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Development Paradigms Related to Peace, Justice, and Solid Institutions: A Case Study on Guatemala for Decision-Makers



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Definition

Development paradigms refer to basic postulates which provide groups of researchers and decision-makers a common theoretical framework to pursue their activities and priorities. The word paradigm first identified by Thomas Kuhn (1996) also has inherent tensions that might intensify conflicts among certain groups who endorse different and frequently opposing points of view about the same reality which is the case of SDG 16 that addresses problems related to peace, justice, and solid institutions.

Introduction

The aim of this entry is to try to clarify the uncertainty created by recent international national events and the 2030 Agenda.

This situation, among other incidents, involves the withdrawal of the USA from the approved Paris Agreement after the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) and internal policies that aim to discourage measures taken in the past regarding environmental care, which in turn are linked to broader sustainable development problems. These tensions are magnified by massive migrations; decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) and discouragement of development itself; religious and political polarization, particularly in Middle East countries; greater commercial protectionism tendencies; resurrection of nationalist movements; and the dangers surrounding the nuclear arms race.

This new scenario deepens existing tensions of the past that are related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in late 2015. Currently this situation is trying to be solved by calling to a paramount effort, taking the year 2030 as the crucial moment in which the expected results are to be on track and many failings of present outcomes might be superseded.

All this effort would accelerate global economic growth, facilitate the flow of goods, and help in effective resource management. Monetary stability and flexibility affecting particularly external debts, international cooperations, corruption scandals as well as migration disagreements together with international confrontations, and civil wars threaten the stability of political

institutions and SDG 16 objectives at the world level, particularly in developing countries.

According to this analysis, the dimensions that require greater effort by the year 2030 are those focused in the elimination of hunger, better health levels, availability and access to clean energy, industrial innovation along with the necessary infrastructure, reduction of inequalities, care on the extinction of submarine species, and overall a greater emphasis on the value of peace and justice around solid institutions. Extreme nationalism leading to economic protectionism and religious wars, among other tendencies, aggravates this situation. The proposal for Guatemala aims to reduce inequality, continue an industrial energy revolution mainly around water as energy generator, strengthen protected areas and forests, and achieve solid institutions through an effective social pact concerning corruption and institutions. The latter would strengthen steps to reach peace, justice, and solid institutions called by SDG 16.

For these purposes this entry intends to answer four questions:

- (a) What was the global and Guatemalan situation in the year 2017 regarding the SDG relevant to the international crisis?
- (b) What is the nature of the international crisis at present and the near future?
- (c) What were the trends that fed international crisis and tensions that might affect SDG?
- (d) What can be done at present to overcome the current international and national (Guatemalan) situation on possible SDG compliance, particularly with SDG 16 that refer to peace, justice, and solid institutions?

Methods

For answering these questions, our point of departure was a set of characteristics describing sustainable development in Guatemala. Secondary data was gathered from available sources mainly through international organizations. The focus was the degree that SDG objectives were accomplished. This analysis provided a baseline data just after SDG targets derived from the 2030 Agenda were approved in the United Nations Assembly at the end of the

year 2015. The identification for Guatemala of its most affected SDG will help to establish the relationship between these priorities and the one that was our focus of research which is SDG 16 (peace, justice, and solid institutions). National and international threats related to this particular SDG will also be highlighted and also their consequences for reaching what is intended in the 2030 Agenda. Finally, this reflection suggested a set of recommendations for decision-makers in charge of facing these threats.

Toward a Decision-Makers' Vision of SDG 16 in the World in General and Guatemala Specifically

Guatemala's Profile

Guatemala is located in the so-called Northern Triangle of Central America, close to Mexico at the North and El Salvador and Honduras in the South. Its population has reached 16,536.0 million inhabitants in mid-year 2017. Although it is the country with the highest number in Central America, it still is far off from countries such as Mexico that has 127,878.0 and Brazil that counts with 211,175.0 million inhabitants in the same date (CEPAL, the acronym for the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, ECLA 2018).

For its degree of development and environmental performance, several indexes show its standing. According to classifications made by the World Bank, Guatemala is considered as a country of "low, median income" with a US \$3,340 dollars of GNP in the last actualization made in 2018 (Tezanos 2018). Agricultural exports mainly represented by the so-called "non-traditional" ones (cardamom, vetches, etc.), followed by coffee and sugar, constitute the main crops. Manufactured goods are mainly oriented toward other Central American countries, taking advantage of integration treaties that dates back to the 1960s of the former century. Although difficult to measure, different figures place migrant Guatemalans living legally and illegally in the USA at around 13%, which represents more than one million inhabitants. Their remittances are

an estimated important source for the economy, with almost two thirds of the total value of export goods in 2016: US\$7.02 against US\$11.6 billion (Economic Forecasts from the World's Leading Economists 2017; Observatory of Economic Complexity, OEC 2017).

On the other hand, the Human Development Index, a United Nations Development Program, UNDP, measure, denominates Guatemala as a country that ranks between 0.5 and 0.7 in a scale that goes from 0 to 1, that is considered in the "Middle." (Tezanos 2018). Last year, these measures have gone from 0.391 in the year 2000 to 0.492 in 2014, reflecting some increase but not enough. The same happens with multi-dimensional poverty rates. During the same period, they have gone from 71.7 to only 66.7%. Nevertheless, this poverty indicator has had an increase of 2.5%, but between 2011 and 2014, the last period that a measure was made. In fact, it has deteriorated from 64.2 to 66.7% (PNUD 2016). According to the same source, the percentage of urban population is 56.0% in the year 2015, but it is significant that this long-term trend has grown from 34.1% in 1964 (Amaro 1970). The urban-rural differences are multiplied in each and every indicator by the presence in Guatemala of a significant proportion of indigenous population that in the year 2011, last time it was measured, had a 41% of the total population (MARN 2017).

