

8-28-2012

# Church-State Ties, Roman Catholic Episcopacies, and Human Rights in Latin America

Nicholas Rowell

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/pols\\_etds](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/pols_etds)

---

## Recommended Citation

Rowell, Nicholas. "Church-State Ties, Roman Catholic Episcopacies, and Human Rights in Latin America." (2012).  
[https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/pols\\_etds/6](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/pols_etds/6)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Political Science ETDs by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [disc@unm.edu](mailto:disc@unm.edu).

Nicholas Rowell

*Candidate*

---

Political Science

*Department*

---

This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

*Approved by the Dissertation Committee:*

Mark Peceny , Chairperson

---

Benjamin Goldfrank

---

William Stanley

---

Richard Wood

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**CHURCH-STATE TIES, ROMAN CATHOLIC EPISCOPACIES  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN LATIN AMERICA**

by

**NICHOLAS ROWELL**

B.A. Political Science & Latin American Studies,  
University of Arkansas, 2004

M.A. Political Science, University of New Mexico, 2006

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy  
Political Science**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**July, 2012**

## **DEDICATION**

**To Robin**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people provided invaluable personal, professional and intellectual support as I completed this dissertation, and it is my pleasure to thank them. First, I wish to acknowledge the patience, hard work, and generosity of my Co-Chairs, Benjamin Goldfrank and Mark Peceny. This dissertation grew out of a project Professor Goldfrank graciously invited me to join while I was his GA at UNM. From the beginning of my graduate study to the completion of this manuscript, Professor Goldfrank and Professor Peceny provided me with invaluable support, guidance, and encouragement. I also wish to thank William Stanley and Richard Wood who also served on my dissertation committee. Both provided tremendous insight and encouragement from very early stages of this project through its completion.

I also wish to thank the Department of Political Science at the University of New Mexico for providing me with a generous assistantship during my time in Albuquerque, and briefly, while I was away from campus. I also wish to thank Ron Faulk, Janet Sheeran, and Dany Doughan of St. Gregory's University for consenting to a teaching load reduction during the final stages of this project.

Many others provided support in various stages of work on this project. Harry Moore, Fr. Robert Busch, Martin Edwin Anderson, Carlos Costa and several anonymous reviewers provided insightful feedback on various portions of this study. Erika Murcia provided expert and efficient research assistance during my time in El Salvador. With kindness and professionalism, Shoshana Handel and Joann Buehler helped me navigate the bureaucracy of completing a degree. Several others encouraged me in the pursuit of this project at critical moments, especially Professors Charles Kenney, Daniel Philpott,

John Anderson, and Sr. Marcianne Kappes. Early in my study, I benefitted from the mentorship of Jeff Ryan and Steve Striffler. I would also like to thank Prakash Adhikari and Meg Edwards; their friendship and camaraderie were among the most rewarding aspects of my graduate study. I also benefitted enormously from the friendship of Brian Risch, who pushed me to the end. My family provided encouragement and inspiration throughout this project; thank you Charles and Jan Rowell and Jennifer, Michael, Rachel and William Taunton.

Finally, for her sacrifice, patience, and unwavering support, I wish to thank my wife, Robin Guthrie, a partner who challenges my thinking, refines my ideas, and remains with me, steadfastly, through thick and thin.

# **CHURCH-STATE TIES, ROMAN CATHOLIC EPISCOPACIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN LATIN AMERICA**

**By**

**Nicholas Rowell**

B.A. Political Science & Latin American Studies, University of Arkansas, 2004

M.A. Political Science, University of New Mexico, 2006

Ph.D. Political Science, University of New Mexico, 2012

## **ABSTRACT**

From the 1960s through the 1980s, Latin America's Catholic bishops' conferences diverged in their responses to state sanctioned human rights abuse. At the national level, some bishops' conferences played leadership roles in nascent human rights movements, others delayed public criticism while pursuing private human rights advocacy, and still others responded with silence or public support for repressive governments. Why? To answer this question, this study presents comparative case studies of the Catholic Church in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil with secondary comparative case studies of Colombia, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Drawing on the theoretical perspective of path dependence, I argue that varied patterns of Church-state interaction arose, in large measure, due to varied configurations in the institutional ties linking Church and state. Where ties are dense, the Church derives its interest in conjunction with the state, relies on the state to pursue those interests, and works to ensure a close and generally collaborative relationship with successive governments via generally non-contentious political

behavior. Where ties are sparse, the Church derives its interest from other sources (the political ideology of bishops, the Vatican, the experience of clergy and/or adherents, etc.) and must rely on sources other than the state to pursue those interests. The result is the evolution of a Church that faces fewer obstacles discouraging confrontation when faced with state practices or policies that it opposes. Where ties are of intermediate density, the Church derives its interest from non-state sources (such as the Vatican), but often relies on state assistance or state approval to organize and pursue those interests. As a result, engaging in contentious interaction with the state can be discouraged by the state's leverage over some Church programs. In this situation, pursuing confrontation with the state necessitates difficult cost-benefit analysis for an episcopal conference. The resolution of intra-episcopal conflict prompts delays in decisive responses.

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1: Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Church-State Ties and Human Rights Advocacy.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter 3: The Changing Church and the Rise of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Antecedent Conditions and Critical Junctures in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil.....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Chapter 5: Mechanisms of Reproduction in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil.....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>Chapter 6: Catholic Bishops' Responses to Human Rights Abuses in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil.....</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Chapter 7: Path Dependence and Episcopal Responses to Human Rights Abuse during Civil Wars.....</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>Chapter 8: Path Dependence and Catholic Responses to Human Rights Abuse in Latin America.....</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>300</b>

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

After Vatican II, Catholic bishops were explicitly charged with two principal tasks: providing prophetic socioethical guidance to society and serving as organizational managers of Catholic dioceses or other ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Attempting to accomplish both of these tasks successfully created a set of ongoing challenges. Inevitably, bishops must, at least in practice, prioritize some values, goals, or issues over others. More difficult still, situations often arise in which the demands of consistent prophetic leadership and skilled organizational management come into conflict. When vigorous defense of some values place essential Church programs at risk or clergy and followers in danger, which task takes precedence?

The resolution of such conflicts is no doubt important for the entire international Church. However, during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Latin America witnessed one of the most dramatic and politically significant examples of such a conflict in recent history. In the wake of the breakdown of democracy that swept through much of Latin America in the decade after 1964, the region suffered through waves of egregious human rights abuses. In the name of halting the spread of communism, authoritarian regimes made widespread use of torture, kidnapping, and murder against suspected 'subversives' while closing down democratic institutions and censoring the press. If subsequent civil wars are included, the total number of victims reaches well into the hundreds of thousands.

As these waves of human rights abuses transpired, Latin America's bishops had the opportunity to respond in politically important ways. Focusing on the political

responses of bishops, as opposed to other actors or levels of organization in the Catholic Church, is a deliberate and important empirical decision. Bishops held administrative authority over some of the better-developed, if under-resourced, domestic organizational networks in Latin America, regardless of country. Support from pre-existing organizational networks profoundly affected the development of domestic human rights movements, especially the emergence of their earliest participants.<sup>1</sup> Bishops' substantial discretion over the use of Church resources, the assignments of Church personnel, the Church's social priorities, and the flow of information within the organization gave bishops an opportunity to support the emergence of broader human rights movements, or not, with potentially meaningful consequences. Furthermore, bishops' relatively high-profile and high-status location in the hierarchy of the international Catholic Church provided an opportunity to build or take advantage of existing transnational networks. This type of opportunity has been a critical component in the emergence and operation (and arguably the efficacy) of the international human rights movement (Keck and Sikkink 1998).<sup>2</sup>

Despite their institutional power, bishops' responses to waves of human rights abuses varied considerably as did the collective responses of national-level bishops' conferences. Some bishops risked or sacrificed their lives to found, lead or publicly support major human rights movements, winning support from the most important sectors

---

<sup>1</sup> On the importance of such networks to the emergence of social movements see Tarrow (1994). On the importance of Church networks to the human rights movement's early days in Latin America see Loveman (1998).

<sup>2</sup> Keck and Sikkink (1998, 90) specifically highlight the Chilean episcopacy's human rights office, the Vicariate of Solidarity (see chapter 6 of this study), as an important example of an organization that pioneered an international strategy for the human rights movement in Latin America. It is important to note that bishops are not the only possible part of the Church imbedded in an international network. Catholic religious orders and academic institutions are as well. However, bishops and bishops' conferences are arguably the highest profile of these possibilities and more consistently present in cross-national terms.

of their national-level bishops' conferences. Others worked quietly behind the scenes to persuade those complicit in human rights abuse to abandon such practices, while delaying public denunciations of culpable regimes by their peers. Other bishops, along with the most important sectors of their national conferences, ignored evidence and accusations of human rights abuse from priests, the laity, and others. Some went so far as to lend their public support to political leaders they knew were ordering the kidnapping, torture, and murder of political rivals. Why did this divergence take place? Why did some bishops' conferences gravitate toward public human rights advocacy, while others continued to prioritize anticommunism in the midst of extreme and arbitrary state violence? In the following pages, I attempt to answer this question.

### **Typology and Expectations**

An empirical survey of Church responses to human rights abuse reveals three distinct types of political commitments made by episcopal conferences as a group. The first type of response included swift and forceful denunciations that surfaced while an early wave of human rights abuses was ongoing. This response type is analogous to the "early risers" described by Loveman (1998). In the pages that follow, I refer to this response type as contentious denunciation. The second type of response included multi-year delays prior to unambiguous denunciations of human rights abuses. In such cases, denunciations eventually occurred while abuses were occurring, but they began several years after a pattern of systematic abuses began. Delays were characterized by a gradual transition from a congenial to a conflictual relationship between the Church and the state with respect to human rights. Once denunciations began, they were followed by sustained episcopal involvement in the human rights movement. I term this response type delayed

advocacy. The third type of response included broad denunciations of violence that cast no blame on the state or denunciations that surfaced after the culpable regime lost state power, typically many years after the wave of rights abuses in question subsided. While rights abuses were ongoing, these episcopacies either offered public support to the rights abusing regime or remained silent despite requests for intervention from victims and their families. I refer to this response type as complicity. These divergent responses were most pronounced from the 1960s through the 1980s, occurring under authoritarian regimes and periods of civil war.

This study examines the nature of the relationship between different types of institutional ties between Church and state and these three types of episcopal responses to human rights crises. The central hypothesis is that pre-existing church-state relationships structure the environment in which each episcopacy considers confrontation with the state during periods of human rights abuse. Church-state relationships are defined as the norms, expectations, and attitudes governing church-state interaction. These relationships were primarily established during critical junctures in the early 20th century when institutional ties linking the Catholic Church and the state were created, severed, or reaffirmed. Such institutional ties included specific forms of official recognition of the Church's privileged role in society, state participation in the appointment of bishops, state control over the organization of ecclesiastical jurisdictions, Church authority over parts of civic life such as marriage and education, and material support such as state funding of Church activity. These ties affected the amount of leverage the state, the Vatican and other actors had with respect to the bishops' conferences' official positions and decisions and, eventually, the evolution of the episcopacy's ideological center of gravity. Church-

state ties also affected national-level adaptations of Vatican II-era reforms, protestant competition, and political repression targeting Church actors. Over the long term, different configurations of Church-state ties conditioned Catholic episcopacies to manage and utilize their relationship vis-à-vis the state in different ways. The stability of these Church-state ties produced stability in broader Church-state relationships, forming patterns of interaction between the two institutions that followed distinct historical trajectories. In this way, Church-state relations in Latin America exhibit path dependent characteristics and are central to understanding the political behavior of the Latin American episcopacy.

These stable trajectories of Church-state relations enhanced or mitigated the effects of other forces acting on each bishops' conference over subsequent decades. The most important of these was the set of relatively progressive Vatican-II era reforms (1962-65) in the international Church, including major regional episcopal conferences in Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979). These reforms called on Church leaders to abandon the Neo-Christendom model of unified church and state and “insisted that the Church stand in defense of human rights” (Mainwaring and Wilde 1989, 10). Though never monolithic, episcopacies generally exhibited a theological “center of gravity” which accepted these reforms in either transformative or superficial terms (Mainwaring and Wilde 1989, 5). Episcopacies that accepted these reforms in transformative terms called for specific political reforms, such as plans to better recognize the rights of specific marginalized groups or end militarized violence. Episcopacies that accepted these reforms at a superficial level were more circumscribed in their actions, producing abstract

documents condemning ‘structural sin’ but otherwise remaining unchanged in their political posture with respect to the state and ongoing political struggles.

Figure 1.1 summarizes the three episcopal response types, their relationship to church-state ties and post-Vatican II reforms, and the cases that exhibit them. Where dense networks of Church-state ties were created, episcopacies offered support to the state or remained silent. Where intermediate networks of church-state ties were created, episcopacies were first reserved in their initial reaction to a wave of rights abuses, gradually came to offer stark denunciations of culpable regimes, and thereafter maintained a meaningful presence in the human rights movement. Where few or no Church-state ties were created, episcopacies reacted to human rights abuse quickly and contentiously. This dissertation argues that Church-state ties are a central feature of these patterns as well as an explanation for the existence of the “empty” boxes (depicted in Figure 1.1) of which Latin American political history offers no examples.

<b>Figure 1.1: Episcopal Reaction Typology</b>			
	No/Few Church-State Ties	Intermediate Church-State Ties	Dense Church-State Ties
Superficial Episcopal Acceptance of Progressive Theological Reforms	<i>Empty</i>	<i>Empty</i>	<u>Complicity:</u> Argentina Colombia
Transformative Episcopal Acceptance of Progressive Theological Reforms	<u>Contentious Denunciation:</u> Chile El Salvador Nicaragua Uruguay	<u>Delayed Advocacy:</u> Brazil Guatemala	<u>Delayed Advocacy:</u> Peru

Nonetheless, this study does *not* claim that Church-state ties alone explain important instances of Church-state interaction. Instead, it argues that giving added weight to the role of Church-state ties in theoretical explanations of such interactions provides a valuable comparative framework for assessing the impact of several other important variables. That framework places the historical evolution of a Church-state dialectic at the center of its analysis.

This argument will not surprise observers of religious politics in Latin America and in some respects this argument is not new. A literature published mostly prior to 1970 described variance in Church-state ties and Church-state relationships in some detail.<sup>3</sup> In addition, some more recent studies mention Church-state ties as being potentially causally important in the religious politics of Latin America.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, several historiographies of Church-state relations in individual Latin American countries point to significant 'turning points' or the origin of certain continuities.<sup>5</sup> Despite this, there remains a literature-wide lack of systematic comparative analysis of such moments. Studies prior to 1970 tend to engage in less theoretical analysis and studies after 1970 either bracket systematic analysis of this independent variable or neglect it all together. The novelty of this study is that it deliberately articulates a theory describing the effects of long-term Church-state interaction and conducts a careful comparative analysis of this form of institutional variation. Challenges associated with the design of such a study are the subject of the next section.

### **Comparative Analysis and Historical Processes**

---

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Pike (1959), Mecham (1966), and Vallier (1970).

<sup>4</sup> See Gill (1998), Philpott (2007), and, somewhat less explicitly, Levine (1981). These works are discussed in greater detail in chapter 2.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Ivereigh (1995) and Klaiber (1998) on Argentine Church-state relationship evolution. Such instances of historiographical overlap are discussed in chapter 4.

Probing the reasons why Church leaders in different Latin American countries reacted so differently to similar human rights abuses presents two main methodological puzzles. The first is how to best evaluate competing theoretical claims focused on long-term historical processes. The second is how best to contribute to a literature crowded with complementary and conflicting hypotheses supported largely by case studies. Solving the first puzzle demands rich historical and contextual detail. Solving the second puzzle calls for better comparative analysis. Thus, the core empirical dilemma is a classic methodological tradeoff. Given limited time and resources, how does one increase the number of cases to be compared without sacrificing the important insights gained through thorough investigation of one or two cases?

Arguments based on long term historical processes are distinct from those based on constant causes (Stinchcombe 1968, 101-29; Collier and Collier 1991, 35-7). Theoretical arguments based on constant causes argue that the continued presence of a specific variable, or set of variables, produces a given outcome. If that variable disappears, the outcome changes. Evaluating such causal arguments empirically calls for demonstrations of hypothesized correlations, preferably over time, such as quantitative time series analysis. In contrast, properly evaluating longterm historical processes as causal factors requires additional attention to specifying and demonstrating the mechanisms linking cause and effect over significant periods of time. Such mechanisms may perpetuate alternative institutional relationships between actors, social groups, or states. The sequence or timing of events in the history of such relationships may also profoundly affect an outcome (Pierson 2004).

Accomplishing this task requires amassing detailed contextual information that allows one to make observations about how cases develop over time. The social sciences offer excellent examples of such work, including Gerschenkron (1962), Moore (1966), and Skocpol (1979). However, with recent work on path dependency and critical junctures, this type of research has grown in methodological sophistication. This growing sophistication includes better specification of distinct phases of these historical processes, a practice that more precisely and rigorously elucidates how they unfold. Increased attention to specific phases also facilitates more exacting comparisons across cases. Collier and Collier (1991) and Mahoney (2001) are seminal examples of such work. Recent work on path dependence has also begun to more thoroughly consider the causes and consequences of institutional stability (Pierson 2004).

