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Neither deathsquads nor democrats : explaining the behavior of the Salvadoran military.

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NEITHER DEATHSQUADS NOR DEMOCRATS:
EXPLAINING THE BEHAVIOR OF THE SALVADORAN MILITARY

A Thesis Presented

by

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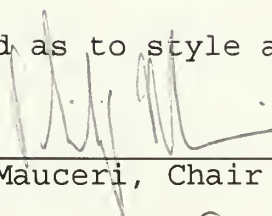
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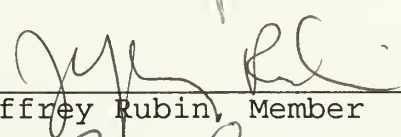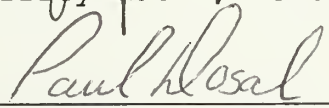

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INTRODUCTION

In 1992, El Salvador's civil war formally came to an end. After years of arduous negotiations between the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN), two Salvadoran administrations, and the Salvadoran Armed Forces, an agreement was reached that, if fully implemented, will have unprecedented results. At the ceremony celebrating the historic accords, UN secretary general Boutrous-Ghali proclaimed, "the long night of El Salvador is reaching its end....[T]hese accords will create a revolution achieved by negotiation" (Karl, 1992a). Whether or not the changes will be "revolutionary" remains to be seen, nevertheless, optimism is running high that the country's human rights abuses, gross socio-economic inequalities, and unrepresentative political system will improve so that El Salvador will become one of Latin America's new democracies. Most observers of recent events in El Salvador agree that the process of transition will be a long and difficult one. One of the most difficult tasks will be reigning in the country's powerful military and subjecting them to the rule of law and civilian authority.

The Christiani government pledged to reduce radically the power of the armed forces and reform major areas of civilian governance. It agreed to halve the 63,000-member military over a two-year period, to disband five counterinsurgency battalions linked to severe human rights abuses, to create a

new civilian police force in which ex-FMLN combatants would participate, and to purge the military of abusive officers (Constable, 1992). This is unprecedented. The role of the military, while criticized by opposition parties, the FMLN, and foreign observers, has never been seriously challenged. One of the major achievements of the peace accords is that for the first time since El Salvador's independence in 1821, the role of the armed forces is being debated and acted upon by political parties, the government administration, the FMLN, and the military itself. This achievement alone is significant and has implications at least as wide-ranging as the results of the accords (Garcia, 1992).

In a recent statement, the Salvadoran Defense Ministry confirmed the armed forces' subordination to civilian authority and their "unbreakable democratic convictions" (Golden, 1992). Despite such ambitious reforms and lofty rhetoric, however, the Salvadoran military remains one of the primary obstacles to any kind of political change in El Salvador. It is important to remember that the end of the civil war was not brought about by "unbreakable democratic convictions" on either side of the conflict. After twelve years of conflict the war in El Salvador had long since reached a military stalemate. As early as 1984, despite confident predictions from commanders on both sides, the war had reached a draw. El Salvador faced a set of international

and domestic circumstances that prevented an authoritarian or a revolutionary outcome (Karl, 1992).

Terry Lynn Karl, an astute observer of Salvadoran politics, offered a warning: "...ending the war does not necessarily mean winning the peace. Reactionaries and revanchists remain, key issues have been postponed rather than resolved, and fear and uncertainty can be expected to persist, at least until El Salvador's March 1992 presidential elections" (Karl, 1992). A military stalemate, as well as economic malaise and El Salvador's status as international pariah, forced the military to accept the *via democratica* as a modus vivendi rather than out of any profound conviction in democratic ideals. Questions about the military's role and subservience to civilian authority, however, are likely to extend well beyond El Salvador's upcoming elections.

In this thesis I seek to answer a basic question: How is the behavior of the Salvadoran military best explained? To answer this question, a re-examination of the methods by which the Salvadoran military's behavior is explained and understood will be necessary. As Alfred Stepan explains, "...the military has probably been the least studied of the factors involved in new democratic movements....In many of the newly democratizing polities, the absence of a tradition of autonomous civilian thought about military affairs is now emerging as a critical problem" (1988, p.xi).

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A current trend in research on Latin America is a focus on the transition to democracy and the factors that effect its consolidation (Karl, 1990). The literature is replete with analyses that detail how democratic regimes emerge, yet is relatively barren of thorough examinations of one of the institutions most able to thwart democratic gains--the military. Karen Remmer explains:

> The majority [of works on the military] either focus on the structural, ideological, and situational preconditions for military seizures of power or provide analyses of transitions from military to civilian governments...the result is a body of literature that fails to add up to or provide a solid basis for theorizing about military rule (1989, pp.23-24).

El Salvador is heralded by many as another example of a country to emerge from authoritarianism and to move toward democracy. As important as many of the changes in El Salvador are, conspicuously absent are any thorough examinations of the Salvadoran military. A perusal through the cumulative pages of the *Journal of Latin American Studies*, *Latin American Research Review,* and *Latin American Perspectives*--some seventy years of collective research--yielded not one single article on the Salvadoran military. El Salvador has had the longest experience with institutional military rule in all of Latin America, yet the military is given little independent weight as a subject of research (Christian, 1986). When the armed forces are discussed it is usually as a sub-theme of human rights abuses, counter-insurgency programs, or US foreign policy.

To some, the Salvadoran military invokes images of shadowy deathsquads dragging suspected subversives from their sleep to violent deaths. By contrast, the military has also been portrayed by governments in San Salvador and Washington as abusive at times, but an essential institution fighting for democracy against communist insurgency. In an article in *World Affairs*, Heyward G. Hutson explained, "if there's one thing the Salvadoran armed forces have done right from the beginning, it has been to support social, political, and economic reforms...the armed forces have been stalwart defenders of land reform, elections, a democratic political system, and a professional military" (1984, p.267). Such a view contradicts Salvadoran reality. What little literature exists on El Salvador's military often puts them in such terms of black and white: Deathsquads or democrats?

In addition to El Salvador's current political situation, the myths that surround many commonly held perceptions of the military also point to the need for a reassessment of the Salvadoran armed forces. Describing the military as the "guard-dog of the elite" or as rabid, anti-communist deathsquads offers little explanation of the armed force's variously personalistic, institutionalized, and reformist behavior throughout the country's history. As Shirley Christian explains,

> Most of the outside world has come to look on the
> Salvadoran military as a murderous, repressive,
> monolithic institution--the problem, if you will. But
> there is also another side of the Salvadoran military--

the one that is looking for solutions to the country's social, economic, and political problems, and that is willing to break with the past to find them. It is a military that cannot be characterized only with a set of good-bad, black-white images (1986, p.91).

What is lacking from much of the literature are thorough investigations of the military's behavior and place in Salvadoran history that transcends partisan hyperbole. In the course of this thesis, I will discuss four broad themes that surround the history of the Salvadoran military.

First, the history of the military reveals an ongoing cycle of repression and reform. The military is not a uniformly repressive, monolithic institution as it is often portrayed, but one constancy in search of Gramscian hegemony.[1] Second and relatedly, the military's history has been shaped by the political activity and intervention of groups of young,

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[1] I acknowledge the absence of any commonly accepted definitions of hegemony. In *Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci (New York: International Publishers, 1971)*, the difference between "rule" and "hegemony" is explained. Rule is the outright use of force while hegemony is the exercise of leadership with popular consent, see pp. 80, 180-5, 243-4, 366-7, 402-3. In another treatment of the term, Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977) defined hegemony as "a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our sense and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of systems of meanings and values--constituted and constituting--which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming," see pp. 108-14.
  Williams makes two distinctions in his definition that seem particularly relevant to El Salvador's military. First, hegemony does not exist passively. It has to be continually renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. Second, although hegemony or a hegemonic actor is always dominant, it is never total or exclusive. "...any hegemonic process must be continually alert and responsive to the alternatives and opposition which question and threaten its dominance," see pp. 110 -14.

progressive officers known as the *juventud militar*. This reveals an institution constantly racked by internal tensions and dissent. Third, despite years of training and indoctrination, the Salvadoran military has remained a profoundly unprofessional institution.[2] Fourth and finally, the themes mentioned above lead to a characterization of the military's behavior as a preeminently political organization with its own institutional interests, resources, and goals.

An understanding of these cycles and themes produces a deeper understanding of the Salvadoran military than is generally provided in much of the associated literature. To the extent that the military is undertheorized, I hope to arrive at a better understanding of what such a theory must do. I will argue that an explanation of the Salvadoran military must be rooted in what I see as its political behavior. Only a political explanation can account for the military's complicated and often seemingly contradictory behavior.

In chapter one, I will present a survey of the theoretical literature that purports to explain the actions and motivations of Latin American militaries. I will focus on three schools of thought: dependency theory, corporatism, and politically-based explanations.

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[2] A professional military is one characterized by a stable command structure, standardized means of promotion, bureaucratization, and apolitical behavior.

My research has shown these three themes to be recurrent means of explaining military behavior. The approaches are not necessarily coherent bodies of theory, nor are they theories specifically about the military. Each is demonstrative of a particular approach to understanding military phenomena. As stated, I find a political approach most useful. I will examine economic and cultural explanations of military behavior because I find both to be of some use. I present them here to show where they lend to an understanding of the military's behavior and where they fall short.

Chapters two through four will comprise the historical section of the thesis. I believe an understanding of the military must extend beyond the institution's often-cited recent history and include a discussion of its early history and formation. In chapter two, I will present a discussion of the military from its inception to the rise, and later demise, of personalistic military rule. In chapter three, I will discuss the period characterized by institutional military rule up to the military-led coup of 1979. Picking up where the preceding chapter left off, chapter four will focus on the country's descent into civil-war, the role played by the United States, and the negotiated settlement of 1992.

Finally, in chapter five I will cast the history of the Salvadoran military against the three theories presented in chapter one. My purpose here is to access the merit of the

theories, identify lacunae that exist, and suggest directions for future research. In so doing, I hope to arrive at a better definition of the military and a more thorough understanding of its behavior.

In the course of this thesis, there are several basic questions I want to address. How was military dominance established and how has it been maintained? Is the Salvadoran military a product of the state or society? How has the "politization" of the military and the "militarization" of the state occurred? What is the state in El Salvador? What is the military's "world view" or ideology? How have the ideals of "institutionalization" and "professionalization" been advanced? Why has the military acquiesced to civilian authority? And what are the chances for a true democratic opening in El Salvador? I will address these questions in both the historical section as well as in the concluding chapter.

As will be shown, the Salvadoran military is made up of many disparate elements. It is a dynamic and often volatile institution that is not readily explained. What little work exists on the Salvadoran military often gives undue weight to certain phenomena while ignoring disparate data that does not fit with a particular ontology. A recognition of its political nature and the recurring themes that run through its history lend to a more thorough explanation of the Salvadoran military's multi-faceted nature.

Since the 1960s, the military has probably been the subject of more research and analysis than any other social force or actor in Latin America (Schmitter, 1973). This concern will likely continue despite the recent decline in authoritarian military regimes, for the military in Latin America continues to be a potent actor.

Militaries and military rule have been studied more in terms of processes of transition to and from democracy rather than as political actors and political systems in their own right (Remmer, 1989). Similarly, the militaries of Latin America are often presented as a means of discussing the relative success of US foreign policy and its impact abroad. All too absent are discussions of the military that deal with the military as an entity unto itself.

Theorizing about the behavior of the military has been an on-going process. My intention here is not to locate the theory that fits best in El Salvador. I believe efforts to locate the single most important cause or determinant are flawed because an unspecified, and perhaps unknowable, number of factors are at play in any given situation. Social phenomena and theory that seeks to explain are overdetermined. Richard Wolff and Michael Resnick, two advocates of an anti-reductionist approach, explain:

> If all possible entities are overdetermined, none is independent of the other. Moreover, each entity will have a different, particular relation to every other entity. Each entity exists as--or is caused or

constituted by--the totality of their different relations with all other entities (1987, p.5).

Thus not only is multiple causality at play, but so is multiple influence. Locating the defining factor or determinant is not possible. Regarding the Salvadoran military, it is impossible to state persuasively that economic explanations, for example, can be identified as the "core" of the institution's behavior. To do so would exclude other relevant determinants or at least to relegate them to an "inessential" status. Further, the Salvadoran military, like other actors in the country, is an institution that is constantly changing and evolving. An explanation that seemed to hold true in one historical moment may prove irrelevant in another. My point here is not to say that it is impossible to state what it is that constitutes and affects the behavior of the Salvadoran military, but that like any other social actor, its motivations, conduct, and ideology are overdetermined and thus not reducible to a singular, parsimonious explanation.

The general survey that follows may seem to contradict what is stated above, for I will examine several decidedly essentialist theoretical categories: economic, cultural, and political. It is not my intention to set up a line straw men only to knock them down. Rather, I hope to show that each approach is both useful and limited in its own way. My purpose is to identify the main questions regarding military behavior and to point out the salient issues and debates that surround them. Because of the over-determination of the

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Salvadoran military's behavior, I expect different theories will each offer partial explanatory power.

In what I am labelling as economic theory, I will focus on dependency theory. In so doing, I will also discuss briefly the related propositions in modernization theory and the bureaucratic-authoritarian (BA) model. In the category of cultural theory, I will discuss corporatism and various explanations that emphasize the weight of the "Iberian legacy" and Latin America's propensity for militarization and authoritarianism. And finally, in the section on political explanations, I will discuss institutional and political approaches propounded by such scholars as Alfred Stepan, Samuel Fitch, and Karen Remmer. By breaking these theories into three categories I do not mean to imply that they are separate, mutually exclusive bodies of inquiry. Indeed, labelling them "theories" may give the impression that they are cohesive epistemologies. They are not. I assume these various approaches overlap and work in conjunction with each other. Economic, cultural, political, and other forces can all be said to affect a society or institution at any given time.

The State

Before delving into the debates and questions surrounding these three approaches, it is necessary to discuss the fundamental role of the state and its relation to military

establishments. An understanding of the state in Latin America is of particular importance because it seems to defy easy characterization. Generally, the state is defined in either Weberian or Marxist terms.

The Weberian conception of the state is defined as an administrative and legal order subject to change by the legislature. This system of order claims binding authority over all action taking place in the arena of its jurisdiction. This is a rational-legal definition in which the state claims a monopoly on the use of force (Parsons, 1964). In theory, the Weberian state acts in the interests of the whole (Hamilton, 1982). The Weberian tradition takes for granted that states are potentially autonomous and may pursue goals at odds with the various dominant groups and classes (Evans, Skocpol, and Rueschemeyer, 1985).

By contrast, the Marxist conception of the state regards it as an instrument of class rule or an arena for class conflict. The common, unquestioned assumption is that the state is shaped by class struggle and functions to preserve and expand the modes of production (Evans, Skocpol, and Rueschemeyer, 1985). The fact that Marxists regard economic structures as the basis for the political superstructure necessarily entails a rejection of the Weberian assumption that the state provides procedural guarantees for free political and economic competition (Stepan, 1978). As will

be shown later, however, the Salvadoran state does not fit neatly within either of these traditions.

The state in El Salvador has traditionally been an area of conflict and multiple interests. Death squad activity demonstrates this and points to the "vagueness" of the state in El Salvador. At least until 1984, deathsquads were serving the interests of the Salvadoran government, and the lack of progress made by the judicial and executive system in curbing their "excesses" was related to the belief the state interests were being served. With the election of Duarte in 1984, however, it became clear that deathsquads did not kill in his name, and yet continued to operate as a part of the state (Stohl and Lopez, 1986). How is such a state described if it cannot be conceived as politically neutral or as an instrument of class rule? Throughout this thesis I hope to show the limitations of the Weberian and Marxist traditions and for the need to rethink the role of the state and its relation to the military in El Salvador. As I will make clear, the military's state role is an ambiguous one. The military serves state interests, but it also is influenced by economic groups, cultural traditions, US interests, and its own institutional interests.

Economic Explanations

Economic theories refer to the production and distribution of the means of production and consumption (Wolff

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and Resnick, 1987). Although the majority of this section will focus on how dependency theory explains the military's behavior, modernization theory and the bureaucratic authoritarian model will be mentioned as a means of identifying the development of the literature. The three approaches--modernization theory, dependency, and bureaucratic-authoritarianism--represent a rough progression of models that give primacy to economic factors. None of the methodologies deals explicitly with the military. Generally speaking, all paradigms afford the military a special significance, but not as the primary subject of inquiry.

George Phillip, in his work *The Military in Latin American Politics*, cites the intellectual climate in the 1960s and its effect on American political science as the origin of "serious study" of the military in Latin America (1985, p.3). The Cuban revolution, the Kennedy administration, the Vietnam war, and the behavioralist movement in the social sciences are some of the main factors that contributed to a more concerted effort to understand the dynamics of military behavior.

Events in Cuba had wide-ranging impact. For many U.S. officials and academics, the "lesson" of the Cuban revolution, was that military dictatorships in Latin America encouraged Marxist revolutions whereas civilian governments did not. Therefore, it became Washington's policy under Kennedy to coddle civilian governments and oppose military ones (Black, 1986). "Although this pro-civilian policy was not followed

with total consistency throughout Latin America," Phillip says, "it was the commonly accepted wisdom both in the Administration and within liberal academic circles that military rule was a bad thing, not only in moral terms but also in terms of immediate US interests (1985, p.2). These convictions, coupled with a belief in the "democratizing" effect of economic growth, produced a loose collection of models now collectively known as modernization theory (Lieuwen, 1961).

Part of modernization theory holds that as a country modernizes economically, the country's social and political institutions will evolve into more representative forms that are responsive to popular demands. Militaries which once thrived under conditions of underdevelopment, the theory states, will either reform themselves and join the modernization process or simply fade out as a repressive political force in the country and assume a more strictly defined state role. The Alliance for Progress and other civic-action programs sought to cultivate this latent progressive element in military institutions. The wave of military-authoritarian regimes that brought the demise of the region's "democracies", however, seemed to reduce modernization theory to wishful thinking.

Dependency

The rise of military-dominated governments in countries relatively "developed" or "modernized" like Brazil and Argentina, contradicted most of what the modernization theory held to be true. Military coups in Brazil (1964), Chile (1973), Uruguay (1973), and Argentina (1976) dispelled the belief that with economic modernization the military would become an apolitical or progressive institution. The nations of Central America, save Costa Rica, do not have a history of democracy like their South American neighbors did. Efforts to professionalize the military in Central America did little to shake years of military dictatorship.

Where modernization theory emphasized the positive effects of economic development for countries of the Third World, dependency theory represented the inverse of this proposition. Dependency theory is best seen as a reaction against mainstream ideas about Latin America developed in the 1950s and 1960s. Rather than producing democratic societies in which the military was subservient to civilian authority, dependency theory predicted that the collusion of dominant classes in the First and Third World would retard the growth of civil society, perpetuate underdevelopment, and foster exclusionary regimes with powerful militaries

According to Theotonio Dos Santos' much-cited definition, dependence is:

a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected. The relation of interdependence between two or more economies, and between these and world trade, assumes the form of dependence when some countries (the dominant ones) can only do this as a reflection of that expansion, which can have either a positive or negative effect on their immediate development (Edie, 1991).

