



The Economy of The Central American Common Market An Update

**Elizabeth P. Davis
Robert M. Finley**

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Elizabeth P. Davis is instructor, Department of Family Economics, Kansas State University and formerly research assistant, Department of Family Economics and Management, UMC; and Robert M. Finley is professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Missouri-Columbia.

The Economy of The Central American Common Market An Update

Central America is considered in this report to include only the five nations of the Central American Common Market (CACM): Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Taken together, these countries cover a geographic area only a little larger than the state of California. All are located on the isthmus joining Mexico to South America, and all except El Salvador have access to both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (El Salvador has no Caribbean coast).

Geographically, Panama and Belize (formerly British Honduras) are part of Central America. Both, however, have some unique political characteristics compared with their neighbors. Belize, though claimed by Guatemala, remains within the British Commonwealth. Panama, formerly a province of Colombia, is in a somewhat different position *vis-a-vis* the other Central American republics, because of the Canal. The Canal not only gives Panama strategic importance from a military point of view, but also an advantage over her neighbors in attracting commerce and industry. This was a basic reason why Panama was excluded from the Common Market, although bilateral trade agreements exist with some members.

Central America has been described as "an irregular mosaic of ecological conditions."¹ The rugged mountains of the Andean Cordillera run the length of the isthmus,

parallel to and near the Pacific Ocean. Waterways exist, but since their courses are so short and rapid, they are not often suitable for navigation.

Central America has three major climatic regions: the *tierra caliente* along the coasts; the *tierra templada* (3,000 to 6,000 feet altitude); and the *tierra fria* along the upper mountain slopes. The wide range of temperatures, rainfall, and soil conditions provide for a wide variety of crops including bananas and plantains; rice, cotton, and sugar; coffee; corn and beans; and some wheat. The population tends to be concentrated in the *tierra templada* regions, which are the most pleasant and healthful.

Population and Demography

When the Spanish arrived in Central America, the isthmus had more than one-third of the total population in the Western Hemisphere. The complex culture of the Mayas had spread throughout modern Guatemala, and into Honduras, and less advanced tribes were scattered throughout the rest of the area. Table 1 shows the wide variety of racial characteristics that Central America displays today: 80 percent of Costa Rica's population is of European descent, while the majority of Guatemalans are Indians. On the average, most Central Americans are mestizos (Indian-Caucasian).

The annual population growth rate of Central America averaged 3.4 percent in the years 1970 - 1975; and almost 47 percent of all Central Americans in 1970 were under 15 years of age (Tables 2 and 3). A rapidly increasing population with a large proportion of very young people has at least two consequences. First is a great need for housing, medical and education facilities that Central America cannot meet. Second is the increasing proportion of economically inactive minors dependent upon the relatively smaller segment of the economically active population.

Health

Malnutrition is a serious problem in Central America. According to the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP), Central Americans should consume from 2,000 to 2,500 calories a day including 50 to 70 grams of protein. Table 4 shows the daily intake of the low income rural populations. Table 5 shows the percentage deficit of calories and protein consumption of the same low income populations. Only in Costa Rica does an average diet come close to meeting the nutritional needs.

Such widespread malnourishment has serious consequences. People suffering from malnutrition are more susceptible to diseases. Undernourished children are more likely to be slow learners. Deficient diets also retard productivity of the labor force.

Health care in Central America is also inadequate. International standards require one doctor per 1,000 inhabitants, and four nurses and aides to each doctor. Table 6 shows the number of doctors, dentists and nurses per 10,000 inhabitants.

Housing

The housing situation in Central America, which has never been sufficient, deteriorated in the 1970s. This was due in part to the rapid population growth and in part to a series of natural disasters. An earthquake demolished Managua, Nicaragua in 1972. Hurricane Fifi struck Honduras in 1974. Another earthquake in early 1976, in Guatemala took an estimated 22,000 lives and an uncounted number of homes.

An estimated 40-50 percent of all housing in Central America is constructed of waste materials, with thatched roofs and dirt floors, and "half the homes in Central America lack potable water, toilets, sewage facilities, or plumbing of any sort."² Lodgings are too small for the number of people they must shelter; for example, 67 percent of the people in Nicaragua lived in overcrowded conditions in 1971.³

Education and Literacy

Educators in Central America fight an uphill battle. First, as previously noted, population statistics have shown a proportionately large number of children to educate. Second, the strained economic circumstances of most families force most children to start work at an early age. The problem of malnutrition and its relation to learning disabilities has already been mentioned. There is also the problem of language. Although Spanish is the official language of all five countries, Indian dialects are prevalent. In Guatemala, for example, 17 different Indian dialects are spoken.⁴

In rural areas, especially, the children find that the coursework has no apparent relevance to their daily lives and/or there are no facilities for education past the primary level. For instance, as late as the early 1960's in Honduras, only 12 percent of the schools offered training past the sixth grade and most of those were in the cities. All these factors contribute to a very high dropout rate among school age children (see Table 7). Illiteracy has increased in every Central American country but Costa Rica, where it has remained constant.⁵ The illiteracy rate is much higher in the rural than in the urban areas. In Nicaragua, for example, the likelihood of illiteracy is three times as great among rural dwellers compared with urbanites.

Among the few who choose vocational training, the majority study industrial arts rather than agricultural sciences (Table 8). This is ironic, considering that the agricultural sector is far more important to the economy of Central America than is the industrial sector.

A study of health, housing, and education suggests that the level of living is critical for approximately half of the Central American population. The annual cost of an adequate diet alone is \$130 to \$140 per person, but the average annual income in the lower strata only amounts to \$84 to \$165,⁶ which must cover not only food but all expenses. People in this segment of the Central American economy are living on the edge of mere subsistence.

The Economy of Central America: Agriculture.