A summary index of performance in the environmental field is the one elaborated by the Universities of Yale and Columbia in the USA. It is called the Environmental Performance Index (EPI). Guatemala is ranked according to these data, in the position number 88 in the world with 69.64 over 100 points (MARN 2017, pp. 14–15). This rank gives Guatemala an increase of 20.51% in the last 20 years. Nevertheless, this advance is not acknowledged in the forest areas, due to significant losses in their coverage between 2001 and 2014. Particularly, the use of this raw material by a great percentage of the rural population as fossil fuels in their kitchen's homes, not only because of their impact on forests but also in human health due to the suspension in the atmosphere of very small particles that might be

breathed. A similar criticism receives the way fishing areas are overexploited, putting in danger the marine life and biodiversity in the seas of their coasts that face the Pacific as well as the Atlantic Oceans.

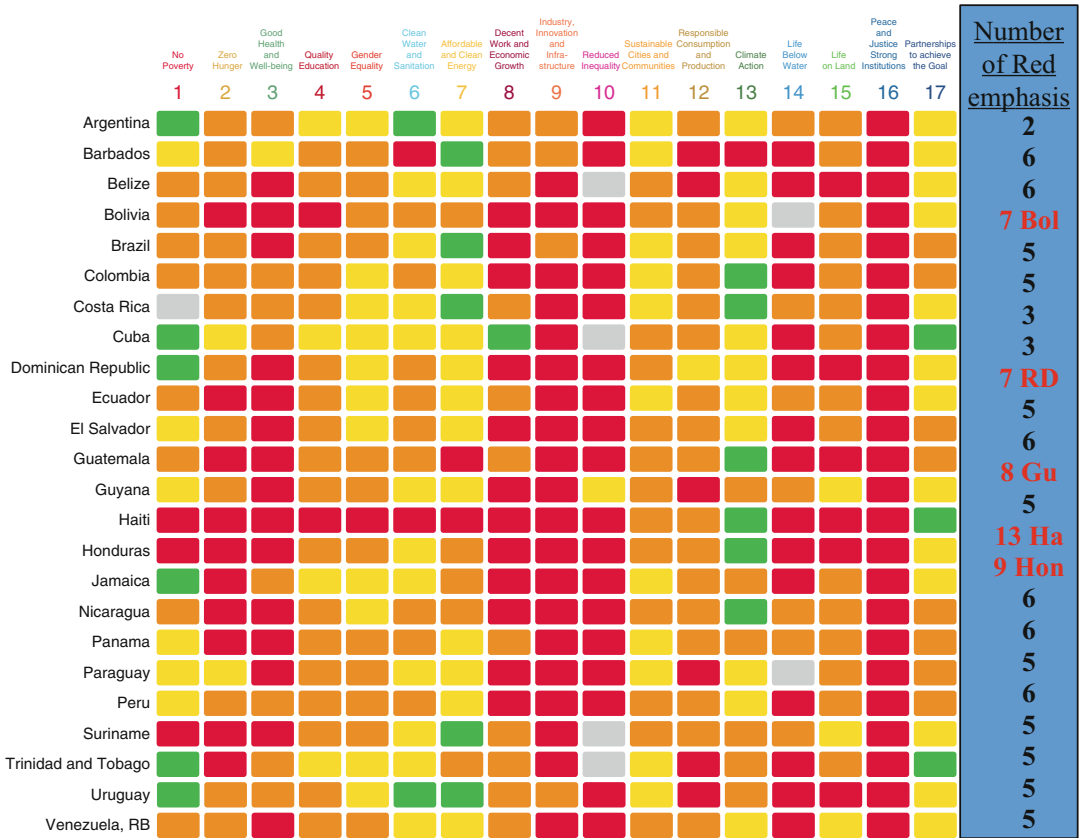
The International Context: Its Nature, Trends, and Answers Needed

The Global State of the SDGs in Latin America and Guatemala in that Context

A look at data for Latin America and specific information for Guatemala will help to highlight the problems that developing countries must face to comply with the 2030 Agenda. Figure 1 shows the relationship of SDG in each country, giving alerts through different colors of the extent that those objectives have been accomplished.

The strengths and weaknesses of the achievements of Guatemala and the remaining 22 countries of Latin America are observed in Fig. 1, provided by SDSN (2017). The blue column that appears at the right of the former Table shows the number of red observations to the left by objective that countries have obtained after the analysis, specifically (Ha (Haiti), Ho (Honduras), Gu (Guatemala), Bo (Bolivia), and RD (Dominican Republic)). They have obtained the worst records in Latin America. As can be seen Guatemala, our case study, is among the countries most deprived around 2016, and therefore, its performance looking at the year 2030 becomes more difficult. This information can serve as a basis for the agenda 2030 and periodic measurements regarding the degree of compliance of the SDG over time. As observed, Guatemala has only one green box, which focuses on SDG 13 for climate action.