While dependency theory can be seen as reaction to modernization theory, it is important to realize that dependency theory emerged from a long-standing tradition of critical thought in Latin America. Dependency was "consumed" by social science in the United States in a way that obscured its Latin roots. "What had previously been an endeavor to be critical and to maintain the continuity of previous historical, economic, sociological, and political studies in Latin America," explains Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "was transformed into an article for consumption in various versions that include references to the original myth but in large measure constitute the expression of a quite distinct intellectual universe from that which it gave birth" (1977, p.8).

I recognize that the work done under the banner of dependency theory is a disparate collection of work. It would be misleading to lump all writers associated with the dependency approach together. What is a theory for some is simply one of many factors for another. My purpose is simply to identify the main currents and propositions of the approach.

As stated previously, dependency theory does not deal explicitly with the military. It is an economic explanation of the Third World's underdevelopment and exploitation. Dependent countries are often characterized by the existence of repressive, exclusionary military institutions and thus discussion of the military as an agent of repression is a major theme in the literature, but is generally not a primary subject. Because the emphasis of much of the dependence literature was on local and foreign elites, state actors such as the military receive only scant attention. Dependency has been used to explain a country's lack of development and the military is dealt with by extrapolation (Phillip, 1985).

The most central structure to the paradigm is a world capitalist economy that is divided into a developed core and underdeveloped periphery. Discussing the dynamics of a country in these systemic terms tends to obscure the role of the state. A more direct examination of the state in dependent countries makes it possible to discuss the role of the military more directly.

Peter Evans states, "the tendency to concentrate on the interaction of foreign capital with local private elites that characterized earlier dependency work has clearly been superseded. Not only is interest growing in relations between the state and subordinate groups, but divisions within the working class....and conflicts within the state apparatus....are being examined as well" (1985, pp.158-159).

Nora Hamilton, writing on the state in post-revolutionary Mexico, addresses the important and often overlooked role of the state in dependency theory. She states, "from this perspective, [classic dependence], internal classes and forces within the dependent country, including the state, have limited importance in shaping the development of these countries" (1982, p.16). Certainly state functions such as taxation, law-making, and coercion have a more significant effect on a polity's development than early versions of dependency would allow. Hamilton explains further:

> ....control of the means of coercion would appear to facilitate state autonomy. At the same time, the different historical origins of state institutions and their interaction with different classes and class segments suggest that the interests pursued by these institutions may be contradictory to each other as well as to the government(1982, p.7).

The tensions between the state and its coercive apparatus are crucial in determining state cohesion and determining the outcome of divisions within the state. A more complete description of situations of dependency must account for the role of the state, its relative autonomy, and specify conflict within the state apparatus.

The power of the dependency approach may be judged by the ongoing criticism and debate that surrounds it (Evans, 1985). The intellectual activity generated by dependency is undeniable. Theorists working within and without the dependency tradition continue to refine and redefine the

issues surrounding the impact of capitalism in countries of the Third World.

One of the most powerful theories to emerge from the wake of dependency theories is the bureaucratic-authoritarian (BA) model developed by Guillermo O'Donnell (1973; 1978; 1979). No recent paradigm has offered a more systematic explanation of the emergence and function of authoritarian regimes and militarism than the BA model. The effect of the BA literature on the understanding of the Latin American military has been great, but is not within the scope of this thesis (O'Donnell, 1973; Cardoso, 1973; Collier, 1979). For many reasons, the BA model is too region-specific and thus not applicable to the subject matter considered here--the Salvadoran military.

The bureaucratic-authoritarian model is generally applied to countries of South America that have experienced a period of socialist or populist government for which authoritarianism is the response. Bureaucratic-authoritarianism links military rule to dependent capitalism: high-levels of modernization and the exhaustion of the "easy stage" of import substitution create a burgeoning popular sector which in turn engenders military repression as a tool of dominant-class cohesion (Remmer, 1989). BA states like Argentina or Brazil are also differentiated from Central American ones by the relatively limited role played by the United States.

The situation described by the bureaucratic-authoritarian model appears similar to conditions in El Salvador. El

Salvador was an exclusionary, military regime that engaged in the suppression of popular interests. The emergence of this system, however, coincided with an economic downturn in 1931. El Salvador never reached the level of modernization described in bureaucratic-authoritarianism. As authoritarian states were rising throughout the Southern cone in the 1960s and 1970s, the military governments in El Salvador were continuing their experiments in the twin policy of repression backed by reform. The bureaucratic-authoritarian model is an effective means of describing the *emergence* of authoritarian regimes in the Southern cone; it is essentially a theory about regime transition. While I am concerned with the origins of military rule in El Salvador, my emphasis is on its function and impact. For these reasons, and others, the BA model is not applicable to the case of El Salvador and its military.

Contemporary dependency theories have expanded their analyses to incorporate the interaction of the so-called "triple alliance"--foreign economic elites, domestic economic elites, and various state actors (Evans, 1979). With the evolution of the paradigm, the role of the military can be addressed more directly. Where once the military was portrayed as a rather inert force subservient to the needs of foreign capital, the greater emphasis on the state affords the military a more active role as a political actor in its own right, but is essentially portrayed as serving the needs of the dominant classes. Based on these broad remarks, it is

possible to draw-out some of the main issues and questions surrounding the military and dependency theory.

The military, as the coercive apparatus of the state, is ultimately dependent on the world capitalist economy. The state in a dependent country, by definition, lacks autonomy. Although the military may rise to a role of prominence, their status is directly related to a country's economic needs. The military owes its existence to the dominant classes. Thus the military's behavior is explained by examining the needs of capital. And in a dependent country these needs are stability, cheap labor, access to resources, and a positive investment climate. As the agent of capital, albeit indirect, the military provides these needs. Political arrangements necessarily reflect or express the changing economic forces at work in and on dependent societies (Fagen, 1977).

The ideology of the military, according to dependency theory, is such that political tranquility is presumed to be a prerequisite for economic development (Mason and Krane, 1989). Hence, the military, in order to insure the maintenance of conditions deemed appropriate for economic development, responds with violence to opposition and dissent.

As will be shown, the Salvadoran military cannot be fully described by relying on an economic explanation like dependency. Even affording the military the status of a state actor with some autonomy, as contemporary versions of dependency do, cannot account for all of the military's

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behavior. Hamilton states that, "the fact that state institutions [i.e. the military] may have an underlying integrity and logic of their own, or that those who control the state apparatus are pursuing their own specific interests are not problematic for Marxist theory so long as state interests do not conflict with dominant class interests..." (1982, p.12). As I will make clear in the historical section, the Salvadoran military did pursue interests at odds with the country's economic elites. Dependency theory is an effective place to begin an understanding of the military in a dependent country, but we must move beyond economically-based explanations if the Salvadoran military is to be more fully understood.

Cultural Explanations

Clyde Kluckhohn, an early proponent of a cultural approach to political phenomena, offered a definition of culture that has been widely accepted:

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning influences upon further action (Chilcote, 1981).

Gabriel Almond, another early advocate of culturally-based analyses, suggested that political culture had a degree of autonomy and yet was related to a society's general

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culture. Political culture, he maintained, did not coincide with the political systems because participation in politics transcends the boundaries of the political system. [Yet] "every political system," Almond stated, "is embedded in a particular pattern of orientations to political action. I have found it useful to refer to this as the political culture" (Chilcote, 1981). In Latin America, this "pattern of orientation" has been defined by some as the so-called Iberian legacy. In the following section I will sketch out the rudiments of the theory I will refer to as corporatism as it relates to military behavior.

Corporatism

Before beginning I must comment on the relevancy of corporatism to the study of Latin American politics. I will not evaluate the utility of the theories presented here until chapter five, yet it is necessary to make a couple of initial remarks.

In the 1970s, the corporatist perspective enjoyed wide popularity. Howard Wiarda, one of its principle proponents remarked, "corporatism and corporatist models have achieved a certain 'in-ness' of late which needs to be kept in perspective" (Pike and Stritch, 1974). Today, the opposite is true. Corporatism has fallen out of favor. Divergent historical developments such as the rise of democratic regimes in all but a few Latin American countries seem to have

undermined the fundamental premises of the model (Rouquie, 1987). To many, the various corporatist models are simply outdated and reactionary means of description that offer little explanatory or predictive value.

While I do not expect corporatism to offer complete utility, I do not think it is possible to dispense with it all together either. As an answer to critics who would like to toss out the corporatist model with Ptolemy's theory of the universe, Wiarda offers a sobering rejoinder. "Most of Latin America is still only *partially* democratic, or else, as in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and other countries, there are two power structures, one democratic and one authoritarian, still coexisting uneasily side by side. The liberal-pluralist framework may help explain one of those power structures, but we still need the corporatist-authoritarian model to explain the other one" (1992, p.335). I believe the model can be of some use in helping to explain military phenomena in El Salvador and is therefore useful to examine here.

There are several strands of corporatism. With a concentration on the work of Wiarda and others, who emphasize the weight of the Iberian legacy in Latin America, I will relate it to an explanation of military behavior in Latin America, and then briefly discuss the contributions of Schmitter and Stepan, who place less emphasis on the cultural antecedents of corporatist behavior.

Proponents of the Iberian legacy emphasize the effect of Latin America's past and cultural traditions. They argue that there is a distinct tradition in the region that predisposes government and society to social and political forms all together different from Western traditions of pluralism, democracy, and individualism. This body of theory states that Spain and Portugal's collective experiences with Roman law, the wars of Reconquest against the Spanish Moors, Catholicism, and monarchism have imparted on the countries of Latin America a distinct cultural tradition (Pike and Stritch, 1974; Wiarda, 1974; Malloy, 1977; Davies and Loveman, 1978; Dealy, 1988). These theories emphasize the need for an "alternative" understanding of the region's social, political, and economic development based on an appreciation of its strong cultural legacies.

Howard Wiarda explains:

> Employed in its historic and cultural sense, corporatism refers to a system based on a belief in or acceptance of a natural hierarchy of social or functional groups, each with its place in the social order and with its own rights and obligations...(1992, p.324).

This is a useful definition in that it incorporates many of the various themes that run throughout the literature: organicism, hierarchy, and state control. It is necessary, however, to draw out two subtypes of corporatism that are implicit in Wiarda's definition: state corporatism and societal corporatism. Phillippe Schmitter offers a second version of corporatism and makes this distinction more clear.

Schmitter distances himself from the majority of corporatist writers. His staring point is to treat corporatism from the viewpoint of the institutional characteristics of interest group representation. Schmitter defines it as a system "in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetive, heirarchially ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state..." (1973, pp.93-94). Unlike the Iberian Legacy, he places less emphasis on the cultural influences of corporatism and instead links corporatism to the emergence of industrialization in the Third World. Further, Schmitter points to corporatist structures in Africa and northern Europe and thus does not find it to be unique to the Iberian world (Schmitter, 1974). From these distinctions come two subtypes of corporatism.

According to Schmitter, state corporatism is associated with political systems in which territorial sub-units are tightly subordinated to central state power; elections are non-existent or plebiscitary; party systems are dominated or monopolized by a weak single party, executive authorities are ideologically exclusive such that political sub-cultures based on class, ethnicity, language or regionism are repressed. Examples of state corporatism are Spain under Franco, the Estado Novo in Brazil, and Chile under Pinochet.

Societal corporatism, on the other hand, refers to a more autonomous and democratic system. Societal corporatism is found in advanced capitalist countries such as Switzerland, Denmark, and the Netherlands. It is characterized by open electoral processes and party systems, an ideologically varied and coalitionally-based executive, and a highly "layered" or "pillared" political sub-culture (Schmitter, 1974).

In Latin America, it is clear that state corporatism has existed almost exclusively. It is erroneous, however, to equate corporatism with right-wing, reactionary regimes. Left-leaning regimes such as Velasco in Peru, Castro's Cuba, and Panama under Torrijos all promoted inclusionary programs of populism and economic redistribution, and yet demonstrated corporate characteristics of clientelism, cooptation, and hierarchy.

It is possible to add a third type of corporatism to the versions propounded by Wiarda and Schmitter. In *The State and Society*, Stepan presents the organic-statist model as an important but often neglected model of social and political behavior. It is "organic" because it refers to a normative vision of the political community in which the components combine to enable the full development of a society's potential. It is "statist" in that organizing such a society requires power, rational choices, and decision-making. An organic-statist society does not occur spontaneously, it needs to be created (Stepan, 1978). The starting point of this

approach is a normative one that states the preferred form of political life is man as a member of a community. It is the state that orders society and provides this "organic unity."

Unlike proponents of the Iberian legacy who trace the reverence for order and unity to Spain and Portugal, Stepan sites a much more ancient tradition. Organic-statism "has been a dominant strand of political thought since the time of Aristotle...this approach is very much alive as a philosophical and structural approach, especially in southern Europe and Latin America" (1978, p.27).

Although Schmitter and Stepan's contributions are important ones, I have chosen to focus on the Iberian Legacy as discussed by Wiarda and others. This form of corporatism is employed specifically to describe Latin society while the others are more broad. The belief that there is something unique in the nations of Latin America that predisposes them toward authoritarianism seems to be a strong, although often unstated belief. "In Latin American minds," Glen Caudill Dealy explains, "the vision of freely competing factions all too often seems a choice between chaos and privilege...Latinos maintain that union comes from unity, not diversity--*Ex unibus unum*, not *E pluribus unum*, has been and still is their motto (1988, p.7). I think it is important to see how far this approach gets us to understanding the Salvadoran military.

The military, perhaps more than any other institution, epitomizes the values and traditions of the Iberian legacy.

It is an institution built on a foundation of discipline, hierarchy, power, and order. Crudely put, the military's behavior in Latin America is explained by corporatist theory as the product of the institution's reverence for the aforementioned traditions. Coups, military dictatorship, and repression are common phenomena in Latin America because they are "normal." It is only because we perceive the world through pluralist lenses that such occurrences are seen as aberrant. How do we explain the US military's apolitical role and subservience to civilian authority? A culturally-based answer would reply that it is the United States' collective traditions of freedom, democracy, and fear of despotism that reigns in the military.

In the corporatist model, the military plays a strong and political role because its organic mission is to maintain order and stability. Perhaps the military's role is better defined not as political, but anti-political. The military in Latin America, it is claimed, intervenes in political and social affairs in reaction to the divisive and corrupting influence of politicians, politics, and pluralist democracy in general. To the military, democracy is a dangerous enterprise. It entails tolerance of the opposition, constitutional restraints on authority, the mobilization of urban and rural poor, demands for income redistribution, and above all uncertainty. Democracy, then, is seen by the military as antithetical to Iberian values of hierarchy,

authoritarianism, elitism, and gradualism. Davies and Loveman describe this as the "politics of antipolitics:"

> Politics, including the demagogic appeals by civilian politicians to the emerging proletariat, promoted class conflict and instability which `forced' sectors of the military to intervene to restore order and cleanse the body politic of political corruption (1988, p.3).

To summarize, the corporatist model explains the omnipresent role of the military in Latin America by pointing to the regions's cultural traditions. The military embodies the Ibero traditions of hierarchy, elitism, unity, and a reverence for order and stability. According to the model, military-led coups and the repression of dissent should be seen as "normal" and not the sign of a deformed society.

The military in Latin America is seen in corporatist theory as the product of society, for the military embodies many Iberian ideals. Of course Latin America has undergone countless changes since the arrival of the conquistadors. Despite corporatist theory's grounding in tradition, corporatist societies are not immutable. The competing models of pluralism and socialism continually exert pressure on corporate structures. Although writers assign different weight to the impact of these forces, none states that a corporatist society is static. Change occurs, albeit incrementally. The military in a corporate society does not simply repress or eliminate all opposition. The corporatist model emphasizes the ability of the military and other powerful groups to absorb and coopt potential threats to the

established order (Wiarda, 1982 and 1992). A small, unorganized union may be easy to marginalize or eliminate, for example, but a larger, mass-based group such as the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENESTRAS) is not as easily squashed. Recognizing the strength of such a movement, the military seeks to coopt it rather than to destroy it outright.

Change in a corporatist system may take seemingly radical forms. The military-led revolution in Peru of 1968 is an example. Stepan explains in *The State and Society* that in this tradition of corporatist thought, "despite the concern for stability, there is a justification for rapid structural change and for a strong state that can impose this change" (1978, p.34). Thus events of 1968 can be seen through the corporatist optic as an effort to restore a sense of the "common good" to Peru and put society's components back in their proper place.

The Salvadoran military displays much of the behavior predicted by corporatist theory: the need to maintain order, a reverence for hierarchy, and authoritarianism. I will show in the historical section of this thesis that the Salvadoran military has been influenced by more than one set of cultural traditions and has acted in ways that the Iberian legacy cannot account for. As with dependency theory, corporatism can offer only a partial explanation of the military's

behavior because it is limited to an essentialized set of influences.

Political Explanations

A political explanation of military behavior begins from the proposition that it is a dynamic organization with interests and goals of its own. Instead of giving primacy to economic or cultural factors, political explanations of military behavior emphasize the porous nature of the military institution. In the following pages, I will describe how the military is explained in political terms and show what authors employing this approach have done. Such a position, it must be said, is under-represented in the literature on Latin America'a militaries. Augusto Vargas explains:

> Although the military has had an important political role in Latin American societies, few scholars have devoted much effort to this phenomena...few studies have focused on the specific ways in which military institutions become intertwined with the rest of the state apparatus, the economy, and society (1989, p.vi).

Despite the small number of politically-based accounts of the military it is possible to sketch out the rudiments of such an approach.

The military in Latin America is influenced by a number of actors and forces within and outside of society. This may seem rather axiomatic, but the military in Latin America has often been regarded as either apolitical or isolated from the events and pressures civil society (Stepan, 1988). In the course of the twentieth century, the military has emerged as

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an independent variable that must be taken into account in analyses of Latin America's political development (Vargas, 1989). Stepan offers a succinct agenda for a political approach to the military:

> ...to study the role of the Brazilian or any other army adequately, one cannot proceed from the proposition that the army, because of its mission and organization, is exclusively a nationally-oriented and unified organization. Instead....there is a constant need to evaluate military institutional characteristics within the larger framework of the overall political system (1971, p.20).

Stepan presents a schematic of society in which the military acts and is acted upon. He divides society into three polity arenas: civil society, political society, and the state.

Civil society is defined as all social groups and organizations such as unions, student groups, and professional associations. Political society is the area in which the polity arranges itself for political contestation. This area is made up of political parties, the legislature, and the electoral process. Finally, the state is conceived as "something more than government." Stepan defines it in Weberian terms as the continuous administrative, legal, bureaucratic, and coercive system that attempts not only to manage the state apparatus, but to structure relations between civil and public power and within civil and political society. In an authoritarian or military regime, the state eliminates or absorbs the autonomy of civil and political society (1988, p.3-4). Stepan's contribution to understanding the military's

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behavior is his argument to "rethink" its role within this polity arena.

In *Rethinking Military Politics*, Stepan investigates the important part played by various components of the nations's military in Brazil's redemocratization. Most of the literature on Brazil's transition from authoritarian rule focuses on civil society's opposition to the state. Civil society has been treated as "the political celebrity of the *abertura*." This unidirectional perspective, Stepan explains, has led to a neglect not only of inter-and intra-class linkages, but also to a neglect of the internal contradictions within the military apparatus that led it to seek out allies within civil society (1988, p.7).