The second methodological puzzle stems from the multiplicity of plausible theories that attempt to account for differing reactions by the Church to human rights abuses in Latin America. A full discussion of these theories is presented in the next chapter, but a short list includes: the overall level of poverty in a country or region; the overall level of political repression; sources of Church funding; competition from Marxists and evangelical protestants; and the Church's pursuit of its own material interests, social influence, or political influence.

This abundance of plausible causal relationships is the result of a proliferation of single case studies or two-case comparisons of Church political behavior in the region. Such research designs are ideal for examining complex social relationships and generating hypotheses (Munck 2001, 119-20). Indeed, some of the most important and well-regarded research on the Church in Latin America was produced by single-case

studies or two case comparisons. A short list of such work includes Brian Smith's (1982) thorough examination of the Chilean Church, Scott Mainwaring's (1986) seminal study of the Brazilian Church, and Daniel Levine's influential comparison of the Venezuelan and Colombian Churches (1981). However, such research designs are limited in their ability to test the broader cross-national applicability of each theory. Thus, as this research design is reused, new theories continue to accumulate while older ones remain untested outside of the cases that inspired them. Consequently, the literature on this question has stagnated.

To advance a new theory one must amass an abundance of information about each case. However, to meaningfully contribute to the literature, research must engage in more thorough and systematic comparative analysis. In the pages that follow, I hope to balance the requirements for achieving these goals by using detailed comparative historical analysis of three cases, Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, paired with shorter studies of three additional cases, El Salvador, Guatemala and Colombia.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

Following this short introduction, the dissertation that follows is organized into six chapters. Chapter 2 first reviews key insights and challenges in the literature on the Church's varying responses to human rights abuse in Latin America. Next, it describes the path dependent theoretical approach used in this project. The chapter then concludes with a discussion of case selection and research design. Chapter 3 describes the historical context in which Church and state collided between the 1960s and the 1980s. The chapter emphasizes the era of reform in the social teachings of the international and regional

Catholic Church from 1891 to 1979, the characteristics of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes in general, and their manifestations in Argentina, Chile and Brazil.

Chapters 4-6 trace the path dependent evolution of Church-state relations in Argentina, Chile and Brazil. Chapter 4 identifies each case's critical juncture in the evolution of Church-state relationships. It does so by tracing each case's progression from antecedent conditions to moments of political crisis that unleashed major sociopolitical forces prompting a break with old institutions. These crises gave way to decisive movements of reform. Though generally not central to debates surrounding them, these reforms redesigned or reaffirmed pre-crisis Church-state ties. Chapter 5 traces the trajectory of Church-state relations during the decades following the critical juncture in all three cases. The chapter argues that these trajectories were set in motion by Church-state ties that were established during critical junctures and sustained by specific self-reinforcing mechanisms of reproduction. Chapter 6 brings these three trajectories into the authoritarian period. The chapter argues that despite the presence of progressive sectors among the Church's clergy and grassroots in all three cases, the distinct trajectories of Church-state relations (now long-established) shaped the response of each episcopacy to pre-coup crises, the military's seizure of power, subsequent waves of repression, and repression that targeted the Church.

Chapter 7 extends the argument presented in chapters 4-6 to three additional cases, Colombia, Guatemala, and El Salvador. These cases exhibit comparable divergence in episcopal responses to rights abuses, but they occurred in the midst of the outbreak of full blown civil wars and the counterinsurgencies that followed. Chapter 8

draws comparisons between all six cases. In doing so, this chapter concludes the study by highlighting and discussing its main findings.

## **Chapter 2: Church State Ties and Human Rights Advocacy**

National-level Catholic bishops conferences' willingness and ability to denounce the state's role in ongoing human rights abuse was the result of a combination of different factors that played out over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The groundwork for this argument is laid out in the chapter that follows. In the next section, I argue that a critical reading of relevant literature reveals two valuable insights in support of this perspective. First, varying episcopal responses to human rights crises is the result of long-term historical processes, not constant or proximate causes. Only with reference to historical factors can key contemporaneous anomalies be adequately explained. In some cases, for example, the escalation of repression targeting the Church is a clear proximate cause for episcopal denunciation of human rights abuses. Yet elsewhere, episcopacies overseeing a Church subject to comparable levels of repression remained silent. Second, these long term historical processes are rooted in the historical institutions that separated or bound Church and state. Attempting to explain episcopal political behavior without reference to the production and reproduction of established norms of Church-state interaction is as ill-advised as attempting to explain voting trends without reference to electoral rules and party systems. Doing so omits a feature of political interaction that is so pervasive in its effects that it may be taken for granted (quite erroneously) in the absence of adequate cross-national comparison. In subsequent sections I provide a brief theoretical overview of the path dependent, Church-state relations argument. The chapter concludes with a discussion of issues related to case selection.

## **The Catholic Church and Human Rights in Latin America**

The historical and social scientific literature on church-state relations in Latin America is expansive. However, it is possible to organize and assess the diverse range of plausible theories offering social scientific explanations for the Church's human rights activity in the region by dividing them into three groups based on the type of causal factors they emphasize. The first are theories suggesting broad, national-level factors or conditions that operate, more or less, as constant causes. The second are theories that credit change or reform within the international Catholic Church from the mid-1960s onward. The third are theories suggesting that either changes or continuity in a long-term relationship between the Church and other organized actors prompted changes in episcopal reactions to rights abuses. The first two approaches provide valuable insights, but posit causes that do not vary across cases with very different outcomes. This indicates that additional variables are needed to fully explain episcopal political commitments. The third approach, which includes the work of Anthony Gill, Daniel Levine, and Daniel Philpott, provides a more nuanced and variable set of insights, though they are imperfect. If evaluated as a family of theories, rather than solely as competitors, each sheds a ray of light on the puzzle, suggesting the potential of path dependent institutional relationships to explain moments when the Church ignored or denounced human rights abuses.

Broad factors or conditions hypothesized to facilitate denunciations include high levels of poverty, worsening economic conditions, low or decreasing regime popularity, and severe repression. Liberation theologian, Gustavo Gutiérrez (1973) proposes one such theory. Gutiérrez links poverty with episcopal willingness to challenge state practices by suggesting that as poverty and material suffering increase in an area, local

bishops feel compelled to question the source of that suffering. Such investigations inevitably led bishops to blame failed or inadequate state policies, thereby engendering a willingness to criticize state policies. This political awakening based on observing human suffering then spills over into a variety of areas, including the defense of human rights.

Bouvier (1983) adopts a different point of view. She sees the episcopacy, at least in part, as a strategic and sophisticated political actor that seeks to protect church interests in a given political environment.<sup>6</sup> In her final analysis, Bouvier includes worsening economic conditions and falling regime popularity as crucial components of a political environment in which bishops find it politically feasible to criticize a rights abusing regime. Bouvier (1983) and Smith (1979) have also suggested that the severity of repression within a country plays a major role in the decision of the episcopacy to denounce rights abusing regimes. Whereas minor levels of rights abuses may be overlooked, shocking or pervasive human rights abuses are more difficult for hesitant episcopacies to ignore.

Regardless of their assumptions about the primary motives of Church leaders, all of these theories posit a similar relationship between cause and effect. Observable material suffering worsens and dissatisfaction among local bishops leads them to speak out against the state on behalf of their followers. The more prevalent suffering is in a country or region, the larger and louder the collective voice of contentious, pro-human rights bishops. This perspective is valuable, because it correctly acknowledges that bishops and episcopal conferences are influenced by the social and political conditions in

---

<sup>6</sup> It should come as no surprise that this is a common assumption throughout the literature on Church politics in the region. Other works in which this assumption figures prominently include Vallier (1970) and Gill (1998).

which they attempt to fulfill their organizational and normative obligations. Variability in these conditions, as well as the causes Church leaders attribute to this variability, is an important consideration in discerning the extent to which they explain the behavior of the region's bishops.

However, such arguments are subject to important critiques that raise questions about their relative importance across time and location. Mainwaring and Wilde (1989, 14, fn 12) note that during the authoritarian period, the overall level of poverty did not increase so substantially as to warrant, in and of itself, a sudden political awakening of bishops in the region. Moreover, they note that the overall levels of inequality were not substantially different between those areas where bishops came to denounce the state and those areas where they did not. Gill (1998, 43-4) makes a similar point about overall levels of repression. Drastically different collective responses to rights abuses emanated from the episcopacies in Chile and Argentina, with the Chilean episcopacy assuming the role of vocal critic and the Argentine episcopacy remaining, at best, silent. These reactions emerged despite the fact that during their respective authoritarian periods, the total number of deaths and disappearances in Argentina were at least four times greater than those in Chile (see Pereira 2005, 21). Finally, it is possible that low or declining regime popularity is causally relevant, but it is difficult to demonstrate or refute such claims conclusively because data about the popularity of authoritarian regimes do not exist. Thus, broad and/or changing social conditions remain potentially important causal factors in some individual cases. However, if causally relevant across the region, such conditions' *systematic* correlation with progressive episcopal political commitments must be influenced by additional factors.

A second valuable group of theories credits a changing international Church with prompting change in the political positions of local episcopacies. These include the growth of the progressive sector within each Church, international sources of Church funding, changes in the ideological leanings of bishops appointed by successive popes, the effects of Vatican II era reforms and the positions adopted by CELAM, the Latin American Episcopal Council, at major regional meetings.

Perhaps the most conventional account of how internal church reform pushed segments of the church towards denouncing human rights abuses comes from Klaiber (1998). Klaiber's work is one of history more than theory-driven social science. However, Klaiber's regional survey of Catholic responses to human rights abuses tends to highlight the extents to which sectors of each Church accepted the reforms of Vatican II as well as some of the conclusions reached by CELAM at meetings in Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979). These reforms included new calls for bishops to adopt roles as socio-ethical leaders, rather than exclusively the leaders and defenders of the Church and its interests. Moreover, during this period the international church began to extend its stated mission from the religious and spiritual realm into the realm of social issues. This new interest included promoting a social agenda based on issues like poverty, equity, rights, and justice (Levine 1981, 35-41). Mainwaring (1986) argues that with Vatican II and Medellín, the Church shifted its conception of its religious mission and that, "The way the Church intervenes in politics depends fundamentally on the way it perceives its religious mission" (7).

Like factors such as poverty and repression, reforms in the international and regional church alone do not explain the widely varying episcopal responses to human

rights abuses across national borders. Despite this, many social scientists correctly regard these reforms as central to understanding episcopal responses to rights abuse because they strengthened emerging groups of socially progressive Catholics across the region. Mainwaring and Wilde (1989), for example, argue that differing episcopal reactions to rights abuses were the result of uneven growth of the progressive sectors within each national church after Vatican II. Where progressive sectors remained weak, no episcopal denunciations were forthcoming. But where progressive sectors grew stronger, once those sectors became victims of state repression, large segments of the episcopacy became willing to denounce the state. Variation in the strength of progressive Catholic organizations depended in part on whether or not a dictatorship existed to provoke Catholic activists. However, once these groups emerged, their survival depended entirely on each bishop's willingness to allow them to continue to operate within his diocese (12-21). Unfortunately, Mainwaring and Wilde leave unanswered the question of why segments of bishops who either tolerated or encouraged such progressive groups grew so unevenly in each national-level Church, and this is the central issue.

Vatican II and the Medellín and Puebla CELAM conferences prove unsatisfactory as singular and direct causes of episcopal action on human rights. However, the importance of sweeping changes they initiated in the Latin American Church is difficult to overstate. With this recognition, the most important question becomes what *varied* in each context so that the ideas of Vatican II and Medellín were put into practice differently? The final group of theories considers how either continuity or change in long term historical relationships interacted with Vatican II-era reforms in each national context.

Perhaps the most frequently cited work on this question in recent years is Anthony Gill's *Rendering Unto Caesar* (1998). Gill focuses squarely on the question of episcopal denunciations of rights abuse during the authoritarian period. Gill's core argument is that the growth of evangelical protestant churches drove Catholic episcopacies to adopt the defense and promotion of human rights as a strategy for competing for religious adherents. Gill rests his argument on the assumption that religious organizations compete for adherents in a religious marketplace by offering different "religious goods." Religious marketplaces become competitive when two or more religious organizations actively and fairly compete for adherents. In competitive environments religious organizations vie for adherents by offering improved goods related to religious observance, such as a stronger sense of community among members, denser social networks, or free meals on Sundays. Gill sees the Catholic episcopacy's defense of human rights as one such religious good, which arose in response to the rapid growth of evangelical Protestantism over the previous century. Gill then uses cross-sectional regression analysis on 12 cases to demonstrate a correlation between increased competition from evangelical churches and Catholic episcopacies who were generally more vocal defenders of human rights.

Gill's work is part of a literature that examines religion using rational choice theory, and for this reason *Rendering Unto Caesar* remains an important contribution in its own right.<sup>7</sup> However, Gill's work remains controversial for a number of reasons. First, Gill's strong statistical correlation is vulnerable to some important critiques.

---

<sup>7</sup> Key early works on rational choice and religion include: Iannaccone (1991, 1992), Stark and Bainbridge (1987), and Stark (1995). See Warner (1993), discussed below, for an insightful early review of this literature.

Philpott (2007), for example, questions Gill's interpretation of the important case of Brazil, which experienced both high levels of protestant growth and a very active, pro-human rights episcopacy. Citing Brazilian census data, Philpott contends that the explosion of evangelical protestant growth did not occur until the 1980s, well after the episcopacy had already made very public commitments to defending human rights (513; See also Frigerio 2007, 34). Ambiguity in the precise timing of religious competition's acceleration in each case is compounded by the notorious lack of reliability in measures of religious conversion in general (Steigenga and Cleary 2007, 11-2). If the case of Brazil were removed from the statistical analysis of only twelve cases, Gill's correlation would fail to meet common standards of statistical significance.

Gill's treatment of the Uruguayan case is problematic as well. Gill describes the Uruguayan episcopacy as "pro-authoritarian," but available evidence indicates that the most powerful members of the small Uruguayan episcopacy initially denounced the deteriorating human rights situation in Uruguay in 1972, only to be silenced by repression and the intervention of the pope in the mid-1970s (Kaufman 1979, 45; Klaiber 1998, 114). According to Gill's data, Uruguay had very low levels of protestant competition, and if Uruguay were recoded as an anti-authoritarian case, his correlation loses its statistical significance.

These empirical issues raise some questions about the strength of the evidence in support of Gill's argument. However, Gill makes no claims that protestant competition was a necessary condition for the emergence of episcopacies that denounced rights abuses and the correlation appears strong if not conclusively robust. These problems do, however, demonstrate some of the tradeoffs associated with such methodological

approaches to this question. Relying on contested measures and regression analysis to analyze twelve cases leaves little room for coding or measurement error. In addition, such an approach sacrifices qualitative analytical leverage rooted in a strong knowledge of each case.

More important than the empirical questions is Gill's treatment of differing pre-existing church-state relationships across the region and their relationship to his competition-based argument. Gill devotes a chapter to tracing the development of Church-state relations in Latin America over the previous century, placing Church-state conflicts during the 1960s in historical context. Gill also asserts that, theoretically, privileges provided by the state to the Catholic Church (but withheld from other religious sects) contribute to the suppression of religious competition. The implication is a case of increased religious competition coinciding with a Church that receives exclusive benefits or privileges from the state is unlikely. Unfortunately, differences in Church-state ties that existed across the region by the late 1960s go uninvestigated and ultimately do not factor into Gill's quantitative or qualitative analysis. This is a critical omission because it is tied to the logic of religious competition. If religious organizations compete for adherents by offering new or improved services, why would a religious organization that has a beneficial pre-existing relationship with the state choose to alienate powerful allies by denouncing them as rights abusers? Such a strategy for competition seems remarkably risky, given that such denunciations might cause state officials to revoke state-provided benefits like subsidies and special legal status. Such a strategy might also place adherents in harm's way by potentially provoking violent retaliation by the state.

More sensitive to such differing national contexts is Levine's *Religion and Politics in Latin America* (1981), a broad analysis of Catholic political behavior. Though Levine does not specifically examine Catholic human rights advocacy, many of Levine's insights speak to the question of why some Churches are more or less likely to challenge state policy. Levine places Vatican II and Medellín-era reforms at the center of his analysis. However, based on a comparison of Church politics in Colombia and Venezuela, Levine offers a sophisticated explanation for the *differing* political commitments of each national level church after this period of reform. He argues that the varying political behavior of the Catholic Church in Latin America is driven by the institutional strength of the Church as it exists within each country. Institutionally strong churches are capable of influencing the state and protecting their interests alone and privately. In such Churches authority follows clear channels from the top of the Church hierarchy to the bottom. This phenomenon makes institutionally strong churches more hierarchically rigid at the national level. It follows that in such Churches ideas from the grassroots are less likely to either receive the support of bishops at the national level or permeate the institution as a whole.

