chapter offers a critical reflection on women's political organizations in the context of democratization in Guatemala. Owing to the complexity of the interpretation developed, the chapter is organized into two major sections. The first section of the chapter discusses the recent feminist literature which pertains to women's involvement in politics in the democratizing regimes in Latin America. The purpose of this section is to assess the extent to which this literature offers useful insights for understanding the Guatemalan case. After a consideration of three major theoretical trends in the literature it is argued that the few alternative approaches which focus on the relation between women's growing involvement in politics and the issue of citizenship are most helpful. In particular, the work of Veronica Schild is identified as offering several important analytic insights.

The second section of the chapter discusses the empirical research findings presented in Chapters Two, Three, and Four, using Schild's insights. The argument is made that the work of the women's organizations in Guatemala constitutes a collective political practise of building the citizenship capacity of women of the popular classes in Guatemala. The language of rights which has been mobilized in Guatemala to promote citizenship is then considered. The discussion focuses particularly on why it is that in Guatemala the discourse of human rights has been employed to contest democratization

through the promotion of citizenship. The conclusion to this chapter also brings the dissertation to a close with some final reflections on the distinctive contribution the women's organizations are making to the contestation of democratization as they endeavour to make human rights relevant to the lives of women. It is suggested that some aspects of their work expose gender issues about the practise of human rights: in particular the gendered nature of the subject of human rights and the invisibility of violence against women raise questions about the claim that human rights are universal.

To begin, then, it is important to recognize that several of the issues identified above as key to this chapter have also figured prominently in recent literature on Latin American politics. Of particular note is the fact that despite the diversity of theoretical approaches to understanding the growth of women's involvement in politics, at a general level of analysis there exists fairly significant agreement about the roots of this phenomenon. Indeed, most authors would agree, in broad terms, with the analysis of the Brazilian case made by Sonia Alvarez, one of the leading scholars in the field. In Engendering Democracy in Brazil she states:

The military authoritarian regimes of Brazil and the Southern cone rapidly and profoundly transformed social, economic, and political institutions. In Brazil, social and cultural life were reordered in accordance with the military's new formulations of national security. The Brazilian economy was restructured in the interest of a form of dependent capitalist development that privileged foreign, State, and domestic capital at the expense of the masses of Brazilian workers. To ensure the success of this new capitalist pact of domination, the political opposition was crushed This radical restructuring of Brazil's political economy also profoundly altered the social, economic, and political roles of women in Brazilian society. I will argue that these rapid changes in women's roles created new material bases for the articulation of gender-based political claims.¹

Notwithstanding the general agreement about the significance of the impact of authoritarian politics and restructuring for women in Latin America, there is far less agreement about the effects and consequences of such impact. Indeed, Alvarez's concluding assertion "that these rapid changes in women's roles created new material bases for the articulation of gender-based political claims" raises an issue which is the subject of much debate in the literature.

Questions about how and why women have moved from potential to actual political subjects --and the significance of the fact that they have-- have thus proven to be much more controversial than the issue of the root causes of such changes. This chapter addresses this issue in terms of the Guatemalan case, and, in so doing, offers a broader, theoretical interpretation of the data presented in Chapters Two, Three, and Four. To underscore the significance of this issue of how to understand in political terms the nature of women's organizations it is helpful to summarize briefly the research findings.

Chapter Two presented the empirical research on the process of formation of the women's organizations. In general it became clear that one, or in some cases a few, women have played the pivotal role in conceiving and establishing the organizations. Furthermore, they are hierarchically structured organizations with a centralized process of decision-making. They have gone through a long, sometimes faltering, and slow process of formation which has often been due to limited resources. A number of the leaders, for example, held down other jobs whilst initiating an organization. In many cases the formative process has also been ongoing, as the organizations continue to

develop their internal structure and organizational identity. The organizations are highly dependent on international funding and, as such, are vulnerable to external financial and policy factors beyond their control. They are institutionalized to a limited degree and are not built on a broad membership base. Indeed, as noted, they were formed by exceptional women leaders who largely continue to direct their particular organizations. Thus, despite the public claims made to democratic, non-hierarchical structure, the organizations generally are characterized by top-down authoritative patterns of planning and decision-making.

Through a number of descriptive vignettes of the work of different organizations, Chapter Three provided an overview of some of the many and diverse activities which they undertake. It was suggested that these activities are of three general --but very interrelated-- types. These are: activities which challenge women's poor self-image and promote a new "entitled and efficacious" identity; popular education activities which lead to conscientization; and activities which build women's organizing skills. It was noted that these activities are designed to promote the long-term objective of building women's participatory capacity.

It is important to emphasize, however, that in order to identify the coherence of formation and skills training as a political project it is necessary to view the activities from a perspective one step removed from the hectic daily world of the women's organizations. Indeed, consistent observation over a lengthy period of time is required to gain a sense, that in the longer term, the activities do cohere in a project of formation and skills training. The uncoordinated and sporadic nature of formation and skills

training activities tends to be reinforced by the fact that very little cooperative effort takes place between the women's organizations. Thus, it is not the case that there exists a division of labour amongst the women's organizations whereby certain organizations have responsibility for particular types of activities. Rather, the women's organizations in general all undertake the same range of activities --namely, the three "building block" activities described in Chapter Three-- and delineate their work from that of other of the organizations by the population of women they are involved with. Thus, for example, GRUFEPROMEFAM works with women in Zone 7 of Guatemala City while Tierra Viva works with women in Zone 21. Similarly, Mujer de Esperanza works with women in the Quiché highlands, while Mujer y Vida works with women in several south-eastern coastal areas.

The attempts made by the women's organizations to work collaboratively through the development of networking or coalition-type relationships was addressed in Chapter Four. The chapter described in detail the combined effort that a large number of the women's organizations made to develop a network to support their work in popular education. Confronting sexism and gender issues in popular education --the general point to the network-- is a concern which all the women's organizations continue to share in common. Despite the obvious relevance of the issue, however, it was stressed that the representatives of the various women's organizations were unable and unwilling to generate a functioning network to address, collectively and collaboratively, the concern. After approximately a year this incipient network was virtually defunct, having collapsed due to the constraints such as time pressures faced by the individual participant

organizations, distrust, personal conflict, rivalry, and underlying ideological and political differences.

Having highlighted the key research findings, let us return to the central question addressed in the first section of this chapter. This is: how to understand, in broader political terms, the nature and activities of the women's organizations in the present context of democratization? The argument made below stresses the importance of understanding the women's organizations in terms of politics as practise, which is to emphasize the dynamic as opposed to the static. It is thus also to assert that to understand the political nature of the women's organizations their activities --understood here to comprise a project of formation and skills training-- must be viewed to embody a broader political practise. This is also then to claim that the project of formation and skills training is best understood as a means, strategy, and method towards an end, which remains to be interpreted through informed analysis.

In order to develop an analysis of the nature and activities of the women's organizations it is useful to reflect on other recent theoretical approaches to understanding women's organizations in the literature on Latin America concerned with the responses and strategies of popular political actors to dynamics of democratization, economic crisis, human rights violations, neo-liberalism, etc. The purpose of this consideration is to cull theoretical insights from select contributions which may prove helpful in understanding the Guatemalan case. As such, it stands as a critical dialogue with the literature and is thus not intended to provide an exhaustive literature review.

I. Assessing the Scholarly Literature:

Through the 1980s and 1990s the scholarly literature which addresses women's political organizing has grown substantially as many authors attempt to understand this phenomenon in other countries and regions of Latin America. Although the literature is diverse, and stems from a number of different academic disciplines, it is possible to identify several emerging approaches to understanding women's politicization, mobilization, and organization in the complex context which has been called democratization. Below I will consider the maternalism approach to mothers' groups contesting human rights, different strands of the new social movements (NSMs) approach, and feminist approaches based in the regime transition literature, and, finally, what I consider to be alternative approaches.

i)The Pertinent Questions About Women's Political Organizing:

For my present purposes two questions are of particular interest. The first is how other authors examining empirical cases analyze and explain how women have emerged as political actors taking up and making gender-based political claims; in other words, how do other authors understand the processes involved in the politicization and mobilization of women? Key to my argument is the notion that while what Alvarez refers to as the "rapid restructuring of Brazil's political economy" did dramatically affect women's lives, when such processes occurred in Guatemala a spontaneous political mobilization of women did not occur. Rather my field research suggests both that the organizing of women which has occurred resulted from the efforts of a relatively small

number of exceptional woman, and that building and promoting the participatory capacity of other women is the work of these organizations rather than the mobilization in mass numbers of women behind the organizations. This leads to the second issue, which is how other authors understand what women's organizations are doing in political terms. In other words, how do they make political sense of the activities of women's groups?

i) Approaches to the Mothers' Groups:

Although the literature provides many different responses to these related questions it is nonetheless possible to identify a few major perspectives. One line of argumentation assumes the relatively immediate mobilization of women as political actors as a reaction to the extremity of the impact of repression and violence on their lives and gender roles. For example, in her consideration of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, Marysa Navarro attributes the politicization of these women to the impact of the dirty war on their internalized gender identity as housewives and mothers. She states: "Their refusal to acquiesce in the loss of their children was not an act out of character, but a coherent expression of their socialization, of their acceptance of the dominant sexual division of labor and of their own subordination within it."² Navarro sees the formation of a women's organization, namely the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, as a medium-term effect of the process of women's politicization and mobilization.

The logic of her argument is relatively straightforward. She begins with the assertion that there has been a social construction of working-class women in a subordinate social location through their roles as housewives and mothers. She then

argues that the Argentinean experience of violence and economic crisis dramatically affected women in this location and in these roles. As a result women were politicized as mothers to contest one phenomenon of the violence which they experienced intensely, that of the disappeared. And as highlighted above, when these women gained political experience they formed a formal organization as a basis from which to wage their political struggle. This argument seems reasonable, especially because of the extent to which the mothers' groups have constructed their political struggle through their social identity as wives and mothers. For example, these women have used extensively symbols which articulate this social identity (headscarves, photos of missing relatives, etc.) to assert at the public level the cause for their engagement in politics.

There is, however, an unstated claim in Navarro's argument which is open to question. This is the assumption that working-class women psychologically and emotionally embraced their social location and roles as mothers and housewives. In other words, Navarro's argument rests on the supposition that women unquestioningly internalized this identity, and that it was therefore unmediated by the women themselves. There are a range of theoretical issues that could be raised about this logic of argumentation about women's identity and politicization, especially from a post-modern perspective which sees subject identity as a highly contested terrain. What is of concern here, however, is the extent to which this type of argument helps to make sense of my research findings about women's organizations in Guatemala.

It is interesting that the Argentinean and Guatemalan cases are very similar in a number of important respects, perhaps most particularly in the harshness of the

repression or the dirty war waged by the military regimes (and the correspondingly high numbers of disappeared), as well as the political importance of mothers' groups (Madres de Plaza de Mayo and GAM).³ As I argue, however, popular women's politicization and mobilization in Guatemala generally has not been mass-based or spontaneous: that is, it has not been an immediate, unmediated, direct outcome arising from the impact of democratization on women. Indeed, even GAM and CONAVIGUA, the mothers' and widows' organizations which derive their political power to make demands on the state from their mass membership base, have not followed an automatic trajectory. As the discussion in Chapter Two of the central role played by Nineth Montenegro in the formation of GAM illustrates, GAM and CONAVIGUA also experienced a top-down process of formation. To the extent that they have a mass base, these have been actively cultivated through deliberate mobilization strategies undertaken by the organizations, such as offering literacy training to rural campesina women as a drawing card to bring such women into the organization.

Jennifer Schirmer pursues a line of argumentation similar to that of Navarro in her historical analysis of three Latin American mothers' groups. Her argument is, however, anchored in a discussion of the state and highlights the contradiction in the strategies of the military regimes. In these respects, then, it presents an analysis which substantiates the argument of Chapter One regarding the politicizing effects of violence and repression on women's roles and the social relations of the family. In discussing this contradictory effect of a strategy designed to depoliticize and decompress civil society she states:

Paradoxically, however, the military in these societies preach traditional family values and valorize motherhood in an attempt to strengthen patriarchal rule in the home. This insistence upon the women's sacrifice for and obedience to the family and to her children has backfired on the military as women have demanded to know what has happened to their sons and daughters. The clandestine nature of forced disappearance has unintentionally politicized the family because of the state's refusal to acknowledge either death or life.⁴

Given the resonance of her argument with my own, I would concur with her on the point about the politicization of the family. In my view, however, silences emerge in the way in which Schirmer understands the outcome of this politicization. In her view the political mobilization of women as mothers to contest the disappeared has been a direct and necessary product of the impact of violence on women's lives. Thus, continuing her argument, she states:

As a result, these women have launched actions of civil disobedience and placed themselves at risk at a time when there has been virtually no other visible protest against the regimes. This contradictory doctrine of at once valorizing and destroying the family has made their resistance possible: they have had to behave as mothers in order to survive.⁵

Again, the point of contention I have with Schirmer's argument is her failure to problematize the politicization, mobilization, and organization of women. In other words, the emergence of women as political actors --both at the individual and collective levels-- in response to violence is neither questioned nor analyzed. If we note that, notwithstanding the tremendous political impact mothers' and widows' groups have had, their membership represents only a very tiny percentage of the women actually who have suffered as relatives of victims of human rights abuses, the processes by which women have been mobilized around the effects of violence and repression must be questioned.

In effect, the approach does not answer why it is that some women were politicized and mobilized to contest the disappeared, and more generally the human rights violations entailed in repression, while others were not. My concern is thus that the construction of a new collective identity for women and the subsequent emergence of women as political actors needs must be posed as a problem to be analyzed. Furthermore, this analysis must be developed through a framework which recognizes the meaning of any social identity as a mediated and contested terrain,⁶ and attributes to women agency and choice.⁷

For the present purpose the most important criticism is that the direction of analysis pursued by Navarro and Schirmer sheds little light on the huge upsurge of women's politicization, mobilization, and organization which has occurred not only in Guatemala but throughout Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s, an upsurge which is not premised only on women's maternal identity.⁸ At the local community level it is the case that some of this women's organizing articulates women's maternal social roles in the formation of mothers' clubs and collective kitchens, etc. It is also the case, however, that much of women's organizing has occurred around issues and identities that have little to do with women in their roles as wives and mothers. Thus, even if in regard to the mothers' groups the destabilizing impact on women's roles and social location in the family of the extremity of the repression, together with the intensity of women's maternal feelings in Latin America, adequately explain the emergence of these human rights groups, these factors do not completely account for the broader phenomenon of the upsurge of women's political organizing in the region.

This poses an analytic dilemma, for if we accept the validity of this line of argumentation to understand the phenomenon of the mothers' groups, it is by logic then necessary to argue that these groups are somehow different or exceptional in the Latin American context, and that the processes involved in the politicization and organization of the mothers are not representative of the processes which have given rise to other types of women's organizations. Certainly in the case of Guatemala such exceptional status is not empirically corroborated. I have shown in Chapter Two that while GAM does have an historical specificity which gives it its particular character and identity, it has, nonetheless, emerged in Guatemala through processes similar to those which led to the formation of the women's organizations which are the focus of this dissertation. And this confluence of the processes of formation also holds true with respect to CONAVIGUA and the women's organizations. In terms, then, of understanding women's organizations in Guatemala it is clear that the similar approaches of Navarro and Schirmer are not sufficiently helpful.

ii) New Social Movements Approaches:

In efforts to understand women's political participation in Latin America approaches similar to those of Navarro and Schirmer have been criticized by others. Yvonne Corcoran-Nantes is concerned that this literature privileges one aspect of women's experience, namely, their roles as housewives and mothers in the sphere of reproduction, to explain their political participation. She states:

... women's participation in urban social movements is explained as a result of their social consciousness as wives and mothers, as opposed to

any kind of political consciousness arising from a sexual division of labour within society which tends to militate against the participation of women in other forms of political organisation.'

Corcoran-Nantes' argument stresses that this approach thus overlooks the significance of women's experience in the realm of production, especially the wide range of income-generating activities that women of the popular classes are involved in, and most particularly, their work in the informal economy. This is a very helpful insight in understanding the Guatemalan case, for as I argue in Chapter One, the potential for women's politicization arises from the impact of two dimensions of democratization: repression and economic crisis, the latter which has caused a tremendous movement of women into the informal economy. As I argue, it is not only women's caregiving work in the family, but also their caretaking work --understood in a broad sense to include housekeeping as well as income-generating activities-- that provides fertile ground for politicization in response to socio-economic destabilization of gendered roles.

Corcoran-Nantes' direction of analysis thus substantiates the argument developed above in Chapter One. Building on this emphasis that both women's productive and reproductive work must be taken into account, she further argues that this broader conception of women's work --premised on an analysis of the sexual division of labour-- facilitates an understanding of why women have recently participated politically in and through urban social movements. She notes two important factors which explain the form of women's participation. Firstly, she suggests that women's work in the informal sector keeps them isolated from formal political structures such as political parties and unions. Secondly, she notes that women's work in the informal economy is community-

based and centred. The thrust of her argument is, then, that urban social movements reflect the centrality of community social networks in women's lives. She goes on to note that the character of urban social movements consequently reflect women's dominant role in them. That is, such movements emphasize collectivity rather than hierarchy, leadership as a position of confidence and trust rather than status and prestige, and avoidance of the institutionalization of representation because these are "women's ways" of doing things.

There are two points which Corcoran-Nantes stresses in her analysis of women in urban social movements in Brazil: that this mode of participation has the shape of a movement --which implies some continuity over time-- and that these movements are community-based and non-hierarchically structured, reflecting women's predominance in them. With respect to Guatemala it is the case that community-based political mobilization has occurred and that women do participate in large numbers. This type of mobilization overwhelmingly has happened as people in the shanty-town communities which ring Guatemala City respond through spontaneous actions (usually civil disobedience) to specific events which negatively affect their lives. For example, such mobilization has been a frequent response to the forced eviction of squatter communities, and the cutting off of illegally diverted sources of water or electricity. These protest mobilizations are very much event specific and do not constitute urban movements which sustain themselves beyond the immediate response to the triggering event. It is therefore not accurate to characterize such community-based protest as urban social movements, in that they do not have the capacity to contest, over time and at a broader, less event-

driven level, the significant issues of health, housing, and unemployment, which Cocoran-Nantes identifies.

Indeed, as will be seen below, building the capacity of women to organize sustained political contestation at the community level defines the work of the women's organizations considered in this dissertation. Recognition of this helps explain the ambiguous identity of the women's organization Superandonos Juntas. Based in Mesquital, one of the largest shanty-towns in Guatemala City, this organization sometimes represents itself as an independent group in meetings, events, etc., of the women's organizations, as it did, for example, in the preliminary meetings of the popular education network. At other times, however, Superandonos Juntas has been represented by a woman doctor and employee of FUNDESCO, a Guatemalan development NGO. Indeed, at times the identities of Superandonos Juntas and FUNDESCO seem virtually inseparable. FUNDESCO supports the building in Mesquital which serves as the meeting and office space for Superandonos Juntas, funds and staffs the health clinic offered by the organization, and puts its seal on the community health information bulletin which is distributed to women in the community by the organization.

In fact, what Superandonos Juntas represents is not a social movement of women but rather an organization which has emerged over time through the work of FUNDESCO in the Mesquital community to actively cultivate, promote, and sponsor a women's organization. This helps explain that while Superandonos Juntas is pursuing the issues which Cocoran-Nantes identifies, it is not a horizontally structured movement

but rather a hierarchical organization: key women have clear leadership positions and have achieved this status through the selection and grooming work of FUNDESCO.

With respect to Corcoran-Nantes' argument, then, her analysis does not help to understand the community or local level of women's organizing in Guatemala City, the national level of women's organizations, nor the relationship between the two levels of organizations. This is because her analysis is subject to a critique similar to that made of the approaches to understanding the mothers' groups: Corcoran-Nantes also does not adequately problematize women's political participation. She rather assumes that this can be "read off" their objective conditions --namely, their location in relations of production. Thus, like these approaches she does not question the emergence of women as political actors: she assumes that the politicization, mobilization, and organization of women to contest socio-economic issues arises as an automatic response to the negative impact on women's work which socio-economic restructuring in Latin America has had.¹⁰

Despite this weakness in Corcoran-Nantes argument, her point that women's political participation is integrally related to their productive work provides an important counter-balance to the predominant weight assigned women's roles in the realm of reproduction. She concludes her analysis as follows:

I have demonstrated in this paper that the struggles of urban social movements are based on issues which are not inextricably linked to women's responsibilities in the home, but are concerned with improving the conditions of both production and reproduction, that is, conditions that also affect men. I have argued that women's participation arises from a sexual division of labour, in which their productive and reproductive lives are centred in the bairros and vilas of the urban periphery.¹¹

With respect to our present purpose, this is a key insight, for it substantiates two points made in this dissertation. The first such point, from Chapter One, is that the potential for women's politicization arises due to the impact of democratization on women's work inside the family and in the economy. The second point, to be elaborated below, is that in their decision to promote the ability of women of the popular classes to lead, and participate in, local levels of community organizing, the women's organizations have correctly analyzed that for many women of the popular classes in Latin America the issues which affect them are community-uniting ones rather than gender-segregating ones which lead to women-only organizations.