This evaluation considers that the only countries in Latin America that have a comprehensive law on climate change are Ecuador, Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico; although when an analysis was made in April 2016, there were others with future law projects (Moraga and Meckievi 2016). For example, Peru has approved a law on the subject by 2018. Largely, the effort mentioned that gained a green observation for Guatemala was due to the



Development Paradigms Related to Peace, Justice, and Solid Institutions: A Case Study on Guatemala for Decision-Makers, Fig. 1 Sustainable Development Goal Dashboard for Latin America and the Caribbean. (Source: Organización de Naciones Unidas. (2017). *Los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/objetivos-de-desarrollo-sostenible/> and for the estimations of

Fig. 1, Sachs et al. (2017). According to this source, green shows achievements in the SDGs; red shows that there still are major challenges, while yellow and orange denote significant targets that should be accomplished ahead. The column at the extreme right only intends to highlight the worst situation (red) leaving the rest without further qualifications). The headings over the numbers refer to the SDGs

hydroelectric potential it has because of its geological characteristics. Recently, the National Electric Energy Commission (CNEE by its initials in Spanish) announced that a national record was achieved covering 83% of the total demand for power using renewable energy sources, 80.5% of which was hydroelectric (Bolaños 2017a).

There are plans in Guatemala that have specific targets for the period 2030–2032 (National Urban and Rural Development Council, CONADUR by its initials in Spanish and the General Planning Secretariat, SEGEPLAN

by its initials in Spanish 2014), Guatemala must recognize the identified weaknesses and face them in order to make a significant difference. This orientation redirects the analysis to the dimensions marked in red shown in Fig. 1. In fact, these weaknesses are shared with many developing countries. The ones detected will be based on these observations. These data along with their ratings refer to the SDG (indicators that served for the qualification and which determined the countries’ ranking will be placed in the extreme right column, mainly by the number of red observations appearing in Fig. 1).

Now, the most critical SDG for Guatemala will be analyzed in the following sections:

SDG 2: End hunger and SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (prevalence of undernourished population, prevalence of low height per age in children under 5 years of age, management of sustainable nitrogen, prevalence in maternal and neonatal mortality and diseases in general). The issue of malnutrition is highlighted in the possible targets to be accomplished in order to achieve these two goals; while noting the existing crises in the Guatemalan Social Security Institute (IGSS, by its initials in Spanish) and in the hospitals with the greatest affluence at present, which are in turn related to more institutional crises which have repercussions in health in general. This aspect will be discussed later when the need for solid institutions are analyzed. The latter is SDG 16, where health and well-being are associated with this important subject.

The problem of malnutrition has especially occupied the Guatemalan government in recent years and might be a global indicator of the situation. Half of malnourished children throughout Central America are found in Guatemala; and prevalence of this condition in children under 5 years of age reaches 49.8%, which is one of the highest in the world and Latin America. In 2012, a Zero Hunger Pact which specified a Plan and Course of Action that set specific goals for 2016 was signed; one of these targets was a 10% reduction of infant mortality and the fight against seasonal hunger in critical months (Gobierno de Guatemala or Government of Guatemala in English 2017). Moreover, the maximum authority of the National Food and Security Secretariat in Guatemala (SESAN by its initials in Spanish) – leading authority on this matter – has stated to at least one media source that after various years of “Zero Hunger” implementation, these actions had reached only 33% of the population in need (Muñoz Palala 2016). Another evidence that SDG 16, the need for solid institutions, is forgotten and contribute very little or deteriorate the situation.

SDG 7. Affordable and clean energy (access to non-fossil fuels and carbon emissions/electricity generated). Worldwide concern here revolves around access to electricity, percentage of the population that has use of alternative guaranteed fuel sources, and the CO₂ emissions derived from electricity generation. Available data show that access to electricity is deficient and reaches 85.5% of the population toward the year 2015; when the population that still relies on fossil fuels is added to this, it is found that 36.7% of the population still depends on this energy source, and therefore CO₂ emissions are relevant. These factors, when compared to the rest of countries worldwide, determine the red color in Fig. 1 (Sachs et al. 2017).

It is necessary to add in this section an aspect which is relevant for Guatemala. It refers to the fact that having no other sources of energy, a significant percentage of the population relies on the use of firewood. This has an impact in existing forests because wood from these forests is the primary energy source of many families. When this happens, the trees are no longer able to assimilate CO₂ (carbon dioxide). According to a study done by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, 93.6% of rural homes use firewood (Gálvez et al. 2012).

SDG 9. Infrastructure and industrialization (urbanization, access to internet and broadband, number of scientific and technical articles, and expenditure in research). This is one of the main sources of corruption in Guatemala. Illegal contributions from corporations to political parties and their relevant figures during elections are the most publicized issues. On that basis, links that later result in favoring those mentioned illicit donors with government contracts are established. In turn, these exchanges result in money laundering in the financial worlds. In addition, a trail of overvalued and non-finished projects is left behind. This situation anticipates an uncertain future, which in turn influences the SDG, and again it belongs more to SDG 16 that asks for peace, justice, and solid institutions that will be analyzed later.

The urbanization process which gives rise to high demands of infrastructure mainly

concentrates in Guatemala City. It is estimated that the capital city's metropolitan growth for the year 2020 will double the resident area that was enjoyed in 2006 (MARN 2017, p. 190). The municipalities surrounding this evolution are increasingly becoming territories where the population only comes and goes to sleep, and popularly, these urban agglomerations are called "dormitory cities." It is estimated that the generation of solid residues or waste in urban areas reached 54% of the total in urban areas, where the territory occupied by Guatemala City and its surroundings concentrates 47.4% of this waste (MARN 2017, p. 190). On the other hand, access to water by home residents becomes critical. Interviews done at this level discovered that only 73% of the homes that were asked answered that they had water daily, while the rest only had this public service 11–15 days in a month and even there were homes that had, during the same period, only 1–5 days (MARN 2017, p. 201).