The economy of Central America revolves around agriculture. Agriculture accounts for an average of 77 percent of all Central American exports, and employs around half of the area's labor force (Table 9). Since colonial days, the agricultural economy has divided into two sectors—the export sector and the food sector. The export sector, which produces commodities (e.g. coffee and bananas) traditionally associated with Central America, has thrived. On the other hand, the food sector, producing staple crops, has suffered serious neglect.

The neglect of the food sector stems in part from the structure of land holding in Central America. Nearly 77 percent of all farms are seven or less hectares in area (Table 10). These are the *minifundia*,⁷ which occupy only 10 percent of the arable land. Around 60 percent of the total area of Central America is agriculturally viable, with 33 percent in farms. It should be noted that about 38 percent of the arable land (23 percent of the total area) is considered marginal.⁸ Looking again at Table 10, one sees that 0.5 percent of the farmers control one-third of the available land. These are *latifundistas*.

The highly unequal distribution of land shown in Table 11 has some further important consequences. First, as one might expect, it contributes to a highly unequal distribution of income. The parallel between concentration of land and concentration of income is set forth in Table 12. The skewed income distribution means that the *minifundistas* generally have nothing left over to invest in their farms, and therefore are

generally unable to take advantage of innovations that might increase crop yields, even when they know about such innovations. Finally, if one accepts the singular premise that wealth is power, then one is forced to conclude that 77 percent of all Central American farmers are virtually without influence over the people and policies who shape their livelihood.

Viewed within the framework of the facts presented above, the dichotomy in Central American agriculture is easy to understand. The *latinfundistas* have access to both capital and expertise. They can apply the newest technology and hire the most knowledgeable managers. Naturally they choose to plant their land in high profit export crops rather than in corn and beans—the mainstays of the Central American diet. To put it simply, the *latinfundistas* have most of the advantages while the *minifundistas* have most of the disadvantages, including the diseconomies of size.

For the *minifundistas*, farming is not really a calculus of profit versus loss, but rather a question of raising enough food to feed a family. To make matters worse, there is very little in the way of infrastructure to help the *minifundistas*. Not only do they lack capital of their own with which to buy inputs like fertilizer or better tools, they are less able to borrow. Credit is generally available for large enterprises and large borrowers but the farmer who wants a relatively small loan to cover day-to-day expenses of his business is generally left begging.⁹ It should be noted that this situation is improving due to the introduction of special mortgage programs and the formation of savings and loan associations.¹⁰

Extension services are minimal in Central America. In Guatemala for example, extension reaches only 5 percent of the Spanish-speaking population and only 1 percent of those using Indian dialects.¹¹ The high rate of illiteracy naturally makes the extension agent's job more difficult and more expensive, but he and those he seeks to serve suffer from the fact that little government money and manpower have been devoted to improving staple crop farming. For example, basic research has concentrated on improving the yield of export crops, not corn and beans.¹²

The small farmers of Central America do not have access to current or carefully estimated market information. The "market" for most subsistence farmers in Central America is the village plaza where goods pass from farmer to housewife and craftsman to farmer on a personal basis. For instance, 50 percent of the population is not even in the money economy in Guatemala, the most industrialized of the five Central American nations.¹³

"Modern" markets likely will not develop soon in Central America. The region lacks transportation and storage facilities and there is no uniform system of price supports to encourage the production of staples over and above the family's needs. There is no one river or network of rivers serving all of Central America. Generally speaking, the railways were built to ship export crops from plantation to port. There are not enough trunk and feeder roads leading to the main highways, and only a few truckers. (In Guatemala, for instance, of the 100 truckers operating in 1969, most owned but one truck.)¹⁴

Storage and drying facilities are woefully inadequate, especially at the local level. For example, some years ago, the World Bank estimated that between 20 and 40 percent of Nicaragua's total agricultural output was lost to spoilage and insect damage.¹⁵ In El Salvador during the 1971-72 year, around 600,000 metric tons of grain were produced but storage capacity, both public and private, equalled only 100,000 metric tons.¹⁶ Without proper storage facilities and a regional system of price supports, regional marketing policies cannot be implemented. Here again, development is slowed because funds are lacking, and funds are lacking because agriculture is given such low priority in the national budget.

The Central American Economy: Industry

Industrial development has generated more interest among Central American policy-makers than has agriculture, although it is currently far less important to the area's economy. Table 13 shows the structure of the regional GNP by economic sector, but one must remember when looking at these figures that agricultural industries make up roughly half of the secondary sector.¹⁷ Nonetheless, manufacturing and industry have grown faster than agriculture, due in a large measure to the creation of the Central American Common Market (CACM). Table 14 shows the rate of growth of GNP.

The CACM began as a customs union; that is, 97.5 percent of the goods traded among the five members fell under the free trade area, and a common external tariff on goods from nonmember countries was inaugurated.¹⁸ Certainly the customs union promoted commerce among the CACM members, but each of the five nations, being heavily dependent on import/export duties for revenue, lost income precisely at a time when expenses were rising.¹⁹

For a time the dramatic increase in intra-regional trade (see Tables 15-19) and the growth rate in the secondary sector were cited as proof of the CACM's success. However, the figures masked some serious problems.

First, there was a lack of "balanced development." Tables 20 and 21 show that in 1960, when the treaty establishing the CACM was signed, Guatemala was by far the most industrialized member. Unfortunately, those countries that already had a fair measure of industry tended to attract still more industry, to the disgruntlement of their less favored neighbors. Thus, by the end of the decade, it seemed that the CACM did the most for the members who least needed industrial development. A scheme to equalize the distribution of industry among the members was signed in September 1966, but it has had little meaning because any foreign company wishing to locate in Central America would obviously prefer to deal with just one government rather than a planning committee representing all five governments.

