

THE REALITIES OF CIVIL SOCIETY
THEORY AND DEMOCRACY
IN LATIN AMERICA

THESIS

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PREFACE

The complex relationships between Non-Government Organizations (NGO's) and the State have many interesting facets. It was the interactions between the two that first were of interest to this writer. It seemed that the amount of corruption in the government slowed down and hindered NGO's in their work with needy people. The original theme of the thesis was the study of how that corruption affected NGO's in their everyday business. However as the research proceeded, the theme has evolved into one more critical of the NGOs.

There seems to be a general consensus in the scholarly community that NGOs have the ability to create a type of civil society that is more stable than the one created by the state. Yet many authors have also shown that NGOs are having anything but a positive effect upon the poor of the world. Interestingly, this paradox has not been explored. Scholars treated both conclusions as valid, but they clearly cannot be or, at least, cannot be maintained as true without conceptual exploration. It was this confusing dichotomy of views that pushed this study in a different direction and led it to examine the effectiveness of NGOs in promoting stability, democracy, and prosperity-the key measures of civil society in developing countries particularly in Latin America.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and their effects. Scholars differ in their opinions on the sustainability of the NGO movement. There is a wide array of literature upon the effectiveness of the work of NGOs among their target population. Arguments and sources can be found that are both critical and supportive of NGOs role in civil society. In the early 1990s, a new NGO literature focused on the democratic effects of civil society and how to build it. There are suggestions of this new tangent in the literature of the 1970s and 1980s, but the new school did not fully emerge as a coherent body of opinion until the last decade. From the 1990s onward, this new scholarship argued that NGOs were the instrument of delivery for the fabrication of a healthy civil society. The end result of NGOs work in civil society was to create democracy and economic stability. Although not fully developed, the popularity of the new view spread throughout the developing world and carried with it the hope of future democratic development. When analyzed, there are major flaws within this new body of theoretical work. NGOs lack the legitimacy to create a truly effective civil society. They are also a flawed instrument to use for creating civil society. Relations with the state are distrustful at times due to

fears of foreign influence. They are dependent upon grants and funds from donors and therefore open to the donor's suggestions for the use of the funds.

NGOs are not the ideal vehicle for the creation of civil society.

The definition of an NGO is widely debated between scholars. The World Bank defines an NGO as "private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development" (World Bank, "Categorizing NGOs"). The definition of the NGO has become tied to the following definition of civil society. Due to the prevalence of the civil society theory, the definition of civil society is the NGOs, which make it up. It, in turn, encompasses all types of organizations and associations, formal and informal, that are not part of the existing political structure. These are described and listed below in the definitions of organizations within civil society. "NGOs are formal organizations, and as such, they emerge when a group of people organize themselves into a social unit 'that was established with the explicit objective of achieving certain ends...and formulating rules to govern the relations among the members of the organizations and the duties of each member'" (Franz 122). For the purpose of this thesis, the definition written by Franz encompasses all types of NGOs present in Latin America, including church organizations, labor unions, and activist organizations.

The new theory that NGOs create democracy is widely popular. There is no specific name for it. A number of authors refer to it as the principle of the New Policy Agenda (Fisher, Commings, Hulme/Edwards, Kapir). Yet these

authors do not define the principles of this theory especially its economic and political dimensions. Nonetheless, the theory is well known and used as the basis of many civil society papers. Surprisingly, few scholars have researched the effects of this theory in relation to reality. Fewer still have researched the origin of these ideas and tried to organize the ideas into one cohesive theory.

For the purpose of this thesis, it is important that a complete definition of Civil Society is laid out. Civil society is a very complex concept. The London School of Economics and Political Science defines this ambiguous term in the most precise definition in scholarly fields. “Civil society refers to the arena of un-coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated” (<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/>). Not everyone uses this meaning of civil society however this definition is the most widely used by scholars. The most ambiguous definition is “a social complement to the development of the market and economic restructuring that reduces the state’s role in providing social assistance” (Grugel 90). Economists are more prone to writing statements about civil society reflecting entrepreneurship and individualism to galvanize the market then they are about it establishing a base for order (Narozhna 2). This is the one view that encompasses business associations as part of civil society. Economists see the duties and role of civil society as moving into the power sphere that the state vacates. This viewpoint easily identifies NGOs as the primary actor moving into the state’s

sphere of power, especially when providing social services to the rural and poor populations.

On the other hand, political scientists have their own definition of civil society based upon their perceptions of the world. It is best described as the part of society that is not government. For political scientists, the division is one of black and white. There is the government sector and then there is the non-government sector. This does not refer to business or the private sector. The non-government sector is one of organization to influence the direction of the nation's populace, whether that's through political means or not. Another writer describes it as "that segment of society that interacts with the state, influences the state and yet is distinct from the state" (Fisher 447). For many scholars who ascribe to this definition, businesses are not included in the civil society of a state. President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Tony Blair have described the civil society as the "Third Way" (Rieff 3). This third sector that they are describing is distinct from government or business. It is made up of "intermediary institutions' such as professional associations, religious groups, labor unions and citizen advocacy organizations" (www.civilsoc.org). Families could be included in this category. However, they often lack the organization to set goals and achieve them. Neighborhood associations are one such example of families working in an organized manner to achieve a common goal.

Sociologists have another way of interpreting the term civil society. It is more of a definition based upon community. Organizations working in civil society are voluntary associations in diverse fields (Narozhna 2). This

interpretation makes the effort to separate civil society from government and business (www.civilsoc.org). However, there are many critics, including governments, of these works due to the fact that civil society is very much concerned with private industry. Civil society has to represent all views including those that are opposites. For example, there are groups that work to keep the air clean. However, there are other groups that lobby for lower energy costs (Carothers 3). These two groups have opposite goals, yet they are both included in civil society.

The World Bank follows all these lines of thinking in an attempt to combine them for the best usage. “The term civil society [is] the wide array of non-governmental and not-for profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations” (<http://web.worldbank.org>). Other scholars are following in the footsteps of the World Bank and adopting this generalized definition of civil society. Thomas Carothers defines it as “a broader concept, encompassing all the organizations and association that exist outside of the state (including political parties) and the market. It includes the gamut of organizations that political scientists traditionally label interest groups-not just advocacy NGOs, but also labor unions, professional associations (such as those of doctors and lawyers), chambers of commerce, ethnic association, and others. It also incorporates the many other associations that exist for purposes other than advancing specific social or political agendas, such as religious organizations, student groups, cultural organizations (from

choral societies to bird watching clubs), sports clubs, and informal community groups” (Carothers 2).

The best description comes from the London School of Economics Center for Civil Society. “Civil society refers to the arena of un-coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional form, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women’s organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups” (<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/>). It is this all-encompassing definition of civil society that the thesis will base its research and conclusion upon.

NGOs are usually associated with the good in a society. Yet there are just as many associations that can be classified as NGOs, which do not have ‘good’ motives. The mafia is one example of such organizations (Carothers 3). One could even argue that Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations fall into the classification of NGOs.

NGOs can be classified into two groups by looking at the methods by which they achieve their goals. The first group is the NGO that pursues its

objectives as a complement to governmental action. The second type is the NGO that opposes government action (Frantz 121).

ANALYSIS

The idea that Non-Governmental Organizations create a civil society that constructs democracy and economic stability better than the state is one that seems to have gained prominence in the scholarly world. “In the views of some observers, the third world in particular is being swept by a nongovernmental, associational, or ‘quiet’ revolution that at least one analyst believes may ‘prove to be as significant to the latter twentieth century as the rise of the nation-state was to the latter nineteenth century’” (Fisher 440). Some authors are tentatively naming this theory the New Policy Agenda; however, the proposed policies vary greatly. The theory is based upon neo-liberal economics and liberal democratic theory (Fischer 444). There is a lot of literature that mentions this theory, referenced as New Policy Agenda, and even more literature that defines the same principles however, do not use a title. Yet few scholars have delved into the mechanics of why or what kind of effect these ideas are having upon NGOs. Moreover, the validity of this theory has not been supported or disproved through case analysis. For the purpose of this thesis, the theory will not be called the New Policy Agenda, although references to this title will be used due to prior use by other authors.

The evolution of the theory that NGOs create a civil society that in turn fosters democracy is extensive and based on many assumptions by international organizations, states, and NGOs. These assumptions are attempts to discover why

certain states are unstable. One author blatantly blames the breakdown of civil society. “The demise of the community is responsible for many of the ills in contemporary societies” (Grugel 90). This sentiment was coupled with “the sense that nation-states are no longer obvious and legitimate sources of authority over civil society” (Fischer 439). Scholars claim that the breakdown of civil society results from the people’s lack of confidence in their governments’ to foster elements of civil society. Confidence in the governments to enact policies to create the desired end that is a vibrant civil society had fled. Another problem that mystified scholars was the collapse of the social movements. This was blamed as well on the weak civil societies during the years of civil conflict and authoritarian regimes (Grugel 98). Scholars knew that the solution to building democracy in former conflict countries would follow a path to strengthening and building civil society.

Once scholars identified the problem, the creation of a new theory to improve these unstable regimes was not long in following. In this case, NGOs were seized upon as the tool through which the rejuvenation of civil society would occur. “Civil society’ has increasingly come to have been identified with the welter of non-government organizations (NGOs) and grassroots organizations (GROs) that have sprung up over the last 20 years” (Foley 69). All these discussions coincided with the events of the late 1980s. In many cases, Latin America included, “authoritarian governments had weakened the party systems, often NGOs were the only survivors” (Hulme 265). It seemed natural for NGOs to step into some of those political roles in an attempt to better the conditions of

the poor. “Civil society as a project capable of transforming politics, society, and culture in Latin America was taken up enthusiastically by NGOS as a long-term strategy for the region” (Grugel 98). Research shows that the NGO perceptions of society and their role were altered by this belief that they could manipulate societal transformation into a democracy. “Increasingly, NGOs also understood development less as a welfare provision than as a fundamental societal transformation” (Weiss 193).

NGOs were chosen by scholars as the vessels of democratization due to their work in the areas of need. “There is “a general sense of NGOs as ‘doing good,’ unencumbered and untainted by the politics of government or the greed of the market” (Fisher 442). Their work in the communities became attached to words such as empowerment and participation. The perception of this was the possible creation of a political constituency such as would be required for a true democracy.

John Locke, a classical political scientist, provides the foundation for the modern day definition of democracy that many modern scholars rely upon. “The majority having, as has been shewed, upon men’s first uniting into society, the whole power of the community naturally in them, may employ all that power in making laws for the community from time to time, and executing those laws by officers of their own appointing; and then the form of the government is a perfect democracy; or else may put the power of making laws in to the hands of a few select men, and their heirs or successors; and then it is an oligarchy: or else into the hands of one man, and then it is a monarchy” (Locke 76). In non-democratic

societies, the actual participation of the majority of the population is nonexistent. By creating a politically educated constituency, NGOs' work became synonymous with building democracy. "Achieving democratization by building up civil society means empowering individuals to live in a modern world" (Grugel 89). Not only individuals but also local societies have to be educated into modernity. This became confused with the actions of NGOs. The actual goals of NGOs were not to build a civil society. NGOs are very diverse in their goals and activities. Many times, the actions of NGOs promoted civil society yet that result was not the achievement of the NGOs' goals. The social context of NGO actions was not analyzed with an eye to the whole picture.

The New Policy Agenda is what first created confusion over the topic of this thesis and therefore led to more research. The title of the theory is not well supported by the few authors who have latched onto it. Yet the theory is very well explored by other authors who did not refer to it with such a title. David Hulme and Micheal Edwards refer to the New Policy Agenda in their writings as the 'Agenda'. "NGOs and GROs are seen as vehicles for 'democratization' and essential components of a thriving 'civil society,' which in turn are seen as essential to the success of the Agenda's economic dimension. NGOs and GROs are supposed to act as a counterweight to state power by opening up channels of communication and participation, providing training grounds for activists promoting pluralism and by protecting human rights" (Hulme/Edwards 6). In a case study of World Vision International (WVI), Stephen Commins noticed a definite trend toward the use of NGOs over state institutions. "The New Policy

Agenda appears to call for NGOs to substitute for state programs and to serve as implementers of public sector donor priorities” (Commins 141). In the WVI case, international donors pressured WVI to take over areas in which governments previously had operated (Cummins 141).

In another study done by World Development on income levels of Latin America, the author concludes that not enough time has elapsed to see the effects of the New Policy Agenda. “The three characteristics of the New Policy Agenda- trade liberalization, the emphasis on property rights, and the retrenchment of the redistributive state, including privatization-are unlikely to worsen income distribution” (Kapur 158). This source was the only one that clearly laid out the expectations of economists. Few references to the New Policy Agenda mentioned the theoretical basis of the idea.

Further information was not found on the New Policy Agenda until the research on civil society creation exhumed more than just references to the theory. This long quote briefly mentions the New Policy Agenda however it goes into much more detail about the civil society theory and definition. “Development agencies and international NGOs, in particular, support local NGOs for the effectiveness in pursuing the goals of what some have called a ‘new policy agenda,’ a heterogeneous set of policies based on a faith in two basic values- neo-liberal economics and liberal democratic theory. As these proponents envision them, NGOs have the capacity to efficiently transfer training and skills that assist individuals and communities to compete in markets, to provide welfare services to those who are marginalized by the market, and to contribute democratization and

the growth of a robust civil society, all of which are considered as critical to the success of the neoliberal economic policies” (Fisher 444). From this light reference to the New Policy Agenda title, the civil society research began to parallel the few references to the titled theory. Further investigation uncovered a well discussed theory about NGOs, civil society, and their ties to democracy.

A result of the beliefs about the New Policy Agenda was further support of NGOs developed in the belief that they created democracy (Fisher 444).

“Many radical NGOs were actively encouraged by external development agencies” due to their hope that they would provide change to the authoritarian regimes (Hulme/Edwards 265). International politicians and political scientists touted the view that NGOs could change the existing political structure where governments and individuals could not.

Although sources on the New Policy Agenda were scarce, a basic theme of the civil society theory was proposing the exact same thing. The literature on civil society was definitive in its statements about the theory whereas the few sources on New Policy Agenda were incomplete. The theory states that NGOs are better able to create democracy through alternative methods. Those methods vary. However, they are pathways closed to governments. A few of these alternative methods include challenging the state from the grassroots level, bringing international attention to issues through discussion and support of social groups to claim their human and political rights. “Strong civil societies were not an automatic consequence of democratization but instead depended on embedding social norms and cultures of tolerance and respect, establishing diverse social

spaces, dismantling patrimonial and clientelistic social practices, living with difference, and fundamentally, turning individuals into citizens. Democratization [was] the only stable way to promote economic and social change” (Grugel 98).

The projects listed above are all types of neo-liberal economic programs such as described briefly in the New Policy Agenda. The elements of the neo-liberal policies are trade liberalization, removal of subsidies, creation of markets, privatization of government industries, and the establishment of property rights (Bebbington 122, Kapur 158). With policies following the lines of these dictates, it was believed that democracy was a step away.

The purpose of these changes was to pursue the interests of the peasants instead of the elites. “NGO projects would generate strategies that could subsequently be scaled up through the policies and programs as an alternative to the state. Importantly, though, these were still visions that included a central role for the state in financing and implementing an alternative agricultural and rural development” (Bebbington 120). Once certain methods had been ascertained as stable, NGOs would cease to be so important to the development process. In this way, NGOs would build the democracy, economic stability, and peace to hand it over to the government. The problem with this theory is that some NGOs are very experienced at the local level and not the national level. Others do not. NGOs run an efficient organization at the local level and therefore their lack of efficiency would transfer to the national level if they ever undertook such a feat. They have no way to “scale up” their projects because they lack experience on how to do this feat. Nevertheless, NGOs tackled these projects with enthusiasm

and international support and funding helped them try to accomplish the goal of creating a civil society.

The theory has only been popularized within the last decade of the twentieth century. In an article written in 1996, one author says, “there is a broad agreement that a vibrant civil society means a more democratic society” (Foley 69). The broad agreement among scholars has made its way into many aspects of NGO literature.

Minor citations within other types of articles show how pervasive the sentiment is over NGOs abilities to create a civil society that creates peace.

Christina Ewig wrote an article over the history of the women’s movement in Nicaragua. She writes in her introduction briefly about the theory.

“Neoconservative policy makers, who believe that democracy is inherently tied to capitalism and the private-sector initiative that capitalism represents, also claim that NGOs promote democracy because they are private rather than state institutions” (Ewig 76).

Another author, Kjell Skjelsbaek, mentions the tendency of the NGOs to move into areas that are historically run by the state. “NGOs have recently been established in fields closely connected with politics--finance, industry, and technological development--than in less political areas. It is in exactly these fields that the most developed state were most active” (Skjelsbaek 435). He implies that with this move, NGOs have a greater ability to create democracy within society.

Shelley Feldman's study of the NGO movement in Bangladesh, introduces of the theory this way. "An NGO discourse, infused with notions of public participation, greater representation of the poor, and more equitable access to resources, gained currency" (Feldman 47). Her explanation of the theory has a slightly different viewpoint than any other source. "NGOs also have played a key role in the struggle for democracy by providing a venue for discussion and debate around issues of poverty, equality, literacy, access to credit and more representative government" (Feldman 47). Instead of directly building civil society, NGOs have simply opened up the topics quoted which have then influenced civilian participation, ending up with a type of civil society.