These contradictions, brought on by the growing autonomy of the National Information Service (SNI), precipitated Brazil's transition. By treating the military as a complex and diverse organization--a political actor--Stepan has contributed to an understanding of the military's role in Brazil's transition. The need to re-examine the military involves its role in the three polity arenas. The Brazilian military influenced and was influenced by members of all three arenas. The fissures within the military reveal an important point: power is a relationship. It is held or exercised in relation to other political actors. As the interaction among and within the three polity arenas changes, so does the political landscape.

The current era of democratization throughout much of Latin America necessitates an understanding of the political behavior of the armed forces. "One of the difficulties civilian governments are experiencing in controlling `their' militaries," Vargas states, "largely derives from institutional changes within the armed forces themselves...these changes have generated strong demands within the military to impose their definition of the national interest" (1989, p.6). A political explanation of the military examines the nature of interest articulation and institutional changes within the military.

The military's autonomy is a principle point of entry in a discussion of its political behavior. It is a particularly salient issue for nations that are attempting to redefine civil-military relations in the wake of democratization. David Pion-Berlin, another proponent of a politically-centered approach, offers a careful treatment of military autonomy. He sees to kinds of autonomy, institutional and political.

Institutional autonomy refers to the military's professional independence and exclusivity. In the interests of its own professional development, the armed forces asserts its corporate autonomy and consciousness that sets it away from lay institutions. This definition of autonomy can simply be called professionalism. Political autonomy, on the other hand, refers to the military's aversion to civilian control. Although the military is part of the state, the military acts

as if it were above and beyond the authority of the government. "The degree of political autonomy," Pion-Berlin explains, "is a measure of the military's determination to strip civilians of their political prerogatives and claim these for itself" (1992, p.84-85). There are several implications of these two definitions.

Growth in military autonomy is not necessarily a threat to a civilian regime. An institutionally autonomous military may actually be desirable in a democratic setting because a professional military is likely to be less susceptible to internal conflict and prey to external influences. Further, military's long-associated with authoritarian rule such as those in Argentina, Uruguay and El Salvador, may find within institutional autonomy a means to coexist with civilian authorities. Rather than intending to weaken civilian governments, the military may simply express a desire for self-governing autonomy and isolation within a civilian government (Pion-Berlin, 1992).

A more thorough description of military autonomy allows for differences in the expression of military power. "If we accept that there are professional and political dimensions to autonomy," states Pion-Berlin, "then any empirical investigation must be sensitive to the variance with which military power expresses itself" (1992, p. 87). Military behavior is better understood if conceived along a professional-political continuum.

Pion-Berlin examined the relative institutional and political autonomy of the military in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Peru during the recent period of regime transition. He focused on several decision-sites. These are senior and junior level personnel decisions, force levels, military education, doctrine, reform, budgets, arms procurements and production, defense organization, intelligence gathering, internal security, and human rights. These areas represent points of contention between civil and military authorities as well as between the military itself. Pion-Berlin found that military autonomy is far from uniform. It varied from country to country and by issue area. The armed forces seemed to exercise greatest control over a set of "core" interests that are at the heart of institutional autonomy. These are education, military doctrine, and issues of reform (Pion-Berlin, 1992).

Military power is neither limitless or uniform. "There seems to be," Pion-Berlin states, "a ceiling to power above which the armed forces prefer not to go or can not go and below which they desire to extend their influence" within the political order (1992, p.99). An understanding of these differences in military autonomy provides an insight into the extent of its power. In the delicate area of civilian-military relations, a recognition of what are "core" military interests and what are "peripheral" may foster a better understanding of how to structure relations between the

military and other interest groups in newly democratic polities.

The central proposition of political explanations of military behavior is that it is necessary to look both outside and within the military institution to fully understand its motivations and actions. Within the political system are a number of forces that act upon the armed forces. How a particular military will respond to these external forces are dependent upon the internal dynamics of the military itself.

Samuel Fitch, examined the political role played by the Ecuadoran armed forces and developed a useful guideline for explaining military intervention in politics. Fitch wrote specifically about military coups which can be seen as the ultimate expression political behavior by the military. Ideally, the military functions to defend the government, not to overthrow it. Fitch identifies four factors that help to understand the military's behavior.

First, it is necessary to specify the decision criteria by which the armed forces judge whether a particular government should be supported or overthrown. "Only by specifying these decision criteria and, through them, the changing political scene to which the military responds," Fitch explains, "can we explain why armies do what they do." Second, it is necessary to indicate what determines which political outcomes are deemed relevant to a decision to overthrow the government. What political outcomes are

desirable and what ones constitute a threat? Third, is the need to specify the military's attitudes toward the political role of the armed forces in a crisis situation. Fourth and finally, is the need to identify the determinants of political outcomes that are seen as relevant to the military's decision to launch a coup or other type of political intervention (1977, pp. 2-6).

Politically-centered efforts to explain military behavior are unified by the assertion that the armed forces, like labor unions, economic elites, and civilian politicians, are political actors in their own right. The challenge of this kind of approach is to open the "black box" of military behavior. One of the central questions that emerge from this undertaking is the issue of the military's autonomy vis-a-vis other political actors. What restraints are placed on the military and, conversely, what restraints does the military place on other interest groups? Much work remains to be done on how the military's own internal logic is formed, how is its ideology created, and why it changes.

The military is an interest group that does not fall neatly under the heading of "state actor." The military may have interests and goals often wholly at odds with those of other components of the state. As Stepan states, "the ideal type of military institution--a highly unified organization with a private code and values, isolated from the general pressures of the political system at large--often simply does

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not exist" (1971, p.56). Many writers who advocate political explanations of the military's behavior reject simply adding a military dimension to an over-arching "theory of the state" (Philip, 1985; Stepan, 1988). "As the recent literature on the state has reminded us," Remmer says, "state actors may pursue goals, interests, and activities that are not readily reducible to those of the middle class, oligarchy, or other set of social interests...the armed forces may be seen as having concerns that potentially differ from the bourgeoisie as a whole" (1989, p.33).

If the military as a political actor cannot be explained simply as a component of the state, where does its motivation and ultimate loyalty come from? Where do state and military interests diverge? There can be no single answer to this questions, but a political approach to the military seeks to answer them by examining the particular set of influences, interests, and goals that surround the armed forces. Remmer states that "the analysis of military rule consequently should be predisposed on the assumption that the answer to variations among authoritarian regime are to be found in the dynamic interaction between social class forces and state institutions" (1989, p.32). A political account of the military allows for a fuller description of its behavior.

CHAPTER 2

FORMATION AND THE RISE OF PERSONAL RULE
(1823-1944)

An investigation into the formation and evolution of the various branches of the Salvadoran military necessarily leads to a discussion of Salvadoran history itself, for the history of the institution and the country are integrally related. In its participation in politics and government, and through its relations with various domestic and external actors, the military has had a profound effect on the country. In the proceding chapters I will present a history of the Salvadoran military that will hopefully illuminate the complexity and dynamism of the institution.

A certain structure emerges when observing the military over time. The history of the Salvadoran armed forces is best understood by observing a number of themes that run through the institution's history. These are the recurrence of repression and reform in the face of crises and unrest, political intervention by the *juventud militar*, and its perennially unprofessional behavior. The Gramscian terms "passive revolution" and "organic crisis" will be presented as a means of explaining events in El Salvador and the military's response.[3] Above all, I argue that the history of the

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[3] Here I borrow from Robert Fatton, Jr., "Gramsci and the Legitimation of the State: The Case of the Senegalese Passive Revolution:" *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XIX:4 (December 1986), 729-750 and John Girling, "Thailand in Gramscian

Salvadoran military shows it to be a political actor with an internal logic of its own. Where it once did the bidding of the country's elite, the military developed into a complex, factionalized organization that pursued its own interests.

In the following pages I will attempt to bring out aspects and themes of the military that are not adequately explained in the competing paradigms presented above, to answer some of the questions I posed in the introduction, and to try to show the complex and often contradictory behavior of the Salvadoran military.

Of course, imposing such structures on the history of the military can only be done with the benefit of hindsight. As Frank Graziano states in his analysis of the "dirty war" in Argentina, "history is lived forward but read backwards" (1992, p.4). Graziano prefaces his work on the Argentine military with a frank admission of the writer's privileged and biased position that is involved in any attempt to construct a historical narrative. Graziano explains:

> the unlikelihood that the world would present itself in coherent stories endowed naturally with central subjects, highly organized plot structures, thematic integrity, and

Perspective," *Pacific Affairs*, v57 (Fall 1984), 385-403.

Both authors argue for the application of a Gramscian approach to the Third World. I believe that it fits El Salvador particularly well. Girling states: "Like Gramsci's Italy, the latter [the Third World] are developing from traditional or mixed society's into modern industrialized ones. In both early twentieth-century Italy and in the present-day Third World we find the dichotomy of industrial and agrarian sectors; the ambiguity of the peasantry, conservatively attached to the ownership of land but capable of becoming a revolutionary force if deprived of it...", p.386.

moralizable conclusions thus fosters the realization that historical events that seem to `tell themselves' are actually authored constructs with distended and complex connections to their sources of production (1992, p.2).

I find this point especially relevant to El Salvador. As discussed in the introduction, many observers of recent events in that country see the end of authoritarian rule and a transition to democracy. These political developments are often portrayed as the product of El Salvador's inexorable progression toward democracy. Enrique Baloyra, an astute observer of Salvadoran affairs, states "contemporary Salvadoran politics reveals a process of political transition that may lead to democratization....resulting in the installation of a popularly elected government committed to inaugurate a democratic regime" (1986, p.125). While a move to democracy may or may not occur, regarding the history of El Salvador as one moving inevitably toward democracy seems to be an act of creating the kind of "moralizable conclusion" described by Graziano. Salvadoran politics may indeed reveal a transition to democracy, but other processes are also at play. To say that Salvadoran history is "complex" may sound a bit trite, but an explanation that emphasizes certain elements of Salvadoran history at the expense of others will most likely be too simple. The nature of political developments in El Salvador are overdetermined and care must be taken not to treat the country's history as some linear progression to democracy.

Overview

Since it became a sovereign republic in 1847, El Salvador
has been dominated by the complex and often conflictual
interplay of economic elites and the military. In general,
the military has dominated the official reigns of government
while the oligarchy has controlled economic affairs. This
system of military and oligarchic domination shaped the course
of Salvadoran history for more than one hundred years. It was
only in 1979, when a group of young, progressive officers
overthrew the government, that the system was brought to an
end. After 1979, El Salvador was governed by a number of
civilian-military juntas and in 1984, its first "civilian
democracy" was inaugurated. Of course, the period after 1979
also marked the country's descent into a twelve-year civil war
which only recently was brought to an end.

Baloyra has broken the period before the coup of 1979
into three main eras: oligarchic republic (1870-1921),
personal military dictatorship (1932-1944), and institutional
military rule (1948-1979) (1982, p.3). After El Salvador
gained its independence from Spain and then from the Kingdom
of Guatemala, an entrepreneurial class of agricultural elites
emerged. When the cultivation of El Salvador's single export
crop--indigo--was rendered obsolete by the development of a
synthetic form of the dye, El Salvador's economy switched to
a far more profitable crop--coffee. The rise of a new coffee

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elite ushered in the oligarchic republic. This was a regime run by a small group of economic actors who controlled the market, derived social prominence from it, and acquired unchecked political influence.

The world-wide depression in the early 30's brought coffee prices to all-time lows and threw the oligarchy into a profound crisis. Declining demand for coffee abroad and increasing labor unrest in the Salvadoran countryside brought the oligarchic republic to an end. After internal differences were resolved, an increasingly active military took formal political control of the country in 1932. The reigns of government passed from the oligarchy to the military. While the military gained de jure control of the state apparatus, economic elites continued to wield a considerable amount of power. The military, in the form of personal dictatorship and then institutional rule, dominated the course of events in El Salvador for the next fifty years (Baloyra, 1982). To fully comprehend the military's rise to power and its role today, it is necessary to begin with an examination of the oligarchic republic from which the armed forces emerged.

Formation

The military and security forces in El Salvador all trace their roots back to the beginnings of export agriculture and the intense pressure for the commercial utilization of land created by the "coffee boom" in the late 1850s. The so-called

"bourgeois revolution" in 1870 brought with it a change in the means of production in El Salvador and a newly dominant social class. The cultivation of coffee modernized the economy and led to the emergence of a preindustrial state. "Liberals" interested in export agriculture and economic expansion, soon eclipsed the more traditional "conservatives," represented by latifundistas and members of the Catholic church.

Baloyra explains that "concentration and coerced labor enabled the coffee cultivators to accumulate capital rather quickly, to wield tremendous amounts of political influence, and eventually to become hegemonic" (1983, p.299). The government that developed in El Salvador was oligarchic because it recruited its leaders from a narrow social stratum which can be identified with two or three families: Araujo, Melendez, and Quinonez Molina (Baloyra, 1982).

Communal and ejidal lands, once viewed as unproductive by indigo growers, were suddenly seized by coffee planters who recognized the value of the volcanically enriched soil. Coffee grows best at elevations over 1,500 feet, but much of the land at this elevation was owned communally by campesino and indigenous communities. The state solved the problem by instituting a number of decrees which abolished collective property. Soon the land was consolidated into private hands. The process of expropriation engendered a great deal of resistance and violence in the countryside. James Dunkerly states that because of the reaction of the newly dispossessed

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Salvadorans, "it rapidly proved necessary to pass vagrancy laws and set up a regular army precisely to control this mass of landless workers and counteract the wave of squatting, crop-burning and theft to which it made recourse in its plight" (1982, p.12). Thus, the Salvadoran army was born out of the agricultural elite's need for vast amounts of land. The oligarchy's need for land produced unrest in the countryside which in turn created the need for a military to repress it. This rather ironic phenomena was to characterize Salvadoran life for decades to come.

Before the formation of official agencies of coercion, the task of dealing with rebellious peasants was carried out by landowners themselves and their private armies. As the need for a more organized force grew, elements of these private groups were formed into the rural police (1884) and the mounted police (1889). Later, these organizations evolved into the National Guard in 1912 and the Treasury Police in 1936 (Montgomery, 1982).

First constituted in 1824 by General Manuel Arce, the Salvadoran army, technically a force of external security, was more often deployed to quell internal unrest (Blutstein et al, 1971). In an effort to professionalize the army, the Salvadoran government recruited a number of foreign military officials to train their troops. First, several French officers were brought in to train the army. In 1901, President Tomas Regaldo hired a Chilean military mission to

instruct Salvadoran forces. Later in 1912, a Spanish Civil Guard officer was invited to aid in the formation of the country's national guard. In the 1960s under the Alliance for Progress and during the 1980s as well, the US played a prominent role in the training of Salvadoran troops (Arnson, 1982).

Here parallels can be made with the development of South American armies. El Salvador was one of the few Central American countries to receive substantial military training from Europe. These missions were intended to create a disciplined, bureaucratic, hierarchical, and above all apolitical military. This is what is meant by a "professional military." In *Yesterday's Soldiers*, Frederick Nunn argues that the European military training missions in Latin America actually led to a greater propensity within the military to involve itself in politics and eschew civilian authority. The result was a rejection not just of partisan politics but of the political process itself. South American officers reflected the traditional European disdain for civilians and a distinct wariness of civilian democracy (Nunn, 1983). The impact of the European trainers seems to have been similar in El Salvador.

The number of foreign influences brought to bear on the Salvadoran military demonstrates the inadequacy of mono-cultural explanations such as the Iberian legacy. The fact that the same Salvadoran military can goose-step in tight

formation, argue for organic unity, and swear allegiance to constitutional democracy reveals a patchwork of influences not easily stereotyped.

Up until the 1930s, the Salvadoran military was largely subservient to the needs of the oligarchy. The relationship between these two groups, however, was symbiotic. The military assured El Salvador's elite access to land and cheap labor while the oligarchy helped the military to rise to a position of prominence in society and allowed many officers to use the government to line their pockets.

The early years of the republic were characterized by instability and dozens of coups d'etat. Between 1850 and 1900, there were 47 heads of state, only 5 of whom completed their full term (Dunkerly, 1982). Such disorder continued into the twentieth century but with much less frequency. Dunkerly explains that with increasing coffee revenues, the military received a fifth of the national budget and state employment reached the highest level in Central America. This expansion of the state led to monopolization of government by the Melendez-Quinonez clan.

From 1913 until 1931 members of these families dominated the political landscape. "The manner in which the oligarchy accumulated it fabulous wealth," Dunkerly says, "was totally reliant upon the constant expansion of the world economy and strict containment of domestic class conflict" (1982, p.14). By the end of the 1920s neither of these conditions existed.

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In the face of a crisis within the oligarchy, the military stepped into the political spotlight, and arguably, has never left.

Although not a member of the Melendez-Quinonez clan, Pio Romero Bosque was placed into government by the family. Soon after he assumed office, however, he distanced himself from the oligarchy's tradition of exclusionary rule by speaking of the need for social reform. Romero Bosque was a political and economic conservative who alternatively tried to conciliate and repress the masses. Although his efforts at reform were relatively timid, he contributed to all-ready growing social and political unrest. He distinguished himself by presiding over El Salvador's first truly democratic election in 1931, marking a sharp break from the Melendez-Quinonez tradition of appointing its successors.

The overwhelming winner of these elections was Arturo Araujo. Araujo took power at a particularly turbulent time in Salvadoran history. The economic crash of 1929 forced many coffee producers to let their crops rot in the field as prices fell sharply. Relatedly, the fall of coffee prices contributed to growing unrest in the countryside and the development of leftist political groups. Unions and political organizations like the Federacion Regional de Trabajadores de El Salvador (FRTS), Socorro Rojo International (SRI), and the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS) put increasing pressure on the new president for jobs, land, and income distribution.

The militancy of these groups, coupled with the similarly hostile attitude of many members of the elite who resented his monetary policies, undermined Araujo's presidency from the start (Anderson, 1992). Araujo could probally have endured these pressures had he not fallen out of favor with the military, who ultimately overthrew him.

During Araujo's nine-month long administration, the payment of military salaries had fallen into arrears. A group of young officers, protesting their lack of pay and the general incompetence they saw in the government, set in motion a coup that culminated in the installation of General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez to the presidency (Montgomery, 1982). General Martinez[4] was Araujo's vice-president and minister of war and is credited with helping Araujo win the election. General Martinez' assumption of power was a watershed event in the history of the armed forces and the nation in general. The consequences of his twelve-year rule are still felt today (Anderson, 1992; Shulz and Graham, 1984).

Martinez' rise to power marked the transference of the oligarchy's domination of the government apparatus to the military. The nature of this transference, however, is subject to interpretation. Baloyra explains that when the oligarchy was faced with rising pressure for land and labor reform from below, they called upon actors within the military

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[4] The general is always referred to as General Martinez instead of General Hernandez.

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to restore order through repression. In so doing, members of the oligarchy traded their direct monopoly of the government for the preservation of the system of export agriculture. "Since the 1930s this form of domination has centered on a very complex partnership between entrepreneurs linked to the export sector and military officers seeking to neutralize or at least delay the land and labor question and the overall question of democracy" (1983, p.307). In Baloyra's assessment of these events, however, I see a problem that runs throughout much of the writing on El Salvador.

