SUSTAINABLE COFFEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS AND COFFEE COOPERATIVES IN GUATEMALA: A SMALL-SCALE PRODUCER PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This descriptive, phenomenological case study presents the perspectives of small-scale coffee producers in Guatemala regarding cooperative membership, sustainable coffee certification programs and the role of ANACAFE. The viewpoints of two producer cooperatives are described based on participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Through content analysis the transcribed data were categorized and summarized, and emergent themes are discussed. Advantages to cooperative membership include access to finances, information, cost sharing and expanding direct-trade relationships. Challenges identified are securing finances and attracting new membership. Certification programs may be desirable, but access to information regarding program types is limited. Participants feel that standards do not reflect cultural differences, and the producers question who actually receives the advertised price premiums. The use of best-practices incorporating the social, environmental and economic principles of certification programs is preferred. ANACAFE is a source of technical information and funding but resource access is selective and limited.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this study is to present the perspectives of small-scale coffee producers who are members of two coffee cooperatives in Guatemala. The individual experiences and viewpoints towards cooperative membership, sustainable coffee certification programs and the role of the Guatemalan National Coffee Association (ANACAFE) are explained in this thesis to contribute to a better understanding of common concerns small-scale producers face. Two Guatemalan cooperatives are profiled: the Apolo Cooperative (APOLO), which was formed and is managed by a small group of local farmers in eastern Guatemala; and As Green As it Gets Cooperative (AGAIG), a group started by a Non-governmental organization (NGO) of the same name, situated in the central highlands near Antigua, Guatemala.

Background

Coffee is one of the most valuable traded commodities. For most of the post-World War II period, it has been the second most highly traded commodity after oil (Ponte, 2002). Coffee is not a homogeneous good, and the market may be divided according to the different qualities of coffee (Ghoshray, 2010). There are two species of internationally traded coffee, Arabica – which produces superior quality beans - and Robusta (Ghoshray, 2010). Despite the popularity and profit associated with coffee consumption, coffee growers often do not receive a sustainable income (Valkila, 2009).

From 1999 to 2004, a coffee crisis swept the coffee producing world, when coffee prices fell to the lowest levels in over a century (Goodman, 2008). The price per pound of unroasted coffee plummeted from US$1.20 to between US$0.45 and US$0.75 (Bacon,
2005). This price plunge had a devastating global impact as “small-scale family farms produce over 70 percent of the world’s coffee” (Bacon, 2005, pg.498). Many of these small-scale coffee producers live in poverty and debt, unable to maintain a sustainable livelihood (Bacon, 2005). In Central America, the drop in price resulted in 350,000 permanent lost jobs and 1.7 million lost seasonal jobs (Varangis, Siegel, Giavannucci & Lewin, 2003).

Coffee prices have rebounded in the past few years; in fact, coffee producers watched prices soar 45% in the first 9 months of 2010 (Fairtrade Labelling Organization [FLO], 2010). The current market jump is partly due to environmental hardships affecting coffee growers around the world; climate change, mud slides, floods, droughts and natural disasters have reduced the global coffee supply in spite of rapidly increasing demand (Harrington, 2011).

There is concern among producers of another looming crisis; as Petchers and Harris (2008) highlight, the dynamics of the coffee market have not shifted in ways that guarantee long-term stability for those at the bottom of the supply chain. Although it seems high prices would be a much needed break for farmers, many producers sell at fixed prices in contracts signed at an earlier date. The global coffee industry is structured in a way that means coffee farmers often have no choice but to accept the prices which intermediaries, such as wholesalers and roasters, are willing to pay. Typically, coffee farmers earn only a tiny portion of the money consumers spend on coffee, while wholesalers, roasters, and retailers earn much larger portions (Francis, 2006). Price spikes also make it difficult for producers to plan ahead as they can only afford to pre-finance a portion of the following harvest. In addition to this economic grief, degradation
of land and water resources has diminished the capacity of farmers and communities to make the investments needed to reverse their situation (Shiferaw, Okello, & Reddy, 2009).

Several current studies have demonstrated that sustainable agriculture (fair trade, organic, shade-grown, etc.) is a viable method of ensuring economic growth, food security and environmental sustainability of rural livelihoods (Alonge & Martin, 1995; Gobbi, 2000; Lawson, 2004). In the past 20 years, due to increased demand in the developed world, continued efforts of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the formation of farmer cooperatives, there has been a significant push towards obtaining coffee that is considered fair-trade (Bacon, 2005; Levi & Linton, 2003; Valkila, 2009). More recently, there has been concurrent growth in two other forms of sustainable coffee production: organic, and shade grown (Levi & Linton, 2003; Raynolds, Murray & Heller, 2007).

Governments, donors and development partners in many developing countries have devoted substantial resources to develop and promote sustainable agricultural livelihoods (Giovannucci, Brandriss, Brenes, Ruthenberg & Agostini, 1999). In 2003, the central Guatemalan government worked with ANACAFE, the Guatemalan National Coffee Association (www.anacafe.org), to help farmers overcome the coffee price crisis, including the implementation of a national fund to support coffee growers (Eakin, Tucker & Castellanos, 2006). Non-governmental organizations and other grass-roots organizations are also actively providing direct support to small growers to produce organic coffee and to access fair-trade markets (Eakin et al., 2006). However, despite the increasing efforts and growing policy interest, widespread adoption and dissemination of
sustainable coffee management has generally been limited (Shiferaw et al., 2009). In order to help small-scale farming communities there must be more wide-spread adoption of sustainable agriculture to compete with the large-scale high-yield producers who can undercut price and quality with quantity (Lawson, 2004).

A central issue in farmer adoption is access to markets and technical information, and the availability of financial resources (Eakin et al., 2006). Governments have traditionally sought to achieve agricultural change through subsidies; these methods are now considered poorly suited to the challenges posed by sustainable agriculture as they are considered to be band-aid solutions and neglect the roots of poverty and inequity (Bruges & Smith, 2008). Community-level participatory organizations such as rural credit unions, farmers groups and cooperatives, organizations like ANACAFE and NGOs appear to be instrumental in promoting farmer adoption of sustainable agriculture in Guatemala by providing access to technical information and financial loans (Eakin et al., 2006).

In response to the heterogeneous coffee production landscape in which there is a wide variety of practices, standards of living and scales of production, several certification programs have emerged. Certification is a means of verification for product safety, quality and procedures as compared to a set of standards. For this system to be effective the certification bodies must be a third-party, independent of other firms in the agricultural network (Hatanaka et al. 2005). There are now several types of sustainability certifications that apply to the coffee industry which contain social and ecological condition standards, such as fair-trade, organic and shade grown (see Chapter 2). In theory, shifting practices to these certified production methods should have resulted in
higher wages for farmers, better investment returns and yields for producers, increased soil and water quality, and overall higher per-pound coffee prices. However, some theorize that sustainability and fair-trade certification is not fair at all, but rather a set of production targets that can only be achieved by farms affiliated with major coffee chain purchasers (Arce, 2009; Taylor, Murray, & Raynolds, 2005; Utting-Chamorro, 2005). Essentially, they propose that large corporations are the only ones that can afford to maintain farms that reach the demanding certification criteria and the costly certification dues; this handcuffs smaller operations and renders them obsolete.

Many fair trade coffee standards emphasize smallholder cooperatives and associations. Several studies have demonstrated extensive positive benefits of forming coffee cooperatives to both producers and their communities (Bacon, 2010; Krolak, 2008; Wollni & Zeller, 2007). Some key benefits to producers include collective processing of coffee, establishing direct-trade markets, access to technical information and access to financing (Bacon, 2010; Wollni & Zeller, 2007). Cooperative membership can also provide opportunities for brand differentiation and farmer adaptation of specialty coffee crops that receive higher price premiums (Wollni & Zeller, 2007).

**Research Problem**

Although there is growing research into the economic, social and environmental benefits and drawbacks of certification programs (Bacon, 2005; Levi & Linton, 2003; Valkila, 2009), less attention has been paid to the opinions and attitudes of small-scale producers towards these programs. Similarly, while the formation of coffee cooperatives by small-scale producers is becoming more common, there is little research which describes producer opinions. To fill this research gap, this thesis focuses on producer
opinions regarding benefits, barriers and challenges of joining coffee cooperatives, pursuing certification programs and ANACAFE’s role as a support structure for coffee producers in Guatemala.

This paper is outlined as follows: it begins with an overview of the history of fair trade, organic and other (e.g., shade grown) certification practices. The literature review focus is on the social implications (e.g., quality of life of workers), the financial differences (e.g., price per yield, wages) and the environmental benefits between fair trade, organic and conventional coffee farming.

Through interviews, focus groups and participant observation in two Guatemalan case study coffee cooperatives, I have identified the opinions of participating coffee producers towards a variety of economic, social and environmental issues they face; the focus will be on cooperative membership, coffee certification programs and the producers’ interactions with ANACAFE. By identifying potential key themes, I highlight similarities, differences and unique producer experiences and opinions. Finally, I make general recommendations regarding the advantages and challenges faced by cooperatives; the usefulness of certification programs for small-scale producers; and the role of ANACAFE as a source of support and information.

**Research Questions**

To address the various research objectives, I have developed three key research questions (RQs). I will use the following RQs to identify what the small-scale producers’ perceptions are regarding the:

- RQ-1: Advantages, drawbacks and challenges to coffee cooperative membership?
• RQ-3: Economic, social and environmental benefits and drawbacks of sustainable (fair trade, shade-grown, organic) coffee certification programs?

• RQ-3: Role that ANACAFE has in providing support and information to coffee producers?

Delimitations

Certain restrictions were placed on the study to narrow the scope and make it achievable with the resources available. In doing so, there may be concern regarding validity of the study, possible design flaws, and replicability (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). This section briefly addresses these issues and discusses how narrowing the scope may affect the generalizability of the study.

A multiple methods approach was first considered, using both case studies of small-scale producers and surveys of the larger Guatemalan coffee production population in to compare and contrast opinions. In order to streamline the focus while maintaining the applicability of the study, I decided that two case studies would be valid to address the RQs and objectives. The two groups selected have some similarities (e.g., both small-scale cooperatives seeking direct-trade markets; both producing smaller yield, but higher quality products) but are also quite different in their financial situations and their organizational structure (see Chapter 4 for descriptions). The intent was not to conduct a comparative analysis, but rather a descriptive phenomenological study where key themes based on the variety of perspectives could be identified.

The decision to focus exclusively on small-scale producers may also limit the generalizability of the study. A number of farms and cooperatives were visited, of which a few were much more industrial in scale compared to the case studies selected.
Although the larger, industrial producers also have valid opinions and face their own challenges, looking at varying levels of production was well beyond the financial and temporal scope.

Researching a small population does limit the ability to make generalizations and extrapolations to bigger picture issues. However the data obtained and potential recommendations may be useful for the populations’ studied, other cooperatives who face similar challenges, or for future researchers planning comparable studies.

**Limitations**

Qualitative research may always have bias due to the researcher’s selective attention, selective memory, interpretations based on existing judgements, and expectations of results (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). However, careful planning and training can mitigate this bias substantially. For this study I used repeated operational methods (i.e., similar individual interviews with a consistent second observer present), meticulous note taking, digital recordings, and a focused blend of questioning and participatory observations as some steps to limit the bias.

The findings (Chapter 5) are based on data collected using semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Both case studies were visited a few times, allowing for repeated informal participant observation however, due to a limited field season, only one round of formal interviews was conducted. The inability to re-interview may present a limitation with respect to response reliability and consistency, and removes the possibility of follow-up questioning after initial data analysis. Furthermore, participants themselves may have provided biased responses either due to inadvertent
leading questions, or participant desire to give what they perceived as the *correct*
response to the visiting international researcher.

The time of year was also a limitation. All research was conducted between
November 2009 and February 2010, coinciding with the height of the coffee harvest in
the highlands of Guatemala. This busy time may have influenced responses negatively
(e.g., stressful time for producers working long hours, concerned about the quality of the
harvest). From most interview accounts, this particular harvest was trending to be
slightly weaker than the previous year, but the quality was high and so were coffee
prices, which may have resulted in skewed positive opinions of some producers. It would
be interesting to see if the variation of opinions at different slower times of the year, and
in subsequent years with better or poorer harvests.

Finally this research is cross-cultural and was conducted in Spanish without the
use of an interpreter. I have extensive experience working in Spanish throughout Latin
America, and have university-level Spanish language training, but it is not my first
language and there is always the chance of missed nuances. The digital recordings and
the consistent presence of a second observer who provided their perspective throughout
the interview and research analysis process has helped capture otherwise overlooked
details.

**Significance**

Without long term environmental, economic, and social sustainability, coffee
producers may not be able to earn a viable income. Lands and ecosystems may be
degraded and future generations may not have the same opportunity as their predecessors.
Sustainable coffee production is essential to the viability of rural lands and to livelihoods
Pursuing certification and forming cooperatives are valid options for small-scale producers striving for sustained change.

The surge in third party sustainability certification programmes for agricultural networks has prompted a growing academic interest (Allen 1993, Marsden 1995, Raynolds and Murray, 1995, Goodman and Watts 1997). Several recent studies are primarily focused on the economic (Bacon, 2005; Levi & Linton, 2003; Valkila, 2009), governance and standards (Guthman 2004, DuPuis and Gillon 2009), environmental (Perfecto et al. 2003, Martinez-Torres 2006, Mendez et al. 2007, Philpott et al. 2008, Mendez et al. 2009) socio-cultural relationships (Nigh 1998, Bray et al. 2002), and consumer opinions (Bacon, 2005; Levi & Linton, 2003; Valkila, 2009) of these initiatives. Although these studies are quite important, there appears to be a gap in the literature when it comes to the non-economic value of certification and cooperative formation, and in particular, there is little research that gives producers a personal voice and disseminates their individual experiences and perspectives regarding these issues.

My interest was to look at the social and environmental reasoning of producers in terms of participation (or lack thereof) in cooperatives, certification and ANACAFE, and what benefits, drawbacks and barriers may exist for them. Perhaps the coffee consumers, in non-coffee producing nations, who read these producer perspectives will gain a better understanding of the production source of their coffee, removing the disconnect that exists between the coffee producers and final consumers.

The potential benefits to the study participants include a summary of findings that will be provided to them regarding viable certification and cooperative options for their production levels. Alternatively, through various presentations I have given and
conversations with consumers here in Canada, there may be opportunity to develop new
direct-trade partners or purchasers of roasted beans.

For other researchers the results of this study could be used to identify key trends
and issues for the small-scale producers. Similar case study locations could be studied to
gauge the regional opinions and identify common concerns and solutions. The coffee
certification program employees or policy developers could look at this and future studies
to identify what changes may be needed to facilitate wider adoption of their programs
among small-scale producers.

**Researcher’s Perspective**

Previous visits to Central America for research, volunteer work and personal
travel framed the regional focus of this study. It was important for me to select a focused
topic that was globally relevant yet important and applicable to the local communities
participating in the study. Key environmental issues for the region include increased
forestry, mining expansion and industrial agricultural practices.

Sustainable agriculture is a pressing global issue, and coffee is such an important
commodity to many cultures. My initial thoughts were to research barriers to farmer
adoption of sustainable production practices, but the literature I found most interesting
was on certification programs, thus this was chosen as the metric to evaluate. Visiting
various coffee shops in Canada during initial planning solidified my interest in this
research; consumer options to purchase certified coffee products appeared to be growing
and so I became interested in learning about who was producing the certified coffee, how
they selected a particular program, and what their overall opinions were towards certified
production.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Sustainable Coffee Certification: An Overview

Coffee Crisis.

Coffee was introduced into Central America towards the end of the sixteenth century by European explorers, but its main use by locals was as a medicinal plant (Eakin et al., 2006). The crop became a primary export for the region in the mid-nineteenth century (Eakin et al., 2006). As rural areas began to rely extensively on coffee production as a livelihood, coffee producers began to look for different ways in which to increase their earnings and better provide for their families. Traditional coffee growing occurred in shade-covered hillsides, where coffee was randomly planted among the forest canopy of pine and fruit trees, including oranges, lemons, avocados and bananas (Martinez-Torres, 2008) and crops were not tended to frequently, resulting in low yields (Eakin et al., 2006). Farmers were encouraged to modernize their techniques to improve yields by implementing a combination of measures such as sun-grown coffee, scientific pruning, and applications of fertilizer, insecticides and fungicides (Rice & Ward, 1996).

Modernization of coffee production was successful in increasing farm yields, efficiency and earnings. Coffee is one of the most valuable traded commodities; for most of the post-World War II period, it has been the second most highly traded commodity after oil (Ponte, 2002). However, high-yield techniques have also resulted in environmental degradation, contamination, and problems in human health (Lawson, 2004). Due to the increased density of coffee bushes, there is a greater demand on the soil for nutrients and minerals. This causes decreased soil fertility, leading producers to
become dependent on fertilizers, which initially help to replace nutrient loss but do not restore optimal soil conditions over the long term (Lawson, 2004). Without the root system and cover of shade trees, soil erosion becomes more prevalent and the coffee plants are more vulnerable to certain types of pests and diseases. Producers then become reliant on intensive use of chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides to reduce and eliminate pests and diseases. These agrochemicals can enter the groundwater and surrounding ecosystems, causing environmental degradation and endangering human health (Lawson, 2004).

This long-term degradation of land and water resources leads to essentially un-arable land and gradually diminishes the capacity of individual farmers and communities to undertake critical investments needed to reverse the situation as no new income can be generated to re-invest in new, more sustainable techniques and practices (Shiferaw et al., 2009). This in turn reduces producer opportunities to address nutritional and other necessities and depletes their ability to buffer shocks, thereby increasing the vulnerability of producer livelihoods. These challenges are highest in many developing regions representing the critical areas where widespread poverty and fragile ecosystems intersect (Shiferaw et al., 2009).

Although the price of coffee in the past few years has rebounded slightly, the unprecedented fall of prices during the coffee crisis (Bacon, 2005) coupled by a global process of market deregulation and the dominance of multinational traders and distributors (Eakin et al., 2006) still affects the small-scale producers today. The low prices devastated rural economies and threatened the biodiversity associated with
traditional coffee production. Farmers were vulnerable to the fluctuations of the coffee market, which led to earnings instability for coffee farmers (Bacon, 2005).

**Sustainable Agriculture: A Coffee Crisis Solution?**

The potential nexus between worsening poverty and degradation of natural resources emphasizes the need for a new paradigm in coffee production. Principles of sustainability offer hope for coffee producers who wish to maintain a stable income from coffee production without endangering environmental and human health. Bruges and Smith (2008) suggest that five conditions need to be met for an agricultural system to be deemed sustainable: it must be ecologically sound; socially just; economically viable; humane; and adaptable.

In sustainable systems, producers earn alternative sources of income from the wood and fruits from shade trees, as well as from the production of any other crops that are intercropped within the coffee plot (Lawson, 2004). Although yields per hectare are lower for sustainable shade grown, fair-trade and organic coffee than for conventional plantations, production costs are also lower. Lower production costs combined with price premiums have been found to make sustainable coffee agriculture more profitable than conventional techniques (Alonge & Martin, 1995; Gobbi, 2000; Lawson, 2004), however, the market dynamics have not changed to effectively filter these profits down to the small-scale producers in the supply chain, instead many of these price premiums are benefitting the large-scale export/importers and roasters (Petchers & Harris, 2008). By participating in sustainable agriculture, many producers would potentially have access to greater economic and financial stability, educational and marketing opportunities, and the implementation of more sustainable production techniques (Lawson, 2004).
Trading Coffee: A Brief Market History

Before the Collapse.

Beginning in the 1960s, the coffee trade was regulated by the International Coffee Organization (ICO), a conglomerate group of industrial coffee companies and member nations, who were able to maintain high coffee prices by setting strict export limits (Levi & Linton, 2003). This allowed producers a certain amount of financial peace of mind while maintaining a set of quality standards as per the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) (Bacon, 2005).