Secondly, many industries that have located in Central America are mainly of the assembly type. The Nicaraguan chemical industry is a good example. Only the final mixing and/or bottling of insecticides, soaps and paints are done in Nicaragua; preliminary processing of raw materials is done outside Central America. Consequently, 86 percent of the raw materials used in the industry are imported, and of the final market value, only 36 percent is added by Nicaraguan inputs.²⁰

Thirdly, most Central American industries produce consumer goods as opposed to capital goods. The continued growth of the consumer goods industry requires the emergence of a large middle class. Considering the skewed income distribution of the area and factors hampering development in the agricultural sector, development of a broad market for consumer items appears unlikely. Data in Table 21 serve to illustrate this third point more clearly. By far the majority of Central American industry falls into the "traditional" category: foodstuffs, textiles, footwear and clothing.²¹ Note that all these industries depend on the agricultural sector for their raw materials.

Before leaving the subject of Central American industrialization, it is necessary to ask if the CACM has created the kind of economies of size that encourage entrepreneurs to expand their facilities and hire additional labor. To judge by Table 22, the answer is "apparently not." Large firms (with over 100 production workers) account for less than 10 percent of all firms in Central America, although they have a large share of the total production.

The relative predominance of small-scale firms also indicates that the industrial sector in Central America has not grown nearly enough to absorb the unemployment and under-employment in the agricultural sector. Some agricultural economists have held

that agriculture is over-endowed with labor everywhere, in industrialized as well as non-industrialized nations, and that national policy should encourage agricultural workers to join industry. Other economists disagree. In the first place, under-employment of labor may not hold true for all crops throughout Central America; for example, an increase in the labor input can increase output (gross income) of some crops by a significant amount. Secondly, the social costs of trying to transfer labor away from agriculture may be prohibitive, since Central America is far from being sufficiently industrialized to absorb the labor thus displaced.²²

Central American Economy: Foreign Trade

Tables 15 through 19 in the preceding section show the structure of Central American trade over the past 14 or 15 years. The inauguration of the CACM led to a dramatic rise in the value of intra-regional trade, and a corresponding percentage drop in imports from developed countries. Table 23 shows some of the major goods traded among common market members.

Despite the increase in intra-regional trade, the United States remains the principal trading partner for each of the Central American nations. The bulk of U.S. *imports* from Central America are agricultural (Table 24); the bulk of U.S. *exports* to the region are industrial goods (Table 25). A breakdown of agricultural commodities that the U.S. imports from Central America is presented in Table 26.

Despite the export orientation of Central America's economy, every CACM member but Guatemala showed a net trade deficit in 1973 (Table 27). Trade deficits have been the rule rather than the exception for the past several years; indeed, balance-of-payments crises contributed to the dissolution of the CACM following the so-called "Soccer War" of 1969-70. It becomes obvious that, despite its search for economic autonomy, Central America remains as dependent on the world market for its major export crops now as it was when the CACM was established in 1960. In fact, some Latin Americans see the CACM as a method by developed nations (specifically the United States) to control and profit from the industrialization of the area. There are understandable fears by some Central Americans that foreign capital means foreign domination. To ask if these fears have any empirical basis is almost beside the point; throughout history men have based their actions on what they *thought* to be true, rather than on what *was* true.

Central America: Planning for the Future

The economic future of Central America is clouded and complex. Too many people must compete for too few resources, and where resources do exist they are so unequally distributed that a few individuals get very rich and the masses remain at a subsistence level. Central American nations share the problems of other developing nations: a burgeoning population; malnutrition and illiteracy (which lower the potential of human capital); an agrarian structure that inhibits economic growth, and the lack of capital that contributes to the lack of infrastructure.

For some years, many economists thought that industrialization was the key to economic growth. Britain set a historical precedent as a small nation that made itself great through trade and manufacturing. Japan, following its defeat in World War II, set another such example with amazing rapidity—and without the benefit of a Commonwealth. It therefore seemed that industrialization might be the golden antidote to poverty. Unfortunately, as members of the CACM have illustrated, one cannot graft industrialization onto an agrarian economy.

One might suggest that a nation must have a certain balance in its economic structure before it can successfully industrialize, and that it must have a wide and fairly even distribution of purchasing power. Meeting the second requirement may be the fundamental economic problem of Central America, or of any developing region.

One might argue that Central America's eagerness for industrialization has abated. The Common Market benefited the industrial sector of the regional economy far more than the agricultural sector. One might suggest that by the time the "Soccer War" broke out in 1969, Central America had already industrialized as much as it could, that the CACM had served its immediate purpose, and that the war merely provided an excuse to dissolve (in fact, if not by law) an organization that was no longer needed. In all events, although the Secretariat of the CACM (SIECA) continues to function, and bilateral trade treaties among the five nations exist, the Market itself—as an instrument of trade—is in serious trouble.

If in fact the policy makers of Central America are turning away from industrialization as a solution to their economic difficulties, then surely they must turn towards agriculture. However, the transformation of subsistence agriculture into a highly productive agriculture is a riddle which begs answers.

An often mentioned step forward in Central America would be the redistribution of land: *latifundias* subdivided; *minifundias* joined into units of an economic size; and idle land put to use. Even were the influential *latifundistas* not opposed to such a plan, other considerations might make legislators hesitate. Should the export plantations, sources of precious foreign exchange, be divided up if they are being operated efficiently? If the *minifundias* are re-grouped, some *minifundistas* must inevitably be dispossessed. What happens to them, in an area that already suffers a labor surplus? Should land now planted to export crops be planted to staples, despite the loss in national revenue? What is the best way to encourage the production of staples and yet keep food prices low?

One should remember that these questions plague developed as well as emerging nations. The Common Agricultural Plan (CAP), inaugurated by the European Economic Community in 1962, sought to insure "parity for farmers"; that is, it sought to bring the incomes of Europeans engaged in agriculture in line with the incomes of those engaged in industry. After years of unmanageable surpluses and increasing program costs, the Common Agricultural Plan was reformulated to promote the consolidation of small farms, the retraining of young people displaced by such consolidation, and the pensioning-off of older farmers. The new plan sounds remarkably like plans suggested for Central America. Even in Western Europe, however, no one expects economic and social changes sought by the new CAP to come about easily. Therefore, how much more difficult must it be to achieve similar changes in Central America?