Implicit in his statement is a denial, or at least a failure to recognize, any military autonomy as an initiator of action. He treats the military as if it were an inert organization without any internal motivation or direction. While it is true that the military and security forces of El Salvador were constituted as the coercive arm of the coffee elite, as the institution grew so did a sense of its mission and perception of itself as a political actor. The genesis and subsequent function of the military must be regarded as separate phenomena.

The oligarchy's interests were served by the installation of Martinez, but I maintain the military's actions stem in part from the institution's own goals and ideology. Anderson doubts the existence of any conspiracy between economic elites and their military henchmen (1992, p.78). Not only was the government's failure to pay the military a factor, but some

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weight must be given to the ideology of the young officers involved in the coup. The Escuela Militar, the first military academy in Central America, instilled in its cadets a certain "constitutional" justification for the military's intervention in political affairs when the "national will" was put in jeopardy. Although much of the military's behavior was anti-democratic, the military often attempted to legitimize its behavior by claiming to be defending the Constitution.[5] Finally, the quasi-populist nature of some of Araujo's policies gave rise to the specter of socialism that further induced the military to act against the president (Grieb, 1970; Anderson, 1992).

Romero Bosque and Araujo's cautious attempts at reform raised the expectations of increasingly agitated campesinos, laborers, and students. Any possibility of reform and social change were quickly dashed as General Martinez let loose one of the most repressive reigns of terror the country had ever seen. A poorly organized uprising of indigenous peoples and campesinos in the western region of the country, instigated in part by the Communist Party and other militant groups,

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[5] See the text of Salvadoran military proclamations in Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies Jr., *The Politics of Antipolitics*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), pp.271-86.
    This kind of rhetorical deference to constitutional legitimacy is not unique to El Salvador's military. Jennifer G. Schirmer offers a similar discussion of the Guatemalan military's references to the Constitution in "Rule of Law or Law of Rule." Guatemalan Military Attitudes Toward Law, National Security and Human Rights." (Unpublished paper presented to the New England council on Latin American Studies Conference) (NECLAS), October 22, 1988.

resulted in the massacre of some 10,000 Salvadorans at the hands of the military.[6] *La Matanza*, as the event is known, is regarded by many as the single most important event in the country's Twentieth century history (Anderson, 1992; Schmidt, 1983; Dunkerly, 1982). Three consequences in particular stand out.

To begin with, La Matanza consolidated Martinez' control of government and established a new division of labor within that government. Harald Jung writes,

> The military kept the office of president and the politically important ministries, while the key positions in economic policy were filled by representatives of the bourgeoisie....this division of functions between the military and bourgeoisie continued right through to the 1970s, and emerged intact from all government crises and coups (1986, p.69).

Next, in addition to this new modus vivendi, the armed forces asserted their role as a political actor that would intervene whenever crises arose. This set in motion a cycle that characterized Salvadoran politics for years to come. Faced with rising unrest, the military responded with brutality to squash the turmoil from below. Then, after "order" had been restored, the military initiated a series of luke-warm reforms in the hope of preempting future outbreaks of unrest. Not surprisingly, deep social problems returned to the surface in the form of popular protest and organization

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[6] Many figures have been given as to total number killed ranging from 1,000 to 50,000. Based on Charles Anderson's careful research, 10,000 seems to be the most accurate number.

and was swiftly met with military reprisal (Shulz and Graham, 1984). The cycle then began anew.

General Martinez appears to have followed this cycle. After the rural unrest was effectively eliminated and the corpse-choked streets cleaned up, Martinez recognized the need for some kind of reform. He assigned his minister of *gobernacion* the task of addressing the needs of the inhabitants of the western provinces. With this information, Martinez set out to implement long-term reforms to avert future crises (Anderson, 1992). His efforts resulted in some changes in public health and education (English, 1984). Most of his policies, however, benefitted the coffee sector.

Finally, perhaps the most enduring legacy of La Matanza was the fear that it etched onto the national psyche. For the impoverished majority of El Salvador, the event served as a reminder of the cost of rebellion. To the oligarchy and members of the bourgeoisie, the event took on mythical proportions. Because most of the evidence surrounding the event was destroyed, the facts of the incident have been altered and many Salvadorans came to believe that a great many members of the upper and middle classes had been killed by the rabid masses of campesinos and communists. In reality only a hundred or more had been killed in the violence and most of them were soldiers. The imagery of thousands of peasants coming down from the hills to terrorize the countryside is capitalized on by those who oppose greater enfranchisement and

reform (North, 1982). Any party which advocates social justice, especially if its program involves change in the agrarian sector, is met with the belief that such measures are impossible in a small and overpopulated country like El Salvador. "After all," Stephen Webre states sarcastically, "[it is] only irresponsible Red deceit of the masses that leads them to violence in the pursuit of such chimeras as social and economic justice" (1979, p.9). And finally, La Matanza demonstrated the extremes to which the military was willing to go to maintain the status quo and its definition of "order." The event foreshadowed the military's brutal campaign against insurgency in the 1970s and 1980s.

General Martinez' government is accurately called a military dictatorship, but authority emanated from the man rather than the institution. However, the military and security forces were becoming increasingly organized and institutionalized bodies in the early twentieth century. This fact, coupled with the growing capriciousness of Martinez' rule, led another group of young officers to overthrow him when he attempted to manipulate election laws and force the legislature to extend his term another five years (Schmidt, p.42).

CHAPTER 3
INSTITUTIONAL RULE
(1944-1979)

On April 2, 1944, when Martinez was out of the country, a coup was carried out. Initially repressed by the dictator's troops, the coup led to a general strike by government, bank, and commercial employees, as well as students and professionals. On April 8 Martinez was forced to resign. He appointed one of his generals, Andres Menendez, to act as interim president. Somewhat unexpectedly, Menendez appointed a balanced cabinet and called for prompt elections. A number of candidates clamored for the upcoming election. Had the election be held as planned, the popular civilian Arturo Romero probally would have won. Members of the military high command, however, were not willing to accept the inauguration of a civilian regime. Increasing violence and divisions within the military forced the interim president out of office. The military postponed the elections, and placed Colonel Osmin Aguirre, director of the national police and architect of La Matanza, in power (Webre, 1979).

Aguirre cracked down on members of the opposition, yet went through with the postponed elections. The army's candidate, General Salvador Castenada Castro, was assured victory and on March 5, 1945, Castenada was inaugurated. The primary difficulty of his presidency was maintaining peace within an increasingly divided military.

Revolution of 1948

In the 1940s, at least three factions were visible with the armed forces. One group consisted of senior officers associated with the Martinez regime, such as Aguirre and Castenda. The second faction, who had been involved in the coup of 1944, were made up of younger, more progressive-minded officers whose prominence was to increase during the late 1940s. A third group was made up of a fading minority of patrician liberals who opposed military rule, often from exile (Baloyra, 1982; Webre, 1979). Factionalism was a recurring phenomena in the Salvadoran miliary.

Castenada was distrustful of the faction of young officers and made policies that limited the possibility of their promotion. On December 14, 1948, the morning the president called for a constitutional amendment to extend his term, the group of young officers, known as the *Juventud Militar*, overthrew him. After the now commonplace internal bickering and posturing, the newly dominant group produced a leader: Major Oscar Osorio. Osorio, heading the newly founded party of the "revolution of 1948"--Partido Revolucionario de Unificacion Democratica (PRUD), went on to win the elections of 1950. Thus began an era of institutional military rule and the end of personalistic dictatorship began by Martinez some eighteen years before.

The formation of the PRUD, later named the *Partido de Concilacion Nacional* (PCN), reveals a phenomena common to Latin America's military-as-governments. The PRUD established the military as an elected and constitutional actor, but at the same time an anti-democratic one. The military dominated the political field while legitimating the ambitions of the military through its reference to the Constitution which spelled out its role the defender of "national interests." The PRUD-PCN was simultaneously the state party and the military under which arrangements were made between civilian or military bureaucracy and the oligarchy. This "military party" controlled political life, had majority in the Congress and routinely had a colonel or general "elected" to the presidency.(Rouquie, 1986; 1987).

After Osorio took power, an era of "reformism" began, led by this new group of "progressive" officers, government technocrats, and entrepreneurs who wanted to industrialize the country (Arnson, 1982). The era of military reformism begun in the 1950s can be traced back to the former regime. When observing the military's response to opposition and social unrest, the cycle of unrest, repression, reform, renewed repression becomes apparent (Shulz and Graham, 1984). Why would the military, a group of supposedly rational individuals, pursue a policy of meeting challenges to the status quo with repression if such measures inevitably led to more unrest? Montgomery offers a commonly accepted view of

the military's role in the years after La Matanza. "A constant in Salvadoran life was the use of repression to maintain order when persuasion failed" (1982, p.56). Ultimately, however, this cycle proved to be both costly and counterproductive.

Mason and Krane, in their work on the political economy of state-sanctioned terror in El Salvador, explain that when the regime is faced with an expansion in the opposition's base of support it has two broad strategies to choose from in its effort to meet challenges to its authority: it can either increase its reliance on repression or attempt to accommodate popular demands through reform. The military in El Salvador is trained in coercion and repression, but as the events after 1932 have shown such, the numbers of the opposition as well have put a strain on the state and necessitated that the military balance repression with limited reform as well. Mason and Krane state:

> As raw trainees and para-military deathsquads are unleashed in the countryside, their blunt, arbitrary applications of force will exacerbate the process by which the otherwise uninvolved turn toward the insurgents for security from s t a t e - s a n c t i o n e d terror....eventually, the regime's financial resources will be strained by the cost of constantly expanding its coercive machinery (1989, p.185).

This seemingly self-defeating behavior requires a more careful examination of the forces that are brought to bear on the military and the political calculus it employs. These issues will be taken up in the following chapter. The era of institutional military rule and reformism, I argue, is best

seen as a continuation of the time-tested policies of the past. The difference is the military placed more emphasis on reform than repression and attempted to achieve a state of hegemony. I believe probing the nature of this balance of repression and reform is a key issue in understanding the military.

The "revolution of 1948" is effectively described by the Gramscian terms passive revolution and organic crisis. A passive revolution is derived from the notion that society has to change if is to preserve its most fundamental structures. In essence, a passive revolution is a preemptive response from above to the disorganized but potentially revolutionary demands of the dominated classes. It is the restoration of ruling class power in rearranged and redeployed political forms. "It is," Fatton explains, "a revolution without a revolution" (1986, p.732). The passive revolution is brought on by a profound disruption or threat to the power of the ruling class. This is described by Gramsci as an organic crisis.

According to Gramsci, at certain moments in history society confronts a crisis which engulfs the totality of its structure. Authority is delegitimized, old values disintegrate, the economy is paralyzed, the ruling classes are sustained almost exclusively by force, the dominated classes no longer put up with their subaltern status, and the state cannot guarantee its preservation (Hoare and Smith, 1971).

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The coup of 1948 and other "reformist" ones that followed it, I argue, are well described as a passive revolution. Similarly, the rising militancy of the popular sectors, economic malaise, and other threats to the status quo presented the military with a situation like that of Gramsci's organic crisis. These concepts lead to a recognition of the miliary as a skillful political actor rather than a crude instrument of force. Despite internal divisions and authoritarian policies, the Salvadoran military has shown through its history an exceptional amount of statecraft as demonstrated by it ability to respond to internal crises and external pressures.

Institutional Military Rule

Beginning with the regime of Osorio and ending with the electoral fraud of 1972, the military was engaged in the routine of reform when possible and repression when necessary. Shulz describes politics in El Salvador as a "homeostatic system" in which efforts at reform were limited by repression whenever it threatened to challenge the status quo (1984, p.196). It must be said, however, that some attempts were made by the state to alleviate some of the country's problems. Increased industrialization and agricultural diversification brought on a period of rising prosperity. While revolutionaries were still attacked by the military, moderates were coopted into the system, unions were allowed to organize,

and opposition groups given more freedom. The military's party, Partido Revolutionario de Unificacion Democratica, created a social security system, sponsored the development of housing, and provided agrarian credit to a limited number of campesinos. Although relatively few in number, some of the governments policies led to a rise in the living standards of the country's poor. Of course, deep problems like agrarian reform were never addressed and the power of the military and economic elite was never put in jeopardy. The PRUD, and later the PCN, existed a means for holding on to the military's power. They were not ideological parties, but created for the sole purpose of maintaining a facade of legitimacy (Christian, 1986).

During this period of institutional rule the miliary academy, the *Esquela Militar*, came to a play a large role in fostering the military's identity and reinforcing internal control. Young cadets who made it through tough entrance requirements could expect years of free education and living expenses, and a respectable life-long career afterwards. While they could never become members of the landed class, a Salvadoran officer could aspire to a position in the government or even president (Doyle and Duklis, 1990).

Each graduating class of officers, or *tanda*, generally moves up the ranks together regardless of ability. Members of each *tanda* develop deep bonds of loyalty to each other and help shield fellow members from prosecution and punishment.

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Loyalty to one's *tanda* often takes priority over one's loyalty to the military institution itself (Walter and Williams, 1993). *Tandas* act to thwart the creation of a more professional military and reinforce the fact that not only do the armed forces not blindly serve the needs of the elite, but they often act against the military institution itself. The obligation to protect fellow *Esquela* colleagues often supersedes the officer's obligation to the armed forces or the country.[7]

During institutional military rule, politics in El Salvador followed a course that became routinized. Incremental change was made when convenient to the military and elite. Governments changed hands by either fixed elections or juventud militar-led coups. Unrest from an ever-growing underclass increased, but with noticeably more vehemence.

The Cuban Revolution and the subsequent Alliance for Progress introduced the military to the techniques of counterinsurgency as a new means of combatting the enemy within. Although El Salvador had no guerrilla movements at

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[7] This point is made clear in the Jesuit murders in 1989. Members of La Tandona, the "big class" of 1966, shielded those involved in the crime from prosecutors. Colonel Sigifredo Ochoa, a retired officer and member of ARENA said candidly: "We are finally seeing the consequences of tendencies we have seen within the institution for several years...*tandas* protect each other, that is the problem. The sin is that this large *tanda* has overprotected itself and is bringing down the entire institution," see D. Farah, "Ties of Loyalty Help Salvadoran Military sidestep Full Purge", *Washington Post*. January 12, 1993.

the time, the presence of US military advisers was seen as preventative medicine. The Alliance for Progress and US military advisers had a lasting effect on the country and the military.

The Alliance for Progress put modernization theory into practice. The program consisted of two main elements: military and economic aid. By providing El Salvador's military with training in counterinsurgency and civic action, the United States hoped to create a professional institution capable of defeating Cuban-type revolutionaries and winning the support of the masses. Through economic aid and investment, the Alliance for Progress sought to foster the growth and modernization of democratic ideals (Phillip, 1985).

During the height of the program in 1962-1965, El Salvador got more funds than any other Central American republic. The United States strongly influenced the growth of such infrastructures as transportation, oil refining, and electricity. The CIA called El Salvador "one of the hemisphere's most stable, progressive republics" (LeFeber, 1984). By the middle 1960s, the growth in food processing, textiles, chemical production, and many other industries placed El Salvador ahead of all other Central American countries in economic output (Dunkerly, 1982). The Alliance for Progress was intended to reform some of the inequities in Salvadoran society and thus undermine the conditions that might make the country susceptible to revolutionary

machinations. Rather than alleviate social and economic problems, however, the Alliance for Progress intensified them.

The oligarchy was traditionally leery of foreign investment, but became increasingly supportive of the favorable terms presented in the Alliance for Progress. Between 1961 and 1975, 80-90 percent of agricultural credit was channeled to export enterprise (Dunkerly, 1982). Washington's policies helped to increase the wealth and power of many sectors of the agricultural elite. Another enduring effect of the Alliance for Progress was its impact on the Salvadoran military.

The CIA, the Green Berets and the US State department all played a role in the development of sophisticated security forces trained in counterinsurgency. Many Salvadoran soldiers were brought to the US-run School for the Americas in the Canal Zone where they were schooled in unconventional warfare. One of the most notorious groups created by the US was the *Organizacion Democratica Nacionalista* (ORDEN). ORDEN sought to undermine the support of El Salvador's growing revolutionary movements by engaging the campesinos in various civic-action projects and defense organizations. Peasants who joined ORDEN were often provided favorable credit terms, health care, and employment. For many of El Salvador's rural poor, ORDEN was a means out of poverty (Jung, 1986). In return, campesinos were required to participate in defense patrols and report subversive activities to the miliary and

National Guard. As it developed, the organization became a powerful means of repression in the countryside.

ORDEN occupied an ambiguous state role. Technically controlled by the president, daily control rested with the Ministry of Defense. ORDEN had no formal budget, no published statues and no public accountability. Dunkerly describes the organization as a kind of fascist political party that sought to incorporate a mass movement of peasants pledged to the destruction of unions and revolutionary groups (1982, p.76). Whether ORDEN was ever envisioned as a mass party in the countryside is debatable, but it is clear that the organization was a source of violence and terror in the countryside. *Patrullas Cantonales*, a part-time police force organized by ORDEN, were responsible for widespread abuses and outright murder (LeFeber, 1984).

The military's involvement in ORDEN epitomizes its two-pronged strategy: tepid attempts at reform and legitimation backed by coercion and repression. This behavior can be described by inverting Gramsci's formula of "hegemony armored by coercion." We can speak of the military as a coercive institution wrapped in hegemony: when the protective cover of ideology and legitimation is stripped away, its coercive core is revealed (Hoare and Smith, 1971; Lowy and Sader, 1985).

Military presidents continued to experiment with small amounts of political and social reform. President Adalberto Rivera, who had come to power through yet another coup in

1961, sought to alleviate growing internal pressure, as well as pressure from the US, by opening the electoral process to opposition parties (Montgomery, 1982). The most significant party to emerge from this newly created political space was the Christian Democrat party (PDC). The support this new party was able to generate ultimately led to an end to the military's experiment with limited reform and liberalization.

A new president, General Sanchez Hernandez, came to power in a typically fraudulent election in 1967. Hernandez was the army's candidate and head of the Partido Reconciliation Nacional (PCN), the revamped form of PRUD. Hernandez inherited a country that was showing increasingly large fissures. Support for opposition parties and criticism of the regime put heavy pressure on the government. Labor protests and student-led strikes became more frequent. The new president railed against communist subversion and received larger amounts of counterinsurgency training from the US (Webre, 1979). Internal pressures were alleviated, albeit temporarily, by the "Soccer War" with Honduras in 1969.

Long existing border disputes, as well as El Salvador's exploding population are cited as the principal causes of the hundred-day war (Browning, 1971; Anderson, 1971). The Salvadoran military won the war with Honduras and also seems to have bought itself a quick dose of legitimacy at home. The Christian Democrats went from winning 78 municipalities in 1967 to a mere eight in 1970. The PCN, capitalizing on an

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upsurge of nationalist sentiment, won 60 percent of the vote in the 1970 elections (Shulz and Graham, 1984). The military's new-found legitimacy, however, was short-lived. The cycle that had existed for some forty years broke down with the events surrounding the elections of 1972 and 1977.