Institutionally weaker churches are forced to operate differently. They must form alliances with other social groups to exert political influence. They are also somewhat less capable of censoring ideas that spring from the grassroots. Consequently, in the 1960s and 70s, as the spirit of Vatican II and Medellín swept the Church, institutionally weaker churches embraced new ideas of reform, such as the call for bishops to assume new roles as socio-ethical leaders. International calls for new commitments to social justice and human rights inclined episcopacies to cooperate with the organized political

left (Levine 1981, 171-91). With the arrival of the authoritarian period, progressive groups became the most vulnerable to human rights abuses. Levine's analysis does not directly consider this possibility, but conceivably once repression of the left began, new ideas within the international church and new alliances with other groups in society drew institutionally weaker Churches into denouncing rights abuses leveled against former associates. Meanwhile, institutionally strong churches, insulated from grassroots pressure from progressive Catholics and from unnecessary alliances with other social groups, and hesitant to alter authority structures (142-70), may have had fewer reasons to publicly denounce human rights abusing regimes.

Levine's specific argument is rarely directly challenged or critiqued and its core insights remain relevant in contemporary discussions of religious pluralism in democracy (Levine 2009). However, its continued relevance is due in part to the fact that it is derived from observing the politics of two Churches in countries that escaped much of the rampant and egregious human rights abuses experienced elsewhere in the region during the 1960s and 1970s. Furthermore, it was written before the return of insurgency and counterinsurgency-related human rights abuse in Colombia during the 1980s and afterward. That is, Levine explains much of Church politics in two countries with very specific and atypical national contexts. Consequently, it remains to be seen if Levine's ideas about Church power, hierarchical norms and alliances might explain human rights activity elsewhere in the region and during different periods of time.

Philpott (2007) takes a different perspective consistent with the historical institutionalist school, which focuses on explaining outcomes as the result of "long historic pathways eeked out by evolving institutions and ideas" (508; see Pierson and

Skocpol 2002). Conducting an expansive examination of the varying political behavior of multiple religious organizations and faiths worldwide, Philpott identifies very broad patterns in the behavior of religious organizations. Generally, he sees the willingness of religious organizations to become pro-democracy advocates as depending on the historical intersection of the ties between religious organizations and the state (the level of “differentiation,” or separateness) and each religious organization’s political theology. These two independent variables are sometimes exogenous and sometimes endogenous. However, according to Philpott, the ideal conditions for the emergence of a religious organization that advocates democratization are political theologies supportive of liberal democracy in the midst of high levels of church-state differentiation. In such scenarios, religious organizations have greater independence (508). Of situations where differentiation takes shape before a new political theology emerges, Philpott writes, “The new [political theology] then serves as a proximate cause of the changes in the religious actor’s political pursuits, though these pursuits will remain empowered or hindered by the actor’s prior condition of differentiation. The Catholic Church in Latin America had achieved differentiation decades before...it took up the liberal democratic ideas that led it to support democratization. Once it did embrace these ideas, its differentiated position empowered it to pursue them” (509).

In his discussion of the Catholic Church in Latin America, Philpott writes in very broad terms. He argues that for much of the region, church and state became differentiated during a period between 1850 and 1925. After that time, Church episcopacies continued to seek political influence by establishing informal ties with the state. However, by the middle of the twentieth century, grassroots groups and sectors of

the episcopacy in a number of Churches began to adopt progressive political theologies. Where these sectors grew strongest, Churches would eventually become very strong pro-democracy advocates. For Philpott, key examples include Brazil, Chile, El Salvador and Nicaragua, with similar patterns in Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Bolivia and Guatemala by the mid-1980s (512). Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay are depicted as Churches that took either little or very late interest in democratization. Philpott characterizes these positions of Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay as arising because “liberal democratic political theology” did not take root and episcopacies “perpetuated the ‘neo-Christendom’ model of close ties to military rulers” (512). In other words, Churches that defended democracy had strong progressive sectors that affected each Church’s political theology and Churches that did not defend democracy had episcopacies that remained committed to retaining close ties to the state and lacked strong progressive sectors.

The tremendous breadth of Philpott’s work leads to the omission of important nuances in this story. For example, the formal and informal ties between Church and state varied significantly across the region well into at least the 1970s, a reality demonstrated by Gill (1999) and thoroughly described by a number of older works (Mecham 1966; Vallier 1970). Thus, one of Philpott’s two central independent variables varies more than his analysis seems to indicate. Furthermore, Philpott’s brief mentioning of the Paraguayan episcopacy’s late opposition to the Stroessner regime fails to note the considerable delays in denunciations from other episcopacies that he considers better examples of pro-democracy advocates. The Guatemalan Church, for example, makes his list of pro-democracy Churches, but its delay in becoming a pro-democracy advocate was

longer than the Paraguayan Church's.<sup>8</sup> Also, Philpott, like Gill (1998) underestimates powerful segments of the Uruguayan episcopacy's efforts to denounce growing human rights abuse and the gradual slide into authoritarianism (Kaufman 1979, 45; Klaiber 1998, 114).

Nonetheless, Philpott's larger ideas about church-state differentiation and political theology remain intriguing. Philpott's broad insights tempered with greater attention to the joint evolution of church-state differentiation and political theology suggest a valuable line of research capable of shedding new light on the Church's political orientation during a critical period in Latin American political history. Philpott depicts the degree of church-state differentiation and the emergence of pro-democracy Churches as relatively consistent phenomena across the region, but in reality both varied considerably across national borders. Taking this greater variance into account, and focusing exclusively on the Catholic Church in Latin America, might reveal more about the effects of church-state differentiation on the political behavior of religious organizations.

#### *Rival Explanations or Reinforcing Institutional Trajectories?*

Sorting out the relative importance of the three theoretical perspectives presented by Levine (1981), Gill (1998) and Philpott (2007) is a necessary and complicated endeavor. The complexity is due to the multiple ways in which the identified causal variables may plausibly interact with each other. For example, Gill (1999) has argued that religious competition is lower in countries where the state provides a single dominant religious organization with exclusive benefits such as tax exemptions, state funding,

---

<sup>8</sup> This discrepancy assumes the 'clock' measuring delay in denunciation starts in 1962 for Guatemala (the start of the civil war) and 1954 in Paraguay (the start of the Stroessner regime).

special legal status, or by placing legal restrictions on the operations of minority religions. Such benefits provide dominant religious organizations with a competitive advantage analogous to a subsidy. These subsidies may allow the continued domination of the religious marketplace by a single religious organization. If accurate, close church-state ties (Philpott's low level of church-state differentiation) and low protestant competition may appear together frequently. Alternatively, close Church-state ties may act as a kind of life support system in an environment where the emergence of competing religious organizations is still possible despite some forms of state support. Such a scenario would allow high levels of competition to coincide with a Church closely tied to the state espousing a social message largely disconnected from society, such as the Catholic Church in France prior to the French Revolution (Warner 1993, 1056).

It is also plausible that stronger churches are in a better position to retain close ties to the state. Levine's (1981) depiction of the differing evolution of the Church in Colombia and Venezuela seems to follow this trajectory. Stronger national Churches may be in a position to retain such ties with the state and subsequently face little challenge in the religious marketplace.

To varying degrees, Gill, Levine and Philpott all note the potential of using a path dependent framework to better understand Catholic human rights advocacy, though they may not use this exact terminology. Gill's (1998) analysis confines itself to the Catholic episcopacy's strategic choices over a relatively short period of time, but he is explicit about the potential importance of path dependence. He notes:

While the central argument of this study is not strictly path dependent, I am aware of and sensitive to the fact that historical events influence the set of

strategic choices available to social actors. As will be discussed later, events that appeared to have little impact at the time proved to be critical further down the road. For example, the implementation of laws guaranteeing religious freedom in the late 1800s opened the gates to a surge in competition when Protestant missionary groups began to take advantage of this situation in the 1930s. (18)

Levine (1981) also hints at such a long term, relationship-based causation, asserting:

members and leaders of the Church...share in national history, deal with all kinds of national institutions every day, and carry with them the memory of those traditions, issues, and conflicts which have shaped national experience. As we shall see, these experiences and memories condition subsequent perception and action in powerful and often striking ways. (57)

Although he does not adopt the terminology, Philpott's (2007) focus on the long-term consequences of the interaction between changes in political theology and church-state differentiation is remarkably in sync with a path dependent perspective. This is particularly true when Philpott notes in his conclusion that both high and low levels of church-state differentiation are likely to be long-lasting institutional relationships so long as both religious organizations and the state consent to them (522). When this conclusion is considered with Philpott's central observation that the level of differentiation has the capacity to restrain or empower changing political theologies, specifying the path dependent characteristics of interactions between the state and religious organizations seems to be the next logical step. Despite this and a recent resurgence of interest in alternative church-state relationships and religious-based political activity, a work exploring the ability of path dependency to explain the puzzling variance of human rights

commitments made by the Catholic episcopacy in Latin America remains woefully absent from this literature.<sup>9</sup>

### *Path Dependence and Church-State Relations in Latin America*

Path dependent arguments are often complex multi-stage comparisons that extend across many years and several cases. Within such major undertakings, two key elements are the most important. The first is the identification of a critical juncture and the second is the identification of one or more “mechanisms of reproduction” (Collier and Collier 1991, 31). A critical juncture is “a period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries (or in other units of analysis) and which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies” (29). These legacies are stable trajectories that last for long periods of time. The stability of a legacy is generated by “mechanisms of reproduction” which typically involve ongoing institutional or political processes that continually reinforce the original direction pursued during the critical juncture and they make shifting to some alternative course very difficult (31; see also Pierson 2004 and Mahoney 2000).

The resolution of the conflict between conservative pro-clerical forces and liberal anti-clerical forces (1917-1948) is a likely candidate for such a critical juncture. The theoretical underpinning for identifying such moments as critical junctures is derived from Warner’s description of a “new paradigm” in the sociological study of religion in

---

<sup>9</sup> Prominent examples of this resurgence include attempts to understand cross-national variance in the political statements issued by Catholic episcopacies in contemporary Latin America (Hagopian 2008), attempts to better describe, measure and categorize varying church-state relationships worldwide as a basis for further investigation into the long and short-term repercussions of alternative church-state relationships (Philpott 2007; Fox and Sandler 2005; Fox 2006; Fox 2007) and calls to further investigate the role of religion in politics in both Latin America (Patterson 2005) and the rest of the world (Norris and Inglehart 2004).

the United States (1993). Synthesizing approximately 20 years of research grappling with the comparatively high level of religiosity in the US, Warner contends that disestablishment of all churches in the US after 1789 (and then gradually in each state) is the key starting point in influential explanations accounting for religious behavior in the US (1050). These accounts posit that disestablishment created a highly competitive environment which forced all religious organizations to “sink or swim” analogous to firms in a market economy where followers are analogous to customers. The generalized implication for social theory is the expectation that increased religious competition (typically understood as ease of entry for new competitors, or “religious entrepreneurs,” rather than an arbitrary measure of religious pluralism) drives increased religious innovation (1057).

Beyond this shared foundation, theories emerging within this paradigm generate conflicting expectations and vigorous debates over proper conceptualization and measurement. Innovation resulting from increased competition may manifest itself in a wide array of choices including theological and political adaptation.<sup>10</sup> However, the paradigm raises questions about how different types of church-state configurations might alter prevailing ‘market conditions,’ how stable those configurations and resulting market conditions might be, and what effect those conditions may have on the behavior of religious organizations and religious leaders.

Thus, when institutional relationships linking the Catholic Church and the state are rearranged and reinforced, cascading long-term effects permeate religious marketplaces in ways that might account for the observations of Philpott, Levine, and

---

<sup>10</sup> It is for this reason that practitioners of the application of rationale choice to religion have critiqued Gill (1998) as presenting an underspecified model (Trejo 2009:326).

Gill. Indeed, each may have identified one component in a larger system of reinforcing causal mechanisms and spurious relationships related to the episcopacy's ideological development and response to state-sanctioned human rights abuses.

In the following chapters, I will argue that antecedent conditions in which Church-state ties were sometimes stable but more often subject to change varied considerably from country to country over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This was due in part to the Church's involvement in the region's political conflict between liberals and conservatives during this era. Antecedent conditions were disrupted and critical junctures arose in response to three historic developments during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. First, the rise of the organized left as an important political force, if not always an important electoral force, fundamentally altered Liberal-Conservative conflicts and the basic dynamics of political struggle. The Church's well-established position in opposition to communism helped involve it in elite-driven reforms to forestall the growth of the left. Second, the vigorously anticlerical Mexican Revolution and its bloody aftermath for significant sectors of the Church raised the stakes for continued Church involvement in zero-sum political conflicts. Third, in 1922 Pope Pius XI's papacy began initiating a period of new Vatican openness to varying, negotiated Church-state schemes ranging from the integral to the separated, so long as persecution of the Church was avoided.

In the wake of these developments, when social and political crises erupted that were disruptive enough to prompt the alteration of basic institutions of government, political leaders in the state and episcopal leaders in the Church were able to rearrange Church-state ties in pursuit of mutual benefits. However, in doing so, these leaders chose

widely varying institutional arrangements that ranged from complete separation of Church and state to the extension of already dense networks of Church-state ties. When situated in broader moments of institutional transformation and agreed upon by both Church and state leaders, such moments created critical junctures in Latin American Church-state relations.

Some critical junctures resulted in the creation of a dense network of Church-state ties that included formal state authority over internal Church affairs. In such cases, the state was able to use its role in the selection of bishops, the approval of new ecclesiastical structures, and the funding of Church operations as leverage to construct politically quiescent episcopacies. Such episcopacies secured the protection and promotion of Church interests by remaining in good favor with successive governments, constructing images of the Church as a nationalist symbol and institution, and calling for "conciliation" according to the terms of the powerful (those who controlled the state) during moments of national crisis. This relationship with the state mitigated the influence of the Vatican during the era of international Church reform and the influence of progressive sectors of the Church calling for social transformation. The result was the construction of more politically conservative episcopacies. Such episcopacies remained silent or complicit during waves of human rights abuse in the 1960s-1980s.

Other critical junctures resulted in the creation of a network of Church-state ties that was intermediate in density in comparison to the first group. In such cases, the state lacked formal controls over internal affairs of the Church. This reduced state leverage and increased the influence of the Vatican, clergy, laity and grassroots Catholic activists in shaping episcopal priorities. Though the interests of such episcopacies were more heavily

influenced by non-state forces during the era of Church reform, remaining Church-state ties gave the state leverage over how the episcopacy pursued its priorities. Whether by funding, tight control over the immigration status of foreign clergy, or some other measure, the survival and success of Church programs and operations remained contingent on state approval. Such leverage deeply divided episcopacies between those willing to compromise with the state in pursuit of common goals, those disenchanted with the state's obstruction, and those normatively committed to public advocacy for Church priorities regardless of the state's response. Such divided episcopal conferences required time, internal dialog, and additional impetus in the form of state repression targeting the Church to begin unambiguous denunciations of rights abusing regimes during the 1960s - 1980s.

Finally, a third group of critical junctures resulted in the creation of a complete or nearly complete separation of Church and state. In such cases, the state possessed very little leverage over the Church. This relationship heightened the influence of the Vatican and the grassroots compared to Churches more closely tied to the state. This position with respect to the state also encouraged the Church to pursue its self-defined interests through the creation of its own institutions and/or its own channels of influence in state policy. Often, public participation in political struggles was one such channel. Such Churches immediately lost influence in the aftermath of military coups. So-called "wait and see" periods were far shorter in such cases and unambiguous denunciations of rights abusing regimes occurred within a couple of years of military coups and the onset of waves of repression.

Thus, the central hypothesis pursued in the chapters that follow is that alternative configurations of Church-state ties established and maintained discernible and relatively stable trajectories in Church-state relations in 20<sup>th</sup> century Latin America. This central hypothesis leads to a series of additional related hypotheses including: (1) Churches with minimal/no Church-state ties derive their interests from sources other than the state, such as the Vatican; (2) Churches with denser networks of Church-state ties derive their interests in part from the interests of those who hold state power; (3) post-Vatican II Churches with minimal/no Church-state ties are more likely to denounce regimes that tolerate or encourage systematic human rights abuses; and (4) post-Vatican II Churches with denser networks of Church-state ties will be more likely to justify state repression or to urge "conciliation" between rights abusing regimes and the victims of their repression.

### **Paired Comparisons and the Utility of Process Tracing**

Methodologically rigorous examination of path dependent systems calls for process tracing best exemplified by Collier and Collier (1991). Identifying the incorporation of the working class into the political system as a critical juncture in eight Latin American countries, the Colliers trace the evolution of four pairs of states. Each pair displays a different type of working class incorporation, and this process creates a set of mechanisms of reproduction which drives all four pairs of states down different multi-decade political trajectories with radically different outcomes in late 20<sup>th</sup> century political dynamics. Through the use of paired comparisons that juxtapose cases with similar outcomes within a broader study of cases with different outcomes, the Colliers set out to employ both "most similar systems" and "most different systems" comparison designs (15; See Przeworski and Teune 1982). The Colliers offer a compelling and cohesive

argument, despite grappling with a project of enormous historical scope, by consistently following two qualitative methodological strategies: process tracing and the identification and comparison of clearly defined stages of path dependence.