By 1989, there were set of growing issues with the ICA that ultimately ended in the collapse of the agreement, and a subsequent plunge in global coffee prices (Bacon, 2005; Levi & Linton, 2003). As the primary coffee consumer and key ratifier of the ICA, the United States wanted to increase their ability to reward allied countries, and set embargos on others (Levi & Linton, 2003). The decline of leftist movements in producing Latin American countries was also an added comfort to the United States; they felt less political insecurity which reduced their perceived benefit of the existing agreement (Bacon, 2005). At the same time, former coffee consumer countries like Brazil and Vietnam who relied heavily on imported coffee products were quickly becoming major producers of lower-grade Robusta beans which could undercut Arabica bean prices (Bacon, Mendez, Gomez, Stuart & Flores, 2008a; Levi & Linton, 2003). After the demise of the ICA in 1989, excessive non-quota production by farmers and large multinational companies caused a dramatic collapse in coffee prices (Bacon, 2005; Levi & Linton, 2003). Despite a brief rebound in the mid-1990s, by 1998, eight private companies, including Nestle and Phillip Morris, controlled 69% of the coffee retail
market, essentially removing any real global competition (Bacon et al., 2008a). Producers were receiving half of the profit they once had under the ICA due to limited competition from buyers (Bacon, 2005). Producers began looking for alternative markets, and the consumers’ taste for instant and cheap coffee was losing ground to a more refined, specialty taste (Levi & Linton, 2003; Valkila, 2009).

**Birth of Fair Trade.**

Alternative trade organizations (ATOs) have existed for over 60 years, initially brought about as a way for religious, disaster relief, and solidarity organizations to ethically sell crafts produced by marginalized societies in the south to consumers in the north (Bacon, 2005). The first coffee related ATO, the Global Exchange, was created in 1986 to sell Nicaraguan coffee in the United States as a show of solidarity between the two nations, which at that time were involved in a heated political dispute (Levi & Linton, 2003). Soon thereafter, the first certification and labelling of this direct (fair) trade market was created by a faith-based NGO in Holland, called the Max Havelaar initiative (Bacon, 2005). They offered a fair trade stamp of approval to even the largest multinational coffee distributors, as long as a fraction of their coffee was purchased ethically from Havelaar’s specified Mexican producer (Bacon, 2005; Levi & Linton, 2003; Raynolds et al., 2007). Sequentially, other organizations and countries started their own labelling and certification initiatives (Levi & Linton, 2003). By 1997, some of the different initiatives decided to form one umbrella organization, called the Fairtrade Labeling Organization (FLO), who standardized certification processes for a wide variety of products, including coffee (Bacon et al., 2008a).
The FLO system is now the global leader in coordinating, monitoring and certifying international fair trade certified products, which they label as “Fairtrade”. According to the FLO (2009), there are now over 700 certified products from over 50 countries. This represents an estimated 5 million workers and their families directly benefiting from this system, with global sales of over US$3 billion (FLO, 2009). As coffee was the first certified product, it remains the cornerstone of the FLO system and involves a well-defined set of standards.

There are also two more categories of certification attributed to coffee: organic, and shade grown. All three certification systems contribute to the sustainability of coffee production, but there are several differing standards, organizing bodies, and criteria. With the array of possible labels, producers are often unsure which certification involves what criteria, and which to pursue. For purposes of this study, I will focus on the most widely used programs in Latin America: Fairtrade (by FLO), organic (by IFOAM), RainForest Alliance (by the Sustainable Agriculture Network [SAN] and Utz Certified (Appendix A).

**Sustainable Certification**

**Fairtrade: The FLO Standard.**

Ever-evolving, the current standards required to meet FLO Fairtrade certification incorporate a balance of economic, social and environmental criteria. From the onset, coffee that is Fairtrade certified has to be purchased directly from small farmers organized into democratically managed cooperatives, where each member has an equal vote (FLO, 2009). The producers must adhere to a minimum set of social and economic
standards aimed at ensuring a democratic structure of the cooperative, protection of worker labour rights and requirements for freedom of association and collective bargaining (Courville, 2008). In 2007, FLO added a few environmental standards, including restricted use of agrochemicals and encouraging water reuse and composting of the coffee pulp (FLO, 2009).

In return, the purchasers must strive to build long-lasting relationships with the cooperatives, and provide pre-export lines of credit to the cooperatives (FLO, 2009). With both sides adhering to set criteria, the small scale producers are guaranteed a floor price that fluctuates with the New York exchange market price, but historically has remained higher (Figure 1). This price is set so that producers will be able to meet sustainable production year over year. An additional US$10 cents per pound from the purchase price is a Fairtrade Premium, where funds are returned to the communities of the producer cooperatives for social and economic re-investment at the local level (FLO, 2009).

![Figure 1. Comparison of Fairtrade and Market Arabica Coffee Prices.](image)

1 From Fairtrade Foundation UK ([www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)). Reprinted with Permission.
If coffee production is certified organic in addition to Fairtrade, an additional US$20 cents per pound is applied. This extra amount paid on organic coffee is grabbing the attention of numerous small scale producers (Bacon et al., 2008a; Valkila, 2009), and involves a completely separate process of certification.

**Organic and Other Initiatives.**

The organic certification process has the longest history of any of the sustainable coffee certification organizations, with origins dating back to the 1970s. The organic coffee market is growing at a rate ten times higher than non-certified coffee (Giovannucci & Koekoek, 2004 in Courville [2008]). The recognized leader in organic certification is the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM) (Levi & Linton, 2003; Raynolds et al., 2007). The IFOAM mission has the most environmentally focused standards, in particular in regard to restricting agrochemical inputs, such as pesticides and chemical fertilizers (IFOAM, 2009). Other norms outline natural processes for maintaining soil fertility and water conservation methods (IFOAM, 2009). The norms set out by IFOAM are regularly reviewed and revised, and independent certifying agencies follow strict and rigorous procedures to ensure organic requirements are met (IFOAM, 2009). Unlike Fairtrade, there are no set price premiums for certified organic, but the market does usually demand a high premium for these goods (Raynolds et al., 2007).

Rainforest Alliance (RA) was started by a coalition of Latin American environmental organizations with assistance from a Danish watchdog group (Courville, 2008). This coalition is called the Sustainable Agriculture Network, and RA is the
secretariat of this group (Courville, 2008). The RA program has a combination of social and the broadest environmental standards, although they do allow some use of agro-chemical inputs and less shade cover than programs focused on shade protection (e.g., Bird Friendly) (Raynolds et al., 2007). Some in the industry consider these liberties to be lax, while RA considers it a realistic approach, as yields for farmers would otherwise be too small and thus unsustainable (Raynolds et al., 2007).

The Utz Certification was originally created to focus solely on coffee production, although it has now expanded to include cocoa, palm oil and tea (Utz Certified, 2011). Utz Certified was previously known as Utz Kapeh (which means “good coffee” in Mayan Quiche) and was developed by the retail supermarket chain Ahold with participation from selected coffee producers in Guatemala (Courville, 2008). It is a registered non-for-profit in the Netherlands and is focused on providing responsibly produced coffee with a market-driven focus (Courville, 2008). Standards include soil management, appropriate use of fertilizer, post-harvest product handling, labour rights and conservation policies (Courville, 2008).

Benefits and Drawbacks of Certification

Prior to conducting this thesis research, I wanted to find somewhat similar recent studies that looked at the benefits and drawbacks for small-scale coffee producers regarding certification programs. Most research to date has been completed in Guatemala as well as neighbouring Nicaragua, Chiapas Mexico and El Salvador, and has focused on the economic benefits, social benefits and, to a lesser extent, the benefits to the environment. Fair trade and organic coffee markets are still in their infancy, as each account for about 0.9% of global sales (Valkila, 2009; Bacon, Mendez, & Fox, 2008b),
however, since 2003, fair trade sales have tripled each year and organic sales have increased by over 50%, so many small-holder producers are eager to cash in on this growth (Valkila, 2009; Martinez-Torres, 2008; Bacon et al., 2008b).

Several previous studies have found that producers who participate in fair trade and organic certification programs do receive a fixed and relatively high price premium (Bacon, 2005; Bacon, 2010; Mendez et al, 2010; Valkila, 2009; Wollini & Zellers, 2007). This is particularly noticeable and important during periods of price depression (Muradian & Pelupessy, 2005). While this price can be higher than what producers earn for non-certified coffee, it is important to remember that the smaller producers have smaller yields, thus the benefit received from these premiums has limited effects on household livelihoods; producers often remain in poverty (Bacon, 2010; Mutersbaugh, 2005; Valkila, 2009). Furthermore, there is a 3-year transition period when pursuing organic certification during which no organic premiums are paid (Valkila, 2009). When conventional coffee prices are relatively high, larger producers could easily pursue conventional, agro-intensive methods, and produce higher yields, earning profits by increasing production (Valkila, 2009). For large-scale producers the organic and fair trade premiums become attractive only when the market-traded price is low (Valkila, 2009). Many farmers understand their experience with Fairtrade as providing improvement, even though they see their share of the global coffee economy as remaining unfair (Francis, 2006).

Bacon (2010) found that although many small-scale producers are certified Fairtrade, there is not enough demand for their product and they often resort to selling their product for lower prices in traditional markets. Mendez et al. (2010) similarly found
that the average volumes of coffee sold by individual farmers were low, and many certified producers did not sell their entire production at certified prices. This can result in an overall loss as these producers have greater overhead costs to maintain their organic and fair trade certifications. The advantage of fair trade organic farming, especially in combination with shade-grown is that there will always be a large amount of organic material available for compost and fertilizer (Valkila, 2009). However, maintaining these fields requires more attention and work, thus more labourers need to be hired. Fair trade, organic producers have a difficult time paying wages during harvest for lack of pre-harvest credit and although workers on these farms are paid slightly more than those on conventional farms, the work is much more laborious and time consuming (Valkila, 2009).

Mendez et al. (2010) listed several other benefits of certification programs to small-scale producers including: a positive influence on savings and credit; contribution to broad-based sustainable livelihoods; rural development; and conservation processes in coffee regions. Certifications, especially Fairtrade organic, have proven effective in supporting capacity building and in serving as networks which leverage global development funding for small-scale coffee producers (Mendez et al., 2010). Linton (2009) argues that Fairtrade has improved the lives of Guatemalan smallholder coffee farmers, their families, and their communities by improving livelihoods, building democracy and increasing cooperative members’ human and social capital. Other benefits of certification include land tenure and cultural revival. Generally, farmers with organic and organic and fair-trade certification had more land under cultivation than uncertified farmers (Philpott, Bicher, Rice, & Greenberg, 2007).
There are also societal advantages, in particular with fair trade certification. The democratic cooperatives and social premium allows producers and farmers to be directly involved in local development projects, which many farmers stated was beneficial to themselves and the lives of their workers (Valkila, 2009). Also, these cooperatives did provide some amount of credit for start-up or pre-harvest costs (Valkila, 2009).

Previous studies into the benefits of ecological certification produced mixed results. Philpott et al., (2007) found no differences in vegetation characteristics, ant or bird species richness, or fraction of forest fauna in farms based on certification. Although producers in the Chiapas highlands with organic and fair trade certification may reap some economic benefits from their certification status, their farms may not protect as much biodiversity as shade-certified farms (Philpott et al., 2007). Working toward triple certification (organic, fair trade, and shade) at the farm level may enhance biodiversity protection, increase benefits to farmers, and lead to more successful conservation strategies in coffee-growing regions (Philpott et al., 2007). Farmers’ incentives for maintaining shade trees are diverse, but in the end this complement to fair trade production can further increase farmer incomes (Bosselmann et al., 2009). This pursuit of multiple certifications is becoming common practice, as fair trade certifiers are encouraging organic practices as part of their environmental sustainability standards (Raynolds et al., 2007).

Certification programs are able to capitalize on the increased concern of consumers in the developed world for the working conditions in developing countries, as well as the potential of free trade to marginalize poor producers worldwide (Basu & Hicks, 2008). Social marketing allows consumers to choose products based on how they
are produced, bought, distributed and sold (Basu & Hicks, 2008). However, although consumer marketing narratives emphasize producer benefits of fair trade, Johannessen & Wilhite (2010) found that its total benefits for primary producers is modest and that it is in fact the consumer countries which acquire the larger share of economic income, mainly because fair trade is positioned within the conventional market where large multinationals control the supply chain. The participation of large multinationals has led to increasing pressure and tough competition for the certified producer cooperatives in the fair trade market (Johannessen & Wilhite, 2010).

Mendez et al. (2010) found that certification programs did not have a discernable effect on livelihood-related variables, such as education, and frequency of younger generations migrating away from family lands. These drawbacks were also reflected in a study by Arnould, Plastina & Ball (2009) who stated that although positive economic effects of fair trade exist, the effects on education and health benefits were uneven. Another potential drawback to large-scale certification programs was identified by Arce (2009), any changes within the fair trade movement and markets can have dramatic impacts on the lives of producers in ways that are not necessarily taken into account; this includes inadvertent exclusion from the fair trade market.

Arce (2009) suggests that fair trade policies need to reflect a more subtle and culturally relevant understanding of household and community level consequences of fair trade standards. There are many facets of certification systems that remain to be improved, notably streamlining the certification and monitoring system, strengthening producers’ understandings of certification, and enhancing NGOs’ and certifiers’ abilities
to effectively work with the farmers they are trying to support (Arce, 2009; Linton, 2009).

**Coffee Producing Cooperatives**

Many fair trade coffee standards emphasize smallholder cooperatives and associations. This can lead to the formation of producer marketing cooperatives, which often generate additional benefits for their members (Bacon, 2010). Small-scale producers often establish cooperative associations to limit dealing with middlemen in the selling of coffee to the final consumer market. Between producers and consumers, there are several intermediaries in the global coffee economy, including exporters, wholesalers, importers, roasters, and retailers, each of which gain increasing profit relative to the farmers. Sometimes, farmer cooperatives are able to eliminate some of these middle stages by taking on additional roles and pooling funds to purchase export licenses and equipment (Bacon, 2010).

Several studies have demonstrated extensive positive benefits of coffee cooperatives to both farmers and their communities (Bacon, 2010; Krolak, 2008; Wollni & Zeller, 2007). Cooperative leaders and experienced farmers report the following among the benefits of maintaining strong cooperatives: defending the land titles earned during previous agricultural and political reforms, providing educational opportunities and scholarships, and providing a political and economic voice for marginalised small-scale producers (Bacon, 2010). Wollni and Zeller (2007) found that participation in cooperatives positively influenced farmer adaption of specialty coffee crops and in turn increases the prices that they receive. It follows that increased participation in coffee cooperatives could help to buffer the hardships of low conventional coffee prices
(Wollini & Zeller, 2007). Creating a cooperative can also offer unique opportunities for success such as brand differentiation and develop additional motivation in the workers as they become co-owners of the enterprise.

However, Mendez, Shapiro & Gilbert (2009) found that some cooperatives actually have less ecologically friendly practices than individual farms. They demonstrated that collectively managed cooperatives used less shade and pruned more intensively than individual farms, they also found a great deal of variation among cooperatives and stipulate that the history and institutional arrangement of the cooperatives strongly influences their management approaches.

Need for the Present Study.

In addition to the large studies which use surveys to generalize about issues faced by coffee producers, there is a need to study whether or not small-scale producers actually believe there is value in pursuing certification and cooperative membership. Certification can be confusing, difficult to maintain, and costly for smaller producers who are using agriculture for subsistence, not profit. Reviewing the literature in preparation for this research highlighted the lack of published information directly quoting the producers themselves, describing in detail their perspectives towards certification programs and cooperatives. No literature was found addressing the small-scale producer viewpoint of ANACAFE and their purpose and role.
Chapter 3: Methods

Research Design and Rationale

This research topic is social in nature, focused on the interactions, perceptions and worldviews of small-scale coffee producers. Social research should examine an issue from the study participants’ point of view and should implement a naturalistic research design (Cohen et al., 2007). Naturalistic research is qualitative, and main forms of inquiry are ethnographies, case studies, comparative and retrospective studies, all of which produce thick verbal descriptions of the issue (Cohen et al., 2007). Often the research process and interaction between the researcher and study participants is as important as the findings, thus social research is best accomplished if conducted in the participants’ natural environment (Cohen et al., 2007), in this case the farming communities in Guatemala. The recommended naturalistic approach to capture the small-scale coffee producers’ perceptions towards certification programs and cooperatives is through case studies; a holistic, descriptive interpretation of opinions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 [as citied in Cohen et al., 2007]).

Selected Approach.

This research is best addressed through descriptive phenomenological case studies of two coffee cooperatives (for case study descriptions see Chapter 4). A descriptive case study allows for the capture of in-depth detail that is often essential for understanding and fully exploring an issue (Tellis, 1997; Yin, 2002). LeCompte and Preissle (1993; as cited in Cohen et al., 2007) suggest the purpose of descriptive, naturalistic case studies is to take the reader into the mind-frame and reality of the study participants, to re-create their
world as much as possible. In the complex world of coffee certification programs, new case studies are an important tool to further understand the thought process producers have when deciding whether or not to pursue certification, and what role farming cooperatives have in facilitating adoption of these programs. The new findings may extend experience to or strengthen previous research results (Yin, 1984).

In addition to using knowledge gained from an extensive literature review, a case study researcher should be aware of the mutual shaping and interaction that will occur between themselves and the study participants. Researchers become the human instrument and should design the study using methods that will be considered unobtrusive and onerous for the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 [as cited in Cohen et al., 2007]). As summarized by Cohen et al. (2007, pp.170) the advantage of being the human instrument is the “adaptability, responsiveness, knowledge, ability to handle sensitive matters, ability to see the big picture, ability to clarify and summarize, to explore, analyze, to examine atypical and idiosyncratic responses.” The researcher should be aware of the other side of the spectrum, where bias, preconceptions or familiarity may hinder the validity of the research.

**Alternatives Considered.**

Initial thought was given to combining a few different methods to complement the case study approach. Specifically, the use of closed-ended question surveys of not only participants in the two case study locations, but also some third-party organizations, such as ANACAFE or similar NGO-based farming cooperatives. The rationale behind this was two-fold: collect data from differing point of views from other small-scale producers, but also larger, industrial coffee farms to compare and contrast other perspectives.
towards joining cooperatives, pursuing certification and interaction with ANACAFE. Additional study areas and participants would significantly expand the scope of the study beyond a manageable amount without much value added in addressing the research questions proposed in Chapter 1.

**Data Collection Methods**

Once the study methodological approach was properly framed, the next step was to select and design appropriate data collection methods that would capture the firsthand knowledge of the farming cooperative case study participants. According to Spindler & Spindler (1992; as cited in Cohen et al., 2007) an effective descriptive case study should incorporate data collection that will: include prolonged and repetitive observational data; extract as much socio-cultural knowledge as possible; establish an interview guide (after arriving in the field), being cognisant of avoiding use of leading questions; use proper recording devices; and provide full disclosure of the intent and role of the researcher.

The main methods of data collection used in this naturalistic case study were participant observation, semi-structured interviews, field notes and informal conversations with coffee producers.

**Participant Observation.**

Relationship building in an informal setting, such as in the comfort zone of the study participants is one means of building genuine rapport that could lead to mutual trust and confidence between the two parties (Cohen et al., 2007). Observing study participants in their regular settings results in essential real-life data collection needed for a naturalistic case study (LeCompte and Preisse, 1993 [as cited in Cohen et al., 2007]).
This study used observations of workers in the coffee fields to not only build trust between the researcher and study participants prior to the formal interviews, but also understand their workplace and gather essential descriptive data.

Participant observations conducted in this study included: spending various days in the coffee fields during harvesting; observing interaction of farm owners and workers during various processing stages, such as de-pulping, drying, packaging unroasted beans; visits to the homes of farming cooperative members, including social meetings with family members; attendance at cooperative management meetings; visits to both coffee cooperative offices for informal discussions; attendance at coffee cupping and public informational sessions facilitated by the cooperatives; and various informal casual discussions. Whenever possible, hand-written notes were taken to capture key, relevant verbal and non-verbal information observed. When note taking was not possible or socially appropriate, key observations were noted as soon after leaving the study setting; alternatively, many observational notes were dictated into a digital voice recorder. For case study-specific details on when data was collected refer to the Study Conduct section later in this chapter. All other case-study specific details are addressed in Chapter 4.

**Semi-structured Interviews.**

Semi-structured interviews, sometimes referred to as qualitative interviews, uses an open-ended questioning approach that is a fluid, changing conversation between the researcher and study participant (Yin, 2010). By avoiding closed-ended questions and limiting the use of leading terms in the questions themselves, study participants were encouraged to use their own words and vocabulary. As Yin (2010, pp. 172) states “a researcher tries to understand a participant’s world, which is likely to include...
concentrated efforts at mastering the meanings of the participant’s words and phrases.” This was particularly true in this study, as I conducted all interviews in Spanish, which is not my first language.