The euphoria surrounding El Salvador's military victory soon faded. Demographic pressures, once alleviated by a tradition of migration to Honduras, increased as El Salvador was forced to absorb 130,000 Salvadoran refugees that had fled from Honduras. El Salvador had enjoyed a lucrative market with its neighbor, but the war brought it to a halt and further strained the government. What President Johnson had once called, "a model for the other Alliance countries," was rapidly deteriorating. In 1971, ten years after the Alliance for Progress began, the number of landless families had tripled (LeFeber, 1984). Clearly, to avert further crises, some kind of agrarian reform would have to be initiated. The implementation of such policy, however, was intolerable to the country's elite.

President Hernandez, perhaps realizing the powder-keg he was sitting on, sought to address the issue of land reform. A National Agrarian Reform Congress was held in 1970. In elections for March of that year, Hernandez made known his plans to enact reforms in agriculture, education, and government administration. Predictably, the oligarchy reacted with alarm. Under heavy pressure and for the sake of self-

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survival, Hernandez was forced to moderate his policies (Shulz and Graham, 1984).

Meanwhile, the military found itself increasingly isolated. The popularity of the PDC grew as the party joined forces with other opposition forces and formed the National Opposition Union (UNO) behind the leadership of Jose Napoleon Duarte in a bid for the 1972 elections. The PCN, under sustained attack from the oligarchy and other members of the far-right, faced mass desertions from the party. While Hernandez recognized the need for moderate reform, he was not about to allow the PCN to be defeated in the upcoming elections of 1972. The candidate chosen to run against UNO was Colonel Arturo Armando Molina, Hernandez' personal secretary.

When election day came on February 20, the government's fears were confirmed. At first Molina was ahead, but as vote tallies began to come from the more populated areas, UNO's victory seemed clear. Molina suffered his most severe loss in San Salvador, home of 30 percent of the country's registered voters, where Duarte beat him by a margin of two to one (Webre, 1979). When it became clear that the PCN was going to lose, the government banned the broadcasting of election returns and later announced that its candidate--Molina--had won by a slim margin. Duarte was arrested, tortured, and driven into exile. A small group of junior officers launched an ill-fated coup. Although they were not associated with

UNO, they supported the coalition in denouncing the military's fraudulent behavior. The revolt was quickly put down when it became clear the officers would generate no national support. On February 25, the National Assembly convened and elected Molina president, who had only obtained a plurality of the vote.

In one sense, the election of 1972 was typical of Salvadoran politics. Faced with an unfavorable electoral outcome, the military committed blatant fraud to assure it won. What was different about this election, was that it produced a radicalization in the opposition and terminated any pretense of moderation or reform.

Deterioration of the Regime

The "homeostatic system" of institutional military rule had been forever disrupted. The system intended to maintain the domination of the armed forces in an alliance with the more significant economic groups in the country. But, as Baloyra explains, "the elections of 1972 and the military revolt represent a drastic discontinuity in the operation of the Salvadoran model of one-party domination" (1982, p.48). Where before the system had been characterized by the alternate uses of repression and reform, the military came to rely almost exclusively on repression.

Baloyra explains that regime deterioration is brought on by two main factors: the government is unable to either

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maintain order or control the growing animosity between itself and society, and the emergence of a well-organized opposition confronts the regime, mobilizing the population and becoming a viable alternative (Baloyra, 1985). After the electoral fraud of 1972, the Salvadoran government found itself in such a crisis. Increased reliance on repression, economic malaise, and the rise of guerrilla groups such as the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) and the Farabundo Marti Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), hastened the deterioration of the military regime. While social and political problems in El Salvador have deep roots, the events of 1972 and there after marked the beginning of the country's descent into internecine conflict, and ultimately, civil war.

Traditionally, when faced with a crisis the military responded with a combination of carrots and sticks in an effort to regain its balance and legitimacy. The government of Colonel Molina was no exception. Under the banners of "law and order" and "anticommunism" Molina's first act was to close the National University which was seen as a communist stronghold (Webre, 1979). During Molina's presidency, the military opened fire on a group of students protesting the government's expenditure of $30 million on the 1975 Miss Universe pageant. At least 37 were killed and many were disappeared (Montgomery, 1982).

Violence in El Salvador seemed to exist on a quid-pro-quo basis. As one group committed an act of violence, retribution

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from the other end of the political spectrum was sure to follow. Members of the ERP and FPL specialized in bankrobbing, kidnapping of prominent Salvadorans, and assassination. An increasingly radicalized right-wing, backed wealthy landowners and reactionary members of the military, formed para-military and deathsquads to combat what they saw as the rising communist threat. Patterned after ORDEN, groups such as Anti-Communist Wars of Liberation Armed Forces (FALANGE) and the White Warrior's Union (UGB) terrorized peasant groups in the countryside, members of the clergy, and all other "subversives" (Pyes, 1986).

While the repression undertaken by Molina was not unique, the efforts he made to appease rising social unrest were. Most of his reforms were modest, such as raising the minimum wage for agricultural workers and nationalizing the International Railroad of Central America. Molina's efforts at agrarian reform were more ambitious. In an attempt to regain hegemony, Molina attempted to address the most explosive issue in El Salvador: agrarian reform. Agrarian reform had been effectively off limits as subject of debate since *La Matanza* and thus the president's efforts were highly controversial.

Molina initiated a program of "agrarian transformation"--the term agrarian reform was seen as too provocative--that sought to pacify the swelling number of landless and campesinos. Rural unemployment reached 57 percent in 1973 and

Molina feared more trouble in the countryside if he did not do something (Arnson, 1982).

Molina began by decreeing the nationalization of 61,000 hectares of cattle and cotton land which was to be divided among 12,000 campesino families (Montgomery, 1982: 90). Next Molina sponsored a law in 1974 that provided for the forced rental of unexploited and underexploited lands. Another law passed in 1975 created the Salvadoran Institute of Agrarian Transformation (ISTA) which would facilitate the transfer of land. The creation of ISTA, rather than quell a highly volatile situation, seemed only to add fuel to the fire. Conservative members of the oligarchy reacted with new ferocity in opposition to ISTA. The agrarian program produced an intense confrontation between Molina and his group of reform-minded officers and the traditional oligarchy. Not only was this a conflict between civilians and the military, Baloyra explains, but a fight between two members of the upper class as well.

Members of the industrial bourgeoisie, considerably more moderate than large landowners, saw some kind of land reform as a necessity. The traditional oligarchy, on the other hand, regarded any kind of enfranchisement or appeasement of the rural population as unacceptable. Two organizations, the Asociation Nacional de la Empresa Nacional (ANEP) and the militant Frente Agrario de la Region Oriental (FARO) launched a political and media blitz to defeat the program.

Ultimately, the oligarchy got what it wanted (Baloyra, 1982). Molina agreed to a "compromise" that effectively defanged ISTA.

The crisis brought on by ISTA is instructive in many ways. The event provides an example of the military's tenacious belief in the utility of reform and repression. President Molina inherited a grave situation that got worse. The first part of his presidency was marked by an effort to regain "order" and silence the opposition. Then, after asserting his authority, Molina thought he could follow up with a number of reforms and preempt an impending crisis in the countryside, as had been done in the past. Events in El Salvador had deteriorated to such a degree, however, that piecemeal efforts could no longer work. The population was well over three million in the 1970s, leftist groups had taken up arms against the government, previously inert campesinos were increasingly organized, and the country's economy continued to worsen. And in the middle of this, the agricultural elite was determined to hold its privileges, whatever the cost. Molina's presidency and the ISTA crisis also demonstrate the resurgent factionalism within the armed forces. One of the most enduring features of Salvadoran politics has been the number of coups, counter-coups, and reforms initiated by the reformist wing of the military or *juventud militar*. The events of the 1970s placed a wider gulf between sectors of the military and the oligarchy. During the

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Molina administration, the military had exceeded its assigned role as manager of the regime and had to be put in its place by the oligarchy.

The fraud perpetrated in the presidential elections of 1977 came as a surprise to no one. The new president, General Carlos Humberto Romero, was a counterinsurgency expert who was reported to have threatened Molina with a coup if he went forward with his land reforms (Montgomery, 1982). Romero assumed office without any pretense of reform.

During Romero's tenure violence continued unabated and both the far right and left became more militant. Romero, convinced that reform would not work, relied on repression. Romero was influenced by ANEP and FARO to deal more harshly with the opposition (Guidos Vejar, 1980). In 1977, he passed the Law for the Defense and Guarantee of Public Order which was, in essence, a declaration of martial law. The law did little to stop mass rallies and labor strikes, but was responsible for an escalation state-sponsored violence. Under Romero, political assassinations increased tenfold, prosecutions of "subversives" increased threefold and the number of disappearances doubled (Baloyra, 1982). These numbers do not include guerrilla violence, which increased as well. El Salvador soon gained the epithet of one of the worst violators of human rights.

The military and the oligarchy traditionally maintained a defensive alliance to maintain order, control the economy,

and stave off rising unrest and popular mobilization. The 1970s, however, represent the growth of conflict within the ever-tenuous military-oligarchic relationship.

As discussed above, the moves made by Molina and the progressive wing of the military in agrarian reform enraged the members of the traditional oligarchy. Romero's presidency was first seen as a return to power by the reactionary wing of the armed forces. Romero's heavy-handed measures and rejection of his predecessor's reforms were received favorably by the economic elite. In spite of what seemed like a return to a symbiotic relationship between the military and elite, however, antipathy for Romero grew not only among the popular sector, but within the oligarchy as well. The differences occurred on ideological lines.

The military's overriding commitment was to the defense of the state and maintenance of institutional interests and the pursuit of these goals often eclipsed oligarchic interests (Walter and Williams, 1993). For example, the Asociacion Salvadorena de Beneficiadores y Exportadores de Cafe (ABECAFE), an oligarchic stronghold, ran into conflict with the Compania Salvadorena de Cafe (COSCAFE), a state-run enterprise. In 1978, COSCAFE found it necessary to restrict exports in an effort to combat the fall of coffee prices. The ABECAFE, composed of powerful export families, vigorously opposed the government's actions (Baloyra, 1982). Despite their opposition to the government, COSCAFE won out. This

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incident demonstrates a breech of the military's traditional role. No longer were economic matters dictated solely by oligarchic interests. The armed forces began to assert autonomy in economic affairs.

As guerrilla armies and popular organizations continued to organize and grow, the military's ideology and behavior centered on anticommunism, while the oligarchy's primary interests lay in maintaining a favorable trade climate and economic autonomy. In spite of the military's crackdown on the opposition, long-existing fissures between the military and oligarchy grew wider and the system became dangerously unstable. Tensions increased as a result of the military's need to increase the repression of the well-organized opposition. Romero's status as an international pariah and his inability to maintain order at home led to the rupture of the military-oligarchic coalition and, ultimately, his overthrow.

On October 12, 1979 a coup was undertaken. When it became clear that all units of the armed forces had withdrawn their support for Romero, he fled the country. On the 15th, the military explained its actions in the "Proclamation of the Armed Forces of El Salvador." The document condemned the Romero administration's for violating human rights, corruption, ruining the economy, and sullying the name of the armed forces and El Salvador (Loveman and Davies, 1989). It identified the source of the country's problems in the

"inadequate economic, social, and political structures which have traditionally prevailed in the country." Electoral fraud and underdevelopment had resulted from the "ancestral privilege of the dominant class" (Loveman and Davies, 1989). To remedy these problems, the military proposed a wide-ranging program that included a full amnesty, an end to human rights abuses, and agrarian reform. The military also pledged to provide food, housing, and health care to all citizens and promised free and open elections (Dunkerly, 1982). As events unfolded, however, it became clear that the military's efforts were too late to prevent a social and political explosion long in the making.

CHAPTER 4

FROM CIVIL WAR TO UNCERTAIN PEACE
(1979-1992)

The October coup, like those of 1944, 1948, and 1960, sought to bring forth a new generation of military officers claiming to represent a clean break with the past. The success of the Nicaraguan revolution some four months earlier sent a powerful message to the military in El Salvador that caused many officers to wonder if they too could fall to the guerrillas. In many ways, then, the October coup was a preemptive act designed to counter a similar explosion in El Salvador, another example of Gramsci's passive revolution. In this respect the coup was similar to previous ones that sought to rebalance the system of reform and repression. As events progressed however, the October coup ushered a new, and more violent, era.

While it is true that members of the *juventud militar* genuinely believed in the need for some reform, the military's highly charged rhetoric must be heard with a critical ear. The coup-maker's desire to distance themselves from the "ancestral privilege" of the oligarchy was not born out of any heart-felt democratic ideals, but out of institutional interest. The military sought to increase its power, not lessen it.

Many things stayed the same. While the military's proclamation pledged to abolish ORDEN, the *patrullas*

cantonales would remain intact. Further, obligatory military service and civic action projects were to be maintained. The proclamation made no mention of democratizing civil-military relations nor reducing the military's well-entrenched role in the state (Walter and Williams, 1993). Because the military's efforts amounted to too little too late, it becomes clear in retrospect why the country rapidly descended into a long and bloody civil-war. Furthermore, as Walter and Williams explain, the paradox of events following the coup was that:

> at the very time that a military-dominated junta was transferring power to a civilian president, the military was successfully consolidating its presence in the state, expanding its network of control in the countryside, and maintaining its institutional autonomy (1993, p.55).

I will show that although power was handed over to civilians, the military actually embedded itself deeper in political affairs and thus stood in the way of meaningful democratic gains.

The October coup, the civil war, and the peace accords of 1992 are adequately discussed in a large number of works (Gettleman, et al, 1986; Klare and Kornbluh, 1988; Lefeber, 1983; Karl, 1992). It is not my intention to narrate that which is already well known. This chapter, therefore, will attempt to synthesize some of the main events and developments of this period as they relate to the military. In particular, I will examine the development of civil-military relations,

the role of the United States, changes in military ideology, and the armed forces' part in ending the war.

The Civil-Military Juntas

The coup was undertaken by at least three factions within the military. The first group was made up of reactionary elements of the armed forces who appear to have played a small role in formulating the subsequent proclamation. The second group was headed by Colonel Adolfo Majano and a number of young, reform-minded officers. This group had links with the ill-fated coup of 1972. Majano believed in the need for basic reforms, but also advocated direct military confrontation with the guerrillas. The third group involved in the coup had close ties with the US. This faction was headed by Colonel Jaime Abdul Gutierrez, commander of the military academy, and Colonel Jose Guillermo Garcia, president of the state telecommunications agency ANTEL.

The months that followed the coup were marked by an intense period of political maneuvering among the military, various political parties, and increasingly, the US government. Out of the rather chaotic events of the coup emerged the first of four civilian-military juntas. The junta was led by Colonel Majano, Colonel Gutierrez and three civilians. The civilian members were Raymond Mayorga, former president of the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA); Guillermo Ungo, general secretary of the socially democratic National

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Revolutionary Movement (MNR); and Mario Andino, a moderately conservative businessman (Montgomery, 1982). The members of the junta sought to implement the goals outlined in the military's proclamation, but it rapidly became apparent that the military members of the coup did little to follow through with their promised reforms and drifted sharply to the right.

Colonel Gutierrez appointed his former boss at ANTEL, Colonel Jose Guillermo Garcia, to the post of defense minister. Garcia had earned a reputation for his harsh treatment of peasant groups when he served as a commander in the San Vincente region. Next, Garcia and Gutierrez appointed Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova as director of the National Guard and Carlos Reynaldo Lopez Nuila as head of the National Police. Both appointees belonged to a hard-line faction of the military (Arnson, 1982). The new military high command resembled the conservative military of old rather than a reformist one.

The civilian participants in the junta agreed to take part in it because they believed the *juventud militar* could keep the other factions in check and because they thought this faction of the military was committed to significant reform. Neither belief proved true.

It became clear that the reformist members of the military and their civilian allies in the junta had no control over the military and security forces. In the first week of the junta, 160 people were killed in clashes with the police

(LeFeber, 1986). On December 27, 1979, a group of civilian government ministers, justices of the Supreme Court, and directors of state enterprises demanded that Consejo Permanente de la Fuerza Armada (COPEFA) assert its authority over the reactionary elements of the armed forces and reconfirm its commitment to the reforms spelled out in the early days of the October coup. COPEFA was created by the junior officers involved in the coup to represent the views of the reformsit wing of the military and make sure the principles of the junta were carried out.

COPEFA responded that it, "was not a political organization [and] could not be diverted from its institutional mission by extremist attempts" (Baloyra, 1982). In essence, the group claimed it wouldn't give the civilians what they wanted. Ungo and Mayorga charged that, "the false notion of the neutrality of the military as an institution....has generated a rightward turn in the process of democratization and social change" (Arnson, 1982). On January 3, 1980, two civilian members of the junta, Ungo and Mayorga, and all but one of the cabinet ministers resigned.

The departure of the civilians left the military with few allies. In the face of rising international pressure, especially from the US, the military needed to maintain a semblance of reform. In 1977, President Carter cut military aid from the Molina administration for human rights abuses and despite the more conservative views of the Reagan

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administration, the military knew it had to moderate itself in the eyes of the US. The Reagan administration was determined to prevent "another Nicaragua" and was prepared to train and fund the Salvadoran military provided they could be portrayed as "reformed" to the US Congress and public. This proved difficult.

On January 9, 1980, a second junta was formed with two members of the Christian Democrats, Jose Antonio Morales Ehrlich and Hector Dada. The new junta, decidedly more conservative than the former, immediately came under attack from the guerrillas, the Catholic church, and center-left politicians. The US, however, found the new coalition more than acceptable and promised thirty-six military advisers so the military could wage a "clean counter-insurgency war."[8] Dada, who soon became disillusioned with the pace of reforms, resigned from the junta. He was replaced by Jose Napolean Duarte, the popular Christian Democrat who had been in exile since the military denied him the presidency in 1972. To add a veneer of badly needed legitimacy, the junta named Duarte president. This unlikely alliance announced a land reform program and a return to civilian rule under the terms of a new constitution to be written by a Constituent Assembly to be

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[8] A "clean counterinsurgency" were the words used by acting Salvadoran charge d'affaires James Cheek to describe the effects of US military aid.

elected in 1982. The PDC-military alliance would last through two more juntas.

Although it had dubious intentions, the naming of a civilian to the presidency marked a fundamental change in the military's behavior. For fifty years the military had controlled the office of the presidency. Suddenly, the second junta named the very man driven out of the country when he contested military rule in 1972. This is an exceedingly important event that is inadequately addressed in the literature on the Salvadoran military. It became clear in the following years, however, that although the military ceded titular control of the presidency to civilians, its gave up little real power. In fact, freed from the burden of heading the executive, the armed forces distanced themselves from civil society and entrenched themselves deep into the state.

In a 1981 interview, Duarte remarked, "the army, as an institution, is willing to accept political solutions, but the others, the National Guard and the National Police, have been trained for 50 years to do it the other way...." (Buckley, 1986). The important point here is that the military *did* accept a political solution, but not one that lessened their power or necessarily brought the country any closer to democracy. The armed forces had become shrewd players of the political game.

The 1980 land reform was designed to proceed in three phases. Phase I would convert estates larger than 500

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hectares into peasant cooperatives. Phase II would affect farms between 100 and 500 hectares. Phase III would transfer title of rented land to the current tenants, up to limit of seven hectares per household. In each phase, former landowners would be compensated in cash and bonds (Browning, 1983). Phase I was largely completed by the time of the 1982 elections, and phase III's implementation has already begun. Phase II, on the other hand, would have encroached on most of the coffee growing lands, and was postponed indefinitely, attesting to the still-powerful coffee oligarchy (Mason and Krane, 1989). In the face of powerful guerrilla armies, the land reform was designed as an effort to siphon away popular support for the guerrillas.