The aforementioned situation related to corruption and lack of sound institutions, in turn, leads to discouragement in investment and delays in stimulating technological innovations in the new society that is envisioned with emphasis in knowledge. Add to this the lack of coordination of the private sector, government, civil society, and academia on these issues (Amaro 2018). Barely 27.1% of the population had access to internet, accompanied by a lower percentage of 10.1 out of 100 inhabitants subscribed to mobile broadband. Finally, the number of scientific articles from Guatemala that are published in relevant magazines and government spending as a percentage of gross domestic product in research and development did not reach 1% worldwide (Sachs et al. 2017).

SDG 10. Reduced inequalities (poverty, hunger, health, gender, access to clean energy, industrialization). The comparative figure that earned Guatemala the red color observed in Fig. 1 was based on the Gini coefficient (a measure that varies from 0 to 100). The Environmental Report of the State of Guatemala (MARN 2017) acknowledges based on global scale statistics that Guatemala had a Gini coefficient of 0.5524,

which ranks 14th among the most unequal countries in the world, a list which includes various African countries, Haiti, and Honduras. This has an impact on national and international migrations and social development in inequalities such as health and education, political instability, environmental neglect, and well-being of future generations.

For Guatemala, this SDG is complicated by the existence of a multiethnic and female population, who suffers a double handicap in these dimensions. The most unequal results appear most prominently in populations of Maya origin (indigenous population) and women. The groups that inhabit the Guatemalan territory can be classified as follows: Maya, Garífuna, Xinka, and Ladino. The Maya population is in turn constituted by over 20 linguistic communities, among which the Kaquchikel, Mam, Q'eqchi, and Quiche communities constitute the great majority of those who often do not even speak Spanish, the Guatemala official language. The census of the year 2002 – the last made in Guatemala – reported that 51% of the population was female (whose inequality indicators also reflect deficits) and 39.5% of the total population was indigenous (National Urban and Rural Development Council, CONADUR, by its initials in Spanish and the General Planning Secretariat, SEGEPLAN, by its initials in Spanish, 2014). The double identity of women who are also indigenous is reflected in maternal mortality; 70% of these deaths are found in this population (MSPAS/INE/CDC 2009).

SDG 14. Life below water (clean water, biodiversity and fisheries indicators) and SDG 15. Life on land (annual deforestation, impacts in species life). Regarding the marine issue, indicators developed expressly to measure this dimension point to Guatemala receiving a score of 94.2 in the Ocean Health Index (which varies from 0 to 100). The severity of the situation is being reflected in its proximity to the highest possible score. Regarding indexes in this dimension: clean water 33.1, presence of fishing 22.1 and percentage of the mentioned presence that is overexploited or collapsed 36.6. This analysis offered critical results. Guatemala, when

compared to other countries, obtained a red color evaluation in this dimension. According to these data, concerns for the life of related species should be extended to terrestrial life in critical areas. An index that indicated a red color list of endangered species obtained 0.7 out of 1. The annual change in the area considered forest reached 12.9%, which is evaluated as highly significant (Sachs et al. 2017). These indicators achieved critical state in this dimension and also resulted in the red color for this category that is confirmed by the national Ministry in charge (MARN 2017).

SDG 16. Peace, justice, and solid institutions (murder rate, percentage of the population that feels safe walking at night where they live, corruption perceptions index). The indicators mentioned in parenthesis determine the red alarm observed in the SDG as they are evaluated by the Report. The highest personalities that occupied the top posts of the past administration, which was elected at the end of 2011, are currently in preventive custody and subject to trial, most of them living in a military headquarter. After this event, another surprise came. Almost the whole cabinet of the administration that was elected before is also in the same situation, also charged with corruption practices.

An agreement with the United Nations was signed in 2007 through an entity called the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG by its initials in Spanish). This entity directly collaborates with government entities and operates within the national laws. This signed mandate specifies the following (CICIG 2007):

The CICIG was thus created as an independent international body, whose purpose is to support the Public Ministry, the National Civil Police and other State Institutions, in investigation of the crimes committed by members of illegal security bodies and clandestine security apparatuses, as well as in the general actions that lead to the dismantling of said groups. This, through support in investigation and criminal prosecution of a limited number of complex cases, as well as through other actions encompassed within its mandate, destined to strengthen Justice Sector institutions so that they can continue to pursue these illegal groups in the future. (CICIG Creation Agreement Section)

The result of these activities has extended over time, intensifying in recent years. Corruption networks that reach the highest level of the government have been detected, key institutions such as customs and the ministry and other institutions co-responsible for infrastructure have been involved, including the international and national private sector. The Odebrecht case, concerning a Brazilian corporation that has occupied media platforms and whose main executives are imprisoned in Brazil, has also been present in the country as well as in many other countries of Latin America. Insecurity and a ratio of 31.2 murders per every 100,000 inhabitants – one of the highest in the world – is added to what is mentioned above (Sachs et al. 2017).

The lack of stability in institutions, exacerbated by the current crisis in Guatemala, has already resulted in a decline of the international rating published by Standard & Poor's. This agency is a guide to financial institutions worldwide to assess the country's economic stability, especially with regard to external support and aid. The country has been downgraded from a "BB" grade to a "BB-". Marco Barceinas, Director and Analyst of this organization, gave the following responses to questions from a journalist (Bolaños 2017b):

How much did the political crisis that Guatemala faces in the midst of the S&P evaluation influence the decision?

It had significant influence. However, this new crisis is just a symptom of the institutional weakness of the country, which includes not only the Executive power, but also the Legislative and Judicial. . . **What actions led to this political instability?** The attempt to expel the head of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG – Ivan Velásquez; the approved reforms to the Penal Code which were subsequently rejected by Congress, (**Author's note:** he is referring to an attempt by a majority of Congress to invalidate the actions of the CICIG and the Public Ministry regarding the persons implicated in corruption processes identified, who are therefore subject to investigation and trial); the attempts to withdraw immunity of the President of the Republic, Jimmy Morales; the resignations from the State Cabinet; the lack of consensus within Congress on the approval of structural reforms; and the limited capacity of the government to accelerate their expenditure in investment, among others (page 7).