Process tracing involves the detailed investigation and description of the chain of cause and effect relationships leading from a significant cause to the outcome one is attempting to explain (George and Bennett 2005, 206; see also Brady and Collier 2004, 300). Because of its attention to detail and chronology, process tracing is particularly adept at uncovering causal mechanisms and causal sequences.

The Colliers use process tracing to convincingly demonstrate clear causal linkages between labor incorporation and political system dynamics, causes and effects that were sometimes separated by 70 years or more. Using process tracing in side-by-side case comparisons also reveals shared causal processes. Rather than determining the mere presence or absence of variables as a test of a hypothesis, process tracing focuses attention on the linkages between events as they unfold over time. Given the importance of the evolution of the Church and its relationship to the social groups and the state during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this methodological strategy is well-suited for investigating the dynamics that drove Church commitments to human rights advocacy.

If performed self-consciously, thorough process tracing is capable of testing competing theories against each other. However, such tests may not be definitive due to unavailability of important information or evidence definitively supportive of only one causal explanation. In addition, process tracing runs the risk of allowing investigators to attribute inordinate significance to evidence that confirms *a priori* assumptions. Yet, process tracing is capable of transforming a single case into a series of observations about

a hypothesized causal sequence. Each link in the hypothesized causal chain is investigated and each piece of confirmatory evidence along this chain adds strength to the argument being made while accumulated contradictory evidence or missing links weaken the argument or identify needed modification. Thus, process tracing is a methodology capable of testing theory, “not only because it generates numerous observations within a case, but because these observations must be linked in particular ways to constitute an explanation of the case” (George and Bennett 2005, 207).

In this way, process tracing complements comparisons of two or more cases because only in extremely rare cases can controlled comparisons actually control for all potentially relevant variables but one. Consequently, controlled comparisons could be said to help generate theory and hypotheses in the social sciences, while process tracing involves the search for evidence that actually tests those theories and hypotheses (George and Bennett 2005, 214-5).

Finally, given the complexity of unraveling the evolution of church-state relationships, process tracing offers a method of research that allows for the investigation of complex causal relationships. Process tracing is a valuable test of theories that posit reciprocal causation (Munck 2004, 108); different causal paths leading to a similar outcome in different cases, or equifinality (George and Bennett 2005, 215), and spuriousness (223). These alternative causal processes are distinct possibilities in the study at hand, so a methodology capable of checking for them is important.

If process tracing forces scholars to perform better qualitative research by focusing on details and connections within single cases, then clearly defined stages in critical juncture arguments force scholars to remain clear about their theoretical claims

when they rise to cross-case levels of abstraction. The Colliers do this by identifying and comparing the same stages for all eight cases. Each stage represents a period with different dynamics, but all within the larger cause and effect story. The most important pieces are antecedent conditions, the critical juncture, and mechanisms of reproduction. Antecedent conditions are the political and institutional dynamics that exist prior to the critical juncture. The critical juncture is the period during which an opportunity exists for sweeping changes that fundamentally reshape political or institutional arrangements. The mechanisms of reproduction are those political or institutional processes that subsequently reinforce the original choice made during the critical juncture (Collier and Collier 1991, 29-39).

This study uses process tracing within specifically defined path dependent stages to trace the evolution of Church-state ties from antecedent conditions, to crises and critical junctures, and finally to mechanisms of reproduction and their impact on episcopal responses to human rights abuse during the authoritarian period. To facilitate case study depth appropriate to process-tracing, three cases (Argentina, Chile, and Brazil) are examined in depth. To add breadth, these cases are paired with shorter examinations of three additional cases (Colombia, El Salvador, and Guatemala). All comparison is structured according to the stages of path dependent processes with side-by side comparisons of antecedent conditions and critical junctures, mechanisms of reproduction, and responses to waves of human rights abuses. The next section discusses methodological issues related to the selection of these cases.

### **Case Selection**

Cases are classified according to the dependent variable, the reaction of the episcopacy at the national level over a specified number of years. The episcopal response to waves of human rights abuse must be assessed through a variety of indicators. Important dimensions of each response include: the length of the interval between the earliest instances of rights abuse and the first episcopal denunciation of that abuse; the nature of the human rights-related activity of members of the episcopacy during such intervals; the intensity and frequency of denunciations; the relative institutional power of the specific bishops engaged in denunciations; the relative size of groups of bishops engaged in denunciations; and the amount of rhetorical and practical support lent by the episcopacy to organizations that supported victims or investigated allegations of human rights abuse.

Cases were selected principally because they present contextually similar cases in accordance with the comparative logic of a most-similar systems research design (Pzeworski and Teune 1982), and they vary on the dependent variable in order to minimize methodological problems associated with no variance designs (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, 130). Despite this, selecting cases on the dependent variable is a controversial choice to some. Applying the logic of regression analysis to qualitative research strategies, critics warn that this practice truncates full variance of independent and dependent variables. Truncation results, some argue, in overestimating the strength of evidence supporting a causal relationship. Overgeneralization of findings may compound this error (Geddes 1991). Others refute this critique, warning that truncation is instead more likely to lead to underestimating the strength of evidence in support of a causal

relationship, causing researchers to erroneously dismiss significant relationships (Collier and Mahoney 1996).

At a more basic level, defenders of selecting on the dependent variable question the assumption that qualitative research uses the same sources of analytic leverage as do regression analysis and other large-N research designs. These rejoinders do not deny that selection bias is a distinct possibility in such research designs. Instead, they argue that the analytical leverage in small-N designs comes from multiple within-case observations collected to support a theoretical argument. Collier, Mahoney and Seawright term such within-case evidence “causal-process observations.” They contend that research relying on such observations and including cases with high values on both dependent and independent variables runs a greatly reduced risk of error resulting from selection bias. Consequently, stern warnings about selection bias are overblown (2004, 93-8, 102). It follows that strategic considerations involving the analytic purpose of the study and judgments about the value of dependent variables of a given case are valid criteria in the selection of cases for small-N studies (102; George and Bennett 2005, 83-4).

In light of these arguments, it is possible to observe a broad range of variance on the dependent and independent variables within two distinct contexts, authoritarian rule and civil wars with counterinsurgency measures effectively permitting the intensive targeting of noncombatants. Counterinsurgency cases tend to exhibit spikes in human rights abuse roughly a decade after authoritarian cases, but these two groups of cases overlap chronologically and are therefore best considered distinct contexts rather than distinct periods. Characterizations of these contexts follow along with the rationale for selecting these six specific cases to examine episcopal responses to human rights abuses.

## **Authoritarian and Counterinsurgent Rights Abuses**

In authoritarian cases Church leaders were in a position to use the Church's network of personnel, parishes and dioceses to collect information about victims of repressive state measures and to denounce them. Typical forms of human rights abuses included unlawful detention of political prisoners, harassment, kidnapping, torture and murder. Because of the Church's prominence as an institution with deep historical, cultural and political roots in the region and its position as an institution that concerns itself with the values observed in society at large, each Church was in a position to issue public statements denouncing rights abuses. The total amount or severity of repression varies from case to case, but all selected cases exhibit significant levels of human rights abuses perpetrated by the state. Table 1.1 presents data comparing authoritarian cases with rough indicators of the institutional strength of each church (priests per 10,000 population circa 1970), competition from Protestants (percentage of population protestant circa 1970), church-state ties, repression level, and response to repression. This table indicates the wide variance in values for dependent and independent variables among relevant cases. However, the quantitative nature of these measures renders them somewhat superficial. The following chapters make related judgments about the relative presence of these variables in each case by synthesizing quantitative and qualitative observations.

The cases selected for study and comparison from this set include Argentina (1976-1983), a complicit episcopacy; Brazil (1964-1979), a delayed advocate; and Chile (1973-1989), a contentious denouncer. Relevant features shared by all three cases include that each: (1) was a bureaucratic authoritarian, national security regime; (2) came to

power via a violent military coup; and (3) engaged in widespread, violent repression of labor unions, the press, social activists and elements of the Church in opposition to the regime.

	Percent Evangelical Christian 1970 <sup>11</sup>	Priests per 10,000 Population <sup>12</sup>	Religious Regulation Index Score <sup>13</sup>	Rights Abuse <sup>14</sup>	Timing of First Public Episcopal Denunciations of Human Rights Abuse
Argentina* (1976-1983)	3.0	2.0 (1971)	12	4.19	<b>Complicity for Duration</b>
Brazil* (1964-1979)	11.6	1.5 (1970)	2	3.13	<b>Moderate Delay</b> 6-11 years
Chile* (1973-1989)	15.2	3.0 (1971)	2	3.75	<b>Minor Delay</b> 2-3 years
Honduras (1981-1988)	1.9	0.9 (1972)	6	2.17	<b>No Delay?***</b>
Mexico (1968-1988)	3.0	1.9 Unknown	8	2.92	<b>Major Delay</b> 12 years
Paraguay (1954-1989)	1.8	2.2 (1972)	9	3.25	<b>Major Delay</b> 15 years
Uruguay (1973-1985)	1.5	3.8 (1970)	2	3.50	<b>No Delay</b>
Mean	5.4	2.2	5.9	3.27	

\* Denotes case selected for further study.  
 \*\*\*Nature and timing of first denunciations and subsequent silence unknown due to conflicting secondary reports which are temporarily irreconcilable.

<sup>11</sup> Source: Barrett (1982): Sum of percentages listed for Evangelicals, Neo-Pentecostals, and Indigenous Christians.

<sup>12</sup> Source: Gill (1998, 86)

<sup>13</sup> Source: Gill (1999, 300); This index variable is a count, with 21 different categories, of religious regulations that gave privileged status to the Catholic Church up to at least the 1970s. High scores indicate close church-state ties.

<sup>14</sup> Source: Gibney, Cornett, and Wood. (2008) *Political Terror Scale 1976-2006*. Average of Political Terror Scale scores for each year of authoritarian period in each country. Scores range from 1 to 5, with 5 being the most violations of human security. However, because data is limited to years from 1976 to 2006, averages are calculated without scores years before 1976. Although this missing data is not optimal, the relative scores are (1) generally consistent with a priori expectations of relative levels of repression, (2) correctly demonstrate that significant levels of repression were consistent in all countries, (3) using PTS scores allows for consistency in comparison with later cases, and (4) more accurate measures of repression than alternative commonly used proxy measures of repression such as Freedom House and Polity scores.

Human rights violations and episcopal responses during civil war cases generally resemble authoritarian cases, but a few key differences must be considered in their assessment. During Latin America's civil wars, patterns of human rights abuses involved kidnapping, torture and murder on an individual basis, but also larger events such as village massacres and death squad activity. Like authoritarian cases, Church leaders were in a position to collect information and denounce repressive measures used and sanctioned by the state during counterinsurgencies particularly in remote rural areas. However, some features of the civil war context largely absent in authoritarian cases may have tempered the response of Church leaders. First, it is possible that Church leaders feared the perception that they were sympathetic to insurgents given the historical ties between elements of the grassroots Church in each country and early forms of secular political organizations tied to early stages of insurgent movements (Berryman 1984). Also, unlike authoritarian cases, Church leaders may have faced greater temptation to interpret rights abuse during periods of open violence as regrettable but inevitable. Finally, Church leaders may have felt compelled to refrain from harsh criticism of either party in a conflict in order to position itself as a possible mediator for a negotiated ceasefire (Klaiber 1998). The potentially relevant cases include Colombia (1962-ongoing), El Salvador (1979-1992), Guatemala (1962-1994), Nicaragua (1961-1979, 1981-1988) and Peru (1980-1995). Table 2.2 presents a comparison of civil war cases with rough indicators of the institutional strength of each Church (priests per 10,000 population circa 1980), competition from protestants (percentage of population protestant circa 1980), church-state ties, repression level, and response to repression. As with Table 2.1, Table 2.2 indicates the wide variance in values for dependent and independent

variables among relevant cases. However, the dissertation assesses the relative presence of these variables in each case synthesizing quantitative and qualitative observations.

**Table 2.2: Civil Wars in Latin America: Religious and Human Rights Data**

	Percent Evangelical Christian 1980 <sup>15</sup>	Priests per 10,000 Population <sup>16</sup>	Religious Regulation Index Score <sup>17</sup>	Rights Abuse <sup>18</sup>	Timing of First Public Episcopal Denunciations of Human Rights Abuse
Colombia* (1962-ongoing)	1.8	1.92 (1982)	10	4.34	<b>Major Delay</b> 33 years
El Salvador* (1979-1992)	3.8	1.1 (1970)	3	4.29	<b>No Delay</b>
Guatemala* (1962-1994)	7.3	1.2 (1970)	6	4.24	<b>Moderate Delay</b> 20-22 years
Nicaragua (1981-1988)	6.2	1.4 (1970)	1	3.56	<b>No Delay</b>
Peru (1980-1995)	2.6	1.36 (1982)	11	4.09	<b>Minor Delay</b> 2-3 years
Mean	4.3	1.4	6.2	4.1	

\*Denotes cases selected for further study.

The cases selected for study and comparison from this set include Colombia (1962-ongoing), a complicit episcopacy; Guatemala (1962-1996), a delayed advocate; and El Salvador (1979-1992), a contentious denouncer. As with the authoritarian cases, these cases were selected principally because they present contextually similar cases and

<sup>15</sup> Source: Barrett (1982): Sum of percentages listed for Evangelicals, Neo-pentecostals, and Indigenous Christians.

<sup>16</sup> Source: Data for Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua is from Gill (1998, 86). Data for Colombia and Peru is from the Catholic Almanac and is presented in Religion and Latin America Statistics, Table 4 available at <http://www.providence.edu/las/Statistics.htm> .

<sup>17</sup> Source: Gill (1999, 300); This index variable is a count, with 21 different categories, of religious regulations that gave privileged status to the Catholic Church up to at least the 1970s. High scores indicate close church-state ties.

<sup>18</sup> Source: Gibney, Cornett, and Wood. (2008) *Political Terror Scale 1976-2006*. Average of Political Terror Scale scores for all years from beginning of conflict to end. Scores range from 1 to 5, with 5 being the most violations of human security. Data is limited to years from 1976 2006. Thus, Colombia’s score is the average from 1976 to 2006 and Guatemala’s score is the average from 1976 to 1994.

they vary on the dependent variable. Relevant features shared by these cases include: (1) Bitter conflicts triggering the repressive capacity of the state, which always involved the military, but often also involved forces with direct or indirect ties to the state, such as police, militias, or death squads and to varying degrees targeted noncombatants. (2) Rights abuses committed by the ‘forces of order’ during counterinsurgencies vastly outnumbered the rights abuses committed by insurgents (Goodwin 2001, 198-9, 237-44). (3) All three insurgencies were strong enough to mount sustained military campaigns. (4) Although the institutional power of the Church in each of the four countries did vary, the Church remained an important political actor. Moreover, all three Churches possessed elements with informal ties (sanctioned or unsanctioned) to nascent stages of secular organizations later tied to insurgent movements. (5) Because counterinsurgency-related human rights abuses all peaked around the 1980s, the Church in each country faced similar international pressures as the political stances of activist progressives and liberation theologians faced increasing criticism from the Vatican.

The rationale for the exclusion of the Nicaraguan and Peruvian cases warrants further discussion. The Nicaraguan episcopacy is arguably an example of a contentious denouncer vis-à-vis the Somoza regime prior to the 1979 revolution and the FSLN afterwards, though the episcopacy largely overlooked the abuses of the Contras during the civil war of the 1980s. However, the Nicaraguan case is excluded from this study because the Nicaraguan episcopacy’s tenuous and shifting relationship with the FSLN (before and after assuming state power) complicates comparison with other cases where revolutions did not occur. Such dissimilarity undercuts the most similar systems research design that guided the selection of other cases.

The Peruvian case is excluded also because of its complicated history with various elements of the Peruvian left. First, unlike other radically progressive Catholic grassroots movements in the region, the Church as a whole was the target of attacks by *Sendero Luminoso* (Klaiber 1998, 153; TRC 2003). Second, unlike episcopacies in other countries, the reformist military government that came to power in a 1968 coup maintained a tenuously collaborative relationship with socially progressive segments of the Peruvian episcopacy (Fleet and Smith 1997). This relationship affected the power dynamics of the Peruvian episcopal conference. Thus, as in Nicaragua, the Peruvian case does not conform to the most similar system design due to a complicated and atypical relationship between elements of the Peruvian Church and elements of the Peruvian left.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the different political contexts in authoritarian and civil war cases, striking similarities exist in the diverging patterns of episcopal reactions to human rights crises. In the next section, I sketch the similarities between three pairs of cases. Each pair follows its own path with respect to church-state ties and each pair manifests a distinct response type during human rights crises. These three pairs are Argentina and Colombia (complicity), Chile and El Salvador (contentious denunciation), and Brazil and Guatemala (delayed advocacy).

