Chapter 5

The Disaster Related Social System

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Introduction

The last two chapters have presented a detailed account of how various parts of the Guatemalan government were organized to respond to the disaster of February 4, 1976. They also presented a view of how the Guatemalan government saw its relationship to non-governmental organizations which were involved in the relief and reconstruction process and how it saw its posture with respect to local communities. The objective of this chapter is to present a structural analysis of this and additional material by presenting a more sociological view of the network of relationships that made up the entire disaster oriented social system. As a guide to performing this task, the structural orientation presented in Bates and Harvey's The Structure of Social Systems will be employed (Bates and Harvey 1975).

In order to present a structural image of any social system, it is necessary first to identify the social units that form the parts or elements of that system and then to specify their relationships to one another to form a network that binds them together into a larger whole. In a system as large and as complex as that which formed to respond to the 1976 earthquake, so many individual units exist that it is useful to begin by identifying segments or sectors of the larger system before

dealing with individual units. Furthermore, it is helpful to identify types of units included in the system in terms of the differential functions they perform. Finally , it is helpful to categorize the types of relationships that are likely to be found among the various parts or sectors of the system.

Complex Sub-systems Forming Sectors of the Disaster Related Social System

The Guatemalan case brought into a state of activity an extremely complex system of human organizations and groups which were focused upon dealing with various aspects of the emergency created by the disaster and the process of reconstruction which the emergency necessitated. It is extremely important to realize that the various groups and organizations which formed the system operated in terms of a wide variety of motives and interests. Each had an implicit or explicit agenda which was related to its own interests and its own value orientations. It would be a mistake to assume that all were motivated by the common altruistic goal of helping disaster victims. While this motive was indeed widespread and honestly held by most of the units involved, it constituted only a highly abstract conception of how organizations and their individual members should feel about their obligations. When this altruistic orientation was filtered through the organizational structures and value systems of various individual units, it was translated into a variety of operational meanings and these interpretations were naturally influenced by the vested interests implicit in the nature of individual organizations and their linkage to the structure

of Guatemalan society and in many cases their linkage to other societies.

While all professed a desire to help, this desire was inevitably affected by the vested interests of the individual units who formed a complex network concentrated on varying aspects of the disaster. This situation was not unique to the Guatemalan case but is characteristic of complex disaster oriented social systems wherever they occur. The organizational participants in a disaster, as well as their individual members, always have a variety of motives and interests which are expressed in goals and objectives and translated into programs and activities. As a consequence, conflict as well as cooperation become an important part of the process which transpires as the disaster oriented social system is set in motion.

The resultant emergency relief and reconstruction processes taken as a whole, and their impact upon disaster victims, their communities and their life styles, are therefore best viewed as the outcome of both the patterns of conflict and cooperation engendered by the division of labor that evolves in the disaster related social system as it moves through the process of contending with the aftermath of disaster. This analysis of the structure of the disaster related social system will therefore proceed on the assumption that the various units and sectors that comprised the system stood in what Bates and Harvey call "conjunctive" relationships to each other.

Such relationships are characterized by a lack of identity in interests among organizations and groups forming a system comprised of

many autonomous and semi-autonomous units. Conjunctive relationships mean that although units may interact and may be oriented towards the same clientele (disaster victims or victim communities), because they are structurally separate and have their own organizational interests and objectives, deal with each other not always as partners, but often as competitors, or sometimes as adversaries. Because of this, conflict problems arise and most be resolved or mediated in order for the individual parts of the system to pursue their goals either separately or together. In addition, coordination among the programs of various independent units with differing orientations and interests becomes difficult and requires techniques particularly suited to a situation in which conjunctive relationships predominate. These points will be discussed more fully later after the sectors of the system have been identified and the nature of their individual interests and value orientations have been discussed.

For purposes of this analysis the disaster related social system can be divided into six sectors on the basis of the types of units involved and their similarity in orientation towards the disaster relief and reconstruction process. These segments are as follows:

1. The Guatemalan governmental sector.
2. The Guatemalan private sector.
3. The foreign governmental sector.
4. The foreign private voluntary organizational sector, including church groups.
5. The local community organizational sector.
6. The household and kinship networks sector.

Each of these broad sectors may be divided into sub-sectors and eventually into individual groups and organizations. Broad sectors will be discussed separately below.