Strengthening its decision, S&P (2017) calculates that economic growth. . . :

...will continue to be insufficient to revert the current level of poverty and increase significantly the low GDP per capita, of US\$4,200 in 2016. The growth of remittances was double digits in 2016 and 2017, which compensates for additional stress in the economy derived from low investment on behalf of the public and private sectors. However, the robust flow of remittances might be temporary since they depend on the immigration policy of the United States.

International Crisis Tendencies and Their Effects on the SDG, Guatemala, and Other Countries

Two tendencies that might be considered among the most visible ones present today and how they influence the SDG will be analyzed here. These tendencies might be defined this way:

a) From the world of the cold war to a multipolar one. Bilateral tensions that could deviate programmed horizons can be detected. Concerns regarding the evolution of certain countries toward an adequate handling of nuclear weapons can be mentioned at this point. Iran and North Korea are some examples that have found a calling in limiting in one way or another these activities on behalf of relevant actors like the USA, China, and Russia. On the other hand, these limitations have been extended to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that has been declared “obsolete” due to their faults in financial responsibility by its European counterparts according to a USA public statement. Nevertheless, the organization has later continued its activities. In May 2017, however, according to the Agence France-Presse (2017a), explicit support for article 5 –which called for collective action from the signatories in defense of one of the partners – was avoided. This unilateral circumstances may not be permanent. Recent research shows that these one-sided policies may be constrained by public opinion (Reeves and Rogowski 2018). This uncertainty also contributes to unexpected events. Tensions and conflicts with significant military movements from former USSR countries, like Ukraine and modern-day Russia, are also noteworthy, causing the European Union and the USA to suspect attempts to recreate

the geopolitical influence Russia had during the Cold War.

There has been a series of unexpected trends, among which is the electoral victory in 2016 of the United States’ current administration. Some of the measures this administration has taken have affected cooperation and international trade and are subject of extraordinary attention by the media (Agence France Presse, Prensa Libre, October 30, 2017a, p. 20). On June 1, 2017, for example, the USA withdrew from the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21), on climate change which was celebrated in Paris in 2015, where it had achieved global consensus. This USA decision was accompanied with a withdrawal of a donation of US\$4 billion that had been promised by President Obama, only a few months before. On the other hand, it is the only country that has not adhered to the consensus reached at COP21 at present.

In addition the first measure of the new USA administration, in commercial matters was the withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, almost a week after the new administration took office. Similar tensions brought disagreements around the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), although finally Mexico and Canada reached a consensus on this matter. Finally, at the end of 2019, a trilateral agreement was reached. In addition to the above, the Islamic “Jihad” represented by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) which opposes peaceful Muslim tradition and the West must also be included. On the other hand, “socialism of the XXI century” in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia has opened tensions with the rest of Latin America and the USA, in addition to the forced migration from Cuba during many years. Recently, the government of Ecuador changed this stance. Adding to the volatile situation, the Bolivian government, that used to pursue such policies, has disappeared giving rise to a new situation in 2019 but new unexpected protests have erupted in Colombia and Chile.

It must be taken into account that according to the Global Climate Risk Index, created by United Nations University and an alliance of organizations of civil society (2014), among 171 countries, Guatemala was ranked 4th. among the

most vulnerable to natural disasters. Although this situation has changed, Guatemala continues to be ranked among several organizations, including the one mentioned, among the first ten countries most vulnerables in the world at present. It is therefore evident that this would allow a greater attraction of resources that would be limited by time and the uncertainty of these events. Anyhow, the Agenda 2030 would be compromised to some extent.

b) The benefits of the growth experienced by developed countries in recent years has been unequal; in the USA, for example, entire portions of the population are out of growing welfare, giving way to political projections with emphasis on nationalist protectionism which is aggravated by migrations from less developed countries. Europe is not an exception to this trend. In the USA, 1% of the richest people owned 17% of the income in 1988. In the last survey done in 2015, this value increased to 24%. The investigation also highlights that significant differences regarding education and networks of informal groups that might be avenues to social ascent have accentuated (Robb 2017). “Between 1987 and 2013, the number of billionaires per every 100 million adults in the world went from 5 to 30 and their participation in global went from 0.4 to 1.5%” (Piketty 2014, p. 477). Jeffrey Sachs (2017) says:

... in the United States in the last 30 years: the Gini Coefficient stands at 41.1, the second highest among the high-income economies, just behind Israel (42.8). There is general concern regarding the situation of the middle classes. This situation is clearly reflected in the political realm and in the decisions of the different states. (p. 13)

Recently, the World Economic Forum (WEF) published the Global Gender Gap Report 2017, which shed light on the aforementioned situation, pointing out that this dimension is far from diminishing in coming years. A comment on the report states that “. . . There is a notable absence of the major industrialized nations of the world, the so-called G20, within the top 10.” This situation suggests that economic power is not a necessary condition to reducing inequality. For example, the

breach detected would close within 168 years in North America and 102 years in Africa, at the current rate (WEF 2017, p. viii).