In April 1980, after years of infighting, El Salvador's revolutionary groups agreed to unite under the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) (Le Feber, 1986). The FDR brought together sixteen different groups into one political organization. The FMLN was comprised of five guerrilla groups. Although the groups involved in the FMLN-FDR alliance differed ideologically, they were united in their determination to overthrow the government. With almost 10,000 troops, the FMLN was powerful enough in 1981 to launch a "final offensive." Although the offensive did not accomplish its desired results, it drew the new Reagan administration deep into the conflict.

At the other end of the political spectrum, the radical right was busy waging its own kind of war. The disloyal right[9] regarded the land reform as treason and sought to eliminate all subversive elements. During the reform's first year, deathsquads and security forces assassinated over 500 peasant leaders, ISTA officials, Catholic and lay priests, land reform workers, as well as hundred of members of peasant unions and cooperatives (Mason and Krane, 1989). In 1981, the year Phases I and III were being implemented 12,501 "extra-judicial killings of civilians not engaged in armed combat" occurred (Simon and Stephens, 1982). Once a hodge-podge of both legal and illegal political groups, the disloyal right soon formed a well-organized political party. Major Roberto D'Aubuisson, a former intelligence chief with strong ties to the Union Guerrera Blanca (UGB) paramilitary group, founded the National Republican Alliance (ARENA) in September of 1981 and announced his plans to enter the 1982 elections.

1982 ELECTIONS

As promised, on March 28, 1982 elections were held. Given the El Salvador's history of fraudulent elections, Salvadorans did not greet the upcoming event with the same enthusiasm as the Reagan administration did. The US placed

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[9] The term disloyal right as defined by Baloyra as groups or individuals who engage in obstructionist tactics in order to political the inauguration or consolidation of a democratic regime. In the Salvadoran case, the term refers to those who have attempted to thwart the goals of the October coup.

its entire Salvadoran policy on the outcome of the elections. The event was a classic example of a "demonstration election."

A demonstration election, as defined by Frank Brodhead and Edward Herman, is an election in which the selection of political leaders is secondary to a more important agenda. The main purpose of the election is to convince the citizens of the US that its client state (in this case El Salvador) is "democratic" and "freely chosen" (Broadhead and Herman, 1982). Only by demonstrating the democratic virtues of the Salvadoran government could the Reagan administration legitimize to the US Congress and public ever-growing amounts of military and economic largesse.

By March 1982, some 30,000 Salvadorans had died at the hands on security forces and deathsquads. Public opinion in the US was decidedly against the support of such a regime. If Duarte and the Christian Democrats won in a "free and fair election", the US could point to its support of a centrist government and self-determination (Broadhead, 1986). The FMLN-FDR saw the political climate stacked strongly against them and decided to boycott the elections. Thus, the two main contenders were ARENA and the PDC. To Washington's chagrin, D'Aubbuison and ARENA won thirty-six of the sixty seats in the constituent assembly. Duarte and the PDC, despite strong US backing, only won twenty-four seats.

Before the election, the US state department had denounced D'Aubbuisson as the leader of a "right-wing

terrorist group" and claimed that only Duarte could restore democracy to El Salvador. "After the election," LeFeber explains, "the United States had to accept D'Aubbuisson as the country's legislative leader--and elected by the process the Reagan administration had devised" (1986, p.288). Washington, it seemed, only found elections useful when their candidate won. After intense pressure and threatening to withhold military aid, the US forced the Constituent Assembly to elect, Alvaro Magana, a moderate businessman and member of the centrist Accion Democratica (AD) instead of the unsavory D'Aubbuisson.

CIVILIAN RULE AND CIVIL WAR

Magana tried to give his government a more moderate face by appointing by civilians to important positions such as Minister of the Interior and by replacing those military officers serving as ambassadors. Magana's administration, however, proved to be more of a "contraption" than a government (Baloyra, 1982). The government attempted to balance the interests of the newly invigorated right, the despondent PDC, and a factionalized military. In addition to this, the Reagan administrations's need for the trappings of a democratic government added strain to the government. As Duarte remarked some years later, "Magana was viewed as a friend by the military, politically neutral, acceptable to the UN Embassy, a good compromise. The entire officer corps was

consulted and approved" (Manwaring and Prisk, 1988). Juggling these interests was no easy task.

The land reform agenda set out in 1980 was largely put on hold. Only Phase I had been implemented and, of the land affected by the program, 69 percent of it had been used for cattle grazing and thus was not well-suited to crop cultivation. Further, only 9 percent of coffee acreage was subject to Phase I redistribution (Mason, 1986).

The provisional and unwieldy Magana administration was followed by the election of Duarte in 1984 in another election in which the US played a highly visible role. Duarte won by a comfortable margin. Washington had finally gotten what it wanted: a popularly elected, moderate president. Although the conditions surrounding the election were suspect, the Reagan administration was jubilant and was not concerned about such details as obligatory voting, the limited number of voting stations, retribution for not voting, and a generalized climate of fear. With the party of their choice in power (PDC), US policy followed a pattern: vocal support for "reform" and "democracy" while it showered the military with unprecedented amounts of aid and training in low-intensity warfare. Where once the Salvadoran military pointed to a vague "communist threat" and sought to repress students, unions, and priests, in 1980 the military had a full-fledged war on its hands and seemingly unlimited amounts of North American aid with which to fight it.

In 1980, US military aid to the Salvadoran armed forces amounted to six million dollars. This money was approved by the Carter administration one week after the assassination of Archbishop Romero, but was suspended after the military's highly publicized role in the murder of four North American churchwomen. In 1981, that figure jumped from $35.5 million to $82 million in 1982 (LeFeber, 1984). By 1987, Washington had provided more than $3.2 billion in economic and military aid. This amounted to the equivalent $6,700 per Salvadoran and more than six times the country's per capita income in 1987 (Siegel and Hackel, 1988). By the war's end in 1992, the US had provided the military with more one billion dollars in military aid.

With the huge infusion of aid, the size of the armed forces grew rapidly. In 1981, when US military aid was just beginning, the military and security forces numbered 12,000. In 1984, that number had reached 42,000. Of course the number of FMLN combatants increased as well, though the exact figures were never known. In 1984, the guerrillas had about 10,000 troops, up from 2,500 in 1981. And in 1992, the armed forces numbered 60,000--the largest military in Central America.

It is difficult to say exactly when El Salvador's civil war began. Within the left, casualties inflicted by the government had been accumulating for more than five decades. For leftist groups and campesinos alike, everyday life was a fight for survival. Guerrillas had been fighting against the

government since the 1970s, but it is possible to say it was not until five of these groups united under the FMLN umbrella that the war began in earnest. The FMLN's less than successful "final offensive" in January 1981 seems to have escalated the war for all involved: the FMLN, the Salvadoran military, and the US (Dunkerly, 1982).

In partnership with its civilian allies, the FMLN succeeding in establishing itself as "a representative political force" in the eyes of France and Mexico, which called for negotiations between the two sides in 1981. By 1983, according to most accounts, the guerrillas were actually winning the war, while the Reagan administration and its Salvadoran clients, pledged to "draw the line against communism" in El Salvador, what ever the cost (Karl, 1992). Increasingly, the interests of the Salvadoran armed forces became indistinguishable from those of their North American patrons.

Magana's ascension to the presidency in 1982 coincided with a rightward swing, a *derechizacion*, within the military. Defense Minister Colonel Jose Guillermo Garcia was ousted by the more recalcitrant elements in the military. Garcia was criticized for his willingness to do the United States' bidding as demonstrated by his role in denying D'Aubuisson the provisional presidency in 1982. After several months of internal conflict, Garcia was forced to resign and was replaced by the more ideologically rigid General Vides

Casanova, the former of the National Guard. As the war dragged on, the institutionalization of military abuses became widespread. The Reagan administration attempted to portray the right-wing violence in El Salvador as the work of extremists not affiliated with the regime. This, however, was not the case.

The US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence reported in 1985 that numerous Salvadoran military and security forces as well as other official organizations were involved in encouraging or conducting deathsquad activity or other violent abuses, and the officers involved in these abuses appear to have been part of a rightist terrorist underground (Diskin and Sharpe, 1986). Journalist Leonel Gomez states:

> it is not an accident that....people have been systematically eliminated by uniformed soldiers or plainclothes policemen....It is not surprising that not a single massacre has been investigated and not a single officer disciplined for carrying out that policy. The Security council must cover its own complicity in these crimes....(Diskin and Sharpe, 1986).

The civilian governments, beginning with Magana and followed by Duarte in 1984 and Christiani in 1988, set in motion a new type of regime. These regimes were characterized by a civilian president with relatively little real power, an entrenched and powerful military, and a dependence on US funds and aid. This new arrangement lasted until the end of the war in 1992. This situation represents more of a continuation of the past than any move toward democracy. This point is made

clear by an examination of what the military actually gave up when presidential power was given to civilians.

Rather than decrease, the military's power has actually increased with the ascendancy of civilians to the presidency. It is possible to point to three factors or events that contributed to the growth of the military's role in Salvadoran society. These factors are the military's presence in various state enterprises, the terms of the constitution of 1983, and the US sponsored low-intensity warfare programs.

To begin, the juntas following the October coup kept many important autonomous institutions in the hands of the military. Among others, these included ANTEL *(Administracion Nacional de Telecomminicaciones)*, CEPA *(Comision Ejecutiva Portuario Autonoma)*, ISSS *(Instituto Salvadoreno del Seguro Social)* CEL *(Comision Ejecutiva Hidroelectrica del Rio Lempa)*, *Direccion General de Transporte Terreste*, *Direccion General de Estadistica y Censos*, the customs office and Civil Aeronautics. The military also headed the Ministry of Public Health and the Subsecretaries of the Interior and Agriculture (Walter and Williams, 1993). The military's continued presence in these agencies insured that the military's state-role would be difficult to erode.

Both Magana and Duarte had some success in reducing the influence of the military in government, but where unable to root them out of several key positions. Throughout the 1980s the military retained control of the security forces,

intelligence agencies, and the military court system. Further, the civilian executives exercised little influence over the military budget, promotions, and training. Control by the military effectively limits the ability of a civilian government to advance interests contrary to those of the armed forces (Pion-Berlin, 1992). The armed forces have shown little regard for civilian politicians and their ability to manage the government.

A second factor affecting the military's continued presence in the state is the 1983 Constitution. The Constitution afforded the military the primary responsibility for guaranteeing compliance with the new Constitution and other laws, ensuring the national defense and maintenance of law and order, and defending the "democratic' system of government (Walter and Williams, 1993). Though a civilian occupied the presidency, the military was given the *legal* ability to enforce its will with relatively little civilian oversight. The military's claim to represent the constitution and the welfare of the nation is a powerful weapon.

Rouquie explains, "those who hold military power know that, whatever they say, there still exists above them a superior legitimacy, the constitutional order" (1986, p.110). These seems to be the case in El Salvador. Although much of it may be simply rhetoric, the Salvadoran military does find the need to at least maintain the appearance of constitutional legitimacy. In El Salvador, the institutionalization of the

military has involved its legalization within the constitutional framework.

A third reason for the military's dominating presence is the number of counterinsurgency programs that began in the early 1980s. More than any other factor, this has contributed to the military's omnipresence in El Salvador and the militarization of Salvadoran society. As Michael Lowy and Eder Sader explain, the militarization of society involves:

> a form of state in which the military hierarchy (the highest and intermediate levels of the officer corps) occupies the central position of the political realm- that is, it controls the essential government posts and the top offices within the state apparatus (ministries, directorships of large state enterprises, and key administrative positions) (1985, p.8).

Lowy and Sader make an important clarification that is particularly relevant to El Salvador. "It is important to emphasize," they state, "that the militarization of the state has not meant the *exclusive* use of coercion as a form of domination" (1985, p.10). This point underlies a fact that is often obscured in the all-too-common denunciations of the Salvadoran military as a uniformly repressive institution. In the 1980s, and throughout Salvadoran history, the military has exercised a "hegemony armored by coercion." If we understand hegemony as the totality of structures and institutions capable of creating social consensus around a dominant group or class (i.e. political parties, schools, the media, etc), we can see that the Salvadoran military has not relied solely on repression but a combination of both coercion and hegemony.

As the war encompassed more of the country, the military's presence increased as well. El Salvador in the 1980s was reminiscent of the political climate of the early 1960s. While the 1980s were more violent than the 1960s, many similarities existed. The first substantial contingent of US military advisers and aid came to El Salvador in the wake of the Cuban revolution and Kennedy's Alliance for Progress. The goal of these efforts was to undercut the support of would-be insurgencies through a combination of military, social, and economic programs. In the 1980s, the specter of communism rose again and the US aimed to train and fund a military in El Salvador capable of defeating the new menace. In both eras, the United States perceived events in El Salvador in Cold War terms and trained the military in counterinsurgency to combat internal communist subversion.

"Counter-insurgency is the old name for low-intensity conflict," according to Colonel John D. Waghelstein, former head of the US military group (Milgroup) in El Salvador. What was applied in Vietnam was updated for El Salvador. Pentagon officials regard the type of conflict in El Salvador a different kind of phenomena, necessitating a new kind of response "The roots of insurgency are not military in origin," explained former Secretary of the Army John Marsh, "nor will they be military in resolution" (Klare and Kornbluh, 1988). According to the definition offered by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, low-intensity warfare is a limited politico-military

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struggle to achieve a political, social, economic, and psychological objectives. It is often protracted and ranges from diplomatic, economic and psycho-social pressures through terrorism and insurgency (Doyle and Duklis, 1990). Colonel Wagelstein describes it more bluntly as a "total war at the grass roots level" (Klare and Kornbluh, 1988).

In El Salvador, the official mission of the US was threefold. First, to help the Salvadoran military defeat the FMLN, the Salvadoran officers corp was to be persuaded to subordinate to civilian authority. Second, the Armed Forces needed to be taught a respect for human rights. And third, the military needed to rationalize its internal methods of organization and promotion (Bacevich, 1988). However, as the war wore on, it became clear that the US was concerned with little more than the defeat and of the rebels and maintaining the legitimacy of its intentions and the Salvadoran government. As for the Salvadoran military, as long as it promised to investigate abuses and professionalize itself, the pipeline of aid would continue to flow.

In 1981, a Pentagon official said the Salvadoran army was "not organized to fight a counterinsurgency war" and had "no hope" in defeating the guerrillas with existing resources (Siegel and Hackel, 1988). Although the military never developed into the efficient fighting force envisioned by US advisers, it did enjoy some success in fighting the guerrillas. Where once it relied on large-scale troop

movements and the indiscriminate use of firepower, training in low-intensity warfare produced a more sophisticated military.

In 1983, for example, the military undertook the National Campaign Plan under US tutelage. The program was a rural pacification program in three stages. Small, mobile *cazador* units would seek out guerrillas with the help of the elite rapid-reaction forces, such as the *Atlacatl* and *Atonal* battalions. An Air Force equipped with Huey helicopters and A-37 aircraft (both specially designed for guerrilla warfare) would add additional support in the form of intensive bombing. Then, after the region was secured, the army would set up civil militias to provide local defense after the military had left. Finally, US-funded development and reconstruction teams would enter the area and attempt to address social and economic programs (Doyle and Duklis, 1990). The success of this program and others like it were mixed, but they did bring about a change in the way the military fought the war and in the way it regarded its place in society.

The military's traditional distrust of civilian politicians was nurtured during the war. The officer's corp continued to regard the armed forces as the only national institution able to defend the state and establish public order. The military was given wide latitude in the implementation of social programs. *Unidos para Reconstruir* was a civic-action program begun in 1986. Because it was administered directly by the military and implemented in all

of the country's 14 departments, civilian leadership was substantially overshadowed at both local and departmental levels (Walter and Williams, 1993).

Taken together, the continued presence of the armed forces in important state agencies, the terms of the 1983 Constitution, and the US-sponsored low-intensity warfare programs have heightened the military's role in El Salvador since formal military rule came to an end in 1979. "Besides helping to consolidate the military's position and confirm its distrust of civilians," Walter and Williams explain, "the civil war enabled the military to maintain its institutional autonomy vis-a-vis the state and society....[in the 1980s] the military became much less dependent upon the oligarchy and much more autonomous as an institution with its own set of interests" (1993, p.58). While this statement is revealing, it tells only half of the story.

As the military became more autonomous and entrenched in the state, it became ever-dependent on the US government for weapons and training. The irony in this is important to recognize if the military's institutional development is to be better understood. The military was not free to do as it pleased nor were its interests the sole source of its behavior. US military aid was often conditioned on reforms such as weeding out human rights abusers and allowing younger officers to advance. While such demands were politically expedient for both sides, it none the less demonstrates a

significant constraint on the military and its institutional development. Further, without US aid, it is quite possible that the FMLN would have won the war (Diskin and Sharpe, 1986). The Salvadoran military was wholly dependent on Washington's support. It could not have survived without it.

WAR'S END

The election of Alfredo Christiani to the presidency in 1988 did not bode well for ending the war. Christiani's party, ARENA, was founded by Roberto D'Aubuisson, the embodiment of right-wing terror and intolerance. Although ARENA moderated its platform after its defeat in the 1984 elections, few considered it a party of peace-makers. There was speculation that right-wing violence might reach the levels of the early eighties if ARENA launched an all-out war on the opposition. Joaquin Villalobos, a commander of the FMLN, wondered, "with the electoral triumph of ARENA, some raise the phantom of repressive escalation and another genocide....We must ponder whether, under the current correlation of forces, it is possible to carry out a new genocide, close political space, and impose terror" (1989, p.21).

Duarte had made several efforts at negotiations and reaching a settlement with the guerrillas. For its part, the FMLN had repeatedly tried to engage the military in peace talks. Although some progress was made, the war was still

raging when Duarte left office.[10] In spite of the lack of
success in the past and the grim predictions surrounding the
Christiani government, the war was brought to a close 12 years
after it began and at a cost of 75,000 lives. No single event
was responsible for the negotiated settlement, but rather a
number of internal and external factors.

On the international front, the fall of communism and
ever-declining situation in Cuba forced the FMLN to reevaluate
its situation and take a more pragmatic approach. As early as
1987, rebel commander Villalobos recognized a "strategic
equilibrium" in the war. With no revolutionary triumph in
sight and popular opinion favoring peace, the FMLN pressed for
a negotiated solution and ultimately elections. "The FMLN
does not fear elections," Villalobos wrote. "Under fair
conditions the majority of Salvadorans would opt for
revolutionary change" (Villalobos, 1989a).

In the United States, the cold war policies of Ronald
Reagan were replaced by the constrained administration of
George Bush. Bush inherited a conflict in El Salvador more
than eight years old and seemed less-than-eager to continue
involvement in the area. Support of the military had turned
into a political liability for Bush. "The Bush
administration," explained *Boston Globe* correspondent Pamela

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[10] For a thorough discussion of the peace negotiations see
Terry Lynn Karl, "After La Palma: The Prospects for Democratization
in El Salvador," *World Policy Journal* (Spring) 1985, and Martin
Diskin and Kenneth Sharpe, "Facing Facts In EL Salvador," *World
Policy Journal* (Spring) 1984.