TABLE 1: Racial Composition of Central America (percentages)*

Country	Mestizo	Indian	European	Negro
Costa Rica	17	1	80	2
El Salvador	78	11	11	< 1
Guatemala	35	60	5	< 1
Honduras	86	10	2	2
Nicaragua	60	5	17	9
Average for Central America	55	17	23	3

SOURCE: Berry, Brian J. L., Conkling, Edgar C. and Ray, Michael D. *The Geography of Economic Systems*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall 1976, p. 361.

*figures may not total 100 due to rounding.

TABLE 2: Area, Population, Rate of Population Growth, Population Density,
Rural/Urban Distribution and Literacy Rate, Central America

	<i>Costa Rica</i>	<i>El Salvador</i>	<i>Guatemala</i>	<i>Honduras</i>	<i>Nicaragua</i>	<i>Central America</i>
Area in sq. km.	50,900	20,935	108,859	112,088	118,358	411,170
Area as percent of total Central American area	12.4	5.1	26.5	27.3	28.8	100.0
Estimated population in 1970 (1,000's)	1,798	3,441	5,179	2,583	2,202	15,203
Population as percent of total Central American population	11.8	22.6	34.1	17.0	14.5	100.0
Population density (persons per sq. km.)	35.3	165.4	47.7	23.0	17.1	57.7
Average rate of population growth in percent (1970-75)	3.8	3.5	2.9	3.5	3.3	3.4
Rural population as percent of total	59.4	60.5	66.4	62.5	52.3	60.22
Urban population as percent of total	40.6	39.5	33.6	37.5	47.6	39.76
Literate population as percent of the total population aged 15 years and older	79.3	38.3	29.4	35.2	38.4	44.1

SOURCES: Kenneth Ruddle and Donald Odermann, eds., *Statistical Abstract of Latin America, 1971*, (Los Angeles: University of California, 1972), p. 192.

Organización de los Estados Americanos, *América en Cifras, 1974: Situación Demográfica*, (Washington, D.C.: Secretaría General de las Organizaciones de los Estados Americanos, 1974), p. 3.

Organización de los Estados Americanos, *Boletín Estadístico* 118 (abril 1975) pp. 18-19.

**TABLE 3: Structure of Population by Three Age Groups
(percentages), Central America**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Years</i>	<i>Age Groups</i>		
		<i>Less than 15 years</i>	<i>15-64 years</i>	<i>65 years and over</i>
Costa Rica	1940	41.7	55.7	2.6
	1960	47.4	29.5	3.1
	1970	47.9	48.9	3.2
El Salvador	1940	40.5	56.8	2.7
	1960	45.4	51.4	3.2
	1970	47.1	49.9	3.0
Guatemala	1940	40.9	56.6	2.5
	1960	46.1	51.1	2.8
	1970	45.7	51.3	3.0
Honduras	1940	41.0	56.2	2.8
	1960	47.4	50.3	2.3
	1970	46.7	50.9	2.4
Nicaragua	1940	42.8	54.5	2.7
	1960	46.6	50.2	3.2
	1970	47.1	49.8	3.1

SOURCE: Murphy, p. 16a.

**TABLE 4: Consumption of Calories and Protein
by Low Income Population, Central America:
(50 percent of the agricultural population - 1970)**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Daily Intake Per Person</i>	
	<i>Calories</i>	<i>Protein (grams)</i>
Costa Rica	2008	48
El Salvador	1318	30
Guatemala	1323	31
Honduras	1447	34
Nicaragua	1726	47

SOURCE: Murphy, p. 27.

**TABLE 5: Percentage of Deficiency of Consumption of Calories and Protein
by Low Income Population, Central America**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Calories</i>	<i>Protein (grams)</i>
Costa Rica	20	30
El Salvador	47	60
Guatemala	47	55
Honduras	42	51
Nicaragua	31	33

SOURCE: Murphy, p. 26.

**TABLE 6: Principal Health Personnel Resources
by Country, Central America**

Country	Years	Doctors	Dentists	Nurses
		(Rates per 10,000 Inhabitants)		
Costa Rica	1960	3.7	1.1	4.5
	1969	5.4	1.4	5.6
El Salvador	1960	1.9	0.5	1.5
	1969	2.6	0.9	2.8
Guatemala	1960	1.4	0.3	1.6
	1969	2.0	0.5	1.5
Honduras	1960	0.7	0.1	0.4
	1969	0.5	0.6	1.2
Nicaragua	1960	3.5	0.7	1.3
	1969	4.6	0.5	2.1

SOURCE: Murphy, p. 32.

**TABLE 7: Rates of School Retention* by Levels of Schooling
in Selected Years, Central America**

Country	Primary School		High School		University	
	1960	1969	1959	1969	1958	1968
Costa Rica	78.3	90.0	7.4	27.8	3.8	10.4
El Salvador	39.8	73.8	9.7	19.7**	1.1	2.0
Guatemala	37.8	46.9	7.7	9.0	1.3	3.5
Honduras	50.6	72.0	6.2	11.3***	0.9	2.0
Nicaragua	45.6	60.8	8.5	16.1	0.9	4.6
Central America	37.1	64.5	—	—	—	—

*Percentage of school age population at each level of schooling which had graduated in the respective years.

**1963 data

***1970 data

SOURCE: Murphy, p. 38b.

TABLE 8: Graduates from the Industrial and Agricultural Schools, Central America

<i>Country</i>	<i>1962</i>	<i>1965</i>	<i>1970</i>	<i>1975</i>
Costa Rica	1,264	3,111	5,584	11,090
Industrial	1,008	2,103	3,858	8,136
Agricultural	256	1,008	1,726	2,954
El Salvador	246	401	809	1,568
Industrial	129	239	437	861
Agricultural	117	162	372	707
Guatemala	393	641	1,731	4,452
Industrial	233	481	1,351	3,591
Agricultural	160	160	380	861
Honduras	346	368	851	1,662
Industrial	241	232	672	1,411
Agricultural	105	136	179	251
Nicaragua	584	1,019	1,791	3,613
Industrial	461	891	1,083	1,742
Agricultural	123	128	708	1,871
Central America	2,833	3,638	13,425	25,353
Industrial	2,072	2,520	9,902	18,540
Agricultural	761	1,118	3,923	6,813

SOURCE: Murphy, p. 43.