The relationships between the interviewer and participant are varied which can influence the length, content and openness of responses given (Cohen et al., 2007). All interviews were supported by an interview guide (Appendix B), which assisted in personal preparation and was used as a framework for the actual semi-structured interview as recommended by Cohen et al. (2007). Yin (2010) refers to the interview guide as an interview protocol, with a subset of topics, each of which have probing cues or questions. These guiding principles were used when developing the research guide for this study, where numerous detailed questions, divided into eight key categories, were developed during the pre-interview stage to ensure that the main topics were covered. The questionnaire used in this study was not intended as questionnaire to be verbalized, but rather as the conversation guide. With the exception of some of the demographic line of questions, useful to describe the study participants and to put the interviewee at ease at the beginning of the interview, no single interview covered all questions or topics. Qualitative interviewing requires intense listening and the ability to hear what the participants actually mean, not just hear the words they are using, a skill learned with practice.

Both digital audio recordings of interviews and photos of study participants were used in this study to document interviews in forms other than notes. As suggested by Yin (2010), permission was discussed verbally and consent given in formal signed permission (Appendix C). The mastery of the recording device is key not only to avoid loss of
important data, but in particular to avoid the perception that the interviewer is incompetent or unprofessional (i.e., didn’t take time to prepare to learn tools, how much time went into preparing the substantive questions and literature research) (Yin, 2010).

The use of electronic devices could create a setting that may be too formal, intimidating or uncomfortable. To alleviate this, once the recorder was initially presented, it was kept out of eye shot while interviews were happening at both case study locations; it was not made a prominent part of the process. Furthermore, to create a sense of comfort, all interviews took place on interviewee terms (time, place). This ranged from office settings, to walking up steep hillsides, to coffee bean drying patios, and to inside moving vehicles. In fact, some interviews actually were broken up to accommodate daily tasks and took place in a variety of places.

**Group Interviews and Focus Groups.**

One way to generate a wider range of responses and increase the potential for open discussion, in comparison to individual interviews, is the use of group interviews and focus groups (Cohen et al., 2007). The group setting can create a comfort level for participants and is also a time-saver for the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007). However, there are drawbacks to the group setting: Arksey & Knight (1999; as cited in Cohen et al., 2007) suggest that one participant may dominate the interview and some respondents may actually withhold information in front of their colleagues. As a matter of convenience, a group interview was conducted with three coffee producer participants for the As Green As It Gets Cooperative (AGAIG).

A specific form of group interview, the focus group, is growing in popularity among qualitative researchers, where there is more interaction between participants who
organically drive the topic of conversation. The researcher acts more as a facilitator, and will only intervene to guide the discussion if the topic has diverted significantly away from the intended topic (Morgan, 1998 [as cited in Cohen et al., 2007]). Both group interviews and focus groups are useful tools to triangulate with traditional one-on-one interviews and participant observation (Cohen et al., 2007). A focus group was held with five members of the Apolo Cooperative (APOLO). The process lasted nearly two hours and was almost entirely directed by the participants.

**Validity and Reliability**

Qualitative research can have either loose design or tight design: a loose design is recommended for experienced researchers who investigate broad study concepts, new fields of study, and adapt methodologies throughout the scope of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994 [as cited in Cohen et al., 2007]). Alternatively, as in this research, the design can be tight with a few focused research questions, pre-planned approaches and methods, specific study groups (i.e., two case studies).

This qualitative study was planned and researched using multiple methods of data collection and framed within the assumptions and nature of qualitative research (i.e., it is a description of a particular phenomenon, specific in time and region). Enquiry and subsequent description is the primary feature, with the semblance of truth being the objective, so the reader can imagine being there (Yin, 2010; Cohen et al., 2007). Truthworthiness, in qualitative research, is used instead of traditional terms of validity and reliability (Yin, 2010).

This case study may still be used to address the generalizability of coffee certification programs, however only in the context of comparability and translatability
Both APOLO and AGAIG case studies characteristics are described in detail in the following chapter, not only to bring the reader to the source, but also to increase the suitability for comparison with similar or dissimilar groups in other research (Yin, 2010; Cohen et al., 2007). Other studies looking specifically at small-scale producers perspectives towards certification programs, and attitudes regarding farming cooperatives, may also use the descriptions and any themes identified in the findings chapter; this adds to the translatability of this study (Cohen et al., 2007).

**Study Conduct**

Initial planning for the study began in June 2009, when a research proposal outlining the background, research questions, methods and planned fieldwork was submitted to Royal Roads University. An Ethical Review application was submitted and approved in October 2009, which included the research agreement (Appendix C). This agreement was presented to each prospective study participant prior to any interview participation in this study. Signed copies are digitally stored and available on request.

All field research was conducted between November 2009 and February 2010. For logistical and other reasons, I based myself in Antigua, Sacatepéquez, Guatemala and travelled as needed to the case study locations. Details about methods and data collection techniques were discussed earlier in this chapter. The first month in the field was spent forming relationships and visiting various coffee producing farms, some members of cooperatives and some not. Four other farms were visited before selecting APOLO and AGAIG. These two were selected as matter of convenience, but also both fit the research framework. Participant descriptions are outlined in Chapter 4.
Between December 2009 and January 2010, much of the participant observation took place over a series of visits to both case study locations, followed by interviews of cooperative members in January and February 2010. The APOLO interviews were carried out first, totaling four individual interviews of coffee producers and one large focus group (5 participants). An additional interview was conducted with one of the cooperative’s exporters.

At AGAIG, five individual interviews of coffee producers and one group interview (3 participants) were completed. One additional interview was conducted with founder and director of the NGO that guides the cooperative. All interviews were digitally recorded using an Olympus VN-6200PC Digital Voice Recorder. Unedited digital audio files are organized and stored for reference.

Initial data analysis began with interview transcription in April 2010. I initially began the transcriptions, but the process was that much slower since interviews were completed in Spanish. I enlisted the assistance of acquaintances made in Guatemala, Ana Maria and Rene Castellano, who meticulously transcribed over 500 minutes of audio during April and May 2010. Transcriptions are stored in digital and printed forms but are not included as an appendix to this study. Initial audio and transcription analysis began in June 2010, and following a break over the summer months, started again from October 2010 to February 2011.

Data Analysis

Through prolonged discourse analysis of transcriptions and recordings I describe the experiences and perceptions associated with coffee certification and cooperatives of the two case study locations. Although analyzing qualitative research is not a sequential
procedure; there is a general five cycle phase that occurs, regardless of the type of qualitative research design (Yin, 2010). This project followed the five phases as outlined by Yin (2010, including compiling; disassembling; reassembling (arraying); interpreting; and concluding. The entire five-phase cycle is recursive and has iterative relationships.

The first stage, compiling, includes organization of field notes, audio recordings, transcriptions, and photographs. In this case, the raw data was organized digitally by case-study groupings and interview subjects, and then printed and organized into binders. This step included constant reading of transcriptions and listening to recorded interviews, familiarizing myself with the raw data.

The second cycle, disassembling, involves splitting the notes and transcriptions into different sequences and theme or topic groups, in this case using Excel tables to keep track of who said what. Transcription excerpts where moved into the interview topic areas based on the research guide discussed in Chapter 3. Some researchers, in particular those using grounded theory, will develop codes at this stage (Cohen et al., 2007). For the descriptive purposes of this research, the analytic approach of using themes rather than coding was applied; whereby transcripts were analysed for unifying, common and case specific themes. The process of disassembling undertook numerous forms and iterations, not uncommon for this stage. The use of memo writing to capture thoughts and themes was used essentially as a way to make new notes of the original data notes (i.e., the transcriptions).

The next cycle involves reassembling, where the substantive themes developed are used to reorganize the data into new groupings (Yin, 2010). This can be done graphically if applicable, but in this case the use of lists, concept maps and table
construction was applied. Transcript excerpts were re-organized in Excel by key topic groupings, and further brief memos were written for each cell entry. Key themes were also identified at this stage, and a final re-organization of transcript quotes was completed. The interpretation of this new thematic order and the presentation of a new narrative is the fourth stage, and is considered the key analytical portion of the qualitative study (Yin, 2010). Similar to disassembling, this process underwent numerous revisions and forms. The fifth and final analysis stage is to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the resulting narrative, which, in this thesis is presented as the summary in Chapter 6.

**Chapter 4: Case Study Descriptions**

This chapter begins with a brief introduction to the Guatemalan coffee industry, including the importance of the crop nationally and the geographic descriptions of the two growing regions where the case studies are located. The remainder of the chapter describes the participant and cooperative characteristics at each case study, based on the demographic questions posed at the start of each semi-structured interview.

**Coffee in Guatemala**

Agriculture (primarily coffee) generates approximately 13% of the Guatemalan GDP, it comprises 26% of exports and employs nearly half of the country’s labour force (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2010). Unfortunately the income generated from agriculture and coffee does not appear to be trickling down to the majority of the labour force. Guatemala has one of the western hemisphere’s largest income distribution gaps;
20% of the wealthiest citizens consume over 50% of the GDP, while half the population lives on less than $2/day (US Department of State, 2010).

Although a relatively small country in land mass, Guatemala is climatically one of the most diverse nations in the region (CIA, 2010). Because of this variation in rainfall, temperature, altitude and humidity the Arabica variety of coffee is grown in Guatemala from the lower, warmer pacific lowlands to the high peaks in the western mountain ranges (ANACAFE, 2010). The higher quality Strictly-Hard-Bean (SHB) varieties are grown in the valleys and slopes at the highest elevations.

**Coffee Processing**

To understand some of the viewpoints of these producers, a brief description of coffee processing is needed. The producers at both case studies collectively process the coffee produced for the cooperatives. Based on interviews and observations\(^2\), coffee can be sold by a producer at four different stages. Stage 1 is to sell the coffee cherry (i.e., the fruit that contains the beans, or seeds) immediately after harvest to a processing facility. This is the quickest manner to earn income, but the least profitable, since the processing facility is essentially purchasing a raw, unrefined product at a low price.

The second stage of production involves washing and sorting. A high quality cherry contains dense beans that will sink in water. The coffee is then de-pulped and dried for 3 to 7 days, typically by sunlight on large concrete patios or rooftops (Figure 2). Both cooperatives in the case study sort the de-pulped coffee using a variety of sieves and dry their de-pulped beans in sunlight, manually turning the coffee every hour or so to

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\(^2\) Unless otherwise noted, the source of all information in the case study descriptions and findings in Chapter 5 are based on personal observations, informal discussions and interview transcripts.
ensure accurate drying and fermentation. At this stage, additional sorting can be done to identify the densest, highest quality beans. Generally a high quality bean will have roughly 13% moisture left after this process. If sold at this stage, the coffee bean is still encased in a parchment skin, referred to as *pergamo*, or parchment coffee (National Coffee Association [NCA], 2010). The *pergamo* coffee is sold to export houses in Guatemala, who will then continue to process the *pergamo* coffee to stages three and four described below, and sell to importing markets.

![Typical Patio Sun-Drying Coffee](image)

*Figure 2. Typical Patio Sun-Drying Coffee.*

The third stage involves removal of the parchment, a process that usually requires additional costly machinery. Hulling, the removal of the parchment, and subsequent polishing and grading of the coffee results in “green” coffee (NCA, 2010), the final step before roasting. In Guatemala, this green coffee is referred to as *café oro* (i.e., gold
coffees, in reference to the price benefits for the producer). The majority of sales for both coffee cooperatives highlighted in this case study, APOLO and AGAIG, are in Café Oro. The fourth and final stage of coffee processing is roasting.

Case Study 1: APOLO

This association of coffee producers was formed in 2004 and consists of 23 producer members. The producers have been producing coffee in the eastern Guatemala region referred to as Nuevo Oriente for generations (Figure 3).

Until 2004 this was not a collective effort, and each producer worked and processed their coffee independently. The cooperative nucleus is made up of nine core members who are actively involved in regular meetings. The remaining members, locally referred to as associated members, are less involved but do look to the cooperative for information and advice. Land tenure is private, with land ownership passed on from previous family members. The cooperative has an existing direct-trade relationship with an importer in Calgary, where the coffee is re-branded as Sierra Las Minas. The producer members are continually seeking new direct-trade relationships in Canada and the United States. Coffee not sold through direct-trade relationships is sold in Guatemala and exported to neighbouring countries. On average, yearly production of unroasted coffee sold through the cooperative is 3200 quintales. This is the amount sold through the cooperative. Individual producers also sell a variety of coffee independently.

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3 A quintal is a common unit of weight measurement used in agriculture in Guatemala. It is equivalent to approximately 100 lbs or 46 kg.
Figure 3. Map of Guatemala and Study Locations.

Geography.

The various coffee producer farms that make up APOLO are located near the small town of Olopa in the south eastern highlands of Guatemala (Figure 3). Situated at an elevation of 1350 m, the picturesque town of 16,000 residents has a dry sub-tropical climate (Chiquimulaonline, 2010). The main industries in the region are agriculture and cattle ranching. The primary agricultural crop is coffee, which is grown on the steep peaks and valleys that surround the town and neighbouring villages. APOLO is situated in one of the eight high-quality bean growing regions as classified by ANACAFE
This area is referred to as Nuevo Oriente, a region characterized by relatively low rainfall (1300 mm/year with a pronounced wet and dry season), mean annual temperature of 18-25°C, and a growing range from 1200 to 1400 m (Chiquimulaonline, 2010).

**Agricultural Practices.**

Common varieties of Arabica grown by APOLO are Bourbón, Caturra and Catuai. Harvesting typically occurs in the dry season, lasting from early December to mid-March. The coffee is shade grown, where typically 70% of the coffee plantation is shaded by taller vegetation. Shade growth is provided by banana, orange, inga and pine trees (Figure 4).

*Figure 4. Coffee Plants and Typical Shade Cover.*
The leaf litter of the inga plant provides a needed source of nitrogen to the coffee plant. Members are shifting towards organic agriculture, but a small amount of chemical fertilizer is still applied. Organic compost, created by vermi-composting of the discarded fruit which surrounds the ripe coffee bean, is used as organic soil in producer fields, and is sold in neighbouring towns and agricultural markets. No herbicide or pesticides are applied because the area has a less humid, high-altitude climate. All harvesting done by hand, with a temporary labour force brought in during the busiest months, usually January and February to assist with the harvest.

**Sustainable Coffee Certification.**

None of the current producer members in APOLO hold any sustainable coffee certificates, such as Fairtrade, organic or shade-grown practices. In the past, some members were certified by Rain Forest Alliance, but as of 2009 this was not renewed due to administrative complications as presented in Chapter 5. Two cooperative members, as part of an independent endeavour, sell some unroasted coffee to Starbucks, who does have a series of environmental and social standards requirements.

**Study Population.**

Four of the nine key cooperative members took part in the individual interviews. The same four, plus two other members attended the focus group discussion. These producers are considered small-scale and most have a secondary source of income as they increase their coffee exports. By typical Guatemalan standards the producers could be considered middle class, based on observed physical wealth such as home size, vehicle ownership, plantation size and home furnishings. In fact it would appear that the general
southeastern population has a higher standard of living then the indigenous communities in the central and western highlands. Table 1 outlines information on the study participants.

Table 1

**APOLO Study Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Participants</th>
<th>Eric</th>
<th>Henry</th>
<th>Orlando</th>
<th>Alvaro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperative</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Coffee producer</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>Coffee producer</td>
<td>Coffee producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of membership</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farming</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11 hectares</td>
</tr>
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<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Information</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Education</td>
<td>Agronomist</td>
<td>Zoologist / Animal Husbandry</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>Agronomist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Occupation</td>
<td>Owner and operator of local corner store</td>
<td>Teaches business administration classes at nearby college</td>
<td>Cattle ranching with siblings</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Case Study 2: AGAIG**

The AGAIG cooperative is linked to an NGO of the same name, whose mandate is to provide locals the training needed to grow independent, environmentally sustainable products, primarily coffee, but also artisan goods, natural cosmetics and reforestation projects (AGAIG, 2010). For further information regarding this organization see their website: [www.asgreenasitgets.org](http://www.asgreenasitgets.org).
Membership in the cooperative has grown to 25 small-scale producers. Land ownership is private, usually passed on from previous generations. However, through the NGO, micro-lending is available and widely used to buy larger parcels by cooperative members. All coffee produced as AGAIG brand is sold to a direct-trade importer in the United States AGAIG is seeking to expand its sales to other international markets.

**Geography**

AGAIG and coffee producing fields are located in and around San Miguel Escobar, a town of approximately 10,000 inhabitants a few kilometres from Antigua, Guatemala (Figure 3). Antigua and its vicinity is well-known internationally for producing high-quality coffee beans (ANACAFE, 2010). This region, also listed as one of the eight high-quality coffee regions by ANACAFE, has annual rainfall around 1200 mm, and annual temperature range of 19-22 C. All AGAIG coffee fields range from 1500 to 2000 m, which grades the beans as Strictly-Hard-Bean (AGAIG, 2010). All farmer fields are located on the north face of Volcan Agua (Figure 5).

**Agricultural Practices.**

The harvesting season usually begins in December, but can last into early April at higher elevation growing plots. Common varieties of Arabica cultivated by AGAIG are Bourbón, Caturra and Catuaí. Coffee is grown under the shade of a variety of plants and trees, including banana, orange, lemon and most commonly the gravilea. A concentrated effort is in place by producers to achieve fully organic practices, but in the transition, a small amount of fertilizer is used. A small amount of pesticides is used in the first two years of planting the coffee tree to protect the vulnerable plant. However, as coffee does
not fruit before the third year, the coffee product is pesticide free. Any organic by-product of coffee harvesting and production is composted and re-applied to the fields as fertilizer. Harvesting is done by hand; the local producers work their fields daily and during peak seasons they hire temporary help from neighbouring communities (Figure 5).

Figure 5. AGAIG Participants.

**Sustainable Coffee Certification.**

No producer currently holds any sustainable coffee certificates, such as Fairtrade, organic, Rain Forest Alliance or other social and ecological programs as discussed in Chapter 2. The members of AGAIG have researched various fair-trade and organic certification programs, but there was no indication that any were being pursued.
Study Population.

A total of four individual interviews and one group interview, with three participants, was conducted (Table 2). The producer members of this cooperative are generally considered subsistence farmers, based on observations of their land ownership size, annual coffee sales, housing, personal possessions and personal accounts of previous financial struggles. All rely on secondary sources of income, usually provided by spouses and older children who have started their own small local businesses.

Table 2

AGAIG Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Participants</th>
<th>Miguel</th>
<th>Fredy</th>
<th>Daniel</th>
<th>Timoteo</th>
<th>Alberto</th>
<th>Filiberto</th>
<th>Juan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Role</td>
<td>Coffee producer</td>
<td>Coffee producer</td>
<td>Coffee producer</td>
<td>Coffee producer</td>
<td>Coffee producer</td>
<td>Coffee producer</td>
<td>Coffee producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>No data</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Education</td>
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<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Occupation</td>
<td>Chicken Farmer</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>Barber shop</td>
<td>Bricklayer</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion

The research findings presented in this chapter rely heavily on direct quotes from over 500 minutes recorded interviews. The quotes presented here are the most unique and relevant viewpoints of the coffee producers, these findings are presented by research question, and sub-divided by case study. The original full length Spanish quotations are included as Appendix D; these have been included so that bilingual readers can gain better insight into the context and nuances of the interviews.

Research Question 1: Cooperatives

The first research question targeted the viewpoints of the producers with regards to advantages, challenges and overall opinions of coffee cooperatives. Within each case study, findings are organized by common categories which emerged through interviews. Cooperative characteristics are highlighted first, including: purpose; membership; organizational support; and direct-trade markets. This is followed by producers’ perspectives on cooperative advantages, disadvantages and challenges.

Case Study 1: APOLO.

Cooperative Purpose.

The objective of the APOLO cooperative is to produce high quality coffee in an environmentally friendly manner using the best-available practices. Members decided early on in the cooperative formation that they would seek direct-trade partnerships, but would also pursue certification programs available to them in Guatemala, in particular Rain Forest Alliance and organic certification. Henry, the cooperative’s administrator, summarizes the responses of the APOLO producers:
We have based our vision and mission, from the start of the group's formation, on producing coffee with an environmental consciousness [while] seeking direct markets […] On that basis [our group] created a principle that members who want to integrate must have certified farms, or be willing to become certified. Above all [they] must meet the standards mandated by the Ministry of the Environment and if they do not have these tools [they] should at least come to us for advice.

Membership.