The data above offers only examples that have broader characteristics in sectors of the population that have been marginalized in recent years. It should not be forgotten that this population is the voter base for the new USA administration. It is also observed in several countries of Europe such as Germany and France new rightist political groupings opposed to migration from developing countries and showing an unknown electoral force at present. Due to the previous situation, the SDG can necessarily be threatened. There might be tensions surrounding external cooperation for the expenses that massive refugee populations – mainly from North Africa and Middle East countries, traveling to Europe on improvised boats – represent; they claim initial support coming from a situation of total poverty. The International Food Policy Research Institute based on the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO (2017, pp. 6 y 12 in Spanish), estimates that in 2015 there were 240 million international migrants in the world. On the other hand, 19 million people were displaced and 65 million people moved to other territories, either as internally displaced people or as refugees both because of conflicts. This situation intensifies when the USA makes the decision (on December 2017) to reject signed agreements on migration, arguing that said policies must respond to the national administration.

Prospects for the Future

Based on the evaluation of current trends and the uncertainties that have arisen in recent times, it is risky to make a prediction about the expected and unexpected trends that might arise if the situations described above worsen. However, what can be done is an “educated guess” as to what the short, medium, and long term would hold. Our first claim is that the “paradigm” – using Thomas Kuhn’s (1996) preferred term – for the future will be the SDG and it would be affected by these trends. The reasons for this realization are the following:

***The current validity of sustainable development as a planetary policy after more than 50 years of different international and national approaches, is the culmination of a long practice of trial and error which has culminated at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Therefore, short term action, outside the mainstream currents, might not be lasting.**

The issue of “development” as such is institutionalized in the planet after the Second World War. The Marshall Plan, programmed by the USA and created to face Europe’s reconstruction after the war, contributed to this. The inauguration and continuity of the United Nations System became a factor, apart from the great division between countries of different income, quality of life, favorable environmental factors, and projections of continuity for future generations. To make this recount, the analysis should begin from the so-called “First Decade of Development” – what the 10 years between 1960 and 1970 were called – as it was nominated by almost all the countries gathered in New York at the headquarters of the highest international organism that was already in place. This evolution is described by many academics and is collected in many documents and international meetings (Amaro 2012; Göpel 2016).

The meeting in Oslo of the Brundtland Commission in 1987 gathered these concerns. This elite group names and defines “sustainable” as an added last name for “development,” capturing the previous experience. This definition then calls for economic development but accompanied by a social or “human development” dimension and considering environmental factors, thinking of future generations in order to have an indefinite continuity and resilience over time. The argument expressed in this entry is that the awareness – which has been forged over so much time and that has confronted reality time and time again and that begun as an initial reflection during the 90s – has in itself a dynamics that tends to remain and even more to expand and disseminate to orient all research and actions in the future.

***Many programs of many countries (developed as well as underdeveloped ones) and sub-national governments will follow their course in the following years.**

It might be noted that throughout time many countries have modified their positions, and it will take time for them to change courses after advances made in many sustainable fronts. A recurrent tension over the last 20 years was holding developed countries accountable for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Following the “polluter pays” principle, they were responsible for financing the process of climate change mitigation and adaptation in order to face adverse effects of this phenomenon. In general, developing countries expected disbursements amounting to US\$100 billion mainly from developed countries, starting in 2020. This figure was based on a consensus reached in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2015 and follows the application of this principle in many European countries.

For example, following COP meetings, a group of countries formed the Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC by its initials in Spanish). Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru belong to this group. They have a combined commitment to reduce their GHG emissions by 20% to 45% by 2030. They also emphasize climate change mitigation and adaptation to its impacts. For example, Guatemala offered a reduction of approximately 11% as a goal, which would double if enough aid was received to support this goal. In addition, significant promises on behalf of Mexico and Brazil were made if there was sufficient consensus. These goals are being discussed at present.

The argument here is that continuity persists, in spite of withdrawal from the USA and similar forces in Europe. AILAC countries, for example, held a meeting in Lima, Peru, previous to COP23 (which was held in Bonn, Germany) in order to unify criteria. In addition, to the aforementioned meeting in Bonn, around 20 countries have committed to abandoning the use of coal, the greatest polluting fossil fuel. Among them Canada, the UK, Angola, Belgium, Costa Rica, Denmark, El Salvador, France, Italy, Luxembourg,

the Marshall Islands, Mexico, Holland, New Zealand, Portugal, and Switzerland can be found. These members have promised to rally at least 50 countries around these objectives (EFE 2017).

The same thing happened in a meeting, held in Vietnam, of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – rejected by the USA as well – in which almost simultaneously, eleven countries strengthen their ties. The partnership (Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam) continues their alliances. It is significant that a total of 44% of US exports head to these countries (Office of the United States in the Trans-Pacific Partnership 2018). There is the intention to attract the USA into the partnership once more, as was expressed during the last meeting. Routes regarding how to reach other agreements that are currently suspended have also been established (The Japan Times 2017a).

This alliance represents 40% of the value of global trade, including the USA which singularly excluded China before its withdrawal. The group has also expressed its desire for China to participate in the alliance in the future, which in turn reinforces the perception that this void, like others present at this stage, will be filled by other actors that are not necessarily allied to those withdrawals. The possible inclusion of China in the TPP does not exclude a similar mechanism known as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which has been promoting China – along with the help of other countries present in the TPP – as a possible alternative that represents half of the world's population, 30% of the gross world product (GWP), and close to a quarter of the world's exports (The Japan Times 2017b).

***The problems that have arisen internally in US territory, regarding the degree of adherence of subnational governments, to a national policy of rejection and withdrawal from national and transnational environmental objectives, have been mentioned. These tensions involve gray areas that require competent courts, to which the parties can appeal and that may become a long process of delays,**

prohibitions, and qualifications of illegality in specific attributions exceeded by the executive power or vice-versa.