The Guatemalan Governmental Sector

In the last two chapters, a detailed account of the Guatemalan governmental sector was presented. In very broad terms, it can be said to have consisted of three types of units: (1) the regular ministries of the Guatemalan government and their various standing sub-organizations, (2) specially formed ad hoc units activated to contend with the emergency and reconstruction process, and (3) disaster oriented coordination units. The overall design of the system envisioned by the President of Guatemala and the Guatemalan legislature was one in which two coordinating units or committees (The National Emergency Committee and The National Reconstruction Committee) and their associated operational arms were to operate as coordination centers through which the efforts of the various ministries, foreign governments as well as domestic and foreign voluntary organizations could be brought to bear on the emergency relief and long range reconstruction process.

The Emergency Committee had been formed before the disaster and consisted of representatives of the Guatemalan army, the Guatemalan Red Cross, the Association of Firemen, the Boy Scouts and the representatives of several governmental ministries including Interior, Public Finance, Agriculture, Communications and Public Works, Public Health and Social Assistance. It also contained representatives from the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Banking Association and the Newspapers. It was controlled by the army and the Ministry of Defense

and utilized the organizational structure implied by the membership of the Committee. This structure used the army, the Red Cross, local fire departments and Boy Scout troops as the operational personnel to carry out its work. Since the Red Cross operates internationally under a policy of cooperating with and working through local Red Cross units, when Red Cross help arrived from abroad it joined this network organized around the Emergency Committee.

As noted in the last chapter, the Emergency Committee was focused on emergency relief activities and had no mandate to engage in long range reconstruction. Its orientation was toward offering emergency assistance and it offered its aid free. It was not particularly concerned with involving victims in self-help, development oriented activities nor with the possible creation of dependency relationships through its activities. The Emergency Committee's approach was a charitable one and geared to quick responses. As time passed, however, it was criticized for being "paternalistic" and for seeking publicity to enhance the image of the army and of other participants as public benefactors.

Because of the special place of the Red Cross in relation to the Emergency Committee,and especially because of the Committee's orientation to giving aid, the Guatemalan Red Cross and other Red Cross societies that came to Guatemala to help remained more or less separated from other voluntary organizations who developed closer ties to the newly formed Reconstruction Committee due to its approach to community development. This whole network of organizations,formed around the

Emergency Committee, continued operations well into the reconstruction process and some, including the Guatemalan army, the Red Cross and the Boy Scouts, conducted housing programs. Thus their activities gradually moved from strictly emergency to what might be considered reconstruction activities.

The orientation of this sub-system must be viewed as being largely a product of the position it occupied in the disaster-related social system. Its mission was basically an emergency one and had short-term objectives. This emergency mission quite naturally fitted a charity orientation. In short, the structure of the network organized around the Emergency Committee and its place in the larger disaster oriented system, and not necessarily the individual value orientations of the people involved, goes far to explain this cluster of organizations' lack of emphasis on such things as community development.

In contrast, the Reconstruction Committee which was created after the disaster to plan and manage the massive reconstruction process quite naturally was sensitive to long range questions related to development. Very early in the process, officials involved in the formation of the Reconstruction Committee saw that the reconstruction process would have a great impact on social and economic development whether it was intended to or not. As has been seen, this Committee formulated policies and designed procedures that were deliberately designed to attain development as well as mere reconstruction goals.

The place that the Reconstruction Committee occupied in the structure of the disaster-oriented social system and its long-range mission and consequent orientation, inevitably brought it into conflict

with other elements in Guatemalan society and with elements of the disaster-related social system from outside that society.

It was designed to be a coordination unit which would bring together a network consisting of the regular ministries of the Guatemalan government and non-governmental organizations from at home and abroad and focus the activities of these various units on the reconstruction process. In theory it had the legal authority to require the cooperation of the various Guatemalan Ministries of State and to bind NGOs to a set of contractual obligations in conformity with NRC policy. In fact, however, this legal right was virtually impossible to translate into manditory compliance and the Committee had to use persuasion and bargaining as its basic tools of coordination.

The various ministries of the Guatemalan government, like those of any government, were organized as bureaucracies with specific mandated missions. Like all such organizations, they were not receptive to turning over their programs to an "upstart" committee or to voluntary organizations they did not control. Nor were they eager to conform to policies which were different from their long standing operating procedures. As a consequence, they resisted the Reconstruction Committee and often gave less than full cooperation, especially when they saw their own interests threatened.