TABLE 9: Selected Features of Central American Agriculture in the 1970's

	<i>Costa Rica</i>	<i>El Salvador</i>	<i>Guatemala</i>	<i>Honduras</i>	<i>Nicaragua</i>	<i>Central America</i>
Area in farms as a percent of total area (1970)	54.0	82.6	34.4	62.1	30.1	52.6
Agriculture as a percent of GNP (1970)	26.0	27.0	25.0	26.0	26.0	27.0
Agricultural exports as a percent of total exports (1972)	79.0	70.0	74.0	82.0	81.0	77.0
Average annual growth rates as a percent of agricultural production (1972)		6.1	4.0	4.2	3.1	4.5
Low strata* as a percent of total agricultural population (1970)	59.2	84.1	81.5	59.4	53.8	67.6
Average annual per capita income of the lower strata	\$165.00		\$84.00 to \$95.00		\$113.00	\$106.00 to \$113.00
Agricultural workers as percent of total labor force	45.0	46.0	63.0	65.0	55.0	54.8

*Landless workers and *minifundistas*

SOURCES: Murphy, p. 28 and p. 66.

Elizabeth P. Davis, "Retrospect on the Central American Common Market," (Unpublished M.S. thesis, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1976) p. 38.

TABLE 10: Land Holding Structure, Central America

<i>Size</i>	<i>Percentage of Farms</i>	<i>Percentage Land Area</i>
Less than 0.7 hectares	22.4	0.8
0.7 to 7 hectares	54.2	9.2
7 to 35 hectares	17.1	18.3
35 to 350 hectares	5.8	38.5
More than 350 hectares	0.5	33.2

SOURCE: Murphy, p. 11.

TABLE 11: Number and Area of Subfamily and Multifamily Farms

	<i>Subfamily (Minifundia)</i>		<i>Multifamily (Latifundia)</i>	
	<i>Number of Farms</i>	<i>Land Area</i>	<i>Number of Farms</i>	<i>Land Area</i>
	<i>(percent)</i>		<i>(percent)</i>	
Costa Rica	43.2	2.9	5.4	60.3
El Salvador	91.4	21.9	0.5	37.7
Guatemala	87.4	18.7	0.3	36.0
Honduras	67.5	12.4	0.2	38.4
Nicaragua	50.9	3.5	4.9	58.8

SOURCE: Murphy, p. 10.

TABLE 12: Coefficients of Concentration of Agricultural Income and Concentration of Land in Central America, 1970*

<i>Country</i>	<i>Agricultural Income</i>	<i>Land</i>
Costa Rica	0.62	0.79
El Salvador	0.68	0.85
Guatemala	0.66	0.81
Honduras	0.56	0.79
Nicaragua	0.46	0.69
Central America	0.59	0.85

*These are indices measuring the relationship between the area defined by a Lorenz curve and a line 45 degrees from the origin and the area of the triangle under the 45 degrees line. The formula used was:

$$r = 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n f_i (g_i - 1 + g_i)}{10000}$$

where r = the coefficient of concentration

n = the number of income categories

f_i = the percentage of population in each income category over the total

g_i = the accumulated income percentages

SOURCE: Murphy, p. 67.

TABLE 13: Structure (percent) of the GNP by Sectors of Economic Activity, in Central America, 1960 - 1970

Country	Primary Sector ¹			Secondary Sector ²			Tertiary Sector ³		
	1960	1965	1970	1960	1965	1970	1960	1965	1970
Costa Rica	32	26	26	24	28	30	44	45	44
El Salvador	32	28	27	24	27	29	44	45	44
Guatemala	28	27	25	20	21	24	52	52	51
Honduras	37	39	26	26	26	29	37	30	35
Nicaragua	28	30	26	23	26	32	46	44	47
Central America	30	29	27	22	25	28	47	46	45

Note: Because of rounding, totals may not equal 100

¹Agriculture (crops and livestock)

²Mines and quarries, industry, construction, electricity, gas and water, transportation

³Commerce, banks and insurance, rental property, public administration, other services

SOURCE: Murphy, p. 48.

TABLE 14: Average Annual Growth Rate of GDP at Constant Prices by Type of Economic Activity, Central America*

Country	Period	Gross Domestic Product			Industrial Activity	
		Total	Per Capita	Agriculture	Total	Manufacturing Industries
El Salvador	1960-1968	6.6	2.8	3.0	10.5	10.3
Guatemala	1960-1970	3.8	0.6	4.1	8.5	8.4
Honduras	1960-1969	5.5	2.1	2.0	8.3	7.9
Nicaragua	1960-1968	7.6	4.0	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Panama	1960-1969	7.8	4.4	6.1	11.1	11.3

*Data for Costa Rica not available.

SOURCE: Kenneth Ruddle and Donald Odermann, ed., *Statistical Abstract of Latin America, 1971* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1972), p. 358.