APOLO is dedicated to finding new members to grow their cooperative. The cooperative is in the process of finalizing a charter of rights and obligations. With over 1500 coffee producers in the Olopa region there is no shortage of prospective members. The cost to join the cooperative is a donation of five quintales of unroasted coffee, which is sold and the profits are put towards administrative costs. APOLO considers an individual’s integrity, honesty and work ethic before allowing membership:

Orlando: Well first, any new member must be honourable, a person whose word we can trust, because often we make contracts that each member will agree to producing a certain amount and if the coffee price rises well we always have to deliver because we have a responsibility.

Cooperative as a Support System for Individual Members.

Throughout interviews and focus groups APOLO members frequently alluded to the essential support they receive from each other including financial loans, technical knowledge, agricultural practices and business management. The cooperative is
essentially an extended family, and in some cases, members were of actual family relation.

**Direct-Trade.**

APOLO’s direct-trade market is quite small; although no specific data was given, members acknowledged that the majority of their coffee production was destined for traditional markets and coffee export houses while only a small portion was locally roasted and directly traded. APOLO is looking to expand their direct trade market; however only one direct-trade partnership has been formed with a Canadian importer, a second market in the United States was being explored during the research period. All members favoured direct-trade partnerships over any other market. Key themes discussed in regard to direct-trade markets were: added benefits to the producers; removal of middle-men exporters (and the politics associated with this); forming and maintaining trade relationships; and overall increased profit sharing for the group. Small-producers often establish cooperative associations to bypass middle-men (Bacon, 2010), and to increase yields and profits (Krolak, 2008). As Orlando states, “[Direct-trade markets are good] because we are cutting out two to three [middle] buyers […] [Otherwise] everyone has to split that profit: the one who loses is the producer.”

Although financial details were not discussed, APOLO members stated that a direct-trade market does allow for higher price premiums, where some of the added profit can be re-invested into the cooperative’s operations.

Henry: What one looks for in a direct market is that the price differential paid to the producer is better than that of the local market […] And with this premium the
producer gives a contribution - a percentage - to the cooperative, depending on the differential.

*Cooperative Advantages.*

The group presented itself as a united front. Although each member produced a varied amount of crops privately (using a variety of practices), the coffee they sell as the APOLO brand is always consistent: Each producer grows their crops at similar altitude of 1300 m, under shade-cover of 70% and other similar agricultural practices to ensure the same high-quality, environmentally conscience product.

One of the key advantages expressed by APOLO members to working as a cooperative is sharing resources, a finding corroborated by several studies (Bacon, 2010; Krolak, 2008; Wollni & Zeller, 2007). Although ultimately the gains by each farmer in the profit sharing method are based on the percentage of coffee each producer contributes to a particular batch, there still exists a sense of camaraderie and genuine desire for organizational success. Wollni & Zeller (2007) suggest that cooperatives develop additional motivation in workers as they become co-owners of the enterprise. Access to resources, sharing operational costs, and selling higher bulk volumes of coffee to exporters to obtain a favourable price differential were all benefits discussed by all four APOLO members interviewed, similarly found in other studies (Bacon, 2010; Krolak, 2008; Wollni & Zeller, 2007).

Alvaro: The association has supported producers in receiving courses on certification: we discuss selling in bulk; and selling an attractive volume to a purchaser by combining our harvest […] We have also, as an association,
purchased agricultural products such as fertilizer and the bulk volume lowers the cost.

Cooperative Disadvantages.

An interesting theme brought up by Eric, Alvaro and Henry was the perception held by other producers in the region. Many believed that cooperatives have ulterior political motives behind strengthening their operations. This misconception is a disadvantage in attracting new members as well as when dealing with financial and governmental agencies.

Henry: The disadvantage is that here, in Guatemala, everyone associates [cooperatives] with politics. […] For example, we have requested some funding and they have not provided us anything because they believe we are participating in politics and that we have [political] aspirations.

Overproduction without established markets is another disadvantage. There is an expectation that all coffee produced is sold, but in reality this is not always the case (Valkila, 2009; Mendez et al., 2010). Even with a strong harvest, there is no guarantee that all of the APOLO brand coffee will sell. Coffee can sit on the shelves for months before it is sold and producers see a profit. This is discouraging for some members, who may not have the patience or resources to persist for the long-term.

Alvaro: In over 5 years we have not yet managed to sell 100% of the crop that APOLO produces. Last year was our best sale; we were able to sell 60% of the harvest. There are people in this organization that have grown hopeless along the way, while they want [quality coffee beans] to grow in the long-term, they want to
see immediate results [...]. We members are financing the cooperative from our own pockets; people sometimes question whether we are on the right track.

Self-financing the cooperative by individual members was also discussed. The primary nine members are sustaining the cooperative financially as APOLO emerges from infancy. One major issue for small businesses in developing nations is access to financing (Kirsten & Sartorius, 2002). The group members continue to personally invest in the cooperative because they are confident in their product and hopeful that coffee prices will continue to rebound and rise.

Eric: It is the effort of the nine original members - the founders - that are fighting [financial] battles to support APOLO. It is not yet self-sustaining because APOLO is still not generating profits. […] The idea is that down the road we will be able to say to producers we have lower costs; these are the real benefits for producers, not to act as a bank.

One unique viewpoint from Orlando was that a drawback of cooperative membership is the time commitment needed to attend administrative meetings, group discussions and other cooperative requirements that keep the producers away from their coffee fields, “The challenge is that there are costs, right, because you have to dedicate time, being in meetings, and in training courses […] for someone dedicated only to agriculture it slows you down a little bit.”

**Cooperative Challenges.**

A common challenge voiced by the cooperative producers was regarding the attraction of new members. As stated in the case study description, the primary nine associates are members of two separate families. There are other producer members, but
they are much less involved. Maintaining and attracting new members is difficult to do while APOLO is still figuring out their identity and establishing new direct markets.

Eric: Obviously right now it is not that appealing [for other producers] to join APOLO because we cannot say: “look we have this market for your coffee.” So the idea is once we have it [an established market], first we sell our own coffee and then if there is more demand we can then say to others: “come over, this is what we can offer.”

Access to information about export markets and lack of business management knowledge are challenges faced by the cooperative. The Guatemalan government does not have an easily accessible information management portal where small producers can access information regarding exportation. According to Henry, smaller groups in the past have failed at their business endeavours, not because of the quality of product, but because they were not able to properly manage their business operations. Additionally, the cooperative farmers also face the challenge of dealing with buyers who do not comply with previous agreements.

Henry: Breach of contracts at the time of sale - we negotiate with a foreign customer and if they don't follow through the issue is: who bears the loss, the cooperative or the producer? The other challenge is the lack of knowledge about regulations and laws of the countries where the coffee is sent [...]. Another challenge is managing and accounting here in Guatemala, there is not much information on how to handle billing - many groups have failed because of this, they did not get appropriate advice.
It will take time to strengthen the group’s markets and the organization’s structure. Alvaro summarizes what he feels are the primary challenges APOLO will have in the coming years:

We want to create the foundation and base so that APOLO can be a fortified organization and, later, accept new members with an open market. At the international level - we believe that if we put too heavy a load on ourselves when the [organizational] base is not well cemented, this can easily destroy us [...] on the other hand if we create a solid foundation, we can carry a larger weight [that is the path we want to take].

**Case Study 2: AGAIG.**

**Cooperative Purpose.**

Cooperative members described the purpose of the cooperative as being a conduit to producing high quality coffee: AGAIG’s role is to provide producers with the knowledge, best practices, and tools for growing and roasting high quality coffee and access to corresponding specialty markets. Thus overall response from participants was that AGAIG’s purpose is to the best quality coffee from the Antigua region, in an ethically and environmentally sound manner.

**Membership.**

The only costs associated with joining the cooperative are small monetary contributions towards operating costs of the machinery used in processing as required. Costs include fuel, electricity, and maintenance. A clear group mentality exists amongst the producers, and it is apparent they genuinely care for the environment and the quality
of product produced. Any new member who considers joining should exhibit similar characteristics and attitudes.

Fredy: Well so far I think the requirement [to join] would be a willingness to work hard; and […] not to cut as before, with green cuts [unripe coffee]. No, now [new members] need excellent coffee because we are already accredited with high-quality coffee and we do not want anyone else who would ruin our reputation.

**Cooperative as a Support System for Individual Members.**

One of the primary roles the cooperative serves is as a source of financing for producers through micro-loans and donations; these are facilitated through the NGO.

Daniel: They [AGAIG] support us through loans so we can start working. [When we were first approached] we wanted to work but the only thing is we did not have the funds to start […]. [To repay the loans] the interest charged is 5% per year and […] we can pay them back in money or in coffee.

The cooperative also supports member communication; through weekly administrative meetings the farmers gain and share valuable knowledge. Meetings cover various topics including best-practices, business plans, and future directions for the association.

**Direct-Trade.**

Nearly all coffee produced by AGAIG is sold directly to foreign markets, via volunteers and tour groups, word of mouth and through the AGAIG website. Key themes discussed around direct-trade include: better prices for producers as they cut out middle
export houses; increased connection with consumers; and building a reputation for high quality product. As with any business endeavour, quality of product and advertising/publicity are paramount to long term success (Hill, Nel & Trotter, 2006).

Fredy: Well what is helping us here is the good price we get for our coffee because we are selling directly to consumers. For example, you can tell your friends: “look here in San Miguel Escobar there is high-quality coffee,” and that helps our publicity, even just word of mouth. […] We have good earnings because our market is direct to the consumers.

*Cooperative Advantages.*

Common AGAIG themes relating to cooperative advantages were: access to finances; facilitation of direct-trade markets; access to information; education for future generations and strength in numbers (sharing costs and profits). In addition to the benefits of direct-trade, AGAIG members have the advantage of a united front; both through providing assistance to each other and having a stronger collective voice in the coffee industry than individual producers.

Filiberto: The advantage of being united - everything can be achieved, you can export more coffee, you can apply for international assistance. […] In groups it is easier, if I make a request to some other country for new machinery; they will not listen [to me alone]

One of the advantages cooperative membership has presented producers is an opportunity to provide for their families. In addition to learning the coffee trade, some of the producers’ children have the chance to give tours to foreign student and volunteer groups passing through. An incentive is then created to learn English and conduct the
tours on their own, instead of working through a translator. Profits earned from coffee allow producers to enrol their children in schooling, an opportunity most AGAIG producers never had when they were young.

Miguel: Thanks to coffee processing, my children have studied. I did not finish elementary school, right, so my kids already had elementary and since starting with coffee processing, […] they are now in high school […] I even have one that is now in University.

Sharing operational costs, including the cost of exporting containers of coffee is an additional key advantage for small-scale producers:

Miguel: Together we are united. I myself cannot ship 1000 lbs of coffee to the U.S., it is very expensive. But combining coffee together will end up being cheaper […]. Really it is a great benefit for us. And so it is important that […] other farmers are encouraged to organize [into cooperatives] as well, and join with us.

One advantage brought up by Timoteo, Fredi and Daniel was that the cooperative members feel a sense of community, and, fortunately, through the NGO, are able to give back to their own community:

Timoteo: We do not have a building for high school - and this is a necessity - this concerns us as producers. We have joined forces so we can obtain this land. And now we want to start construction [because current students] have classes on the side of the street […] we plan to make nine high school classrooms and eight rooms for a technical school, with laboratories.
Cooperative Disadvantages.

One of the disadvantages many AGAIG producers expressed was immediate access to the cash generated from sales. Although the micro-loan program has been working, and no participant spoke negatively in any way towards that process, the issue of the payment schedule from the direct-trader in the United States did come up a couple of times. When a shipment is sent, it does not always sell right away. It is possible for the exported coffee to stay on store shelves or in a warehouse for months before purchased by consumers. The AGAIG producers do not get paid until the product sells, which creates a long lag between production and pay, making it difficult to plan finances for the year.

Timoteo: When we export to the US our payment comes very late, up to 8 months later. And not one full payment, but it comes in four payments. We do not sell directly to a consumer, but rather to a coffee warehouse where orders are placed […]. We sell it very slowly […] and we have to collect and combine the money from sales, and pay a transfer fee [with high costs].

Cooperative Challenges.

In general, I found producers named either challenges the AGAIG organization faced or challenges the producers faced in developing their business. I felt that the responses given were quite open and honest. Prior to starting the morning interviews, we walked from the AGAIG office up towards the coffee fields on the slope of Volcano Agua. While walking, we talked about a variety of subjects; one point that came up, which was repeated in nearly all of the individual interviews, was the issue of distrust.
towards foreigners and cooperative organizations that exists amongst potential new members. Past experiences with foreigners have formed the basis for this distrust.

Fredy: There are a lot of coffee producers here; […] almost 70% of the population. But [most] don't process it, and don't want to process it, [I’m] not sure of the real reason. They are already used to harvesting and taking the fruit to the agency where they receive payment. We have offered many invitations to producers but they do not want to join our group […]. They would tell us “how is it that you trust a Gringo [white North American], he will steal your coffee,” […] Others would say “you go ahead and sink, don't bring me down with you - but if you succeed we will join.”

This distrust and the difficulty in attracting new members and securing an export license are the common AGAIG Challenges.

Daniel: The disadvantage we have is in exporting; because we do not have a licence. So we find other NGOs or other groups that have export licenses [to sell though them]. […] A partner NGO has done us the favour of exporting our coffee for 3 years.

Past Cooperative Experience.

One reason distrust and apprehension exist towards joining a cooperative is illustrated by an experience some of the AGAIG producers had when they formed their first agricultural association, an agricultural endeavour selling zucchini.

Miguel: We had a cooperative before, not working in coffee, […] but rather growing zucchini. We rented and cropped some nearby fields, and had a very good harvest, but the company that purchased our product failed us. Because we
sent them more or less 15,000 lbs and they paid us for only 9,000 lb, there was a rejection that we were not even aware of [...] but it was the company stealing the difference, so there we had a tremendous loss really.

**Research Question 2: Sustainable Coffee Certification**

The purpose of this research question was to present the producers’ perspectives on sustainable coffee certification programs, including perceived advantages, disadvantages, challenges and overall opinions regarding the value of these programs. Within each case study, findings are organized by common categories which emerged through interviews. Categories include: access to certification program information; the certification process; certification standards and requirements; and overall opinions towards the value of pursuing certification.

**Case Study 1: APOLO.**

**Access to Information.**

The primary source of information about certification programs, according to both Henri and Alvaro, is ANACAFE. Since the initial cooperative meeting, all research and information gathering about certification programs and processes has been completed independently by individual APOLO members.

Henri: ANACAFE made a [financing] agreement with the Spanish Cooperation [for International Aid], [...] and they [ANACAFE] explained to us [about certification]. Later with Certinsa, which is an export house, we worked with them to achieve C.A.F.E. Practices stamps [Starbucks Certification: Coffee and Farmer Equity], similar to Rain Forest Alliance but perhaps less demanding.
 [...] Export houses] have a technician dedicated to promoting certain certification stamps.

Certification Process.

Overall themes brought up by APOLO members regarding the certification process are lack of accountability of auditors and communication barriers impeding the ability to re-certify. APOLO was previously certified with Rain Forest Alliance (RA) but that unfortunately ended in 2009 due to challenges in the re-certification process. Similar to most certification programs, RA requires re-certification every year, a process that involves audits completed by a third-party organization registered as approved auditors by RA. The process of getting the auditor to visit the respective coffee plots is where things fell apart for APOLO:

Henry: We lost our certification, not out of will, but rather the company that certified us asked that we deposit in their account 50% of the cost of re-certification. But I, the one who manages the contract, did not confirm the date of re-certification [supposed to be Nov. 20th, 2009]. And they sent us the auditors on Nov. 24th, 2009 and no one was here. [...] So we lost our 50% deposit.

Environmental Perspectives.

The key themes of the perceived benefits of certification were having environmental consciousness, using best-practices to achieve environmental regulation targets, and exhibit a genuine caring for the workers and environment is more important than achieving the certification stamp. Francis (2006) found that producers were motivated to contribute to their communities by environmental and cultural
improvements. The APOLO group members felt that a balance was needed between mostly organic practices and long term financial growth. Farmers have multiple incentives for maintaining diverse shade trees (Bosselmann et al., 2009), although, the price premium in itself is not always an incentive (Mutersbaugh, 2005). Based on Nilman's personal experience and his discussions with other producers, the economic numbers are not compelling enough to shift to full-organic:

[Certification programs] will tell a producer to manage your coffee 100% organic. […] Coffee that is not 100% organic will provide a production of roughly 25 quintales per manzana, whereas totally organic fincas produce a maximum of 15 quintales. I was discussing this with another producer and I said: “show me clear arguments to convince a conventional farmer to adopt organic and let’s look at the numbers” […] When looking at total production and income, the conventional plot] has a larger profit by 7000 quetzales. So you do not feel a big incentive to produce 100% organic. So now what we are trying to do is work mostly organic using products that the stamps consider acceptable.

Eric’s viewpoint was that minimizing fertilizer use, not eliminating it completely, was the only viable option for their scale of production:

Let’s not divert from reality; if you fertilize with chemicals you will have better production […] what we are trying to figure out is the minimum amount of chemicals to use, or use one that is not as harmful - that will not affect the PH of soil. […] Really minimize the use of chemicals […] you cannot say “don’t use it, leave your production until it does not produce anything,” no one wants that. So you play the game of seeing, measuring, and balancing for a good harvest.
Nilman brought up the point that at certain times, even humans require non-organic solutions to health issues they may face. “A comparison made by a friend once: ‘Look, the plant is the same as a human being - there are certain things that it needs and you have to provide them in the moment when really needed.’”

The other issue was that export houses do not always pay the producer the price differential for organic coffee:

Nilman: I met an older producer in Guayaobo who told me "I am certified organic, I produce organic coffee, but in the end up they [export houses] end up paying for my coffee like it was conventional coffee. The benefit is to he who delivers the final product [exporter]. So why am I killing myself doing these practices."

Henry also discussed the fact that they as producers are living sustainably; it is not just a buzzword, but rather an awareness that they have grown up with and continue to apply in their daily operations.

Henry: The [certification] stamp is just a mark, not a philosophy; living your learning is needed. As producers we are fully convinced of sustainability and the importance of caring for the environment. And because of that, in Olopa we have encouraged our producers to comply with regulations mandated by the Ministry of Environment. […] However it is not the stamp that guarantees that the producer is committed to protecting the environment, rather it is part of their environmental consciousness. And we as an organization, I believe, have awakened this environmental awareness in producer’s minds.
Certification Requirements.

The key theme that emerged from APOLO interviews on the topic of certification requirements was that a disconnect exists between producers, certifiers and buyers. Certification programs generally cater to the concern of consumers in the developed world and do not reflect a culturally relevant understanding of local realities (Arce, 2009). The financial benefits associated with certification are for workers and exporters, not as much for producers.

The delicate issue of minors and children working the fields was discussed at length during the focus group, and it was also referred to during some individual interviews. Although Fairtrade standards prohibit minors from working in the fields (FLO, 2009), however the APOLO producers presented a different point of view. It should be made clear that endorsing child labour was not the theme of the conversation; the following viewpoints were not arguing for flexibility in labour rules, but focused more on the actual benefits and challenges faced by working families. This example illustrates a potential cultural disconnect between the certification policy writers, the auditors and those involved in coffee production. It is not uncommon for seasonal workers to bring their families for a few weeks during peak harvesting season; this is what Eric had to share:

[The certification agencies want us to] tell workers "look I only want you, leave your kid […]", but there are lots of factors here. You have maturing coffee, you have poverty, and someone from the other side telling you "no". So who has the correct social viewpoint, the certifier or the producers? Or is it the workers?
Who knows what the certifier’s position is [but] certification programs are out of touch with reality; we are living in any area classified as poor.

The APOLO producers indicated that there are more complex factors at play than just protecting minors from working. The mountain communities around Olopa are poor; families struggle to earn a basic subsistence living. Although school is available and most children are enrolled, education is not free. Apart from the lost income opportunity of children attending school, there are actual fees associated with elementary school onward. Some families use the short harvest period, which coincides with the extended Christmas and summer break, as an opportunity for the older kids to earn enough to cover the costs of their following school year.

Nilman: There are numerous issues at play here, one side is the economics; it is the time of year when families […] pay for the school year. So it’s the time that the family [participates] in the coffee harvesting process, because from that they gain the income needed to buy school supplies, shoes for kids, and whatever else the child needs at school.

An additional issue raised was that there are cultural differences at play regarding the importance of working from a young age. It is quite common for a trade to be passed on across generations, such as learning agricultural practices or operating a small business. Parents will often bring their children to work, and although the children are usually not working long hours, they will help out occasionally, and more importantly, learn what Nilman refers to as the value of hard work.