Due to this interest in the politics which stem from production, Corcoran-Nantes' work is in some respects atypical of the NSMs literature. In general, this literature does not focus on class-based politics, but is rather interested in post-Marxist or post-industrial politics of alternative or non-traditional identities. In one important respect, however, her analysis is representative of this literature. Indeed, the lack of attention she pays to the processes whereby women come to participate politically can be explained by the fact that her interest is rather to explain the form of urban women's organizing, i.e., as community-based social movements. As has been seen, Corcoran-Nantes stresses the community-based nature of women's organizing: this emphasis on, and interest in, the non-traditional (i.e., horizontal, flexible, participatory) nature of NSMs is central to this perspective.

Given this focus, it must be noted that her conclusions provide few insights for understanding women's organizations in Guatemala. In very general terms, it can be said

that women's participation in politics in the context of democratization in Guatemala does not take the form of NSMs. Women's organizations are not mass-based, grass-roots organizations which have emerged in response to repression and economic crisis, a point which was elaborated in Chapter One. In fact, the community-level women's organizations, the national level of women's organizations, and the groups like GAM and CONAVIGUA are all hierarchical structures which have formed in a top-down manner as subsequent chapters documented.¹² I would stress, however, that this form of organization is an historical product: as detailed in Chapters One and Two it reflects what has been possible in the climate of terror and ongoing repression in which the women's organizations emerged. Mass-based and mass-directed organizations are fragile and rare entities in a society controlled by fear and ongoing violence, and shaped by the long legacy of authoritarian culture.

A final point which must be raised with respect to the NSMs literature on women's involvement in politics is the extent to which it entails evaluation and judgement of such involvement in the analysis it offers. As Elizabeth Jelin notes, the idea of a social movement is a constructed object of research.¹³ I would add to her comment that not only are NSMs constructed phenomenon, but also that social scientific inquiry is not neutral. Rather, value-judgements are embedded in the process of constructing a social phenomenon as an object of study. The extent to which this "construction" is value-laden is to some degree determined by the research question(s) posed about the constructed object. With respect to the NSMs, towards one end of the value spectrum would be perhaps the categorizing approach of authors like Corcoran-Nantes who are primarily

interested in studying the form of NSMs. Toward the other end would be the approach of authors interested in the impact of NSMs, for very significant value-judgements are made both in determining the indicators by which to measure impact, and in assessing any particular social movement according to such indicators.

iii) Feminist Approaches in the Regime Transition Literature:

Such a concern to evaluate the impact of women's movements, understood as NSMs, has figured predominantly in much recent feminist literature on South America. As such, this reflects an important process of self-reflection, a search for self-understanding, and a crucial effort to assess political strategies. The important book The Women's Movement in Latin America: Feminism and the Transition to Democracy,¹⁴ takes on such an evaluative agenda. It is a collection of articles which considers the impact of the women's movements in five South American countries during democratization. The position of the editor, Jane S. Jaquette, is worthy of more detailed consideration here, for it is her position which guides the analysis developed in other articles. I will argue that despite its predominance in the literature, the perspective Jaquette represents is not helpful in understanding the Guatemalan case because it leads to a negative view of women's organizations in Guatemala.

Jaquette provides an historical backdrop to the articles in the collection through an overview of the antecedents to democratization, or what she calls regime transition, in the Southern Cone, Uruguay, and Peru. In particular she is interested in the correspondence between the rise of military authoritarianism in the 1960s and 1970s, and

the exhaustion of ISI and the need to deepen industrialization by moving to the production of capital goods. She reviews the different theoretical perspectives which attempt to explain the new regimes and notes that Guillermo O'Donnell's analysis -- widely characterized as "bureaucratic authoritarianism"-- has been largely accepted.¹⁵ In her view however, this economistic and deterministic analysis is much improved through a consideration of political factors, especially in order to explain military behaviour.¹⁶

Jaquette's concern to insert political elements into the analysis of the regime transitions of the 1960s carries forward into her analysis of democratization. And it is here that she and the other authors in the collection can be seen to straddle the NSMs and regime transition literature on Latin America which was discussed in Chapter One. As was there highlighted, within the regime transition approach the predominant interest lies with analysing the central institutions involved in transitions to liberal-democracy. Feminist scholars shift the emphasis, however, to the role of non-traditional political actors: that is, they are interested in the roles played by popular political actors like NSMs, and more specifically, by the women's movements. As such, their work recognizes the tremendous impact of political forces "from below" on transition processes. One very important contribution of this work is therefore the recognition of new popular political actors in Latin America.

In general, however, these feminist scholars do not take the next analytic step which is to understand the new ideas about politics that the women's movements may be developing. While they do recognize the alternative ways of political organizing

presented by NSMs, this reflects a recognition of new ways of doing politics rather than of understanding politics. I would argue that this arises from the fact that while they embrace the focus of the NSM literature on popular and non-traditional actors, their analyses are nonetheless circumscribed by the liberal-democratic understanding of politics embedded in the regime transition perspective.

Thus, while they reject the narrow focus on institutional actors in the regime transition understanding, they do assume the view of politics as competition over interests. This directs their analyses back to the question about the impact of women's movements on transition processes such as elections and the elaboration of state policy, and to the related question of the extent to which women's movements have developed into effective vehicles for the representation of women's interests in the context of liberal democracy.

Several implications stem from this direction of analysis. Like the other bodies of feminist literature considered here, this work largely assumes the existence of the women's movements: that is, it takes as a given that women have come to be collectively constituted as political actors.¹⁷ Therefore, because their concern is to assess impact, in terms of the representation of already defined interests, these authors also fail to problematize the politicization of women, individually and collectively. While questions about the organizational nature of popular actors are addressed, this is done in order to discern the impact of these organizations in larger liberal-democratic political processes, and, in even broader terms, on the definition of the political agenda.

This general concern with impact on the political processes of liberal democracy is reflected in the questions Jaquette highlights as central to the articles contained in her collected edition. She states:

[The book] examines the ways in which women's mobilization affected the course and the content of transition politics, and discusses the impact of women's politicization on the prospects for democratic consolidation.... All [of the chapters] were written to address several key questions: What was the extent of women's mobilization? How did that mobilization affect the transition process from military dictatorship to democracy? What was the relationship between women's movements and feminist movements? To what extent was a 'women's agenda' developed during the transition and what was the content of that agenda? How durable is this new wave of women's politicization? What are the prospects for institutionalizing women's issues as an ongoing part in the political process? How will women's politicization affect the prospects for consolidating these fragile democratic governments?¹⁸

In effect, Jaquette is interested in determining the impact of the women's movement, measured by the extent to which the women's movement represents women's interests, and the extent to which their mode of representation has been consolidated or institutionalized in vehicles which will endure over time.

Raising concerns about the work of such feminist scholars is not meant to imply that their questions are wrong. It indeed may be the case that with respect to South America, and particularly the Southern Cone countries, there is a need to pause and take stock in this manner. I would suggest, however, that this is not an appropriate approach to understanding the case of Guatemala. For even when the problems entailed in conceptualizing democratization in political terms as regime transition as opposed to a political-economy understanding of crisis are set aside, this approach still cannot illuminate the Guatemalan experience. Returning to the idea of the value-laden nature

of any assessment of impact, I will argue that the approach would actually lead to a negative judgement of women's organizations in Guatemala.

If we look at the questions that Jaquette poses to orient analysis of women's movements in Latin America, Guatemala does not measure up very well. With respect to the extent of women's mobilization, in sheer numbers this has been very limited. GAM claims a membership of approximately 1,000 women. If GRUFEPROMEFAM's claimed membership of 300 women is accepted, this would make it the largest of the women's organizations. And even while CONAVIGUA, the women's group in Guatemala which most closely resembles a women's movement, claims a membership of 11,000-13,000 women (depending on the source), I would argue that if what is assessed is mobilization of women, measured in terms of participation in public events, then the CONAVIGUA number is much, much smaller.¹⁹ Thus, if the extent of women's mobilization is taken as an indicator by which to measure the influence of the women's movement, a negative conclusion must be drawn: namely, that mobilization is highly limited and has had, therefore, little influence.

Most of Jaquette's questions lead to a similar negative assessment. Regarding the relationship between the women's movement and the feminist movement we arrive at the disappointing answer that since there is neither, there also is not a relationship. With respect to the durability of the women's organizations, the research presented above has emphasized that in fact they are extremely fragile. The case of the former Guatemalan women's organization Maria Chinchilla is illustrative. It was one of the first women's organizations to form in the mid-1980s and its leader, Maria Chinchilla subsequently took

the decision to lead the organization into the formal political arena by running for office in the 1990 election. She was murdered and the group dissolved. While this is an extreme example it does serve to highlight how the environment of terror has very effectively circumscribed the work of even the most highly politicized, committed women leaders, and concomitantly, how effectively the "message" of passivism has been transmitted to women at the base.

Each of Jaquette's questions could in turn be asked of the Guatemalan case. For example, it is not a present goal of the women's organizations to affect the transition process (if indeed it can be argued that there is such a transition occurring) in Guatemala: their effort to influence the political position of the popular movement through such important fora as the UASP has met with very limited success. More recently the women's organizations have represented themselves as the Women's Sector in the Assembly of Civil Sectors (ASC [Asamblea de Sectores Civiles]) formed in 1994. The Women's Sector of the ASC has, however, experienced the active participation of only a few women's organizations and has been predominantly controlled by one organization. As such, it can not be understood as a representative vehicle for a women's movement.

With respect to a women's agenda, the empirical research presented, especially in Chapter Four, illuminates how difficult it has been for the various women's organizations to arrive at any point of consensus around women's issues and gender issues. Through a variety of venues, including popular theatre, cultural events, etc., several of the women's organizations have attempted to sensitize the popular classes to women's issues, in particular the issue of violence against women. The development of

a feminist agenda in Guatemala which is distinct from the politics of the popular movement is not, however, a present objective of any of the women's organizations: this again reflects the fact that the women's organizations are deeply embedded within the structure of the popular movement.

Regarding the prospects for institutionalizing women's issues it must be pointed out that there is a state-run National Women's Office (ONAM [Oficina Nacional de la Mujer]). The women's organizations, however, view ONAM with some disdain. It is staffed by middle-class professionals who have little direct contact with the women's organizations and ONAM, as an institution, has provided little political support to the women's organizations. Indeed, the women's section of the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos) has played a much more active role in working with the women's organizations on various relevant issues. For example, when the Guatemalan Congress decided in 1993 to push forward legislation that was viewed as negatively affecting the reproductive rights of indigenous women, the women's section of the Ombudsman's Office convened a series of meetings for the women's organizations to discuss the legislation. As well, the women's section frequently has sent a representative to various events and fora of the women's organizations.²⁰ In contrast, the women's organizations view ONAM as, at best, a source for statistical information of relevance to women.

Finally, regarding Jaquette's question about the prospects for the consolidation of women's political activism I have above argued two points: 1) that the women's organizations in Guatemala are extremely fragile for a complex set of reasons, including

the unpredictable and precarious availability of international funding, and; 2) that their goal is not the institutional or organizational consolidation of women's activism but rather the promotion of non-institutional, non-traditional community-based political organizing by women of the popular classes.

From the perspective suggested by Jaquette, it would seem, then, that the women's organizations in Guatemala have been unsuccessful.²¹ Their lack of measurable, quantifiable impact would suggest that they are still in a process of evolving, developing, or "becoming" something other than they presently are. Indeed, I would suggest that the most positive assessment that could be made of these organizations from this perspective would be that they are immature and, as yet, underdeveloped in their politics. In effect, Jaquette's questions lead to a focus on what the women's organizations in Guatemala are not, rather than to an effort to understand what they are, and concomitantly, what they are doing politically.

This negative "not yet" type of evaluation arises because of the pluralist ideas about politics embedded in the analytic framework. These feminist scholars do recognize that forms of representation have undergone transformation, as is illustrated by their concern with NSMs as important political actors in processes of regime transition. Nonetheless, they continue to employ an understanding of politics as the representation of interests, as evidenced by their concern to measure the extent to which women as (non-traditional) political actors have evolved into vehicles of interest representation. They also assume a linear understanding of organizations, where the natural and appropriate evolution is from individual organizations of women to the formation of a

women's movement. Issues such as the processes entailed in the politicization of individual women, the processes involved in building organizations and collective identity, and practises of representation, are superseded by questions about the durability and potential for continuity of political actors, the policy impact of such actors, and their impact on defining the political agenda. And as has been highlighted above, this is a silence which generally characterizes recent feminist work on women in politics in Latin America.

The point to be made is that a different understanding of politics and different questions about women's political participation are needed if we truly desire to understand the political nature of women's organizations in Guatemala. If Jaquette's questions are not the appropriate ones to ask of the Guatemalan case, more helpful ways of understanding what women in Guatemala are doing must be considered. As elaborated below, an analysis of women's organizations in Guatemala which seeks to understand them on their own terms, and which demands a less narrow understanding of politics, and which considers the subjective processes involved in the construction of political identity, is needed.

iv) Alternative Approaches to Women's Political Participation in the Context of Democratization in Latin America:

There are several feminist scholars working on issues related to women's political mobilization in Latin America who are developing such alternative approaches. Elizabeth Jelin is one, and her position warrants some discussion. Like many other feminists, Jelin

looks at women's political participation through the conceptual lens of social movements. Her position is, however, distinguished from the NSMs approach by her concern with the issues of citizenship and identity, rather than evaluation and assessment of impact.

She identifies two important ways of understanding social movements. "One way of understanding them ..." she says, "involves seeing social movements as mechanisms of struggle to widen socio-political citizenship." And drawing on Melucci, she suggests that a "second way of seeing social movements linked to the collective social search for identity and for the appropriation of a cultural field, as an affirmation of the right to specificity and difference." She continues on to conclude that "[b]oth elements are present in the Latin American social situations we have studied. It is a struggle to widen citizenship while simultaneously claiming social recognition of specificities The search for citizenship and the creation of an identity are both collective and active processes."²²

In her discussion of women's neighbourhood organizations in the poor areas of Santiago, Chile, Veronica Schild also focuses on citizenship and identity. Her analysis begins by challenging the gender-blindness of traditional analyses of popular movements in Chile, which she argues generally come to the conclusion that women's participation "constitutes a defensive response by people to their socioeconomic and political exclusion...." Noting that "pobladoras [poor shanty-town women] ... have always been excluded" she insists that "[t]he answer lies elsewhere.":

Seen in the context of the ongoing continuum of collective activities of pobladoras, these groups are spaces in which many women acquire the elements of a gender-specific culture of citizenship. This form of political learning involves challenging preestablished boundaries of appropriate

feminine behavior and is lived by women as learning to experience themselves as confident, competent beings and acting accordingly. Thus, practises that embody questions about who they are, what their rights are, and what fields of action are appropriately theirs are a central aspect of learning to become political agents. To use more conventional terms, developing a sense of political efficacy necessarily means questioning limiting gender relations and forging alternative identities.²³

It is useful to cite at length Schild's recognition that her approach to women's organizations leads to a new understanding of politics. She elaborates:

Linking the activities of economic-type organizations to a gender-specific process of political learning requires a notion of politics that goes beyond conventionally narrow conceptions. In this context, then, politics is not simply about (to paraphrase Lasswell's classic formulation) who gets what, when, and how Politics, then, is also about challenges to power relations that set the limits within which we define ourselves and establish our differential participation. In other words, politics includes struggles for subjectivities --what Bowles and Gintis (1986), following Foucault, have called a "politics of becoming". Politics in this context is "also a contest over who we are to become, a contest in which identity, interests, and solidarity are as much the outcome as the starting point of political activity".²⁴

With respect to the neighbourhood women's organizations Schild suggests that the "politics of becoming" for pobladoras, or women of the popular classes, occurs through a variety of group activities which promote political learning. Initially women are interested in the neighbourhood groups because of their desire to improve themselves by learning skills such as handicrafts. Over time, however, they may learn to become political agents through their participation in activities which challenge women to question who they are as women and what their rights are.²⁵

Schild goes on to argue that the various types of women's organizations in Chile - the neighbourhood groups and NGOs-- are connected through what she calls a "symbolic network". She refers to these relationships in this way "because they consist of an

exchange of knowledge in language and because what women obtain through these networks is cultural-discursive resources."²⁶ Importantly, the conduits for this symbolic network of women's organizations are the women leaders of each type of organization. For example, within the neighbourhood organizations there are women leaders who have participated in workshops, seminars, etc., offered by the NGOs. In turn, the women offering such training are frequently middle-class professional women who "have tended to be on the left and to work for feminist goals". Schild adds that [t]he political inclinations and practises of [such] women ... shape their relations with pobladoras and translate into a commitment to work with them rather than for them²⁷

In effect, Schild's analysis offers a conceptual alternative to understanding the relationships between women's organizations as a movement focused on achieving strategic political objectives. Her approach frames these relationships not as a movement but rather as networks, oriented toward the promotion of political learning and the dissemination of knowledges. Through these networks women thus gain "cultural-discursive resources" which enable them to contest their social identity, reconstruct their understanding of themselves as active political agents, and, ultimately, engage in politics as citizens.

Elsewhere Schild elaborates the relationship between political learning and citizenship through a broader discussion of the context in which women's networks are working. This, she argues is the context of the "new democracy" which she understands as "a hegemonic project embodied by the discourse of liberal democracy".²⁸ "Furthermore," she adds:

the transformations taking place today are embodied in the discourse of liberal democracy, and central to this discourse is a citizenship identity. This means ... that the positioning, and self-positioning, of women in the political process is carried out through the language of rights -- the grammar of a liberal democratic political identity. In other words, struggles around citizenship identities are a cornerstone of this political process involving women.²⁹

Pointing to Claude Lefort's work, Schild stresses that before we are able to exercise our rights we must first become "subjects of rights". She elaborates:

"Becoming subjects of rights" with its emphasis on agency, invites us to examine the construction of political identities as socially contextualized and embodied processes. Read against the grain of liberal democratic theorizing, and its critics, then, "becoming" subjects of rights is a prompt to address the activities through which people, women in this case, embedded in specific social relations, struggle to creatively appropriate elements of a dominant discourse. Thus, I am proposing a conceptualization of citizenship as cultural practises, rather than as static discourse, a "doing" of citizenship rather than "being".³⁰

What Schild is here emphasizing is that the political environment in which the women's organizations are situated gives specificity to the general concept of political learning. In the context of "new democracy", defined as it is by the hegemonic project of liberal-democracy, political "becoming" through political learning takes on the character of becoming subjects of rights. As Schild argues, within the grammar of liberal-democracy, "subjects of rights" is a citizen identity. To make this argument is then to suggest that while women can learn to become something else they cannot become anything else, for the range of alternative subject identities is circumscribed by the structures of the historical moment. It is, therefore, to insist on agency while recognizing the role of structure in shaping agency.

From the above it can be seen that both Jelin's and Schild's understanding of women's participation in politics are integrally bound to two key ideas: the building of citizenship as a collective political practise, and the constitution of subjectivity and identity. I would suggest, however, that for my present purpose, Schild's work offers more substantial guidance because her analysis moves towards the development of a theoretical framework. Her analysis is more fully fleshed out, as is indicated by her insight about the structuring effects of the present historical moment in Latin America: in this context women are contesting their subjectivity by re-constituting their identity as subjects of rights (and hence, as citizens), through a process of political learning, which is above all, a lived experience. Furthermore, Schild takes various types of women's organizations as her unit of analysis and thereby offers an alternative to the social movement approach. This is very helpful to an understanding of the Guatemalan case, for, as above argued, it is difficult to understand women's organizations in Guatemala as a social movement.