TABLE 15: Exports and Imports for Costa Rica in Selected Years*

	1960	1965	1970	1974
Exports				
Total Direction of Trade**	87.8	111.9	226.8	431.4
to Developed Countries	81.4	88.8	165.5	294.6
to U.S.A.	48.1	56.4	95.3	135.3
to Latin America	4.8	22.3	53.9	127.5
to CACM		18.3	46.1	104.4
Costa Rica	—	—	—	—
El Salvador	0.6	4.7	10.5	25.0
Guatemala	0.8	4.3	11.1	30.2
Honduras	N.A.	3.0	11.7	9.6
Nicaragua	1.0	6.3	12.9	39.5
to Panama	1.1	1.9	6.8	17.3
Imports				
Total Direction of Trade	109.9	111.9	315.5	715.6
to Developed Countries	96.7	88.8	220.2	472.3
to U.S.A.	51.7	56.4	110.3	456.3
to Latin America	9.5	22.3	90.0	215.7
to CACM	3.7	18.3	76.6	114.0
Costa Rica	—	—	—	—
El Salvador	1.0	4.7	21.5	33.1
Guatemala	0.6	4.3	27.1	40.4
Honduras	N.A.	3.0	1.6	7.7
to Panama	1.2	1.9	3.4	9.7

TABLE 16: Exports and Imports for El Salvador in Selected Years*

	1960	1965	1970	1973
Exports				
Total DOT	116.7	188.4	228.4	358.9
to Developed Countries	103.1	137.3	146.9	227.6
to U.S.A.	41.0	47.0	48.9	119.2
to Latin America	12.6	45.6	75.0	117.8
to CACM	12.3	45.3	73.6	113.2
Costa Rica	0.8	4.7	19.5	22.8
El Salvador	—	—	—	—
Guatemala	6.1	20.3	39.7	64.4
Honduras	4.0	14.1	14.4	N.A.
Nicaragua	1.4	6.2	N.A.	26.0
to Panama	0.2	0.3	0.8	3.3
Imports				
Total DOT	122.2	201.0	213.5	371.0
to Developed Countries	102.4	128.8	139.1	235.9
to U.S.A.	52.5	66.5	63.3	231.9
to Latin America	18.7	57.7	72.5	132.4
to CACM	13.5	42.5	60.6	92.4
Costa Rica	0.6	5.1	11.2	17.4
El Salvador	—	—	—	—
Guatemala	5.2	18.5	40.6	59.4
Honduras	6.3	15.7	N.A.	N.A.
Nicaragua	1.4	3.2	8.8	15.6
to Panama	1.1	3.0	4.2	8.0

*In Millions of U.S. Dollars

N.A. - information not available

**Hereafter referred to as DOT

Totals may not add due to rounding

SOURCE: International Monetary Fund, *Direction of Trade*, (Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 1960 through 1974).

TABLE 17: Exports and Imports for Guatemala in Selected Years*

	1960	1965	1970	1974 (Jan. - Dec.)
Exports				
Total DOT	112.8	185.9	290.2	572.6
to Developed Countries	105.8	144.8	178.6	366.8
to U. S. A.	62.7	68.2	82.6	188.3
to Latin America	6.0	35.9	106.2	179.7
to CACM	4.8	37.7	102.4	163.2
to Costa Rica	N.A.	4.3	20.1	36.6
El Salvador	4.4	19.6	38.8	65.2
Guatemala	—	—	—	—
Honduras	0.4	6.6	28.9	21.3
Nicaragua	N.A.	5.3	14.5	40.1
to Panama	N.A.	N.A.	1.7	4.2
Imports				
Total DOT	138.1	229.7	284.2	700.5
to Developed Countries	114.5	178.3	202.1	447.4
to U. S. A.	67.5	96.7	100.4	434.4
to Latin America	12.8	45.3	78.4	239.5
to CACM	6.8	32.6	65.0	122.0
Costa Rica	N.A.	3.9	11.2	22.4
El Salvador	5.9	23.5	39.5	72.5
Guatemala	—	—	—	—
Honduras	0.9	3.8	7.1	7.6
Nicaragua	N.A.	1.4	7.2	29.5
to Panama	N.A.	N.A.	0.5	0.8

TABLE 18: Exports and Imports for Honduras in Selected Years*

	1960	1965	1970	1973
Exports				
Total DOT	64.3	127.3	171.9	266.1
to Developed Countries	53.8	101.3	136.1	249.9
to U. S. A.	43.1	74.2	93.0	149.6
to Latin America	12.9	21.6	26.2	10.3
to CACM	8.5	21.1	18.9	10.3
Costa Rica	N.A.	1.5	7.2	2.7
El Salvador	6.5	13.2	N.A.	N.A.
Guatemala	2.0	5.2	7.5	1.2
Honduras	—	—	—	—
Nicaragua	N.A.	1.2	4.2	6.5
to Panama	N.A.	N.A.	2.0	0.8
Imports				
Total DOT	72.4	122.9	220.7	211.9
to Developed Countries	58.9	85.9	145.5	184.9
to U. S. A.	40.1	57.5	91.5	112.9
to Latin America	7.4	28.3	70.7	23.9
to CACM	5.2	25.6	54.9	30.3
Costa Rica	N.A.	3.1	12.4	6.9
El Salvador	4.1	12.3	N.A.	N.A.
Guatemala	1.1	8.1	28.5	10.3
Honduras	—	—	—	—
Nicaragua	N.A.	2.1	14.0	13.0
to Panama	N.A.	N.A.	0.8	0.2

*In Millions of U.S. Dollars

N.A. - information not available

SOURCE: International Monetary Fund, *Direction of Trade*, (Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 1960 through 1974).

TABLE 19: Exports and Imports for Nicaragua in Selected Years*

	1960	1965	1970	1974 (Jan. - Nov.)
Exports				
Total DOT	67.7	149.0	N.A.	354.5
to Developed Countries	56.9	127.9	N.A.	215.0
to U.S.A.	32.2	37.5	N.A.	62.8
to Latin America	3.6	12.9	N.A.	93.5
to CACM	2.3	12.4	N.A.	84.9
Costa Rica	0.9	4.2	N.A.	31.6
El Salvador	1.3	3.9	N.A.	22.7
Guatemala	0.1	1.7	N.A.	20.5
Honduras	0.1	2.6	N.A.	10.0
Nicaragua	—	—	—	—
to Panama	0.1	0.3	N.A.	2.0
Imports				
Total DOT	71.8	160.5	N.A.	496.7
to Developed Countries	58.5	128.5	N.A.	298.7
to U.S.A.	37.8	75.6	N.A.	159.1
to Latin America	8.1	33.7	N.A.	187.7
to CACM	2.7	21.4	N.A.	120.3
Costa Rica	0.4	6.9	N.A.	38.3
El Salvador	1.7	6.7	N.A.	34.3
Guatemala	0.5	6.5	N.A.	37.7
Honduras	0.1	1.3	N.A.	10.1
Nicaragua	—	—	—	—
to Panama	2.4	4.4	N.A.	5.5

*In Millions of U.S. Dollars

N.A. - information not available

SOURCE: International Monetary Fund, *Direction of Trade*, (Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 1960 through 1974).