Nilman: On the cultural side - in this area of Chorti they believe that a child must be taught to work from a young age. Because if they do not get involved in work
while young, when they are older they will be incapable of achieving a career and
developing a love of work, you see? A common saying here is “a tree born
crooked will never straighten its trunk”, and if you let your child grow up without
a love of work then they will never learn this latter.

Eric argues that it is not as simple as banning children from accompanying their
parents to the coffee fincas, regardless of whether they actually are involved in picking
the cherries. But that is what certification requires, and it is not an easy task to enforce.

Eric: A certifier came with me and told me that he needed my help to tell the
families to leave the children behind. On one side, now you have to have the right
temperament to tell people no. […] On the other side - the economics - what
exactly am I taking away from these people by telling them not to have their
minor children help?

**Alternatives to Certification.**

During the focus group the APOLO members discussed methods to get certified
directly, without going through an export house program. The consumer trusts
certification agencies and labels; they recognize the stamp but do not necessarily
understand the producer's reality (Arce, 2009). Certification programs understand the
consumer; what motivates the consumer to purchase ethically produced and
environmentally-sound products (Johannessen & Wilhite, 2010). However, neither side
seems to grasp the fact that small-scale producers also have a tough road, and that many
of them are working their own fields. Eric suggests that the certification process itself
should mimic the direct-trade relationship. The purchaser can visit, see the situation first
hand and can then decide whether or not to purchase from the producer, and essentially certify them with their consumers' stamp of approval.

Eric: The only way to find a solution is if the buyer says “well I buy from this producer, and I went to see the conditions […] and feel that the producer is doing what they are saying […] and I will certify their process.” […] This is the only way both producers and consumers can be happy; [if we eliminate] the middlemen, the certifiers.

As Nilman states, there is a mutual environmental awareness between the producer and purchaser, who in turn will sell to a like-minded consumer. Expanding direct-trade relationships is the desired path for APOLO. But it will take time, as Nilman explains, to build trust, forge relationships, and prove to each other that this in fact is a genuine alternative, to produce high quality, socially and environmentally aware, directly-traded coffee without official certifier stamp of approval.

Nilman: Both sides have environmental awareness, the buyer and the producer.

So the producers are concerned with conserving the environment and preserving the environment. Why? Because they receive direct stimulus from the buyers [who value this].

Certification and Export Houses.

There was a feeling among APOLO members that certification itself is fine, but the issue is the process in Guatemala. As previously discussed, when one chooses to become certified with a specific stamp, there is no direct connection to the organization such as Rain Forest Alliance or Transfair in Guatemala. The certification programs have licensed in-country practitioners by whom the producers are audited. APOLO members
suggested that there is an oligopoly when it comes to these registration and auditor organizations. Not only is there a limited number, it was suggested that these third-party organizations were not impartial but rather directly linked with the large export houses. The export houses purchase a certain amount of cheap unroasted coffee, then roast and export for a high profit. Some of these certification practitioners will give an incentive to small-scale producers to certify with them by covering the initial costs of obtaining the stamp. The issue for APOLO and other smaller producers is that once their coffee plot is certified, the beans are sold with minimal processing to the export houses, who then process and sell it as high-quality, certified coffee. The price differential that exits does not trickle back to the producer; it stays with the company that owns the export licence. Johannessen & Willhite (2010) found that the benefits of certification for primary producers are limited; it is in fact the exporters and consumer countries that acquire the largest share of income. Key themes that emerged were that export house control the profits and the price differential goes to the export houses, rather than the producers.

Henry: Another link in the commercial chain of certified coffee is the certification houses [business]. These businesses are dedicated to certification and there is a link between them and the export houses. The producer receives a differential - but how much does the export house gain with the certified coffee? We [the producers] have no idea. I mean the producer is always punished within this commercialization chain [...] the export houses are the ones who continue to reap the benefits. And each export house will offer [different] benefits for [different] stamps.
One reason consumers buy certified products, in particular ethically or fairly traded products, is that they gain a level of comfort knowing that those on the production side are guaranteed a minimum price for their product (Basu & Hicks, 2008). The certification programs use this as a selling point to entice coffee producers to join and reap benefits from the price differential (Basu & Hicks, 2010). The differential is obtained on the refined product (i.e., roasted beans). For many small-scale producers, roasted beans are not how the majority of their product is sold, they sell green or *pergamino* coffee. The coffee export houses, who, according to APOLO, are directly linked with the certification providers, have organized their system to ensure that they are purchasing green or *pergamino* coffee; roasting, branding and stamping it, and then selling it to receive the price differential associated with the certified product.

**Importance of Certification**

Alvaro was the study participant most in favour of certification programs. His overall experience with certification was positive, and he had been afforded opportunities that other producers had not.

Alvaro: All agricultural products should be certified because many people see production in the [present] moment, not in the future. Agriculture and an irrational use of agrochemical products has contributed several problems to the management of natural resources [...] and what we see with climate change; consequences of misuse of resources and excessive use of chemicals. So, the [certification] stamps provide environmental consciousness to producers and [encourages them] to seek out sustainable production [...] We have to be aware, to pass on this heritage to our children, and the world of certification teaches us to be
environmentally friendly, to have harmony with natural resources [...], to have environmental and social awareness, and live in a cleaner and healthier world.

There is a lack of understanding by both producers and consumers regarding the significance of the stamp, and why the process of achieving certification standards is important. Alvaro has been fortunate to travel to a couple of different global coffee producer conferences, and a key insight he gained was that this lack of understanding is common throughout the coffee world:

Some people do not know about [certification] stamps [...]. So when someone says “look I have Rain Forest [Alliance],” [others reply] “so what is that? I care about coffee quality, not the stamp”. There is something lacking still, there is a need to go and awaken interest in buyers that they should buy certified because there is added value. So you have to create more demand for certified products because right now it is not enough. At the international level, we do not have the capacity to advertise certification to the world [...] so at the national level we try to find markets or buyers who require stamps.

Case Study 2: AGAIG.

Access to Information.

The AGAIG members’ knowledge regarding sustainable coffee certification programs was quite limited. All members were aware of organic and fair trade certification, but they could not describe any specifics programs available to them. Through discussions with the foreign volunteers at the AGAIG NGO, and the NGO website, the organization is well versed in the various certification requirements and
processes, but there appears to be limited knowledge transfer from the foreign volunteers to the local producers.

The AGAIG producers are interested in pursuing certification, in particular organic certification. They work with a sister cooperative in western Guatemala, which has an organic certification, so the AGAIG producers are somewhat familiar with the experience of this other cooperative.

**Overall Opinion.**

Miguel and Daniel were the most interested in pursuing certification, primarily to obtain a price differential and to verify his compliance with standard practices:

Miguel: Well we have seen that there are many advantages because certified coffee has more value, having a written certified endorsement by ANACAFE or any institution will increase the [coffee] value a lot. So we are quite interested in getting certified, because it is something important. But right now we are going slow, we cannot just start running to get it. “He that walks slowly always arrives.”

The remaining participants were not overly concerned with the certification opportunities or the stamps. The general feeling was that they would prefer to continue achieving environmental and social standards without pursuing certification, and continue to trade in direct markets. They had doubts as to whom profits from the advertised price differential actually benefited:

Fredy: We have spoken with them [sister cooperative] on our visit, and they have certification. But, we are selling [our coffee] and getting a better price then their certified coffee. So we say, we have seen the requirements they sent us, but eventually we will not obtain the price we are [currently] selling at, so the certifier
is the one that gets the benefits [...] we may do it [in the future], but we really need to find out exactly how it works.

**Research Question 3: ANACAFE**

ANACAFE is a polarizing subject among coffee producers in Guatemala. In early preparation for the interviews, informal discussions amongst other coffee producers in Guatemala led me to the realization that there exists quite a varied opinion about this organization. The opinions towards ANACAFE seemed to be strongly related to the producer’s scale of production. Large producers viewed ANACAFE favourably, small-scale producers viewed them negatively. This research question aims to present the opinions of two relatively small-scale producing groups. The findings are organized by case study and an overall viewpoint from each cooperative is presented.

**Case Study 1: APOLO.**

**Overall Opinion.**

The overall response to ANACAFE by APOLO producers was neutral. I was warned by other coffee producers in informal discussion that the topic of ANACAFE could be sensitive for smaller producers. There is a common opinion among producers that ANACAFE is biased towards larger producers in providing financial, administrative and technical support. As Eric states, “ANACAFE supports producers, however they are very selective. [We now get support] because we have an export license.”

Eric and Alvaro had positive experiences dealing with ANACAFE, as the primary source of certification information and as an intermediary for obtaining international funding. They also received donations from ANACAFE to furnish the APOLO office
and to purchase equipment for a small coffee cupping demonstration lab. Eric did mention that ANACAFE can be slow in granting export licenses, a process that took APOLO three years. All study participants considered ANACAFE primarily a source of technical information and the organization through which you obtain export licenses. Orlando thought ANACAFE should increase their involvement and support to producers:

> Well maybe a little more participation [would be good]. I feel that they leave you for too long between visits, a few times a year. But yes it would be nice at least to have more information from them, more training programs offered. [...] At least offer fertilizer at a discounted price.

**Case Study 2: AGAIG.**

**Role.**

AGAIG producers view ANACAFE mainly as a resource to access technical information, attend training programs, obtain export licenses and act as a facilitator of coffee tasting conferences and competitions.

Juan: Well they offer various things; they authorize all that is exporting: the paperwork and license. They offer training programs [on coffee production practices]. They give guidance to a lot of farmers so they can learn all the logistics to properly grow [their crops].

The other high profile role of ANACAFE is in advertising Guatemalan coffee. In addition to classifying coffees for regional growing characteristics, the organization also regularly puts on expositions and conferences to exhibit the high-quality of Guatemalan coffee. Once such exposition, the *Cup of Excellence*, is an annual coffee cupping
competition where an experienced panel of coffee ‘cuppers’ (tasters) determine the best varieties of coffee produced. Although this can be quite subjective, such as wine tasting, there is notoriety associated with placing in this competition, both nationally and internationally. The members of AGAIG are interested in participating in this process with hopes of increasing their profile and showing fellow producers that they are indeed producing a high-quality product, thus validating their efforts.

Fredy: They have a coffee tasting contest. You have to register and participate with a certain quantity of coffee with a signed contract that if you win, they [ANACAFE] will buy that coffee from you. We have wanted to enter but since we work as a cooperative we would all have to give some quintales of coffee [to register] and would [risk] lose a lot. […] It would be beneficial because it could be us that wins the contest right, and this would help us, plus we would get a first place ANACAFE Guatemala certificate.

**Relationship to AGAIG.**

A common perception from AGAIG producers towards ANACAFE was that as an organization, ANACAFE is failing the smaller producers by building unnecessary barriers to obtaining export licenses. The viewpoint of AGAIG producers is that ANACAFE is a conglomerate of wealthy coffee exporters who are administering a system that ultimately serves their own interests. It is not a competitive system; rather it is suppressive for small-scale producers.

Fredy: We have always been presented with many obstacles. The first one that presented itself was when we were seven members and we tried to get our licences and they told us that we needed 1,000,000 Quetzales in the as a deposit.
Without that no license could be granted. Every time we went back they listed a new requirement, and after they lowered the deposit to 500,000 Quetzales, then we were required to hold a certain amount of land [...] we are small producers and could not compete with large producers, the powerful ones [...] the most wealthy producers are those who administrate ANACAFE and so they do not want any more competition.

Timoteo: ANACAFE must be certain you are the rightful owner of the land. So now we figure it is better to form a different system as a business, to get the [license] paperwork as co-proprietors [...] we went to a lawyer and they told us there is a better chance of getting the license as co-proprietors [of each other's land]. And that the co-proprietors will be the owner of the license [not each individual].

**Overall Opinion.**

The overall themes that emerged from the interviews with AGAIG members regarding ANACAFE was that they create barriers for smaller producers to obtain export licenses, the regulations favour larger, wealthier producers and it is difficult to access accurate information from the organization. The following excerpts from the group interview discussion illustrate these themes:

Alberto: Well in reality we are not sure what [the problem] is; the workers at ANACAFE or if [these problems] are coming from high up in ANACAFE.

Filiberto: It appears that they may favour the rich a little; they do not want a small group [to] be born and grow. They support the wealthy and to the poorer groups -
they are not interested in helping. And within ANACAFE you will encounter only the largest producers.

**Additional Research Findings**

The semi-structured interviews were quite varied, but I tried to end each one with two questions: “What does coffee mean to you?” and “What does sustainable coffee mean to you?” Not all interviews captured this information, but the variety of responses received led me to include it as additional context and findings presented in Appendix E.

**Chapter 6: Summary and Recommendations**

**Summary**

**Cooperatives.**

The overall perceptions of study participants towards cooperative advantages, challenges and direct-trade markets are summarized in Table 3. All members of both case studies had an overall positive position towards cooperatives, and felt that other producers in the region who were not members were missing an opportunity to improve their production techniques and business operations. Both case study groups mentioned that access to direct-trade markets and resources as key benefits in cooperative membership (Table 4). Mendez (2008) in a study of small-scale producers in El Salvador found that perceived benefits to cooperative membership include job security, improving financial situations and a conduit to negotiate with external actors.

The challenge of financing exists for both case study groups. For APOLO, some financing has been secured through international micro-loans and aid development (i.e.,
the Spanish Cooperation), but mostly the cooperative is sustained by personal funds of
the nine primary members (Table 3). In the case of AGAIG, micro-loans and donations
by the NGO’s supporters have sustained the group until now, but long-term questions
remain. Until both groups can establish larger direct-trade markets and grow their
international presence they will face struggles. Minimal access to financing for small-
scale producers in Central America is common-place and reduces their ability to maintain
positive cash flows, produce high quality coffee and comply with contract terms
(Petchers & Harris, 2008).

Table 3
Cooperative Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>APOLO</th>
<th>AGAIG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperatives</td>
<td>• access to resources</td>
<td>• access to loans and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sharing resources and costs</td>
<td>• sharing resources and costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• high volume sales</td>
<td>• strength in numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• providing for future generations</td>
<td>• lag in payment time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• political perception</td>
<td>• attracting new members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• self-financing operations</td>
<td>• securing export license</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• attracting new members</td>
<td>• distrust of other producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• access to export market information</td>
<td>• lack of business management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct-Trade</td>
<td>• benefits producers</td>
<td>• price differential for producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• removal of intermediaries</td>
<td>• connection to consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• profit sharing</td>
<td>• desire to produce high-quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• challenge in forming new markets</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The concept that cooperatives are viewed as political organizations driving their
own agendas was an interesting and unexpected finding. This has not come up in review
of previous literature however the fact that it was mentioned by most APOLO members
suggests it might be an issue which requires further study. Trust issues and financial viability were also barriers to attracting new members, attraction of members was a common theme for both cooperatives and merits further investigation. Perhaps this speaks to the general distrust small-scale producers have of organized groups, and based on these interviews, the overall perception that the systems in place not only favour the large producers, but are designed to hold back any competition.

Certification Programs.

Most of the opinions regarding certification programs came from the APOLO group as they had direct experience being certified by Rain Forest Alliance and Starbucks’ C.A.F.E. Practices during the past few years. The overall themes regarding certification programs that emerged are summarized below in Table 4.

Table 4

Certification Program Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Themes</th>
<th>APOLO</th>
<th>AGAIG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>lack of accountability of auditors</td>
<td>profits go to export houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communication barriers to re-certify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>profits go to export houses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements</td>
<td>disconnect between producers and buyers</td>
<td>no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>policies focus on consumer values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>limited producer benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cultural differences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>environmental awareness</td>
<td>no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>use of best-practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>environmental consciousness over stamps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The producers in the APOLO region understand the social and environmental importance of certification. They acknowledge that participating in the process it can benefit the environment, the workers in the fields and, the producer attitudes towards best practices. The main issue was that the cost of certification, between actual fees and reduced volume of production, does not make it a very attractive option for their level of production. Although some small producers do see an increase in yields following the initial shift to full-organic practices (Martinez-Torres, 2008), several studies have shown that yields can actually decrease in the short to medium time frame while increasing operating costs (Bacon, 2005; Bacon, 2010; Valkila, 2009). Assuming the coffee sold as green coffee, the producer may not see any real beneficial price differential in certified coffee for numerous years which may be too onerous financially for small-scale producers (Bacon et al., 2008b). The system of export house certification, in their opinions, results in little or no financial benefits to the producer. The general APOLO consensus is that apart from workers’ rights, the benefits of certification go to the final exporter in the commercial coffee chain.

**ANACAFE.**

The topic of ANACAFE was the research area where responses felt somewhat reserved, perhaps respondents where withholding their complete opinions. This is based on non-verbal observations and informal conversations I had with other producers in both the greater Olopa region and around Antigua. I was warned by theses other producers that ANACAFE could be a topic where the research may encounter some resistance, because of the political nature of the group, and the experience producers have had in
acquiring an export license. A summary of producers’ opinions regarding ANACAFE is provided in Table 5.

Table 5

*ANACAFE themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANACAFE Themes</th>
<th>APOLO</th>
<th>AGAIG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>• source of information</td>
<td>• barrier to export license</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• access to funding</td>
<td>• favour larger producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• selective in their support</td>
<td>• difficult to access information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommendations**

The case study approach does limit the generalization of the study, making it somewhat challenging to extrapolate to other coffee cooperatives and producer communities; or to create over-arching statements about coffee cooperatives, certification programs or ANACAFE. However, there may be similar groups who face similar challenges for whom some of this may apply.

**Cooperatives.**

One of the issues brought up in this study was the difficulty in attracting new members, whether for political reasons or trust and fear of the unknown. One recommendation to both case study groups, and to similar cooperatives facing these challenges, is to better advertise the group’s vision and purpose. Cooperatives need to share in detail the advantages and benefits of joining. They should be careful to not appear singularly focused, and remain open to discussing the challenges and the issues
one may encounter as well as acknowledge failures that may have happened in the past and highlight policies that have been created in response.

To build trust, cooperatives could offer workshops to the general coffee community on best-practices, and provide a forum where other producers can come and discuss their own challenges. Perhaps this open dialogue will contribute to a sense of camaraderie between cooperative members and independent producers. The limited time and resources of cooperative member producers is clearly a challenge when it comes to attracting new members, however, since membership and growth are key factors and indicators for success present sacrifice may be worth it in the end.

AGAIG producers reflected issues highlighted by Petchers & Harris (2008); small-scale producers many times lack the infrastructure required to increase their processing abilities, and thus cannot generate more sustained income for their cooperative. Petchers and Harris (2008) recommend the creation of accessible, collective processing facilities, which could be shared between numerous cooperatives in a region.

**Certification Programs.**

A general recommendation to the governing organizations that create, distribute license and audit certification programs is to make the process more transparent for producers and consumers and make the information easily accessible. This information should take into account the various educational backgrounds of the producers as many do not have extensive formal education. In addition, in Guatemala the process of certification is too closely tied into exportation; export houses partner with, and promote certain limited certification programs. Certification should be conducted by politically and financially neutral third parties who can in no way benefit from the inclusion or
exclusion of specific producers. Perhaps a solution is to ensure that certifiers do not work directly with or represent a specific export house. Although changing the process of an established system is no easy task, additional standards and regulations should be introduced to avoid the situations described by APOLO. Another common issues highlighted in my study was the perception that the price differential of certified coffee products really only benefits the final exporter rather than the producer. To increase participation by smaller-scale producers, an evaluation of profits allocation would be beneficial. As direct-trade becomes a viable alternative for the smaller producers, the certification process may only be valuable and reflective of large-scale production systems.

**ANACAFE.**

A key recommendation for ANACAFE would be to provide a business management training course, in addition to the current technical training, workshops, and coffee cupping expositions. This would allow the smaller producers a single resource point to learn about export licenses, trade tariffs, and the rules and regulations of importing countries as well as general business management skills. Improving the accessibility of information by improving the navigability of their website, readability of documents and increasing the number of local and regional resource offices would also improve producer knowledge base.

**Future Studies.**

As a continuation of this research, it would be interesting to see where the two cooperatives are in terms of membership growth, certification programs, and direct-trade
markets in the future. Even a year or two from now would be enough time to measure the progression and changes in their viewpoints. In general, more perspective based studies are needed that stay true to the reality of the producers.

In addition this research has highlighted a gap in knowledge concerning cooperative challenges in recruiting and maintaining members, this would be a useful topic for further research. There also has been no formal research into the role of ANACAFE and other governmental coffee organizations in Central America. The roles, benefits and pitfalls of these organizations should be more closely examined in order to maximize the benefits to the general coffee production community.