Huge programs were being contemplated and there was both political credit and private profit to be had from controlling or participating in them. The bureaucracy wanted its share of the action. In addition, these governmental units did not have the capacity to contend with either the scale or the pace of the reconstruction process but found

it hard to relinquish claims to jurisdictions that would normally be theirs. In short, they were in a defensive position with respect to NRC and with respect to the massive buildup of outside voluntary organizations that seemed to them to be running wild in the countryside. Their interests were in conflict with the interests of this newly formed Reconstruction Committee and its allies in voluntary organizations, both Guatemalan and foreign.

Again, this should not be seen as a peculiarly Guatemalan phenomenon but one which is associated with long established bureaucratic organizations when they confront an environment that is perceived to threaten their interests. The type of conflict that arose and is described in the previous two chapters must be regarded as a common outcome of the form of organization which emerges following a large-scale natural disaster.

Also included in the Guatemalan governmental sector in a more informal manner were the three independent interest groups mentioned in Chapter 3 as "The 100 Days Group," the GSNCEP group and the group formed of the field personnel from a variety of agencies. Each of these units constituted an "interstitial unit"; that is, a group which stands in between established organizations and groups and draws members from them on the basis of similar vested interests in order to bring about coordination in putting pressure on public institutions. In short, interstitial groups are coalitions designed to bring about temporary or more or less permanent alliances which can be useful to their members in furthering their own interests.

The 100 Days Group grew out of the Emergency Committee's efforts to conduct an emergency shelter program and to respond to the housing problem and at the same time to take the National Plan for Development into account. It was formed during the first month after the disaster and was comprised of representatives of groups with aspirations to control or to participate in the massive housing reconstruction program that would obviously follow the disaster.

It consisted of some members of the National Economic Planning Council, The Guatemalan Chamber of Construction, The National Housing Bank (BANVI), The Municipality of Guatemala City and The Institute of Insured Mortgages (FHA). Its public concern was with coordinating the reconstruction process with the National Development Plan. However, this plan called for the Ministries of State to conduct programs and make investments through normal governmental channels which tied various ministries to their normal clientele in the private sector. A good deal of the concern over the impact on the development plan was a concern with keeping within regular operating procedures during the reconstruction process so that the private groups represented by members of this ad hoc unit could do business as usual.

This group formulated a plan for emergency activities to be carried on during the first 100 days following February 4th, the date of the earthquake. Among other things, the plan dealt with debris clearance and demolition and recommended a shelter program through which seven sheets of lamina, along with other construction material, would be provided to 40,000 families in Guatemala City and 107,000 families in the countryside outside the city. These programs would be carried out

through regular governmental institutions including BANVI, BANDESA and the Guatemalan army. This was considered a "transitional plan" which would allow time for planning long-range reconstruction in conformity with the National Development Plan.

The 100 Days Plan Group may be regarded as an informal pressure group which sought to and did influence the policy and programs of the NEC. It was concerned with the development impact of the disaster and the reconstruction process primarily in terms of its impact on established plans for development. Its approach was therefore more traditional than innovative and the activities it recommended were to be controlled through the regular machinery of government. Nevertheless, it actually formulated operational plans that were adopted and followed for a period of time by the NEC. Its focus was primarily on urban reconstruction, especially Guatemala City.

The second group which sought to influence NEC policies and activities was the one formed by a coalition between the General Secretariat of the National Council of Economic Planning (GSNCEP), the Bank of Guatemala, and the Ministry of Finance. This group's usual responsibility was for the formulation of national development plans, and for monitoring indicators of economic development. It was comprised primarily of economists, bankers, and experts on finance and was concerned about the impact of the disaster on carrying out the development plan for Guatemala. Since it was given responsibility by the President of Guatemala for estimating damage and loss and for carrying out negotiations to secure and legalize foreign loans to aid in reconstruction, it was in a potentially powerful position to influence NEC and

later NRC policy. In addition to these responsibilities it had been assigned responsibility to "coordinate" foreign technical cooperation and to "adjust" the national plan for development to take reconstruction needs and activities into account.

In the long run this group did not propose exact operational plans but engaged in general economic analysis and planning which was regarded as being of little immediate value to NEC members who were responsible for immediately carrying out relief programs. Conflict arose between it and the NEC because of its failure to produce specific operational recommendations and it appears to have had relatively little effect on the planning and conduct of actual programs. Because it represented financial and business interests as well as governmental financial institutions, its approach to reconstruction tended to be conservative and to favor reconstruction by massive publically financed, but privately executed, reconstruction programs. It had minimal concern for such issues as community development or for the social consequences of public programs.