Before turning, then, to an analysis of the Guatemalan women's organizations, it is useful to briefly highlight the insights from Schild's work which I intend to build on. As we have seen, both Jelin and Schild concur that women's search for political identity entails a pursuit of difference or specificity. But Schild further stresses that in the present moment of the "new democracy" in Latin America, specificity or difference is defined through the grammar of liberal democratic politics. Given that the citizen is the preeminent subject identity of liberal democracy, women's struggle for identity will mean the contestation of gender-specific citizenship. Schild also emphasizes an understanding

of politics as practise. Jelin refers to this in very general terms as the development of socio-political citizenship.

Through her Chilean case study, Schild, however, again goes further and elaborates what processes are involved in politics as practise. She begins by noting that the continuum of activities of women's organizations can be understood collectively as a process of political learning for women. Moreover, this process is also a political practise, that of constituting women as citizens. Importantly, Schild stresses that the context of liberal democracy determines that this process/practise of political learning employs the language of rights, and leads, consequently, to the constitution of women as subjects of rights.

The final insight to be utilized --which is specific to Schild's work-- comes from her understanding of the nature of the relationships between women's organizations. She argues that they are not connected as a movement, but rather in symbolic networks through which "cultural-discursive" resources are exchanged. She emphasizes the role that the women leaders within the various types of organizations play in the networks, acting as the conduits for the exchange of resources.

To summarize, what is helpful in Schild's analysis is that it offers a way of understanding politics which encompasses the idea of politics of becoming, or of the struggle for subjectivities. With respect to women's organizations this means that, taken as a whole, their discrete activities comprise a collective political practise. The general content of this collective practise is a process of women learning to question who they are and to seek out a new identity founded on political agency. Schild stresses, however,

that such political learning does not occur in a vacuum but rather in the context of the "new democracy", or capitalism's hegemonic project of liberal democracy. This context establishes the parameters for the possible content of political learning. By imposing a grammar of liberal democracy, this hegemonic project thereby also imposes both the language of rights and the subject identity of citizen. Thus, in this historical moment women's struggle for new subject identities is framed discursively by rights and the available subject identity of citizen. For this reason then women's political learning as a collective political practise is about becoming subjects of rights and learning citizenship. And in this way the women's organizations promoting this political practise through their activities can be said to be "doing citizenship".

Having highlighted Schild's ideas that are to be built upon in analysing women's organizations in Guatemala, I would like to begin this analysis by noting Jelin's thoughtful comment about doing analysis. She states: "the task of the researcher is to seek out the meaning of a collective practise, a meaning that obviously is anchored in the conceptualization of these very subjects, but which goes beyond this conceptualization."³¹ Her comment reflects a concern I share, which is the importance of understanding the women's organizations on their own terms. Bearing in mind this caveat, let us turn to a consideration of how Guatemalan women themselves understand or "make sense" of their organizations and their work in order to build on their own self-understanding in analysing the meaning of their collective political practise.

II. Interpreting the Women's Organizations in Guatemala:

i) The Self-Understanding of the Organizations:

Despite the diversity of organizations and differences which serve to cleave them, there exists in fact a widespread consensus amongst the women themselves as to what their organizations "are about". The women leaders consistently self-describe their purpose and work as a project of formation and skills training.³² They recognize that their work is often scattered because of the demands on their time and severe shortage of human and material resources, and lament the fact that they are unable to work in a more comprehensive and consistent manner. Yet despite this awareness of the fragmented nature of their work they also believe that, overall, they are engaged in a political project, which they call formation and skills training.

The women leaders also believe that, taken as a whole, the work of the women's organizations comprises a collective practise, namely a project rooted in a political commitment to popular education and aimed at further developing the organizing and leadership capacities of other women in the popular classes. This is, then, the conceptualization which the women themselves have of what they do, or, in Jelin's words, the "conceptualization of these very subjects". It is, however, a descriptive conceptualization. Returning to Jelin's comment, I take as my task the need to seek out the broader meaning of this collective practise of formation and skills training, where this meaning is "anchored in the conceptualization" of the women, "but which goes beyond this conceptualization".

ii) Building Citizens: Women, Human Rights and Democratization:

In seeking the broader political meaning of the work of the women's organizations I will use Schild's approach to understanding what women are doing through the concept of political learning. As we have seen, the women's organizations themselves understand that the many and diverse activities they are engaged in comprise a collective political practise which they call formation and skills training.³³ Through these practises the leaders strive to build leadership capacity in women of the popular classes, to develop their organizing skills, and to enable them to participate politically. I would argue, then, that formation and skills training is another way of naming what Schild calls the process of political learning. In other words, what the women's organizations are doing, understood as a collective political practise, is facilitating and promoting political learning in women.

As has been seen, Schild stresses that political learning does not occur in a vacuum, but is rather situated in the context of capitalism's hegemonic project of liberal democracy. This means that the struggle occurs within and through the grammar of liberal democracy, and must, therefore, employ the language of rights. It also implies that not all subject identities are available for articulation: in liberal democracy "becoming subjects of rights" means becoming citizens.

As discussed in Chapter Three, it is possible to identify in the project of formation and skills training --or the collective practise of political learning-- three types of "building block" activities, all of which lead to the constitution of women as subjects of rights. Perhaps most importantly are those experiential type of activities which are

designed to enable women to improve their sense of self-esteem and to learn to value themselves.³⁴ Political education or conscientization about the specificity of class, gender, economics, the repression, etc., through popular education techniques comprise the second type of activity. And very much intertwined with this work of conscientization is the dissemination of information about issues of relevance to women. Very frequently such information is about the specificity and content of rights: human rights, workers' rights, women's rights, etc. Finally, the promotion of organizational skills aims to provide women with concrete tools and strategies to contest politically the violation or lack of respect for, or recognition of, their rights.

Framed discursively as they are in the language of rights, all of these three types of activities meld together to engender women as subjects of rights. Women learn that as women they deserve to have rights, why they ought to have rights, and what rights are. Taken as a whole, then, these three general types of activities strive to generate in women a sense of entitlement. In using this term I wish to emphasize the creation of a belief in the right to have rights. Generating a sense of entitlement through the promotion of self-esteem and self-valorization is, then, the objective of the first category of activity. It is furthermore the aim of the women's organizations to instill in women a conviction about the need to act politically in order to secure their rights, that is to become not only subjects of rights, but also acting subjects of rights. The women's organizations have recognized that this further step in building a new identity for women is crucial in the Guatemalan context where rights are neither recognized nor respected.

and realizing the step from subject to acting subject is the objective, then, of the second and third types of activities.

One of the important strengths of Schild's analytic concepts of political learning and symbolic networks is that they link the form of women's organizing with the activities or work of women's organizations. She emphasizes that the women's organizations are linked through and by the exchange of "cultural-discursive resources" and are thus related in a "symbolic network". Importantly, this exchange of cultural-discursive resources is integrally related to the collective practise of political learning, because it is through the overlap of various levels of leadership that women acquire the skills and knowledge to promote political learning with other women. Schild argues that it is the middle-class professional feminists in the NGOs who train promising leaders in the neighbourhood organizations. These women go on to initiate, implement, and lead political learning activities for the neighbourhood women. In effect, Schild conceives of the women's organizations relationally. they are related to each other through a network which has as its purpose the transmission of politically valuable resources necessary for political learning to occur. And importantly the points of contact between the organizations of this network are the leaders.

This concept of symbolic network is crucial to understanding Guatemalan women's organizations. For unlike analyses framed by the NSM concept which lead to a focus on what these organizations are not, Schild's concept leads to an understanding which places value on what they are in the present moment. My research in Guatemala shows that there are multiple layers of women's organizations. It has been emphasized

that the leaders of the national level women's organizations take as a central goal the building of leadership capacity and development of organizing skills in women of the popular classes. Another way of expressing this is to say that the women's organizations are actively developing symbolic networks of women by building another node of women leaders at the community level, and indeed, this image very effectively captures the nature of the relationship between FUNDESCO and Superandonos Juntas described above.³⁵

As the discussion in Chapter Four illustrates, however, the women's organizations are presently much more occupied with the development of such symbolic networks vertically rather than horizontally. Indeed, as the effort to build a popular education network shows, the women at the leadership level of the organizations face great difficulties in the exchange of resources between the women's organizations. It is clear from the research presented that a mentoring system which spans several levels of women's organizing exists in Guatemala. For the reasons discussed in Chapter Four, however, the women at the national leadership level are not focused on developing mentoring relationships amongst themselves even though they recognize a need to share resources between the various organizations as is illustrated by the example of the popular education network.

This vertical networking system also extends beyond the visible national level of the women's organizations. In most of the organizations there exists an invisible level of participation of women who provide guidance and political orientation to the leaders of the organizations. These women are not highly active in the organizations but are

rather available to the leaders in a consultative capacity, providing theoretical guidance and orientation on an "as need" basis. For example, both GGM and GRUFEPROMEFAM have women professors from the National University of San Carlos who play a background role in advising and orienting the women leaders of the organizations. In the case of CENTRACAP the two women who took the initiative to form the organization have continued to play an advisory role, although again, their presence is discreet. In the case of Tierra Viva this relationship stretches into the USA, from where a number of feminist scholars act to support and advise the organization. Thus, within the women's organizations there are at present three nodes of leadership in the symbolic networks of women: the "patrons"; the active and publicly visible women leaders; and the up and coming women at the community level of leadership. While these women all play different roles and participate in varying degrees their relationship is built on the exchange of what Schild calls cultural-discursive resources.

With respect to this pattern of networking, it is important to note that in Guatemala the promotion of vertical linkage between women of the popular classes in the form of symbolic networks --rather than the building of discrete mass-based organizations-- reflects a cognizance on the part of the women's organizations of the political imperatives of democratization. As was seen in Chapter Three, the activities which comprise formation and skills training reach a relatively small number of women. In part this reflects the extremely limited range of resources available to the women's organizations. It also reveals, however, a key aspect of the political strategy of the women's organizations.

The women leaders are keenly aware that in the present conjuncture building civil society is crucial to the contestation of democratization. In concrete terms this means generating the ability of the pueblo to participate politically in the contestation of democratization. The women's organizations understand that in Guatemala this is a long-term political project and one which must be self-sustaining, so that if the high-profile national level of political leadership is eliminated, civil society will not collapse, as was the experience of the early 1980s. Thus their overarching orientation is to build multiple layers of leadership in the popular class's.³⁶ The women's organizations are not then trying to build a membership base for their own individual organizations but are rather, through the development of further leadership capacity which will promote further political learning, striving to generate the broad participation of women as citizens.

Put differently, the collective political practise of the women's organizations is thus about building citizenship capacity in women. This is what Schild, in her argument against feminist reductionism, refers to as "doing citizenship."³⁷ Schild is very concerned to recognize differences between women --especially those stemming from class location-- and thus urges

that we move away from discursive definitions of citizenship which focus on citizenship as a given discursive "position," with a fixed content as it were, which is generally available, and that we approach citizenship as a more dynamic, less determined discursive phenomenon. The notion of citizenship as "cultural practises" is useful here, because it shifts our analysis from identities as texts... to the processes of constructing lived identities. This is another way of emphasizing the need to rescue a sense of political agency in our conceptualization of citizenship.³⁸

She goes on to clarify what she means, in concrete terms, by "doing citizenship" when citizenship is conceived as cultural practises. Citizenship becomes the

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elements of a "language" --vocabularies, and rules for their use-- which we "make ours" always from within specific cultural contexts. By "making ours" I mean that in appropriating the elements of a discourse of rights we do not acquire a set of meanings but --following Wittgenstein-- that we transform these elements into means, or "tools," for making meaning.³⁹

It is in this sense, then, that I argue the women's organizations in Guatemala are "doing citizenship" by building citizenship capacity in women. Through the collective practise of political learning, held together and perpetuated by symbolic networks, the women's organizations are constituting women as political actors who are bearers of rights. But importantly this process also entails constituting women as agents able to use the language of rights as "tools" or means by which to contest democratization, through their newly developed abilities to organize and mobilize their communities around issues which affect them.

To summarize the analysis I have developed to this point, it has been argued that in the context of democratization in Guatemala, the broader meaning of the collective practise of formation and skills training is that of building citizenship capacity in women of the popular classes.⁴⁰ The argument has also showed how building such citizenship capacity is a political process with many constitutive elements. To recap, it is a process which aims to construct women as subjects of rights, through the generation of a sense of entitlement at the psychological and emotional levels. Instilling in women a belief in their entitlement --or in effect, their right to have rights-- in turn provides the basis for the movement from a sense of passivity to a conviction about potentiality and agency, or a belief in the right and capacity to be social and political actors. This sense of entitlement, fomented, channelled and directed through the political

education/conscientization component of formation provides the subjective base for the political mobilization of women. Finally, the organizational skills development type of activities promotes women's capacity to act politically through organizing initiatives, thus becoming acting subjects of rights. This complex process is, in the context of democratization in Guatemala, the building of citizenship capacity in women.

Conclusion:

In the second section of this chapter the argument was made that, collectively, the activities of formation and skills training constitute a political practise of building citizenship capacity in women of the popular classes. It was emphasized that a central feature of this practise is the development in women of a sense of entitlement, as part of the process of constituting women as subject "bearers" of rights.

It is crucial, however, to understand the work of the women's organizations as integrally related to the broader strategies of the popular movement to contest democratization in Guatemala. As was discussed in detail in the Introduction the popular movement has through the latter half of the 1980s and early 1990s pursued three strategies: the internationalization of struggle; the contestation of liberal political and legal institutions; and, the promotion of the capacity of the pueblo to participate politically. The formation and skills training work of the women's organizations constitutes a key part of this third strategy of the movement to politicize the pueblo through the popular education work of the Guatemalan NGOs. More generally, the work of the women's organizations also contributes to the broader strategy of the movement

to contest democratization by demanding the recognition of, and respect for, human rights.

Given that the work of the women's organizations is, then, so organically connected to the struggle of the popular movement, it is important to consider in conclusion what may be distinctive about their work. I will suggest below that the gender silences which the work of the organizations discloses serves to challenge the idea of, and claim to, universality contained in the concept and discourse of human rights.

It was emphasized in the Introduction and is reiterated here that the collective political practise of the women's organizations --understood as building citizenship capacity in women of the popular classes-- is fundamentally connected to the struggle of the popular movement for human rights. As in the popular education work promoted by the popular movement more generally, the concept of entitlement which underlies human rights is central to the work of the women's organizations in building women's self-esteem and self-valorization. At the same time, however, it must be noted that in doing formation and skills training for women the discourse of human rights has not always fit unproblematically into this work. In fact, the women's organizations often also employ ideas from newer but related discourses of women's rights and indigenous rights.

What this signifies is that through their work the organizations have discovered that the discourse of human rights is not always helpful in addressing the issues which women of the popular classes face. In large part this is because those human rights which have been most venerated and, concomitantly, upheld, are rights which are often not relevant to women's daily lived experiences. Indeed, taking this point one step

further, the leaders of the women's organizations have discovered that while human rights are claimed to be universal and applicable to all, in actual practise it is rather the rights of men which have been enshrined and protected. This is undoubtedly a strong assertion to make, and it needs to be considered in more detail how the collective political practises of the women's organizations can be understood to challenge the claim to universality in human rights.

In developing the activities which comprise the three broad types of work in formation and skills training the women's organizations have been forced to consider why it is that women have not historically participated in politics in large numbers. This is to say that in striving to do formation and skills training the leaders of the women's organizations have had to develop a gender analysis of women's political location and social situation in Guatemala. This analysis has entailed the realization that the social construction of gender has functioned to keep women out of the public sphere, and concomitantly, out of politics.

The issues which the women's organizations have identified as being important to women of the popular classes (as reflected in the formation and skills training activities discussed in Chapter Three) are those which pertain to women's experiences of economic crisis and the structures of patriarchy as lived through their gendered roles in the family: economic survival; childcare; illiteracy; healthcare; violence against women; etc. Because they inhibit women's political participation --and consequently, women's meaningful citizenship-- addressing such issues is imperative if this situation is to change.

Through their work the women's organizations have come to understand that in addition to political and civil rights women of the popular classes also need the guarantee of basic socio-economic rights in order to become citizens. That is, they need a minimal level of education, food and fuel, shelter, employment, and medical care if they are to have the time, interest, and well-being necessary to participate politically. In the actual practise of human rights, however, it is precisely this category of basic socio-economic rights which is the least recognized and respected. While the covenants which form the basis of international human rights law include socio-economic rights it is nonetheless the case that the political and civil rights expressed in the UDHR are those rights which have generated the most international recognition and support.

What this means for women of the popular classes in Guatemala, and the women's organizations which seek to foment their capacity to participate politically, is that the human rights which would actually enable their political participation are those which are the least respected internationally. The broader implication is that the collective political practise of the women's organizations of building citizenship capacity exposes as gendered, and concomitantly, exclusionary, the idea embedded in the traditional understanding of human rights that civil and political rights are the rights most appropriate to safeguard and ensure citizenship.

This is to argue, then, that in the doctrine of human rights both civil and political rights are enshrined as fundamental. While the subject identity of human rights is supposedly the pre-political "human", in actual fact these rights serve to protect the political identity of citizen. In effect, in the discourse of human rights political and civil

rights serve as guarantees of political participation, which in the present historical moment of democratization means also citizenship. Not only does the political practise of the women's organizations disclose that the subject identity of human rights is a citizen, but moreover it also serves to illuminate that this citizen is embodied as male. Their realization --discovered through political practise-- that the human rights which uphold citizenship are not those most necessary to women's political participation holds the implication that these rights are gendered in their conception. Thus, the identity assumed in the idea of civil and political rights is both a citizen subject and a male subject. The practise of human rights as it has evolved in the post-war era is then gender-biased to the extent that these rights are oriented to the needs of the male citizen.

That human rights are gendered is only further highlighted by the awareness contained in the work of the women's organizations that women of the popular classes live their lives in the private sphere. This means that the subject identity of citizen --both conceptually embedded and legally encoded-- in human rights cannot be embodied by women because women's lives and gendered identity have been socially constructed in terms of the private sphere of the family. As the discussion in Chapter One of women's caregiving and caretaking work illustrated, women in Guatemala have not historically occupied the public sphere. Civil and political rights are thus not only irrelevant to women because they do not speak to their socio-economic needs for security, etc. They are also irrelevant to women because they are rights which are constructed in terms of, or in relation to, the public sphere --from which women are absent as a result of the social construction of their gender. In effect, civil and political rights guarantee men the

freedoms, equality, and security necessary to their practise of citizenship in the public sphere.

This gendering of human rights which arises from their spatial character is also exposed by the work of the women's organizations to address the issue of violence against women. To appreciate this contribution of the work of the women's organizations, it is important to consider that their work around the issue of violence against women is a piece of their larger project to redefine the way in which the idea of "peace" is being constructed in the negotiation process. The women's organizations have attempted to generate public awareness that violence in Guatemala, and consequently, human rights violations, encompass more than the massacres, the murders, and the assassinations perpetrated by the state against the populace, and indeed, have another face: this is the non-state violence perpetrated in the private sphere by men against women, and the violence against women entailed in the feminization of impoverishment stemming from the deep socio-economic crisis gripping Guatemala. From this perspective the women's organizations contend that peace, if it is to be lasting, must be premised on socio-economic justice and must recognize all dimensions of violence.

The leaders of the women's organizations in Guatemala know that human rights as practised in the international system is of very little help in challenging violence against women. This reflects their awareness that in the actual policing of human rights, violations of human rights are generally understood as state transgressions against the male citizen occurring in the public sphere. In contrast, the global problem of non-state violence perpetrated by men against women --often in the private sphere-- has gone

unrecognized and unpunished. Entailed then, in the work of the women's organizations around the issue of violence against women is a further illumination that the practise of human rights has been gender-biased. This is because such violence occurs in the realm of the private sphere --the socially constructed location of women's lives and the socially constructed domain of men's power-- and is therefore invisible and beyond the realm of public concern and scrutiny. In that women are guaranteed the human right to personal security in international law it is clear that this gender-specific violence constitutes a violation of women's human rights yet it has remained outside the purview of the practise of human rights. In their efforts to make visible violence against women the work of the women's organizations thus exposes that violations of human rights are neither universally recognized nor condemned.