Another example of the popularity of this theory is a quotation from an article that analyzes Latin American participation in the international arena. "Theories of domestic civil society's role in democratization have highlighted the importance of autonomous interaction among individuals, groups, and organizations in the public sphere as a counterbalance to state-dominated action" (Friedman/Hochstetler/Clark 8).

The last example is from the World Bank. In the 1991 World Development Report, NGOs "have become an important force in the development process [justifying] the costs of developing countries' institutional weakness" (www-wds.worldbank.org). The pervasiveness in which this theory has invaded all different types of scholarly thoughts is shown throughout these examples. Each is different, yet all the authors find this theory relevant to their topics.

Globalization has changed the way that NGOs and donors view the state system. NGOs have established a self-image that they are the best method for change (Grugel 95). No longer is the state the most effective way to transform society through reform projects. Societal transformation also failed when support of the local social movements was provided by international parties. The civil conflicts of Latin America left the social movements in tatters. Except for the initial burst of enthusiasm over social movements, NGOs' progress in Latin America was impeded by their inability to stay strong through times of political and economic upheaval. The result of this was that NGOs' belief in the power of government and social movements was shattered.

Many NGOs seized upon this theory as a way to put into action what they think is best for the creation of civil society. However, "nothing short of miracles [are being] expected from NGOs....NGOs have become the 'favored child' of official development agencies hailed as the new panacea to cure the ills that have befallen the development process and imagined as a 'magic bullet' which will mysteriously but effectively find its target" (Fisher 442).

Yet other scholars have made a point to research what they see as a dichotomy between the interests of civil society and the interests of NGOs. NGOs are striving to gain better conditions for their members. Civil society is trying to build democracy and a stable economy, using private economic interests (Carothers 3). Much of the time, the espoused interests are opposite to each other.

There are many critics of the theory that NGOs are able to build a type of civil society that will create democracy and, therefore, economic stability. Fisher

points out the possibility that NGOs have simply become a “technical solution to development problems” (Fisher 445). He also states that the psychological effect of using NGOs to develop civil society transforms the state into an impediment to development. Thomas Carroll writes in his book about the bias present among NGOs and the literature that deals with them. “However, the NGO literature suffers from a strong case of antigovernment bias, to the point where NGOs are seen not only as opposed to the state but as alternatives to the state. This attitude is fueled by neo-conservative ‘rational choice’ theorists, by celebrants of the informal economy, and by the strong U.S.-led push for privatization by means of the microenterprise sector” (Carroll 23). Carroll’s opinions show clearly that evaluations of NGO work tend to trend toward black and white results. The NGOs were either effective or they were not.

Few have taken the time to analyze the history of regions to apply the theory and see its outcome. “Little is known about how these organizations interact with their beneficiaries or partners and with the power centers in their countries. This lack of documentation is disproportionate to the growing importance of GSOs and MSOs in the developing world” (Carroll 22). The following three chapters are a historical look at the civil conflict within three nations of Latin America: Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. These three nations had the most pronounced civil conflict in the modern history of Latin America.

HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis posed in this thesis is that NGOs do not create the type of civil society to build democracy, which then stabilizes the country. The view is one of comparison of the ‘myth’ against modern history to see the discrepancies and the realities of such a theory.

What kind of civil society do NGOs create? NGOs are very effective at building civil society on the micro level. In the local communities in which they work, resources are used efficiently to achieve the goals of the organization. “The goals of NGOs, as opposed to those of other organizations, are almost always related to the problems of development” (Franz 122). NGOs are very effective in solving development problems within local communities, such as education or health care. They are able to concentrate their attention and resources on a small area to achieve the maximum impact. The civil society that NGOs promote exists within the local areas. Rarely does an NGO take on the entire national system.

NGOs are also adept at creating social change. By bringing international attention to issues that need resolving, they support and push at the same time for policy and institutional changes within the society. Many of the issues being brought into light are for the purpose of bettering the situations of the lower classes. This is healthy for a government to address for further development. In this way, NGOs create civil society through healthy communication (Garilao 119).

Why is this not a stabilizing element to society? The achievements of NGOs exist on the local level of the micro-economy. The State operates at the macro level or the national economy. “By generalizing, they lose depth,

objectivity, and efficiency” (Franz 123). It is likely that if the NGOs were to do the same job of the same scope as the state, similar results would be found.

Although NGOs solve a problem of development in one area, it usually is not a permanent solution. The work of NGOs tends to be more of a band-aid to the development problem. A permanent solution involves the NGO working long term on the same project. The relationship that NGOs develop with the local populations is critical to the achievement of their goals. Long term goals also ensure stability of funding for the organization.

The temporary nature of NGOs works against them as well. Staff members, upon gaining experience, will become leaders and will naturally leave the NGO sector and move into political and government positions (Garilao 117). There they can make a bigger difference in the national economy and for the people they used to represent as staff of an NGO.

Three historical studies are presented as case studies and they are all drawn from Latin America. Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador were chosen for their relatively recent history of civil conflict. Upon analysis, their history will show that NGOs are ineffective at promoting economic growth, society, and democracy at the national level and, therefore, the New Policy Agenda is wrong.

There are many elements to civil society which scholars neglected to look at when they assigned NGOs as the creative force behind it all. Historically, NGOs and the state have not maintained a good relationship. In fact, it was often one of antagonism and reaction (Landim 32). The presence of the two antagonists during civil war has spurred them to make drastic moves which they would not

have done otherwise. Many of these actions and reactions were from assumptions of their motives and goals, whether correct or not. There has been a movement within the past decade for NGOs and the state to cooperate to further the developmental goals of both systems. Scholars are beginning to analyze how they are working together. These works have brought to light the former antagonism between the two systems.

Another problem with the movement of NGOs into former state space was the legitimacy of NGOs. Foreign NGOs were not accountable to the population like governments are. If situations turned negative, the NGO could withdraw their personnel, leaving the population to endure the conditions that they might have created or not created. Elected representatives are dependent upon their constituency and are tied to them in hopes of future election.

NGOs were and are dependent on funds from donors, whether those are foreign benefactors, corporations or governments. To keep these funds, NGO goals are subjected to pressure from their donors of what they should and should not be. NGOs are not truly autonomous. To gain and keep their funding, NGOs have to 'compete' most often against one another. This goes against the values of NGOs that are working, in theory, for the good of the people (Garilao 117).

A final example is that NGOs potentially harm the populations whom they are trying to help. This can occur through misunderstanding the situation or the culture. Foreign NGOs run into problems of these types all the time. For example, their staff can misunderstand the problem with development, often times focusing on the problem instead of the solution. In war, if NGOs focus on the

division between the two fighting parties instead of a commonality, their goals to alleviate the situation of the people in the middle cannot be achieved (Anderson 16).

All of these elements mentioned as well as others are present in the three cases of Latin America. Chapter Five will follow the historical studies with an outline of how NGOs have failed to create the civil society that will make democracy prosper, using the three case studies as examples.

CHAPTER 2

GUATEMALA

The first case study starts, ironically, with a democratic government. It was the first democratically elected government in Guatemala. The year was 1945. Juan Jose Arevalo was elected by an overwhelming majority. He was supported by the people's 1944 Revolution that overthrew the authoritarian government which had been in power since 1821 when the elite of Guatemala gained its independence.

Arevalo was inaugurated in March of 1945 as the first democratic president. He espoused many socialist ideas introduced by the revolutionary movement. However, he claimed he was not a Marxist. "Rejecting the concept of class struggle in favor of the ideal of social harmony, he advocated the rights of private property and opposed the ingenious distribution of material goods for the silly economic leveling of men who are economically different" (Immerman, 631). His term began with a new constitution that was ratified by the new congress setting up a decentralization of power, and guaranteed basic human freedoms similar to the constitution of the United States. While he occupied the presidency, he concentrated on improving the economy through modernization.

He knew that the weak economy was the cause of underdevelopment in the country.

The most important law that he passed was the Law of Forced Rental, which established a system to control the land rent by leasing land for no more than five percent of the value of the crops producible therein. This law upset the United Fruit Company greatly. Arevalo's term of presidency suddenly became the most controversial of Latin America (Immerman 632). However, United Fruit would not make any move against the government until more drastic action was put into play in the 1950s.

Land reform cannot be passed through the legislature without looking at agrarian reform. Within two years, the legislature passed the Labor Code, allowing labor contracts, the right to organize, minimum wage, and standards for working conditions. One of the first organizations set up was a union for the workers of the United Fruit Company. They immediately went on strike for better wages and working conditions (Immerman 636).

The government specifically encouraged labor unions to organize. Politicians hoped they would act as a check on the larger businesses' power. These first labor unions were the first emergence of non-governmental organizations in Guatemala. They grew rapidly due to the current popularity within Latin America as a social movement.

Even though labor unions were being encouraged by the Guatemalan government, others had reason to fear their existence. United Fruit decided to use its influence with the government of the United States. The FBI had accumulated

files on the leaders of the government, including Arevalo, and the newly formed labor unions and leaders. “Government experts reasoned that since unions in Guatemala were a post-Ubico [previous dictator] phenomenon, any native organizer was unquestionably inexperienced and susceptible to the advice and manipulation of veteran Communists” (Immerman 635). This fear of Communist influence in a new NGO easily spread to the government of Guatemala after the election and resulting legislation.

The national election of 1950 was slightly tainted by doubt in the population due to the death of the opposing candidate, Javier Arana. Arevalo’s handpicked successor had served as his Minister of Defense, Jacobo Arbenz. Prior to the election, Arana was assassinated, leaving his successor Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes to carry on. Fuentes did not stand a chance as he was closely associated by the public with some of the most repressive actions of the previous dictatorship. Even with this doubt hanging over Arbenz’s head, he was very popular with the people. He described his goals as, “...the fundamental objective of his administration would be to convert Guatemala from a country bound by a predominantly feudal economy into a modern, capitalist one” (Immerman 633).

Arbenz was very good to the NGOs formed and working within Guatemala. He allowed a close association with the government. He even enabled the government to provide incentives for labor union members to encourage a rise in association (Immerman 632). The Catholic Church also took a hand in helping the NGOs to spread their word and obtain more members. Owing to this, religious sensibility became linked to the cooperative movement, which

also encouraged political participation (Immerman 632). However, their methods of mobilization, such as using the local elite and giving material benefits, were ineffective to the environment once Arbenz was deposed, due to the ostracism of the local elite. The military considered the NGOs as their opposition.

In 1952, Arbenz enacted the Agrarian Reform Bill, also called Decree 900. The government would take all idle land from landowners with more than 223 acres to redistribute to those without land. For the United Fruit Company, this would mean a loss of four hundred thousand acres (Immerman 636). They made sure that this legislation came to the headlines and attention of the United States of America with their perspective coloring the story. It was not mentioned in the resulting marketing campaign that the Guatemalan government was going to pay the full declared United Fruit book value of the land. This amount of money for United Fruit would have been close to two million dollars. “The United Fruit refused to accept bonds offered in payment on the ground they were grossly inadequate” (Brackers 2). It is interesting to note that the declared value of the lands by United Fruit in their books did not match the perceived value of the land by the company.

President Eisenhower was not swayed by the initial marketing by United Fruit. He wrote in his memoirs, “Expropriation in itself does not, of course prove Communism; expropriation of oil and agricultural properties years before in Mexico had not been fostered by Communists” (Immerman 636).

United Fruit stepped up their campaign against Decree 900, sending out their message to the American public. They did this by bringing leading reporters

in the United States for newspapers and magazines, as well as their publishers, to Guatemala. United Fruit called upon former Assistant Secretary Braden, an ex-diplomat of Latin America, along with ex-Roosevelt aide Thomas Corcoran to use their influence to sway friends and acquaintances in Washington. Their marketing campaign focused upon the fear of Communism and the creation of an international conspiracy (Immerman 638).

Due to these actions, "...it convinced any remaining skeptics in the Eisenhower administration that the programs of the Arbenz government were Communist inspired" (Immerman 634). The *New York Times* released an article in 1954 that was evidence of the success of the United Fruit Company. It stated that the "...constant harassment here [in Guatemala] to which the company [United Fruit] now is being subjected is largely a Communist tactic" (Brackers 2). Eisenhower himself used a specific argument to justify his change of thought. In particular, it was the reaction of the Guatemalan government to the Korean War, the Guatemalans "...must be in league with the Soviets and Chinese, for it accepted the ridiculous Communist contention that the United States had conducted bacteriological warfare in Korea" (Immerman 636).

This was the time of the Red Scare in the United States. "Communism threatened the fundamental American way of life; foreign investment was essential for this way of life so any threat to this investment was concomitantly a threat to the national interest, and that any threat to the national interest was necessarily the result of Communist activity and a threat to national security" (Immerman 638-9). The expropriation of United Fruit Company's land had

become linked to the American's fear of advancement of Communism into the United States sphere of influence. Communism had come close to home to the Americans and they were set to wipe it out of their sphere. It was this cascade of events that brought American intervention in Guatemala.

INTERVENTION AND ITS EFFECTS ON NGOs

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) guidelines forbid it from directly interfering in a conflict by armed intervention. They chose Carlos Castillo Armas as the most likely candidate to lead the coup to take control of the government. Ydigoras Fuentes, the opposing candidate in the election of Arbenz, had positioned himself in nearby Honduras where he could plot the overthrow of Arbenz. The CIA felt that Fuentes was too similar to the old Spanish aristocracy and the country would not support him. Armas, a close co-conspirator of Fuentes, had been assured of American support through a letter from Somoza, the dictator of Nicaragua. "I have been informed by our friends here that the government of the North, recognizing the impossibility of finding another solution to the grave problem of my country, has taken the decision to permit us to develop our plans" (Immerman 640). Armas prepared the countryside with leaflets and radio broadcasts.

Desperate for help against the uprising, Arbenz pleaded with the government of the United States to sell him arms to counter the invasion when it came. They refused on principle of an arms boycott initiated in the 1940s after the revolution. With no help forthcoming, Arbenz turned to the other side of the world, asking for help from the Soviets. They agreed in the hope of embarrassing

the United States. However the shipment was discovered and when it arrived in Puerto Barrios, where American officials were waiting. The uproar that resulted gave Armas the opportunity to institute his invasion with full knowledge of United States support. In total, the coup cost the United States about ten million dollars (Simons 94). The Soviet help was used as confirmation of Communist infiltration in the Western Hemisphere (Immerman 646).

On the 18th June 1954 Armas invaded with one hundred and fifty paid mercenaries. They settled six miles within the border at a major religious shrine and simply waited for Arbenz to crack (Immerman 647). Due to the documented 'help' given to Armas and the great lengths to which Eisenhower went for the invasion, Arbenz believed it to be much larger than it actually was. He saw the small force with Armas as a small part of the whole. The radio broadcasts continued, demoralizing the government. In desperation, Arbenz ordered a blackout of the capital and largest cities. However, the uneducated population of the country still received the announcement with their battery and gasoline power. The distribution of information continued.

The radio broadcasts began telling of Soviet pilots defecting with their planes. One Guatemalan pilot swayed by the radio broadcasts, surrendered. By getting him drunk, the CIA was able to record him appealing to his fellow pilots to surrender as well. Arbenz, fearful of further defection, grounded his entire air force (Immerman 648). The atmosphere of tension and fear built in the capital. The last straw to the resistance was the decision by Arbenz to arm the peasantry, creating militias. The officers of the military took this as the gravest of insults

and deserted Arbenz, demanding his resignation. Without fuss, he did and fled into exile on the 27th June 1954 (Immerman 649).

With the incident over the Soviet arms fresh in the minds of reporters, the coup was not investigated and the American help remained a secret. Washington put the emphasis on a native patriotism to root out Communism. (Immerman 649). Armas, as the leader of the coup, assumed power of Guatemala. This did not necessarily mean the end of Non-Government Organizations, such as the labor unions that had caused such Communist furor. However, many did choose to lie low until the horizon had cleared of smoke. Armas was accused of weakness and assassinated in 1958 by followers of Fuentes. Guatemala subsequently held an election in which Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes won the presidency (May 70).

However the election created turmoil within the popular labor movements, which resurfaced in Guatemala, expressing their opinions and presence with strikes and demonstrations (May 78). One of the first demonstrations was against electoral fraud and corruption within the Ydigoras government. Students and professors of the University of San Carlos formed up in the streets. Violence erupted between the demonstrators and the local peace-keeping forces (May 71). Several strikes of workers occurred at this time as well. The most well known was the railroad workers union. In 1961, students again took to the streets with the intent to protest the American training of mercenaries for the Bay of Pigs invasion. Local forces opened fire upon the crowd, killing several (shr.aaas.org ch.2 p.2).

Campesinos organizations re-emerged as well in 1962, mostly in the form of labor movements. These were local cooperatives, trade unions and campesino leagues (labor unions). Cooperatives were much more popular than trade unions due to their ideas. The cooperatives believed that they needed to satisfy the people's needs before they could organize to gain power for the people. The trade unions were similar except they put the need for political power before assuring the needs of the peasantry. If an organization could gain power politically, then the needs of the people would automatically follow. Many NGOs of Guatemala learned through the first wave of repression that the recipients of benefit of these unions were to be targeted by the military. To their credit, they applied this knowledge to the post conflict organizations to the benefit of the people. The members of these campesinos organizations also learned their lesson and sought political power to further their goals (May 81).