The third group was a loose confederation of field representatives from various agencies who were conducting development programs of one sort or another when the earthquake occurred. This group was quite naturally interested more in the form of reconstruction programs at the operational level than in high level economic theories. They also saw the process of reconstruction as a golden opportunity to put their ideas concerning development at the grass roots into effect in a situation where massive resources would be available and a maximum opportunity for success would be present.

Individually and collectively they pressured their own agencies, and especially the top levels of the Guatemalan government, to form a Reconstruction Committee that would promote development as a part of reconstruction. In the long run, many of this group assumed roles in the newly formed Reconstruction Committee and helped shape its policies and practices which were carried out through the complex system of sub-groups and units that made up the Reconstruction Committee's organization.

At the local level one of the most important developments in the Guatemalan disaster experience was the formation of local emergency, and later, reconstruction committees. In established communities, these groups blended together local governmental officials and elected grass roots leaders, and in the newly formed urban neighborhoods of Guatemala City they created entirely new local organizations capable of pursuing self-defined development goals.

Although these committees were in a sense an arm of the central reconstruction or emergency committees, they also represented the people and became the vehicle through which they could put pressure on the national government and its various agencies, as well as upon foreign voluntary agencies working within their communities. They, therefore, represented important interstitial groups that coordinated and managed local programs, acted as pressure groups, resolved conflicts, and perhaps most important of all, acted as training schools for the development of local leadership and organizational capacity. Since the representatives of the people were elected and represented the interests of their constituents, they also served as a testing ground for and

demonstration of democratic non-paternalistic procedures at the local level.

It would be a mistake to conclude that these committees resulted only in harmony and cooperation. They also created a vehicle through which conflict was carried out when several factions were in disagreement or when local ideas and preferences were at odds with the practices of voluntary or governmental agencies. The conflicts that arose, however, must be regarded as performing positive functions with respect to insuring greater local autonomy, cultural appropriateness, and independence. Of course the various arms of government, and often the voluntary agencies, at times had difficulty seeing this positive aspect of this arrangement when conflict seemed to be getting in the way of achieving agency goals.

There is still another side to the local reconstruction committees. In many cases, they brought local officials and representatives of the people in closer contact than ever before. This should have had a long range effect, at least in some cases, by making local government more aware of the aspirations of local citizens, and of their ability to help the community cope with problems, given the opportunity to do so. Whether the benefits of this contact will have its promised positive effect is problematic at the moment, however, because of the armed conflict going on between the central government and the guerrilla movement which has totally disrupted many of the communities touched by the disaster.

The Guatemalan Private Sector

In a major disaster which is followed by a massive reconstruction

process, involving the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars, the private sector inevitably becomes interested. The private producers of products and services which may potentially be consumed in the reconstruction process stand to make enormous profits, even while performing a valuable public service. As a consequence, they are interested in how reconstruction will be carried out, and quite naturally favor the use of the same mechanisms whereby ordinary public works programs are conducted. They are not as likely as voluntary organizations to view development as a process that takes place at the grass roots level, but instead, to see it as a process that strengthens the ability of the formal economy to produce products and services and thereby to offer jobs and spin-off economic and social benefits to the rest of the society.

In particular, those private firms who produce or sell construction materials, or who are in the construction business or in real estate development, have an interest in participating in the reconstruction process as profit-making organizations. They are likely to see the disaster related demand for materials,and the shortages that develop,as well as the need for large scale construction projects, as an unparalleled opportunity to make a profit.

It is quite natural that such organizations would view housing reconstruction from the perspective of their normal operations and to favor building large scale housing developments using normal commercial construction methods which essentially call for building by a contractor rather than by the eventual tenants. Such a process, they believe to

be more orderly and to result in higher quality construction because it is done by professionals rather than amateurs. Such procedures are also less likely to upset the standing balance of power that exists among regular segments of the society.

These interests placed pressure on the Guatemalan government to be included in the reconstruction process and used their ties to the regular government bureaucracy to further their cause. Eventually some large scale housing developments were built this way, but more often private companies contracted for large scale public reconstruction projects such as for the construction of hospitals or governmental buildings in the large urban centers, or highways and bridges, and so forth.

For the most part, the construction of housing was conducted by private voluntary organizations, with the help of the Reconstruction Committee, BANVI and BANDESA, usually with the participation of local people who supplied their labor and at least a minimum degree of managerial participation. This was even more characteristic outside Guatemala City than inside it where a few "private" projects were carried out.