#### *Complicity: Argentina and Colombia*

The reaction of the Argentine episcopacy to the human rights abuses committed during the authoritarian period in Argentina is perhaps the most infamous. During the period between 1976 and 1983, security forces killed, disappeared, and imprisoned tens

---

<sup>19</sup> The Nicaraguan and Peruvian Church's atypical relationships represent an interesting pair themselves as relationships with segments of the left impacted power dynamics in each episcopal conference. However, these interactions digress from the study at hand and will be set aside for further study in the future.

of thousands of individuals for political reasons. The use of torture was widespread. As many sought to avoid this fate, the number in exile reached approximately half a million (Pereira 2005, 21; See also CONADEP 1984). A small group of progressive bishops spoke out against human rights abuses as did a radical group of priests known as Priests of the Third World, but the vast majority of bishops either remained silent on the question or defended the military regime and its tactics. The Argentine episcopacy's collusion with rights abusers is well-documented.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the presence of competitive elections, by the beginning of the 1980s, the already serious human rights situation in Colombia was growing far worse. Death squads linked by both activists and academics to security forces grew in urban areas during the 1980s (Chernick 1988, 56). Part of this war against 'subversion' was the systematic eradication of members of the *Unión Patriótica*, the emergent political wing of the FARC, including the murder or disappearance of over 3,500 party members (Pardo 2000, 72). By the mid-1990s, the military and various paramilitary forces were responsible for “kill[ing] thousands of peasants suspected of supporting the guerrillas and displac[ing] hundreds of thousands” (Goodwin 2001, 241).

The growing human rights problem of the 1980s prompted few if any public episcopal responses. Although the episcopacy denounced the broad moral failings it saw in Colombian society, the Colombian bishops remained unwilling to document military and paramilitary-linked rights abuses or produce moral appeals denouncing the officials,

---

<sup>20</sup> See Mignone (1986); Klaiber (1998); Verbitsky (2005); Feitlowitz (1998); and Gill (1998), among others.

governments, or institutions that tolerated them. The episcopacy remained silent and provided minimal or no assistance to victims of repression until the mid-1990s.<sup>21</sup>

*Contentious Denunciation: Chile and El Salvador*

Human rights abuses during the authoritarian period in Chile were egregious as well. During the authoritarian period, political prisoners were often subjected to torture (Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación 1991). Between 1973 and 1989, the number of people killed or disappeared fell in the thousands, while the total number of political prisoners and exiles reached into the tens of thousands (Pereira 2005, 21).

Although at first the Church welcomed the coup, within about two years the episcopacy began to issue major collective denunciations of rights abuse. The Chilean Church's Vicariate of Solidarity was founded by Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez and helped document cases of rights abuse. The Chilean episcopacy's role in founding and supporting the Chile's human rights movement is well documented.<sup>22</sup>

By the late 1970s professing social progressivism in El Salvador was to invite state repression (UN 1993, 43). Rights abuses committed by the state during the early 1980s were rampant, with the total number of victims reaching into at least the tens of thousands (18-30). Frequent victims of murder and disappearance included trade unionists and members of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), a social-democratic coalition of parties that would align itself with the FMLN (238).

Indiscriminant violence in the countryside, extrajudicial killings in both rural and urban areas, and the widespread use of torture against suspected subversives (which included

---

<sup>21</sup> See CELAM's extensive online record of episcopal documents.

<sup>22</sup> See Loveman (1998); Smith (1982); Klaiber (1998); Gill (1998); Lowden (1996); and Aguilar (2003, 2004), among others.

nearly all of the political opposition) were characteristic of the late 1970s, and particularly the early 1980s (UN 1993, 43-44).

Before and during El Salvador's civil war, the Catholic Church in El Salvador was divided into two camps. The most vocal and politically significant was based in the Archdiocese of San Salvador and followed the lead of Archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero, and, after Romero's assassination, Bishops Rivera Damas and Gregorio Rosa Chavez. These and other Church leaders with the help of priests and members of the laity monitored and denounced the deteriorating human rights situation from the earliest days of the war. They also created a legal support network for victims of repression and their families through *Tutela Legal*, a human rights office often compared to Chile's Vicariate of Solidarity. Outside of San Salvador, many Salvadoran Church leaders were critical of this human rights work. Despite this internal opposition and the murder of Romero, priests, nuns and members of the laity, the pro-human rights faction of the Church remained outspoken (Klaiber 1998, 173-92).

#### *Delayed Advocacy: Brazil and Guatemala*

Human rights abuses during the authoritarian period in Brazil were significant, but less extreme than those in Argentina and Chile. Though the use of torture was widespread, Brazilian security forces killed or disappeared several hundred people (rather than thousands) and the total number of political prisoners and exiles reached into the tens of thousands (Catholic Church, Dassin, and Wright 1998; Pereira 2005, 21). The Brazilian episcopacy denounced human rights abuses and became a vocal and integral proponent of democratization. However, there was a considerable delay between the military's seizure of power in 1964, the subsequent increase in rights abuses after military

hardliners rose to power in 1968 and the earliest broad, unambiguous episcopal denunciations of human rights abuses committed by the regime in 1976 (LADOC 1976, 30). During much of this period of delay (1970-1974), representatives of the episcopacy were engaged in secret negotiations with the military that often involved advocacy for specific victims of human rights abuses, including the disappeared and political prisoners (Serbin 2000). After that time the Commission on Peace and Justice, particularly its São Paulo office, worked to document and eventually publish reports of rights abuses across the country. This work contributed to near consensus votes of support for official episcopal conference statements denouncing the regime for its human rights record from 1977 until the end of the military rule (Klaiber 1998, 31-6).

Human rights abuses were a persistent feature of the government's counterinsurgency during Guatemala's prolonged civil war (1962-1994). However, human rights violations rose steadily after 1974, and sharply during the regimes of Generals Romeo Lucas Garcia (1978-1982) and Efraín Ríos Montt (1982-1983). During the late 1970s, successive waves of political murders targeted urban labor and grassroots leaders and activists. However, the total number of human rights abuses skyrocketed during Lucas' "scorched earth" highland counterinsurgency offensives during 1981 and early 1982, and stayed tremendously high during the Ríos Montt-led counterinsurgency offensives during the second half of 1982 and 1983. Serious rights violations continued after this time, but the period between 1980 and 1983 represents the peak of state sanctioned repression and violence. Characteristic forms of human rights abuse during this period included village massacres, extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, rapes, irregular detentions and torture (REMHI 1999, 211-41, 302). Moreover, the vast

majority of rights abuse was attributed to security forces tied directly to the state, including the army, civil patrols, and death squads (REMHI 1999, 290-91, fn 3).

Despite the Lucas and Rios Montt regimes' sweeping use of brutal violence and intimidation during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the forced exile of human rights advocate Bishop Gerardi, the forced closure of the El Quiché diocese, and the targeting of progressive priests and catechists, the Guatemalan episcopacy at large remained silent for a period of several years. It is possible that escalating repression forced the progressive church into silence, particularly in rural dioceses. However, the delay is also partly attributable to a faction of the episcopacy, led by Archbishop Casariego, which blocked forceful denunciations of state rights abuses. Throughout 1980 and 1981 the episcopacy remained "conciliatory" and "did not point to those responsible for the repression" (Jonas, McCaughan and Martinez 1984, 146). Public statements in 1982 took a slightly harsher tone, but still sought dialogue with the military regime (146). In January of 1984 Casariego was succeeded by Archbishop Próspero Penados. Penados became a high-profile defender of human rights helping to present the new unity position of the episcopacy that called for respect of human rights and an end to violence. In 1984 the bishops conference published *To Construct Peace*, a document that described the massacre and exploitation of the peasantry at the hands of the military and proposed specific steps to address the problem. In 1989, Penados founded the Office of Human Rights of the Archdiocese of Guatemala, which rapidly grew from a staff of 4 to a staff of 29, including "lawyers, educators, sociologists, [and] economists" (Klaiber 1998, 229).

Subsequent chapters provide a comparative examination of the path dependent evolution of Church-state relations in these countries. The next chapter begins the

comparison of the three principle cases, Argentina, Chile and Brazil, by providing an overview of the historical and political context in which Church and state interacted. The era of international Church reform, characteristics of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes, and patterns of repression are emphasized.

## **Chapter 3: The Changing Church and the Rise of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism**

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the international and Latin American Catholic Church fundamentally altered its relationship with the modern world. A broad segment of Church leaders, including a succession of popes, pushed Catholic bishops to engage with the era's rapidly changing social conditions, secular ideologies and political regimes. As the politically diverse national and subnational-level Churches in Latin America grappled with the implications of this reform movement, various groups within the Church expanded their participation in political struggles, sometimes provoking conflict with the state and Church leaders.

Significantly, the climax of the era of Church reform coincided with a period of major political and economic instability in Latin America. In Chile, Brazil and Argentina this instability included economic crisis producing runaway inflation, increased popular sector militancy, and military coups that overthrew elected governments. Each of these crises culminated in the creation of a bureaucratic authoritarian regime, the adoption of some variant of "national security doctrine," and waves of repressive violence targeting citizens. Thus, just as Argentine, Brazilian and Chilean Church leaders were instructed to play larger public roles in socioethical leadership on social problems, each national-level Church was confronted with major human rights abuses in the midst of larger economic and political crises.

This chapter describes the broader historical and regional context in which the dramatic Church-state interactions of the late 1960s through the early 1980s played out. First, I briefly sketch the era of international Church reforms. After that, I outline key political developments in Latin America's southern cone during the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, I describe specific timelines and features of the crises, coups and waves of repression as they occurred in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Chapter 4 and chapter 5 take up the specifics of evolving Church-state relations in each of the three cases.

### **The Era of Church Reform**

The seeds of Latin American Catholic bishops' widely varying relationships with rights abusing regimes were sown by a series of major social encyclicals promulgated by the Vatican between 1891 and 1971. These encyclicals, issued by Popes Leo XIII, Pius XI, John XXIII and Paul VI provided guidance to the international Church as it reacted to the rise of liberalism, socialism and fascism; global economic crises; world wars; decolonization and the prospect of nuclear war. Typically, these documents comment on the moral acceptability of various systems (democratic, authoritarian, capitalist, socialist, etc.) or practices (strikes, infringement of rights, etc.) related to large-scale social problems. Rooted in notions of fundamental human dignity and the presumption of an achievable "common good," social encyclicals used the voice of the Church to describe and defend the rights of groups and individuals the Vatican believed were vulnerable. Major social encyclicals and the popes who issued them are summarized in Table 3.1.

Social encyclicals were not politically radical in part because they consistently called for reconciliation between the powerful and the victim whether the parties in question were individuals, organizations, states or classes. In doing so, social encyclicals

implicitly asserted a largely discursive but nonetheless enhanced role for the Church in 20<sup>th</sup> century politics.

<b>Table 3.1: Popes and Major Social Encyclicals, 1878-1978</b>		
<b>Papacy</b>	<b>Dates of Papacy</b>	<b>Major Social Encyclicals</b>
Leo XIII	(1878-1903)	<i>Rerum Novarum</i> (1891)
St. Pius X	(1903-14)	
Benedict XV	(1914-22)	
Pius XI	(1922-39)	<i>Quadragesimo Anno</i> (1931)
Pius XII	(1939-58)	
Blessed John XXIII	(1958-63)	<i>Mater et Magistra</i> (1961) <i>Pacem in Terris</i> (1963)
Paul VI	(1963-78)	<i>Populorum Progressio</i> (1967) <i>Octogesima Adveniens</i> (1971)

However, within each encyclical, tension existed between either (1) calls to specific action and conciliation, or (2) condemnations of profound injustice and calls for gradual reform. These tensions maintained a certain level of ambiguity about how national and local-level Church entities were to respond to modern social, political and economic problems. Emblematic of this tension is the first of these social encyclicals, Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891), which defended the rights of workers to organize unions, urged respect for the welfare of workers in specific terms such as adequate wages, work hours and leisure time, and called on states to take action to address poverty and the causes of conflict between workers and employers. At the same time, this encyclical strongly criticizes socialism's focus on the material well-being of the working class. Above all, *Rerum Novarum* seeks class conciliation and envisions the Church playing a central role in this endeavor. Leo writes, "There is no intermediary more powerful than religion (whereof the Church is the interpreter and guardian) in drawing the rich and the working class together, by reminding each of its duties to the other, and

especially of the obligations of justice" (*Rerum Novarum*, section 19).<sup>23</sup> Similar themes were addressed in the midst of the Great Depression in Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931).

Three decades later, similar tensions appeared in Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* (1963), in which the Vatican defends broader human rights. This encyclical lists and defines specific rights with reference to the idea of fundamental human dignity while insisting on gradual reform and not revolutionary change. Again, seeking connection with the modern world, the Vatican lent support, tempered by conciliation, to the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Referring specifically to the declaration, Pope John writes,

We are, of course, aware that some of the points in the declaration did not meet with unqualified approval in some quarters; and there was justification for this. Nevertheless, We think the document should be considered a step in the right direction, an approach toward the establishment of a juridical and political ordering of the world community. It is a solemn recognition of the personal dignity of every human being; an assertion of everyone's right to be free to seek out the truth, to follow moral principles, discharge the duties imposed by justice, and lead a fully human life. (*Pacem in Terris*, sections 143-144)

Additional important papal social encyclicals followed, especially Pope Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* in 1967, which stressed a connection between oppressive social systems and the outbreak of social and political violence. The central insight of the

---

<sup>23</sup> All major encyclicals issued by popes from 1878 to the present are archived and available in English online at [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/index.htm) .

document was that development and a just political system are among the prerequisites for establishing peace and order.

Intellectually sophisticated, social encyclicals tend to employ ambiguity rather than self-contradiction. This ambiguity allowed for flexibility at the local and national level whether bishops chose to emphasize conciliation or confrontation, the insistence on protection of rights or gradual reform. What was not ambiguous was that, relative to earlier currents in Catholic social thought, these social encyclicals were progressive. Without the impetus they provided, it would be difficult to imagine a national-level episcopacy forcefully denouncing a rights abusing state that did not undermine material Church interests.

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, continued Vatican interest in engagement with the modern world also led to a series of practical, organizational reforms in the international and Latin American Church. These reforms encouraged lower levels of the Church's hierarchy, particularly bishops, to enhance their social leadership and engagement with modern social problems. Prior to the 1950s, bishops acted as local Church administrators, whose primary responsibility entailed defending Church interests with the support of local followers by "maintaining ecclesiastical structures and promoting the growth of the Church" (Gonzalez and Gonzalez 2008, 243). In doing so, most Latin American bishops prior to the 1950s rarely interacted with other bishops and rarely left the city in which their offices were located. Information was gathered by maintaining a steady regimen of visitors, but systematic data collection about sociological trends was infrequent at best (Cleary 1985, 28-9).

These norms began to change in the mid-1950s. First, bishops conferences began to form at the national and regional level, with the support of the Vatican. This new level of organization was intended to promote the episcopacy's ability to respond to real world challenges, such as the region's endemic shortage of priests. Brazil was the first country in Latin America to establish a national-level organization that would bring together its bishops. Founded in 1952, the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB) was among the first such organizations in the world. The CNBB was established under the leadership of Dom Hélder Câmara, who first proposed the idea though he was an auxiliary bishop in Rio de Janeiro (Mainwaring 1986, 48). In 1955, the Latin American Bishops Conference, CELAM, held its first general meeting in Rio de Janeiro. Bishops in a few other countries, including Chile, formed their own conferences by the beginning of the 1960s. For many bishops, recognizing and discussing common problems for the first time in such venues was a powerful experience (Levine 1981, 35; Cleary 1985, 20). In addition to directing attention to common, real-world problems faced by bishops in their diocese, as national episcopal conferences formed, the dissemination of new ideas accelerated (Cleary 1985, 12).

This experience took place on an even grander scale during the second Vatican Council (1962-1965). This general council of the world's bishops was called by Pope John XXIII in an effort to update the Church. In preparation, the Roman Curia prepared a series of documents laying out various reforms, which the assembled bishops discussed, sometimes substantially amended, and approved by vote. The proceedings stretched across 10 sessions and produced a series of fundamental reforms ranging from day-to-day religious practices to issues of church doctrine. For example, Vatican II reforms

translated mass from Latin into the local vernacular and opened dialogues with other faiths (Gonzalez and Gonzalez 2008, 241-2).