Not many NGOs were able to survive the military purge. The basic structures of their organizations were rigid, hierarchical systems like corporations. When the military assassinated a high level official, the NGO was crippled. If the NGOs had had the flexibility to band together against the military terrorism, they might have survived. It was a lesson that they learned well as the second budding of NGOs had a flexible structure.

THE FIRST WAVE OF TERROR

Hampered by public opinion, the military had previously only attacked civilians through newsprint. However, to gain more autonomy and government authorization, they approached Ydigoras with a deal. It was mutually beneficial.

Ydigoras would gain help in further repression and the military would gain power. This involved replacing all Ydigoras's government advisors with military personnel (shr.aaas.org ch.2 p.2).

In March of 1963, after several failed coups, Colonel Enrique Peralta Azurdia took the presidency by coup prior to the presidential election, with United States support. With his new power, he canceled elections (shr.aaas.org ch.2, p.3). He claimed that Ydigoras's administration had been permeated with Communists. He dissolved the constitution and the congress, the last remnants of democracy, and took the seat of power for himself. The military began to use more force against the demonstrators, citing reasons of 'communism or inciting disturbances, or both'. The previous dispute, carried out only in writing in the local paper, escalated into repression (May 71).

At the same time, the first guerrilla activity began to surface. The Movimiento Revolucionario del 13 de Noviembre (November 13th Revolutionary Movement), nicknamed MR-13, organized in direct opposition to the military governments of Ydigoras and Azurda. They openly allied with the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (Guatemala Workers' Party), the Communist Party of Guatemala, banned by law in 1955 (May 71). The Communist party had not left Guatemala, but had gone underground in its activities since the fall of Arbenz's government. The alliance called themselves Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (Rebel Armed Forces) and their goal was simply to engage the military in armed combat to gain power of the government (May 71).

These two organizations chose to fight in the countryside and, therefore, needed the support of the locals. However, one negative consequence of their location was the fact that peasant organizations, called campesinos organizations, were often put into the same category as these guerrillas. All organizations in the countryside became suspect by the military of dissident ideology (May 72).

In return, the military, trained by US tacticians and money, attributed communism to all non-governmental organizations. With the power granted to it by Azurdas, the military became politically and economically powerful, evolving into the new elite class of Guatemala. It gained its own budget, expanded by reasons to fight communism, and, therefore, the guerrillas who were threatening peace. Retired military officials moved into most communities as commissioners to act as a 'paid spy' (May 73).

By 1966, the military openly attacked the guerrillas and their civilian supporters (shr.aaas.org ch.2 p.2). It was at this time that the Guatemalans elected a civilian to the presidency, Julio Cesar Mendez Montenegro. The success of democracy was tempered by the fact that the military forced him to sign a pact, allowing them the power to fight the guerrillas as they saw fit, without interference. Several members of the Guatemala Communist party were hopeful of the elections and let their guard down, emerging from their hideaways. Twenty eight leaders and influential members of the party disappeared. Their bodies were never found. The government reported that they were "under unofficial charges of guerrilla subversion...and murdered extra judicially" (May 74). After that point, any person suspected, not just Guatemalans, of being opponents of the

military, foreign diplomats and US military advisors included were subject to surveillance (shr.aaas.org ch.2 p.3). This type of violence was new to Guatemala. For the first time, the military was committing violent acts to control the population instead of a reaction to demonstrations or strikes (May 73).

With unlimited power to fight the forces threatening Guatemala, the military began bombing villages near guerrilla operations. Civilians were “disappeared” by the thousands as suspects of supporting the guerrillas (shr.aaas.org ch.2 p.3). During these years prior to 1970, the death squads and death lists came into being. Military forces would dress as civilians to murder political or popular organizational leaders. Often, their bodies would be found with notes indicating communism or criminal acts as the cause of murder (shr.aaas.org ch.2 p.4). The most famous of these groups was the “Mano Blanco” (The White Hand), which had official support of the military and the powerful elite (May 73).

The Rebel Armed Forces were defeated by the military by 1970. However, popular organizations (NGOs) continued under suspicion. The reign of the military solidified as they presented their official candidate for the election, Colonel Carlos Arana Osorio (shr.aaas.org, ch.2 p.4).

THE SECOND WAVE OF TERROR

As the 1970's rolled into Guatemala, new incidents of strife began anew, such as labor disputes between peasants and land owners, conflicts between students and the military and criminal violence. Students had mobilized to protest a deal with a company from Canada to take advantage of the nickel deposits in

Guatemala. President Arana had to use force to quell the demonstration. During the chaos, he used his power to declare a state of siege. This allowed the power to transfer from elected officials to the rural village commissioners set up by the military (shr.aaas.org ch.3 p.1). In 1973, a six month strike by teachers led to several fierce conflicts. Acts of subversion and fear of terrorism was on the rise again. The military published reports more often of political violence. To the army, this was proof that the guerrillas had remobilized (May 74).

The spark that set off the building tension was an incident in the countryside between the indigenous population and the ladinos (non-Indians). Both had claimed a piece of land for two different purposes, the Indians had planted corn and the ladinos claimed it as pasturage for their cattle. By the time the corn had been eaten and the cattle had been poisoned, the military arrived to settle the conflict. However, the peasants surrounded the forces and would not let any get arrested. The army opened fire and the reports disagree about the actual number of people killed. It is estimated somewhere around thirty to sixty people (May 75).

By the end of 1972, the military had used the siege to capture the remaining members of the Communist party and tightened their hold on power. The use of death squads took care of the remaining organizational leaders in Guatemala that could be found. The few guerrillas that had survived the previous slaughter had, by this time, gathered a new force and taken a new name, Ejercito Guerrillero de los Pobres (Guerrilla Army of the Poor) (Simons 96).

Most of the surviving members had been from the indigenous faction of the previous organization, who had fled the country when the military cracked down on the guerrillas. Due to this indigenous remnant, the guerrillas were able to create a larger rural support base of the Mayan Indians than before. They did this by moving into the Mayan lands and gaining the trust of the people by offering them legal and economic advice (Simons 96). By 1975, twenty percent of the Mayan Indians living in the highlands were formed into cooperatives to take advantage to larger scale production (Brockett 259). The idea of gathering together peasant producers across borders was spreading across Latin America. The Mayans, with help from the guerrillas, attempted to move into this field of “Transnationalism,” - the circulation across borders of persons, technology, money, images, and ideas” (Edelman 55). The organization of the Mayan Indians brought them into contact with political ideas and organizations. NGOs became one way to develop their society as well as gain development grants from the government and international sources when available.

Prior to the second wave of terror, the Mayan population is thought to contain about fifty three percent of the whole Guatemalan population (Lovell/Lutz 403). This gave the guerrillas an enormous boost for support and fighters. The war also moved from the Eastern lowlands to the home of the Mayans, the densely populated Western half of the country, called the Highlands.

There was another reason that the army sought out the combatants and supporters during this time of conflict. There was a large section of land that they wanted to own due to rumors of oil deposits and prospective cattle ranching.

They declared that the population therein was suspect of cooperation with guerrillas, allowing them to clear the land by massacre of the existing population. They then used international funding to develop the region with hydroelectric projects and highways (May 77).

In 1974, Arana held a fraudulent election for his successor, General Kjell Laugerud Garcia to assume the presidency. Instead of following the pathways of previous military leaders, Laugerud enacted a program of political and social reform (shr.aaas.org ch.3 p.2). NGOs had not been allowed this amount of autonomy since before 1954. Several labor disputes were resolved through negotiation.

However, this democratic opening was interrupted by a colossal earthquake in 1976. Laugerud's opposition from the election, General Rios Montt, used this distraction to gain resources and power. He took the government by another military coup and established himself as leader. In response, the military increased repression (shr.aaas.org ch.3 p.2).

The earthquake opened pathways for non-government organizations. Relief poured into the country from various international organizations. The local organizations surged under this barrage of resources from international donors. However, this had the effect of making the military even more paranoid. Their very existence was seen by the military as a prospective political foundation for further insurgency (May 76). In 1978, the most extensive genocidal operation against the Mayan Indians by the military followed.

Two organizations emerged as leaders from the surge of NGOs. *Comite Nacional de Unidad Sindical* (National Committee for Labor Unity, CNUS) and the *Comite de Unidad Campesino* (Committee for Campesino Unity, CUC). Each had lofty goals of unifying the local organizations and labor movements to obtain political action. These two organizations reflected a new system of internal organization, one of flexibility and participation of members. The leaders had learned from previous organizations that legal recognition would only bring military attention. Instead, most of their internal structure was kept secret to protect them (May 81).

CNUS instituted a council of leaders of member organizations to lead. CUC had something very similar. These new NGOs used a new system of mobilization and methods of protection to survive. Marches or *caminatas* gave the organization a great deal of public attention. However, as soon as this faded, the leaders and participants were in danger. CNUS fashioned “self defense groups” from factory workers. Both initiated a method called ‘*concietizacion*’ which was a long term strategy of educating the peasantry. CUC urged them to learn Spanish as a means of empowerment. CUC instigated a brilliant method of communication among workers. They utilized migrant workers to unify communities of workers. They were able to stage a strike of workers who numbered over 80,000 without repercussion from the military (May 83).

The destiny of the two organizations was very different however. CNUS joined an international organization called *Federacion Sindical Mundial* (Worldwide Trade Union Federation), which associated with Marxist theory. Due

to this, several of the larger labor unions pulled out of the organization. The military, alarmed by this connection to Communism, intensified the counterinsurgency measures. The division of several unions pulling out of the whole gave no protection from the military on either side (May 82).

On the other hand, the CUC joined an organization of clandestine NGOs, one of which was the active guerrillas in the region. Yet the CUC never launched them into a rigid ideology of radicalism. This kept its legitimacy with its members intact. After 1982, the CUC closed down operations due to the danger of reprisal. But in 1985, when conditions were safer, they reopened their doors. The main reason for this was to protest civilian participation in the civil patrols. There was one other main difference of why the CUC survived. Its leaders were ordinary people, campesinos, and not professional organizers. This enabled them to have flexibility on the local level that CNUS lacked. Every ethnic, religious, and ideological background was represented by its leaders. Therefore, its constituency was able to identify with them. "Its ideology is more Mayan than Marxist, and this has been key" (May 85).

CUC had been responsible in the late seventies for the spread of information throughout the country about the actions of the government, specifically, the rural massacres. Unable to halt the spread of the news of the killings, the government increased the repression (shr.aaas.org ch.3 p.4).

General Romeo Lucas Garcia took power in 1978. He encouraged the military to hunt down and assassinate labor leaders and popular organizers. These tactics changed to include the general population after a specific incident

involving “a major demonstration... in conjunction with a strike of the Ixtahuacan miners and sugar refinery workers from the Pantaleon plantation.” Such a show of strength by labor organizations spurred a change in tactics from reactionary terror to an attempt to keep the population under control, increasing the killing. “Communiqués from popular organizations document the disappearance, detention, torture, and murder of ordinary workers and campesinos throughout the period between 1978 and 1984” (May 76).

Much of this selective assassination was in response to neighboring country Nicaragua’s current events. The urban insurgency had allied with the rural organizations to get rid of the Nicaraguan dictator Somoza. President Garcia used these scare tactics to avoid the same thing happening in Guatemala (shr.aaas.org ch.3 p.4).

The election of Ronald Reagan as the president of the United States in 1980 was greeted with enthusiasm and hope by the military of Guatemala. They watched the support provided to the military of El Salvador in hopes that such aid would come their way. To encourage the US aid, “The government even came up with purported guerrilla documents proving Cuban arms shipments in the hope of panicking Washington” (Simons 101). They boasted of campaign support by Guatemalan businessmen for Reagan. Surprisingly, the US held back from contributing money to the Guatemalan military. The history of human rights abuses was far too great to ignore (Simons 101).

In 1980, the CUC encouraged a group of Mayan Indians to protest the killing of nine people from the province of Uspantan. The government

considered the protest a subversive act, refusing judicial intervention. Their advisor was assassinated. In desperation, the people of Guatemala, in an attempt to publicize their plight, took over the Spanish Embassy. Police killed all the people involved, including their hostages. “The massacre at the Spanish Embassy showed that the Guatemalan government would stop at nothing, not even destroying its standing in the international community, to defeat its foes, armed or unarmed. The entire history of the 1980s stands as testament to that willingness” (shr.aaas.org ch.4 p.1).

In 1982, General Rios Montt, took power by coup. He managed to pacify the country within six months using new methods. Among them was a program called the civil patrol which forced local men to cleanse their own communities of subversives. The massive scale of murder in the 1980s sent NGO organizers and their support into either exile or hiding. Even the CUC stopped all activities in 1982. The government did not just target leaders of organizations. They “disappeared” students and intellectuals. The few leaders who did not flee the country chose to hide with the guerrilla organizations. This choice was even more fraught with danger.

The army called its campaign to eliminate resistance, Operacion Ceniza, or “Operation Ashes.” This called for an attack on villages, burning houses, crops and animals in an effort to depopulate the guerrilla zones (shr.aaas.org, ch.4 p.3). In addition, they set up their bases and barracks in population centers, using the locals to shield the troops from the retribution of the guerrillas (“Declaration of Revolutionary Unity in Guatemala” 116).

In opposition to the military's growing repression and power over the government, the guerrilla groups unified to create a united front. It was at this time that Cuban premier Fidel Castro "reportedly did intervene to help the guerrilla groups form a unified command, much as he did in El Salvador" (Simons 102). He provided training as well to those guerrillas who could visit Cuba. However, the guerrillas did not receive armaments from Cuba or any of their sources (Simons 102). Four large guerrilla groups were combined into one organization, the Union Nacional Revolucionaria Guatemalteca (UNRG) ("Declaration of Revolutionary Unity in Guatemala" 115).

The bloody reign of General Montt was shortened when General Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores took power. Disgusted with the atrocities committed by the military, he promised the people to reinstitute a civilian government.

Before 1985 and the new civilian rule, human rights organizations had already begun to emerge. The CUC had picked up their activity. The coast was not clear for the NGO leaders. There were still assassinations after 1985, yet the economic downturn of the country eroded allowing the military's power. All types of organizations were now willing to risk the danger for the benefits that they could bring to the people (shr.aaas.org ch.4 p.5).

The military was still involved with fighting the guerrillas in the countryside. In 1987, they set free a new plan, the "Year End Offensive," in which soldiers killed a great many innocent people in the Quiche region. In 1988, the military attempted to gain more control over the government. Although it succeeded in getting more power, the civilian president remained in office. This

resulted in another increase in the killings. The active NGOs rose to the occasion and took to the streets to protest the military's actions. Death squads emerged to defeat the challenge (shr.aaas.org ch.4 p.6).

However, such a massive scale of murder would not go unnoticed internationally. The violence and worldwide economic hardship of 1985 had undermined the military. The economic recession in 1985 was especially harsh on the Guatemalan military. The Guatemalan government found themselves without financial resources as the capital fled the country. "Rich foreigners do not want to invest in Guatemala because of the political instability and foreign banks are refusing credit to the local rich and the government. More and more factories are closing because of capital flight, the lack of foreign credit, and because local industry has started to lose the Central American market it had until a few years ago" (Declaration of Revolutionary Unity in Guatemala" 117). They were forced to surrender partial control and allow a fair election. This is not to say that they had not given up complete control. They used their influence to market their chosen representative for the election.

During the election process of 1990 and 1995, political assassinations and political rights abuses by the armed forces were reported. Yet the armed forces were not beyond international justice as before. In 1995, international news reported on the slaughter of returning refugees. The resulting tumult brought the criminals to the forefront of the public eye. The second incident that reinforced the first lesson of justice was the assassination of the Archbishop Juan Gerardi in

April of 1998. Although it took years for the evidence to be collected and processed, four people were indicted for the murder in Guatemala City of the Archbishop, three of which were army officers
(<http://www.clas.berkeley.edu:7001/Events/spring2004/02-23-04-goldman/index.html>).

THE PEACE PROCESS

The peace process was initiated by the Esquipulas II peace agreement of Latin America. This agreement was a meeting of minds built upon the work of previous peace meetings, called the Contadora Process. Started by Oscar Arias, the president of Costa Rica, Esquipulas II emerged upon the Latin American scene in 1989 and had more success in bringing peace than anyone had thought it would have. The peace agreement was calmly debated and then signed by many nations in Latin America, including Guatemala. This movement coincided with a growing acceptance that human rights needed to be respected, in Guatemala and abroad. This was due to the hard work of many NGOs within and outside of Guatemala, including the CUC, the only surviving NGO through the second wave of violence. The other reason for the sudden openness to peace was the appointment of a representative for Human Rights within the government (shr.aaas.org ch.5 p.1).

In 1994, the government and the guerrillas had agreed to the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), which would initiate human rights reforms and demilitarization (shr.aaas.org ch.5 p.2). New resources, both national and international, were devoted to investigating human rights abuses

and challenging the army's impunity. A committee was set up in Guatemala, headed by a new human rights ombudsman (DePalma 3). In response to the intentions of the conflicting parties, Mayan refugees from Mexico began tentatively to return to their homelands. In 1994, thirty thousand refugees returned, about half the total living in camps in Mexico (Rohter 3).