**Coffee Consumers.**

For consumers who purchase certified coffee, my recommendation is to learn about the source. The stamp does provide a certain level of comfort in knowing that the coffee was produced in an ethically, socially or environmentally friendly manner. However, as a consumer your concern may be deeper and more personal, I would recommend that you support coffee that is directly-traded, likely through local coffee shops or organic health stores. The key is to spend time with the importer, learn about the production process, and ask to look at photos or watch videos. It is not enough to simply trust packaging and labels; strive to learn about the origin of agricultural products and understand the life worlds and perspectives of the producers.
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## Appendix A Sustainable Coffee Certification Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizing Body</th>
<th>Year Started</th>
<th>Label Provided</th>
<th>Program Focus</th>
<th>Standards Focus</th>
<th>Auditor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FLO</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Fairtrade</td>
<td>• developing nations&lt;br&gt;• over 50 products&lt;br&gt;• small-scale producers&lt;br&gt;• hired labour</td>
<td>• social&lt;br&gt;• economic&lt;br&gt;• recent limited environmental</td>
<td>• FLO Cert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFOAM</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Organic</td>
<td>• global&lt;br&gt;• all agriculture products&lt;br&gt;• large and small-scale producers</td>
<td>• environmental&lt;br&gt;• limited social</td>
<td>• private and government accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Rainforest Alliance Certified</td>
<td>• tropical nations&lt;br&gt;• large and small-scale producers&lt;br&gt;• coffee, banana, cocoa, citrus, ferns, cut flowers</td>
<td>• social&lt;br&gt;• environmental</td>
<td>• SAN partner organizations in each country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utz Certified</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Utz Certified</td>
<td>• global&lt;br&gt;• small-scale producers&lt;br&gt;• hired labour&lt;br&gt;• coffee, cocoa, palm oil, tea</td>
<td>• social&lt;br&gt;• environmental</td>
<td>• local and international approved bodies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from text and tables in Courville (2008).
# Appendix B Interview Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date/Time</td>
<td>• Start by recording date, time and place</td>
<td>• Grabar la fecha, hora, ubicación</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent</td>
<td>• Consent to having interview recorded</td>
<td>• Dar permiso/autorización para que pueda grabar la entrevista</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consent to me using this interview for my research</td>
<td>• Permiso/autorización para que pueda usar la información de esta entrevista en mi tesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You are aware that you can end this interview at anytime for any reason</td>
<td>• Ud. puede terminar este entrevista en cualquier momento por cualquier motivo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If at any point you want to change something said or you don't want any</td>
<td>• En algún momento, si u quiere cambiar lo que dijo, o no quiere que yo uso lo que ya ha dicho, me puedo decir ahora o después por email o teléfono, y no lo usara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or all of this used, contact me and it will be removed</td>
<td>• Si u entiende y esta en acuerdo de estas condiciones, por favor necesito su autorización verbal en este momento</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To you understand and agree to these terms? If so, please give verbal</td>
<td>• Puede permanecer en el anonimato. Quiere usar un seudónimo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and written consent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You can chose to remain anonymous. Would you like to use a pseudonym?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What would you like?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>• What is your occupation?</td>
<td>• Cual es su ocupación?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is your role?</td>
<td>• Cual es su papel en el trabajo de café?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How long have you being doing this?</td>
<td>• Lleva cuanto tiempo en este trabajo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is your education level?</td>
<td>• Que nivel de educación tiene?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family Questions: married, children?</td>
<td>• Esta casado? Tiene hijos? Cuantos?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are you from the region? How many years in this area?</td>
<td>• Ud. es de aqui? Hace cuantos anos que vive en la región?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Details</td>
<td>• Land tenure?</td>
<td>• Quien tiene tenencia de la tierra? Quien es el dueño del terreno?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How long has it been coffee? Was it coffee before that?</td>
<td>• Desde cuando siembran café? Siempre ha cosechado café?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What type of coffee species/subspecies?</td>
<td>• Que tipo de café siembran?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are the other primary crops?</td>
<td>• Que mas cosechan?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Farm size, altitude?
- Number of workers, permanent and seasonal?
- Shade grown? If so, what species used for shade cover? Are you certified?
- Organic practices? Fertilization techniques, pesticide use? Are you certified?
- Weeding techniques?
- Compost use? Water Reuse?
- Soil protection
- Tell me about the coffee berry processing?
- What is the quality/grade of coffee produced?
- Do you produce green coffee? Where is it sold?
- Do you roast? Where does this happen? Who is in charge

---

**Farm Management**

- Que tamaño es la granja (manzanas)? Cual es la altitud?
- Cuantos trabajadores fijos? Temporales?
- Cultivan bajo sombra? Se manejan el sombra? Que especies usan? Tienen certificación al sombra?
- Tienen practicas orgánicas? Técnicas de fertilizantes (abono orgánico)? Se usan pesticidas? Tengan certificación?
- Practicas de desherbar? Su usan herbicidas?
- Se aplican abono? Que usan como residuos orgánicos para el compostaje? Se reúsan aguas residuales en algún parte de la producción?
- Que hacen para proteger el suelo de la erosión?
- Explica un poco sobre el proceso de la cosecha hasta el proceso de la fruta?
- Cual es la calidad que producen? Que características tiene?
- Se producen y venden café oro?
- Se tosta el café? Donde ocurre? Quien esta encargado?

---

**Cooperative**

- Are you part of a cooperative?
- What is the role?
- What is the structure? Is there a monetary commitment?
- What are the requirements for membership? Coffee standard, farm size, etc
- How long have you been part of the cooperative?
- How many others are part of the cooperative?
- What is the support system?
- How are the finances managed?
- What market to they sell to?
- Is this a Direct market ot another Alternative Trade?
- Who is your buyer?
- Se pertenecen a una cooperativa?
- Cual es el papel de la cooperativa en relación con Ud.?
- Cual es la estructura? Hay que pagar para ser miembro?
- Cuales son las requisitos para ser miembro? Por ejemplo, calidad, tamaño de terreno
- Hace cuanto que pertenece?
- Hay cuantos miembros hoy día?
- Como se apoyan o suportan?
- Como se manejan los fondos?
- A quien (mercado) se venden?
- Es un mercado directo? Como funciona?
- Quienes (países) compran su café?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Question (Spanish)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is it marketed?</td>
<td>Como se hacen publicidad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain the trade process to me</td>
<td>Se puede explicarme un poco del proceso del mercado?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is you relationship with the cooperative, other farmers? Relationship with external actors?</td>
<td>Cual es su relacino con la cooperativa? La relacion entre miembros?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your opinion on coffee cooperatives? What works, what doesn’t work? What you change?</td>
<td>Que opinas de cooperativas? Que funciona bien, que no? Si pudieras cambiar algo, que seria?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANACAFE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is ANACAFE?</td>
<td>Que es ANACAFE?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is their relationship to your cooperative?</td>
<td>Como es relacionado al cooperativa?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is their role? Education, research and development, technological changes, market promotion?</td>
<td>Cual es el papel de ANACAFE? Educacion, investigacion y desarrollo, publicidad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your opinion on ANACAFE?</td>
<td>Que opinas de ANACAFE?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee Price</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your thoughts on how coffee price is determined?</td>
<td>Que pienses sobre como se ponen el precio del café?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there pricing advantages/disadvantages to being in a cooperative?</td>
<td>Hay algunas ventajas/desventajas para cooperativas en relacion con el precio de café?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you certified?</td>
<td>Estan certificado?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What types of certification are available to you?</td>
<td>Que tipos de certificación son disponibles as Uds.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is this in formation accessed?</td>
<td>Como se obtiene/solicita esta informacion sobre certificación?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the process (i.e., paperwork, contacting certifiers, etc)</td>
<td>Cual es el proceso?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long does it take?</td>
<td>Toma cuanto tiempo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a fee (either annual, one-time)?</td>
<td>Hay que pagar una cuota?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you need to get certified?</td>
<td>La certificación es valido por cuanto tiempo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who performs the audits?</td>
<td>Cual es el proceso de la auditoria? Quien lo hace?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the environmental advantages/disadvantages?</td>
<td>Cuales son las ventajas/desventajas al medio ambiente?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the social advantages?</td>
<td>Cuales son las ventajas/desventajas sociales?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there financial</td>
<td>Cuales son las ventajas/desventajas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantages/Disadvantages to being certified?</td>
<td>económicos?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your opinion on certification programs?</td>
<td>Que opinas de programas de certificación?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Que significa el café para Ud.?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does coffee mean to you?</td>
<td>En su opinión, que es el café sostenible?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is sustainable coffee in your opinion?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anything else that is an important issues related to coffee or you would like me to know about</td>
<td>Hay otras cuestiones a cerca del café que debería saber/querría compartir conmigo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any answers you want changed?</td>
<td>Hay unas respuestas que quisiera cambiar?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C Research Agreement Form

You have been invited to participate in a research project that investigates the role of cooperatives and certification in sustainable coffee production.

In this study I will be interviewing individuals in the coffee production and distribution industries to learn about the benefits, barriers and challenges of coffee cooperatives, sustainable certifications and third party organisations when it comes to implementing sustainable coffee production. The most time I am asking of you is your participation in a half hour interview and a one hour focus group. Once the interviews have been completed there is no further participation requested.

**Benefits:** You will benefit from the opportunity to contribute to original, important research in the field of agricultural sustainability. Your participation could also result in publicity and recognition for your organization as the results are published and findings are presented.

**Collection of Information:** All information collected during the study will remain strictly confidential. If you would like to remain anonymous there will be no reference in oral or written reports which could link you to the study. A pseudonym may also be used if desired.

**Participation and Compensation:** For your participation in both the interview and focus group sessions, you will be compensated Q50. I understand that you are volunteering time in a busy season and want to acknowledge your participation in the study. This compensation is earned simply for your initial attendance. If you decide to withdraw or discontinue the interview at any time you are free to do so without any penalty. You may keep the compensation and leave at any point without prejudice. You will have the opportunity to withdraw your data from the study if you do not wish to be included.
Questions and Inquiries: For questions any time over the course of the study, do not hesitate to contact the principal investigator, Omid Madjidi, (cellular: 4299-0712), Omid.Madjidi@RoyalRoads.ca. For inquiries into the authenticity of this research project, or if you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights have been violated during the course of this project please contact Dr. Lenore Newman, Program Head, Masters in Environment & Management, Royal Roads University, 001-250-391-2600 ext. 4785, Lenore.Newman@RoyalRoads.ca.

Consent: I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study and allow a sound recording of my interviews.

YES ☐ NO ☐

I consent to my photograph being taken for use in presentation materials:

YES ☐ NO ☐

Interviewee Signature ______________________ Date ________________

Investigator Signature _____________________ Date ________________
Ud. está invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación sobre el papel de cooperativas y programas de certificación en la producción del café sostenible.

En este estudio, voy a entrevistar individuos involucrados en la producción y distribución del café para aprender cuáles son las ventajas, barreras y los desafíos que se presentan las cooperativas, programas de certificación y ONGs cuando se desarrollan e implementan la producción del café sostenible. Su participación incluye una entrevista individual (media hora) y una discusión en grupo (una hora). Cuando hemos terminados la entrevista y discusión, no tendrá que participar más en el estudio.

**Beneficios:** Con su participación, Ud. aprovechará de la oportunidad de contribuir a un estudio original e importante en la rama de agricultura sostenible. Además, su participación podría resultar en publicidad y reconocimiento de su organización cuando la tesis sea publicada y los resultados presentados.

**Recolección de Información:** Toda la información adquirida de las entrevistas será mantenida confidencial. Si Ud. quiera, puede permanecer en el anonimato. No habrá ninguna referencia escrito ni oral a su participación. Si prefiere, podría usar un seudónimo.

**Participación y Compensación:** Para su participación en ambas actividades (entrevista y discusión en grupo), una compensación económica de Q50 será pagada, al principio de la primera entrevista. En cualquier momento, si quiere retirarse de la entrevista o el estudio completo, se puede sin consecuencia. También en este caso, tendrá la oportunidad de retirarse toda la información que ya hubiera contribuido.
**Preguntas:** Cualquier preguntas sobre este estudio, se puede ponerse en contacto con el investigador, Omid Madjidi, (celular: 4299-0712), [Omid.Madjidi@RoyalRoads.ca](mailto:Omid.Madjidi@RoyalRoads.ca). Si Ud. quiera una consulta sobre la autenticidad de este estudio, o piense que hubiera mal tratado (contra las descripciones en este acuerdo), se puede ponerse en contacto con Dra. Lenore Newman, Directora del Programa Maestría de Gestión Ambiental, Royal Roads University, 001-250-391-2600 ext. 4785, [Lenore.Newman@RoyalRoads.ca](mailto:Lenore.Newman@RoyalRoads.ca).

**Autorización:** He leído y entiendo toda la información escrito en este acuerdo de investigación. He recibido una copia. Estoy de acuerdo de participar en el estudio y consiento que se grabe las entrevistas (sonido):

Sí [ ] No [ ]

Yo consiento el uso de mi foto en presentaciones sobre este estudio:

Sí [ ] No [ ]

Firma del entrevistado ______________________   Fecha________________

Firma del investigador ___________________    Fecha ________________
Appendix D Original Spanish Quotations

A = Apolo Case Study; G = As Green As it Gets Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Spanish Quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>HENRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nosotros lo basamos en la visión y la misión que nos planteamos desde un principio de la formación del grupo que el primero es tener una conciencia de producción ambiental, buscar un mercado directo pero producir amigable con el ambiente. En base a eso se creó un reglamento que pudiera modificarse pero realmente está en que tengan voluntad los que se quieran integrar en tener certificadas las fincas o tener voluntad para certificarse. Sobre todo cumplir con las normas que manda el Ministerio de Ambiente y si no tienen esos instrumentos mínimo dejarse asesorar por nosotros por institución [...] y si hay bosques no eliminar completamente los bosques sino tratar de aprovechar los bosques naturales que están al máximo, a manera de irnos renovándolos con plantas de sombra apropiadas para el café.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>ORLANDO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bueno primero tenemos que sea persona honrada verdad, que tenga palabra porque muchas veces hacemos contratos y necesitamos reunir un bloque de café, a bueno yo me comprometo con tanto, yo con aquel. Y si el café llega a subir pues siempre tenemos que entregarlo verdad porque tenemos una responsabilidad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>ORLANDO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sí porque imagínese estaríamos quitando tres compradores, dos compradores hasta tres de en medio verdad, entonces ya sería una cosa una ganancia, o sea una venta mejor pues, porque aquí uno le vende al otro, el otro al otro y en total que todos se dividen una ganancia. Quien viene perdiendo es el productor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>HENRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lo que se busca al tener un mercado directo es que al productor se le da un precio diferente a como pagan en el merado local, digamos unos quince, veinte, treinta quetzales de diferencia por quintal a como esta en el mercado local. Y eso del sobreprecio como esta en el mercado local, el productor entrega un aporte un porcentaje a la asociación dependiendo cuanto sea la diferencia sobre el mercado local.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>ORLANDO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bueno, nos los rotamos verdad si ahorita estoy cortando y allá les hace falta corte pues se los doy. Siempre nos echamos la mano si alguien está en un grupo de familiares, amigos .</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A6 **ALVARO**
Bueno aquí nosotros este, la asociación ha apoyado a los productores en cuanto a recibir cursos orientados a la certificación, tratar la manera de vender en bloque, vender un volumen atractivo a un comprado, un volumen unificado, o sea del grupo, entonces despierta un poco mas el interés [...] No es lo mismo que vaya yo Alvaro Lemus a vender 100 quintales, a que vaya Apolo a ofrecer 1,000 quintales. Entonces, el interés es mas por los 1,000 quintales que por los 100 y se pueden conseguir diferenciales o precios mejores, así como también el posicionamiento de una marca que es lo que andamos pretendiendo. Nosotros posicionarnos.también hemos logrado a través de la asociación comprar algunos productos que se usan en la agricultura por ejemplo fertilizantes, los que nos permite el sello usar. Pero lo hemos comprado juntos y hemos bajado volúmenes de precios.

A7 **HENRY**
La desventaja es que en Guatemala todo lo asocian con política, cuando uno empieza a hacer asociaciones piensan que uno tiene aspiraciones políticas. Entonces y si uno no es afín a un[...]al de gobierno bloquean algunas gestiones. Por ejemplo nosotros hemos gestionado algunos financiamientos y no se han dado porque piensan que nosotros participamos en política y piensan que nosotros tenemos alguna aspiración [político].

A8 **ALVARO**
A lo largo de 5 años todavía no hemos logrado vender el 100% de la cosecha que produce Apolo. El año pasado que fue la mejor venta, se logro vender el 60% de la cosecha de Apolo ... hay personas que dentro de la organización que en el camino nos hemos desesperado, quisiéramos tener frutos luego, quisiéramos ver resultado inmediatos. Entonces, esto es un proceso, un proceso que los mismos tropiezos nos han enseñado, nos han dado experiencia que hasta ahora tenemos y nos falta todavía mucho camino que recorrer muchos mas tropiezos que superar [...] La desventaja es básicamente la desesperación, la falta de un este, un financiamiento porque somos autofinanciantes nosotros mismos damos aportes y a veces la gente duda si vamos por el buen camino. Los mismos socios han dudado si vamos bien o no vamos bien y estamos invirtiendo, invirtiendo y no se miran frutos.

A9 **ERIC**
Si cada socio se quiere meter pues que se meta verdad, pero Apolo es apolítico verdad. Entonces eso mismo nos ha costado porque es nuestro esfuerzo de los nueve miembros originales los fundadores ellos luchando, aportando. No es auto sostenible aún porque todavía no se genera; hay que llevarlo poco a poco para llegar a ser algo grande ¿no? El financiamiento lo agarró un socio lógicamente...cuesta digámoslo así es la comunidad de la oportunidad este año. La idea es lógicamente más adelante llegar a ese punto decir al productor aquí hay a un bajo costo que sea un beneficio para un productor, no ser un banco. Sino que Apolo sea un apoyo, lógicamente tiene que ganar algo para poderse mantener.

A10 **ORLANDO**
El reto es de que cuesta la unión verdad, porque hay que dedicarle tiempo también verdad, estar en reuniones, en capacitaciones y quiera o no uno que está dedicado solo a la agricultura eso como que lo atrasa un poco.
ERIC
Estamos generando las, un reglamento interno un reglamento interno donde esta especificado cuales son las condiciones generales. Lógicamente ahorita no es atractivo meterse con Apolo porque no le podemos decir, mire ya tenemos este mercado para su café. entonces la idea es entonces cuando ya tengamos. Primero vamos a sacar el café de nosotros y haya más demanda entonces podemos decirles bueno vénGANse, les ofrecemos algo. No sé cuantos años más nos ira llevar para poderles ofrecer un mercado que les sea atractivo para ellos.

ALVARO
Así estamos ahorita conformados y...queremos crear el cimiento y las bases para que Apolo sea una organización bien fortalecida y luego, ingresar mas socios con un mercado abierto, con un espacio ganado. A nivel internacional creemos que si nosotros nos ponemos una carga muy grande todavía cuando las bases no están bien cimentadas y hechas... pues esto se puede destruir fácilmente mientras que si creamos el cimiento sólido, fuerte, entonces si ya nos pueden poner un peso más grande encima...entonces este... es una desventaja ser autofinanciantes... lo bueno es que la visión hacia donde vamos, que queremos y no nos hemos desprendido de esa visión que queremos... y pues eso básicamente es la desventaja que hemos visto.

FREDY
Bueno hasta el momento creo que el requisito sería tener ganas de trabajar, ya no como productor solo cortar como se cortaba antes con verde . No ahora necesitamos un café excelente porque si ya estamos acreditados con un buen café entonces no queremos que otra persona vaya dagnificar nuestro nombre .

DANIEL
Nos apoyamos por medio de prestamos para poder nosotros comenzar a trabajar con el café [...] nosotros si queremos trabajar pero lo único es que no tenemos fondos económicos para comenzar a trabajar [...] el interés nos están cobrando el cinco por ciento al año y bien si quieren el dinero o se lo pagamos con el producto o sea con café.

FREDY
Bueno nosotros aquí lo que nos ayuda es que nosotros tenemos un buen precio porque lo estamos vendiendo directamente al consumidor. Entonces esta gente por lo menos un ejemplo usted puede contactar a sus amigos mira en San Miguel Escobar hay café de calidad y eso nos va ayudando a la publicidad, aunque sea boca a boca. Pero nos va beneficiando entonces por eso nosotros tenemos buenas ganancias porque el mercado es directamente al consumidor.