Foreign Governmental Sector

Foreign governments who maintained embassies in Guatemala offered government-to-government aid and also helped finance the relief and reconstruction activities of various voluntary organizations to whom they were tied. Although governments such as that of the United States, normally offer emergency aid to foreign countries, especially those in the third world, out of humanitarian motives, they also have foreign

policy objectives and shape their aid to promote these goals.

Each nation has its own characteristic method of working in a foreign country and there is neither enough space nor sufficient inside information to discuss how each works here. Instead, the United States will be used as a case study.

The United States most often funds development programs in foreign countries by working through private voluntary organizations that have long-standing relationships with U.S. AID in various parts of the world. Instead of conducting the development programs itself, the U.S., through its embassies and U.S. AID, contracts with these agencies to manage and operate programs. Things become even more indirect because many of the large organizations they fund, such as CARE or Catholic Relief, also act more or less like funding agencies and work through existing local institutions and governmental bureaus to carry out their programs. In particular, food programs are organized in this fashion as are the many related programs that are attached to them. Thus, large voluntary organizatons, often with international mandates, act as intermediaries between the U.S. government and the people served by development programs.

When an emergency arises, funds are normally made available through Congressional appropriation to offer both direct government-to-government assistance and to fund voluntary agency programs related to disaster needs. In the Guatemalan case 25,000,000 dollars was authorized for these purposes. Some went directly to the Guatemalan government for road repairs, debris clearance and the like, and some went for food and housing programs conducted by voluntary agencies or by a special staff

hired by AID to conduct a lamina distribution program.

In addition to these things, the Embassy, through the Foreign Disaster Assistance Office and other channels, arranged for assistance such as helicopters, emergency medical teams, field hospitals, road building equipment and personnel, and so forth. These activities eventually involved various agencies of the U. S. government in the disaster, theoretically under the coordination of the Embassy and the U. S. Foreign Disaster Assistance Office.

It can be seen that there was a complex web of organizations and groups organized around the U. S. participation in the emergency and later the reconstruction process. This web was in contact with the Guatemalan government through its regular ministries and officials and through the Emergency Committee, and later The Reconstruction Committee. On the other hand, it also was in contact with other governments, and with various international voluntary agencies operating in the country. The complexity of the network is too enormous to explore here. In fact it was so complex that only fragmentary data could be collected on it during the course of this study.

One important variation occurred in the Guatemalan earthquake in the normal operating procedure for U. S. programs abroad. A housing program, which will be discussed later, involving the subsidized sale of corrugaged sheet metal roofing was actually conducted by personnel hired particularly for the purpose, rather than being conducted through voluntary agencies as would usually be the case. This program itself required that a distribution network be established and managed, thus creating a rather complex set of organizational ties which led indirectly from U. S. AID to cooperatives in various communities throughout the disaster area.

In connection with this program, an informal coordinating body was established between various agencies engaged in housing programs in the countryside. This group met weekly during the early days of reconstruction to iron out problems and exchange information. Although it was initiated by U.S. AID personnel, it was quickly made into a separate, non-aligned coordinating body for all voluntary agencies willing to participate. Before further discussion of this group, it is necessary to conceptualize the voluntary organizational sector of the disaster related social system.

Voluntary Organizations

Several kinds of voluntary organizations participated in the massive disaster related social system. It will be useful to classify them into four types, as follows: (1) emergency relief organizations, (2) development agencies, (3) church groups with basically religious missions, (4) ad hoc organizations and committees. Each type had its own orientation towards its role in the aftermath of the disaster. As a consequence, numerous disagreements arose over what was really needed in the way of aid, and how aid should be delivered.

Emergency oriented organizations, as pointed out earlier in the discussion of the Emergency Committee, tended to see their roles in relatively specific terms and to have short-range objectives. Their concern was with the immediate alleviation of suffering and with stabilizing the disaster situation so that the society could begin to function "normally" once more. Such organizations saw their presence, at least as active participants in post-disaster activity, as being

temporary. With respect to issues like housing they saw themselves as providing emergency shelter, or at the most, furnishing temporary housing in contrast to conducting long range permanent housing programs, especially where such programs had development as well as reconstruction objectives. The International Red Cross and The American Red Cross normally define their roles in this manner. Their international responsibilities are so extensive, and their commitment to disaster relief so constant, that they can not normally focus on one specific disaster over a long period of time but are forced to contend with a given emergency and then to move on to the next. The Salvation Army, under most disaster circumstances, operates in much the same manner, although, being a religious group with a special focus on the poor and indigent, its objectives go beyond disaster relief in and of itself.