These actions are mainly in response to an American woman, Jennifer Harbury, who was searching for her husband, a captured guerrilla commander. She had brought international attention to the fact of the human rights abuses by the military in Guatemala (DePalma 3). Her husband was captured in 1992 and she believed him to be dead as the army claimed until two other guerrillas told her of seeing him several months after that point in a secret prison ("Guatemala: Change the Message 26). When she queried the military about it, it proceeded to produce two bodies to get her off the case. Neither one was the body of her husband (Greenhouse 18). Embarrassing to the United States, the CIA was discovered to have aided the military in the repression. In fact, documents were uncovered that named a CIA operative as the man that had killed Harbury's husband (Weiner 3).

In December of 1995, the two parties signed a peace agreement to end the fighting ("For Guerrillas, Final Step for Guatemala Peace" 17). The resultant elections brought to power a democrat, Alvaro Arzu Irigoyen, who defeated Rios Montt, a former military general. Yet the defeat of the military candidate had created serious waves of violence in Guatemala ("A Democrat wins in

Guatemala” 30). Continued military actions of murder and repression threatened the entire peace process.

Disarmament of the two sides was finalized after a year. The last guerrilla camp was closed and arms were turned over to UN officials. Under the peace treaty, the rebels were promised help reintegrating into society in the way of land and education. One guerrilla commented “Now we will become a political party” (“For Guerrillas, Final Step for Guatemala Peace” 17). On the side of the army, one third was disbanded. Police duties would be handed over to a civilian force and rural bases in populated areas would be closed (“For Guerrillas, Final Step for Guatemala Peace” 17).

Peace has been officially declared in the Latin American nation of Guatemala. However, the history of power abuses has carried over into the new democratic nation. While not perfect, society has begun to reorganize around the rights that international attention helped instigate when the peace treaty was signed. The people are hopeful of fair future governance. NGOs are not restricted from organizing and getting membership. Leaders are not persecuted as they were in the civil conflict. Democracy has opened the opportunities for non-governmental organizations. Many huge international organizations, such as Food for the Hungry, the Red Cross, and Oxfam have flooded into the peaceful areas. The civil void has been filled with human rights groups, labor unions, new political parties, and many other organizations that are solely dedicated to creating civil society.

CHAPTER 3

EL SALVADOR

The case of El Salvador is one of a long standing elite regime holding and maintaining the nation's political and economic power. It would not be until the 1960's when a wave of peasant awareness swept all of Latin America that the oppressed part of society would strive to change their conditions. The formation of Non-Governmental Organizations to represent the rights of the people brought organization to an otherwise chaotic movement. In turn, this would lead to the bloodiest civil war of Latin America. Today, the peace treaty signed in 1992 is holding a tense peace within the country. Some changes have been made towards social transformation, the most important of which is political representation of opposition.

The basis of the revolution in El Salvador actually started in 1832 when the Indians rose up against the Fourteen Families, who held all arable land. Political control of the state followed the economic control held by the elite. "The small oligarchy developed a virtual monopoly of political power and used it to maintain its economic power. This led to the pauperization of the rural masses who were increasingly without land or adequate employment. Wealth became concentrated and clear class distinctions were easily discernible" (Taylor/Vanden

109). The elite Fourteen Families consolidated their power using the military to subdue those that would create unrest.

Under the Fourteen Families, however, the military had supported a few economic policies to weaken the economic power of that oligarchy. Through this tactic, the generals founded their political power, independent of other social and political groups. In October of 1931, the military overthrew the government in a coup. Maximiliano Hernández Martínez was the first military dictator. The public rationale of the military for coup was the protection of the state from threatening political forces and to solve the dire effects of the Great Depression (Walter/Williams 43).

The threat seen by the military was a young nationalist named Faribundo Martí who was a member of the Communist Party of El Salvador. The economic depression and military coup brought together a large peasant force headed by Martí in direct opposition of the dictator Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez (Taylor/Vanden 110). It was the largest to assemble in Latin America at the time.

Fighting broke out between the peasant group and the military in 1932. The military and security forces responded quickly with brutal repression and killings. Faribundo Martí and other leaders were easily captured by the military. To ensure the quick death of the revolutionary movement, some 30,000 peasants were killed as intimidation to prevent future uprisings (Taylor/Vanden 110). The soldiers held up the example of the defeat of the peasant insurrection as proof of their success in government (Walter/Williams 44).

One peculiarity of the successive military regimes emerged in 1944 when one military leader overthrew the current military dictator. It is peculiar that the reigning military would 'overthrow' itself in that name of 'reform.' It would become the standard in El Salvador for this change of military regimes in order to provide "new political rhetoric and new ways of ruling," when peasants began stirring over their rights (Walter/Williams 45). The purpose of this overhaul was to publicize their displeasure with the previous regimes' lack of regard for popular will. The overthrown dictator had begun to curtail the rights of the elite producers, and some observers thought he was unbalanced. He was quoted as follows, "It's a greater crime to kill an ant than a man since when men die they are reincarnated, while the ant dies forever" (Montgomery 40).

The new leader of the government, General Salvador Castañeda Castro, strove for a democratic legitimacy for his government. He espoused free elections, publicized government records of expense, and established many new schools for the masses (Walter/Williams 46). However, the progress was limited. Former promises of political representation for opposition parties in the government failed to come into being. Elections were rampant with fraud. The military used intimidation during campaigns and the surveillance of the election.

The following decades were a progress of one military dictator after another. The 1950's saw a general period of unorganized protest by students and teachers of local universities, as well as other politically conscious people (Walter/Williams 45). These stirrings were the first political consciousness that

would lead to the development of NGOs in the 1960s. The political changes would again bring about overt conflict.

RISE OF THE SALVADORAN CIVIL CONCIOUSNESS

The 1960's saw a sweeping change in all of Latin America in the form of popular movements inspired by the Communist victory in Cuba. It coincided with another military coup to reform the government. A short opening was presented for political and social organization, which the people seized. Along with international pressure for reform, the land situation became exacerbated with a war between El Salvador and Honduras. Land was scarce in El Salvador and for decades peasants had sought opportunity in Honduras. However, the war erupted over the closure of the Honduran border and the forced expulsion of former immigrants being sent back to their homeland. Resources became strained and extremely scarce in El Salvador because of the number of people inhabiting a small amount of land (Taylor/Vanden 111).

Dropping coffee prices in the late 1950s left the current military government without the support of the producing elite. To assuage the reform movement, the military dictator set a minimum monthly wage for urban workers. For the elite, this was one step closer to a threat to its power over the economy and the government lost its support (Montgomery 44). It removed the dictator in a coup in October of 1960. A civilian junta (meaning "council" in the Spanish language) was established using military leaders and university professors. The junta legalized nine new political parties, including the Revolutionary Party of April and May (PRAM) (Montgomery 43).

During this time, the creation of the NGOs was facilitated by the revolutionary success in Cuba. The success of the Cuban peasants in obtaining land and political rights encouraged those in El Salvador to organize. Peasants in El Salvador did not follow the Communist Party. Yet they joined organizations such as labor unions and the new political organizations that gave them alternatives from the military controlled parties. Political organizations, such as the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats, gave voters a new alternative. These groups gained immediate support from urban populations (Walter/Williams 49).

Threatened by the new contenders for political power, the military overthrew the junta in January of 1961, exiling the members of PRAM. Other political parties were allowed to continue their actions (Montgomery 43). For the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats, they held their hand due to international ties to other political organizations, making reprisal an international affair. For smaller, rural peasant organizations, many leaders such as union leaders, teachers, health workers, catechists, and community organizers were targeted by the “death squads” in an attempt to repress the rising popularity of NGOs in the 1960s, such as labor unions, cooperatives, educational systems to increase political consciousness, and general organization to demand peasant rights (Foley 67). Much of this violent action resulted from US pressure in an attempt to find an alternative to the Cuban style revolution (Montgomery 44). Yet another response to the rise of the NGO was an increase of interest by the military in reformist programs to “fend off any Left-wing attempts to garner support.”

The Acción Cívica Militar (ACM) or Military Civic Action group was formed to enhance rural development. Many of their projects were in partnership with departments of the government and international organizations such as Cáritas. Their projects included a road network, schools, clothing for kids in school, lunches and haircuts as well, medical assistance, blood collections for hospital, and circulation of national symbols for patriotization. Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, the growth of the NGO was combated by the government by its involvement with growing societal programs such those listed above (Walter/Williams 50).

For the national Non-Governmental Organizations, the 1960s and 1970s were times of growth with minimal reprisal from the government. Trade unions emerged and students organized themselves into groups to make a collective effort at making changes in the political structure.

The Catholic Church also began to make a political difference with their actions. Concerned by the predicament and rights of the peasantry, priests assisted the organizational movement (Taylor/Vanden 111). Father Miguel Ventura worked in the Morazanian province, one of the first to consolidate its independence through guerrilla actions. By educating the peasants to “relate social reality and the faith,” their eyes were opened to the injustices of the system. In 1977, Father Ventura was forced to leave the country after being captured and beaten. He returned after the guerrillas had liberated the province (Binford 58). By the end of the 1960s, the opposition parties had gained almost half of the seats

in much of the governing bodies, both national and local, including the capital city (Walter/Williams 49).

Tensions rose throughout the country during the 1970s as the military faced more challenges to its power. In 1972, the election was characterized by blatant fraud when the military placed its candidate in power when the coalition by all opposition parties proved too popular. Another challenge came with the subsequent demand for scarce land. The economy had slowly migrated toward an export driven crop of coffee and cotton. Fewer peasants had access to land to grow foodstuffs for subsistence. Other peasants arrived in droves as Honduras expelled them from its borders. Population increases exceeded natural growth. In 1980, “the population density was 581 per square mile. India’s is 550 per square mile” (Prosterman/Riedinger/Temple 60). The land was strained to its utmost to support the amount of people. Tensions rose as resources were fought over.

In addition to the use of ACM to quell peasant unrest, the military also strengthened its security forces’ structure. It did this by investing in additional training facilities and further acquisition of weaponry (Walter/Williams 51). Having set up a rural organization called ORDEN throughout the countryside in 1960s, the army had eyes and ears to know and repress any kind of subversive organizing (Binford 57). However, the time period of the 1970s showed a distinct difference with the peasantry which the military did not interpret clearly. Peasants had become willing to directly move events to gain what they wanted (Walter/Williams 53). Repression increased as the military reacted in the usual way against the threat of activist challenges.

In 1972, the Christian Democrats put up Jose Napoleon Duarte as opposition against the military candidate in the elections (Riding 8). To garner more support, they allied with two other political parties, the National Democratic Union and the National Revolutionary Movement. The alliance was named National Opposition Union or UNO, meaning “one” in Spanish (Montgomery 47).

The military greatly underestimated the number of votes that the opposition would receive and when it looked like it was losing, a media blackout was imposed. When the results were announced, they had been modified to include extra votes from rural provinces to overcome the number in San Salvador. Several young military officers, as members of the political opposition of National Opposition Union, attempted a coup to gain the power denied to them in a fair election. However, once they captured the president, their support was not great enough to keep the military from turning against them (Montgomery 47). The officers called upon Duarte to rally his followers on their behalf. He did so, yet it was not enough. In the process, Duarte became the face of the coup (Montgomery 48). Duarte was arrested, beaten and tortured before being sent into exile as an example to other reformist politicians (Taylor/Vanden 111). This action convinced many political groups that violence was the only means to achieve their goals of ending the political deadlock of the government.

The late 1970s saw the emergence and gradual increase of activity in guerrilla groups, especially the FMLN. In 1978, the *New York Times* reported on the kidnappings of foreign officials and businessmen by the guerrillas. “The guerrilla group has vowed to continue its campaign by kidnapping American,

West German and Israeli businessmen” (Riding 2) They hoped to bring attention to the blatant fraud committed by the military government in the 1972 and 1977 elections.

To combat these actions of terror, the government passed the Public Order Law to give “the security forces sweeping powers to arrest anyone holding public meetings, organizing trade unions or writing articles critical of the Government” (Riding 2). NGO leaders and their associates were closely supervised. “Those who have worked to improve conditions among the poor or to ease the suffering of the growing number of refugees are branded as Communists and are increasingly subject to assassination by government-organized or –controlled death squads or by the security forces themselves” (Taylor/Vanden 112). All humanitarian work was labeled as subversive.

By March of 1979, the economy was immobilized by strikes. The government was unable to persuade foreigners to invest in the country. In desperation, the president rescinded the Public Order Law in the hopes that NGOs would slacken their demands (Montgomery 49). The final death rattle of the current military regime occurred with the overthrow of Somoza in nearby Nicaragua. Crowds gathered in the streets comparing Somoza to Romero, the president. The military also had observed the fate of Somoza’s National Guard in Nicaragua. To prevent that same fate in El Salvador, a group of officers took the government in a coup, and Romero went into exile (Montgomery 50).

THE COUP OF 1979 AND CIVIL WAR

The coup of 1979 was another attempt by the military to change its political image and “restore constitutional order” (Reuters 1). This new government was set up around a junta of military leaders. Realizing their precarious situation, they knew social reform was needed yet were unable to institute changes. With this unfulfilled promise hanging over the heads of the government leaders, a large peasant crowd gathered and marched upon the capital. They demanded their rights to land with the declaration that seventy percent of the Salvadoran peasantry did not own the land they worked.

Civilians had been utilized by the old military regimes in an attempt to quell peasant demands. The new regime that took power in 1979 took the initiative further. They put civilians in positions of power yet never high enough to break the military hold on power. “Although the military had relied on civilian partners to help it maintain its political dominance throughout the pre-1979 period, it never seriously considered handing formal power over to a civilian president. This reflected not only a basic mistrust of civil politicians, but also a conviction that the armed forces made up the only institution capable of defending the state and preserving order” (Walter/Williams 54). The military juntas of the 1980s demonstrate this psychology that its leadership is all that holds the state intact.

To achieve the land reform called for by its citizenry, another military coup took power in 1980 with a second junta that incorporated many leaders of the Christian Democrats. The second junta was able to institute one of the most

controversial land reforms in Latin America due to its success in reallocating land from elite to peasant ownership (Prosterman/Riedinger/Temple 61).

The land reform announced in March of 1980 was implemented in two phases. The first part of the land reform phase was the seizure of all estates greater than five hundred hectares (one thousand, two hundred and thirty five acres). In total, the government took over six hundred thousand acres, over half of which was planted in crops at the time. Critics claimed that much of the land taken by the government was unusable. However, the seizure included twenty-two percent of the coffee land, fifty percent of cane land, and twenty-eight percent of cotton land. It was a large chunk of the export industry (Prosterman/Riedinger/Temple 62).

The formal law, or phase two, was called “land-to-the-tenants” of Decree 207, announced in April, “expropriated all tenanted and sharecropped land by operation of law, for universal, in-place transfer to all tenant and sharecropper families of the land they farm” (Posterman/Riedinger/Temple 62). This law made those peasants who were renters into owners of their land.

The government then proceeded to hand out land grants to the peasantry, averaging 2.25 hectares per tenant. Many grants were given directly to families rather than to groups of producers to encourage higher production. The government felt that collectivization would have had the opposite effect upon production motivation. Tenants were promised titles to their land soon but they were given control immediately. For reasons of inertia and political conflict, the titles got stalled in the bureaucracy (Posterman/Riedinger/Temple 64). The

peasants, however, received the news of ownership with great joy. Few doubted their new status (Posterman/Riedinger/Temple 65). Private studies of land production “indicate that coffee, cotton and cane production on ‘Phase I’ estates, and basic food-crop production on ‘land-to-the-tenants’ lands, are normal or better” (Posterman/Riedinger/Temple 68).

The land reform was protested by the elite producers because it decreased their power and privileges by taking their land and power of production. The revolutionary segment also protested the reform for the reason that their support groups faded away. With the government founding new agrarian reforms, their base of peasant support wilted. The revolutionary fighters depended upon their ability to motivate the population along their aims, that of revolution. It also made their goals for fighting seems superfluous due to the fact that the government was addressing the land and political rights of the peasantry (Posterman/Riedinger/Temple 61). Peasant marches to address rights were not able to gather the numbers previously represented. To protest the first military junta, 100,000 people gathered in San Salvador to make their wishes known. After the land reform was implemented, only two thousand people could be gathered for support for strikes and marches (Posterman/Riedinger/Temple 62).

There were many challenges to the implementation process of the 1980 land reform. The government had to get the information about the decree to the tenants in a believable manner. To this effect, radio announcements and peasant representative NGOs worked to spread the word to the recipients. Another challenge came through the loss of power of former landowners. Illegal rent

collecting and threats of eviction were rampant, although these fixed themselves as word spread.

Yet through all the land reform being implemented by the government, power was still controlled by a regime of the extreme right. The military was freed up from previous power checks to fight the guerrillas as they wished. War was officially declared in October of 1980 to wipe out the guerrillas and their civilian support base. They did this by “burning crops, killing animals, destroying villages, and torturing and murdering civilians” (Binford 59). The most famous offensive against the civilian population base was the massacre at Mozote in 1981. Over 1,000 women and children were killed. The rural population response was one of flight. International attention focused upon the refugees fleeing the military’s actions. The United Nations set up refugee camps (Binford 59). In 1982, the new military government created a constitution that did away with the previous agrarian reform of the 1980’s (Stahler-Sholk). The military would stand no threat to their power.

The military struggled with the enlarging guerrilla threat. This included using political actions to accomplish its aims, especially in the elections. One colonel was heard saying during the elections of 1982 that soldiers would use all means available to wipe out the guerrillas as soon as possible, which to him meant the use of napalm. The winning candidate was Roberto d’Aubuisson of the newly founded Nationalist Republican Alliance or ARENA, representing the military candidates and elite producers support. Assassinations and death squads became more prevalent (Taylor/Vanden 115).