A conservative guess would predict long battles that would allow greater flexibility. An argument cannot be ruled out that many of these mandates might lose their content and be validated by superior legal authorities. This situation that contributes to uncertainty, are the so-called Sanctuary Cities, which differ from the Executive's policies regarding migration and tend to protect illegal aliens. This situation also applies to the COP21 Agreements, in which any withdrawal from them would be valid 4 years after the party expressed its desire to withdraw. This means that for the case of the USA, where elections are to be held just before this time period is over, decisions taken in a former administration may be revoked by new elected incumbents. All these measures, and the meaning and extent they take, will surely affect the SDG and the 2030 Agenda.

***A greater lack of consensus is taking place in Congresses and Parliaments (in USA and Europe) may delay partial decisions or impede measures that contribute to greater development of less developed countries.** This is another uncertainty that hangs over the SDG. It concerns the growing nationalist wave, which often has historical origins but is also intensified due to sudden migrations taking place both in the USA and Europe. In the first case, countries like Mexico and those located in Central America, constitute a central axis due to the volume of migrations and commercial aid relationships that have been established. There has been considerable controversy regarding the number of migrants and undocumented immigrants measured by official sources in the USA. These data are difficult to obtain; therefore it must have some degree of lack of accuracy.

However, there is consensus, even among anti-immigration organizations, that the number of illegal immigrants is around 10 to 12 million depending on the year of measurement; in 2014, the last year recorded, the figure was 11.3 million. Then, what would be the amount of people per country? As expected, Mexico occupies the first

place with five million 990,000, followed by El Salvador with 631,000 and Guatemala with 499,000. India appears in fourth place with 392,000 and Honduras in fifth place with 349,000. All of South America amounts to 637,000 (Warren 2016, pp. 9–10; De Bastos 2017). For Guatemala, the Institute of Migration Policy, based in Washington, DC, indicates that in 2015 the figure was 928,000 people (Lesser and Batalova 2017), which implies that 53.7% of this last figure is illegal.

An example of what is mentioned above that can affect the SDG may be mentioned. Children that accompany migrants sometimes get detained at the border, which has already led to a decline in primary school enrollment in Guatemala; according to the Ministry of Education, there were 23,292 less students than the year before (Montepeque, November 17, 2017). As a consequence of the impact of these children, official aid under the “Plan for Prosperity” has been approved by US Congress. It benefits the less favored population of the so-called Northern Triangle (Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras).

US Congress has donated US \$209.4 million (National Competitiveness Program 2017) to Guatemala, which are also complemented with national funds; 51 municipalities are prioritized when addressing poverty. Threats of massive deportation therefore present a massive impact to the SDGs, and preparation to receive these deported populations should be anticipated. There is no doubt that a large part of the withdrawal of official development assistance (ODA) will suffer considerable decline. Withdrawal from the agreements reached during the COP21 meant mainly that the US\$4,000 million pledged by the Obama administration to the corresponding fund shall not be incorporated.

In the European case, limited centuries old nationalist tendencies react to recent migrations which are mostly from predominantly Muslim countries. However, the election of new governments in Holland, France, and Germany did not result in significant administration changes, which would alter previous commitments. Therefore the countries of the European

Union continue supporting the Agreements reached during the COP21 and also are ratifying the SDG, at UN meetings. Giddens (2010, pp. 223–227) states that organizations of the European Union have faced environmental and development issues since 1998, and by 2008, there were already percentages of target reductions of GHG emissions. There is the commitment to reduce emissions by at least 10% by 2020 on behalf of all countries. It is expected that those values will continue to increase; the effort varies by country. European countries as a whole continue to adhere to these commitments, despite some breakdowns.

For Guatemala, what is detailed above announces the worsening of a trend that is being observed. Public spending in health and education has diminished significantly in recent years. During 2010, 2.25% of the GDP was spent in healthcare, and in 2016 this figure decreased to 1.65%; in education this figure diminished from 3.19% to 3.03% during the same years; and only 2 months from ending the year 2017, the figure is currently at 2.37% (Contreras, November 27, 2017, p. 9). This also calls into question SDG compliance in these dimensions.

***Fears exist that other rival countries might fill voids in a multipolar world.**

This concern is present in many past alliances in which countries have held common positions in the Middle East, as is the case of Iran and North Korea, and the problems surrounding Crimea and Ukraine. The root of this fear lies in interpretations that Russia, after having broken the territorial pact of the Soviet Union, would like to revive its previous political influence. On the other hand, the rise of China in Asia, has left many countries behind that have not had sudden progress in recent years and that also have their base in a wide territory and population size, or that having reached a certain level of development in previous stages, have found it difficult to have long-term continuity in their achievements, like Japan.

Latin America is not immune to these tensions. Chinese investments and exports to South America are already an important component of many countries. A recent report made by

the Atlantic Council and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Avendaño et al. 2017) sheds light on a tendency for which there was little information. In the last 5 years before the report was drafted, the average annual investment of China in the area reached more than 10 billion dollars per year, mainly in countries with larger populations, like Brazil and Mexico. Likewise, there are talks to create infrastructure joining the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, across the whole Latin American continent with an important Chinese participation. This is repeated in Nicaragua, Central America, to create an infrastructure capable of competing with the Panama Canal. There is a significant Chinese investment in Honduras around a hydroelectric plant. Cuban, Chinese, and Russian presence were notable in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia. These possibilities complement the influence that these rival countries already had in Cuba since the 1960s although as it was mentioned Ecuador and Bolivia recently have followed a different path.