FILIBERTO
Si, las ventajas es que estar unidos, todo se puede lograr, se puede exportar por mayor el café, se puede solicitar alguna ayuda internacional, se puede solicitar alguna ayuda internacional. Y en cambio en grupo es más fácil, si yo hago una solicitud a los otros países para que me den una máquina, a mi no me van a escuchar porque solo yo estoy trabajando. Pero si hay un grupo, a través de todas esas ventajas podemos pedir un financiamiento para poder comprar terreno, para comprar café, para poder seguir sembrando más verdad.
G5  MIGUEL
Porque yo por eso, el proceso del café, mis hijos ya han estudiado. Yo no saqué ni sexto, verdad, entonces mis patojos ya antes ya habían sacado su sexto. Cuando ya empezamos con el proceso del café y vimos sus resultados empezaron a estudiar sus básicos [...] ya tengo tres que han sacado su bachillerato verdad, el otro también sacó su bachillerato y ya está en la universidad.

G6  MIGUEL
Estamos unidos. Yo solo no podría mandar unas mil libras de café para Estados Unidos, me sale muy caro. Pero ya juntamos un montón de café y a todos nos va salir más barato verdad. Es un gran beneficio para todos nosotros verdad. Y por eso es importante que nosotros y que los demás campesinos se animen a organizarse también y a ingresar con nosotros, verdad.

G7  TIMOTEO
Este terreno nosotros lo tenemos para, bueno uno de los planes que hay de los veinte campesinos que estamos trabajando en San Migue no contamos con un edificio para una escuela básica. Tenemos necesidad de una escuela y nosotros como campesinos nos hemos preocupado de esa necesidad y hemos unido nuestras fuerzas para poder logramos este terreno. Y ahora queremos hacer la estructura de una escuela básica, solo hay escuelas pero de primaria [...] ellos tienen que hacerlo en la calle. Entonces nosotros nos hemos preocupado de esa necesidad y bueno hemos pedido algunas donaciones tenemos en proyecto hacer nueve salones para básicos y ocho salones para una escuela técnica, si pues con laboratorios.

G8  TIMOTEO
Nosotros cuando hacemos la exportación a Estados Unidos nuestro pago viene muy tarde y empiezan a venir nuestro pago hasta los 8 meses. Y no un pago completo si no que viene como por cuatro pagos porque nosotros no vendemos el café directamente al cliente sino que va a una bodega y en la bodega hacen sus pedidos en café oro o café tostado. Vamos vendiéndolo muy despacio conforme a los pedidos y tenemos que juntar el dinero una cantidad algo grande porque tenemos que pagar la, la transferencia. Entonces no nos tiene cuenta pagar por mil quetzales, por mil quetzales. Tenemos que esperar y como la venta es muy lenta. Eso nos cuesta recibir este dinero.

G9  FREDY
Bastantes productores de café, hay muchos casi podríamos decir un setenta por ciento de la población, Pero no lo procesa, no quiere procesarlo, saber cuál será la razón verdad que no quiere procesarlo. Ellos ya están acostumbrados a cortar su café, llevarlo a una agencia donde están recibiendo y reciben su dinero y hasta ahí no mas. Ya hemos hecho bastantes invitaciones a muchos productores pero no quieren ingresar al grupo [...] Pues el primer año nosotros invitamos a mucha gente pues para que trabajara y nadie quiso. Lo que nos decían: “como le creen ustedes a un gringo” nos decían. El les va robar su café. Y nosotros también un poco desconfiados verdad, realmente no lo conocíamos [...] Ya hasta la demás gente, porque eso era lo que decía la demás gente “métanse ustedes a un gringo” nos decían. El les va robar su café. 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G10 DANIEL
La desventaja que tenemos nosotros es en la exportación porque como no tenemos licencia entonces tenemos que andar buscando otras ONG o, otros grupos que tengan licencias de exportación. Entonces esa es nuestra desventaja que nosotros no tenemos licencia directa para exportar [...] nos hizo el favor 3 años de exportar nuestro café.

G11 MIGUEL
Ya teníamos la cooperativa más antes, pero no habíamos empezado a trabajar con café, sino que en hortalizas. Empezamos a sembrar lo que es suquini, alquilamos, arrendamos un terreno en Chimaltenango, verdad. Tuvimos muy buena producción pero la empresa que nos compró esta producción nos falló porque mandábamos más o menos unas quince mil libras y nos aceptaban unas ocho mil a nueve mil libras, lo demás era un rechazo que nosotros ni lo mirábamos. Entonces ellos nos fueron robando todas esas libras ... entonces ahí tuvimos una pérdida tremenda verdad, todo campesino perdímos mucho dinero.

A13 HENRY
Hizo un convenio con la Cooperación Española y era un financiamiento y nos explicaron eso [de los sellos] y luego ya por ir llenando la papelería fue como empezamos nosotros a conocer el proceso, y luego ya cuando vino la primera auditoría de certificación y nos hicimos ahí amigos de los que vinieron la primera vez, le dimos seguimiento hasta ahí fue como nos fuimos enterando. Luego con Certinsa que es una casa exportadora con ellos trabajamos lo que es el sello C.A.F.E Practices [Starbucks] ... igual que el de Rain Forest [Alliance] pero quizás menos exigente [...] [casas de exportación] tienen un técnico dedicado a promocionar los sellos de certificación.

A14 HENRY
Nosotros perdíamos la certificación no por voluntad, no tener voluntad para hacerlo sino porque la empresa que nos ha certificado nos pidieron que les depositáramos a su cuenta cincuenta por ciento [del costo de certificación]. Pero yo que era el que llevaba el contrato no les confirmé la fecha de certificación y nos mandaron el veinticuatro de noviembre los certificadores y no estábamos nosotros, yo estaba en Chiquimula. Pero yo a ellos no les respondí simplemente les deposité y hablamos hablando que en septiembre la fecha era veinticuatro pero yo les deposite el veinte de noviembre. Pero el depósito no era confirmación para hacerlo en esa fecha, entonces ahí perdímos nosotros el cincuenta por ciento de la certificación que era cinco mil seiscientos cincuenta quetzales lo perdímos. Los muchachos se molestaron y bueno dijeron no tengo que hacer una carta y nos van hacer un reembolso pero lo tengo que hacer de acá, pero no lo he hecho porque digo yo, cuando hable con esta personas me puedo molestar y mejor voy a esperar que me pase lo. Pero si eso pasó, teníamos la voluntad de seguir con el Rain Forest y luego tampoco en ningún momento nos explicaron que había que hacer la certificación, la verificación o la nueva auditoría para revalidar el sello antes de que venciera. Y los muchachos ya viendo los beneficios que se pueden tener con el sello estaban en voluntad de hacerlo, pero cuando vinieron la semana pasada, con la otra certificación de café. Nos explicaron de que ya vencida había que hacer un nuevo trámite que se quede. Entonces perdímos ese dinero, perdímos el sello. Pero vamos empezar de nuevo.
A un productor le digas que maneje su cafetal cien por ciento orgánico. O sea un café no cien por ciento orgánico te va estar dando una producción más o menos de veinticinco quintales pergamino por manzana, mientras que una manzana de café orgánico te está produciendo máximo que llega producir quince quintales pergamino. Yo discutía con alguien una vez y le decía como vienes o dame argumentos...bien claros para convencer a un caficultor convencional a que se convierta a orgánico y hagamos números. Y andaba y le digo yo ¿Cuánto estás produciendo en tu finca orgánica? Yo saque nueve quintales pergamino, a bueno, y estaba otro a la par convencional ¿Cuánto sacaste? Veinticinco, ¿A cómo te pagaron el quintal convencional? Ocho sesenta me dijo, a va esta bueno ¿y a vos? Dos cientos dólares el quintal orgánico. Si hacemos relaciones es una diferencia como de seis mil quetzales de diferencia entre esa producción. Entonces dice no siento yo el incentivo para estar produciendo el café orgánico. Entonces ahorita lo que se está tratando de trabajar orgánico es que se acepten ciertos productos, porque tienen el sello orgánico y se puedan aplicar a la producción del café para mejorar la producción en las fincas orgánicas.

No nos vamos apartar de la realidad, si abonas con un químico te va dar una mejor producción que si abonas con otro. Entonces que se hace, lo que se está tratando de hacer es hacer un juego de minimizar el químico o utilizar un químico que no sea tan malo, no te vaya afecta el PH del suelo. Te vaya afectar la flora del suelo, se está tratando de usar lo mínimo químico, pero es lógico que no podes decir que no lo voy a utilizar, entonces dejas de producir, entonces te volvés de ser un productor un productor que va para abajo verdad, y eso es lo que no se quiere verdad. Entonces es un juego que hay que ir viendo que vaya amarrando y que vaya dando una producción buena.

Una comparación que hizo un amigo una vez, mire la planta es igual que el ser humano. Hay ciertas cosas que la necesita y hay que dárselas en su momento cuando realmente las necesita.

Nosotros como productores si estamos plenamente convencidos de la sostenibilidad y de que es importante cuidar el ambiente. Y a raíz de eso, pues los en Olopa nosotros como organización. Hemos promovido en los productores que tratar de cumplir con las normas que manda el Ministerio de Ambiente. Y ahorita en cosechas se midieron y, hubo algunos vecinos de la aldea allá del Tipuque que dijeron que se estaba contaminando, y realmente hubo una inspección del Ministerio de Ambiente y todo está en orden. O sea que el agua sale limpia, si estamos plenamente convencidos de cuidar el ambiente. Habrán algunas insatisfacciones con el proceso de certificación verdad, con estos sellos. Sin embargo no es el sello el que garantiza que el productor este comprometido a cuidar el ambiente sino es parte de conciencia ambiental. Y nosotros como organización si creo que hemos despertado en los diferentes productores esa conciencia ambiental.
ERIC
Se le dice a la gente “mira solo quiero que llegues vos y déjame a tu hijo” “no quiero que llegues vos y no te lleves a tu mujer”, o sea hay varios factores que se van metidos allí. Tenés maduro tu café, hay pobreza y por otro lado que te estén diciendo que no. Entonces ¿Cuál es el punto social que ellos miran? ¿El de ellos o el del productor? ¿o el de la gente que trabaja? No sé cuál será la posición de ellos [pero] la certificación no se apegan a la realidad. Estamos nosotros en un área que está catalogada pobre.

NILMAN
Hay muchas cuestiones que entran en juego, por una parte entra lo que es lo económico, es la época que prácticamente es la familia que paga para empezar la época escolar. Entonces es el momento en que la familia por ejemplo se integra en ese proceso del corte de café, porque de allí obtiene el ingreso para comprar los útiles para la escuela, para comprar los zapatos para el niño, para comprar otra cosa que pueda necesitar el niño en la escuela ¿no? Va eso en ese aspecto.

NILMAN
En lo cultural, por cultura se sabe que en el área cholti se tiene aquello de que al niño hay que enseñarle a trabajar desde pequeño, porque si no se le va metiendo en el trabajo desde pequeño, ya cuando grande ya no logra uno encerrararlo a que le agarre amor al trabajo ¿no? Acá se maneja mucho ese dicho que dice que “árbol que nace torcido jamás su tronco endereza” y si tú dejas que tu hijo vaya caminando así sin amor al trabajo entonces jamás más grande, jamás le vas enseñar que agarrar amor al trabajo. Y por lo otro el es el momento para obtener más ingreso familiar, es el momento en que ellos de una u otra forma pueden gozar de degustar algo que ellos querían. Por ejemplo ustedes van el sábado o el viernes a una carnicería ven que la carnicería queda, pero así, sin carne porque toda la gente está haciendo cola que quiere comprar una su libra de carne, es el momento en que puede comprar una su libra de carne y para irlo a compartir en familia. Entonces eso es lo que nosotros a veces decimos ¿no? Por qué en una certificadora a veces dicen que no que no participen los menores, los niños verdad. Si los niños de una o otra forma también salen favorecidos en ese aspecto de estar participando en ese proceso ¿no? Porque tienen el acceso a comida. Aquí es bien marcado, es bien marcado acá, por ejemplo ya se siente después de pasar el proceso de cosecha de café, ya se ve que empieza a bajar. Las ventas bajan un poco [...] pero si se ayuda bastante la familia en este proceso de la producción de café.

ERIC
Viene una certificadora que se venga conmigo y que me le diga, que me ayude a decirle a esta familia “mira deja a tu hijo” y “no me lo lleves no me lo metas”. Por un lado, ahora uno tiene que tener el carácter para decirle a esa gente no verdad, cuando uno se certifica. Ahora mirémonos el otro lado, el lado económico ¿Qué les estoy quitando a esta gente al decirles que no les ayude a ellos? Lo comento porque aquí dice algo de las certificaciones verdad.
ERIC
La única forma de ver solución es de que el comprador diga bueno yo les voy a comprar a tal productor. Y bueno le fui a ver su finca verdad, y se siente con el productor y se sienten así como estamos acá y que el productor le cuente que es lo que el dispone, cuales con sus problemas que tiene para producir verdad y que él diga bueno lo voy a certificar. Siento yo que es la única forma que podría verse unidad en que el productor y el comprador van a tener los dos, pueden estar contentos. Porque media vez haya gente intermediaria, las certificadoras.

NILMAN
Hay conciencia ambientalista de ambas partes ¿no? La parte que está comprando y la parte que está produciendo. Entonces esta gente se preocupa por mantener el medio ambiente, por conservar el medio ambiente ¿Por qué? Porque está recibiendo un estímulo directo de esta gente. Creo que el llego a exportar creo que seis cientos quintales molidos en un año, pero por lo mismo. Entonces la gente se preocupa y empieza dice bueno aquí tengo gente que está pagando mi esfuerzo. Entonces yo me voy a esforzar por mantener bien mi finca por no contaminar con las aguas mieles, ya todo eso. Pero el directamente está recibiendo el beneficio.

HENRY
Otro enlace allí en ese canal de comercialización a través del café que viene con certificado. Y están las casas o las empresas que certifican. Hay empresas dedicadas a certificar y hay un enlace también entre las certificaciones y las casas exportadoras. En donde el mayor beneficio llega a las casas exportadoras. Al productor le llega un diferencial. ¿Pero cuánto gana la casa exportadora con ese sello certificado? No sabemos nosotros. O sea que el productor es siempre el castigado dentro de esa cadena de comercialización del mercado final la casa exportadora es la que sigue teniendo el mayor beneficio. Entonces acá llega lo mínimo. Y hay personas por cada empresa o cada empresa exportadora nos da para promocionar ese sello.

HENRY
Lo que sucede es que el café certificado le dan diferencial, le dan un sobreprecio de ocho dólares digamos ¿Cuánto es el beneficio que tiene la casa exportadora? No sabemos, pero por ahí va el negocio o la producción para las casas exportadoras para las certificaciones. Ellos vienen y te buscan un contacto directo con ese sello pero a través de una casa comercial. Entonces el mayor beneficiado en cuanto lo económico es la casa comercial, la casa exportadora tiene un diferencial sobre la bolsa. Nosotros en el año pasado nos pagaron ocho dólares por quintal. ¿Cuánto es el beneficio que obtiene la casa exportadora? No lo sabemos.
ALVARO
Yo lo veo mas positivo que negativo, mas ventajas que desventajas. Creo que la certificación, todo producto agrícola debería ser certificado porque mucha gente ve la productividad en el momento, no ve la productividad hacia el futuro. Eso, la agricultura e una forma irracional en el uso de productos agrícolas, agroquímicos verdad, a traído varios trastornos hacia el manejo de los recursos naturales. Y eso a alterado parte de lo que de habla hoy en día, del calentamiento global y las alteraciones del clima y todo eso, ha sido también por consecuencia del mal uso de los recursos, y el uso excesivo de químicos. Entonces este, los sellos como que viene a dar esa conciencia a los productores sobre como, como deben hacerlo, en que momento tienen que hacer cada practica, o buscar que lleven hacia la sostenibilidad de los recursos tenemos que realmente estar consientes de que, que tenemos que heredar un buen patrimonio a nuestro hijos, entonces el mundo de los sellos nos enseña a ser mas amigables con el ambiente, tener una armonia con todos los recursos naturales [...]si no también ha significado llegar a tener una conciencia ambiental y social. vivir en un mundo más limpio, vivir en un ambiente mas sano y produciendo pues, con conciencia ambiental, con el concepto sostenible verdad.

ALVARO
Hay gente que no sabe los sellos, en Olopa no saben en algunos lugares de sellos, en Asia no saben los sellos. Entonces, cuando uno les dice: “mire yo tengo el sello Rain Forest” – ¿y eso que es?... yo quiero calidad de café no me importa el sello. Entonces hace falta, como ir despertando el interés en muchos a muchos compradores a que compren con sello porque es un valor agregado. Entonces se tiene que crear mas demanda del producto certificado todavía no es la suficiente ahora en la parte de publicidad y creo que ahí si no podemos, no tenemos la capacidad económica para poder este hacer a nivel internacional de los sello [...]entonces a nivel nacional se trata de buscar mercados con exportadores o compradores que requieran con sello.

MIGUEL
Bueno nosotros hemos visto que hay muchas ventajas también porque ya un café certificado tiene mejor valor. Pero ya tener una certificación escrito avalado por Anacafe o por cualquier institución el café va tener un valor más mejor. Entonces nosotros nos interesa tener esa certificación verdad, porque es algo importante. Pero ahorita como decimos vamos despacio no podemos irnos corriendo porque no llegaríamos a tenerlo. El que camina despacio siempre va llegar.

FREDY
Si nos interesa mucho, pero nosotros con los que hemos hablado por lo menos esa visita que hicimos a Santa Anita aquí a Coatepeque. Ellos tienen certificación, pero nosotros estamos vendiendo un precio más de lo que ellos tienen certificado. Entonces decimos nosotros, nos han enviado los requisitos para certificación y a la larga no estamos obteniendo el precio a que nosotros lo estamos vendiendo, entonces la certificadora es que siempre se queda con el mejor dinero si fuera para beneficiarnos yo creo que si lo haríamos [...] pero había que ver, tratar de realmente averiguar cómo se trabaja.

ERIC
ANACAFE es apoyo para el productor pero son muy selectivos [nosotros ahora tenemos apoyo] porque nosotros tenemos licencia de exportación verdad.
ORLANDO
Bueno talvez un poco mas de participación, yo siento que lo dejan a uno una temporada, unas sus tres visitas al año y se cortaron ¿no?...pero si sería al menos a través de ellos más información, por lo menos tenerlo más capacitado a uno, a uno más preparado verdad. Pero si le puedo decir un cincuenta por ciento la presentación de ANACAFE para uno, no el cien por ciento, sea en ese sentido han fallado un poco, porque al ser ellos una institución tan grande podrían ayudarnos. Por lo menos a comprar fertilizantes a un mejor precio.

JUAN
Bueno ellos hay varias cosas. Ellos autorizan todo lo que es exportación, toda la papelería, licencias de exportación. Ellos dan capacitaciones de beneficiados húmedos y albacivos y todo lo que envuelve lo que es el café, hay ingenieros de caficultura. Entonces ellos dan esa orientación a la población dan capacitaciones a un montón de campesinos para que ellos tengan toda la logística de cómo poder cultivar.

FREDY
Ellos hacen un concurso de café. Uno tiene que inscribirse y participar con una cierta cantidad de quintales, pero con un contrato firmado de que si uno no gana el café lo van a comprar ellos. Nosotros y hemos querido inscribirnos, hemos querido decir pero bueno trabajemos así como cooperativa, yo voy a poner un quinta, yo un quinta, no vamos a perder mucho. Entonces esa es la meta de nosotros [...] si nos va servir porque podía ser que ganáramos verdad entonces eso a nosotros nos va ayuda más tener un certificado primer lugar en Guatemala Anacafé.

FREDY
Wso es lo que hemos tratado de tramitar nuestro propio licencia de exportación pero siempre se nos ha presentado muchos obstáculos. Por lo menos el primero que se presento cuando éramos siete nosotros tratamos de tramitar nuestra licencia de exportación, pero ellos nos dijeron que teníamos que tener un millón de quetzales cada quien depositado en una cuenta bancaria. Que si no teníamos eso no podíamos acceder a tramitar la licencia. Y entonces cada vez que vamos ponen un requisito nuevo, después bajaron a quinientos mil quetzales, después que teníamos que producir cierta cantidad de café. O sea que siempre nos han puesto como un obstáculo muy grande para que nosotros que somos pequeños productores nosotros no podamos competir ante los grandes, ante los más poderosos, porque realmente Anacafé está, como le dijera yo, los más adinerados son los que administran lo que es Anacafé entonces no quieren que alguien pequeño pueda competir con ellos, entonces si se logra pero es bastante difícil.