This effort to engage with society is particularly evident in the Council's *Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church*, or *Christus Dominus*, which substantially reformed the jobs of bishops. In addition to preexisting administrative duties, after Vatican II bishops were charged with responding to the needs of society and playing more active and outspoken roles in socioethical leadership (Levine 1981, 36). Henceforth, bishops were called by the Church to act as leaders in society who "unite and mold their flock into one family that all, conscious of their duties, may live and act as one in charity" (Vatican Council and Flannery 1996, 292). Bishops were now responsible for more than the faithful in their diocese and were instructed to approach various social groups, engage in dialog, and explain Church teachings to all humanity (289-90). Episcopal messages were to "present Christ's teaching in a manner relevant to the needs of the times, providing a response to those difficulties and problems which people find especially distressing and burdensome" (290). Preferred methods for sharing this message include education and public statements on current events (290-1). In this way, Vatican II's efforts to encourage bishops to exercise public moral leadership in society at large took on political significance consistent with papal social encyclicals (Crahan 1992, 155). In support of their newly prescribed role as leaders in society, bishops were directed to establish "institutes of pastoral sociology" to begin conducting systematic research on spiritual, moral, social, demographic and economic problems (Vatican Council and Flannery 1996, 293). Bishops were also directed to organize regular meetings with other

bishops through the creation of regional and national episcopal conferences as had already been accomplished in Brazil and Chile (311).

While in Rome, Latin American bishops held the first meetings to plan for CELAM's second general conference to be held in Medellín. The goal of that conference would be to devise ways of applying Vatican II reforms to the realities of the Latin American Church.<sup>24</sup> In 1966, after Vatican II's conclusion, planning began in earnest. In the two years of preparation that followed, all national-level episcopacies were invited to contribute to preparations with several preliminary meetings held around the region.

In August of 1968, the Medellín conference was convened with Pope Paul VI in attendance for the first few days. Bringing together bishops from across the region to discuss common challenges, the conference produced a series of collective documents designed to push the regional Church to be more in line with the major tenets of Pope John XXIII's and Pope Paul's VI's recent social encyclicals and Vatican II reforms. Bishops attending the conference were also influenced by a number of regional developments and insights gained over the previous decade. In addition to searching for ways to respond to the modern world, nearly all bishops sought to demobilize small pockets of radicalism among the laity and some priests, typified by the example of slain guerrilla-priest, Camilo Torres. In addition, new and more systematic research about the Latin American Church had become available. This included research conducted by a network of regional Catholic scholars who sought to describe and explain the root causes of social conditions prevalent in the region. Bishops were also increasingly familiar with

---

<sup>24</sup> Edward Cleary describes the period of planning for this conference and the conference's output as the "Latinamericanization" of Vatican II (1985:26-7).

the emerging economic literature on dependency, which describes Latin America's commodity-based export economies as extremely vulnerable to changing economic conditions in developed countries. Thus, the conference opened with a sociological overview of the region and discussions based on several thematic committees.

Discussions were then organized around the production of a series of concluding documents and recommendations for the regional church. Bishops then voted on the concluding documents, with every document securing near unanimous support (Cleary 1985, 44).

The Medellín conference's concluding documents shook the Latin American Church and attracted attention from the international community. In particular, the documents on poverty, justice and peace stood out for a level of progressivism that marked a radical break with the past. Bishops denounced social injustices, deploring the state of social conditions in the region and their structural origins (which the Church admitted to having played a role in creating and sustaining), and they called for the Church to begin acting on behalf of the poor. The document on justice pledges "The Church—the People of God—will lend its support to the down-trodden of every social class so that they might come to know their rights and how to make use of them. To this end the Church will utilize its moral strength and will seek to collaborate with competent professionals and institutions" (CELAM 1968a, section 19). Making explicit reference to the responsibility of the state, the same document explains, "Faced with the need for a total change of Latin American structures, we believe that change has political reform as its pre-requisite" (CELAM 1968a, section 16). While warning against the use of violence

to achieve this end, bishops went on to describe the unjust structures of Latin American society as a form of violence.

As the Christian believes in the productiveness of peace in order to achieve justice, he also believes that justice is a prerequisite for peace. He recognizes that in many instances Latin America finds itself faced with a situation of injustice that can be called institutionalized violence, when, because of a structural deficiency of industry and agriculture, of national and international economy, of cultural and political life, 'whole towns lack necessities, live in such dependence as hinders all initiative and responsibility as well as every possibility for cultural promotion and participation in social and political life,'...thus violating fundamental rights. This situation demands all-embracing, courageous, urgent and profoundly renovating transformations. We should not be surprised, therefore, that the 'temptation of violence' is surfacing in Latin America. One should not abuse the patience of a people that for years has borne a situation that would not be acceptable to anyone with any degree of awareness of human rights. (CELAM 1968b, section 6)

The Vatican officially approved the concluding document, but other responses to these statements varied widely. The nascent liberation theology movement saw the approval of the most progressive documents as legitimizing their activities (Klaiber 1998, 5).<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the dissemination of these statements helped create a space for nonviolent grassroots progressivism to continue growing in the Latin American Church (Mainwaring and Wilde 1989, 7). Meanwhile, some members of the laity offered critiques questioning

---

<sup>25</sup> Indeed, noted liberation theologian Gustavo Guitierrez played a significant role in shaping the conference's thematic agenda (Cleary 1985).

the ability of the episcopacy to understand Latin America's social realities given their separation from it.<sup>26</sup> Many Catholic and non-Catholic conservatives, including the region's militaries and existing national security states, disapproved of the conference's pronouncements (Cleary 1985, 43; Levine 1981, 49-50).

In addition to CELAM, many bishops elsewhere in the international Church worked to articulate the challenges of Vatican II and papal encyclicals during this period as well. In 1971, the Second Synod of Bishops issued "Justice in the World," a statement echoing much of the content of CELAM's Medellín documents. In it, the bishops denounced domination and oppression, including the remnants of colonial structures and the exploitation facilitated by international capitalism. The bishops specifically position the Church as the "voice of the voiceless," emphasizing the need to face injustice with action. The bishops explain, "The mission of preaching the Gospel dictates at the present time that we should dedicate ourselves to the liberation of man even in his present existence in this world. For unless the Christian message of love and justice shows its effectiveness through action in the cause of justice in the world, it will only with difficulty gain credibility with the men of our times" (reprinted in Gremillion 1976, 518, 521). The bishops continue, "the Church has the right, indeed the duty, to proclaim justice on the social, national and international level, and to denounce instances of injustice, when the fundamental rights of man and his very salvation demand it" (521). For bishops worldwide, the document indicates a rhetorical shift from urging others toward social concern and action to acknowledging such a responsibility for themselves and for the Church in general (Tombs 2002, 143).

---

<sup>26</sup> Several members of the laity authored an essay critique Medellín pronouncements. This essay is reproduced under the title "A Lay Critique of the Medellín Draft" in *Between Honesty and Hope* (Conferencia Episcopal Peruana 1970).

When the era of Church reform was at its height, progressive, moderate and conservative tendencies within the Church emerged in response. Each can be identified by its interpretation of this period of church reforms, particularly vis-à-vis social problems (Levine 1981, 41-53; Klaiber 1998, 15-6). Progressives interpreted reforms as a call to participate in political struggles aimed at addressing the structural causes of poverty and other social injustices. At its extremes, progressives included Colombia's *Galconda Group*, Argentina's *Priests of the Third World* and Chile's *Christians for Socialism*. These groups were in perpetual conflict with the vast majority of the Church's ecclesiastical authority. Less radical, but still remarkably progressive voices, such as Brazil's Bishop Hélder Câmara and the *Bishops of the Third World*, also called for the Church's political involvement. Moderates, the largest of the groups regardless of country or level of the Church hierarchy, interpreted reforms as a call to bear witness to suffering while avoiding direct attachment to political organizations, instead focusing on reform efforts within the Church. By 1968, moderates constituted the majority of Latin American bishops. However, maintenance of such a position was fraught with ambiguity given the explicit calls made by the bishops themselves to engage with the social realities of the modern world, such as attending to victims of structural violence (Levine 1981, 51). Conservatives interpreted reforms to be largely liturgical in nature rather than political and adopted many of those reforms slowly, cautiously and, in some cases, not at all (Klaiber 1998, 15). To conservatives, social problems were the result of the moral failing of individuals, not the result of an unjust and inequitable social order. At its most extreme, this group included *Opus Dei*, a quasi-religious order, and Societies for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property (TFP), both of which openly criticized

Vatican II reforms (Levine 1981, 49-50). Less extreme conservatives simply sought to retain close relationships with the oligarchy, military and state along with the privileges such relationships provided the Church.

The beginning of the end for the era of international Church reform arrived in 1978 with the election of John Paul II as pope. John Paul II was a compromise candidate selected by a conclave divided between theological conservatives and progressives with different perspectives about how to complete the reforms initiated during Vatican II (Coppa 2008, 183). Though John Paul II's papacy did not shy away from its own diplomatic engagement in international politics, after 1978, the Vatican began working to rein-in what it viewed as the excesses of liberation theology on the Catholic left and the extreme conservatism denouncing Vatican II on the Church's right (185). In this sense, after 1978 the Church showed a clear interest in strengthening hierarchical authority and internal unity across the international Church (Klaiber 1998, 13). In Latin America, the Vatican's primary message to bishops was to control the Catholic left, especially after clerical involvement in the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979. The clearest signal of this reorientation in the Vatican was the pope's message to bishops assembled as CELAM's 1979 general conference in Puebla, the first since the monumental conference in Medellín. In a speech to the assembled bishops, John Paul II criticized variants of liberation theology that flirted with Marxism or that reduced the New Testament to singularly material or political terms. Rather, the pope stressed that bishops' sociopolitical involvement was to be rooted in the defense of human dignity. John Paul stressed, however, that a century of Catholic social teaching included property rights as one dimension of that human dignity and that communism was incompatible with Catholic

promotion of human rights (Weigel 1999, 284-6). The significance of this message was that the defense of human rights remained an important and very genuine priority for the Vatican. However, the Vatican's tolerance of Catholic political solidarity with the preponderance of the victims of political repression in Latin America, many of whom at least sympathized with the goals of the Marxist left, now became far more circumscribed.

After 1978, the Vatican began to appoint relatively conservative bishops in Latin America as well. This was most noticeable where high-profile progressive bishops were replaced with more conservative figures. Such was the case in Chile, when human rights leader and Archbishop of Santiago, Cardinal Raúl Silva, was replaced by the relatively conservative Bishop Juan Francisco Fresno. Apparent as well was John Paul II's very public criticism of priests involved in the Sandinista government, at the same time that he was generally silent, at least in public, about the Argentine episcopacy's lack of opposition to human rights abuse in that country (Klaiber 1998, 13-4).

Resultant changes in the Latin American episcopacy were neither stark nor rapid, but the tide had shifted in the international Church. After John Paul II's address, CELAM's 1979 Puebla general conference reaffirmed its "preferential option for the poor," adopting that specific language for the first time. In Chile, Archbishop Fresno helped organize the political opposition while the Pinochet regime planned a plebiscite to legitimize its continuation in power (Meacham 1987). But by the early 1990s, Vatican-led changes produced noticeable effects. CELAM's next general conference in Santo Domingo in 1992 was more circumscribed in its political pronouncements and Chile's Vicariate of Solidarity was closed. Some episcopal conferences once noted for their forceful progressive voices in Chile and El Salvador took a conservative turn, reorienting

their messages around issues of individual morality (Hagopian 2008). As the Cold War ended and the 20<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close, the era of international Church reform ended.

In sum, the era of international Church reform genuinely increased the Church's political engagement with social problems in the modern world, especially in Latin America by the late 1960s. However, within this evolution multiple voices came to coexist with different perspectives about how to respond to social problems and relevant secular authority. This religious "multivocality" (Stepan 2000, 44) would be significant as ongoing political and economic instability prompted responses from the region's bishops.<sup>27</sup> As these new political commitments prompted backlashes from forces both inside and outside of the Church, the Vatican and many bishops backed away from political struggles during the 1980s. This gradual, but far from total withdrawal was rooted in concerns about the consequences of the politicization of the Church and its mission, but its concern about decades of progressive-led reforms marked the end of the era of international Church reform. The remainder of this chapter describes the political and economic circumstances the Church faced during the height of this era of reform, the 1960s to the 1970s.

### **The Authoritarian Context in the Southern Cone**

As the reform era of the Catholic Church in Latin America reached its apogee, military coups overthrew elected governments in Brazil in 1964, Chile in 1973 and Argentina in 1976. Two common features distinguish these regimes from other variants of authoritarianism: the establishment of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes and the

---

<sup>27</sup> Gonzalez and Gonzalez describe this phenomenon as the Church's two faces; one defends the status quo while the other speaks pointedly on behalf of victims of unjust political, social and economic structures (2008:263).

application of National Security Doctrines. After briefly sketching these two features, the pre-coup crises and key characteristics of post-coup rights abuse are sketched for each case.

### *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism*

By the early 1960s, Latin America had entered a period of economic, social and political instability. Explanations for the rising tide of disorder vary widely and a comprehensive survey is well beyond the scope of this chapter. However, O'Donnell's (1973) conceptual framework of bureaucratic authoritarianism is helpful in describing the political context in which the Church and rights abusing regimes interacted.<sup>28</sup>

O'Donnell argues that the series of regime crises and breakdowns that swept relatively developed countries in Latin America (including Argentina, Chile and Brazil) in the 1960s and 1970s was the product of structural factors long at work in the region's history. Briefly, by the 1960s, Latin America was emerging from decades of relatively populist regimes that sought to promote the interests of domestic capitalists through industrial modernization. Toward this end, import substitution, in its earlier "easy" phase, was able to capitalize on limited domestic markets through the near exclusive production of consumer goods. Protecting the development of these industries from foreign competition necessitated various combinations of tariff barriers and subsidies that made possible the increase of wages and other benefits for workers. To organize support for these reforms, modernizers sought out the political activation and inclusion of popular sectors who benefited from these policies.

---

<sup>28</sup> The literature which articulates and responds to this conceptual framework is quite large itself. This brief sketch draws principally on O'Donnell (1973), Collier (1979) and O'Donnell (1988). It should also be noted that this perspective, though influential, is contested.

However, by the 1960s the "easy" phase had concluded. Further industrial expansion necessitated increased access to foreign markets and more orthodox economic policies. Pursuit of this strategy would negate many benefits won by workers who were now part of the political system and increasingly organized. Where Latin American industrial expansion had once created a multiclass coalition, in the 1960s it was entering a phase in which the interests of the domestic bourgeoisie and workers were pitted against each other. Resultant political struggles helped produce the decade's most profound social, political and economic crises.

During moments of the most profound crises, the military intervened, overthrowing elected governments and instituting regimes designed to combat this set of structural programs. The broad features of these regimes are what O'Donnell terms "bureaucratic authoritarian" regimes. The hallmark of such regimes is their primary objective of restoring order through the forced depoliticization of state-society relations. More specifically, a bureaucratic-authoritarian state is a type of authoritarian state in which: (1) the main social base of the regime is the transnational upper bourgeoisie, (2) institutions of government are designed to hand the predominance of power to forces of coercion (military and police) and economic normalization (market-oriented technocrats) for the purposes of restoring "order", (3) popular sector organizations that became politically active under previous regimes are deactivated and excluded, (4) citizenship rights and democracy are suppressed, (5) the popular sector is economically excluded, exacerbating existing inequalities, (6) decision making about social issues is depoliticized and handed over to technical experts, and (7) democratic channels to government are closed (O'Donnell 1988, 31-2).

In practice, bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes closed congresses and elected subnational governments, allowed minimal or no public input in the radical redesign of economic and social policies, repressed the left and its organized constituencies and pursued market-friendly economic reforms. O'Donnell explicitly identifies such regimes as seizing power in Brazil in 1964, Uruguay and Chile in 1973, and Argentina in 1966 and again, more violently, in 1976 (1988, xi), and this assessment is shared by other prominent works in the field.<sup>29</sup> Combined with the most extreme interpretations of the national security doctrine, bureaucratic authoritarianism produced draconian repression.

#### *The National Security Doctrine*

In addition to bureaucratic authoritarianism, military regimes in Brazil, Chile and Argentina were influenced by varying applications of the National Security Doctrine (NSD) (Pion-Berlin 1989). NSD elevates the importance of national security to the extent that it is the paramount standard by which all other government policies are judged. Developed in part by the French in Algeria and Vietnam and promoted by the United States in the wake of the Cuban Revolution, the NSD focuses primary attention on *internal* security threats that seek to subvert existing institutions. In its Latin American form during the authoritarian period, the NSD's overriding concern was the threat of "subversion" posed by Marxism. Launching attacks against this perceived enemy, the military's publicly stated intentions were to defend Western and Christian values against agents of atheism and communism (Pion-Berlin 1988, 385-6; Klaiber 1998, 7).

The proliferation and entrenchment of this ideology in Latin American militaries can be traced to the growth of what Stepan terms the "new professionalism of internal

---

<sup>29</sup> See Collier (1979).

warfare and military role expansion" during the early 1960s (1973, 57). Essentially, in the wake of the Cuban revolution, the primary focus of the military's central mission to defend the state from threats shifted from preparing to engage external threats (e.g. foreign invasion) to preparing to counter internal threats (e.g. rural or urban guerrillas). In doing so, the military began to identify and anticipate threats emanating from groups of civilians whom the military believed challenged, or were preparing to challenge, the legitimacy of the state.