In the case of both of these organizations in the Guatemalan disaster, obligations beyond ordinary emergency functions were assumed. Various national Red Cross societies, such as the Norwegian Red Cross and The Swiss Red Cross, assumed responsibility for and conducted permanent housing programs. The Guatemalan Red Cross, supported by International Red Cross funding, cooperated with the American Red Cross and the Mennonites to construct over 10,000 temporary houses for disaster victims. The Salvation Army, which had not operated a program in the country at the time of the earthquake, arrived to carry out its normal emergency activities, but eventually took charge of permanent housing reconstruction in Tecpan Guatemala. This was the first time it had been involved in such a program anywhere.

The second large block of agencies consisted of those organizations that were already conducting development programs of one sort or another in the country and of similar organizations that came to Guatemala for the first time to offer disaster assistance. These organizations vary considerably in their orientation to the development process and have widely different philosophies as to how to perform development tasks. They also vary from those which are very small to those which are very large and carry on large-scale operations. Included under this heading in the Guatemalan case were such agencies as CARE, Catholic Relief, Church World Service, Save the Children, The Christian Children's Fund, OXFAM, World Neighbors, PLENTY, etc. Many agencies falling in this group have a religious base of support, while others are funded by individual charitable donations, as well as governmental funding. All carry on programs not exclusively oriented towards disasters, but towards some form of development objective.

There is a division among these agencies which is drawn in terms of the conditions under which they normally deliver aid to their clientele. Some have a strong "charity" orientation and are committed to helping the needy through the delivery of free aid such as food, or cash payments to assist in child support. These free aid programs are normally tied to educational activities and health and fertility control efforts aimed at development objectives. The commitment to a charitable orientation stems partially from an ideological position, frequently with strongly associated religious convictions and partially from the funding base of the organization. Funds are obtained from donors, with the understanding that certain types of aid will be given to the poor in a specific country, or in developing countries in

general. The donors understand that they are helping to feed a poor child, or to buy clothes or pay expenses associated with education or health. The organizations therefore feel that they can not place conditions on their assistance which are in conflict with this understanding with their donors. For this reason, such organizations as CARE and Catholic Relief, and for that matter, The Red Cross and Salvation Army, approached housing with a reluctance to charge even a nominal price for aid or to place other major conditions on its receipt that would stray too far from their normal charitable orientation. It is difficult and perhaps unfair and misleading to make a single statement summarizing the orientation of this group of organizations. Nevertheless, it might be said that many believe that development depends on first solving the hunger, health and educational problems of the poor, thus providing a firmer basis for other development activities.

There is a second group of development agencies whose orientation is strongly centered upon self-help, extension education and technical assistance. These agencies are likely to be operating programs in agricultural development or the development of small-scale industry or vocational training and to focus on problems such as marketing or the formation of cooperatives and the strengthening of community organizational infrastructure. In a sense, their programs are forms of extension education backed up by appropriate technical assistance. They do not normally offer direct financial aid to the poor or distribute products such as food, clothing or housing materials. Instead, they focus on raising the consciousness of their clients and on improving the capacity of a community to manage its own affairs or

on the capacity of individuals and households to produce income and to fit into a marketing system. The expenditures of such organizations go more for supporting personnel who carry out the program in the field, rather than into subsidies for the clients. The Peace Corps and such groups as World Neighbors, or PLENTY fall into this category.

This type of organization often takes the view that charity produces dependency and therefore programs that give money or commodities to the poor undermine the development process. When organizations in this category organized disaster relief and reconstruction programs they therefore required recipients to make some sort of contribution either monetarily or in the form of labor. For example, some sold lamina and other building materials to disaster victims at half price, and conducted extension education programs on how to build safe houses using locally available materials. Since some were operating agricultural development programs, they saw free food distribution as a threat to their programs. They felt that the massive distribution of free food would depress agricultural prices and act as a disincentive to agricultural production as well as preventing farmers from making money during the immediate post-disaster period needed to assist them in reconstruction.

This group also tended to oppose the notion of building whole houses in large housing programs on the grounds that many of the houses being built were believed by them to be culturally inappropriate and to be too expensive, given local resources. Furthermore, such programs

were viewed as "paternalistic" since local people often had very little to say about their design, or their construction.