The military campaign did not make NGO personnel safe. Organizing was seen as a direct threat to the military power and, therefore, leaders and members were targeted by the death squads. Amnesty International related that “the majority of the reported violations, including torture, “disappearance,” and deliberate cold-blooded killings, have been carried out by the security forces and have been directed again people not involved in guerrilla activity” (Taylor/Vanden 114).

Although the military governments were funded by the United States, politicians in Washington were not happy about the fraudulent elections and the human rights abuses. In 1984, Duarte was welcomed back into the elections as a candidate for the Partido Demócrata Cristiano (Democratic Christian Party) (Stahler-Sholk 2). He was assured of the win. However, the military retained their power to impose severe limitations on reform. He did provide an opening for the creation of labor and popular organization that had been underground since the 1970’s (Stahler-Sholk 6).

As for the repressive actions in the community against civilians, the power of the army was not checked at all by the new government. NGOs had not been able to work outside of hiding since the freedom to do so was denied to them by repressive government actions (Burge 148). “Elections, far from democratizing El Salvador, merely worked to rationalize increased US aid to a counterinsurgency government, thereby strengthening the armed forces and economic elites who were most implacably opposed to democracy” (Stahler-

Sholk 3). With this move, the military government kept their US funding and their power to fight the guerrillas as they wished (Stahler-Sholk 3).

US FUNDED NGOS VERSUS FMLN SPONSORED NGOS

There were two types of NGOs operating in El Salvador during the 13 years of civil war. The first type was organizations that were created by the private sector. Therefore, these NGOs were considered safer for donors and investors (Foley 75). The second type was the national organizations, such as community organizers, labor unions and, of course, the political groups associated with the FMLN guerrillas (Binford 63).

The Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social (FUSADES) was created in 1983 by the elite of the country. Based upon an ideology of business principles, it attracted a lot of international attention. Its goal was to endorse economic policies which would bring about political stability and economic growth, especially the ones which the United States would fund (Foley 72). Due to their ideological alignment with the US, support flowed in from foreign sources. FUSADES was very successful in spreading its organizations. Many new NGOs were created in 1986. These offshoots had full governmental support due to their association with FUSADES. Official registration was simplified. On the part of the government, the organizations names were given to donors looking for projects to invest in the communities (Foley 78).

At the same time, FUSADES fought a private war against other NGOs associated with the FMLN opposition. Its leaders supported the government in

their harassment of NGOs that were viewed as associated with the FMLN and opposition (Foley 73). New organizations often became tied up in the bureaucratic process of registration (Foley 78). This alliance with the government had further results. FUSADES used its influence to discredit the largest of the FMLN-related NGOs so that international funding for the reconstruction of the country was more likely to be funneled towards them (Foley 77). Even U.S. government AID made its way to these NGOs. The effect upon FMLN NGOs was considerably prejudiced against the United States. “Neither these populations, nor the NGOs with which they worked, would have a relationship with the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which they considered to be a part of the US/El Salvador Governments’ counter insurgency strategy” (Burge 151). In 1991, the US authorized \$21,000,000 on behalf of the Salvadoran government (Krauss 3).

On the other hand, NGOs also thrived in the provinces under guerrilla control. The FMLN used the organization of the Catholic priests to spread education and communication (Binford 62). Through these methods, the population was urged to stay home when the military attacked. Afterwards, NGOs sent delegations to the city demanding the democracy promised by the government. The open environment fostered by the FMLN “created even more political space for civilian organizations” (Binford 63). By 1988, the region of Morazán created the Patronato de Desarrollo de las Comunidades de Morazán y San Miguel (Community Development Council of Morazán and San Miguel) or PADECOMSM. The goal of this new NGO was to bring together all the

grassroots organizations and local councils in order to face the government to obtain rights and social reforms. Upon gaining international funding from a variety of organizations such as Caritas and the EEC, PADECOMSM expanded its goals to create “projects that combine local labor and expertise with external financing” (Binford 67).

Throughout their growth and development in the guerrilla territories, NGOs faced setbacks in their interactions with the military. According to Binford, “The Salvadoran army routinely torched reforestation projects and communal sugarcane fields,” as well as accused member peasants of guerrilla collaboration (Binford 69). The military developed the routine of reacting to civilian organization as a threat to “oligarchical hegemony and state security” (Binford 71). Leaders of PADECOMSM and other NGOs were seized and questioned, most times including torture as a means of questioning. Materials were taken and commerce was hindered in the region under the influence of the FMLN. Trade between the government controlled and rebel controlled areas was taxed or seized for government purposes (Binford 71).

Another large organization operating in the rebel’s territory was Diaconía, based in Brazil, which strove to bring international relief to the large numbers of refugees created by the fighting. The government repression of this specific organization led to international attention to the effects of the fighting, which the governments of the US and El Salvador did not want (Foley 74). Combined with these challenges was the manipulation of Diaconía by the FMLN, which used its institution to escape the army. Once safe, fighters would move back into different

areas of the fighting zones. Diaconia also had to overcome government resistance to repopulation efforts. It viewed these movements as an attempt by the FMLN to re-establish the guerrillas civilian support base (Foley 76). . “The army stepped up its confrontation, denying access by blocking roads, arresting refugees and harassing returning communities by shooting at them as a part of its counterinsurgency strategy” (Burge 149). These actions did not speak well to the refugees or the organizations attempting to help them. To protect itself for army retribution, Diaconía organized the *Concertación*, a forum of six NGOs to support one another against the government and call for an end to the hindrance by the military of their work (Burge 150).

The repressive actions of the army and security forces attracted international attention throughout the decade of 1980. This had the effect of creating international pressure to stop such human rights abuses (Burge 152). In 1987, the Esquipulas Central American Peace Plan produced greater regional anxiety over a negotiated peace (Stahler-Sholk 3). UNHCR was able to get the army to stop the harassment of the returning population and the organization of Diaconía (Burge 152). With the election of a moderate, Alfredo Cristiani in 1988, the steps toward a negotiated peace became possible. By 1990, the pressure from international organizations had become too great to ignore. However, both sides did not want a peace treaty for different reasons. The military government did not want to lose its US funding, and the FMLN guerrillas did not want to lose their war to peacetime (Larios 20). The guerrillas had also lost their source of arms from Nicaragua since the free elections and defeat of the Sandinistas. Official

negotiations commenced in Mexico City between the military and the guerrillas. They were avidly watched by many Latin American presidents (Golden 1).

THE 1992 PEACE TREATY

The negotiations were attended by the Army High Command, the Salvadoran elite, and the soldiers-at-arms of the FMLN guerrilla group (Foley 76). The resulting peace accord was finalized and signed on the 16 January 1992. It laid out a formal cease fire as of the 1 February 1992 and full dismantling of the rebel force to be observed by neutral international witnesses. On the other side of the agreement, the military was required to severely cut down the size and political influence of its forces (Golden 1). Amnesty would be given to all political parties and included in the body politic of the nation. To correct the basic inequalities that created the conflict in the first place, economic measures were written into the treaty. Provisions were made for a fair election to be held in 1994.

The peace treaty accomplished several things while at the same time failing to build an equitable society for which the FMLN had fought. There were five provisions written into the treaty: assure human rights, de-militarize the government and the guerrillas, institute reform in the police force, judicial sector, and bring back the land reform (Stahler-Sholk 9).

Yet there were problems with the arrangement. The political figures that participated in the treaty did not represent the whole society of El Salvador. Because of this, the current military government's institutions were not altered by the peace treaty (Foley 77). The life of the peasant was not bettered by the

arrangement. Yet the effect of the treaty was to eliminate the repressive pressure on NGOs that could represent the peasant.

Many NGOs were excluded from the societal transformation, including, the federation of cooperatives (no matter their associations), traditional NGOs and those linked with the FMLN. Funds were restricted and government interactions were bogged down with bureaucratic red tape.

The peace treaty called for a 'National Plan of Reconstruction' to be determined by a council of NGOs, government representatives, and community leaders. The use and distribution of reconstruction funds would be administered by a government association. However, many European donors thought this plan facilitated government corruption without societal transformation (Foley 79). Due to this skepticism on the part of donors, funding was slow to reach El Salvador (Spencer 55). The funding that did funnel through this government organization did get allocated to the 'safer' NGOs before those related to the former opposition. The peace treaty failed to bring equality to the world in many eyes of El Salvadoran NGOs.

The other side to this post-war picture is the sentiments from the non-participating NGOs. Local NGOs were less experienced with all the management control systems that the U.S. required for funding (Patton 2). There was a fear of government control and confusion about the new standards. "NGOs told us they would be willing to accept U.S. funds and to work with the civilian government, but only under certain conditions....According to NGO representatives, they have been confused about the procedures and criteria for submitting project proposals

and for qualifying for National Reconstruction Plan funds....U.S. officials told us that these NGOs may be reluctant to solicit funds from the Salvadoran government because such solicitation signifies public recognition and acceptance of the governments conditions on the funds and because there is a perception that accepting funds would result in a loss of authority or political power within their communities” (Patton 3). These comments were made in an official U.S. study for Congressional members on the question of equality for local and international NGOs. Their findings indicate that there is no favoritism for any ‘type’ of NGO whether it had an affiliation with FMLN or not.

In 1992, sixteen NGOs were receiving funding from the government of El Salvador. Twelve of them were local NGOs. Upon inspection of the five major NGOs affiliated with the FMLN, none had submitted proposals to the government for funding. Several of the funded NGOs were considered by the U.S. to be affiliated with the FMLN (Patton 3). So there can be no question of discrimination against these organizations.

Yet the participation of NGOs in the reconstruction of El Salvador was limited. The government did not use them to implement many plans. The government was skeptical about the effectiveness of NGOs due to their history of organizing for the FMLN. To adapt to this government prejudice, new organizations without the affiliation of previous history were created called ‘umbrella organizations’ which managed the smaller grassroots organizations (Spencer 58).

One such organization that got government funding was the Human Rights Commission who worked closely with the Catholic Church and various women's movements to bring sociological help to the 'child soldiers' of the war (Verhey 3). "Because child soldiers are deprived of the normal cultural, moral, and values socialization gained from families and communities, they experience a process of asocialization" (Verhey 1). These were fighters under the age of sixteen which the peace treaty made no provision for (Verhey 6).

With all these reconstruction processes going on in the country, the political consequences of the peace process, the election in 1994, was avidly watched by all parties. The election contained candidates for both the ARENA party and the FMLN as well as several other political parties. ARENA was represented by Mr. Calderón Sol, a founding member of the ARENA party from 1981. He was rumored to have involved himself with the former president most well known for his actions with death squads. As the winning candidate in the first election, both sides were uneasy about his abilities to lead the country toward unification after war. The former guerrilla parties distrust him for historical reasons while the candidate makes his own party nervous with his caustic manner. He was quoted by the press as to the reason that the country lies in ruins. "You must go and ask those politicians why there is not more employment in Salvador, why there is not more infrastructure in Salvador. Because they destroyed it" (French 7). The members of ARENA question if he could heal the historic division of the country.

The implementation of the Peace Treaty in certain categories was poor. On the issue of human rights abuses, the government continued to disregard it. Days after it was signed, it instituted a law of amnesty to all persons involved in human rights abuses prior to 1992. Death squads periodically continued their assassinations of the leaders of the former opposition after the peace process (Stahler-Sholk 10). However, due to the international attention that El Salvador has received, such actions do not go unnoticed. Since the peace treaty, deaths by assassination have fallen in number.

Other problems persisted in transforming the Salvadoran society into a peaceful one. The head of the Supreme Court refused to leave office before the end of the term, claiming divine appointment. During the elections of 1994, electricity to the media was cut off when they chose to announce information about the ARENA candidate, linking him to death squad activity (Stahler-Sholk 12). The disbanding of the military occurred with broad transfers of members into the new civilian police force, an action expressly forbidden by the peace treaty (Stahler-Sholk 16). Agrarian reform was sluggish and badly conceived. Small portions of land were allocated for this and it was uncertain prior to the elections (Stahler-Sholk 19).

El Salvador has not made the transition fully to a democracy in which political entities are free to express their opinions. Yet the peace process is a large step toward the day when democracy might reign. International pressure from the UN and other large NGOs, as well as their new presence in El Salvador,

has spurred the beginnings of a societal transformation. The path will be long and crossed with many challenges to the new government.

CHAPTER 4

NICARAGUA

The last case of Nicaragua is one of action and reaction between the new sovereign government created by the Sandinistas and the United States. The history of NGOs in Nicaragua is closely related to politics as it was in the previous two case studies. As is often the case in Latin America, the United States was very active politically in Nicaragua, most often referring to the region as their “back yard.”

The interventionist history of Nicaragua begins with the story of the idea of the Isthmus canal. First conceived as a route through Nicaragua, the government refused the United States the exclusive rights to build the canal. The president, José Santos Zelaya, was overthrown by an American-supported coup. A local school teacher who led an armed protest against such treatment, was violently murdered by the United States Marines. This blatant disregard for the sovereignty and people of Nicaragua rendered itself upon the mind of a youth, Augusto Sandino, destined to be one of the most influential men in Nicaraguan history (Kinzer 22).

Upon reaching adulthood, 10 years later, he gathered together peasants to form “The Army to Defend National Sovereignty,” designating himself as the

“General of Free Men” (Kinzer 22). After six years of hounding the Marines with his guerrilla forces, when they were withdrawn from Nicaragua. Only then was he willing to diplomatically talk about peace with the authorities. However, upon leaving the talks, Sandino was murdered by the Somoza family, in an attempt to curry favor from the United States. With this act, the Somoza dynasty consolidated its power over the government of Nicaragua as a dictatorship (Kinzer 22).

The Sandinistas arose as a political party in the 1960s as a result of the political optimism that swept through Latin America due to the success of the Cuban Revolution (Midlarsky/Roberts 179). However, the organization called the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) used violent means to achieve their goals. Daniel Ortega, the future president of Nicaragua, began in the FSLN as an urban guerrilla and bank robber (Goldman 38).

There was little non-governmental organization before that. The labor movement was especially weak in Nicaragua compared to other Latin American labor movements. With the rise of the Sandinistas, many organizations interested in the well being of the peasants followed. With the help of the Catholic Church and the Jesuits, the labor movement arranged itself to demand better living conditions. These NGOs concentrated upon the more productive regions of Nicaragua which grew coffee, cotton or beef (Luciak 56). This also meant that the peasantry was banding together against the large landowners, the elite and powerful.

The response by the Somoza regime was repression by the National Guard (Luciak 57). Ortega himself spent seven years in prison after capture (Goldman 38). Yet the repression did not contain the ideas of organizing to achieve goals, especially the peasant movements. Yet the Sandinistas learned from the repression, altering their goals from warfare to political and organizational work. Their goal was to build a support base among the rural population for a future revolution. This action away from warfare aligned them with the actions of the church. With repression against both groups, the two found themselves working together to achieve their similar goals, “to mobilize the poor for reform and confront the Somoza regime” (Midlarsky/Roberts 179).

The organization of two large groups spurred other smaller grassroots organizations to organize. By banding together, these small organizations were able to make a difference politically. Two NGOs distinguished themselves from the emerging mass of groups as representatives of the smaller organizations. The Asociación de los Trabajadores del Campo (ATC) or Rural Worker’s Association and the Unión Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos (UNAG) or National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (Deere/Marchetti 76). The ATC was very active during the late 1970s in response to the greater mobilization of the peasantry and working classes. UNAG was created shortly after the Sandinistas took power in response to growing unrest about distribution of resources to small and medium peasant landowners.

The popularity of the NGO movement spread to the rest of society. Others, such as the medium and large producers, created their own NGOs. The

Federación de Asociaciones Ganaderas de Nicaragua (Federation of Cattlement Associations of Nicaragua) and the Asociación de Ganaderos de Estelí (Association of Ranchers of Estelí) were some of the forerunners. All of these producers unified in opposition to the Somoza regime under the Unión de Productores Agroecuarios de Nicaragua (Union of Nicaraguan Agricultural Producers, UPANIC) in the year 1979 (Luciak 58).

THE REVOLUTION OF 1979

The success of the Sandinista revolution was dependent on the fact of an alliance between all classes of society, including elites, peasants, NGOs, businesses, and producers. Without this alliance, the revolution would never have toppled the Somoza dictatorship from its position of power over Nicaragua. Certain circumstances made this possible for the Sandinista organization, which espoused an ideology against the elite and wealthy. In the 1970s, the Somoza family began to take over more industries within the country, squeezing out the previously prominent businessmen (Kinzer 22). Due to its greed for more wealth, ill-feelings against the government grew, upon which the Sandinistas capitalized.

It was the larger fear of the power hungry regime that made elites choose the risk of a popular revolution that might threaten their system of privileges. These educated elites knew that revolutionary transformations almost always included the redistribution of land and resources. They chose to risk all of that when they finally sided with the Sandinista peasant movement. Yet there was a small assurance given to them by the Sandinista leaders in their attempt to broaden the class and ideological base of their organization. The promise was

made to the elites that the significant role of private enterprise would be defended in the post-revolutionary government (Midlarsky/Roberts 190).