Emerging in the context of the Cold War, the NSD cast security challenges in terms of geopolitics, counter-insurgency and development. Geopolitics framed internal struggles as a part of the global struggle against the Soviet Union. Counterinsurgency saw the most important internal threats as arising from asymmetric, unorthodox combat with guerrilla forces relying on support from noncombatants. Thus, primary targets of the military became "insurgents" or "subversives" who must be eradicated from the general population. Security was also bound to efforts for social and economic development, because the military, among others, believed successful development would increase the long-term stability of the state and undermine the appeal of communism (Pion-Berlin 1988, 386-92).

To develop skills necessary to accomplish this new mission, militaries began major transformations of the curricula used to train officers at key institutions such as Brazil's Superior War College (ESG) and General Staff School (ECEME). Curricula included training in political and managerial skills, and continued officer indoctrination into NSD's basic assumptions about looming internal threats (Stepan 1973, 53-9).

The NSD profoundly distorted the relationship between militaries and government. The military was an institution created for the purpose of defending the nation. By assuming the responsibility of distinguishing between internal threats and loyal opposition, the military was necessarily politicized. This led to the expansion of its role in society, including the military's own willingness to set up long term governments (Stepan 1973, 47-53). As a result, the military now had two roles: national defense and the administration of government. The merger of these two roles conflates many legitimate civilian criticisms of the military's administration of government with internal threats to the nation as a whole. As Pion-Berlin explains, "the military reifies itself as the only depository of the interests and values of the nation by virtue of its retention of state power; all dissent and denunciations of the military regime are viewed as attacks on the nation itself; conversely, attacks on the nation are considered to be direct challenges to the regime" (Pion-Berlin 1989, 98; see also Calvo 1979).

At its worst, the military's internal campaign against subversion culminates as the state, controlled by the military, assumes "special prerogatives," which are used to "illegally, repeatedly and flagrantly" violate individual rights (Pion-Berlin 1991, 69; Comblin 1976). In Latin America during the authoritarian period, elements of this doctrine were frequently employed to justify state violence and repression. Thus, throughout periods of military rule in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, the agents of the state frequently made reference to shadowy subversive agents and fabricated or exaggerated instances of confrontation with guerrillas to justify continued suppression of basic citizenship rights and democratic institutions. Furthermore, in many instances, to criticize the military's policies, including human rights abuse, was to be identified as subversive

and become a target for repression. While all of these dynamics played out in Brazil, Chile and Argentina, several specific circumstances varied, such as the intensity of repression. Brief individual sketches of these distinct pre-coup crises, military takeovers and subsequent waves of repression follow.

### *Brazil*

Social, economic and political instability preceded the March 31, 1964 military coup in Brazil. Between 1940 and 1964, Brazil's population doubled. During the period between 1950 and 1960 the population in urban areas alone increased from 19 million to 32 million. Political demands and political mobilization increased during this period also. In addition to expanding electoral participation, the early 1960s witnessed a sharp increase in strike activity, rural labor organizing, and ideological polarization (Stepan 1978, 112-3). Meanwhile, with the establishment of the National War College (ESG) in 1949, the 1950s and early 1960s produced a cadre of military officers who had received substantial technical training in matters of national policy. The ESG's instruction and seminars drew on the national security doctrine to discuss matters of internal security as well as the policy of development and political administration. The ESG had the effect of increasing the confidence of many officers that the military could competently intervene and manage the Brazilian state (Roett 1978, 94-5)

In the midst of these profound social changes a political crisis involving the military erupted. In 1961, Brazilian President Jânio Quadros resigned suddenly after only eight months in office. In accordance with the 1946 Brazilian constitution, Quadros was to be replaced by his vice president, João Goulart, who had been elected on a separate ballot and at the time was out of the country on a trade mission to China. Deep skepticism

existed within powerful factions of the Brazilian military about handing power to Goulart, who came from Brazil's political left and was seen as a successor to authoritarian populist reformer Getulio Vargas. Goulart was first advised by Brazilian congressional leadership not to return to Brazil, but then the military and congressional leaders reached a compromise agreement allowing Goulart to assume the office of the president. The compromise fundamentally altered Brazil's democratic institutions by adopting elements of a parliamentary system, stripping the president of several powers (Skidmore 1988, 9). This sudden reform combined with pre-existing conditions of political polarization and party system instability, creating institutional paralysis. Political compromises necessary to select prime ministers were difficult to achieve, cabinets were reshuffled and the parliamentary experiment ultimately failed. Through a plebiscite in January 1963, Goulart regained full presidential powers (Roett 1978, 95-6).

Meanwhile, the Brazilian economy experienced sudden and rapid decline during the early 1960s. During most of the 1950s Brazil's GNP per capita experienced some of the strongest growth in the world and in 1961 GNP grew at a rate of about 4%. However, the rate of GNP growth slowed in 1962 such that by 1963 Brazil's GNP per capita was contracting by a rate of about 1% annually. As the Brazilian government increased spending (and took in less tax revenue), deficits grew larger while new development aid from the US declined (Stepan 1978, 115). This acute period of economic decline was accompanied by rapid inflation, which increased from 50% in 1962, to 75% in 1963 and to 140% during the 3 months prior to the military coup (Stepan 1978, 113-4; see also Skidmore 1988, 11-3). Goulart first attempted to confront these problems via collaboration with technical experts of the center left. These efforts, which included

currency devaluation and cuts in public sector jobs, proved too politically costly among his base of support among unions and were abandoned after six months (Skidmore 1988, 13). This situation was described by newspaper editorials and political elites of both the left and right as a crisis of regime rather than a crisis of government, warranting major changes in Brazil's basic governing institutions (Stepan 1978, 118; see also Skidmore 2007, 255).

Beginning in June of 1963, Goulart moved sharply to the left, calling for sweeping structural reforms related to land redistribution, education, taxes and housing. Meanwhile, in the midst of mounting strikes, a failed military insurrection led by junior officers in September 1963 led Goulart to ask Congress for emergency powers. This move was met with skepticism from both the right and the left, who feared repression would follow (Skidmore 2007, 261-2). Despite this signal that his government lacked disciplined support among popular sectors, when Goulart was unable to pass his structural reform measures in Congress he attempted to draw on mass support for leverage.

On March 13, 1964, at a publicly broadcast mass rally, Goulart announced a land reform decree expropriating a total of 1,270 acres of unutilized land near federal highways and dams, the nationalization of all privately owned oil refineries, and future plans to legalize the Communist Party and expand the voting franchise by eliminating literacy requirements (Stepan 1978, 125; Roett 1978, 97-8). Then, during March 26-7, over 1,000 soldiers rebelled and forcibly occupied an armory in Rio de Janeiro in response to disciplinary action taken against a soldier who had been attempting to unionize enlisted soldiers. The minister of the navy moved to quell the rebellion. Goulart

removed the minister, allowed trade union representatives to participate in the selection of his replacement, and then granted the new naval minister authority to deal with the situation as he wished. The new minister granted the soldiers an amnesty provoking intense reactions across the officer corps (Stepan 1978, 129-31; Roett 1978, 98).

This political crisis took place amidst rising social and political confrontation and violence elsewhere in Brazil. Urban strike activity and radical student organizing were increasing during the early 1960s. In São Paulo, the MAC and CCC, two anti-communist paramilitary groups, were already targeting leftwing student activists before the coup (Skidmore 1988, 17). In the countryside, organizing among peasants was growing rapidly. By 1963, peasant leagues were increasingly carrying out land invasions (Skidmore 2007, 254). In response, landowners frequently hired their own armed gunmen to intimidate and kill peasant activists (Skidmore 1988, 17).

Goulart's political miscalculations alarmed his critics in the Brazilian military to such an extent they staged a coup (Stepan 1978). On March 31, 1964, the military successfully overthrew the Goulart regime. As the coup took place, Goulart fled the country and what remained of his coalition of support crumbled. The military faced little resistance at first. In the aftermath of the coup, the military launched an initial wave of repression that declined sharply after several weeks (Pereira 2005, 21). This early wave of repression targeted activists on the left in urban areas, such as labor and student leaders and was largely carried out by the *Departamento de Ordem Política e Social* (DOPS). The Catholic left, especially the JUC, was among the most targeted groups. The largest portion of this wave of repression, however, targeted peasant organizers and rural union

activists in the country's Northeast. Repression in this area was carried out by the Fourth Army with support from state and local police (Skidmore 1988, 17).

After the initial wave of abuses in 1964, some democratic institutions were permitted to continue operating, though their activity was restricted. For example, after a purge of the left, Congress was permitted to continue conducting some business. Elections continued to be held, but military-imposed hurdles to party formation limited competition to two parties, the pro-government *Aliança Nacional Renovadora* (ARENA) and the opposition *Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (MDB) (Pereira 2005, 20; Skidmore 1988, 48).

Then, public dissent and protest within Congress and from university students increased, particularly between 1967 and 1968. This change provoked a crackdown from the hardliners in the military beginning under the administration of General Costa e Silva. The military suspended *habeas corpus* for those accused of political crimes, suspended Congress and various provincial legislatures indefinitely, began heavier media censorship, and purged party members, justices and universities (Skidmore 1988, 81-4). A second wave of violent repression followed, intensifying during 1969 with the emergence of an urban guerrilla insurgency and the October installation of hardliner General Emílio Médici as president. This wave of repression was more centralized than the first and was coordinated by the military government's *Serviço Nacional de Inteligência* (SNI) and carried out by each state's political police, the *Departamento Estadual de Ordem Político e Social* (DEOPS). The DEOPS were later forced to share jurisdiction with the military regime's special military police units, the *Departamento de Operações Internas / Comando Operacional de Defesa Interna* (DOI-CODI). Aimed at

guerrillas and groups the military believed to be their subversive bases of support, the second wave of repression targeted students, academics, journalists and religious personnel (Pereira 2005, 20-1).

The military's use of torture began within days of the 1964 coup. Afterwards, the use of torture against political prisoners was widespread, with approximately 17,000 cases between 1964 and 1979 documented by one Church study (Catholic Church, Dassin and Wright 1998). The use of torture declined somewhat during the interval between waves of repression, but intensified after 1968. Torture was used intensively during the campaign against urban guerrillas in 1969-70, and did not begin to decline in urban areas until 1972. This decline came at least a year after the defeat of the urban guerrillas (Skidmore 1988, 125).

Meanwhile, a rural counterinsurgency in the north of Brazil conducted mostly between 1972-74 produced half of the total disappearances during the military period (Pereira 2005, 21). After 1974, internal divisions in the military led to a change in leadership that was more supportive of plans for gradual liberalization. After this period, repression declined. Initial liberalizing reforms took effect in 1979 and included an amnesty for political prisoners. Some instances of repressive activity continued, though they were relatively mild, and the return to institutional democracy was completed in 1985 (Pereira 2005, 22).

Though severe, repression during Brazil's authoritarian period was less extreme than in Chile and Argentina. Between the 1964 coup and the beginning of a gradual transition to democracy in 1979, Brazilian security forces were responsible for the deaths

and disappearances of 284 - 664 people, the detention of 25,000 political prisoners, and the flight of 10,000 exiles (Pereira 2005, 21).

### *Chile*

The early 1970s in Chile was a period of economic and social upheaval and extreme political polarization. Unlike Brazil and Argentina, prior to the 1973 military coup, Chile was a long-standing and relatively stable democracy. In the 1964 presidential elections, Chileans elected Eduardo Frei, a Christian Democrat. Frei pursued a series of progressive policies including increased investment in social services, expansion of unionization rights for agricultural workers, land reform and increased government control of copper mines owned by US companies (Wright 2007, 48).

In the 1970 presidential elections, Chileans narrowly elected Salvador Allende, a long-time member of Congress and leader of the Socialist Party who garnered support from a coalition of leftwing parties called Popular Unity (UP). Pledging to work within the confines of Chile's constitution, Allende immediately accelerated reforms begun by Frei, including land reform and the expropriation of large industry.<sup>30</sup> By the end of 1971, the state had taken control of at least 150 industries, including the country's twenty largest firms (Falcoff 1991, 59-60).

In the midst of these reforms, preexisting political polarization spiraled out of control. Radical movements sympathetic to the UP and emboldened by the pace of reform initiated 1,700 land occupations during the first year and a half of the Allende government. Many such occupations provoked vigilante-style retributive violence from land owners (Loveman 1976, 266; Falcoff 1991, 103). Meanwhile, the number of strikes

---

<sup>30</sup> Expropriations included copper mines owned by US corporations Kennecott, Anaconda and Cerro (Falcoff 1991:60).

increased from 1,819 in 1970 to 3,325 in 1972 and 2,050 in 1973 (Falcoff 1991, 137). Although strikes in the copper industry slowed production in that vital sector, the most significant strike was undertaken by truckers during the summer of 1973. Fearing government interference in this private industry and frustrated by shortages of mechanical parts, truckers launched a work stoppage with effects that rippled across Chilean society, exacerbating food shortages, halting housing construction, preventing delivery of milk to school children, and threatening hundreds of thousands of workers with layoffs (Sigmund 1977, 228-9). Civil society and business interest group opposition to Allende was well organized and particularly active by mid-1972, especially through professional organizations known as *gremios* (Falcoff 1991, 264). At the fringes but garnering headlines, radical factions of the UP called for the arming of people's militias while elements of the extreme right, notably the paramilitary group *Patria y Libertad*, carried out hundreds of acts of sabotage and assassinations of leftwing figures (Falcoff 1991, 264).

During the first year of Allende's government the Chilean economy experienced a boom. During that year the GDP grew at a rate of 7.7%, output increased across a wide range of economic sectors, including construction, unemployment in major urban centers declined, and the interest rate, which had grown to a burdensome 34.9% in December of 1970, declined to 22.3% by December 1971 (Falcoff 1991, 57). Increases in wages, falling unemployment, growing GDP and an increased share of income for both blue collar and white collar workers followed (Stallings 1978, 131-2; Smith 1982, 185). However, the following year the economy abruptly began to decline. In 1972, output decreased in most sectors, and by the end of that year GDP contracted at a rate of .08%.

Far worse, by December of 1972 inflation shot up to 163% (Falcoff 1991, 61). By 1973, the Chilean economy was in complete disarray. During that year, GDP declined at a rate of 3.62 percent, food shortages emerged, and the rate of inflation reached 508% (71).

On September 11, 1973 the Chilean military staged a coup, including an aerial bombardment of the presidential residence at *La Moneda*. Allende died during the assault. Pockets of resistance persisted for no longer than 48 hours, after which the military gained control of the country. A military junta led by General Augusto Pinochet immediately declared a state of siege and began an initial wave of violent repression designed to detain and eliminate Allende supporters (Pereira 2005, 23). Chile's borders were temporarily closed, and high-ranking officials from the Allende government were seized and taken to a prison on Dawson Island in the Straits of Magellan.

The armed forces and police (*carabineros*) proceeded to carry out sweeping acts of violence and repression in the months immediately following the September coup. In the initial wave of security activity, approximately 50,000 people were rounded up and held in various locations across the country, including soccer stadiums, military bases, and government buildings. The largest detention centers held thousands and included the National Stadium and the *Esmeralda*, a navy ship anchored in the harbor of Valparaiso. Suspected Allende supporters, particularly members of the Socialist and Communist parties, were the military's chief targets (Pereira 2005, 23). Many of the detained were subjected to torture, about 300 were executed immediately, and just fewer than 2,000 were quickly tried in military tribunals. Meanwhile, vigilante groups carried out a wave of retributive violence in rural areas directed at *campesinos*, whose political activity had included participation in unions and land occupations (Wright 2007, 52). Though the

military regime would remain in power from 1973 through 1989, the most intense wave of rights abuses, and about half of the deaths, occurred in the 2-3 months immediately following the coup. Between September and December 31, 1973, over 1800 people were murdered by the regime, 621 were disappeared and over 20,000 people were detained (Policzer 2009, 88-91, see also Wright 2007, 54).

As the rapid initial wave of violence transpired, democratic institutions and sources of potential opposition were routed and civil liberties were suspended. Congress, provincial governments, and municipal governments were closed, with military officers assuming administrative roles to replace them. The jurisdiction of military courts was dramatically expanded, the national labor federation was dissolved, and military officers were appointed to oversee universities. Leftwing parties and unions were banned, and the political activity of all other parties was suspended. Finally, media organizations sympathetic to Allende were closed, with remaining media outlets subject to heavy censorship (Wright 207, 52-3).