As a consequence of these differences in objectives, funding sources and philosophies of development, conflicts arose among voluntary agencies during the reconstruction process. These conflicts expressed themselves in both private and public criticisms as well as in occasional confrontations at meetings. More importantly, they resulted in some compromises which led charity oriented organizations to emphasize victim participation in the construction of housing to conform to the Reconstruction Committee's policy that aid not be given away free. Thus organizations such as The Red Cross and The Salvation Army, as well as Church World Service and many others, required victims to contribute their labor, where possible, to house construction or community projects to qualify for receiving housing aid. CARE required conformity to nominal housing design standards, and the building of a frame for a house by organized groups of victims before it donated roofing materials. In addition, most of the food eventually distributed to disaster victims was distributed through food-for-work programs that had self-help objectives.

Nevertheless, aid programs differed widely from agency to agency and frequently competed with each other in the same town. For example, roofing materials were sold at half price by one agency and given away free by another in the same village. Or, some people might receive food free while others were required to work for it. One of the most important decisions of the Emergency Committee, and later the Reconstruction Committee, was to assign specific voluntary agencies to particular

communities or sets of communities. This decision cut down on inconsistency in programs within communities to a certain extent, but resulted in substantial differences between communities in the types of reconstruction programs carried on. In addition, some very large agencies who had programs extending across much of the entire country at the time the earthquake struck continued to operate on a more or less country-wide basis. This meant that their programs might be carried out in the same or nearby communities where other agencies were conducting programs using an entirely different organization and philosophy.

The Coordination Committee of Voluntary Agencies initiated by U.S. AID and continued on a nonaligned basis, included only some of the voluntary agencies. In particular, it was dominated by those agencies whose programs were based on the second orientation discussed above, namely a "self-help" orientation. It also had higher participation on the part of middle sized and small agencies than the larger country-wide programs. For the most part, emergency oriented organizations did not participate. Their attachment, however, was more to the Guatemalan Emergency Committee than to the Committee on Reconstruction.

Religious Groups and ad hoc Committees, etc.

In addition to the larger more development oriented groups with religious affiliations and backing such as Catholic Relief, Church World Service, The Salvation Army and various Mennonite groups normally engaged in development and disaster relief, a fairly large number of

other church affiliated groups sent aid, and along with it, missionaries. Many such groups offered assistance ranging from houses, housing materials, to food and clothing on a charitable basis. Their interests, however, were often focused upon making converts and used disaster related activities as a mechanism to do so. New churches associated with various evangelical sects sprang up in villages and towns where they had not been seen before.

In a similar fashion many newly formed disaster relief groups showed up on the scene offering themselves as volunteers or promising various forms of assistance. An unusually large number of medical personnel were among these volunteers. Many remained in Guatemala long after the disaster related medical emergency was over and attemped to deal with health conditions in general in relatively remote areas of the country. Most eventually left voluntarily or were forced to leave once the Guatemalan health establishment began to insist that they be licensed to practice like all other health personnel in the country.

There were also the opportunists who saw the disaster as a way of raising funds which would never find their way into the reconstruction process. In addition, there were those who were sincere in their desire to help and who had formed committees or groups, especially in the U. S., but were not properly incorporated back home to be non-profit organizations. Some such organizations lasted only long enough to be assigned to communities, to make extravagant promises as to what they would do,and then to disappear, never to be heard from again.

Added to the above were the disaster scientists studying earthquakes in the physical and social sense, taking part in the complex web

of activities constituting the system. Also included were the disaster consultants who were called in as experts to advise agencies on the design of programs. These included both academics and members of commercial consulting firms. Representatives of manufacturing and commercial firms in the business of selling emergency shelters, modular houses, or other "hardware" likely to be needed in the reconstruction process also came to Guatemala. Finally, of course there were the curious who came more or less as tourists just to see what had happened. All of these assorted individuals and groups blended into and interacted with other units making up the disaster related social system.

The voluntary agency network was loosely tied to the Reconstruction Committee by written contractual agreements which spelled out in some detail what each agency promised to do. Through these agreements individual agencies were allocated responsibility for reconstruction programs in particular communities or geographic areas. These documents also gave the agencies legal authority to operate in these assigned areas.

In particular communities, agencies were theoretically subject to influence, if not a degree of control, by local reconstruction committees with whom they were expected to consult on the design and execution of programs. In practice, the degree of consultation varied considerably, in some cases being very intense and in others virtually nonexistent. In a few instances, conflicts arose between local committees and agencies which kept certain local programs in a turmoil over many months.

In addition to the local reconstruction committees there were roving field teams representing the National Reconstruction Committee that

periodically monitored agency programs and reported on them to headquarters. This could occasion consultation between the NRC and agency personnel over problems in the execution of programs at the local level.