The cross class alliance was created by these two revolutionary movements, elite and Sandinista, linked up to form a cohesive unit. The action that initiated the linkage was an exiled group of twelve business professionals and prominent citizens, including two priests, that publicly declared their support for “popular insurrection.” They are popularly called “Los Doce,” meaning The Twelve. This group called for an incorporation of the Sandinista organization, FSLN, into a post-revolution government (Midlarsky/Roberts 179). The elites were willing to follow these men’s direction.

Another representative NGO of the pre-revolution time, the Democratic Conservative Party in Nicaragua, signed pacts with the Sandinistas to help in the revolution, but, in return, gained the right to free elections instead of trading one dictator for another. The leader at the time was quoted, “The insurrection was a general repudiation of Somoza, not a movement in favor of any particular group. The Sandinistas were merely the armed group of the moment” (quoted in “Nicaragua: The Beleaguered Revolution” 22)

The Sandinistas were able to unite the populace behind them by downplaying class divisions. The coalition between elite and poor was successful due to Somoza’s thoughtless actions against the higher classes of society. All of the Nicaraguan society turned against Somoza by the late 1970s. At that time, the Sandinistas began fighting against the military with guerrilla tactics again. The

support base was well established to accomplish this against the better trained and armed military.

In 1978, the Broad Opposition Front (FAO), a group formed by middle and upper class Nicaraguans in opposition of Somoza, made the first public move against Somoza. Business owners were very effective in their choice of opposition. They closed all stores and factories to publicly protest the treatment by the government and openly courted foreign supporters to help their cause (Kinzer 22). This nearly shut down the national economy (Midlarsky/Roberts 178). With the increasing political chaos, the FAO attempted to negotiate with Somoza to determine an end to the political crisis. Yet Somoza remained stubborn in his outlook and refused to yield power. After a year of negotiating and feeling as if they had no resort left, the last of the elite population joined the FSLN's revolutionary coalition. Within the coalition, the FAO was looked down upon to their attempt at negotiation with Somoza. That action left them outside of the decision making process and later politics (Midlarsky/Roberts 180).

The revolution was a societal repudiation of Somoza. Every citizen fought against the National Guard to gain control of their country and destiny. The first city to fall to the Sandinistas was Leon, the previous home of the foreign elite and businessmen (Simons 2). Few escaped the blockades by the Sandinistas. The fighters had immediately destroyed all private planes and surrounded the town. One Swiss family, who owned a crop duster plane, escaped by hiding it off the side of the runway in the jungle. When they landed in Managua, the plane was

riddled with bullet holes from being shot at on their way into the capital city (Lucchese 1/27/06).

By July 1979, the revolution had taken Somoza out of power and the Sandinistas were the head of the revolutionary coalition. Immediately, the class alliance began to fray. The Sandinistas immediately began the “socioeconomic transformation” that they had promised to avoid (Midlarsky/Roberts 190). The Sandinista ideology explained the class split. “We have to be against the United States in order to reaffirm ourselves as a nation” (quoted In “Nicaragua: The Beleaguered Revolution” 22). The elites and businessmen refused to help “root out American influence.” They knew that the economy was dependent upon international trade and that America had the power to stifle their trade (Kinzer 22). At this point, the prominent leaders of the business elites lost the power they held with the FSLN.

THE SANDINISTA TRIUMPH

The Sandinistas began the reconstruction of the Nicaraguan society immediately. To begin with, they constructed a new constitution that represented the revolutionary ideology and incorporated the people of Nicaragua. Town meetings were held throughout the entire country for two reasons. The government wanted to get the people involved in the constitution process and at the same time use it as a political education (Harris 14). A constitution was ratified and a national assembly to represent the peoples’ interests was created. The national assembly functioned similarly to the Congress of the United States.

The Sandinistas found the reinstatement of the agricultural sector to be the most necessary to get up and running. With the income from the export dependent economy, the rest of society could be shaped and molded into the Sandinista vision. The government focused primarily on the state sector. For the NGOs, specifically the ATC, this meant an expansion of their previous duties and goals in relation to the FSLN. However, after a few years, the focus shifted to one of organizing the peasantry into cooperatives as producers. In July 1981, the state announced the Ley de Reforma Agraria. The ATC and UNAG had actively participated in the formation of this law. This progressive law was the answer to the peasant's demands for land as well as diminishing the idle land in the private sector. The elites' fears of a socialist transformation of society and therefore the end of the private sector were soothed (Deere/Marchetti 91). The elites felt that their future with the current regime might be better than it would have been previously under Somoza.

The ATC, which had worked to spread the support base of the FSLN in the 1970's, now found themselves in new roles. They set up the structures to get land of private producers generating income and foodstuffs. Closely allied with FSLN, they gained the title of a recognized Sandinista organization. Their goal was "to assist the revolutionary government in designing an agrarian reform in order to restructure the old relations of production in the rural sector and to build a strong peasant movement based on the principles of Sandinismo" (Luciak 59). The new official title under the Sandinista government definitely had its pros and cons for an NGO.

As a positive improvement, the organization of ATC had gained three seats upon the new government's Council of State. With this new political power came responsibility and accountability for the productive sector. They were given control of abandoned properties from former elite to make them productive. These properties were the initial formation of the state farms (Luciak 58). By keeping close ties with the government, their goals to organize the rural producers into a force to demand rights were more apt to be realized. In 1979, the ATC had permanent representation in the Ministerio de Desarrollo Agropecuario y Reforma Agraria (The Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform). "Its word 'was almost as good as law' (quoted by Luciak 68). In this melding of state and NGO, one author states, "Because the revolutionary Sandinista government in the 1980s greatly encouraged increased activity in civil society, the line between the state and civil society became difficult to discern..." (Ewig 78). The ATC and other organizations that aligned with it felt this blurring of the lines between themselves and the state. They had accepted integration with the state and were often dominated by the government.

However, this new status created complications for the ATC. Due to the class alliance of the revolution, the ATC was stuck between the landless workers and the agricultural producers. The landless moved onto farms, threatening the small and medium agricultural producers livelihoods (Luciak 60). To represent both of these groups, the ATC had to hold the role of employer and representation of the worker. "The record of the first years of the revolutionary process indicates that the ATC is more likely to defend the overall goals of the revolutionary

project than to press the specific demands of its membership. This situation leads to complaints by some workers that they exchanged their old landlord for a new one-the state” (Luciak 68).

This policy was a change from their actions previous to the revolution. The ATC had demonstrated in 1979 publicly in Managua to protest the return of the land that had been invaded during the armed insurrection (Luciak 67). Once it was more firmly aligned with the state, the ATC kept a low profile. Its initial goals of agrarian reform were shelved in light of the realities of the Sandinista troubles with the elite.

On the other hand, UNAG maintained its distance from the Sandinistas to keep the right to oppose policies should they not benefit its membership (Luciak 66). UNAG was created in 1981 by national assembly due to the need for an independent peasant organization not so closely related to the state. It coincided with the election of Ronald Reagan and the disillusionment of the elite of Nicaragua with the revolution. The elite saw Ronald Reagan as prospective ally against the FSLN (Deere/Marchetti 88). In response to this defection, the FSLN felt the need to win over the small and medium producers.

The national assembly was attended by an enormous number of peasant producers. The ATC lost about half of its membership to the new organization (Deere/Marchetti 88). Due to the size of the organization, it was given two seats on the Council of State, one formerly belonging to the ATC (Luciak 59).

Although this hurt the power of the ATC, it was left with a more homogenous peasant base made up of rural wage laborers who worked the farms administered

by state and private enterprise (Deere/Marchetti 88). No longer did they have to divide their interests, mediating conflicts between land owners and workers.

The FSLN relied upon UNAG to create a safeguard between it and the elite producers (Luciak 62). The inexperience of the Sandinistas in the agricultural sector misled them in this respect. “It is interesting to note that the Sandinistas initially failed to realize their main objective,” that of protecting the economy against the defection of the large producers, the elite. “It appears that in seeking to develop into a unifying force in the Nicaraguan countryside, UNAG lost sight of the central task of guaranteeing that the new relations of production would benefit primarily the marginalized peasantry” (Luciak 62). It traded its original priority of helping the peasantry to one of getting as large a constituency as possible. Much of the Nicaraguan population became disillusioned with the Sandinista movement.

Other NGO movements such as the Feminist Movement prospered under the close ties with the state. Prior to the revolution, little help for women existed in the male society of Nicaragua. The new organization, Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses, AMNLAE (Association of Nicaraguan Women “Luisa Amanda Espinosa”), attached to the FSLN. They blossomed into a full organization with leadership and agendas. Much of the agendas fit into the Sandinista movement. In the beginning, the NGO did little more than organize women around the revolutionary movement. Yet this gave the leaders experience that would later be an invaluable basis for an independent NGO (Ewig 80).

In time, all NGOs in Nicaragua became inseparable with the government. Although the government used NGOs during the Sandinista decade, the NGO leaders used them just as much. All types of NGOs were able to benefit from this cooperation. The leaders gained experience and the channels necessary for later independent work with other NGOs. "The NGO ability to appreciate the political implications of the humanitarian situation was quickly overwhelmed, and as their capacity to intercede with the government weakened, their ability to act independently was eroded. A close association with the Sandinista cause led some NGOs to refrain from relief work with Nicaraguans, fleeing as refugees to neighboring countries. Moreover, as NGOs became instruments of government policy, they failed to realize how much humanitarian assistance was part of the government's counterinsurgency and pacification strategy" (Weiss 194). AMNLAE and the ATC were examples of organizations that were used yet used the government as well.

THE DECLINE OF THE SANDINISTAS

There are many reasons that the revolution did not prosper. First and foremost were the multiple problems with the economy. The revolution had inherited a society full of inequality and underdevelopment. Added to this fact were the hardships created by the US embargo and the US-funded Contras. Instead of being able to devote scarce resources toward development, the government found itself locked into armed conflict with the remains of Somoza's government, the Contras. The press from the attack on the Misquito Indians gave the Sandinista government bad press all over the world. To cultivate allies against

the US, the Sandinistas gave aid to the FMLN in El Salvador. With all these causes taking up economic resources, the government had none left over to spare for the population of Nicaragua.

To compound this problem on the economy, the peasants felt they were owed compensation for this support of the Sandinista cause. The ideology of the revolution had grown in the mind of the peasant. The workers suddenly felt they were owed immediate improvement in their situations. With so many problems facing the new government, the needs of the peasants were given secondary consideration.

The economic controls, such as price fixing and wage controls, that the government instituted left a shortage of food and basic daily commodities. The difficulties after the revolution spurred the state to concentrate upon strengthening the state sector and organizing the worker populations. By increasing the size of the state sector, the private sector was obliterated in the process.

The lands held by Somoza and the former elites were confiscated under decrees 3 and 38. The Sandinistas decided to set up state farms with this land in a hope to boost the economy to its former productivity. They were renamed Area de Propiedad del Pueblo, APP (People's Sector). They hoped it would ensure the continuation of foreign trade and capital (Deere/Marchetti 79).

Yet the ideology of the revolution had been firmly entrenched in the peasants and workers. The new government suddenly found themselves lacking workers to raise productivity. Laborers began to take their "historic vacation" and three hour workdays characterized this period of transition. There was no

incentive for laborers to work on state-farms. They had been promised land ownership by the revolutionaries. When it did not happen, workers were not eager to get back to work for another dictator. Added to these difficulties was the fact that much of the Somoza management had to be kept due to their knowledge and expertise. These individuals were aware of their importance and they had not been overtaken by the revolutionary fervor as it did the workers (Deere/Marchetti 80). Conflict between these two groups with such different ideas of post-revolution life was bound to happen.

The fixation of the Sandinistas with getting the state farms running to stimulate the economy had one large oversight. These state farms were export driven, producing coffee and cotton for shipping abroad. Food to feed the populace was soon in short supply. This could have been averted by granting the populace land to own by right and title. However, the money produced by export crops was too enticing to the new government and land ownership was again overlooked. Cooking oil, soap, gasoline were some of the products that became impossible to get a hold of (Wicker 21). At the same time, the government initiated price fixing to keep products affordable for the peasants (Kinzer 22).

These economic controls got in the way of natural entrepreneurship. The land that was distributed to the peasants, organized into cooperatives, was not awarded with a bill of ownership. Rather, it was put under their management for the state. Furthermore, their produce was sold to the government at a fixed price. No peasant owned their land outright. The control by the state of agrarian produce was in response to a fear of capital flight. Entrepreneurs were not

allowed to send profits abroad. “When the Sandinistas decreed [in 1983] that foreign trade was to be a state monopoly, they effectively declared war on these small-scale entrepreneurs” (Robinson 7). The government confiscated their business on the premise that they were “decapitalizing” the economy (Kinzer 22). The FSLN lost most of its support with these economic moves.

The Sandinistas blamed these economic shortcomings on U.S. hostility. With the enthusiasm for the revolution fading after four years of economic hardship, the government transferred the blame for their economic mismanagement to the U.S. blockade and the funding of the Contras (Wicker 21). “The FSLN top priority was to defend the revolution that was being threatened by a protracted civil war against U.S.-backed counter-revolutionary forces” (Ewig 82). Resources that could have been used by the people had to go toward the defense of the country.

At the beginning of the new government’s term, it also made a crucial mistake in clashing with the Miskito Indians over who owned the land bordering the Atlantic Ocean. The Indians felt they deserved sovereignty over the land that they saw as historically their homeland. The Sandinista troops were ordered to take the land from the Indians. It is estimated that about seventy Indians were killed in the fighting (Brumberg 27). Forty-nine villages were burned along the Coco River and sixty-five bombs were dropped on six locations (Corry 16). The incident created a mass exodus of refugees, mostly Miskito Indians, into Honduras and Costa Rica.

The episode was picked up by international human rights organizations which spread it over the world. In response, the Sandinistas stated that the relocation was to protect them from the Contras (Corry 16). In the US, the incident was propagated into the news by the Indian Law Resource Center (ILRC). Due to the Sandinista actions against the Indians, the ILRC also strove to turn the multi-racial communities of Nicaragua against the revolutionary government (Harris 7). With this use of the press, the United States suddenly found an ally against the Sandinistas. Reagan's fear was that Nicaragua would export its revolution to other Latin American countries, specifically in El Salvador (Wicker 21). The resurgence in guerrilla activity in El Salvador was supported by the Sandinistas. Nicaragua provided a safe place for the guerrillas to regroup as well as training in resurgence tactics. Nicaragua denied from the beginning of the conflict that it was aiding the rebels in El Salvador in any way (LeoGrande 92). The United States hoped that funding the Contras was one way to keep the Sandinistas occupied within their own nation even if the Contras didn't win. If the Contras were able to take over the government, then the U.S. would have control again of their banana lands.

With the example of the Miskito Indians to point at, President Reagan was able to push the contra funding through Congress each time the legislation came up. Without this blatant disregard for human rights from the Sandinistas, Congress would probably have withheld funding. The Senate and the House of Representatives firmly urged an end to the big stick policies of the Reagan administration throughout the decade of the 80s. Their reasoning was that if the

Sandinista government failed, it would only be due to their mismanagement of the government, instead of being blamed upon the United States (Lewis 31).

The Contras used the neutral policies of Costa Rica to their benefit, hiding across the border when the Sandinistas were out in force (Furlong 120). Costa Rica used this fact to gain economic assistance from the United States during the 1980s when all of Latin America was in an economic crisis. Costa Rica's pro-American policy kept threatening to spiral into armed conflict between it and Nicaragua. Eventually Costa Rica risked angering the United States when President Oscar Arias drafted a peace plan in attempt to cool relations between Costa Rica and Nicaragua (Furlong 124). This desperate attempt was in hope that the refugees from the fighting between the Sandinista and Contras would cease.

The Sandinistas, in an attempt to maintain the revolutionary nature of the state, used coercive tactics against all opposing ideologies. They suppressed other political parties with censure of the media as well as surveillance of active members. "The Democratic Conservatives, like other non-Sandinista parties, are forbidden to hold public demonstrations or purchase newspaper advertisements to present their views. The Sandinistas' limited tolerance for opposition political activity is reflected in their attitude toward challenges in other areas. Nicaraguans who engage in systematic criticism of the Government are being closely watched, their freedom of speech and assembly is restricted, and they are subject to harassment and arrest" (Kinzer 22).

The national newspaper had a monopoly over the news and was directed by the views of the government. No other newspapers were allowed. Any

articles written about the government or their allies of Cuba and the Soviet Union in a negative way were cut. The television stations were all run by the Sandinistas as well. Reporters were threatened with loss of their job if they wrote the wrong thing against the government (Kinzer 22). Censorship was a large part of maintaining the revolutionary ideology in Nicaragua.

The Catholic Church played a large part in the anti-revolutionary sentiment present in Nicaragua. Prior to the Sandinista take-over, the Catholic Church as been the largest of the Sandinista supporters containing the largest contingent of followers. However after the regime transition, the Sandinistas proposed that the “Christian faith, by its very nature, leads its adherents to participation in the transformation of society” (Cleary 4). The break between the Sandinistas and the Church occurred in 1983 when Pope John Paul II visited Managua to denounce their idealistic view of Christianity. “The Papal visit to Nicaragua proved to be an ideological battlefield that resulted in the banning of Liberation Theology as quasi-heretical” (O’Donoghue 1).

POST SANDINISMO AND FREE ELECTIONS

In 1987, the president of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias, drafted a Latin American Peace Plan called the Arias Peace Plan (Furlong 124). A large part of this plan was the cut-off of foreign aid to the rebels in all countries. It also strove to negotiate a peace between the guerrillas and the governments, while maintaining the freedom of press, elections, and human rights (LeMoyne 2). For Nicaragua, this was the death notice for American funding of the Contras.