Constable, "which coincided with the collapse of Soviet communism and the decline of Moscow's regional ally, Cuba, adopted a more pragmatic attitude toward the conflicts in Central America" (Constable, 1992). The US government had simply grown tired of funding a war that seemed endless.

In El Salvador, a number of events precipitated the end of the war. Shortly after Christiani took office, the FMLN launched a powerful "final offensive" on November 11, 1989. The guerrillas, who nearly captured San Salvador, demonstrated that they could match the strength of the Salvadoran armed forces. In retaliation, the military murdered six jesuit priests, along with their housekeeper and her daughter on the campus of the Central American university. The murderers had actually cut out the brains of the priests as if to demonstrate that they had eliminated the intellectual base of the FMLN. Rather than weaken the guerrillas, vociferous international condemnation of the crime turned already critical public opinion decidedly against the military and the war. "More than anything else," Karl states, "[the] offensive and the army's subsequent murder of the six Jesuit priests drove home the point that a prolonged and inconclusive struggle was less desirable than a political settlement (1992, p.151). The Salvadorans had also grown weary of twelve years of death and violence.

After months of UN sponsored peace talks, the war officially ended on January 16, 1992. Karl wrote, "in what

might be considered the hallmark of a successful negotiation, both sides believe they have won" (1992, p.160). Clearly, the FMLN has gotten much of what it wanted: a reduction in the size of the military, the dissolution of the National Guard and Treasury Police, the promise of prosecution of some of the army's worst human rights abusers, and the government's pledge to move forward with social and economic reforms. What's more, the FMLN is able to enter the 1994 presidential elections now that it is a legally recognized political party. ARENA too seems to have emerged a winner. Not only can the party point to its undeniably important role in the negotiations, but it also presided over a decline in inflation--from 25 percent in the 1985-1988 period to 9.8 percent in 1991 and a growth rate of 3.5 percent (Envio, 1992). ARENA can be expected to make a very strong showing in the upcoming elections. Finally, the United States and United Nations seem to have gained prestige for their role in bringing one of the world's bloodiest civil wars to an end. This leaves only one group to account for: the Salvadoran military. What kind of political gains did it make? Does the military, as Karl would have us believe, consider itself a winner too?

Based on the terms of the peace accords, the military has little cause to celebrate. If all the provisions of the accords are carried out, the armed forces will be a smaller, weaker, and more subservient version of its former self.

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Scores of soldiers are likely to punished for their role in a host of human rights crimes. This leads to an important question: Why did the military agree to a settlement so stacked against them?

One answer might be that the military simply grew tired of fighting. As Giuseppe Di Palma suggests that, "because [war] weariness is not only temporary but also relative (one is tired of an ineffective strategy and readier to renounce it if a new one is made available), it seems to me that introducing the lure of a viable political settlement at the moment of weariness is possibly the best or even the only way to interrupt the vicious cycle" (1986, p.41). The military's response to the peace settlement and to its reconstitution has been mixed.

Another possibility might be that the costs of the war simply became too much. In a work on newly founded democracies, Baloyra asks, why and in what circumstances do the elites of an authoritarian regime decide to forego more repression and opt for a change of regime? "One may hypothesize," Baloyra says, "that because the repressive capacity of a regime is not inexhaustible there will come a point at which, given the sustained impact of deterioration and the increasing costs of repression, a consensus for extrication may emerge (Baloyra, 1987).

Of course, it is difficult to discern the level of consensus in a relatively closed institution such as the

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Salvadoran military. Baloyra offers a set of six determinants
which are likely to produce a decision by senior military
officials to disengage from the ways of the past:

> 1) military perception of the strength of the opposition;
> 2) the choices available to the military; 3) the balance
> between military *aperturistas* and *obstructionistas*; 4)
> the extant patterns of social cleavage; 5) the
> substantive programs of the opposition and 6) the
> presence of actors traditionally antagonistic to the
> military (1987, p.40).

In addition to these six determinants, I would add the
weighty force of world opinion. In the case of El Salvador,
an inquiry of the presence of these factors reveals a military
that was isolated and ultimately backed into a corner. Rather
than fight its way out, however, the military gave in.

At first the armed forces claimed victory and awaited the
reforms with stoicism. In a characteristic statement, former
Defense Minister Rene Emilio Ponce said, "we have successfully
completed the mission to defend the fatherland against
Communist aggression." Ponce stated that Salvadoran soldiers
"had never taken up arms for a more just cause," but added "we
are ready to assume the new mandate assigned to us"
(Christian, 1992). After the findings of the UN Truth
Commission came out, Ponce's tone became far less
conciliatory.

Ponce declared that the findings of the report were
"unjust, illegal, unethical, prejudiced and insolent," and
went on say that "the armed forces...will use all necessary
legal resources as a legitimate right to self-defense against

those who seek to destroy the military and the republic"
(Farah, 1993). The fact that Ponce himself was implicated in
the report may explain his vituperative tone. Perhaps even
more than this, however, Ponce's remarks may come from a fear
of the military's demise.

As should be clear from this chapter and the two
preceding it, above all else the military has acted to
preserve itself as an institution. How this is defined is of
course dependent upon which faction of the military is
referred to. But all groups, from the most rigid to the most
reformist, believe in the importance of their institution and
negotiating away much of its power is not compatible with the
military's history of fighting to maintain its institutional
integrity.

In the 1980s, the Salvadoran military came to see itself
as the only institution capable of enforcing political
tranquility. Regular infusions of US military equipment,
training and funding have served as constant reinforcements of
this belief, making violent repression the almost reflexive
response to mass political opposition (Mason and Krane, 1989).
The reasons surrounding the military's decision to support a
negotiated settlement seem directly related to El Salvador's
future. If the military's acceptance of the peace accords was
predicated on compulsion rather than a genuine commitment to
democratic ideals, then El Salvador's transition will prove to
be a difficult one indeed. Ruben Zamora, a candidate in

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1994's presidential elections, summed up El Salvador's current situation: "I think what is happening is that the armed forces are faced with a historic dilemma, the same as the rest country. The dilemma is whether we stay on the road toward demilitarization or whether we stay a militarized society, and that would lead back to war sooner or later" (Farah, 1993).

CHAPTER 5

EXPLAINING THE BEHAVIOR OF THE SALVADORAN MILITARY

Each of the three theories presented in chapter one offers some explanation of behavior of the Salvadoran military, but based on the preceding historical sections I believe a politically-based approach is the most effective. At different times the Salvadoran military has displayed reformist, institutionalized, and personalistic behavior. It has attempted to improve the conditions of the rural poor, but has also subjected them to some of the most sadistic abuse the world has ever seen. The armed forces has pledged to uphold the sanctity of the constitution and defend internal order, and yet has overthrown the government in numerous coups d'etat. This complex and often contradictory behavior points to the need for a more diffuse approach that is not wedded to any one set of criteria.

In light of the preceding three chapters, I will conclude by attempting to answer the question I posed at the beginning of this thesis: How is the behavior of the Salvadoran military best explained? This is a fundamental question, but by no means a simple one.

I will seek to answer this question by casting the history of the institution against the three theories I presented in chapter one. I will examine each theory as well

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as point out where the theories fall short. In so doing, I hope to arrive at a better understanding of the Salvadoran military. I will argue that each theory lends itself to an understanding of the military, but a political approach is most useful. I will conclude with a discussion of directions for future research.

Dependency Theory

The central deficiency in dependency theory is that it affords the military too little autonomy and places too much emphasis on exogenous forces. At first glance, El Salvador seems to fit neatly within the paradigm. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, coffee exportation and the rise of the rural oligarchy created a situation well described by dependency theory. Once the military took control of the state in 1931, however, its role changed. Dependency theory cannot offer adequate explanation of the military after 1931.

El Salvador's underdevelopment, impoverished peasantry, and authoritarian political systems stemmed in large part from the country's reliance on the export of a single crop--coffee. The great coffee-owning families of El Salvador amassed huge fortunes while the majority of the rural-dwelling population lived a semi-feudal life of poverty. The key to the maintenance of this system was control of the countryside.

The state, run by and for the elite, created the military and security forces to ensure the necessities of the coffee

market: cheap land, cheap labor, and a politically inert peasantry. This system has been described as "development without modernization" (Weeks, 1986). The landed oligarchy used its power to maintain pre-capitalist land systems in the countryside while fostering the development of agro-export economies. The result of this was the rather paradoxical situation in which the Salvadoran state, while dependent on the demands of foreign capital, was relatively independent of internal interests.

Thus far dependency offers relatively strong explanatory power of the behavior of the armed forces and their oligarchic patrons. But when General Martinez assumed control of the government and initiated a fifty-year era of military rule, dependency runs into difficulty. As the Salvadoran state and civil society grew, so too did the military institution. Fissures between the military and the oligarchy, which grew wider over time, first became visible in this period.

To be sure, the repressive measures taken by Martinez and successive military regimes in the countryside and the growing urban centers were favored by the oligarchy. It is a mistake, though, to portray the military as the myrmidons of the country's economic elites. Dependency theory asserts that as the coercive apparatus of the state, the military serves the interests of the dominant class. This view does not recognize the military's internal logic. While its true that actions taken by the military often served the interests of the

oligarchy, policies were not undertaken *for* the oligarchy. Rather, it is more accurate to say that the interests of the military and landowners often coincided, but they were not synonymous. This is a subtle, but important distinction. Their relationship was one of symbiosis, not master and servant. As the military's sense of purpose and mission evolved, this relationship became increasingly strained. This reveals a country not solely controlled by the "fourteen families", but instead a contestation of power, a search for hegemony, and intense political activity.

As the military developed, it grew out of the narrow praetorian guard role created for it by the country's elite and adopted a more complex ideology. This ideology is characterized by extreme nationalism, anti-communism, and the need to maintain hegemony. As years of in-fighting and factionalism have shown however, the military's ideology is by no means uniform. Above all, the history of the military has shown it to be a profoundly political institution that regards itself as uniquely qualified to establish and maintain order and tranquility.

La Matanza placed the reigns of government firmly within the hands of the military. The repression unleashed by Martinez was waged out of a "fear of the other" and because it was threatened by the rising militancy of the peasantry. The military saw its ideal of society--top-down order, a

subservient rural population, and "anti-politics"--imperiled by the nascent peasant and labor movements.

Dependency theory cannot account for the military's own political identity. Faced with such a contradiction, proponents of the theory might assert that political arrangements necessarily reflect or express the changing economic and social forces at work in and on a dependent society. The kind of rule exercised, be it "shock treatment" for the economy or alternate relaxation and intensification of repression, are tied to the international arena (Fagen, 1977). The Salvadoran military, according to this view, crushed the peasant uprising not because of any internal motivation, but because the country's elite, in collusion with international capital, demanded it. Such a position is, of course, untenable. This is made more apparent when the actions of the *juventud militar* and military-led reformism are considered.

"What is remarkable is the `staying power' of the Salvadoran military," Walter and Williams remarked, "its ability to renew its presence in the highest offices of the state and to legitimize its presence among the people..." (1993, p.43). What strikes me about the history of El Salvador and the military in politics is not that the system was in danger of collapsing, but that the military was able to endure for as long as it did. The military's longevity is no accident.

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The coups of 1944, 1948, 1960, and 1979 can be seen as the military's response to crises and the need to reestablish hegemony. In the face of rising unrest, each new government made lofty promises to carry out land reform, to weed out corruption, and in general to address the country's problems. Most of these promises amounted to little and were often followed by a period of intensified repression. This has been the cycle of Salvadoran politics: unrest, repression, reform, unrest, etc... A few of the military's reforms, however, amounted to more than just rhetoric.

The establishment of the Salvadoran Institute of Agrarian Transformation (ISTA) in 1975 and the agrarian and banking reforms instituted after 1979, while relatively modest given the scope of El Salvador's problems, are instructive in that they reveal the cleavage of the military-oligarchic relationship as well as the military's ability to maintain legitimacy and stay in power. While individual links between members of the oligarchy and military no doubt remained, the military demonstrated its skill as a political actor in its own right.

Here again the limits of dependency are apparent. The military's pursuit of reform, while often coupled with repression, requires that we look beyond narrow characterizations of the military as the acolytes of the oligarchy and world capital. Instead, the institution itself as well as its various integration with other actors must be

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probed for answers to its behavior. By relying on dependency theory we miss too much of the internal political and social dynamics of El Salvador. This is not to say that the theory is totally without merit. Dependency is useful in that it asks us to look at the development of a country from a historical perspective and to observe how the relations of classes within and outside of it have shaped its development (or lack of development). Further, dependency theory inserts an international dimension that is essential to understanding a country like El Salvador that finds itself in the United States' sphere of influence. As stated above, dependency adequately explains the emergence of El Salvador's armed forces, but cannot account for its subsequent evolution into a political actor.

Corporatism

The body of theory loosely defined as corporatism shares with dependency many of the same limitations. There are many versions of corporatism, but I have focused on the culturally-based approach known as the Iberian legacy because it has been advanced expressly as an explanation of Latin society. By focusing almost exclusively on one set of influences, this approach fails to account for other equally important ones. Advocates admit to the existence of other influences, but assign primacy to the cultural power of corporatism. At best, I argue, corporatism presents only a partial explanation of

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the military's behavior. At worst, it denies the importance of other influences while dismissing the worst aspects of the military's behavior--human rights abuses, electoral fraud, and intolerance--as "normal" or "natural."

Corporatism tells us where to "look" for the source of the military's behavior. The traditions and philosophies that make up the Iberian legacy are seen as the basis of Latin society and government. A cursory examination of the Salvadoran armed forces would make it easy to grant corporatist explanations primacy.

The military exhibits behavior seemingly well-accounted for in corporatist theory. The military's mission has been consistency couched in terms of the need to promote "order" and to defend *la patria*. Its history of political intervention have been undertaken in the name of these ideals. The military institution itself embodies the Iberian characteristics of corporate order: a central, authoritative command structure built on strict hierarchial lines. The Salvadoran military has shown an intolerance for opposition, but has frequently allowed certain political actors to enter the political arena after they have demonstrated strength or "power capability" (Shulz and Graham, 1984).

Once an actor is admitted, the military moves to coopt and incorporate it, thus forestalling any threat to its own power. The military's cautious agrarian reform projects and its coalition with the Christian Democrats in 1979 are

examples of this. By embracing some of the demands and personnel of the opposition the military sought to stave off the erosion of its legitimacy and power.

The hallmarks of corporatism--a reverence for order, hierarchy, and cooptation--are well represented in the history of the Salvadoran military and seem to vindicate such an approach. Perhaps a better test of the theory's utility, however, is to examine what it cannot explain. What questions does it leaves unanswered? A survey of what corporatism is not able to explain, I argue, shows not the inapplicability of the approach, but its limits and the need for other explanations.

Two aspects of El Salvador's military that give the corporatist approach difficulty are the number of non-Iberian influences on the military and the military's participation in politics. To begin, the Salvadoran military traces its roots and influences not to just one tradition, but many. While it is true that most Salvadorans have at least part Spanish ancestry, El Salvador is not an island free of non-Iberian influence. This is apparent in the history of the military, yet inadequately appreciated by a corporatist approach to the institution.

The armed forces of El Salvador received training from Spanish officers, but also from contingents of French, German, Chilean, and American officers as well. It is difficult to assign dominance to any one of these. In the formative years

of the military, the European military missions had a particularly enduring impact. European training was supposed to foster professionalization within the military but actually led to decidedly unprofessional behavior. As Frederick Nunn explains in *Yesterday's Soldiers*, a work about the effect of European military training in South America in the years 1890-1940, Latin American "officers reflected the traditional European disdain for civilians...and a distinct wariness of liberal democracy" (1983, p.12). The result was military institutions that felt compelled to intervene in politics and suppress threats to their ideal of order. Nunn calls this professional militarism. This involves a set of attitudes that result in the resort to political action in an attempt to find solutions to social and economic problems.

In El Salvador, a country with less to spend on expensive military training, much of its training came from a group of Chilean officers who proffered a kind of "second hand Prussianization" to the Salvadoran military. Chilean military missions, themselves the recipients of European training, were called in by El Salvador to "europeanize" the Salvadoran armed forces (Rouquie, 1987). Beginning in 1905, the Chileans spent six years instructing the Salvadoran military (Elam, 1989). The training seems to have had a lasting effect.

"The Prussian and French officers' paranoid fear of communists, capitalists, the English, and Jews," Handelman asserts, "was easily transferred to the South American

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military's anxieties about `the enemy from within'"(1987, p.189). Like their German and Chilean mentors, the Salvadoran military feared communism and preferred authoritarianism to liberal democracy. The Salvadoran military displayed more than its share of anxiety about internal subversion and dissent as demonstrated by *La Matanza* and subsequent efforts to root out subversion.

The effect of these training missions on the armed forces in El Salvador seems to reveal a set of behavior quite similar to that described by proponents of culturally-based corporatism. It would be inaccurate, however, to base any conclusion about the military's behavior on just one tradition. In truth, it may be impossible to know where the Salvadoran military's propensity for anti-communism and authoritarianism comes from. It makes more sense, I argue, to allow for a number of influences rather confining an interpretation to any single tradition or legacy.

A second area in which corporatism inadequately accounts for the military's behavior is its political role. The Iberian legacy supposedly instills the military with a disdain for the divisive and venal ways of politicians and politics. Yet the Salvadoran military, in its frequent coups and alliances with various actors, has displayed behavior that directly contradicts much of what corporatist theory holds true.

Coup-making in itself is not necessarily damaging to the theory. Stepan explains that the military's concern for stability may actually manifest itself in a move for rapid structural change (1978, p.34). The so-called reformist coups in El Salvador, however, demonstrate a military motivated by more than just the establishment of order.

One of the enduring phenomena about the Salvadoran military has been the divisions among ideological and generational lines. Factions within the military each saw the role of the armed forces differently. Members of the *Juventud Militar* perceived the growing politization of the peasantry, unequal land distribution, and corruption not just as threats to national order, but to the military institution itself. Although groups within the military differed on the role of the military, all agreed that maintaining its power was of paramount importance. The coups of 1948, 1960, 1979 were all efforts by groups of young officers to regain hegemony. These events uncover the existence of the same kind of politics and disunity that the military pledged to do away with.

A professional military is characterized by a well-defined hierarchy, discipline, bureaucratization, and above all--unity. Years of training designed to "professionalize" the Salvadoran military have failed to create such an institution. The military attempted to equate the maintenance of its power with national order, but this amounted to little more than the rhetoric of one of many political players making

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a bid for power. Since 1932, when it took control of the state, and until 1992 when its authority was challenged, the military has shown itself to be an unprofessional, factionalized, corrupt, and cunning political actor--a far cry from the bastion of order and stability described by corporatism.

The results of the 1992 peace accords may prove to undermine corporatist explanations of the military's behavior as well. The terms of the agreement, if fully implemented, will fundamentally alter the armed forces. The size of the military will be halved, the National Guard and National Police disbanded, human rights abusers brought to trial, and civilians will have greater oversight over their training and activities. Why would the military agree to such terms?