It can be seen from this discussion that there was a network of connections which tied agencies to the local community and their clientele, disaster victims, on the one hand and to the National Reconstruction Committee on the other. There was also a network which led from agency programs in particular communities to agency headquarters in Guatemala, most frequently in Guatemala City or Antigua, and from there often to a regional headquarters, and finally to their central office, usually located in a foreign city, for example New York or London. From thence the network spread out to incorporate the donors and sponsors of the agency. Donors often consisted of individuals or church congregations and groups. Program sponsors often consisted of foreign governments and their various ministries and bureaus. For example, much support for U.S. based voluntary organizations comes from U. S. AID.

This sponsorship network had definite implications for the form that programs took, as noted above, because sponsorship is usually attained on the basis of a commitment to operate certain types of programs in a certain manner. But the point to be made here is that feedback information had to flow back through agency channels and eventually to sponsors so that funds could be raised to support programs and this feedback had to reflect the agency's commitment to its sponsorship as well as its accomplishments with respect to its client's

disaster victims. This has the long range implication of binding agencies to a pattern of operation which has proven successful in obtaining support on the one hand and delivering services on the other. Actual field programs in a sense may be viewed as an outcome of long range experimentation which finds a successful formula for maintaining this delicate balance. Because of their position in a network of organizational commitments, local program directors and field personnel often do not have a great deal of freedom to innovate. They are tied to disaster assistance strategies and development philosophies that fit the structural niche they occupy in the voluntary agency segment of a now global system of related, sometimes cooperating, sometimes competing, multinational organizations.

It must be understood therefore that much of what took place in the reconstruction process was decided far away in organizational headquarters, often on the basis of policies which apply to all local programs carried out by large scale agencies with programs operating in many parts of the world. As a consequence, much of the conflict between charity oriented and self-help oriented development agencies is structural in character and has very little to do either with the Guatemalan case in particular, or with the personalities representing various agencies in this particular case.

Community and Household Level Units

Communities affected by the disaster varied from very small isolated villages and hamlets to large municipios and departmental capitals and finally to a large portion of Guatemala City, a giant primate urban center. Except in the smallest places there was,

of course, a local governmental structure and often offices representing various ministries of state and nationally organized bureaus. In the larger places there were educational institutions, health facilities, many churches serving various religious sects as well as business establishments. All of these local institutions became factors in the reconstruction process, some as active participants in the process itself, and some as the recipients of assistance from the system. Government buildings, churches and schools, health clinics and hospitals, businesses and public utilities were all affected by the disaster and had to be repaired or replaced either by their owners or members, or by those who came to aid.

In other words, individuals and households were not the only "victims" of the disaster, nor were agencies, both Guatemalan and foreign, the only actors in the reconstruction process. The whole organizational infrastructure of communities was a part of the disaster related social system.

It must be noted also that interpersonal networks organized around kinship or around neighborhood and friendship relationships became involved in relief and reconstruction. Victims did not simply stand and wait to be assisted by agencies but the regular social networks through which people normally help each other in time of need or crisis were activated and rescued victims, sought medical attention, provided temporary shelter, and began reconstruction. It was these networks that many agencies attempted to join up with in an attempt to combine self-help with outside aid to maximize the developmental impact of the reconstruction process.

Summary and Conclusions

The changes in Guatemalan society at the household, community and national level that can be attributed to relief and reconstruction following the earthquake must be seen as the results of the operation of a very complex system of intermeshed activities carried on by hundreds of organizations and agencies, as well as by thousands of subsidiary field units operating in hundreds of damaged communities, each with its own internal organization. The reconstruction outcome must be seen as being the result of the interaction between these various units in the context of a geophysical and geopolitical environment. This interaction was as much characterized by interorganizational rivalry, conflict and competition as it was by cooperation and mutual assistance. Both conflict and cooperation are natural processes in such a system and both have positive and negative consequences for the attainment of disaster recovery or of development goals. Conflict may at times produce new ideas, and force creative compromises and at others produce destructive and debilitating effects on the functioning of a system such as this. Likewise, cooperation may forge alliances against change and adaptation just as easily as it can magnify the creative force of mutual assistance. It is therefore ill-advised to view the lack of internal consistency and unanimity on goals, objectives and operating procedures observed in the Guatemalan case, or the case of any other disaster as a sign of weakness in the reconstruction process. Indeed it may be exactly the opposite, a sign of adaptive change in disaster related social systems themselves.

References

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