TABLE 20: Gross National Product and Participation of Manufacturing in
Gross National Product, Central America 1960 - 1970

	(thousands of U.S. dollars)			
	<i>1960 GNP</i>	<i>Estimated GNP associated with manufacturing, 1960</i>	<i>1970 GNP</i>	<i>Estimated GNP associated with manufacturing, 1970</i>
Costa Rica	480.9	67.5	845.4	160.8
El Salvador	568.0	82.7	981.8	180.4
Guatemala	1,043.6	133.1	1,787.0	277.9
Honduras	345.5	43.0	561.5	77.3
Nicaragua	359.0	43.3	714.7	142.3
Central America	2,797.0	369.6	4,890.4	838.7
		<i>Percentage Structure</i>		
Costa Rica	18.0	18.0	17.0	19.0
El Salvador	20.0	22.0	20.0	22.0
Guatemala	37.0	36.0	36.0	33.0
Honduras	12.0	12.0	11.0	9.0
Nicaragua	13.0	12.0	16.0	17.0
Central America	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: Murphy, p. 88.

TABLE 21: Structure (percent) of Industrial Sector,
Central America, 1960 and 1970

Country	Traditional		Type of Industry Intermediate		Heavy	
	1960	1970	1960	1970	1960	1970
Costa Rica	83.3	68.7	10.5	20.3	6.2	11.0
El Salvador	87.5	74.6	8.3	18.5	4.2	6.9
Guatemala	88.4	81.3	8.9	10.8	2.7	7.9
Honduras	86.0	83.3	7.7	10.7	6.3	6.0
Nicaragua	84.3	72.0	13.7	22.0	2.0	6.0
Central America	86.6	76.2	9.5	16.0	3.9	7.8

SOURCE: Enrique Tellez y Ruiz, "Influence of the Central American Common Market on the Marketing System of Industrial Products in Central America," (unpublished paper, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1976), p. 7.

TABLE 22: Structure of Industrial Sector According to
Firm Sizes, Central America 1968¹
(percentages)

Size**	Costa Rica	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
Small	70.1	72.8	72.9	70.4
Medium	22.5	19.1	19.7	20.0
Large	7.4	8.1	7.4	9.6
Participation in Total Production				
Small	20.0	13.4	16.6	19.4
Medium	40.7	37.5	47.8	30.8
Large	30.3	49.1	35.6	49.8

*Does not include El Salvador

**Small firm: 5 to 29 production workers

Medium firm: 30 to 99 production workers

Large firm: more than 100 production workers

SOURCE: Enrique Tellez y Ruiz, "Influence of the Central American Common Market on the Marketing System of Industrial Products in Central America," (unpublished paper, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1976,) p. 6.

TABLE 23: Major Goods* Traded Among CACM Members, 1971 (1,000's of U.S. Dollars)

	1	2	3	4
	<i>Total Imports</i>	<i>Imports from CACM</i>	<i>Main Seller from CACM</i>	<i>Percent of Total Imports from Main Seller</i>
Costa Rica				
Cotton seed oil	3484	3483	Nicaragua	87
Tires	2285	1328	Guatemala	58
Unprocessed ginned cotton	1236	1227	El Salvador	68
Processed ginned cotton	2656	2509	El Salvador	49
Crocheted products	2230	1604	Guatemala	64
Glass containers	1805	1170	Guatemala	59
El Salvador				
Sawed wood	1049	999	Guatemala	61
Soaps	1442	1154	Guatemala	76
Tires	3470	2732	Guatemala	60
Plywood	1262	1262	Costa Rica	64
Unprocessed ginned cotton	1179	1065	Guatemala	67
Glass containers	1445	1147	Guatemala	79
Flashlight batteries	1601	1550	Guatemala	80
Steel sheets	1359	1192	Guatemala	62
Guatemala				
Fertilizer	4014	3125	El Salvador	72
Paper boxes	1378	1336	El Salvador	95
Unprocessed ginned cotton	1833	1826	El Salvador	99
Processed cotton	1715	1571	El Salvador	80
Steel beams, iron bars	3013	1649	El Salvador	54
Honduras				
Glass containers	1137	762	Guatemala	67
Flashlight batteries	949	890	Guatemala	73
Nicaragua				
Processed cotton	1801	1738	El Salvador	57
Synthetic textiles	907	797	Guatemala	53
Glass containers	1399	945	Guatemala	67
Steel sheets	1813	1714	Costa Rica	50
Flashlight batteries	1289	1263	Guatemala	76

Major goods = those for which a CACM member is the major supplier

SOURCE: Enrique Tellez Y Ruiz, "Influence of the Central American Common Market on the Marketing System of Industrial Products in Central America," (unpublished paper, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1976), pp. 10-11.

**TABLE 24: Value of U. S. Imports from the
Central American Common Market, 1974**

<i>Country</i>	<i>(1000's of U.S. dollars)</i>		
	<i>Total Imports</i>	<i>Agricultural Imports</i>	<i>Non-agricultural Imports</i>
Costa Rica	170,000	121,817	48,183
El Salvador	161,000	105,639	55,361
Guatemala	211,000	160,415	50,585
Honduras	150,000	116,082	33,918
Nicaragua	97,000	74,999	22,001

SOURCES: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1975*, (96th edition), (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 814.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, *U.S. Foreign Agricultural Trade Statistical Report, Fiscal Year 1975*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 243-244.