The most likely explanations of the military's acquiescence were the unlikelihood of a military victory and its isolation. Although the armed forces had few options open to them in 1992, their acceptance of the accords, albeit somewhat grudging, is remarkable. According to corporatist theory, however, the military defends the status quo and is slow to change. The accords promise to radically restructure civil society, heighten political activity, and fundamentally disrupt the status quo. The peace accords, spell the end of the preeminent role so long enjoyed by the armed forces. Corporatism cannot explain the military's support of these changes. More than anything else, corporatism asserts the

permanence of cultural traditions and yet the military has accepted the possibility of establishing a pluralistic democracy. Corporatism is not able to explain how or why regimes change. Time will test the military's commitment to the terms of the accords. The fact that the military has come this far, however, acts to weaken the utility of corporatist theory. Like dependency theory, corporatist explanations can offer are only of partial utility in understanding the Salvadoran military.

Political Explanations

Based on the discussion of the Salvadoran military in the chapters above, I have concluded that a political explanation of the military's behavior is the most useful means of explaining its behavior. If we take up the themes that run through the history of the Salvadoran military, the utility of this approach becomes clear.

The behavior of El Salvador's armed forces has been characterized by a continual cycle of repression and reform. I have defined this as the military's search for hegemony. The history of the military, and El Salvador in general, have also been shaped by the actions and frequent coups undertaken by the *juventud militar*. And finally, despite the infusion of money and years of training, the Salvadoran military has remained an unprofessional institution that has constantly

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sought to augment its political autonomy. These factors lead to a politically-based explanation of the military's behavior.

The Salvadoran military has been a repressive organization, but not uniformly so. Like most military's in Latin America, El Salvador's is factionalized along ideological, functional, and generational lines. These divisions account for variations in the military's response to threats and the creation of them. One of the recurring phenomena in the history of the military has been its search for hegemony. In the case of El Salvador, the military has sought to establish hegemony in the face of various internal crisis. The military ruled as a government for almost fifty years. This could not have been accomplished by domination alone. In the face of popular unrest, economic malaise, and international pressures, the military, often quite skillfully, employed both coercion and hegemony. Without the use of both the military's five decades in power may have ended much sooner.

The behavior of the Salvadoran military is explained in part by its struggle to maintain power; it is thus a political actor. It is wrong to portray the military as rigid or monolithic. It has been El Salvador's most dynamic actor. In its efforts to maintain power and legitimacy, has engaged in activity from outright murder to forming alliances with members of the opposition. In its history of coup-making, mild reforms, and suppression of dissent the military has

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shaped the face of Salvadoran history like no other actor.[11] The military was created by the state, but soon outgrew its economically-based origins and developed into a political actor in its own right, often challenging the very oligarchic powers that created it.

Treating the Salvadoran military as a political actor necessitates that its role vis-a-vis the state be reexamined, yet defining the military's relation to the state is problematic. As my discussion of the Marxist and Weberian conceptions of the state in chapter one demonstrated, neither definition of the state adequately explains the military's relation to the state. The Salvadoran military is not the dependent arm of the dominant class nor is it a component of the state monopolizing the legitimate use of force.

Gabriel Aguilera states that process of modernizing the armed forces of El Salvador took place at the end of the 19th century when then the military evolved from a "tool of regional or personal interests" into a "state structure" (1990, p.25). While it is true that the Salvadoran military became formally inscribed into the confines of the state and no longer served as landowner's private guards, defining it as part of the "state structure" is too simple and reveals little

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[11] I acknowledge the existence of various subaltern groups who, had they not been suppressed, may have altered the course of Salvadoran even more than the military.

Two excellent books that deal with the less overt forms of resistance are Jeffrey Gould, *To Lead As Equals*.1990: (University of North Carolina Press) and James C. Scott. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

about its behavior. Beginning with the personal dictatorship of General Martinez and extending up through the end of the civil war, the Salvadoran military has shown itself to be a diverse collection of interests and goals that go beyond those of a state actor.

The Salvadoran military seems to occupy a dual status of both state and political actor. It is clear that a definition of the military must extend beyond a functionalist one that confines it to defending the nation from external aggression and defending the government by preserving internal order (Lieuwin, 1964). The Salvadoran military cannot fit within such a definition because it has frequently engaged in political behavior wholly at odds with those of the government, i.e. a coup, while at the same time based its legitimacy on claims to defending state and national interests.

Rouquie explains a military's participation in a coup is "first of all action by the state against social sectors whose power has grown to the point that they threaten government autonomy or endanger its functioning" (1987, p.38). This view cannot be applied to El Salvador for it does not account for the military's ambiguous state role. Coups in El Salvador, such as those in 1944, 1960, and 1979, were undertaken in response to rising social unrest, but this does not tell the whole story. These coups should be seen not simply as the state moving against various social sectors, but as the

military moving against the state. In this sense, the military can be seen as a self-interested political actor asserting its will on the government.

If we evaluate the behavior of the military along the political-professional continuum presented by Pion-Berlin, several of the military's interests are revealed. Pion-Berlin found that the military is motivated most strongly by a set of "core" interests. These basic interests are control over its education, indoctrination, and issues of reform. The peace accords have provided an especially candid view of the military's interests and seem to support Pion-Berlin's findings. The terms of the peace accords have put the military's institutional autonomy in jeopardy. One high-ranking officer stated that of all conditions stipulated in the accords, the most unpalatable was that of creating an academic council to oversee the military academy. Top officers consider continued control of the military to be a vital interest (Walter and Williams, 1993). The fact that the military has expressed its opposition to certain terms of the accords, however, does not necessarily entail a derailment of democratization efforts. The military's interests seem to be a need for institutional, not political autonomy. A recognition of the military's interests and status as a political actor may facilitate less-strained civil military relations.

The military's recent defense of these core interests is contrasted by the institution's history of politically-motivated behavior. The recurrent factionalism of the *juventud militar* reveals a military not only with interests and goals of its own, but a number of conflicting interests within the military itself. This has also been demonstrated by the recalcitrance of members of *La Tandona* who have opposed any reform of their ranks. Remmer explains, "existing literature offers few insights into the political impact of authoritarianism... theoretical analyses of military rule have rather consistently down-played the capacity of state actors to induce political change" (1989, p.48). Similar to the Fitch's discussion of the Ecuadoran armed forces, various components of the Salvadoran military implement their own "decision criteria" in their decision to intervene in politics (Fitch, 1977). In so doing, the *juventud militar* and various *tandas* demonstrate the political behavior of the military.

A political approach to the military is useful in that it moves away from essentialist perspectives that neglect important facets of the institution while placing undue emphasis on others. At best, however, a political approach can serve only as a point of departure for further inquiry into the military. Once we accept the military's status as a political actor, more questions emerge. What lies within the military's "black box?" The military's ideology and use of symbols consisted of a mix of populism, McCarthyism, and

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reformism (Baloyra, 1982). How was this ideology or "world view" created? How does it change? What has been the effect of the military academy's curriculum on their beliefs and praxis? Many of these and other questions may be difficult to answer given the secrecy and fear that surrounds the military. The end of the war and the possibility of greater military disclosure and civilian oversight, however, may shed new light on the armed forces.

In a work written some years ago, Abraham Lowenthal stressed the importance of both internal and external factors for an theory of military behavior (1976, pp.12-13). This point seems particularly relevant to El Salvador, yet no theory utilizing such a perspective has emerged.

When O'Donnel presented his bureaucratic-authoritarian model some twenty years ago, it became the dominant paradigm about military behavior (Handelman, 1987). Today, bureaucratic-authoritarianism has come under criticism as too deterministic and too specific to a particular set of circumstances.[12] Further, like much of the work on the military in Latin America, its focus was on the nations of South America not Central America. None the less, it appears that both regions are now without any compelling model of military behavior. This, however, should not be cause for alarm but rather cause for optimism.

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[12] Karen L. Remmer and Gilbert W. Merkx offer a thorough critique of the model in "Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism Revisited," *Latin American Research Review* 17, no. 2 (1982): 3-40.

In a review of works on the Latin American military, Barry Ames wrote: "We now seem to be without a dominant theoretical paradigm, and because there are no aspects of the military on which closure has been reached, the coming years should be a period of exploration and experimentation in studies of Latin American militaries" (1988, p.169). I would add that the coming years *should not* be characterized by a search for any "dominant theoretical paradigm," but instead for approaches that account for multiple-causality and over-determination. Such an effort must be far less wedded to any one level of analysis than the ones that came before it. Rather than search for some overarching understanding of the military, we may have to settle for a less ambitious, desegregate approach.

Conclusions

El Salvador's civil war has come to an end, but the end of hostilities is by no means certain. Although the possibility of a genuine transition to democracy is more propitious than ever before, substantial challenges remain. Democracy and democratization are defined in various ways. It is possible to set a standard that is so high that it may never be reached. Years of war in El Salvador have raised the consciousness of a great many Salvadorans. Whether they supported the FMLN or not, it is doubtful the country's vigorous civil society will accept a "democracy" characterized

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by austere, neo-liberal economic measures that do not address the country's many needs. I will conclude with a brief look at the experiences of other Latin American nations as a means of comparing them to El Salvador. I will close with a look towards the March 1994 presidential elections and what they may hold in store for both the Salvadoran military and the country.

Comparative Perspectives

Future research on the Salvadoran military that brings in the comparative experience of other nations that have emerged from years of authoritarian rule may prove to be valuable. The case of Guatemala is instructive. There are many parallels between Guatemala and El Salvador. The military in Guatemala regarded itself as the only institution capable of providing order and stability in the face of powerful guerrillas armies. Both countries experienced long periods of military rule that resulted in the suppression of civil society and the deaths of thousands. The inauguration of Vinicio Cerezo in 1986, a Christian Democrat like Duarte, marked the transfer of power from the military to civilian control. Guatemala is currently grappling with many of the same questions now facing El Salvador: How can the power of the military be reduced? Why did the military acquiesce to civilian authority? How should democratic institutions be fostered? Should past human rights abusers be brought to

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justice? What will be the military's role in a democratic setting?

Jim Handy offers a grim assessment of current civil-military relations in Guatemala. Many cite the country's economic misfortune as well as the military's need for foreign aid as the reason behind the military's concession to civilian power. These two explanations of the military's acceptance of civilian government, Handy states, suggest it will be short-lived (1986, pp.383-385). He presents a situation similar to that in El Salvador. Because of the military's predominance in Guatemalan politics and often subtle use of power, the military will continue to play a significant role in "democratic Guatemala."

Handy states that while "...the alterations in the political structure in Guatemala during the twentieth century have changed the degree of military influence in the political process, they have never ended it. A reduction of direct military influence does not, in itself, signify a democratic revival" (1986, p.386). Handy describes the Guatemalan military in political terms and this leads him to his less-than-optimistic appraisal of their place in the country's future. Yet recent events in Guatemala are cause for optimism and may be comparable to El Salvador's situation.

Perhaps one of the most revealing episodes in Guatemala's recent history was the military's behavior in the *autogolpe* carried out in May of 1993. At first the miliary high command

rallied behind the cause of President Jorge Serrano and joined in his efforts to dissolve the constitution and National Assembly to "weed out corruption." As soon as it became apparent that neither Guatemalans nor the international community would tolerate the measures taken by Serrano, the military changed its course. Like any political actor, the military could read the writing on the wall. The political climate at home and abroad did not bode well for a return to exclusionary rule. Weighing the relative costs of siding with Serrano or what seemed like the rest of Guatemalan society, it chose the latter and perhaps gained a dose of badly needed legitimacy. In an event replete with irony, the miliary stood beside the election of former human rights ombudsman Ramiro de Leon Carpio, an individual who routinely condemned the abuses of the Guatemalan military. This event may be auspicious for El Salvador.

The Guatemalan military's decision to side with civil society shows that an armed institution long-schooled in the black arts of repression and counter-insurgency, will not necessarily chose a resumption of authoritarianism over democratic rule. The military tested the political winds and saw its interests better served in a return to constitutional authority. The point here is that the militaries in Guatemala and El Salvador are not predisposed to monolithic, anti-democratic behavior. If the siding with unions, students, and

other members of civil society serves the military's interests then the military will likely chose that course.

A second inference can be drawn from the case of Guatemala. The number of dead in Guatemala, which has yet to resolve its civil war, is more than 100,000. The number of Salvadorans killed in the course of the civil war is generally put at 75,000. Most of these individuals were civilians. What is encouraging about civilian-ruled Guatemala is the vitality of its political society. It is doubtful that the military would have come out against Serrano's *autogolpe* as it did without the outpouring of demonstrations and opposition from a wide variety of Guatemalan society. Decades of repression and a "culture of fear" have not destroyed the ability of traditionally dominated sectors of society from speaking out.[13] El Salvador, which always had a relatively active popular sector, may react to future transgressions by the military or any other sector with a similar outcry.

The nations of the South America may also offer useful comparisons to El Salvador. Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay all suffered from particularly long periods of military rule. One of the most pressing issues facing these countries is the need to address human rights abuses committed under authoritarian rule. In Chile, for example, after the

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[13] See the discussion of the effects of state terror in Juan E. Corradi, Patricia Weiss Fagen, and Manuel Antonio Garreton, eds., *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America* (University of California Press: Oxford, 1992).

overthrow of Salvador Allende in 1973, the country experienced a particularly brutal period of miliary rule under General Pinochet that ended with the election of Patricio Aylwin in 1989. As Chile attempts to consolidate its transition to democracy, one of the biggest problems facing that country is the issue of past human rights abuses committed by the armed forces.

The abuses committed by the military are well-documented and I will not recount them here. Civilian presidents have side-stepped the issue of military crime in an attempt to move away from its authoritarian past, yet the specter of the dead and tortured remain. In 1986, President Alfonsin declared the *Punto Final* which ended investigation of hundreds of cases of human rights abuses. In 1989, President Menem pardoned over 200 military officers and in 1990 pardoned the members of the notorious junta involved in the "dirty war" (McSherry, 1992). These actions and others undermine the possibility of greater democratic advancement.

J. Patrise McSherry explains that, "the possibility for achieving socio-economic change in the interests of the majorities, or establishing mechanisms to ensure participation for subordinate classes excluded by the military regimes, remains threatened as long as politicized and undemocratic military/security forces remain above the law, protected by impunity..."(1992, p.464). In both Argentina and El Salvador the military enjoyed impunity from prosecution. El Salvador

can profit from Argentina's example. An overwhelming majority of Argentines oppose granting the military amnesty. A poll taken in 1990 put this number at 95 percent (Reuters, 1990 NYT 12/31/90).

In El Salvador, a lieutenant and a colonel were convicted for there role in the murder of the 1989 murder of six jesuit priests and two women. Although a conviction of a member of the armed forces is unprecedented, many observers contend that the intellectual authors of the crime escaped punishment (Christian, 1991). The results of the Truth Commission, a UN task force that implicated scores of military officials in human rights crimes, as well a growing anti-militarist sentiment in El Salvador seem to indicate that future governments will not easily evade the issue of military crimes (Walter and Williams, 1993). If El Salvador, like Argentina, is to restore faith in its institutions and promote a democracy, punishing those who lived outside the law for so long will be an important measure of its commitment to these goals.

Elections and Beyond

The presidential elections scheduled for March 1994 will be an important test of the military's commitment to the terms of the peace accords and of El Salvador's chances of democratic consolidation. Based on the conclusions reached in

this thesis, it is possible to speculate about possible outcomes and their effect on the military.

The main contenders for the presidency are ARENA, the Christian Democrats, the Democratic Convergence, and the FMLN. Several smaller parties will also participate. The most likely scenario is an ARENA victory.

ARENA presided over a period of economic growth and the end of the civil war. Due to its vast economic resources, ARENA began its campaign well before any other party. A victory of ARENA's candidate, San Salvador's mayor Armando Calderon Sol, would be the most favorable outcome for the military. Although outgoing president Alfredo Christiani represented a sanitized version of ARENA, the military can expect the most favorable treatment from the inauguration of another ARENA administration. Since the military still wields a considerable amount of power in the countryside, one may wonder how vigorously ARENA will pursue reforms of the armed forces as spelled out in the accords. Much of the party's economic power still lies in the coffee and cattle-raising regions of the country and is thus eager to protect these interests. If ARENA wins the presidency, I suspect the military will be subjected to the minimum number of restraints and reforms necessary to appease Salvadorans at home and observers abroad.

A victory by the FMLN is unlikely. The former guerrilla group is made up of five different parties: the People's

Revolutionary Army (ERP), the National Resistance (RN),the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), the Communist Party (PC), and the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers (PRTC). These groups are divided over the proper election strategy. The ERP and RN argue that the FMLN should move toward the political center as a coalition with other centrist parties such as the Democratic Convergence and the Christian Democrats. On the other hand, the FPL, PC, and PRTC advocate a more leftist approach in which each party enters the election alone (Serrano, 1993). Further damaging the FMLN's chances for electoral victory was the discovery of a large arms cache in Managua in July of 1993. This has hurt the organizations's credibility and has been played up by ARENA. Even though their victory is unlikely, it is useful to speculate about what an FMLN-led presidency would mean for the military.

One of the first moves the FMLN would likely take is the installation of a civilian Minister of Defense. Although the accords do not call for the appointment of a civilian to this position, such a change would be an important step in greater civilian oversight of the military. It is almost certain, however, that the armed forces would vehemently oppose a civilian in the defense ministry. General Vargas, a progressive member of the high command, explained that a civilian appointment would be "difficult" on the grounds that civilians lack the expertise and "political education" needed

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for the job. Similarly, Colonel Corado Figueroa argued that the public itself would oppose such a move because "a civilian would project an image of lack of solidarity" and lead to the "weakening of the armed forces" (Walter and Williams, 1993).

With only two years since the end of the war, an FMLN-led government may place too much strain on El Salvador's emerging democracy. It is likely that a great deal of mistrust still exists between former military and guerrilla combatants. Placing former enemies into the same government could be disastrous.

Perhaps one of the most important factors in the future of the Salvadoran military is the continuation of international pressure and attention. The roles played by the UN, and ultimately the US, were pivotal in bringing the civil war to an end. Similarly, various human rights groups placed great pressure on the military to reform. A former Salvadoran security official discussed the effect of this pressure on the military's treatment of suspected subversives:

> In general, you will kill the prisoners because there's an assumption they shouldn't live. If we pass them to the judge, they'll go free and we'll have to pick them up again. If there's lots of pressure--like from Amnesty International or some foreign country--then we might pass them on to a judge, but if there's no pressure, then they're dead (Pyes, 1986).

During the Reagan administration, US and popular attention was fixated on Central America. With the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1989 and the end of the civil war in El Salvador, international attention has all but

disappeared from the region. This is unfortunate. If the trend continues, the military will likely feel less compelled to change its behavior.

Finally, one of the most important questions facing the armed forces and El Salvador in general is a redefinition of the military's mission. El Salvador was never faced with severe external threats and thus based its role on combatting domestic threats. Now that the civil war has ended, the military can no longer base its legitimacy on the fight against communism and internal subversion.

The Salvadoran military is not a legion of sadistic deathsquads, nor is it a bastion of freedom and democratic ideals. Like El Salvador's past, the future of the country and its military are inexorably linked. It is unlikely that the military will maintain the power it has had for so long. Yet as eager as the people of El Salvador are to make a break from the past, it is also doubtful that a democratic El Salvador will be able to exclude a politically-motivated actor like the armed forces either.

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