TIMOTEO
Ahora estamos de nuevo intentando, fuimos con el compañero a averiguar eso a Anacafé. Per primero tuvimos la idea de poder sacar una licencia como productor, exportador, pero ahí encontramos otro problema, porque necesitamos tener una cantidad de tierra para poder mandar un contenedor para que Anacafé este segura de que yo soy dueño de esa cantidad de terreno. Yque tengo ese café suficiente para exportar a Estados Unidos, sino no me va a autorizar una licencia. Pues ahora nosotros pensamos que era bueno formar otro sistema como una empresa si, ahora estamos vamos a formar ya estamos en esos trámites una copropiedad [...]Y bueno como copropiedad, nos fuimos con una licenciada en auditoria, ella nos está ayudando a hacer esos trámites ella nos dijo que era mejor, era más posible sacarlo como copropiedad, que la copropiedad sea dueña de la licencia.
G18  ALBERTO
Pues la verdad que no sabemos cuál sea. Si son los trabajadores de Anacafé o ya sea que venga desde el más alto de Anacafé porque en el caso de nosotros como contaba el compañero el primer requisito fue un millón de quetzales. Pienso que es algo injusto que aquí nadie va a tener un millón de quetzales.

G19  FILIBERTO
Parece que ellos están un poco a favor de los ricos, no quieren que un grupo pequeño, o sea nazca, que crezca. Ellos apoyan más a los ricos y a los grupos pobres no los quieren apoyar. Y dentro de la asociación de Anacafé, se encuentran solo grandes productores de café donde tienen 60 y 100 manzanas de café.

G20  ALBERTO
Quizá por eso sea de que, a nosotros nos ponen un motón de obstáculos para que nosotros no podamos pues, verdad.

A31  HENRY
El café para nosotros acá en la región es el cultivo que mayor ingresos genera a las familias ¿ya? Tanto del área rural como del área urbana. Entonces se convierte en el motor económico del municipio. La economía del municipio gira alrededor del café, ese es el caso para mí.

A32  ORLANDO
Bueno es una forma de ingreso económico para mí ¿no? Es algo que prácticamente le está dando sustención a mi familia.

A33  ALVARO
Bueno el café es un cultivo apasionante. El que se mete a tratar con café y el que empieza en tomar café se apasiona por el café, le da a uno en el campo en calidad de vida, porque uno puede vivir y convivir con muchas plantas y animales que viven en el lugar. Aquí ustedes van a ir a ver muchas, aves, muchos animales que viven en el bosque. Entonces este es algo bien relajante, motivante. El café es un cultivo bien, bien agradecido, bien noble, que a pesar de que uno no le, no, si se vinieran abajo los precios del café, este año gracias a Dios no ayudaron, pero si el café, se vinieran abajo lo precios y nosotros dejáramos de asistir una plantación de café, el café sigue dando, sigue dando sus frutos, aunque no en la misma cantidad y quizás calidad. Si uno logra meterse realmente en el concepto sostenible, uno puede tener un caficultura de años como esta que ven aquí en la que ya van casi por la cuarta generación en la que seguímos dependiendo del café, nos ha dado muchas alegrías, también algunas tristezas va, pero mas alegrías verdad. Yhemos tratado de hacer este rincón, este rinconcito que ustedes ven aquí, lo hemos tratado de hacer con un ambiente agradable para que cuando uno venga disfrute el ambiente, disfrute del lugar, del contacto directo con la naturaleza, del contacto directo con la naturaleza. Entonces el café es especial.
A34 ERIC
para mi sostenible...lo entiendo es producido manteniendo una sostenibilidad de en el recurso...suelo, recurso agua,...eso es la sostenibilidad. Estamos hablando de un recurso natural renovable al cual no le voy a cambiar nada, en el sistema de producción yo no voy a...no voy a crear...ni tierra, ni...que mas...agua, ni nada, pero tengo que producir. Producirlo lo mismo sin alterar, eso es por lo que yo entiendo y lo he estudiado... tendría que ser un café sostenible. que no voy a dañar nada en el ecosistema para sacar una producción de...va todo en circulo

A35 NILMAN
Yo siento que es mas sustentable que sostenible, o sea que estas sosteniendo ciertos pilares, pero no es sostenible porque no estás cumpliendo realmente un circulo digamos. Porque al menos si es sostenible tenés lo político, lo económico y lo social. Dentro de lo económico, lo político y lo social va inmerso todo eso que vos mencionaste. Pero si te das cuenta a veces cumplimos ciertas políticas, pero lo económico realmente no está bien o lo social realmente no está bien. Por ejemplo si fuera sostenible, por ejemplo si tengo acceso a una mejor educación, si tengo acceso hortalizas, el café, a salud ¿ya? Ahí es donde juega la cuestión que es sostenible porque los tres cuartos se están manejando. Por ejemplo si hablamos de salud si nosotros realmente producimos un café sostenible vamos a tener una verdadera conciencia del medio ambiente, entonces vamos a tratar de mantener eso, porque eso ¿Qué? Nos va dar empleos, ha estado tratando de armar los tres cuartitos estos verdad, como lo económico, como lo político y como lo social, pero no se ve bien aquí como realmente debe ser el café sostenible estando en esos tres espacios. Yo siento que lo sostenible lo enfoca cada quien bajo el punto de vista que le conviene.

A36 HENRY
Talvez la definición de café sostenible seria de seguir garantizando la producción de café por más años, tomando en cuenta las consecuencias del cambio climático. Yo creo que ahí va la definición de café sostenible.

A37 ORLANDO
Lo que yo pienso sostenibilidad bueno primero que me genera el mantenimiento de mi situación económica. También seria sostenibilidad en el asunto que es medio ambiente porque lo estamos cultivando entre bajo sombra verdad. En el caso mío eran terrenos para ganado y hoy es café esto en vez de estar deforestando mejor he forestado.
ALVARO
Pues fíjese que todo eso que usted menciona de sostenibilidad, una palabra bien, bien amplia y bien importante, permítame, cultura sostenible. La palabra sostenible de verdad este, encierra muchos. Toda la Caficultura que se busca bajo el concepto sostenible tiene que ser bajo una sombra moderada, esos arboles que ven ustedes ahí que son ingas, son arboles que dan cobertura de sombra al café. Entonces, podemos tener una caficultura por muchos, muchos años con una fertilización casi orgánica natural, por toda la deposición de las hojas que se caen de las ingas, que son plantas ricas en nitrógeno y que mejoran el suelo. Entonces, luego nos estamos metiendo al proceso de certificación, los sellos de certificación verde como es el sello de Rain Forest nos condiciona sabiamente hacia uso de productos bien restringidos, químicos, que alteran el ambiente verdad, yquipos de protección para los trabajadores. Y entonces nos da otra forma de manejar la caficultura también, y que ha pues enfocado y dirigido a la sostenibilidad de las fincas y de ahí pues el uso de los fertilizantes al suelo, abonos orgánicos que dan pues lo sostenible del recurso suelo, las siembras cultivos a nivel las estructuras, las estructuras a conservación de suelos. Todas esas prácticas ayudan a la caficultura sostenible.

y les digo [a mis hijos]: “miren esto es de ustedes, esto va a ser para ustedes, ustedes tienen que aprender a trajarlo” Nosotros como productores, hemos recibido tal vez no lo que, lo que verdaderamente deberíamos de merecer en cuanto a esta relación con la naturaleza y en mantener este ambiente sano, con conciencia y que diga: “bueno hay que ser justos en el pago, hay que ser justos con esta gente que me esta mandando, se esta esforzando y me esta brindando una materia prima de calidad”. Entonces eso habría que crear, esta muy difícil porque a veces todo mundo piensa en llenar sus bolsillos y no ve el, quizá un daño que puede ocasionar abajo, de la que esta sucediendo con lo que esta dando.

Y otra cosa verdad, los exportadores grandes. Pues tienen las condiciones económicas de poder agarrar los mejores negocios. Nosotros por la situación económica no tenemos acceso a esos mercados y si la tuviéramos, de forma inmediata el exportador lo sabe y nos bloque o nos hace algo para sacarnos nuevamente del mercado verdad. Es como decir que: “siempre el pez mas grande se come al chico.”

Así es y pues nos ha costado llegar a donde estamos ha sido un desafío muy grande, grande, grande, y tal vez espacios como este, como el que estamos teniendo en el que podamos hablar con libertad y expresar realmente nuestro pensar y nuestra opinión. Nos ayuden algún día pues a que la gente sepa la realidad.

MIGUEL
El café significa, como hablamos aquí el oro se conoce a nivel mundial verdad. Entonces nosotros le llamamos al café oro, para nosotros es café oro porque es algo importante para el sostenimiento verdad, y es un trabajo que hay para mucho campesinos verdad. Entonces el café lo que significa para mi es lo mas importante en la vida del pequeño caficultor verdad. Porque nos interesa que haya mejor producción [...] si vamos a progresar nosotros, nuestro pueblo, nuestro país también va progresar.
G22  FREDY
A mí el café significa como le llamamos la palabra oro, significa dinero, buena ganancia. Lo puedo ver en mi propia vida en mi propia familia. Yo por lo menos cuando integraba no pertenecía o no procesábamos el café, mis casas eran hechas con esa caña. Ahora gracias al café ya he podido haciendo cuatro casitas con cuatro habitaciones. Gracias al café mis hijos han podido seguir estudiando. Hemos tenido una mejor vida. Entonces para mí el café significa oro, significa dinero, significa vida.

G23  DANIEL
Para mi es el mejor producto porque ahora es lo que a nosotros mas nos, nos ayuda más que el frijol, el maíz, las verduras. Para nosotros es el mejor producto. Lo podemos tener entre 25 años tenemos una, 25 años para producir y sin volver a sembrar. En cambio lo que es el maíz, el frijol las verduras cada año tenemos que estar sembrando. Esa es la ventaja que nosotros tenemos con el café.

G24  FILIBERTO
Para nosotros el café es un producto muy importante. Nosotros hemos trabajado en diferentes productos verdad, verduras y maíz, frijoles. Pero dentro de todos los productos el mejor producto ha sido el café porque este nos ayuda mucho ahorita en el mes de diciembre, en el mes de enero que nuestros hijos no han entrado a la escuela, es una oportunidad para que nuestros hijos nos vengan a ayudar a trabajar, vienen a ayudarnos a coleccionar el café y pagar inscripciones de nuestros hijos. Entonces es muy importante el café en este momento y al mismo tiempo uno puede tener algo para, para poder comprar algo mejor, comer algo mejor por parte del café [...] el café nos ayuda mucho.

G25  TIMOTEO
Para mí el café es, es el mejor producto que hay en esta región porque bueno el café puede ser beneficio para el presente y para la mañana. Con este producto puede uno disponer de dar, bueno oportunidad de estudio a los hijos, poder hacer tal vez una, una construcción de una habitación o un sanitario. Y tal vez muchas personas han logrado comprar terrenos, mas cuerdas de tierra, con el producto del café. Es una gran ayuda porque también sirve para el mañana porque por ejemplo estas plantas s va a durar unos 60 años. Yo voy a poder, de aquí a unos 20 años yo voy a ser un hombre viejo, y yo voy a poder decir, bueno yo voy a vender mi terreno con todo y las planta y puedo venderlo ganar más dinero, que no teniendo plantas si. Entonces voy a tener como pensando en mi vejez como, como mi jubilación, voy a ganar mucho dinero de aquí a 20 años al vender mis plantas juntamente con mi terreno a otro campesino. Y también para la familia porque si yo voy a sembrar muchas plantas le puedo decir a una hija o a un hijo bueno te voy a regalar una cuerda trabajálas y yo creo que va ser para que ellos tengan una mejor vida económicamente y puedan sacar a su familia adelante.

G26  JUAN
Bueno el café para mi es un producto de sostenibilidad, económica, trabajo, esfuerzo, donde intervienen más de mil personas a veces en el esfuerzo del trabajo [...] Y es una satisfacción para mi que la persona que se lleve una taza de café, de mi café para mi es un orgullo que me digan: su café es muy bueno[...] o sea para mi es un honor oír eso que una persona me reconozca mi trabajo.
G27 DANIEL
Café sostenible e, como sostener a nuestra familia porque de ahí sale, de ahí sale para todo. Porque es el mayor ingreso que tenemos, para estudio de nuestros hijos para la comida de todos, para el vestuario de los patojos, para todo eso nos serviría y para hacer otras cositas más que haya en la casa, eso sería el café que a nosotros.

G28 TIMOTEO
Por ejemplo ahora con el café, cada año se están sembrando más plantas. Y yo pienso que todo esto va a ayudar de aquí a 10 años, 5 años porque muchos árboles eso nos ayuda a nosotros en el área, al ambiente natural. Sino que también a la sostenibilidad de las familias en la educación eso es una gran ayuda de veras, una gran ayuda porque hace 10 años no habían muchos árboles. Ahora hay miles de miles de árboles, ahora hay miles de miles de árboles y todo eso va a ayudar a la sostenibilidad, que todo eso ayuda el café.

G29 FILIBERTO
Antes nosotros, no teníamos, no teníamos agua potable, no teníamos luz, no teníamos un drenaje. Y a través de estos cultivos de café, se ha logrado tener agua, tener luz, el drenaje y tener como digo más, mejores cosas para comer, entonces ayuda la sostenibilidad de diferente manera.
Appendix E  Additional Research Findings

The semi-structured interviews were quite varied, but I tried to end each one with two questions: “What does coffee mean to you?” and “What does sustainable coffee mean to you?” Not all interviews captured this information, but the variety of responses received led me to include it as additional context and findings. The intent of this section is to present readers with a better understanding of who the producers are and their lived experiences. Within each case study below, the personal meaning of coffee is presented first, followed by the personal meaning of sustainable coffee.

**Case Study 1: APOLO.**

**What Does Coffee Mean to You?**

The key themes for the APOLO responses were economic importance, quality of life and connection to the natural environment.

Henri: Coffee for us here in this region signifies the largest crop revenue generator. Both for rural and urban areas. So it becomes the economic engine of the municipality. The town's economy revolves around coffee.

Orlando: Well it is a form of income for me right? It basically gives subsistence to my family.

Alvaro: Well coffee is a fascinating crop. Whoever works in coffee or begins to drink coffee becomes passionate about coffee. It gives the workers quality of life because one can live and coexist with many plants and animals. Here you will see many birds, animals that live the forest and this is something very relaxing, motivating. Coffee is a thankful crop, a noble crop, that even though one does not know if prices will fall [...] even if we stopped attending to the fields, the coffee
continues to grow and give [...]. If you really achieve the concept of sustainability one could have coffee trees for generations, like us, [this is] our fourth generation. [...] coffee has given us much happiness, some sadness [...] and we have tried to create in this spot an agreeable environment so when one comes here they can enjoy the surroundings, be in contact with nature. So, coffee is special.

**What is sustainable coffee?**

The key themes that emerged from are that sustainable coffee is synonymous with renewable resources, it benefits the people and environment, and it creates long-term job security.

Eric: I understand sustainability as maintaining the resource in a sustainable way, the soil, the water, that is sustainability. We are talking about a natural, renewable resource [...] in the production system I will not create land, or water, nothing, just produce. Producing without altering [the natural system] that is what I understand of sustainability. To not damage the ecosystem just to increase production and everything goes in cycles.

Nilman: You are sustaining certain pillars, but it is not really sustainable because you are not actually completing a circle as it were. We have policies, the social aspects and the economics. Within economics, the policies and social aspects are immersed throughout. But sometimes we encounter certain policies [in which] the economics are not good or the social is not good [...] it is difficult to see really what sustainable coffee looks like in the three spaces [economics, politician, social]. I feel that sustainability depends on the point of view you are focused on.
Henry: Maybe the definition of sustainable coffee would be to continue to guarantee coffee production for many years, taking into account the consequences of climate change.

Orlando: Sustainability generates and maintains my economic situation. And it would also be sustainable in the issue of the environment, as we are producing shade grown coffee. In my case, before my land was used for cattle, now it is coffee so instead of deforestation it is reforested.

Alvaro: The word ‘sustainability’ is a very broad term and very important, if you will, culturally. The word sustainable, in reality, contains a lot. All of the coffee you are looking at under the concept of sustainability should be grown under moderate shade. These trees you see here are Ingas; they provide shade cover. With this we can ensure coffee production for many years, with fertilization that is mostly organic - mainly with the falling leaves, rich in nitrogen that improve soil quality. And we have the certification programs [...] which condition us to use only registered products, limit chemical use, provide protection to our workforce. And this provides us with another manner to manage our crops sustainability. I tell my children – “look all of this is from your heritage, and will be for your future, you need to learn how to work this.” We as producers have received perhaps not what we truly should have merited because of the relationship we have with nature and consciously maintaining this healthy environment [...] and we should say: “we need to be fair in pay, be fair to the people coming here, working and providing a high quality product.” So this is what needs to be created, but it is very difficult because sometimes people just
want to fill their pockets. [...] And another thing, the large-scale exporters, they have the economic conditions to obtain the best deals. For us, and our economic situation, we do not have access to those kinds of markets. If we were to, the large exporter would find out and immediately block us [...] as the saying goes: “always the largest fish eats the small.” So it has been a difficult to get to where we are. There have been many, many challenges, but perhaps in forums like this [study] where we can speak freely and express our true opinions and thoughts, it may someday help us. And so that others realize our reality.

**Case Study 2: AGAIG.**

*What Does Coffee Mean to You?*

Key themes that emerged were provisions for future generations, economic importance for the region, progress for the community and sustaining lives.

Miguel: Coffee signifies, well here we call it Gold coffee, we call it Gold because it sustains us, it is work for many farmers [...] it is the most important aspect of the small producers' life [...] we will continue to progress our group, our town, and our country will also advance.

Fredy: To me coffee means the same as the word we use for it, Gold, it signifies money, good earnings. I can see it in my own life, my family. When I wasn't processing coffee my houses were made of straw. And thanks to coffee I have been able to build four little houses. And thanks to coffee my children are able to continue their education. We've had a better life. So for me coffee signifies gold, signifies money, signifies life.

Daniel: For me it is the best product because it helps us more than [cultivating]
beans, corn, vegetables [...] we can have 25 years of production without once re-planting.

Filiberto: For us coffee is a very important product. We have cultivated many different products and coffee has produced the best [...] in the month of January, before our children return to school, it is an opportunity for them to come help us, collect the harvest, pay for their school registration [...] coffee helps us very much.

Timoteo: Coffee for me is the best product of the region. It can benefit us today and tomorrow. It can provide the opportunity for education for our kids, build a room on the house, to purchase more land [...] these trees will last 60 years, and 20 years from now when I am an old man, I will be able to sell the land with all these trees [...] or I can say to my son or daughter, I will give this to you as a gift, and if they work they will have a better life economically and can keep their family moving forwards.

Juan: Coffee for me is a product of sustainability, economics, workforce, where thousands of lives are involved [...] I find it satisfying when a person drinks a cup of my coffee, and tells me that the coffee is very good. This makes me proud and it is an honour for me to hear a person recognize the work I do.

**What is sustainable coffee?**

Key themes are long-term production, sustaining family livelihoods, improving living conditions and improving on current practices.

Daniel: Sustainable coffee is, how to sustain our family, because from that comes our best income, [it provides for] our children’s’ schooling, food for everyone,
clothes for the kids, for all of these reasons it serves us well.

Timoteo: For example right now with coffee, each year they are planting more [shade] trees […] and in 10 years there will be many [different types of] trees and this helps this area's natural environment [...]. Where 10 years ago there were almost no trees and now there are already so many. Furthermore it provides sustainability to families with education, and this is a big help.

Filiberto: Before we never had potable water, no electricity, no drainage systems. But as a result of our coffee crops, we now have water, electricity, drainage and much more, better things to eat.

**Coffee Significance Summary.**

The final category of findings includes the producers’ viewpoints on two questions: ‘What is the meaning of coffee to you?’ and, ‘What is sustainable coffee?’ These two questions were originally designed as a means to end the interviews with a summation statement. The responses given were diverse and interesting, and when analysis began, I realized that these remarks needed to be included in the findings to provide context and depth. The key themes are summarized in Table E1.
### Table E1

*Significance of Coffee Themes*

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<tr>
<th>Key Themes</th>
<th>APOLO</th>
<th>AGAIG</th>
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