A major turning point in the history of Nicaragua happened in the 1990 elections. Thinking that they would win, the Sandinistas held a free election under international monitoring. Opposition was encouraged to run against the Sandinista candidate. The expectation of the FSLN was that the people of Nicaragua would elect the Sandinista candidate, proving to the world that they were a regime for and by the people. Every part of the election was watched by international officials to certify the fairness of the elections (Uhlig 3).

On February 25th, the results were announced to the astonishment of the FSLN. Violetta Barrios de Chamorra, the Catholic widow of a leader for the fight against Somoza, was the undisputed winner of the election (Goldman 38). The FSLN was put in the position of keeping control of the government through military means or accepting the results of the fair election. Daniel Ortega made a speech the next morning with its decision. “We leave victorious, because we Sandinistas have sacrificed, have spilled blood and sweat, not to cling to Government posts, but to bring Nicaragua something that has been denied since independence in 1821... We feel proud, in this unjust world divided between weak and strong, to be giving Nicaragua and Latin American a little bit of dignity, a little bit of democracy, a little bit of social justice” (Goldman 38). The Sandinista president stepped down from power and accepted the new leader. There were members of the FSLN that had a hard time with this decision. The hardened militants fought the decision. Several spoke of following the lead of Augusto Pinochet, the military dictator of Chile, and taking power by force (Uhlig 3). Yet Ortega’s decision held and power was passed to the new regime peacefully.

However, the Sandinista government was not going to leave office without a few changes for its benefit. A law was initiated that gave large amounts of land to Sandinista officials and supporters. To salvage their pride in losing the election, they also would not take the responsibility, instead saying that people voted against the draft and the economic crisis created by the policies of the US (Uhlir 3).

For the NGOs, the election held different meanings. Those that had sided with the FSLN during the revolutionary government no longer had a monopoly on politically independent organizations. For the women's movement, several top leaders resigned and started a new politically independent NGO. AMNLAE lost its government backing and funding. The new organizations multiplied quickly. Foreign foundations and governments gave with monetary donations that enabled the new NGOs to gain influence with the new government (Ewig 83).

The new NGOs were also able to set up cooperation with the state in a much less dependent way. The Matagalpa Colectivo, made up of previously state employees, set up women's health clinics throughout the area of Matagalpa. With their experience, they set up training facilities for other professional women and negotiated with the state to grant official certifications (Ewig 88). It is interesting to note that state cooperation has much to do with the personality of the government official in the area. In Managua, the mayor, was very conservative and would not work with feminist NGOs on certain issues (Ewig 90).

The state, for its part, began setting up a way that these NGOs could take part in policy making with "commissions." The commissions have a job of

recommending to the government what sort of state policies would help NGOs' goals and constituency. Within these groups, the most influential of NGOs gathered to make the recommendations. For the feminism movement, the Comision Nacional de Lucha contra la Mortalidad Maternal was created in 1992. The members were composed of fourteen national NGOs, three former FSLN women's divisions, and two universities (Ewig 91). This specific commission was dismantled in 1996 when the conservative Mayor of Managua, Arnoldo Alemán, was elected president. He opposed the Feminist movement due to his conservative outlook on women's role in the family and society (Ewig 94).

Yet there were other commissions established that survived this time. One in particular was one that President Alemán set up himself to investigate allegations of human rights abuses. This issue had never been addressed in Nicaragua due to the former Sandinistas' government policy of reconciliation (Rohrer 15).

The government of Chamorros had a difficult job facing them. It had to change the government enough to please the international donors, and yet establish the institutions to further the development of the country. Within the first few months of taking office, she let go of most of the top Sandinista officials. They were replaced by members of the United Nations Coalition, an organization in Nicaragua to monitor their adherence to the fair election among other duties. The former Sandinista government officials went to work for many of the NGOs in the country (Spoor 193).

The result of this changeover was a decrease in efficiency for the government. The U.N. was pressuring the new government to institute cut backs as the Civil Society theory stated, all the while trying to move the country into a new era of peace. The \$138 million aid promised by the U.S. did not come through. USAID sent only a fraction of what was promised in total (Spoor 192). Other countries and organizations also sent aid but it was not enough to achieve the development and reconstruction that Nicaragua needed. Spain and other governments sent money to specific projects within the country (Spencer 25).

International and local NGOs stepped up to the challenge of developing the new peace. They were the main channel for the money of international donors. These organizations had set themselves up to help the soldiers of both sides of the conflict reintegrate with society. They saw the re-socialization project as the most crucial toward ending the civil war. A whole generation had grown up as fighters. They had no other skills to offer society. International NGOs provided counseling, training and technical assistance (Spencer 32). Local NGOs took a different approach in the hope of reaching more individuals. They implemented the "Training of trainers," which was successful in the fields of "health, literacy, numeracy, agriculture, vocational education and income generating activities" (Spencer 33).

International NGOs established a program with funding and often, when that funding ran out, local counterparts picked up the project for continuation (Spencer 33). The NGOs were more successful in the communities than the government due to their greater flexibility. Yet they were only able to accomplish

their goals with cooperation between themselves (international and local) and the government. Unfortunately for the recipients, the projects to reintegrate fighters were never entirely successful. The whole program suffered for lack of funding and an ill-conceived strategy by the government.

The peace process was interrupted in 1992 when opponents of the government rearmed and formed into groups. Their intent was to demand more assistance from the government. They called themselves the 'ReContras.' The Sandinista army members, which had been disbanded, were dissatisfied that the former Contras were receiving more assistance than they were, so rearmed as well. They called themselves the 'Recompas.' The third group that arose was a mix of the former combatants, named the 'Revuelos.' They protested the economic conditions and the failure of the government to take steps to help out the people (Spencer 26). The government ended this political crisis by granting some of the wishes of the groups. A formal cease fire was initiated and the gun buy-back program was rejuvenated. Members of all the groups were folded into the police force. One demand granted was an office to one of the groups to collaborate with the UN organizations on solutions to the poor reintegration efforts. Others that were not aided by the government have turned to a life of robbing and kidnapping in protest of the government's policies. "It is believed that some are simply bandits and this has been their *modus vivendi* since the end of the war and some just do not want to return to the life of a poor farmer" (Spencer 28). Although the government and NGOs gave it their best effort, there

was still much to do to help the people of Nicaragua end poverty and establish peace.

The history of Nicaragua is unique in Latin America. The revolutionary movement encouraged many NGOs formation. Without such a popular movement in Nicaragua, these social movements would have been wiped out by the National Guard under Somoza. Nicaraguan NGOs were fostered as an aid to the government, yet they did not create peace by themselves. International pressure took the Sandinistas out of power in a fair election and they acquiesced to the peoples' desires.

NGOs have come of age in post-Sandinista Nicaragua. Yet they are not without their problems with the government and with their self appointed missions. Corruption still exists and hinders the help they are able to give to the people. They face the challenge of mobilizing the populace to raise the standards of all sectors of society while trying to provide expected services to the population, such as health care and land management. However the task has become much easier with government collaboration and the presence of large international organizations such as the Red Cross and Food for the Hungry.

CHAPTER 5

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The civil society theory began to take form in the early 1990s. Scholars interpreted the civil work of NGOs as an effective form of building civil society. Therefore, they anointed NGOs as the most effective vehicle to create civil society and, as a result, to create democracy. Coincidentally, the formation of the civil society theory corresponded to the peace processes of Latin America. There are several interesting factors to the whole picture that scholars overlooked and these are demonstrated in the three case studies described above. Unfortunately for the three case studies, the conflicts left the states severely weakened. NGOs were able to take advantage of this fact and fill the void that was formerly considered state territory. Estimates from the World Bank show that the aid that was poured into these regions post peace was absorbed by the societies much more efficiently than it would have been in a normal situation because of the presence of NGOs (Collier/Hoeffler 8). The drastic effect of the international aid in civil society of Latin America altered the civil society theory. This factor made all the difference when analyzing the theory against the real picture. The theory does not have the intended results as scholars predicted.

One component to the societal picture of Latin America was the deep distrust between indigenous NGOs and the state. The pattern of antagonism between the two entities was established at the time that formal NGOs were created. The birth of NGOs paralleled the rise of Communism and the Red Scare in the 1940s and 1950s. Governments, especially that of the United States, often saw the differences between Communism and Capitalism as black and white. The societal organizing of peasants by NGOs echoed the fundamentals of Marxism and the challenge to the bourgeois. Governments often reacted more strongly due to the opposition building in Western countries against Communism. NGOs became threats to the status quo of Latin American systems.

There was a secondary reason that NGOs were seen as threats by governments. NGOs often represented manipulation by a foreign government or investor in the view of the government. The governments of Guatemala and Nicaragua both feared manipulation by foreigners through their NGOs. Whereas Nicaragua incorporated many NGOs into the Sandinista movement to prevent foreign interference, Guatemala reacted in a repressive manner toward the NGOs. The military in Guatemala hunted down and assassinated NGO leaders to prevent the foreign manipulation that they feared: that of Communist influence. To some extent, NGOs were subject to the agenda of their donors. Often to get the money to continue services, they had to compete against other NGOs, subjecting themselves to the views and goals of the donor. So therefore, local governments had a basis upon which their paranoia of foreign interference rested. The result was a furthering of bad relations between NGOs and governments.

There remains one last element, that of legitimacy, which political scientists did not calculate into the civil society theory. NGOs have no official legitimacy upon which they conduct their services. Pearce defines legitimacy as “the right to represent and the consent of the represented” (Pearce 258). NGOs began as organizations that were self-appointed, claiming their legitimacy through their effectiveness to their goals. However, there are disputes over who should be the judge of the effectiveness of NGOs. Donors, states and the constituency of the NGOs all claim the position of judge. Not only does this create another element of disagreement around NGOs for states, but also NGOs themselves do not have the answer to this question. Because of this, their legitimacy gets questioned by all parties.

A: NGO-STATE RELATIONS

NGO relations with the state have been rocky from the beginning of their emergence. They formed in states that characteristically had authoritarian repressive regimes (Bebbington 41). All three of the case studies had government characteristics of authoritarianism. Nicaragua and El Salvador were overtly ruled by an elite group. The family of Anastasio Somoza and their close friends held control of all politics and economics in Nicaragua. In El Salvador, the fourteen families that composed the elite population gripped the political and economic power in a tight fist. Although NGOs emerged in Guatemala during a period of democracy, their emergence was due to the fact of previous military rule. The revolution that overthrew the military was just an opening for NGOs to develop and gain influence. The reason for the creation of NGOs in this atmosphere of

repression is simple: the aim of the NGO was to change the “public institutions in order to make them more participatory and oriented towards campesino reality” (Bebbington 41). Many goals of NGOs in Latin America reflects this attitude to improve campesino conditions. Labor unions were among the first to emerge in all three nations in the hopes of obtaining better wages and working conditions for laborers. In Guatemala, it was a labor union composed of workers for the United Fruit Company. The military first responded with violence to the formation of labor unions in El Salvador. It saw the one accomplishment of the labor unions, the setting of a minimum wage for laborers as a threat to its hold on economic power. In Nicaragua, the labor movement was utilized by the Sandinista movement to spread their ideology among the rural populations. Many NGOs, during the decades of conflict in Latin America, organized to protest government procedures or policies. The governments were not blind to these movements. They began to harass and make life difficult for all NGOs.

To further complicate the situation brewing in Latin America, the Red Scare gripped the United States of America during the late 1940s and 1950s and its foreign policy was influenced by fear of and opposition to Communism. Some NGOs and the social movements that they inspired in Latin America had goals that echoed distantly and sometimes directly the theories within Marxism. For example, educating the rural population in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie to create a more just society for the peasant seemed to be a variation of Communism. The United States viewed the actions of some of the NGOs in all three case studies as threatening. In Guatemala, the U.S. armed and gave help to

the military general that overthrew the democratic government of Arbenz. The result was that all the NGOs, the majority of which were labor groups that had formed in Guatemala during the democratic opening, were hunted down and eliminated. In El Salvador, the U.S. strengthened the existing elite structures, providing arms and other resources to the military as a means of maintaining their hold on power. The reigning military attacked members of NGOs as threats to national security. The intervention of Nicaragua is the most obvious example of fear of Communism. The Sandinistas had briefly aligned themselves with the Communist party of Nicaragua. However, they did not maintain that alliance after it was first broken in the 1930s. Since the Sandinistas used NGOs to spread their cause throughout the entire countryside of Nicaragua, they became targets of the Somoza military. When the Sandinistas became a threat to the current government, the U.S. tried to support Somoza. After his fall from power, the U.S. openly armed and supplied the 'Contras,' former members of Somoza's military as well as other opponents to the Sandinista cause in the hope that they would overthrow the new government of the Sandinistas. Early in the Sandinistas' government, the Carter administration supported the new regime. However, as their views and opinions swung to the left, the US reassessed its relations. The result was further support of the Sandinistas' opponents, the Contras. To combat the military help that the Contras received from the U.S., the Sandinistas turned to the only help left on the globe, that of Cuba and the Soviet Union. These interactions further enflamed the fear of Communism taking root in the Western Hemisphere. Although NGOs had suffered under the Somoza dictatorship, the

Sandinistas fostered their organizations, creating political and economic opportunities for them. Censorship of NGOs, such as the religious organizations, did not occur until later in the Sandinistas regime. Communism had a direct effect on the treatment of NGOs when they were first emerging upon the Latin American political scene.

The antagonism between states and NGOs has further roots. During the repressive periods of the state upon the citizenry, many people chose to flee the country instead of face the violence and chance death. Refugees of all three conflicts can be found in the United States, Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica and other neutral states. International NGOs responded to the situation with resources to help the refugees. "As resources flooded into the region, information flowed out-with added credibility afforded to eye-witness reports provided by field staff based in the region" (Weiss 1992). This 'first hand information' gained by the staff of international NGOs was not positive towards the governments. All three of the governments in the case studies gained a negative international reputation in the case of human rights. The militaries of El Salvador and Guatemala outright brutalized the population in the fight against the guerrillas. The rural populations were considered as a support base for the guerrilla fighters. Without that base, the militaries thought they would collapse. Thousands of innocent civilians fled the violence. Even Nicaragua's Sandinista government felt the effects of the outflow of information. When they attacked the Misquito Indians, thousands fled the country, taking with them, witness of the brutality of the new regime. The Catholic Church, a worldwide organization, was among the first to bring in help

for the Indians, learning firsthand of their treatment under the Sandinistas. This later affected the relations between the Sandinista government and the Church.

The location of the NGOs also had a close tie to the antagonism between the two entities. NGOs formed as labor unions working to get rights for rural workers. This put them in close proximity later to the guerrilla organizations, fighting in the countryside, as well as the guerrilla civilian support bases. All were closely associated in the eyes of the military and the government. Therefore actions against the guerrillas often affected the rural NGOs.

States were very paranoid about foreign interference or manipulation. The ties that NGOs had with foreign donors, including governments or corporations, were interpreted by the state as the long arm of foreign interference. El Salvador repressed its NGOs as well as the guerrilla organizations for fear of Communist influence by Nicaragua. Due to oppressive government over much of Latin America throughout modern history, civil society was weak and “extremely vulnerable to external control and manipulation” (Pearce 262). Much of NGO work was done in the micro side of civil society. States fear that through NGOs, foreign entities could reach in to change or alter elements of society against the state.

The bad relationship between states and NGOs has not vanished altogether today. There is still suspicion between the two, although more forms of cooperation are being created. States see reconstruction of society as a potential threat. Naturally, aid flows to the ‘loser’ of the conflict. Relief agencies often gravitate to those in the conflict that ended up with less resources, which tend to

be the party that suffers defeat or in the stand-off conflicts of Latin America, the party that just can't overcome the other, most times, the government. Aid sees the "loser" of the conflict as the one that did not gain political control of the state. In the case of Nicaragua in which neither side held the government after the free elections, aid was more sympathetic to the Contras who had never held political power. The Sandinistas had, at least, controlled the government for the eleven years before the election ousted them. "The international aid community was re-strengthening the 'enemy' whom they had defeated. They saw this as a political rather than a humanitarian act" (Anderson 46). There are many examples of post-peace conflict over aid distribution in the case of Nicaragua. As mentioned previously, aid in post-conflict societies tends to flow toward the 'loser' of the conflict. In the case of Nicaragua, the contra fighters were given more aid at times than the previously Sandinista fighters. The de-militarized Sandinistas saw the aid given to the Contras as unfair. "The Sandinistas felt it was too generous since the government offered the Contras what it could not even offer to the rest of the population" (Spencer 23). The uneven distribution of aid to each side of fighters caused a lot of tension and led to conflict as well as rearming. However, the government did not have much choice about the aid distribution. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were pressuring them to institute austerity measures to decrease its national debt. The first programs cut the reconstruction aid to the civil war veterans, Sandinistas and Contras alike. Many of them took up arms again, both former sides united against the government to protest the distribution of reconstruction aid. The government made a lot of

political concessions, further weakening its political power, to the rearmed groups to get them to disarm once again. These concessions could be categorized as cooperation between the government and the NGOs. There are many scholars who have begun to study the new cooperative structures between the two entities since the signing of the peace accords.