In conclusion I have highlighted several ways in which the work of the women's organizations exposes that in the practise of human rights the identity promoted and protected is not the neutral category of human suggested by the claim of universality, but rather is the embodied and engendered male subject. The collective political practise of women's organizations in Guatemala can thus also be seen as contributing to the current effort of feminists to challenge the conventional discourse of human rights. One concrete outcome of this movement to make visible and to challenge women's subordinate relation to human rights has been the elaboration in the United Nations of the Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Signed in 1979 the CEDAW promotes a recognition of the specificity of women's rights and it reflects the work of the international women's movement during the UN Decade for Women. While this

decade has proved to be of great significance in fomenting a movement for women's rights the struggle women face in achieving effective enjoyment of their human rights is ongoing. This is reflected in the recent effort of women to force onto the international agenda the issue of women's rights at the 1993 World Conference.⁴¹

Returning to the situation in Guatemala, it should be noted that challenging the gender-biases in the practise of human rights --and the related issues about the claim of universality-- is not a predominant political concern for either the women's organizations or the popular movement more generally. As the analysis of the political imperatives posed by democratization for all actors in the popular movement illustrated, there are strategies which are viewed as more pressing in the current conjuncture. And it is certainly the case that the human rights work of GAM, CONAVIGUA, and FAMDEGUA --which is focused particularly on civil and political rights-- remains crucially important. Some of the more feminist women in the cadre of leaders are aware of the potential political significance of the gender issues in the discourse of human rights that their work exposes.⁴² Only time will tell, however, whether, and to what extent, the popular movement, more generally, will take on the gender issues posed by the collective political practise of the women's organizations.

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

Introduction.

I would like to discuss in more detail than is provided in the Introduction the research design and methodology of the empirical field research upon which the dissertation is based. In writing this it is my hope that other researchers may benefit from my "lessons learned" in Guatemala.

I first outline briefly how I came to be interested in the topic of women and politics in Guatemala, and the choice of women's organizations as the unit of analysis for my research. This is followed by an overview of my research activities. Finally, I discuss the issues I confronted in doing the research, those of establishing contact with the women's organizations, gaining trust, my role in the organizations, and finally some of the personal implications of doing this field work.

Background:

I remember both the intellectual fascination and interest as an activist and feminist I experienced some 12 years ago when I first learned about the emergence of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, and the Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM) in Guatemala. At that time what intrigued me most was the manner in which the mothers involved in these human rights groups had been politicized. Many of them had challenged the social construction of their gender roles in society as apolitical by politicizing the social relations of reproductive work for which they were responsible. In effect, many of these women came to protest human rights violations in their

respective countries precisely because of their emotional relationship to a husband or other member of their family

I wondered then about the limitations and opportunities for further political formation these women would come to face as a result of this initial impetus to their politicization. I also wondered about the personal costs and consequences which these women would encounter by having defined their political posture in terms of a disappeared relative. More precisely, I wondered about the personal implications of political denial of the death of a loved and lost one. I could imagine that for the older women involved in the mothers' groups, living in a suspended state of time was perhaps a means to cope, survive, and maintain one's integrity and sense of justice. But what of the young women, those like the leader of GAM, Nineth Montenegro (then Garcia)? She was a young woman --at the time in her early twenties-- and I wondered what her life would be like when her politics was defined by her refusal to acknowledge the death of her husband?

What I saw as the potential contradictions of women's politicization in GAM also continued to intrigue me and my interest in this general issue laid the foundation for this dissertation. In broad terms I have addressed in this dissertation the questions of the nature and purpose of women's popular political organizations in Guatemala. My initial intent was to investigate GAM, as well as CONAVIGUA, which had appeared on the popular movement scene in Guatemala in the late 1980s. My early field research in 1991 and 1992, however, gave me cause to redefine my unit of analysis.

At that time Nineth Montenegro had withdrawn from public life. As a result of her absence, GAM was painfully hobbling along but had clearly lost its central role in the popular movement and was, in my opinion, not able then to do more than struggle to survive. I remember vividly the time in July, 1992 when I was having lunch with a number of GAM activists in their office in Zone 12. This was already a subdued, dispirited group of people, but when the FAX from FAMDEGUA arrived announcing publicly their formation, an atmosphere somewhere between resignation and despair settled over the them. FAMDEGUA was a rival splinter group from GAM, composed of former key GAM members in personal conflict with other GAM leaders. With respect to CONAVIGUA I spent sufficient time with the women at the national and regional levels of the organization to understand that it was not possible for any outsider to do participant observation field research.

Unit of Analysis:

GAM and CONAVIGUA rapidly gained international attention and support -- especially in solidarity, human rights, and feminist circles-- throughout the second half of the 1980s and through the early 1990s. What my early field work made clear, however, was that during this same period of time there has also emerged in Guatemala a number of women's organizations which remain virtually unknown despite the fact that they have played a vitally important role in the development of the broad strategy of the popular movement as it has struggled to recompose. For these reasons, then, I decided to focus on understanding the politics of these women's organizations with the hope that

my work might generate an international interest in and attention to their work which they rightfully deserve.

To the casual observer the activities of this other constellation of women's organizations may not seem particularly political, in the conventional sense of what is defined by this term. Their work can seem scattered, disorganized, and sporadic, and therefore without a unifying political programme. The content of the work of the women's organizations includes a wide range of activities, and many of these --such as training for women in handicrafts-- may seem to reinforce rather than challenge traditional roles for women and hence may not seem designed to achieve politicization of women. Furthermore, even to the casual observer it is evident that the organizations are not engaged in mass protest actions against the Guatemalan state.

To the observer who has a more intimate understanding of the general politics of the popular movement in Guatemala it is clear, however, that this constellation of women's organizations has recently played an important role in the politics of resistance and the effort of the movement to gain representation in the processes of democratization. I personally became intrigued with the challenge of "making sense" of what they were about politically, that is, of understanding the nature of their political strategy and identifying and analyzing the logic which belies casual observation. For these reasons, then, I decided to investigate the approximately 20 women's organizations based in Guatemala City.

Overview of Field Research Activities:

During the year and a half of field research I conducted in 1992 and 1993 I was extensively involved with CENTRACAP [Centro de Apoyo para las Trabajadoras de Casa Particular (Support Centre for Domestic Workers)], GRUFEPRMEFAM [Grupo Feminino Pro Mejoramiento Familiar (Feminine Group for the Improvement of the Family)], COMFUITAG [Comité de Mujeres FESTRAS/UITA de Guatemala (Women's Committee of the Labour Federation of Food and Allied Workers/International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations of Guatemala)], and GGM [Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres (Guatemalan Women's Group)], and Tierra Viva doing participant observation research. This entailed my involvement in many workshops, seminars, meetings, political fora, and commemorative and celebratory events. I also spent much informal time with the women involved in these organizations as they went about their daily business in an effort to learn to see through their eyes the Guatemala they confront politically. As well, I attended numerous other events and activities undertaken by the entire range of women's organizations.

While such participant observation was my central focus I supplemented this research in several ways. Firstly, I conducted a series of interviews: a general organizational interview with 12 of the women's organizations, an interview with 13 women leaders, interviews with approximately 25 women at the participant level, and interviews with numerous significant political figures within the popular movement more generally. Secondly, I sought to understand the politics of the popular movement and the relationship of the women's organizations to the movement through attendance at the

weekly meetings of the UASP [Unidad de Acción Sindical y Popular (Unity of Labour and Popular Action)], at the time the most important forum of the popular movement, and by attending the wide range of political events organized by the movement. At the time many of these events were organized around the campaign spearheaded by Helen Mack, sister of Myrna Mack, to bring to trial those responsible for the disappearance of the Guatemalan anthropologist, the campaign in support of Rigoberta Menchú's Nobel Peace Prize candidacy, and support for Diana Ortiz, the American nun raped and tortured in Guatemala and seeking prosecution of those responsible through the court system.¹ Thirdly, I investigated the relationships amongst the women's organizations by participating for a short period of time in COAMUGUA [Coordinadora de Agrupaciones de Mujeres Guatemaltecas (Coordination of Guatemalan Women's Groups)], and for a period of eight months in the newly formed Red de Educación Popular para Mujeres (Women's Popular Education Network). Fourthly, I collected written material relating to the women's organizations. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I spent a great deal of time visiting, passing time, and talking informally with women at both the base and leadership levels of all the women's organizations.

When I returned from my field work in Guatemala in August, 1993, I continued my involvement with the Guatemalan popular movement generally, and women's organizing, specifically, through my participation in the Guatemalan Community Network (GCN) in Toronto and Nuestra Voz, the women's group associated with the GCN. While this solidarity work did not formally comprise part of my research it gave me

significant insight into the international character of the popular struggle in Guatemala and led to my analysis of this in Chapter Five.

Establishing Contact:

I arrived in Guatemala in April 1992 with a number of copies of Emilie Smith-Ayala's recently published book, The Granddaughters of Ixmucané.² Prior to leaving I had met with a number of Canadians who were knowledgeable about the politics of the popular movement in Guatemala and of personal conduct issues in this environment. Smith-Ayala's book is a compilation of oral histories and testimonials of Guatemalan women involved in politics and for this reason she had extensive experience with the popular movement. She provided me with letters of introduction to six different women's organizations and gave me signed copies of books to deliver to them.

During the first four months of my field work I approached a number of these organizations with my letter of introduction. This initial contact led to a number of invitations to attend events of the organizations, and in this way I gradually came to meet and introduce myself to representatives of the various women's organizations. I also established contact with several organizations by attending seminars and events of the popular movement and taking the initiative to introduce myself to any woman present. For example, through my attendance at the Workshop on the Human Rights of Displaced Women conducted by the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights, I met and introduced myself to both the women of Mujer de Esperanza and the noted Costa Rican feminist intellectual and activist Dr. Laura Guzmán Stein of the Institute. When my

presence and my work became known within the popular movement several individuals also took a personal interest in what I was doing and took it upon themselves to introduce me to both women and men activists they thought I should meet. In this manner of networking, then, over the course of a year and a half I came to know most women activists in the women's organizations, most key women in the popular movement more generally, and many other activists.

Several comments on my process of establishing contact are here crucial. Firstly, through the course of my field work I came to understand the fundamental importance of both formal introduction and introduction via a known and trusted person. Guatemala is a society which places great emphasis on formal conduct: manners and behaviour which in North American are currently viewed as old-fashioned are still very much respected within the popular movement and characterize personal conduct within the movement itself. While many years of involvement in Guatemala by the international solidarity organizations have taught the popular movement not to expect this type of behaviour from foreigners it is nonetheless very much appreciated and helps to create respect. This is to say, then, that formal methods of establishing contact, such as a letter of introduction from a known individual generally result in a courteous reception.

At the same time I learned that these manners of introduction do not lead automatically to acceptance within an organization. Such an introduction inevitably carries with it the personal and political history of encounter of the individual, organization, or institution providing the introduction: this legacy may or may not be remembered positively, and meaning may be attached to it which may remain unspoken.

In general, I found that the personal introductions that I received from one activist in the popular movement to another facilitated a much quicker entrée into an organization.

A number of the experts I spoke with prior to leaving for Guatemala advised me that I should prepare a statement of purpose (which would include short personal/political and professional/academic biographies) to show to the women's organizations as a way of familiarizing them to my work. In general, it was not my experience that this formality served me well in establishing contact. I had chosen to affiliate myself professionally with CIRMA, a research institute based in Antigua which focuses on historical and anthropological work. Because this institute is run by an American foundation and because of its location outside Guatemala City most activists in the popular movement had little knowledge of or information about CIRMA. Consequently, my affiliation held little significance for them. Furthermore, it was sometimes viewed by members of the movement as pretentious: in their eyes accreditation is achieved through practical, political work in and for the movement itself.

Gaining Trust:

After the first four months of field work I concluded that I could never possibly complete my intended research project in the six months I had initially proposed. By that point I had spent extensive time with the Grupo Feminino Pro Mejoramiento Familiar (GRUFEPROMEFAM [Feminine Group for Family Improvement]) and had established contact with a number of other women's organizations. This exposure taught me that in Guatemala trust is an enormously complex issue. Indeed, distrust and suspicion are the

norm and the very basis for the survival of popular organizations. I realized that in six months I would be very fortunate if I had been able to gain enough confidence with the women leaders to even begin to do the participant observation research I had planned.

I pursued a number of strategies to gain the confidence and trust of the women with whom I wanted to work. For one, I maintained a consistent presence in the organizations and spent a great deal of time working and passing time with them in their offices and accompanying them in their travels. I also displayed a great deal of enthusiasm for menial work and hence fetched bread, looked after children, did photocopying, etc. Thirdly, to the greatest extent possible I promoted solidarity linkages between the women's organizations and organizations in solidarity in Canada: I wrote and presented information about the women's organizations to CUPE through my own local, secured financial support for GRUFEPROMEFAM, assisted in the development of project proposals, spoke to various solidarity groups in Canada about the women's organizations, translated for visiting solidarity activists, wrote popular education material for distribution in Canada, etc.

These strategies were not without problems, however. With respect to maintaining a consistent presence, this became increasingly difficult as I came to know more organizations and as the women activists concomitantly became both possessive about my presence and jealous of the time that I spent with other organizations. This then proved to be one very practical limitation to doing broad research in an environment where trust and confidence are crucial and exceedingly difficult to establish. While my willingness to do menial work was appreciated I was also questioned about what political

contribution I was to make to the women's organizations. My response to this question was to try to explain that my research would lead ultimately to the publication of a book about the work of women's organizations in Guatemala and would in this way serve to generate the international interest and attention these organizations so desperately need. Generally speaking, my response was not perceived as adequate. As activists the women leaders measure contribution in concrete terms, and academic research means very little to them. Their perspective also reflects the fact that the Guatemalan popular movement receives a number of foreigners who are there solely in a solidarity capacity and who frequently have practical or technical skills which are valued. On several occasions the issue of my contribution became quite antagonistic. Some of the women leaders are quite familiar with feminist issues and accused me of appropriating their voices. And a few of them were particularly angry about this because of the fact that as a Canadian I had a strong embassy in Guatemala to protect me while I was in Guatemala, and furthermore, was able to leave at any time while they have no option but to remain in an environment where their personal safety is perpetually at risk.

At times, however, their use of feminist discourse was contradictory, mobilized at convenient times for other purposes. For example, GRUFEPROMEFAM became increasingly demanding about what I was going to do for them as a way of deflecting the real issue they were concerned about which was my close relationship with other women's organizations towards which they felt only animosity. At one point GRUFEPROMEFAM insisted that I conduct a seminar for them on feminism in Guatemala. When I told them that I felt this was an inappropriate thing for me to do

they accused me of not pulling my weight. Subsequently they asked me to develop a series of workshops designed to train women in forming self-help groups. I did this, but my effort was viciously attacked. After my departure from Guatemala they proceeded to implement my series of workshops and use this project to raise international funding.

Finally, with respect to my work to promote solidarity linkages, it became apparent that some activists viewed me as a tool to be used to access international funding. I was questioned very intensely about my personal contacts and connections and it was often expected that I could use these to gain funding. At one point in time this became very difficult for me when it was learned that I was a personal friend of several key individuals in the Canadian embassy.

My Role in the Women's Organizations:

As noted above I was involved to some degree with nearly all of the 20-odd women's organizations with a national political presence in Guatemala City. My main methodological objective was participant observation and I learned that this means, in practical terms, that one cannot schedule research. I learned to approach my research with a "go with the flow" attitude. In fact, this was really the only possible way in the Guatemalan context and cultural environment and allowed many unanticipated opportunities for both participation and observation.

As a consequence I participated in an incredible variety of activities and events. I will cite a few examples to illustrate this. I helped GRUFEPROMEFAM mount a popular theatre production, crocheted little purple purses, did photocopying, returned to

the organizations my efforts of visually recording their events through photographs. I sat in seemingly endless meetings, and attended workshops, seminars, celebrations, etc. I peeled potatoes for potato salad at the house where the CONAVIGUA women's children lived, and attended the confirmation mass of these children. I clipped newspapers, washed dishes, joked laughed, and cried with the women, consumed seemingly endless cups of highly sweetened instant coffee with bread. And I massaged their shoulders when the pressures they faced seemed too much. In other words, I attempted to be with the women, to do what they do and to see Guatemala through their eyes. I did translation, advised on project proposals, developed a mini-workshop for self-help groups, and provided accompaniment, especially to the CONAVIGUA women around the time of their fourth anniversary celebrations. And above all, I talked endlessly with people in order to understand. This happened most productively in all those informal moments of coffee breaks and errands, of bus rides and bathroom breaks. These are moments that can never be planned or scheduled but which proved in the end to have been the most enlightening and informative.

At times I was frustrated by this research. At the personal level it often left me feeling scattered, unorganized, and stretched. As I came to understand the larger political logic and strategies which inform the work of both the women's organizations and the popular movement more generally I also came to a greater acceptance of what seemed at times nothing more than chaos. I now firmly believe that what seemed often to be no more than "stumbling along" was really the only way I could have done the research I intended. This is to say, then, that one simply cannot arrive in Guatemala

with a scientific plan of inquiry and impose it on Guatemalans. It is necessary to work very hard at gaining the confidence of these people, and this work comes to fruition in terms of leading to information in the most unlikely moments. Furthermore, it is only possible to come to an understanding of the Guatemala that these people both love and hate through living the daily reality of their lives along with them

The nature and extent of my participation and the information and knowledge that it generated led me to be very sceptical of the validity of the claims of any research at the popular level based on interviews. Long-term participation leads to the understanding that in Guatemala there are a number of levels of truth. It also leads to the understanding that, in general, the pueblo is extremely sophisticated in its ability to determine what the interviewer wants to hear and in its ability to shape a level of truth to satisfy the interviewers expectations. In my experience this is particularly true of indigenous people generally and, indeed, a large part of their success in mounting "500 years of resistance" is attributable to this sensitivity and attendant skills. At the present moment it is virtually impossible for any foreigner to gain the entrance to and acceptance by the indigenous women's organizations which is necessary to do participant-observation research. As a result the research being done on these organizations remains largely based on interviews. I would insist, then, that it is imperative to be very careful about the conclusions drawn from such interviews until such time when they can be corroborated by more in-depth and participatory research.

Personal Impact of Research:

Given the nature of the field research I conducted it is certainly not surprising that it had many real and deep personal implications for my life, for indeed I was both deeply invested personally in my project as well as politically committed to it. On the positive side I came to count as friends a number of extraordinary Guatemalan women for whom I have the deepest admiration and respect. At the same time, I frequently felt deeply inadequate as I observed what they did and accomplished politically while surviving economically and being mothers. Certainly I felt that the life experiences of many of these women far surpassed my own: consequently, even though we were often of the same age I usually viewed them as older and wiser. I was invited into their homes and allowed on occasion to share a small part of their private home life. I came to know their children and ate tortillas and beans with them. Ultimately, making such friendships has proved to be the most personally satisfying part of the research project.

Several things, however, also made the research project a very difficult one. For one, the manner in which I did the research was highly stressful. Due to the lack of concern with agendas and the "mañana" culture I often walked from my home in Zone Two to Zone One, where the popular movement is institutionally located, feeling a great deal of anxiety. Often I did not know what the day would bring, where I would end up going, and what I would end up doing. Frequently my participation would mean being in places which were dangerous, especially when it entailed being out at night when an informal curfew of seven pm was in effect. To refuse carried the connotation of a lack of political commitment, in that one placed priority in ones' own safety over solidarity

and accompaniment. This choice forced me to confront the issues that all Guatemalans know intimately: those of integrity and commitment to one's political beliefs and convictions in the face of palpable danger and personal risk. I generally chose not to refuse, accepting as I did that my research project was a highly political one which, consequently, entailed personal repercussions.

My anxieties in this regard were only further exacerbated by the chronic stress of being very visibly a foreigner in a city also highly dangerous due to the extreme poverty, prevalence of street gangs, and high level of common crime. Furthermore, not being a person naturally gifted with languages I also experienced a good deal of stress about having to constantly work in Spanish. Although I did this competently it was nonetheless chronically tiring for me. I often had to deal with the sexual overtures of men in the popular movement, and these situations were always dreadful. In most cases the men were married and frequently I knew their spouses: I had a hard time reconciling their advances with their simultaneous claim to support the women's sector. This was, however, only one of the contradictions of Guatemalan society that I had to learn to deal with.