Conclusion

This analysis provided grounds that might be extrapolated to the whole world. The conclusions of each one of these objectives will also show the relationship it has to the SDG and related targets that having these examples in mind could help developing as well as developed countries to face the uncertainties created by the international scenario in each country. First the SDG 2 and 3, related to hunger, health, and well-being, were analyzed. Nutritional levels of the Guatemalan population require a renowned effort on behalf of public policy, as well as medical attention and provision of hospitals and health centers, with priority areas marked by the presence of Mayan people and attention to women. From these first dimensions, priority on SDG 16, related to the solidity of institutions, can be highlighted. It is necessary to attribute a large part of the weaknesses observed to failures of public attention both from behalf of the State, involving its judicial, legislative, and executive powers, and the Guatemalan Social Security Institute (IGSS),

both currently indicted and questioned regarding their dubious management of public resources.

SDG 7 is related to clean and accessible energy and constitutes a challenge for decision-makers because it is necessary to recognize that Guatemala, in terms of electricity generation from renewable sources, occupies a rather advanced position in the context of Latin America and the rest of the world. However, these challenges concern not only the public sector but also the private one. Still electricity is not universal in its access. On the other hand, there are serious obstacles for hydroelectric power expansion in the country and given the national potential in this field; the country may even export energy on a large scale to other Latin American countries, if these challenges are faced. These conflicts have reached the judicial powers, but their decisions have been characterized by delays and lack of understanding between the parties.

There are also strictly public situations such as contamination of lakes, rivers, and water sources in general that have reached critical levels like the presence of excessive waste in the Motagua River, which has forced action because it impacts the territory of a neighboring country: Honduras. On the other hand, contamination of Lake Amatitlán, close to the capital city, has also attracted tensions regarding the problem of SDG 16, since a million-dollar investment was made by a corporation whose offer was to clean the water pollutants. This in turn is being elucidated by the judicial organ and various officials accused of corruption, including the former Vice-President of the Republic, who is currently under preventive detention until a final judicial decision is reached.

SDG 9 aims to strengthen society's knowledge and education, mainly that which is capable of producing scientific and technical articles and could also make contributions in research and is strongly linked to aid cooperation and donations. This is absent in developing countries, and Guatemala is no exception. Primary and secondary education still suffer from significant deficits; and higher education has serious problems that are reflected in a greater emphasis in teaching and a notable absence of research (Amaro 2018). In the future it is not possible to visualize significant progress in this area.

Advances in education, enter the list of problems derived from SDG 10, which refers to the reduction of inequality, which traverses almost all the goals. For example, SDG 1 and 2 refer to “zero hunger” and “elimination of poverty.” Nevertheless, the effects of pollution and climate change (where at least 5 environmental SDG are directly mentioned), precarious health, education deficit, low employment, etc. have a direct relationship to the SDG 2 that calls for the elimination of poverty.

SDG 14 refers to strictly environmental goals that would seriously be affected by human activity and Guatemala is not free from it. The location where the Petén Department is located in the north of the country represents a third of Guatemalan territory with barely 3% of the population. Different groups, with different objectives, move to this territory. The first condition to prepare the land for crops is to remove the trees. Many families seek land due to the scarcity of it in areas with higher population density. The factors that affect inequality influence this migration. Finally, given the situation of Guatemala, which touches the dimension described in SDG 16, groups linked to human trafficking and drugs have established organized and territorial activities in Petén, taking advantage of its proximity to Mexico.

Suggestions for Decision-Makers

The “educated guesses” advanced necessarily highlight temporary dimensions that are necessary toward the future in order to formulate actions that allow the advancement of goals that have practically global consensus. However, the insertion of Guatemala requires limitations that adjust to its specific characteristics as a developing country, answering to its position in Central America and its current political and institutional context. The strategies, which arise from the circumstances analyzed and the limitations pointed out, could be stated as follows:

- (i) **Closing ranks with those who have intensified their activities both in the USA and in the rest of the world in the short, medium, and long term.**

- (ii) **Regarding SDG 16, which appears as a priority in the Guatemalan reality, a call should be made to strengthening institutions and avoid violence and confrontations. Particularly corruption practices should be stopped. It is necessary to address the calls to different government sectors and civil society for a social pact. In these possible accords, which could materialize in the medium and long term, the weaknesses in sustainable development stated previously and the international crisis that looms over its achievements should be considered.**

Cross-References

- ▶ [Climate Justice](#)
- ▶ [Governance and Regulation](#)
- ▶ [International Resistance Networks for Anti-Corruption: Multi-Stakeholder Mechanisms](#)
- ▶ [Leadership and Sustainable Development: Perspectives, Principles and Practices](#)
- ▶ [Peace Funding](#)
- ▶ [Performance Measurement of Governance, Peace and Justice](#)
- ▶ [Political Inclusion](#)
- ▶ [Re-contextualizing SDG Implementation under Political Instability and Growth of Populism](#)

Acknowledgment First, the author would like to thank Dr. Eduardo Suger, Ph.D, founder and current Rector of Universidad Galileo, protagonist of strategic initiatives, in the fields of sustainable development, renewable energy, and climate change, for the benefit of the development of the country. Special thanks should be extended to Eng. Daniella Suger and Dani Alvarez who made the translation possible to English of the first draft made in Spanish delivered at the Forum on Sustainable Development and International Crises at the Galileo University in October 2017. The author would also like to thank the support received from other authorities of Universidad Galileo, like the Vice-Rector, Dra. Mayra Roldan, as well as the technical and administrative staff that helped, Ing. Robert Guzmán, who is in charge of academic and managerial responsibilities in the Master in Public-Private Partnerships for Sustainable Development and the Doctorate in Sustainable Development and, finally, our Assistant, Sayra Gómez.

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