NGOs and state systems have discovered their joint ability to cooperate to make their goals in development achieved smoother and faster. Cooperation between the two is still being perfected. With resources not being spent on the conflict, new projects between states and NGOs are more effective in achieving their goals. Nicaragua learned how effective NGOs can be when utilized for state projects. In El Salvador and Guatemala, NGOs have taken on more of a contractor role in relation to state projects. They benefit from this position as much as the state does. The NGO gets funding and avoids bureaucratic entanglements. The state obtains the experience of the NGO staff to make the project as efficient as possible. It is this capacity for cooperation and the resulting efficiency that have engendered the civil society theory in the minds of scholars.

B: POST CONFLICT VOID

Another point was the lack of organization in the post peace society that scholars overlooked in their calculations of the civil society theory. An economic study of post civil war situation sums up the fact that scholars misread. "The end of a civil war creates a temporary phase during which aid is particularly effective in the growth process. Our results suggest that during the first full peace period, the absorptive capacity for aid is around double its normal level. As with aid in

more normal circumstances, absorptive capacity depends upon policy, but, conditional upon policy, aid is considerably more effective. Although policy is worse in post-conflict societies than in most other societies, this is insufficient to offset the greater absorptive capacity, so that post conflict societies constitute an important exception to the proposition that for given levels of poverty, aid should be lower in societies with worse policies” (Collier/Hoeffler 8). Combined with the fact that post-civil war societies emerge with weakened state institutions, scholars misread the signs of NGO effectiveness in Latin America.

There is ample evidence in the literary field of the correlation between government policies and the effectiveness of aid. In other economic studies, political instability is related to economic growth. Political instability stagnates economic growth. These correlations parallel the terms used more often in civil society theory: government policies and the effectiveness of aid. Government policies are directly related to political instability. And the effectiveness of aid also is closely dependent upon economic conditions. Growth won't necessarily initiate aid effectiveness, but it certainly helps the distribution of aid when the government is not tied up in unstable knots. Government policies directly correspond to political stability. If policies are worse, affecting the economy and society negatively, as Collier and Hoeffler claim, then political instability is high. If the government, in reaction to external threats, pressured its foreign policy to reflect its xenophobia, the work of NGOs and aid is made more difficult. If the business policies are convoluted, the effectiveness of aid and NGO work is not going to be optimized. “Rapid economic growth, far from being the source of

domestic tranquility that it is sometimes supposed to be, is rather a disruptive and destabilizing force that leads to political instability” (Olson, quoted by Haan/Siermann 349). The trend works at the other end of the spectrum as well. “Coups could occur as a direct consequence of deteriorating economic conditions” (Fenmore/Volgy 550).

The result of these studies is a determination of behavioral patterns for states and NGOs. However, the end of a civil war breaks these patterns of behavior. Yet, it is not recognized as such by scholars. Therefore, when the results of the breaks occur, false connections are made. In this case, the resulting false conclusion is the high capabilities of NGOs to create civil society, resulting in the theory analyzed in the introduction.

The era after a civil war is one of confusion and inefficient operation of government as it learns the needs of the nation. All patterns of operation are broken, both for government and NGOs. The economy is in the process of carving a new pathway through the remains of the civil war. Greater opportunities are available for those that are in a position to take them. Most of the time, the new government is not in an advantageous position, whereas many NGOs suddenly find themselves with these new opportunities, including less government control of NGOs and greater funding from international sources to promote peace. These two elements allowed NGOs to have a much greater effect upon their constituency than in normal time. This increase in efficiency and productivity is the basis for the civil society theory. Unfortunately, once the new patterns of operation began to work in the new governments, the result of NGO

work tends to gravitate back to its normal capacity. It was this short post-war opportunistic period that generated the theory that NGOs could create civil society.

The three case studies all show the opening for aid absorptive capacity after the end of the civil wars. Most of this was due to the attention and pressure the United Nations put upon these nations after signing the peace treaties. In Guatemala, a new organization was created, MINUGUA, United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, which took upon itself the responsibility for civil war reconstruction. This required funds. With the press following the end of the longest Latin American civil war, funds flowed in from donors worldwide. The press created an opening for the giving and receiving of funds to Guatemalan reconstruction. For a short time, while the situation was still capturing the attention of worldwide news, the aid absorption was immensely greater than its normal capacity. But as the world tired of hearing the Guatemalan events, donations and NGO activity slowed down.

It was the same in Nicaragua and El Salvador with less dramatic results. The press was utilized as a powerful money-generating source. Reconstruction aid was geared towards the provisions of the peace treaties, which had attempted to correct the social inequalities that started the wars in the first place. Until the first election in El Salvador, reconstruction aid flowed into the country in enormous quantities. After the successful election of a civilian into the presidential office, the world viewed El Salvador as gaining democracy, and attention waned. The funds for reconstruction decreased.

Another factor that created the aid absorption was the return of refugees. Thousands of the population came flooding back into the country. These people had no homes or land left. They were in dire need of reconstruction funds and reintegration help, which the donor community fully approved of. The impetus in the donor community to help out the returning refugees did not last as long as excitement over contributing money to set up democracy. Far past the signing of the peace treaty and talks about reconstruction plans, donors held onto the excitement of creating a democracy through funding NGOs. It must have seemed to the peasants in the situation that the world had all the money needed for politics, yet none to get them on their feet as fully functioning members of society.

C: DONOR DEPENDENCY

The third element that scholars overlooked in the creation of the civil society theory is the pressure to put on the agenda of the NGO by donors. NGOs seemed to be the perfect vehicle for the creation of democracy, yet there are many different types of NGOs all striving for different goals. The goals of an NGO are effectively realized on the local scale. Yet with the emerging popularity of the civil society theory, donors have taken a more active role in the agenda of the NGOs that they fund. "The acceptance of increasing volumes of foreign aid involves entering into agreements about what is done, and how it is to be reported and accounted for" (Hulme/Edwards 8). The external pressure on NGO goals changes the organizations' structure and agenda. NGO work was a learning process on how to most efficiently help the constituency of the organization, but

with this change the orientation becomes how the resources can best be utilized. This change could mean that the best utilization of the resources is not the most helpful to the constituency of the organization. The emphasis on the organization is not upon those that are being helped but instead on the way that help had arrived and was used. This trend is best described as upward accountability instead of the principle of democracy, which calls for downward accountability (Hulme/Edwards 8). This is why elections are so necessary for democracy to be a representation of the population. "It becomes difficult for NGOs not to tailor their programs to the priorities of the resource agency rather than the other way around" (Garilao 113). The ATC in Nicaragua became closely tied to the government, including their agenda. It was not able to generate the benefits for its constituency due to those benefits opposing the government's agenda of development. There is a positive side to this foreign funding. With it, NGOs have certain autonomy outside of the authority of the state which allows them a security in their work as well as the freedom to increase the scope of such work. It depends on the opinion of the NGO whether that freedom is worth the donor pressure inside their organization.

The ATC in Nicaragua faced this challenge to its infrastructure. It closely aligned with the Sandinistas and found that by gaining more political power, it gave up some of the autonomy. It no longer had the power to demand things for its constituency, but it gained the ability to help by directing government policy.

There is also donor debate between North NGOs (NNGOs) and South NGOs (SNGOs). North NGOs are those run by entities within developed

countries such as the United States and the European Union. South NGOs are those developed locally in the countries to which aid flows. As always, there are proponents of both sides of the debate. Donors of NNGOs claim they are more responsible and accountable with the money given to them (Hulme/Edwards 13). On the other hand, the opposition to the argument says that donating to SNGOs will use the money more efficiently toward the strengthening of civil society due to their proximity to the people (Bebbington/Riddell 108). The trend in current research emphasizes the arguments for the SNGOs. The change has left NNGOs at a loss with work and funds.

The large number of NGOs has created a competition among them for funding. "If an NGO is to survive in this environment [limited resources for third world development], it must take on the view that it competes for these same resources with other institutions" (Garilao 117). This view is foreign to the NGO and its staff. They are a self-elected organization trying to help those less fortunate. Competition is another step away from helping people directly. Yet the NGO has to acknowledge this fact to continue its organization. There are also organizations created by the elite which exist simply to undo the achievements of grassroots organizations. "Mindful of the creative force represented by grassroots, political elites have devised a two part strategy. While encouraging the arrival of US Pentacostal church agencies, they have also organized their own NGOs. The process of elites forming NGOs is most developed in El Salvador and Guatemala" (Weiss 194). The goals of these elite NGOs are similar to the goals of big business and macro-economics. "The overall objective of the creation of

enterprise culture NGOs is to contest the associational space [civil society] of those NGOs advocating empowerment” (Weiss 194). NGOs that wish to continue making an effect with the peasantry have to alter their way of operating and thinking if they wish to continue upon their chosen course.

In Guatemala, the military was one of the first to jump on the NGO bandwagon. It established its own organizations for its own purposes. In the case of ORDEN, it instituted a network throughout the countryside which would spy on the population. It used this network to follow the guerrillas and the subversives, such as NGO leaders, wherever they might go.

In El Salvador, the elite group created FUSADES, composed of businessmen actively working to institute the U.S. espoused policies. Neo-liberal economic policies obtained funding from the United States for FUSADES. Organizations dedicated to capitalistic practices found allies with the United States and obtained funding because of it. Further foreign funding flowed in as the world learned their political alignment with the U.S. The resulting offshoots of FUSADES also were funded by US sponsors. This is one great example of the formation of elite NGOs to take advantage of available funding by the US. It also illustrates the setting of the NGO agenda in relation to the ideology of the donor. This pattern follows the gamut of NGOs whether they are indigenous, religious or radical.

Nicaragua has fewer cases of elite NGOs. Most of the elites had left the country shortly after the Sandinista takeover due to the redistribution of social

wealth. The organizations that had sided with the Sandinistas to make the overthrow of Somoza possible simply took their wealth and left Nicaragua.

Finally, there are many examples of cooperation between North and South NGOs. Some organizations choose only to funnel their donations into indigenous local NGOs. These NNGOs have no field representation and the SNGOs are not a part of the NNGO organization (Natsios 392). This example is one of money-creating organizations that then distribute the proceeds among separate organizations with need. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund would be organizations of this type.

This conflicting account of agendas of NGOs and donors is an example of why NGOs are not able to create civil society to great effect. “He who pays the piper calls the tune” is an apt saying for the pressure put onto NGO agendas by donors (Hulme/Edwards 8). Not all NGO agendas are determined with civil society in mind. Some NGOs work towards tearing down civil society. A great many other agendas are not targeted towards civil society at all. Although NGOs are effective at creating civil society, democracy will not be achieved through NGOs due to the realities of the world. NGOs are not a magic cure for society to catch democracy. If they were, all third world nations would have been democratic back in the 1960s when they emerged. The very nature of activist NGOs is to protest the things in society that are repressive.

D: LEGITIMACY

NGOs encountered the problem of legitimacy from their creation. The position of self-elected representative brings up questions pertaining to

legitimacy. Who elected you to do this? Legitimacy is best defined as “the right to represent and the consent of the represented” (Pearce 258). What right do NGOs have to represent their constituency? The answers to these questions are not easy and many organizations have disputed the answers.

The confusion of legitimacy is the claim that different organizations provide legitimacy to NGOs. Donors, governments, international organizations and, of course, the constituency of the NGO all claim that theirs is the responsibility of determining the legitimacy of an NGO.

In the beginning, legitimacy was more connected to the constituency of the NGO due to their close connection with the people they were trying to help. If one organization wasn't achieving the goals of the people, they would form a new one or overhaul the older organization's system. The wording of authors in their descriptions of the New Policy Agenda is deceptive. They put the emphasis on the goals of the NGOs in opposing state power. However, these NGOs don't always represent their constituency. Are these goals those of the NGOs or the people of the nation? The wording leads to the conclusion that these goals of opposing the state in power are those of the NGOs that wish to see changes made in the present government structure.

NGOs emerged out of the social movements of Latin America. There is a distinct difference between the social movements and the NGOs of Latin America. Social movements or popular organizations “are accountable to their memberships or constituency” (Pearce 260). NGOs developed independent of their constituency organizations, yet they still worked toward helping the

constituency that they arose out of. NGOs found a position in the political system to make a difference for the people they were helping. “The former [NGOs] are elevated into increasingly professional protagonists of development and change while the latter [social movements] lose their distinct character as active and conscious social agents, representing particular social interest and political choices” (Pearce 260). Of course, this removes an NGO from its constituency and its legitimacy comes into question. It is a fact that International NGOs are extremely distanced from the population they are representing (Schafer 73).

On the other hand, NGOs have moved closer to their donors due to their dependence on funding. “Dependence on external funding often results in organizations becoming accountable to their funders rather than beneficiaries” (Pearce 260). This fact relates to the previous discussion on donor pressure upon the agendas of NGOs. Legitimacy relates to the effectiveness of the organization to accomplish their goals. Donors claim it is their right to determine the effectiveness of the organization that is spending their money. Therefore, donors are claiming the right to bestow legitimacy upon NGOs. For NGOs that are striving to continue their existence in a world of competitiveness, the legitimacy of donors is crucial. “Many radical NGOs were actively encouraged by external development agencies, and for many their legitimacy in the eyes of these agencies derived from their engagement and commitment to radical change. It could be said that in these years, such legitimacy was more important than the accountability of NGOs to funders and beneficiaries alike” (Pearce 265). There are many NGOs that have not traded the closeness to their constituency.

However, they have infinitely more problems due to funding. The Fundacion Centro Cultural y Asistencia Maya (CCAM) in Guatemala has close connection with the Mayan population base. They strive to maintain the Mayan culture in a world that is slowly moving toward globalization. They obtain no funding from the government or international sources. Instead they collaborate with NGOs based in the United States, bringing them to communities that need medicines and teachers. Because of this, their agenda has remained one hundred percent original. No donor agency is distorting what they are trying to accomplish. The Mayan people that they represent are grateful to their stance (Interview by Author of Miguel Chan Juarez 1/26/06). In this way, it obtains legitimacy from its constituency.

To alleviate the confusion that legitimacy creates in the world of NGOs, several organizations have been set up to monitor NGO standards. Interaction represents many of the organizations based within the United States. The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) is the equivalent to Interaction for the nations of Europe and various countries of the Third World. The organizations strive to keep down corruption as well as set up some 'bylaws' for the internal structure of NGOs. These ensure those board members who determine the projects and use of funding are diversely chosen, rotated, and not abusing their privileges (Natsios 392). However, there are only 160 of the largest organizations that are members of Interaction. This leaves a great many other NGOs who don't use the forums of these organizations to keep their internal organization responsible and in touch with their beneficiaries.

The situation of each type of legitimacy is aptly demonstrated in all three case studies of Latin America. The government of El Salvador created the most useful system for establishing legitimacy for NGOs working within their country after the end of the civil war. The majority of funds were channeled through the government. NGOs were then able to apply to the government for funding by presenting a project proposal. Distribution and use of these funds were watched over by United Nations officials to ensure their security. By doing this, the government of El Salvador established legitimacy to those funded NGOs post-peace.

In Guatemala, the two largest NGOs, the CUC and the CNUS, took separate paths to legitimacy with far different results. CNUS associated themselves with an international trade union, which had affiliations with Marxist theory. Confused about this new step into the international arena, several member unions pulled out, making them just disjointed enough for the military to pick them off. Instead, the CUC chose to stay close to its constituency, the peasants of Guatemala. The population that it represented gave the organization recognition due its close involvement and understanding of peasant issues. The peasant population of Guatemala gave the CUC legitimacy when it chose the CUC as its representative. Because of this, it was the one organization that survived the civil war.

After the peace, MINUGUA gave legitimacy to associated NGOs due to their international reputation for accountability connected with the UN. There were similar organizations set up by the UN in El Salvador and Nicaragua to

watch over the peace process and the distribution of reconstruction funds. A neutral board of witnesses was installed in El Salvador to monitor the flow of reconstruction funds. Nicaragua had opened itself up for fair elections and were so closely watched in 1990, the UN would have pointed out any unfair practices. However, the free election and the win of the civilian candidate opened up many avenues that had been closed during the Sandinista years. The US revoked the blockade and aid funds began to flow into independent NGOs that were not associated with the Sandinistas. These NGOs gained their legitimacy through their independence as well as the resultant foreign donations.

CONCLUSION

The theory that NGOs create civil society and through that process help promote peace, has not been demonstrated. Scholars that posited this theory had some very good ideas. However, they were misled by several factors in recent history. The most important factor was that the end of civil wars created an opportunity for aid to work at double its regular effectiveness. This led scholars to conclude that NGOs were more able to create civil society than they really were. Once the effect of the post-peace opening wore off, NGOs were back to their normal levels of production and effectiveness.

This together with other factors, including NGO-state relations, donor dependency, post-peace void, and the question of legitimacy that have set up the situation that resulted in such a unique situation after the end of civil wars. The resultant civil society theory has trapped many NGOs into believing that the theory is correct. "NGOs today are caught between their macro-level political

imperatives and their micro-level social developmental roles” (Pearce 258). Yet the clear results of the case studies show that the period after civil war is unique.

NGOs are suited for local development. They have a comparative advantage in the development of the micro economy. When they tackle a national economy, the results become so dispersed as to be not felt by their target population, similar to the efforts of the state. That lack of stable civil society as well as political stability in the Latin American countries examined proves, at least in the cases studied here, that NGOs are not the democratic cure that scholars believe them to be.

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