Finally, I often had to deal with conflict and tension between myself and the women's organizations owing to the fact, that like it or not, I too had become a political actor (needless to say, playing a minute part) within the popular movement. Several of the women's organizations did not like the fact that I was openly involved with all the various organizations to a greater or lesser degree. Having a foreigner involved in one's organizations is quite coveted because of the belief that such a connection may lead to

sources of international funding. Thus, in spreading myself amongst all the women's organizations I irritated some activists. In particular, the leadership of GRUFEPROMEFAM was very unhappy about my involvement with COMFUITAG and what had been a very warm and close relationship soured and eventually was severed by mutual agreement. As well I generated some distrust by refusing to align myself with any particular organization. Generally speaking non-alignment is not tolerated in Guatemala and some of the women leaders could not believe that I would not carry "secrets" between organizations.

At the same time, however, when it was learned that I was involved in a personal relationship with a well-known activist in the popular movement who could orient me to the politics of the movement I gained entrance to Tierra Viva which had previously made clear that I was not welcome. This personal relationship changed my status from "outsider" to "insider" overnight. This entrée was, however, mitigated by the distrust my personal relationship generated in other organizations. While at this point I was generally viewed as an insider it was also assumed that I was also aligned, the consequence of which was a censored rapport on the part of some of the women's organizations.

When I returned from Guatemala I continued on my mission to understand Guatemalan politics, and the popular movement. I was very actively involved in the Guatemalan Community Network (GCN) in Toronto for a year and a half, and was a central member in Nuestra Voz, the women's group associated with the GCN. My time spent with the GCN Guatemalans in Toronto led to my understanding of the issues and

realities facing Guatemalan activists living in exile. Through this work, I came to understand better the international character of the Guatemalan popular movement and the political and ideological complexity of doing solidarity with revolutionary forces.

ENDNOTES: INTRODUCTION

1. This dissertation is concerned with popular women's organizations and does not attempt to consider professional middle-class women's organizations such as associations of women journalists, and so forth.

While the Grupo Feminino Pro Mejoramiento Familiar --GRUFEPROMIFAM-- (Feminine Group for the Improvement of the Family), a women's organization related to the labour movement, did form in 1986, it was between 1988 and 1992 that organizing really took off. In 1988 three women's organizations formed: Tierra Viva (Living Earth), COMFUITAG (Women's Committee of the Labour Federation of Food and Allied Workers/International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations of Guatemala), CONAVIGUA (National Coordination of Guatemalan Widows).

In 1989 Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres (GGM [Guatemalan Women's Group]) officially formed after a year of preliminary work. In 1991 four women's organizations formed: CENTRACAP (Support Centre for Domestic Workers); Niña Madre (Child Mothers); the women's unit of the NGO IDESAC (Institute for the Socio-Economic Development of Central America); and, after two years of preliminary work, Mujer y Vida (Women and Life).

In 1992, another four women's organizations formed: Comisión Nacional de Mujeres (National Women's Commission); the Women's Committee of UNSITRAGUA (Unidad Sindical de Trabajadores Guatemaltecos [Guatemalan Workers Labour Unity]); Mujer de Esperanza (Women of Hope); and FAMDEGUA (Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos de Guatemala [Guatemalan Families of the Detained and Disappeared]). In addition the following four groups formed (no dates available): the women's unit of the NGO FUNDESCO; Colectivo de Estudios Feministas (Feminist Studies Collective); Comité de Mujeres de Primero de Mayo (Women's Committee of the First of May labour federation); Superandonos Juntas (Overcoming Together).

2. Ana Isabel García and Enrique Gomáriz, *Mujeres centroamericanas: Efectos del conflicto*, vol. 2 (San José, Costa Rica: FLACSO, 1989), 216.

3. For an overview of this general trend towards women's organizing through Central America, and a discussion of differences between various countries in the region, see Ana Isabel García and Enrique Gomáriz, "Las mujeres definen el futuro," in *América central hacia el 2000: Desafíos y opciones* (Caracas: Editorial Nueva Sociedad and UNITAR/PROFAL, 1989), 137-152.

4. Susanne Jonas notes women's organizing as one of the "novel" features of the new face of the popular movement, but provides no theoretical explanation of the phenomenon. Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels, Death Squads, and U.S. Power* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 187. Similarly, Joan Font notes the "important growth of women's participation" as a major feature of the popular movement in the second half of the 1980s, but again offers no understanding of this growth. Font, "Political Actors in Change: Popular Guatemalan Movements in a Context of Limited Liberalization," paper presented at the 17th Latin American Studies Association Conference, September 1992.

5. In the academic literature Jennifer G. Schirmer has written most extensively on these groups. See: "'Those Who Die for Life Cannot be Called Dead': Women and Human Rights Protest in Latin America" in *Surviving Beyond Fear: Women, Children and Human Rights in Latin America*, ed. Margorie Agosin (Fredonia, NY: White Pine Press, 1993), and "The Seeking of Truth and the Gendering of Consciousness: The CoMadres of El Salvador and the CONAVIGUA Widows of Guatemala" in *'Viva': Women and Popular Protest in Latin America*, eds. Sarah A. Radcliffe and Sallie Westwood (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

6. "De-Constructing Dualism: Citizenship and Nation in Canada", 7.

7. "Citizenship and Equity: Variations Across Time and Space", Paper prepared for the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, Revised April 1991, 5-6.

8. While Jenson emphasizes how the transition from feudalism to capitalism is integrally related to citizenship, it is important to highlight the dialectical nature of this relationship. For, in effect, the consolidation of capitalist social relations of production has in large measure been realized through the rights of citizenship; first civil and political rights, and later social rights.

For example, civil rights have been crucial to the formation of the labour market, as these rights establish the individual with the rights and freedom to enter into contracts. Political rights signal the breakdown of the feudal order of social relations and the related political system where participation is a privilege of the elite: this hierarchical system is superseded by one built on the ideas of universal suffrage and equality. As it became increasingly apparent that liberty could lead to excessive inequalities there emerged demands for social rights founded on the principle of equity to alleviate this situation. Jane Jenson, "The Model Citizen? Women in the New Europe," paper presented for the Social Science Research Council Workshop on A New Europe: Rethinking the Collective Responses to Change, Center for European Studies, Harvard University, 1992, 9-10. In this paper Jenson is concerned to identify the recognition of distinctions in the identity of the citizen in T.H. Marshall's historical sociology of rights.

9. The brief "ten years of spring" from 1944 to 1954, when two civilian governments were in power, democratically elected with substantial middle-class support, was an exceptional period compared to the norm of dictatorship and rule by force. Despite the nostalgia that many active participants in the popular movement feel for this democratic moment, the "ten years of spring" was not able to deeply erode the tradition of oligarchic rule, dictatorship, and repression.

10. Given the absence of any meaningful sense of citizenship in Guatemala it is not surprising that popular political participation has been pursued through extra-legal methods which sometimes push the boundaries of civil disobedience into violence (burning buses, etc.). Given the fact that there are no meaningful citizenship rights to claim, it is also not surprising that the participants attempt to avoid the possibility of identification by wearing hoods, masks, etc.

11. Indeed, in 1988 Americas Watch concluded that "[w]hile the numbers of political killings are lower than in the early 1980s --a time of great carnage-- the apparatus of state terror remains intact and undiminished in strength". Americas Watch, *Closing the Space: Human Rights in Guatemala*, November 1988, 104. Cited in T. Barry, *Guatemala: A Country Guide*.

12. It has not only been continued to the present day but has also peaked at certain moments such as in 1988 when at least seven USAC students were kidnapped and murdered. Tom Barry, Guatemala: A Country Guide, 146. This was a moment when the popular movement was demonstrating success in reformation. See S. Jonas, The Battle for Guatemala, 182.

13. See, for example, Jonas' summary discussion of the Central American Peace Process in The Battle for Guatemala, 217-18.

14. This is not to imply that the moment for armed insurgency had passed. S. Jonas discusses, for example, the "resurgence of a revolutionary project" in the late 1980s. The Battle for Guatemala, 189-93. The URNG also recognized, however, the impossibility of seizing state power according to old models, and hence also began pushing for a political solution, viz., a negotiated end to the armed conflict. Jonas summarizes the changed perception toward strategy which had emerged by the early 1990s as follows:

In contrast to "reform versus revolution" formulations of the 1960s (when reformism was perceived as the enemy of revolution) or the late 1980s (when reformism came to be perceived by some as the only remaining route, since revolution had "failed"), the conditions may now exist for a convergence, as basic demands for democracy and social justice take on a revolutionary significance and require many forms of struggle for their realization. 236.

Furthermore, despite the initial exclusion of the URNG from the national dialogue, this changed in the early 1990s. The present negotiations are between the URNG, the government, and the military, while civil society, organized in the ASC, has attempted to also gain representation in the process.

15. James Painter states:

The fact that the army had largely dictated the rationale for the elections clearly established the limits on Cerezo's room for manoeuvre. He himself estimated that he would only have 30 per cent of the power when he took office, and 70 per cent when he left. But there was just a hope that he would interpret his massive majority as a plebiscite for change. After all, his party enjoyed widespread internal and international support Instead Cerezo opted for caution and staying in government. At his inaugural speech he pleaded for time and understanding to help him consolidate civilian power after 30 years of disastrous military rule. But just six months after his victory, most observers were already arguing that he had 'missed the boat' Cerezo clearly made it his priority to reach consensus with the business community and with the faction of the army which was prepared to allow him to stay in office. Guatemala: False Hope. False Freedom (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations and Latin American Bureau), 1987 (updated edition 1989), 85.

Painter goes on to discuss in detail Cerezo's relationship with the military and the ongoing human rights violations during his government. 85-109.

16. This is a highly political term, especially within the context of the popular movement. Literally pueblo translates into English as "the masses" or "the people". While it carries both of these related meanings in Guatemala, the popular movement also assigns a political connotation to the "people", in that pueblo is articulated as the people against whom the systematic repression has been directed and as the people united in resistance to oppression and domination. This significance is captured in the rallying cry so frequently heard at political events and demonstrations of the popular movement: "El pueblo unido jamás será vencido". This translates as "the people, united, will never be defeated!" and reflects the feeling deeply rooted in actual experience that only through unified and mass popular resistance will liberalization ever be democratized. Consequently, because this term has such emotional resonance in the political project of the popular movement I have chosen to use it in Spanish in order to signify that its political meaning cannot be captured in a literal translation.

17. D. Moreno discusses the complex nature of the internationalizing strategy which accompanied the Arias peace plan for the Central American region. The Struggle for Peace, 134. He emphasizes that ultimately the peace process "underscored the United States' power in Central America", and its support was crucial. He notes that

[a]lthough many Central America leaders viewed the accords as Central America's second declaration of independence, the [Esquipulas] accords were only implemented after the Bush administration endorsed the peace process.... President Bush's decision to abandon the military option in Central America created the political space necessary.... The Reagan administration had previously blocked all efforts to negotiate an end to the conflict. 135.

18. Mario Lungo Uclés, "Building an Alternative: The Formation of a Popular Project" in *The New Politics of Survival: Grassroots Movements in Central America*, ed. Minor Sinclair (New York: The Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean (EPICA) and Monthly Review Press, 1995), 153-54.

19. Two important organizations based in the United States are NISGUA (Network in Solidarity with Guatemala) and US/GLEP (United States/Guatemala Labour Education Project).

20. For example, in a national referendum held in January 1994 and initiated by President Carpio de León, as well as in the congressional elections held in August 1994, the popular movement urged Guatemalans not to vote. Weekly News Update on the Americas, No. 237, 14 August 1994, 5-6.

21. Recently the ASC wrote in a working document/proposal for consensus:

To strengthen civil power it is necessary to consolidate rule of law and this depends on the correct functioning of those actors which conform the system of the administration of justice. Nevertheless, until now, [this system] has only served to cover up impunity. (My translation). Fortalecimiento del Poder Civil y Función del Ejército en una Sociedad Democrática: Tema Sustantivo Numero Cuatro (Guatemala: Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil, September 1994), 59.

22. Ms. Harbury is the American wife of a guerilla leader, Commander Efraín Bámaca Velásquez, who was kidnapped and killed by the military. Through Ms. Harbury's work to bring American state and diplomatic pressure on Guatemala a court order has now been issued for the exhumation of the grave in which her husband is presumed to be buried. The special prosecutor assigned to this case, Julio Arrango Escobar, has faced significant opposition, having had documents stolen from his car and finally being removed from the case owing to military pressure. Weekly News Update on the Americas, No. 281, 18 June 1995, 2.22.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER ONE

1. Two key collections in this literature are: Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds. *Democracy in Developing Countries vol. 4, Latin America*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1989); and, Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead, eds. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*, 4 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).
2. There is, however, some disagreement in the literature that democratization --understood in terms of regime form-- is the most helpful beginning point for analysis. See: James M. Malloy and Mitchell Seligson, eds., *Authoritarians and Democrats: Regime Transition in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987); Ronald H. McDonald and J. Mark Ruhl, *Party Politics and Elections in Latin America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989); and, Robert Wesson, Introduction and Conclusion to *Politics, Policies, and Economic Development in Latin America*, ed. Robert Wesson (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1984).
3. This is reflected in the extent to which the work of Robert Dahl is cited, especially *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).
4. See, for example Alfred Stepan, "State Power and the Strength of Civil Society in the Southern Cone of Latin America" in *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. P.B. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, and T. Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 317-43.
5. See: L. Diamond, et al., *Democracy in Developing Countries*.
6. See: Paul W. Drake and Eduardo Silva, Introduction to *Elections and Democratization in Latin America, 1980-1985*, eds. Paul W. Drake and Eduardo Silva (San Diego: Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, and Institute of the Americas, 1986); and, John A. Booth, "Elections and Democracy in Central America: A Framework for Analysis," in *Elections and Democracy in Central America*, eds. John A. Booth and M.A. Seligson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 7-39.
7. Most analysts of Guatemala --and more generally, Central America-- agree that the approach is not helpful. For example, see: J. Booth and M.A. Seligson, eds. *Elections and Democracy in Central America*; Gordon Bowen, "Prospects for Liberalization by Way of Democratization in Guatemala," in *Liberalization and Redemocratization in Latin America*, eds. G.A. Lopez and M. Stohl (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1987), 33-55; Jim Handy, "Resurgent Democracy and the Guatemalan Military," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 18 (1986): 383-408; Susanne Jonas, "Contradictions of Guatemala's 'Political Opening'", *Latin American Perspectives* 15 (1988): 26-46.
8. For a notable exception to this disregard of the state see: Evelynne Huber Stephens, "Capitalist Development and Democracy in South America," *Politics and Society* 17, no. 3 (1989): 281-352.

9. This insight stems from Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "On the Characterization of Authoritarian Regimes in Latin America," in *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*, ed. D. Collier (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 38.

10. For a notable exception to this lack of concern for new, non-traditional political actors see: Scott Mainwaring and Eduardo Viola, "New Social Movements, Political Culture, and Democracy: Brazil and Argentina in the 1980s," *Telos* 61 (1984): 17-52.

11. The argument made below represents a highly synthesizing analysis of the Marxist debate on the state which developed through the 1970s and 1980s. Some of the key contributors to this debate --especially with respect to the question of relative autonomy-- were Ralph Miliband, Nicos Poulantzas, Claus Offe, and Fred Block. For a good guide to this debate see: Martin Carnoy, *The State and Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

12. In most instances, this understanding is intellectually indebted to the work of Antonio Gramsci. His *Selections from Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971) has been particularly influential.

13. In making these points about the state I am drawing in general terms on the later work of Nicos Poulantzas, and in particular on his understanding of the state as a class state where the state is a condensation of class relations. See, for example: *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (London: New Left Books, 1975); and, *State, Power, Socialism*, Patrick Camiller, trans. (London: New Left Books, [1978] 1980).

14. In making this point I am drawing on Claus Offe's work which represents the capitalist state as one which acts to aggregate the collective interests of capital primarily by ensuring accumulation and working against the tendency in capitalism to decommodification. See, for example: Claus Offe and Volker Ronge, "Theses on the Theory of the State," *New German Critique* 6 (1975): 139-47, rpt. in *Classes, Power, and Conflict*, eds. A. Giddens and D. Held (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 249-56.

15. In the Marxist debate on the state C. Offe and V. Ronge early on signalled the importance of considering the institutional level: "Theses on the Theory of the State". Later Fred Block took this interest in a different direction, by drawing from Weber in his emphasis on state power as rooted in control over the means of violence. "Beyond Relative Autonomy: State Managers as Historical Subjects," in *Socialist Register*, eds. R. Miliband and J. Saville (London: Merlin Press, 1980), 227-42.

16. My understanding of the exceptional state derives from Nicos Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship* (London: New Left Books, 1974), and in particular "The Political Crisis: Fascism and the Exceptional State", 57-64.

17. These laws were: encomienda which transferred the crown's right to tribute to an individual as a reward for service to the crown; repartimiento, a system of forced labour; and reducción, the forced centralization of the scattered indigenous population. Jim Handy, *Gift of the Devil*:

A History of Guatemala (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1984), 21-23.

18. Indigo and cochineal were natural dyes needed by the British textile industry.

19. These developments reflected the significance of coffee to the Guatemalan economy, which cannot be underestimated. By 1880 Guatemala was the world's fourth largest producer of coffee. While Guatemala's economy is today somewhat more diversified, coffee remains one of its most important exports.

20. As Jim Handy states:

[t]he Vagrancy Law required landless peasants to work for an employer 150 days a year while those with some land were required to work 100 days. The vast majority of the Indian population of the highlands and most of the *ladino* peasants were required to work for over three months of the year, enough time to ensure labourers for the harvest. *Gift of the Devil*, 98.

21. This reorientation is indicated by the fact that by 1940 90% of Guatemala's exports were destined for the American market. Handy, *Gift of the Devil*, 94. For a more general discussion of American involvement in the Central American region see: Dario Moreno, *The Struggle for Peace in Central America* (Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 1994), especially ch. 1, "The Limits of Sovereignty", 1-22.

22. At the time Guatemala was second only to Honduras as a world producer of bananas. Peter Calvert, *Guatemala: A Nation in Turmoil* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), 131

23. Christie Gombay notes that "[b]anana, by 1966, accounted for only 2 percent of total exports, and only after the United Fruit Company had sold out to Del Monte, did they begin to recover reaching 6.8 percent in 1973". "The Popular Church in Guatemala: The Silent Voice", M.A. Thesis, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, September 1988, 16.

24. Through the extensive and excessive use of capital intensive inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides extraordinarily high yields were realized and helped produce an economic boom in the country.

25. The impact of this expropriation of land on the population was further exacerbated by the fact that this period was also one of rapid population growth: 3.1% annually between 1960 and 1980 in a largely rural population (62% in 1980). John Weeks, *The Economies of Central America* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985), 141.

26. Under pressure from the Confederación Nacional Campesina de Guatemala (CNCG [National Peasant Confederation of Guatemala]), Arbenz was forced to address the question of land reform and in 1952 introduced Decree 900 to "eliminate all feudal type property in rural areas, abolish antiquated relations of production, especially work servitudes, and the remnants of slavery, such as *encomiendas*". The land reform was conceived as the way to transform the Guatemalan

agricultural sector into a small-scale capitalist one dominated by peasants producing for the market. The political objectives of the land reform were threefold. First, it was designed to appease the anti-imperialist, anti-US elements of the bourgeoisie and petite-bourgeoisie by attacking the multinational UFCO from whom 387,000 acres were expropriated with compensation. Second, Decree 900 was an assault on the coffee oligarchy, the feudal element, since the decree stated that expropriation of holdings over 223 acres lying idle would also be included in the land reform. And third, it was designed to win the support of the peasantry in Guatemala and defuse the growing support for the Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajadores (PGT [Guatemalan Workers' Party]) in certain regions of Guatemala. R.M. Brown, *Gustavo Gutierrez* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1971), 19.

27. For a detailed discussion of the role of American interests in Guatemala's political and economic history since the time of Ubico, see: Saul Landau, *The Guerrilla Wars of Central America: Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993), 148-204. See also Dario Moreno, *Struggle for Peace*, 13-16, for another view on the evolution of American concerns in the region.

28. Xabier Gorostiaga and Peter Marchetti, "The Central American Economy: Conflict and Crisis," in *Crisis in Central America: Regional Dynamics and U.S. Policy in the 1980s*, ed. Nora Hamilton, et al. (Boulder London: Westview Press, 1988), 121-22.

29. Piero Gleijeses. "Perspectives of a Regime Transformation in Guatemala," in *Political Change in Central America: Internal and External Dimensions*, eds. Wolf Grabendorff, Heinrich-W. Krumwiede, and Jorg Todt (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984), 129.