TABLE 25: Value of U.S. Exports to Central America¹, 1974

<i>Country</i>	<i>(1,000's of U.S. dollars)</i>		
	<i>Total Exports</i>	<i>Agricultural Exports</i>	<i>Non-agricultural Exports</i>
Costa Rica	233,000	24,866	208,134
El Salvador	202,000	28,662	173,338
Guatemala	240,000	27,962	212,038
Honduras	159,000	15,435	143,565
Nicaragua	200,000	19,376	180,624

SOURCES: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1975*, (96th edition), (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 814

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, *U.S. Foreign Agricultural Trade Statistical Report, Fiscal Year 1975*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 64-66.

¹includes countries not shown separately

**TABLE 26: Value of U.S. Agricultural Imports from Central America,
by Country and Commodity**

<i>Country and Commodity</i>	<i>Value (1,000's of U.S. dollars)</i>	
	1974	1975
Costa Rica	121,817	163,561
beef and veal - ex. offals,* fr.,* frz.*	30,112	29,296
bananas and plantains - fresh	26,800	59,118
vegetables, leguminous, dried	1	650
vegetables, nes* - fr.,* frz.* dried	351	647
vegetables, nes,* prep.* pres.*	667	393
sugar - cane, beet	21,667	48,418
coffee and coffee substitutes	24,697	15,750
cocoa beans	5,230	5,650
cocoa butter	969	1,182
seeds for planting, nspf*	890	1,066
other agricultural products	433	1,391
El Salvador	105,639	137,542
beef and veal - ex. offals,* fr.,*, frz.,*	11,662	3,427
sugar - cane, beet	15,555	52,016
molasses	1,880	1,438
coffee and coffee substitutes	73,876	77,360
coffee extracts, essences, conc.*	1,813	1,837
oil seeds, nuts, kernels, nes*	483	710
other agricultural products	370	754
Guatemala	160,415	170,300
beef and veal - ex. offals,* fr.,*, frz.*	28,711	16,857
bananas and plantains, fresh	20,488	21,339
sugar - cane, beet	12,743	41,345
molasses	5,785	7,999
coffee and coffee substitutes	81,254	72,070
coffee extracts, essences, conc.*	889	464
cocoa beans	491	1,259
oil seeds, nuts, kernels, nes*	4,455	2,708
seeds for planting, nspf*	556	606
plants, nspf.* - live	642	1,788
cut flowers, fresh	881	420
extracts, drugs, etc - vegetable	596	590
essential oils and resinoids	1,668	1,283
other agricultural products	1,256	1,572
Honduras	116,082	79,718
beef and veal - ex offals,* fr.,* frz.*	26,843	12,635
bananas and plantains, fresh	68,875	28,546
coconuts, brazil and cashew nuts	146	595
tropical fruit, nes.* - frs.,* prep.*	1,128	1,852
jams, jellies, marmalades, etc.	757	656
sugar - cane, beet	551	4,676
molasses	1,445	1,178
coffee and coffee substitutes	12,191	24,930
tobacco, unmanufactured	2,455	2,821
plants, nspf.* live	764	931

<i>Country and Commodity</i>	<i>Value (1,000's of U.S. dollars)</i>	
	<i>1974</i>	<i>1975</i>
Nicaragua	74,999	75,685
beef and veal - ex. offals,* fr.,* frz.,*	39,814	18,172
bananas and plantains - fresh	11,184	13,303
vegetables, nes.* - fr.,* frz.,* dried	482	651
sugar - cane, beet	12,705	28,405
molasses	1,112	2,161
coffee and coffee substitutes	3,537	6,085
coffee extracts, essences, conc.*	5	507
cocoa beans	161	711
tobacco, unmanufactured	2,880	2,814
oil seeds, nuts, kernels, nes.*	2,317	2,145
other agricultural products	832	730

*Abbreviations for commodities:

conc. = concentrated, concentrates

ex. = excluding, except

fr. = fresh

frz. = frozen

nec = not elsewhere classified

nes = not elsewhere specified

nspf = not specifically provided for

prep = preparations, prepared

pres = preserved

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, *U.S. Foreign Agricultural Trade Statistical Report, Fiscal Year 1975*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 64-66.

Notes

¹Ann Elaine Murphy, "Agriculture: A Neglected Element in Central American Integration," (unpublished thesis, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1976), p. 6.

²Barry, Conkling, Ray, *Economic Geography*, p. 360.

³Murphy, p. 35.

⁴Elizabeth P. Davis, "Retrospect on the Central American Common Market," (unpublished thesis, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1976), p. 46.

⁵Murphy, p. 38.

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 9. *Minifundia* are defined as "farms of a size too small to absorb family labor throughout the year for most kinds of production undertaken."

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹Davis, p. 47.

¹⁰U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of International Commerce, "Basic Data on the Economy of the Central American Common Market," by Thomas Brewer, Overseas Business Report #70-43 (September, 1970) p. 41.

¹¹Davis, p. 46.

¹²John Dombrowski, *et. al.*, *Area Handbook for Guatemala*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 249.

¹³Davis, p. 47.

¹⁴Dombrowski, p. 249.

¹⁵John Morris Ryan, *et. al.*, *Area Handbook for Nicaragua*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 231.

¹⁶Gene F. Miller, "An Economic Analysis of Basic Grains in El Salvador," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1976), pp. 16 - 17.

¹⁷Murphy, pp. 47-49

¹⁸Davis, p. 37

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Murphy, p. 85

²¹Enrique Tellez y Ruiz, "Influence of Central American Common Market on the Marketing System of Industrial Products in Central America," (unpublished paper, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1976), p. 5.

²²See Abraham Oyediji Ogungbile, "An Analysis of Labor Use in the Production of Selected Food Grain Crops under Tropical Conditions", (unpublished M.S. thesis, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1974), p. 89.

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