30. For an overview of the general nature of economic crisis afflicting Central America which supports the argument presented here, see: X. Gorostiaga and P. Marchetti, "The Central American Economy", 121-35. The authors state:

Our first hypothesis is that, given the way they are structured and the way they function in the international market, the Central American economies are not viable, regardless of whether their governments are of the left or of the right. Central America's economic recovery therefore requires not only (1) peace, (2) an end to restricted democracies, and (3) the social reforms that the dominant classes refused to make earlier, but also (4) a new form of regional integration and (5) a new mode of insertion by the region as a whole in the international market by way of agro-industrialization and the diversification of exports. What makes the crisis in Central America especially intense is not only that it followed three decades of steady growth but, above all, the particular vulnerability of the region's countries resulting from their participation in the international market as exporters of agricultural products. Their economies thus became overly vulnerable to the cycles of the world capitalist economy (p. 121).

31. Armas quickly oversaw a wholesale return of land expropriated under the Agrarian Reform Law.

32. Royce Q. Shaw, *Central America: Regional Integration and National Political Development* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), 51.

33. C. Gombay notes:

The Central American Bank for Economic Integration ... a conduit for U.S. capital, loaned funds to sectors of the Guatemalan bourgeoisie to encourage import-substitution industrialization. The first tire factory in Guatemala was quickly followed by a steel plant, a petrochemical complex, and a Kellogg's cereal plant. Throughout the sixties, industrial production increased by 10 percent annually and by 1971, 81 percent of all U.S. investment in Central America was in Guatemala. "The Popular Church in Guatemala", 16.

See also René Poitevin, *El Proceso de Industrialización en Guatemala* (San Jose: EDUCA, 1977).

34. For a discussion of the disjuncture between ECLA's ideas for integration and the political and economic conditions of Central America at the time, see Edelberto Torres-Rivas, "The Central American Crisis and the Common Market," in *Crisis in Central America: Regional Dynamics and U.S. Policy in the 1980s* (Boulder and London: 1988), 138-39.

35. One of the first two agreements signed by the five Central American countries in 1958 was the Agreement on Central America Integration Industries, "which was intended to help achieve a more or less equitable distribution of the benefits derived from trade." Stuart I. Fagan, *Central American Economic Integration: The Politics of Unequal Benefits*, Institute of International Studies Research Series, no. 15 (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California: 1970), 1.

Although the reasons why this scheme never got off the ground (only two industries were established) are complex, the influence of the US was a determining factor. Proposed by ECLA, this integration strategy was based on the principles of gradual integration, reciprocal industrialization, and industrial development based on regional planning. However, the combination of the US's burgeoning interest in opening up Central America for trade and investment for US corporations, the US desire to defend against the perceived internal Communist threat, and the desire to counter ECLA's influence in Central America led the US to offer \$100 million in assistance funds if the Central American states adopted a programme suitable to US interests.

See also Susanne Jonas, who argues that the US fear of the "internal Communist threat" was really the fear of "another Guatemala". She also notes that the desire of the US to reduce ECLA's influence in Central America stemmed from a political-philosophical dispute between the two: the US viewed ECLA's tenet that investment decisions should be based on planning as overly statist, tending toward socialism, and hence dangerous. "Masterminding the Mini-Market: U.S. Aid to the Central American Common Market", excerpted and abridged from *NACLA* 7, no. 5 (May-June), 1973, rpt. in *Revolution in Central America*, ed. Stanford Central America Action Network (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), 157-59.

36. For a discussion of the weak role played by the state and local capital in the failure of the CACM see E. Torres-Rivas, "The Central American Crisis and the Common Market", 144. The author states:

Since Central American private capital was not only limited but also timid about making medium or long term investments, the financing of new industry became a major problem, and there was strong competition among governments to attract foreign capital. Just as there was never a regional industrial policy, neither was there a common policy on direct foreign investment. In the absence of such a policy, the freedom of movement of foreign capital became almost anarchic, demonstrating the absence of nationalism and bourgeois consciousness among political elites.

37. For a brief overview of the tensions between the ECLA and US visions of the common market see Luis Díaz Müller, "La integración en centroamérica: La liebre o el ciervo?" in *Centroamérica: Desafíos y perspectivas* (Mexico, DF: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1984), 93-98.

38. The regional development policy of ISI led to the establishment of an increasing number of assembly plants, with little value being added in processing. At the same time, the common external tariff deprived the member governments of their traditional instrument --the tariff-- to deal with trade imbalances. As well, by the mid-1960s, the region was experiencing a deterioration in the terms of trade for its exports. In combination, these factors caused severe fiscal and balance-of-payments crises for all CACM members.

39. Weeks, *The Economies*, 131. He notes, however, that "[i]t is open to question whether this represented a gain to the multinationals."

40. Taking a longer-term view which does not see the CACM as having collapsed by 1970, E. Torres-Rivas sees some positive aspects to regional integration and argues that in the late 1980s there was still significant political will in the region for integration. Torres-Rivas, "The Central American Crisis and the Common Market", 146, 148.

41. For a brief opinion on the current state of regional integration see Federico Alvarez Fernández, "Economic Integration in the Region" in *Central America After the Crisis*, Institute of Latin American Studies Conference Papers, edited proceedings of a conference held 30 November-1 December 1992 by the Institute of Latin American Studies, London, in conjunction with Canning House (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London, 1992), 17-19.

42. This manufacturing was composed mainly of traditional industries such as foodstuffs, beverages, tobacco, textiles, shoes, clothing, wood, furniture, paper, printing, leather, and leather products. In the 1950s these products accounted for 88.4% of all industrial activity but declined to 81% by 1970. Marta Ortiz-Buonafina, *The Impact of Import Substitution Policies on Marketing Activities: A Case Study of the Guatemalan Commercial Sector* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1981), 54.

43. The average annual growth rate of manufacturing was: 1960-1965 6.8%; 1965-1970 7.9%; 1970-1975 4.6%; 1975-79 8.0%. Weeks, *The Economies*, 64.

44. Handy, *Gift of the Devil*, 186.

45. X. Gorostiaga and P. Marchetti concur:

The twenty years (1950-1970) of stable economic growth and superficial changes did not bring needed structural changes. The growth, far from being self-sustaining, was artificially engendered by external factors; as import-substitution industrialization was not integrated with agriculture and natural resources, no internal market sufficient to generate its own demand was created. Economic growth over a period of nearly thirty years did not result in the accumulation of funds because resources were concentrated in a small proportion of the population. "The Central American Economy", 121.

46. E. Torres-Rivas, "The Central American Crisis and the Common Market", 139-40.

47. Honduras, in particular, perceived itself to be negatively affected by the common market. Thus the 1962 Common Fiscal Incentives Agreement was never implemented, largely because Honduras --which faced a regional trade deficit in 1963-- felt it was subsidizing the industrial development of the other Central American states. It therefore refused to deposit the protocol without significant revisions. The other governments learned from the tactics Honduras employed to pressure for preferential treatment. As the economic situation in the region grew worse in the late 1960s Costa Rica and Nicaragua also promoted crises within the common market. The integration process thereby gradually became a game of brinkmanship.

48. A number of authors have argued that one of the key reasons for the failure of the CACM was that the member nations refused to undertake the kinds of economic reforms which could lead to sustained, internally-generated growth. S. Jonas states, for example, "The very emphasis on industrialization was evidence of this strategy [to achieve modernization without confronting the existing socioeconomic structures], since it was the form of 'development' which entailed the least possible challenge to vested interests, and which avoided or at least postponed the social upheaval that would necessarily accompany an agrarian reform". "Masterminding the Mini-Market", 155. Isaac Orantes Cohen has concurred: "Those responsible for integration in Central America seemed to have forgotten that if industrial integration is to be a key element in a policy of industrial development, it is necessary to tackle also the problem of agricultural improvement: in fact they tried to avoid the whole issue." *Regional Integration in Central America* (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1972), 86.

Other authors have argued that a key factor in the collapse of the CACM was the extent to which integration issues were manipulated by national governments to avoid addressing domestic concerns and conflicts. See: R. Shaw, *Central America*, 223; and Joseph S. Nye, "Central American Regional Integration," *International Conciliation* 562 (March 1967), rpt. in *International Regionalism*, ed. J.S. Nye (Boston: Little, 1968).

For a discussion of the effort in 1980 to revive regional integration see Comisión Económica Para América Latina (CEPAL) Naciones Unidas, "Evolución de la integración

Centroamericana en 1980" in *Centroamérica: Desafíos y perspectivas* (Mexico, DF: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1984), 61-93.

For a discussion of the challenges facing the revival of regional integration in the context of neo-liberalism, globalization, and the dictates of the IMF, see Alfredo Guerra-Borges, "Los desafíos para la integración centroamericana hacia el 2000" in *América central hacia el 2000: Desafíos y opciones* (Caracas: Editorial Nueva Sociedad and UNITAR/PROFAL, 1989), 175-190.

49. J. Weeks, *The Economies*, 134.

50. Between 1954 to the end of 1957 "direct aid to the Armas government amounted to close to \$100 million. This was during a period when total U.S. aid to all of Latin America was under \$60 million annually." J. Handy, *Gift of the Devil*, 188-89. This bounty continued into the 1960s as the US AID programme was overhauled and "Guatemala became the regional center of the revamped AID program in 1962 and from then on received specially favoured consideration in the allocation of resources within the CACM." Calvert, *Guatemala*, 142. In contrast, the rate of reinvestment by the landowning coffee oligarchy was only 11.5% in the 1960s. J. Handy, *Gift of the Devil*, 192.

51. M. Ortiz-Buonafina, *Import Substitution*, 55.

52. *Ibid.*, 54.

53. Alfredo Guerra-Borges, "Industrial Development in Central America, 1960-1980: Issues of Debate", in *Central America: The Future of Economic Integration*, eds. George Irvin and Stuart Holland (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 49.

54. E. Torres-Rivas suggests that a significant level of production of intermediate goods was achieved. Discussing the period of the 1970s, he states: "The production of non-durable consumption goods also increased and the products were diversified appreciably, but intermediate and metallic and machine industries expanded at rates greater than 9 percent." "The Central American Crisis and the Common Market", 143.

55. Tom Barry, Beth Wood, and Deb Preusch, *Dollars and Dictators: A Guide to Central America* (Albuquerque: The Resource Center, 1982), 37. On *maquiladora* production in Guatemala see: James A. Goldston, *Shattered Hope: Guatemalan Workers and the Promise of Democracy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 47-49; Kurt Peterson, *The Maquiladora Revolution in Guatemala*, Occasional Papers Series 2 (New Haven: Orville H. Schell, Jr. Center for International Human Rights at Yale Law School, 1992); J.P. Perez Sainz and E. Castellanos de Ponciano, *Mujeres y Empleo en Ciudad Guatemala* (Guatemala City: FLACSO, 1991), 67-98.

56. Barry, Wood and Preusch, *Dollars and Dictators*, 38.

57. The exception was Costa Rica. Importantly, five primary products accounted for over 60% of Central America's export earnings in the 1970s. Weeks, *The Economies*, 147, 98.

58. For example, the chemical sector experienced an impressive rate of growth (which Guatemala controlled almost entirely): its proportion in total manufacturing output in the region rose from 6% in 1960 to 16% in 1975. Yet the sector never developed as a supplier to agriculture and manufacturing but rather as a sector to satisfy consumer demand. Weeks, *The Economies*, 136-37.

59. According to P. Calvert, taking the base year of 1980 as 100, though the volume of exports of coffee was up by 10 percent and that of bananas by 34 percent, those of cotton, sugar, and meat had fallen by 53, 60, and 65 respectively, and in terms of the value of exports the picture was one of unrelieved disaster. Declining prices abroad had meant that even with increased production, coffee realized only 70 percent, bananas 101, cotton 91, sugar 64, and meat 80 percent of the 1980 export value" in 1982. *Guatemala*, 138.

60. Weeks, *The Economies*, 80.

61. Guatemala had the largest net direct investment flows of any country in the Central America region. However, the positive ratio of Net Direct Investment to Net Profit Transfers is misleading, for in the case of Guatemala, the vast majority of this investment was the International Nickel Company of Canada, in a nickel-mining project. When operations finally began after much delay in 1977, they never surpassed 20% of capacity and in 1981 production was stopped due to high operating costs and declining international demand. Weeks, *The Economies*, 91, and Calvert, *Guatemala*, 150-51.

62. Romulo Caballeros, "Central America's External Debt: Past Growth and Projected Burden," in *Central America: The Future of Economic Integration*, eds. George Irvin and Stuart Holland (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 127.

63. D. Moreno, *The Struggle for Peace*, 44. The author also goes on to discuss how the cutting off of US military aid "freed the Guatemalan military from the U.S.-imposed constraints that forced the Salvadoran military to run a 'clean' counterinsurgency program in which civilians were no longer systematically eliminated." The author argues that this unfettered freedom of the military goes a long way toward explaining the extreme and unprecedented violence of the counterinsurgency campaign unleashed in Guatemala.

64. R. Caballeros, "Future of Economic Integration," 127.

65. *Ibid.*, 123.

66. Edelberto Torres-Rivas, *Repression and Resistance: The Struggle for Democracy in Central America* (Boulder, San Francisco, and London: Westview Press, 1989), 84. [Originally published as *Centroamérica: La democracia posible* (San José: FLACSO-EDUCA, 1987)].

67. In his very interesting interpretation of this period of crisis in Central America more generally, Marcos Roitman Rosenmann describes the crisis as a crisis of domination. His general argument is that this crisis reflects the contradictions and conflicts between the new

bourgeoisie and the traditional oligarchy, where the new bourgeoisie was unable to implement a project of democracy, and the oligarchy came increasingly dependent on the military to retain power, leading to a tremendous militarization of the region. "Tiempos y espacios en las crisis centroamericana", in *Crisis y militarización en centroamérica* (Madrid: Editorial Revolucion, 1988), 28-46. See also Jorge Mario García Laguardia, "Partidos políticos, orden jurídico y cambios social en Guatemala: La cuadratura del círculo", in *Centroamérica: Desafíos y perspectivas* (Mexico, DF: Universidad nacional Autónoma de México, 1984), 9-13, for an historical discussion of the divisions within the capitalist class in Guatemala.

68. X. Gorostiaga and P. Marchetti summarize the emergence of crisis in the Central American region as follows:

To recapitulate, the dominant classes, concerned mainly with profits curtailed investments, and the investments they did make were damaging to the long-term health of the economy. When the state had to step in to replace these investors, it did so without increasing their taxes. Governments were thus forced to go into debt and run large budget deficits to save their economies, in the process shattering the two most important economic macro balances. The region's foreign debt increased from \$564.1 million in 1970 to \$3.2 billion in 1978. Fiscal deficits rose by 1060 percent in the 1970s, from \$122.9 million to \$1.3 billion. A vicious circle of inflation and monetary imbalances followed. "The Central American Economy", 127.

69. In effect, full blown fiscal and financial crisis coincided with the growing socio-economic effects of import and capital intensive industrial and agrarian development, i.e., increasing poverty, landlessness, malnutrition, all leading to political upheaval.

70. Describing the macro-economic dimension of crisis D. Moreno states:

The debt service burden led to a contraction of the Guatemalan economy. Between 1980 and 1985 the gross domestic product declined 6.2 percent, a figure that translates into an 18.5 percent decline in per capita GDP. In the first five years of the decade, half the growth of the previous decade had been lost, and GDP per capita was at the level of 1971. According to Guatemala's Secretariat of Economic Planning outright unemployment rose from about 2.2 percent in 1980 to 10.5 percent in 1984. Underemployment also increased dramatically. By 1985 it was estimated that 43 percent of the economically active population - that is, one million people-- were either unemployed (10.5 percent) or underemployed (32.9 percent). *Struggle for Peace*, 45.

X. Gorostiaga and P. Marchetti note that between 1978 and 1985 real income per capita dropped by 33 percent in the Central American region bringing Guatemala back to the level of 1972. "The Central American Economy", 119.

71. The organization of industrial labour which blossomed during the "ten years of spring" was dealt a serious blow with the overthrow of Arbenz. Armas immediately cancelled most labour unions and by "late 1955 labour union membership had declined from 100,000 in 1954 to 27,000". J. Handy, *Gift of the Devil*, 186-87.

Through the 1960s and 1970s efforts to reorganize labour were violently suppressed by the military and death squads. Despite such repression, both agricultural and industrial labour have shown surprising resilience, with reorganizing occurring in the Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC [Peasant Unity Committee]), the umbrella labour organization --the Confederación General de Trabajadores de Guatemala (CGTG [General Confederation of Workers of Guatemala]),

and the various guerilla organizations. One particularly important moment came when the miners from the north-west went on strike in late 1977. S. Landau, *Guerrilla Wars*, 177.

Marcos Roitman Rosenmann provides a more general discussion of the development of a "revolutionary popular movement" in the Central American region. Stemming from the progressive militarization of the region, and the underlying inability of the dominant bloc to achieve hegemony or any functioning form of articulation between state power and civil society, there has emerged, in Roitman Rosenmann's view, a situation of a dual power structure:

The rupture, which is now total, between the state, political society, and civil society, has created a scenario determined by the emergence of dual power which presupposes a battle between the dominant bloc and this alternative power of counterhegemonic character. [my translation] "Tiempos y espacios", 47-48.

72. Aguilera Peralta, "The Hidden War: Guatemala's Counterinsurgency Campaign" in *Crisis in Central America: Regional Dynamics and U.S. Policy in the 1980s*, eds. Nora Hamilton et. al. (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1988), 159.

73. Saul Landau describes this as:

the strategy of basing the guerrillas in remote and defensible areas from which they could choose the time and place to attack vulnerable enemy outposts, popularized by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in the Sierra Maestro of Cuba. *Guerrilla Wars*, 161.

74. A. Peralta, "Guatemala's Counterinsurgency Campaign", 155. In her overview of this phase of the armed insurgency in Guatemala, Marta Harnecker describes briefly the constant formation of factions within the major guerilla organizations and concludes:

It is in this way that the ascent of a mass movement in Guatemala in the second half of the decade of the 1970s encountered the revolutionary forces dispersed and incapable of orienting this movement toward the overthrow and destruction of the commanding regime and the seizing of power. The repressive government of Lucas took advantage of this situation to strike harshly against all the [guerilla] organizations equally, with the exception of ORPA which had not yet gone public, and to oppress and attack the Guatemalan pueblo. (my translation) *Pueblos En Armas: Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua* (Mexico: Serie Popular Era, 1984), 237-38.

For a detailed historical overview of the armed insurgency in Guatemala, including a discussion of the influence of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara on the organizations in their early stages of development, see S. Landau, *Guerrilla Wars*, 160-204.

75. E. Torres-Rivas has observed:

In Guatemala ... social struggles and labor organizations grew after 1974, with their actions also focused on urban centers. The 1977 Miners' March from the town of Ixtahuacan to the capital mobilized over 300,000 people. Then came the general strike of August 1978 --ignited by bus fare hikes-- which represented the most significant moment of mass mobilization up to that time. *Repression and Resistance*, 78.

76. E. Torres-Rivas traces the development of this at times uneasy alliance between the capitalist class and the army back to the "ten years of spring", highlighting two significant implications of this decade for Guatemala's subsequent politics. He argues that the overthrow of Arbenz "opened a large period of crisis and instability, which can be considered as a manifestation of the weakness of the dominant class". "Problems of Democracy and Counterrevolution in Guatemala," in *Political Change in Central America: Internal and External Dimensions*, eds. Wolf Grabendorff, Heinrich-W. Krumwiede and Jorg Todt (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984), 115. As a result of the weakness of the capitalist class an estado de excepción (a state confronting a situation of crisis) emerged. Secondly, he argues that the military --for the first time as an institution-- assumed political control in the coup of 1963. This had serious implications: the end to the internal divisions within the armed forces, military intervention as a conscious strategy, and the beginning of counterinsurgency terror. 114-23. He summarizes his argument as follows:

[t]he military has joined with diverse bourgeois interests, so that the appearance of a civilian and political-party structure is maintained. In practice, the top hierarchy of the military operates in direct coordination with the highest representatives of the bourgeoisie. It unites with some and displaces others to form what in fact is the only real political party of the dominant class (p. 122).

Of the political-economic crisis which came to a head in the late 1970s, Torres-Rivas argues: Notwithstanding the nature of the politico-military alliance that in Guatemala explicitly began in 1966 (or perhaps after 1954), the fall of the government of Gen. Fernando Romeo Lucas García in March 1982 was without doubt an expression of crisis. It is a crisis in the interior of the reactionary pact, which exhibits all the weaknesses of the authoritarian model: international isolation and disrepute, administrative corruption, malfeasance in the conduct of public business. The abuses of the government of the Lucas García group raised the level of the contradictions of the Guatemalan political crisis to the point that in March 1982 the fraudulent election results, which always accord victory to a military officer, were not even respected by the military themselves. "Problems of Democracy in Guatemala" (p. 124).

In another discussion of the Central American region more generally Torres-Rivas describes the pattern as a state of emergency. He states:

In Central America, the recomposition of classes had been expressed within the state as a military dictatorship. The army was the only institution that could place itself at the center of the process. This was partly due to the inability of the different factions of the bourgeoisie to reach a stable agreement, but was above

all a response to the uncontrolled irruption of the popular sectors. The region's state of emergency took the form of a counterrevolutionary military dictatorship. It was the military presence --and nothing else-- that gave meaning to the new character of the state.... [I]n Central America the repressive apparatus reconstituted itself in a particular manner and occupied the central nucleus of the state, the epicenter of power. *Repression and Resistance*, 95-96.

77. For a brief overview of this shift in American policy from the Carter to the Reagan administrations, as well as the influence of other international forces in the Central American region, see E. Torres-Rivas, *Repression and Resistance*, 102-104.

Aguilera Peralta presents the perspective that the posture of the US was of little significance to the Guatemalan military in its development of the counterinsurgency strategy. He attributes this relative indifference to "resentment toward the United States dating back to 1954, when a mercenary army organized by the Central Intelligence Agency overthrew the government of President Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, an episode interpreted in Guatemalan military thought as a humiliation suffered by the army...." "Guatemala's Counterinsurgency Campaign", 166-67.

In terms of the relationship between repression and democracy Deborah Barry, et al., state:

Another key component of the U.S. security policy for Central America, designed to increase public support for counterrevolution, is reinforcement of the "democratic center." As carried out in El Salvador, the policy implies the creation of a political system that will bring civilians to formal power and will help to consolidate alliances in support of counterrevolutionary plans, while the military concentrates on the war or on the neutralization or prevention of popular mobilization. The objective of setting up a restricted democracy is to smooth over the harshness of military power, not to eliminate or limit it. "'Low Intensity Warfare': The Counterinsurgency Strategy for Central America." In *Crisis in Central America: Regional Dynamics and U.S. Policy in the 1980s*, eds. Nora Hamilton et al., 77-96. Boulder and London: Westview Press. 1988, 88.

78. D. Barry, et al., "'Low Intensity Warfare'", 78-79.

79. For a discussion of the counterinsurgency state see S. Jonas, *The Battle For Guatemala*, 116-23. In her book Jonas generally makes the argument that hegemony of the "ruling coalition" remained unchallenged despite frequent squabbling among the fractions which form this coalition. For a different perspective on the relations between the various factions of capital see Edelberto Torres-Rivas, "Guatemala: Crisis and Political Violence," *NACLA* 14 (1980), 16-27 and "Problems of Democracy in Guatemala". In the latter article Torres-Rivas states:

The estado de excepción in Guatemala is a counterrevolutionary state that utilizes all the material and ideological instruments of counterinsurgency. The ideology of counterinsurgency is distinctive in that it looks not for the defeat of the adversary but rather for total physical annihilation. The confusion between war and politics inherent in anticommunist ideology supports the resort to violence (p. 122).

80. A. Peralta, "Guatemala's Counterinsurgency Campaign", 157-58. See also D. Barry, et al., "'Low Intensity Warfare'", 83-92.

81. As S. Landau notes, an important part of this strategy was also the elimination of underground resistance in the urban areas, primarily Guatemala City:

A collateral part of the US counter-guerrilla strategy was the removal of the urban support structure used by the revolutionaries. Relying on information gathered with the help of foreign intelligence advisers, the Lucas government's agents in the cities began to murder or kidnap (disappear) suspected opponents. An office of the Catholic Church estimated that in 1981 the repressive agencies eliminated more than fourteen thousand people. During the last three months of the year assassinations averaged twenty-five a day. *Guerillas Wars*, 181.

82. On the institutionalization of military control see: S. Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala*, 150; A. Peralta, "Guatemala's Counterinsurgency Campaign", 16-64. For a detailed discussion of the Civilian Defense Patrols see Alice Jay, *Persecution By Proxy: The Civil Patrols in Guatemala*, eds. Kerry Kennedy Cuomo, Helet Merkling and Nan Richardson (New York: Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, 1993).

D. Barry, et al., describe the military's understanding of the psychological and ideological dimension of counterinsurgency as follows:

Because of the unique connection between rearguard and combat forces, counterinsurgency assigns the highest priority to undermining and converting the enemy's rearguard. Tactics range from psychological warfare (aimed at winning the "six inches between the peasant's ears" (instead of territory) to massive saturation bombing of populated areas in "liberated zones" (intended both to reinforce psychological tactics through terror and to "remove the water from the fish"). The underlying goal is to remove the masses as a support for revolutionary forces and recruit them into the rearguard of "national security". "Low Intensity Warfare", 83.

83. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to consider in detail the inner dynamics of the military during this period, it is important to note that there was considerable discontent. This reflected primarily criticism of Lucas Garcia's handling of the counterinsurgency war, and was manifested in the junior officer coup which put General Ríos Montt in power in 1982.

At this time the army also faced a growing crisis of confidence among the bourgeoisie, evidenced by the rapidly escalating flight of capital from the country, and the need to revamp its international image as a pariah state in order to regenerate international aid. It was in response to this discontent and these pressures that from 1982 onward the military began elaborating a series of one-year plans --culminating in the plan for the holding of elections or "politics as the continuation of war"-- which constituted its National Plan of Security and Development. George Black, "Under the Gun," *NACLA* 19, no. 6 (1985), 11-14. For another overview of the military's strategy see Tom Barry, *Guatemala: A Country Guide* (Albuquerque, NM: Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center, 1989), 8-9.

84. About this election S. Landau states:

In capitals throughout the world there was a growing disgust as people became aware of the extent of the killing. The already unpalatable scenario in Guatemala was made worse by the arrogance of the generals and the aristocrats. The scale of death and corruption increased to the point where the men at Foggy Bottom began to pressure the generals to clean up their image. For that purpose, most of Latin America's military had learned, nothing succeeds like the spectacle of a free election. *Guerrilla Wars*, 185.84.

85. E. Torres-Rivas has captured this impact as follows:

Between June and September 1982, the Guatemalan army, with Israeli and U.S. military aid, began a "scorched earth" offensive against densely populated Indian zones where guerrilla groups had once been based. The offensive resulted in more than eight thousand deaths, including those of women, children, and elderly people. Here we are witnessing something even more brutal than the violation of human rights; we are witnessing the systematic desecration of the most sacred values and customs of Indian culture. "Problems of Democracy", 125.

86. As P. Calvert notes, "by 1983 over 35,000 persons had 'disappeared' --a figure far above that established for Argentina in the same period of time." *Guatemala*, 113.

87. It is estimated that over 200,000 Guatemalan Indians have lived in makeshift refugee camps just over the Mexican border.

88. In 1991 the Communities in Resistance went public, announcing their existence, and since then have been visited by a number of international delegations concerned about their living conditions and security. See S. Jonas for a good brief summary of the devastating impact of this period of violence, *The Battle for Guatemala*, 149-50.

89. Morna Macleod, *GAM-COMADRES: Un Análisis Comparativo*, Cuadernos 12 (Mexico, DF: CITGUA, 1986), 10. For an overview of the impact on the university student movement see T. Barry, *Guatemala: Country Guide*, 72-75.

90. While there has always been some participation of women in the politics of the popular movement in Guatemala, this has usually been within the structure of male-dominated organizations. See Garcia and Gomariz for a brief discussion of women's organizations from 1950 to 1980, *Mujeres Centroamericanas*, 205, 208. As the authors discuss, the few predecessors to the women's organizations of the 1980s and 1990s were the Alianza Feminina Guatemalteca (Guatemalan Feminine Alliance) which formed between 1944 and 1954, and the Union de Mujeres Guatemaltecas (Union of Guatemalan Women) which formed in 1975.

As will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Five there is a general agreement in the literature on women in politics in Latin America that the roots of the upsurge in women's political participation are found in the contradictory nature of societal restructuring under authoritarian rule.

91. Elizabeth Jelin, Introduction to *Women and Social Change in Latin America*, ed. Elizabeth Jelin, trans. J. Ann Zammitt and Marilyn Thomson (London: Zed Books United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1990), 2.

For an interesting discussion of the historical role of the Catholic church in social construction of gender roles understood in terms of marianismo and machismo, see: Evelyn P. Stevens, "The Prospects for a Women's Liberation Movement in Latin America", *Journal of Marriage and the Family* (May 1973): 313-321.

In her discussion of the role of the politically radical ANDES 21 de Junio (Asociación Nacional de Educadores Salvadores [National Association of Salvadoran Teachers]), Marilyn Thomas discusses the reproduction of gender roles in the state school system in El Salvador. *Women of El Salvador: The Price of Freedom* (Avon: The Bath Press, 1986), 71-79.

92. Jean Franco, "Gender, Death, and Resistance: Facing the Ethical Vacuum" in *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America*, eds. Juan E. Corradi, Patricia Weiss Fagen, and Manuel Antonio Garretón (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press), 112.

93. As S. Jonas discusses, this non-economic form of oppression, what she terms the "destruction of human relations", is highly gendered. *The Battle for Guatemala*, 111.

94. Jennifer G. Schirmer, "'Those Who Die for Life Cannot be Called Dead': Women and Human Rights Protest in Latin America," in *Surviving Beyond Fear: Women, Children and Human Rights in Latin America*, ed. Margorie Agosin (Fredonia, NY: White Pine Press, 1993), 53. In her specific discussion of the Guatemalan situation, Schirmer notes that "given the long history and more widespread forms of violence used in Guatemala, the women of GAM believed less in the 'protectiveness of motherhood' This may explain why GAM is the least segregated of the groups [Madres de Plaza de Mayo, Argentina; Agrupacion, Chile; GAM, Guatemala] by gender" (p. 52).

95. Elizabeth Jelin, "Citizenship and Identity: Final Reflections" in *Women and Social Change in Latin America*, ed. Elizabeth Jelin; trans. J. Ann Zammitt and Marilyn Thomson, (London: Zed Books and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1990), 204.

96. See García and Gomáriz for a good general discussion of the economic impact of the crisis of the 1980s on women and their strategies for survival and income generation. *Mujeres Centroamericanas*, 47-58. S. Jonas also points out that "indigenous women have been very particularly affected by the counterinsurgency war of the 1980s: Forced recruitment of men into the army and the civilian 'self-defense' patrols has left the women economically responsible for their households. *The Battle for Guatemala*, 111. It is for this reason and the fact that many men die from illness contracted particularly through migrant work that CONAVIGUA counts in its membership economic widows at approximately 10 per cent. (Interview with Rosalina Tuyuc, 19 June 1992; Coordinadora Nacional De Viudas De Guatemala, CONAVIGUA 1988 (information pamphlet, 1988).

97. Perez Sainz and Castellanos de Ponciano note in their study that in 1989 one-fifth of households in Guatemala City were headed by women and that in most households an average of 1.8 persons were working outside the home and another 0.3 persons were actively seeking work. *Mujeres y Empleo*, 15, 23. In her discussion of women's neighbourhood organizing Elizabeth Jelin notes the impact of economic crisis on women's work:

[T]he economic crisis and its repercussions in popular sectors-- in so far as unemployment grows and the purchasing power of salaries decreases-- has led to a new situation. In many cases women are forced to carry the full weight of the family economy or to contribute in a systematic fashion. This reality has compelled them to go out and find paid work. But as they have few qualifications the alternatives open to them are basically casual and domestic work. "Citizenship and Identity", 189.

98. Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala*, 83.

99. Ana Isabel García and Enrique Gomáriz make a very similar argument about the factors which precipitated women's political mobilization in the 1980s. "Las mujeres definen el futuro", 137-152.

100. Three sources are: Sonia E. Alvarez, *Engendering Democracy In Brazil: Women's Movements in Transition Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Jane S. Jaquette (ed.), *The Women's Movement in Latin America: Feminism and the Transition to Democracy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), and; Elizabeth Jelin (ed.), *Women and Social Change in Latin America*, trans. J. Ann Zammitt and Marilyn Thomson (London: Zed Books and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1990).

101. A. Criquillon discusses in detail the development of a women's movement in Nicaragua and its relationship to the FSLN through the late 1970s to the early 1990s. "The Nicaraguan Women's Movement: Feminist Reflections from Within," in *The New Politics of Survival: Grassroots Movements in Central America*, ed. Minor Sinclair (New York: The Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean [EPICA] and Monthly Review Press, 1995), 209-37. See also Barbara J. Seitz, "From Home to Street: Women and Revolution in Nicaragua," in *Women Transforming Politics: Worldwide Strategies for Empowerment*, ed. Jill M. Bystydzienski (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 162-174.

102. For a discussion of the significance of the UN Decade for Women to the general growth of feminism in Latin America see: Francesca Miller, *Latin American Women and the Search For Social Justice* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1991). For a concise statement regarding the early general position adopted by the UN towards women see: United Nations Office of Public Information, *The United Nations and Human Rights* (New York: United Nations, 1978), ch. 5. This convention was signed on 18 December 1979. Guatemala ratified the convention on 29 June 1982. Significantly, this Convention is widely used in the popular education work of the women's organizations to justify and legitimize their demands for women's rights.

103. The Encounters have been held as follows: 1981, Bogota; 1983, Lima; 1985, Santos (Sao Paulo); 1987, Taxco, Mexico; 1990, Argentina; San Salvador, 1993. For a discussion of these Encounters in relation to the growth of feminism in Latin America see F. Miller, *Latin American Women*, especially chapter 7.

104. F. Miller, *Latin American Women*, 235. Given the extremely limited resources of most women's organizations, the ability to travel overland to the Encounter in Mexico was a very important factor in encouraging the participation of Central American women generally, and Guatemalan women specifically, since Guatemala shares a border with Mexico and transportation is relatively good.

105. It is important to note that these regional efforts had repercussions at the national level. For example, to some degree the organization of the 1993 Encounter had a unifying effect among the women's organizations in Guatemala. A Pre-Encounter Working Group was formed to organize the Guatemalan contribution and participation in the Encounter and the Working Group was composed of women representing a number of different women's organizations. Some representatives of women's organizations would disagree with the claim that the Working Group generated a unifying effect. They felt that the Group was dominated by one particular organization which controlled the agenda and determined participation. Informal discussion with anonymous source, 15 July 1993.

106. In the case of Guatemala much of the popular feminist literature was produced by Guatemalan women in Mexico. Forced into exile for allegedly being subversives, many of these women encountered feminism and began a process of elaborating material appropriate to the Guatemalan experience which addressed both class and gender issues from a popular perspective.

107. Interview with anonymous source, 19 April 1993.

108. To appreciate fully this transmission of influence between the National University of San Carlos (USAC [Universidad de San Carlos]) and the popular movement it is important to recognize the nature of the relationship between the two. USAC in general, and the university students' movement in particular, has historically wielded a tremendous influence over the political direction of the popular movement. The national university has been the spawning ground for much of the leadership of the popular movement, and proximity --rather than "ivory tower" distance-- characterizes the relationship between the national university and the popular movement. Consequently, the spread of feminist ideas and the politicization of women around gender issues within the university had an important impact on the orientation of the popular movement.

109. FESTRAS-UITA (Federación Sindical de Trabajadores de la Alimentación, Afines, Servicios y Similares-Unión Internacional de Trabajadores de la Alimentación y Afines [Union Federation of Food, Allied, and Service Workers-International Union of Food and Allied Worker's Associations]) is only one example in Guatemala of a union federation with international linkages. It is a member of the International Union of Food and Allied Worker's Associations, with headquarters in Geneva. The history of FESTRAS-UITA is complex. In

June, 1986, COFUITAG (Unión Internacional de Trabajadores de la Alimentación y Afines-UITA-Guatemala [International Union of Food and Allied Workers-UITA-Guatemala]) was formed. In 1991 COFUITAG evolved in FESTRAS-UITA.

110. COMFUITAG (Comité de Mujeres FESTRAS-UITA Guatemala [Women's Committee of FESTRAS-UITA Guatemala]) is perhaps the oldest and internationally best known example of this. COMFUITAG had its inception in a conference organized by UITA for women members of unions affiliated to it at the national level. A number of Guatemalan workers who were members of unions associated with COFUITAG attended this conference and, as a result of their participation, decided on the need to form a women's committee within COFUITAG to address their specific needs and issues as women workers.

The formation of a women's committee in UNSITRAGUA (Unión Sindical de Trabajadores de Guatemala [Trade Union Unity of Guatemalan workers]) in 1992 and the process of formation of the National Women's Commission (an incipient federation of state and private sector unions as well as different women's organizations and associations) over 1992 and 1993 are, however, further examples of this pattern. Most importantly, these women's committees are active in the promotion of women's leadership and women's committees in unions with a relationship to the federations.

COMFUITAG, for example, has worked very hard to develop a women's committee in STINDE (Sindicato de Trabajadores del Instituto Nacional de Electrificación [Union of Workers of the National Electricity Institute]), the national electrical workers' union and in the union of state workers in the Ministry of Finance, and is actively working to promote women's leadership in the union in the Adams chewing gum factory.

111. Although outside the purview of this paper, another story which has parallels to the processes of influence described here is how a concern for women's issues developed within the religious sector, and particularly the Catholic church in Guatemala. For example, several of the women leaders interviewed during my research attributed the roots of their gender politicization to their involvement in church youth groups.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER TWO

1. Nineth is now known publicly as Nineth Montenegro, reflecting her union in the late 1980s with a subsequent partner.

2. From interview with Patricia Crowther, sister-in-law of Nineth, 16 November 1994.

3. This initial group was primarily composed of mothers and wives but included a few men.

4. GAM is treated here as a women's group, reflecting the fact that at the beginning it was generally led, directed, and controlled by one key woman and its membership was largely composed of women. This slowly changed, however, through the late 1990s and particularly when Nineth Montenegro withdrew from the group in 1991. For insights into her actions see: "El Retorno de Nineth," Magazine 21/Siglo Veintiuno (Guatemala City), April 18, 1993, 5-8. For a consideration of the growth of a similar group in Argentina see: Marysa Navarro, "The Personal Is Political: Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo," in Susan Eckstein (ed.), Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 241-58.

5. Central America Update assessed these events:

Clearly the GAM had pressed up against the limits of the apertura, which was planned to be wide enough for limited electoral campaigning but not for embarrassing grassroots mobilization which encourages international inspection. Central America Update, 6 (1985).

6. GAM has attempted, in a variety of ways, to reveal the continuing problem of human rights violations in order to challenge the equation of democracy with respect for human rights. As GAM learned to play the international "game" it became subject to increasing efforts by the government to de-legitimize its activities, and fractionalize its organization in addition to escalating violent repression. Yet GAM persisted in its attempt to force an investigation of the 38,000 disappeared in Guatemala.

The general strategy used by GAM was to manoeuvre in the political space which should exist, on the assumption that democracy had meant at least a return to the rule of law. Thus, GAM continued its bi-weekly demonstrations demanding an investigation of the disappeared. The group has been reluctant to use the judiciary as a channel to further their political claims for fear that such action would provide the government with the justification for continued inaction.

Indeed, despite several promises to address GAM's claims, the record of Cerezo's administration was generally poor. For example, the Congress passed a law in November 1986, to establish a human rights ombudsman in Guatemala. While Cerezo personally attempted to veto the law, due to bungling on his part it was passed. By July 10, 1987, the position still had not been filled but Cerezo renewed his pledge to establish the position. In mid August, 1987, an ombudsman was finally selected. However, much scepticism was expressed about the ability of an 82 year old man to perform such a physically and emotionally demanding job.

Similarly, despite a promise by the Roman Catholic Church to establish a human rights office in late 1986, the office still had not been established by October of 1987. Furthermore, the Church made it very clear from the beginning that the office would not function as a tribunal, but would simply record reports of rights violations. James Painter, False Hope, False Freedom: The Rich, the Poor, and the Christian Democrats (London: Latin American Bureau, 1987), 89.

More importantly, however, Cerezo repeatedly reneged on his promise to GAM to establish an independent commission to investigate the disappeared. On the eve of his trip to the United States in August, 1987, Cerezo promised that a commission would be functioning by the end of August. To date such a commission has not been established. In 1986, in desperation over the lack of response they faced, GAM filed 1400 writs of habeas corpus in the Supreme Court. As they feared, this was used by the government to justify further inaction on fulfilling its promises, and nothing came of the investigation by the judiciary. J. Painter, False Hope, 93.

Yet GAM has continued to expose the limits of democratization. In October, 1987, the group filed charges in the Supreme Court accusing eighteen security force members of involvement in specific cases of "disappearances" in 1986. The list of those named was publicly read the same day, during GAM's demonstration in front of the National Palace. Central America Report, October 30, 1987. In this same month GAM criticized the widely reported impression of an improvement in respect for human rights in a political advertisement in the Guatemalan newspaper, El Grafico. Central America Report, October 30, 1987. Citing a recent surge in political violence, the advertisement insisted that those guilty of such crimes remain above the law.

7. Rodolfo was a key organizer in the Coca-Cola strike of 1984 which had long reaching ramifications for the reemergence of organized labour.

8. Information based on interview with Maria Isabel, 8 March 1993.

9. Information abstracted from COMFUITAG promotional pamphlet.

10. Information based on personal observation, and interviews with Olga Rivas, 15 May 1992, 22 May 1992, and 27 April 1993. During my period of research participation with GRUFEPROMEFAM two women foreigners were involved with the organization. One, a child psychologist from the USA participated on a short-term basis, and attempted to develop a childcare programme. The other, from the Basque region of Spain, participated over a period of half a year, and was involved in many ways, including giving workshops, helping in the daily operation of the organization, and taking on a decision-making role.

11. Interview with cooperant, 5 June 1994.

12. Information based on personal participation, and abstracted from various promotional pamphlets, project proposals, etc.

13. From GGM promotional pamphlet.

14. Information based on personal participation with GGM, promotional pamphlets, and an interview, 17 September 1992.

15. Approximately 90% of the students in the Faculty of Social Work at the National University of San Carlos are women.

16. Mesquital is a very large community on the edge of the capital composed of shanty-town and squatter areas. Informal estimates of the population are 30,000-50,000 inhabitants.

17. Clara Luz notes that only the Catholic Church had been involved in such support work, but that this was always done from a religious perspective which she did not feel adequately met the needs of the women. Interview, 23 February 1993.

18. Information from interview with Julieta Villagran Soto, 2 September 1992, and from information pamphlet of organization.

19. This dynamic can have serious implications for a researcher from the North. In my experience, my relationship with the women's organizations was always mediated by the fact that they viewed me as a potential connection to funding. This certainly affected the "face" of the organization they wanted me to see, and also affected the manner in which I was treated. It was assumed that I had connections to funding resources and this was at times almost expected of me.

One small example from my involvement with GRUFEPROMEFAM will illustrate the point about how this dynamic may affect the research relationship. It was with this organization that I had the most difficulty establishing a legitimate presence: the women leaders were constantly questioning my reasons for being involved in their organization and urging me to contribute in ways which I considered highly interventionist and inappropriate to feminist solidarity. After much discussion and negotiation it was agreed that I would develop and facilitate a mini-workshop programme designed to enable women to establish their own support groups. This was entirely my idea and initiative, yet very shortly (and before the project had even been piloted) in a new and updated promotional pamphlet GRUFEPROMEFAM listed as one of its services support groups for women.

20. The issue of class differences between the leadership and the women participants in the organizations under consideration is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five. I would suggest here, however, that the women leaders of these organizations are not women of the middle class but rather women of the popular classes in Guatemala. In general, class divisions in Guatemala are very difficult to specify with precision because of the large numbers of unemployed, underemployed, those employed in multiple sectors of the economy simultaneously, etc. While the women leaders are clearly distinguished from the women who participate in their organizations, this largely reflects their higher level of education (either high school or some university education). Almost without exception the women leaders live in the marginal areas of the city in precarious economic circumstances, and many are single mothers.

21. While the casual observer can easily be critical of this mode of authority, it is eminently understandable when contextualized by the recent history of Guatemala. Being a leader means putting your life on the line, daily. The popular movement was virtually decapitated in the early 1980s and the emergent new leadership lives perpetually with the risk of the same fate. In this context it is now surprising that the person drawn to such a vocation is a strong individual, who becomes even more so through the process of surviving the psychological pressure of living this reality of fear and repression.

22. To see this, however, requires an extensive period of participation with the women's organizations. Without exception the "party line" which any passing visitor will be told is that the women's organizations work democratically as collectives. In large part presentation of this image reflects the fact that the women leaders know that in the North collective decision-making and base-level participation is very much in vogue. A presence in the organizations over time, however, allowed me to see that the actual mode of operation is far different. Again without exception, each organization is really run by one or a very small group of women leaders.

23. On this issue the women leaders face a very delicate problem. In general the male leadership is not receptive to the idea of feminism, seeing it as divisive and as undermining the more fundamental issues of class which apparently unite all. Consequently, the women's organizations are forced to tread very carefully in their manner of articulating their views to avoid alienating this male leadership.

24. Tierra Viva stands as the one exception. It is the only women's organization which explicitly and publicly defines itself as feminist. Despite this it clearly works within the popular movement. For example, as the leading member of COAMUGUA (Coordinadora de Agrupaciones de Mujeres Guatemaltecas [Coordination of Guatemalan Women's Groups]) it participates in the very important forum of the popular movement, the UASP (Unidad de Acción Sindical y Popular [Unity of Labour and Popular Action Coalition]).

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER THREE

1. Interview with anonymous source, 18 June 1992.
2. I was in Guatemala for all but the first seminar, and participated as a participant-observer in the remaining four of the seminars.
3. My role in this production expanded to include "official photographer": I gave back to GRUFEPROMEFAM a photographic memory of the play.
4. Over the course of the following 15 months (to August, 1993) that I was involved with GRUFEPROMEFAM no further popular theatre production was mounted.
5. Inforpress is the organization which produces in both English and Spanish a left-wing weekly news bulletin. This particular man was also a former AEU leader.
6. At the time a number of high school student protests had been held in the streets of downtown Guatemala. The usual tactic was to burn bus tires in the streets, effectively blocking traffic for hours. Sometimes this spilled over into the stoning and/or burning of buses.
7. GRUFEPROMEFAM annually organizes a large day-long workshop in Guatemala City for all of its members. They refer to this event as their "Encounter".
8. These places are the departments of San Marcos, Sacatepequez, and Mazatenango.
9. As state workers they are relatively well paid.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER FOUR

1. As part of the work of this campaign the structure, objectives, and plan of activity of the network were reiterated in a campaign document which was issued from Quito in March 1991. Four regional coordinators were charged with the regional coordination of the national-level networks in each of the countries of their regions. "Campana Latinoamerican: Trabajemos Por Una Educaci3n Humana No-Sexista", Red de Educacion Popular Entre Mujeres, Quito, March 1991.
2. Information on the historical antecedents of the Network derived from an internal document "Antecedents of the Popular Education Network Between Women of CEAAL [sic]," presented by Olga Villalta to a meeting of the national Network on 27 November 1992.
3. "Campana Latinoamerican: Trabajemos Por Una Educacion Humana No-Sexista", Red de Educacion Popular Entre Mujeres, Quito, March 1991.
4. The Institute for the Socio-Economic Development of Central America --IDESAC-- is actually a Guatemalan NGO which was formed in the 1960s. It had recently begun to specifically address women and development issues and, while not formally a women's organization, had a visible presence amongst these organizations and participated in events within and amongst the women's organizations.
5. I was unable to attend this meeting. The following synthesis is taken from the (very brief) notes from the meeting.
6. Carlos was held within the popular movement to be the Guatemalan expert on popular education. The thesis he completed for his Licenciatura (the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree) was on the subject of popular education.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER FIVE

1. Sonia E. Alvarez, Engendering Democracy in Brazil, 8. Indeed, Alvarez's statement identifies the same key factors and processes as my argument in Chapter One which explains democratization and its effects on women of the popular classes in Guatemala. I therefore take this broad consensus in the literature to substantiate the argument I have put forward.
2. Marysa Navarro, "The Personal is Political: Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo" in Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements, ed. Susan Eckstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 257.
3. For an interesting discussion of the politics of the various human rights organizations contesting the disappeared in Argentina, and especially the issues which both unite and divide them, see: Elizabeth Jelin, "The Politics of Memory: The Human Rights Movement and the Construction of Democracy in Argentina", Latin American Perspectives, 81, 21, 2 (Spring 1994), 38-58.
4. "Those Who Die for Life Cannot be Called Dead", 34.
5. Schirmer, 34.
6. José Nun offers a hermeneutical approach to understanding identity as a contested terrain. Employing Gramsci's concept of common sense in his discussion of the rift between the masses and intellectuals, he argues the necessity of decoding the language games of the exploited through which their (fragmented) world views are constructed. He states:
 [t]he political hypothesis guiding this proposal is that the world of everyday life of the oppressed is not merely a sphere of social reproduction but is crossed over by numerous breaks and cleavages with the dominant order; and that, although these points of rupture are often contradictory or partial, they concern the most intimate and long lasting logic of the social struggle. "The Rebellion of the Chorus", LARU Studies, 4,3 (June 1982), 95.
7. Elizabeth Jelin also points in this same direction. "Introduction", 7. Veronica Schild expresses similar concerns in her understanding of the contested nature of subjectivity. She states:
 The way in which poor and working-class women identify themselves and their place in the world is an outcome over time of their interaction with the church, the state, the family, and other institutions. However, domination, in this case in the form of the promotion of lived experiences that suppress and marginalize a whole range of human capacities, is never totalizing. It also creates possibilities for challenges and resistances, for ultimately people are not mere cultural dupes; they are active subjects who engage in renegotiating their subjectivities, transforming their experiences, and shaping their collective identities. "Recasting 'Popular' Movements: Gender and Political Learning in Neighborhood

Organizations in Chile". Latin American Perspectives, 81, 21, 2 (Spring 1994), 74.

Marilyn Thomas argues with respect to El Salvador that women's politicization and mobilization has been actively cultivated. She states:

In the late 1970s, as sons, daughters and husbands fell victim to the repression, women of all generations have joined the revolutionary movement. One of the particular features of the popular organizations which support the FDR-FMLN is precisely the large numbers of women activists. El Salvador is a traditional and highly machista society where there are huge cultural and practical impediments working against women's political involvement. However, all the organizations which make up the FDR-FMLN have adopted a deliberate policy of recruiting women. In part, of course, stemming from the need to maximize resources, this is also a principled position based on the firm belief that a popular democracy cannot be formed without taking into account the marginalized position of women and the need to work towards ending this situation. 8.

8. Jane S. Jaquette suggests that "[t]hree distinct patterns of women's mobilization have combined to give the 'women's movement' a recognized role in the democratic transitions: women's human rights groups, feminist groups, and the organizations of poor urban women." "Introduction" in The Women's Movement in Latin America: Feminism and the Transition to Democracy, ed. Jane S. Jaquette (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 4. I would argue that this schema is too simplistic and does not account for the type of women's organization in Guatemala, nor the organization of women within the trade union structure.

9. "Women and Popular Urban Social Movements in São Paulo, Brazil". Bulletin of Latin American Research, 9,2: 252.

10. I would like to stress that in making the critique of the NSMs literature I am not criticizing what I understand to be the motive underlying this approach. I agree with Elizabeth Jelin's assessment of the predominance of this approach. She argues that it reflects a concern to seek out new forms of participation. "Introduction", 3. What I am concerned to stress through my critique, however, is that we not allow our political desire to locate sites of resistance to lead to a reification of social movements, or to obfuscate what has actually occurred historically.

11. Corcoran-Nantes, 261.

12. I would at this point reiterate my argument that this assessment is true even of GAM and CONAVIGUA, the groups which most appear to have the form of a NSM. As has been argued above, the political power to pursue their strategy of contesting the state derives from the ability to mobilize at crucial moments a visible and large membership base. This is a feature which these organizations do share with NSMs. Nonetheless, the NSM perspective cannot explain the top-down process of formation of the organizations, their hierarchical structure and centralized process of decision-making, nor the fact that they also pursue many formation activities like the other women's organizations, and thus must also be understood as contributing to the development of citizenship capacity in women.

13. Jelin, "Introduction", 2-6.

14. Jane S. Jaquette, ed., The Women's Movement in Latin America.

15. Jaquette, "Introduction", 9-11. Here Jaquette is referring to Guillermo A. O'Donnell's seminal book Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California Press, 1973).

16. It is beyond the scope and purposes of the present chapter to consider to what extent it is possible to "add on" a political approach --which is essentially voluntaristic-- to the bureaucratic authoritarian approach, which is economically deterministic. I do, however, believe that this additive strategy poses some serious theoretical difficulties.

17. For the authors who do question the emergence of women as political actors, their analysis draws from the NSMs literature to understand this phenomenon.

18. Jaquette, "Introduction", 13-14.

19. Having attended a number of CONAVIGUA events, and participated in others, in Guatemala City, regional centres, villages, and remote hamlets, I would suggest that the number of women CONAVIGUA mobilizes across the country is closer to 2,000. This is not to dispute the veracity of the CONAVIGUA claim (nor indeed that of any other group or organization), for the meaning of "membership" and hence, the related concept of mobilizing members, is highly political.

20. As is illustrated, for example, by Yolanda Aguilar's participation in the workshop for the Day of Non-Violence. See Chapter Three.

21. I would argue that a more helpful way of assessing the "impact" of the women's organizations in Guatemala is by talking to the women who participate in the activities of the organizations. In the numerous interviews I conducted with such women the overwhelming majority spoke at great length about the deep changes in their lives brought about through their involvement with the women's organizations. The most common change mentioned by these women was their enhanced self-esteem, self-valorization, and their new-found belief in their ability to do things. All of these changes are, I would suggest, indicators of a emergent sense of efficacy.

22. "Citizenship and Identity", 206.

23. "Recasting 'Popular' Movements: Gender and Political Learning in Neighborhood Organizations in Chile", Latin American Perspectives, 81, 21, 2 (Spring 1994), 64.

24. "Recasting 'Popular' Movements", 64.

25. "Recasting 'Popular' Movements", 64.

26. "Recasting 'Popular' Movements", 65.
27. "Recasting 'Popular' Movements", 66.
28. Veronica Schild, "Becoming Subjects of Rights: Citizenship, Political Learning, and Identity Formation Among Latin American Women", paper presented at the XVIII International Congress of Latin American Studies Association, Atlanta, March 10-12, 1994.
29. "Becoming Subjects of Rights", 2.
30. "Becoming Subjects of Rights", 2-3.
31. "Introduction", 4.
32. This observation stems from numerous informal discussions with the leaders of the women's organizations throughout the duration of the field research, as well as my own participant-observation of their activities.
33. It is important to point out that formation and skills training are fundamentally rooted in the alternative tradition in Latin America of popular education, which itself incorporates and encompasses many strategies and techniques all aimed at political conscientization. As recounted in Chapter Three, the activities of the women's organizations aimed at the conscientization of women in the popular classes include: workshops, seminars, retreats, forums, games, popular theatre, making contact through informal "moments", health clinics, etc. The broader activities of the women's organizations, which incorporate the conscientization of women but also go beyond this to encompass education of the pueblo, include: building resource networks, commemorations, celebrations of special days and events, participation in broader political fora, etc.
34. This is a complex task which has led to the development of many techniques and strategies. Most of these are focused at the experiential level of learning and are designed to help women gain an awareness of their gender, and the social repercussions of this. Such activities include exercises which explore the daily nature of women's lived experience, which validate women's health issues and concerns, which discuss women's sex and sexuality, which legitimize violence against women, etc.
35. GRUFEPROMEFAM and Tierra Viva have similar relationships with neighbourhood organizations of women they have cultivated, in Zone 7 and Zone 21 of the city respectively. As well GRUFEPROMEFAM has developed two satellite branches of its organizations in smaller towns in the far west of the country. Both Mujer y Vida and Mujer de Esperanza have promoted women's community organizations in several rural locations.
36. My research focuses on the relationship between the national level of women's organizations and unorganized women of the popular classes. The historical analysis presented in Chapter One stresses, however, the formation of the women leaders of these organizations through their location in spaces such as the national university or unions with international relations which

exposed these women to international currents of feminism through literature, participation in regional feminist encounters, etc. Thus it must be emphasized that the symbolic networks of women are networks which span not only national/community political spaces, but also national/international political spaces. It is also important to note that the women's organizations considered here generally have a feminist middle-class patron (most frequently a professor from the national university) who provide the political learning or orientation for the women leaders. These women are highly invisible and their presence and influence can only be discerned through involvement with the organizations over a long period of time.

This point raises an issue which here must be addressed, if only briefly. While I have argued that Schild's concepts of political learning and symbolic networks are very helpful to understanding women's organizations in Guatemala it must be noted that Schild herself is very much interested in the class nature of the network relationships between the various types of women's organizations. What I refer to as the national level women's organizations in Guatemala, Schild calls NGOs in Chile. And furthermore, she stresses that the women leaders of these NGOs are generally middle-class feminists (and frequently women who have returned from exile in Europe where they were politicized around gender). The neighbourhood organizations which are the focus of Schild's analysis are organizations of *pobladoras*, or women of the popular classes. In the case of Guatemala I would argue strongly that there is not this same class differentiation between the women's organizations and the women of the popular classes they are related to through the practice of political learning and symbolic networks. Indeed, with possibly two exceptions, the leaders of the women's organizations are also women of the popular classes and themselves live in the marginal areas of the city. They are distinct from their women neighbours not because of class difference but rather because of either having achieved some higher education or having participated in the popular movement. As I have noted above, class difference does enter this picture in the relationship between the women's organizations and the women whom I call their patron feminists.

With respect to the political strategy of the popular movement to re-compose civil society by developing multiple layers of leadership capacity in the popular classes, it must be stressed that the repressive apparatuses have quickly recognized the political implications and opportunities this strategy opens up. In brief, although leaders with a national presence and international visibility are still the targets of intimidation, many "sub-leaders" are now also targets. From the perspective of the military, one advantage of this counter-strategy is that the international community is much less able to generate rapid response solidarity for virtually unknown victims of violence. Thus, while Rigoberta Menchú is now virtually untouchable because of her international stature, other women below her are tremendously susceptible. With respect to the women's organizations, one clear example of this counter-strategy was the kidnapping, torture, and rape of a "leader-in-training" in COMFUITAG in the spring of 1995.

37. With respect to her work she says:

... taking the lessons of postmodernism at heart, I want to suggest an approach that preserves differences between women. "Becoming subjects of rights" with its emphasis on agency, invites us to examine the construction of political identities as socially contextualized and embodied processes. Read against the

grain of liberal democratic theorizing, and its critics, then, "becoming" subjects of rights is a prompt to address the activities through which people, women in this case, embedded in specific social relations, struggle to creatively appropriate elements of a dominant discourse. Thus, I am proposing a conceptualization of citizenship as cultural practices, rather than a static discourse, a "doing" of citizenship rather than "being". "Becoming Subjects of Rights", 2-3.

38. "Becoming Subjects of Rights", 8.

39. "Becoming Subjects of Rights", 8. Reflecting her concern to understand the dialectical relationship between structure and agency discussed above, Schild goes on to emphasize that "though in our appropriation of elements of a discourse we transform them, this transformation is never total. How we use these words, that is, the grammar of this language, cannot be created anew by each speaker." 8-9.

40. This is to assert, then, that in order to interpret the political significance of the women's organizations the crucial line of questioning is to ask what these organizations are doing with respect to other women, rather than what they look like or what institutional impact they have had.

41. In preparation for the conference, the North-South Institute published Ours By Right: Women's Rights as Human Rights, ed. Joana Kerr (London: Zed Books, 1993).

42. For example, this awareness is expressed in the statement issued by COAMUGUA in its celebration of International Women's Day, 1993:

We as Guatemalan women know that women's equality ought to be constructed by us with strategies that permit us to fight against gender oppression (inequality, discrimination, division, subordination, etc.), with the belief that our advance towards equal rights constitutes a way of transforming society profoundly and irreversibly.

Excerpted from pamphlet prepared by the Coordination of Women's Groups for the 8 of March, International Women's Day, 1993.

ENDNOTES: METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

1. *The Granddaughters of Ixmucané: Guatemalan Women Speak*, (Toronto: Women's Press, 1991).

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