In mid-1974, the organization and strategy of military repression changed, impacting the scale of repressive activity. At this time, the National Directorate of Intelligence, DINA, assumed control of coordinating and carrying out repressive activity, functioning as the military junta's secret police. The head of DINA reported directly to Pinochet, which made DINA an important political resource for Pinochet as he consolidated his power over the military regime (Valenzuela 1995, 49). During DINA's period of operation (1974-1977), repressive activity became much more centralized and the number of disappearances declined, though they became more secretive and systematic. Repressive violence, particularly disappearances, began to specifically target

remaining members of the MIR and the Socialist and Communist parties (Policzer 2009, 88-97). DINA employed 4,000 agents at its peak and established several secret detention and torture facilities across Chile, including Villa Grimaldi (Wright 2007, 63-4). Owing to internal disputes within the military and international pressure in the wake of DINA-orchestrated assassinations abroad, DINA was reorganized and renamed the National Center for Information, CNI, in 1977 (Valenzuela 1995, 49). The number of murders decreased, though murder, disappearances and torture continued until the transition to democracy began in 1989 (Policzer 2009, 9; Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation 1993).

In sum, repression in Chile was particularly violent for a country of only 9.5 million inhabitants. Between the 1973 coup and the beginning of the transition to democracy in 1989, state security forces were responsible for the deaths and disappearances of 3,000-5,000, people, the detention of 60,000 political prisoners and the flight of 40,000 exiles (Pereira 2005, 21).

### *Argentina*

In Argentina, the decade between 1966 and 1976 was one of multiple and escalating political and economic crises. In 1966, General Juan Carlos Onganía led a military coup, which overthrew an elected government and established a bureaucratic authoritarian regime resembling the military government in Brazil after 1964. The banning of political parties, repression of labor unions, and censorship of the independent press immediately followed (Wright 2007, 97). When market-oriented economic reforms led to the withdrawal of various benefits afforded industrial workers in May 1969, a brief but major insurrection in Córdoba, known as the *Cordobazo*, erupted. On May 28-29

workers, students and various middle sectors successfully repelled police and attacked government buildings and the property of transnational corporations using rocks and Molotov cocktails. The military used force to occupy the city and put down the rebellion (O'Donnell 1988, 159).

The *Cordobazo* accelerated the radicalization of significant portions of the Argentine left and several guerrilla movements were organized shortly afterwards. By 1970, multiple guerrilla organizations coalesced to form two significant insurgencies, the ERP and the Montoneros. During this period, guerrillas robbed banks, staged kidnappings for ransom, attacked police installations, and carried out assassinations of high-profile military targets, including General Pedro Eugenio Aramburu, a former head of state (Wright 2007, 97).

In June 1970, Onganía was overthrown by General Roberto Levingston, who was replaced by General Alejandro Lanusse in February 1971. During this time, the Montoneros, militant labor and a resurgent Peronist Youth movement all sought the return of former president Juan Perón who had been in exile for 18 years. Lanusse responded to growing radicalization of the left with increased repression, including expedited trials for suspected guerrillas, torture, executions and disappearances (Wright 2007, 98). However, in 1973, Lanusse decided to allow elections with participation by the Peronists. The elections produced a Peronist caretaker government, which recalled Perón from exile. Perón returned in June, was elected by a sizeable majority in a September plebiscite, and inaugurated in October (Romero 1994, 206).

Unlike Chile and Brazil, violent government repression in Argentina preceded the military coup (Pereira 2005, 26). The coalition that had united to demand Perón's return

proved too ideologically diverse and difficult to maintain once Perón was in power. In an effort to regain control over his party, Perón expelled the radical left, including the Montoneros and some regional governors. Then, using ERP violence as a pretext, Perón began to take repressive measures against the broader left. Perón's Minister of Social Services, Jose Lopez Rega, created the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance, or "Triple A", a paramilitary death squad composed of police and military personnel which operated outside official government channels (Wright 2007, 99; see also Romero 1994, 206-8). The AAA proceeded to carry out attacks on the armed left.

Perón died suddenly in July 1974, and he was succeeded by his wife Isabel. With limited experience in government, Isabel Perón inherited a Perónist Party still militant despite the expulsion of its far left wing. As unions began negotiating large wage increases, Isabel restructured her cabinet, removing members from the moderate left. In the midst of this party turmoil, inflation spun out of control, soaring from about 15% in mid-1974 to 776% in 1976 (O'Donnell 1999, 16). Capital flight ensued, production ground to a near halt and in 1976 inflation approached 1,000 percent (Lewis 1993, 171). Meanwhile, the Marxist ERP launched a series of political assassinations and attacks on police and military installations in an effort to destabilize the government. The Montoneros, who viewed Isabel Perón's government as illegitimate, resumed tactics they had employed during the previous military government, including kidnappings, assassinations and brief military exercises (Romero 1994, 211-2). By the spring of 1975, the Argentine military judged that, while the Montoneros were the numerically larger organization, the ERP constituted the larger military threat (Johnson 1976, 15). The government responded by authorizing a military campaign against the ERP in rural

Tucumán province in February 1975. Later, in October 1975, while Isabel Perón was briefly hospitalized, acting president Italo Ludor issued decree 2772, which authorized the armed forces to "carry out the military and security operations that may be necessary to annihilate the activities of subversive elements in all the country's territory" (Wright 2007, 100).

It was in this chaotic environment that the Argentine military seized power in March 1976. The coup took few by surprise and was welcomed by many (Wright 2007, 101). However, under a military junta led by General Jorge Rafael Videla (until 1981), the military appropriated sweeping powers and systematically eliminated all civilian government and potential sources of opposition. The constitution was suspended; political parties were banned; Congress, provincial governments and city governments were closed and replaced with military administrators; free press was curtailed; universities and courts were purged; and union activity was prohibited (Wright 2007, 100-1). In doing so, the military re-established a bureaucratic authoritarian regime and, guided by their application of NSD to Argentina's security situation, intensified its anti-guerrilla campaign targeting suspected "subversives." This "dirty war" continued until 1983 when divisions within the military, a declining economy and the disastrous war in the Malvinas led to the start of a democratic transition.

During this 7-year period, human rights abuses sanctioned by the state were rampant. Abuses included murder, torture, forced disappearance and arbitrary detention. Repression tended to target union members, the Peronist and Radical parties, intellectuals, students, journalists and lawyers for political prisoners (Pereira 2005, 26).<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Military and police intelligence began preparing lists of leftist suspects prior to the coup (Wright 2007:107).

Abductees were taken from their homes, workplaces, schools and the street. A majority of victims were seized at night, but many were seized in broad daylight in front of numerous witnesses. Repression was organized by the military and carried out by all branches of the military and police (Wright 207, 109). Moreover, the organization of repression was relatively decentralized, with each branch of the military and police maintaining their own intelligence agencies and jurisdictions based on different zones dividing the country. Though the repressive apparatus remained under the control of the military junta, at the operational level commanders had wide discretion, and in practice the severity of repressive activity varied by locale and was often arbitrary (Pion-Berlin 1989, 103-4). As a consequence of this and other factors, state violence was far more lethal and sweeping in scope in Argentina than in Chile and Brazil, with a massive wave of violent repression that did not abate for the first 4 years of military government. Repression only began to decline in 1980, though it continued for the duration of the military government (Pereira 2005, 26). During this time, the military established 380 secret detention facilities across the country where prisoners were kept off of official police roles, physically and psychologically tortured, and usually executed (Wright 2007, 110). The largest of these centers was located at the Navy Mechanics School, ESMA, which received over 5,000 prisoners during this period (110-11). Bodies were disposed of in unmarked or mass graves, burned or thrown into the ocean from aircraft (113-4).

Throughout the dirty war, the military consistently justified repressive measures with reference to a supposed ongoing war with guerrillas. While the ERP and Montoneros included sizeable fighting forces prior to 1976, both forces were decimated within a few years of the coup. The ERP was essentially inoperative after 1977. The

Montoneros persisted longer, but annual casualty totals inflicted by guerrillas on military and police personnel peaked at 156 in 1976 and then declined to 6 by 1978 and zero thereafter (Wright 2007, 102). Meanwhile, disappearances perpetrated by security forces and documented by CONADEP increased sharply to 350 in 1975, peaked at 4,200 in 1976, and then declined only from 3,200 in 1977 to just over 1000 in 1978. By 1983, the total number of disappearances annually was less than 100 (Wright 2007, 114; CONADEP 1984).

In terms of absolute number of victims of repression, the case of Argentina clearly surpasses Brazil and Chile. Between 1976 and 1983, in a country of about 24 million inhabitants, security forces killed or disappeared between 20,000 and 30,000 people, held roughly 30,000 political prisoners, and forced about 500,000 people into exile (Pereira 2005, 21). Table 3.2 presents comparative indicators of political repression and human rights abuses committed during the military governments in Brazil, Chile and Argentina.

	<b>Brazil</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Argentina</b>
Period of Military Rule	1964-1979	1973-1989	1976-1983
Period of heaviest military repression	1964, 1969-1973	1973-1977	1976-1980
Deaths/Disappearances	284-664	3,000-5,000	20,000-30,000
Political Prisoners	25,000	60,000	30,000
Exiles	10,000	40,000	500,000
Total Population (1970)	96,800,000	9,500,000	24,000,000
Sources: Pereira (2005, 21) provides repression figures and periods. United Nations Demographic Yearbook, Historical Supplement (1997, 85-7) provides 1970 population figures (rounded to nearest 100,000).			

## *Conclusion*

During the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, a rapidly changing religious institution and the tendencies it contained grappled with long-term structural injustices in the midst of rapidly devolving political and economic crises and the rise of repressive military regimes. Religious leaders who pledged to challenge social injustices met military governments bent on dismantling democratic institutions and extinguishing the left. Thus, by the 1960s, significant segments of the Catholic Church and Latin America's military governments were on a collision course. Despite this, the response of Catholic bishops' conferences varied, from the Chilean conference's relatively rapid denunciation of the Pinochet regime, to the Brazilian conference's private negotiations with various generals and long delay in denouncing the military government, to the Argentine conference's complicity with the military's rights abuse.

The next two chapters explain this variation by identifying a critical juncture in the historical trajectory of Church-state relations in Chile, Brazil and Argentina (chapter 4) and then tracing the effects of key features of those trajectories to each national-level episcopacy's response to major waves of human rights abuse occurring between the late 1960s and the early 1980s (chapter 5). Together, the following chapters argue that varying responses to waves of human rights abuse were shaped by the Church-state ties that structured the interaction of these two institutions for decades prior to the rise of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes. Different types of Church-state ties created varying dominant ideological tendencies within each episcopal conference as well as varying material inducements and constraints structuring episcopal interaction with the state. As a

result, waves of human rights abuse met very different episcopacies and provoked very different responses.

## **Chapter 4: Antecedent Conditions and Critical Junctures in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil**

This chapter describes a critical juncture in church-state relationships in Chile, Brazil and Argentina, respectively. The central claim is that a critical juncture in Church-state relations occurred in all three countries during moments of major political upheaval between the 1910s and 1930s. During these moments, reformist governments redesigned secular political institutions during large-scale sociopolitical crises and created an opportunity for Church leaders and state officials to revisit fundamental questions about the proper institutional relationship between Church and state. Arriving at answers to these fundamental questions involved collaboration and negotiation unseen in prior decades. The products of this collaboration were generally consensual agreements between representatives of the Church and state involving three distinct levels of Church-state ties. As a result, this period gave rise to relatively stable, but otherwise dissimilar, forms of Church-state relationships which persisted for the majority of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Adequately distinguishing between alternative forms of Church state relationships in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Latin America necessitates scrutiny of two related variables.<sup>32</sup> The first variable is the level of Church-state differentiation. Differentiation refers to the relative amount and importance of institutional ties linking Church and state, such as recognizing Catholicism as the official state religion, state involvement in the selection of bishops, state subsidization of Church activities, and special authorities and privileges

---

<sup>32</sup>This interaction and Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 are based on Philpott (2007, 508).

granted to the Church.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the level of differentiation in each state may range from highly differentiated (Church and state are completely separated) to highly integralist (Church and state are heavily intertwined).

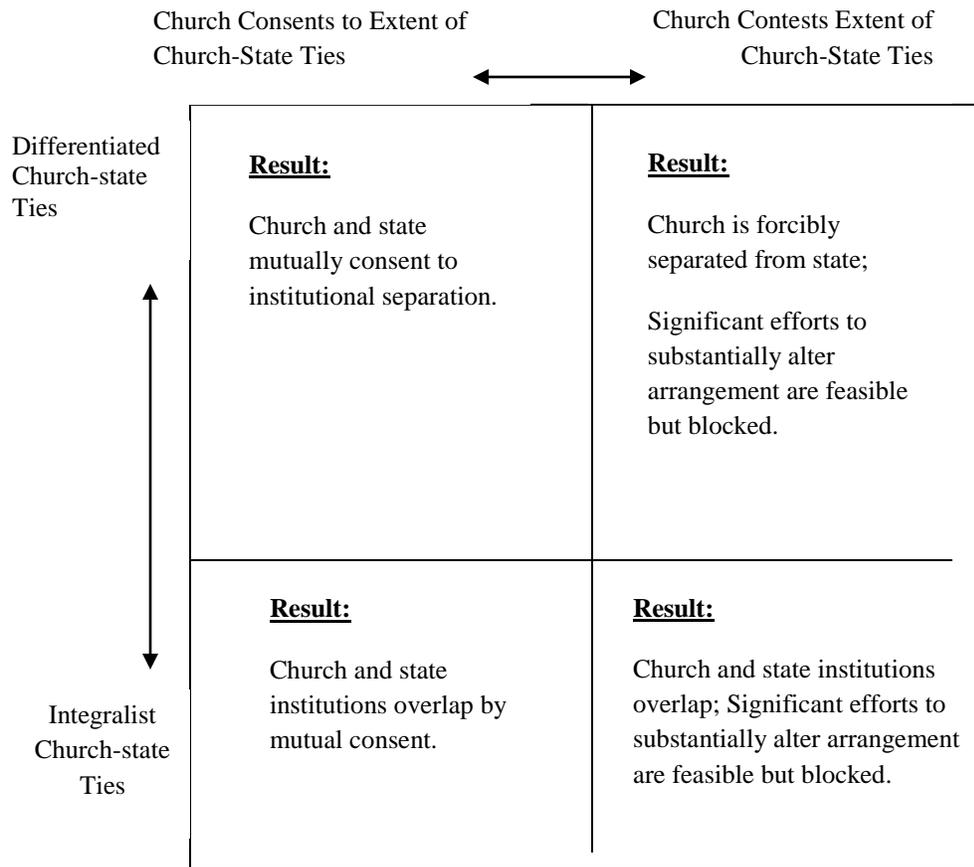
The second variable is whether or not key actors in the Church or the state seek substantial change to the level of differentiation. Church and/or state may agree with or seek to change a differentiated relationship or an integralist relationship. When at least one of these two institutions seeks change but is blocked from doing so, the relationship becomes conflictual. When both institutions generally accept the level of differentiation, that relationship is consensual. Thus, Church-state relations of this period could be differentiated-consensual, differentiated-conflictual, integralist-consensual or integralist-conflictual. These relationships are summarized in Figure 4.1.

To adequately demonstrate the existence of the hypothesized critical juncture, the narrative for each case is divided into three sections. First, antecedent conditions are described. Antecedent conditions “form the ‘baseline’ against which the critical juncture and its legacy are assessed” (Collier and Collier 1991, 30). In this study, antecedent conditions refer to typical church-state relations as they existed prior to the critical juncture. These conditions may or may not exhibit relatively stable institutional ties linking church and state (close ties, minimal ties, etc.) and may or may not exhibit generalizable church-state relationships (conflictual relationships, congenial relationships, etc.). However, subsequent stages of the narrative for each case will demonstrate a moment during which a decisive break with relationships typical of the past is possible, and sometimes, chosen by representatives of Church and state.

---

<sup>33</sup> For a full list of key institutional ties linking Church and state see chapter 5.

**Figure 4.1 Church-state Ties and Church-state Relationships<sup>34</sup>**



Antecedent conditions began to take shape during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as each country won independence from colonial powers and the Catholic Church retained significant state-provided privileges. As the century unfolded, liberal, anti-clerical parties ascended to power and Church-state relationships began to face political challenges. During the 1880s and 1890s, anti-clerical governments initiated substantial anti-clerical reforms stripping the Church of many of the old privileges born of the colonial era. However, such early periods of conflict over appropriate types and amounts of Church-state ties

<sup>34</sup> Figure adapted from Philpott (2007).

reflect a pattern of generally unstable relationships (Philpott 2007, 507) and thus do not represent critical junctures themselves. In all three countries, these reforms pushed the Church into a period of conflict with the state typified by Church-led efforts to (1) roll back anticlerical reforms and (2) reevaluate the Church's strategy for exerting influence in society. In Chile and Argentina, anticlerical reforms dismantled several Church privileges during the 1880s. In Brazil, the 1889 revolution gave rise to the 1891 constitution that severed Church and state. Afterwards, the Church in all three countries actively sought to reestablish lost privileges, provoking conflictual Church-state relations. Antecedent conditions are summarized in Figure 4.2.

After antecedent conditions, a large scale socio-political crisis is identified and described.<sup>35</sup> This period of crisis gives rise to the larger critical juncture and thus is significant enough to genuinely threaten status quo relationships. The identified crisis in each case provides an opportunity for reformist political leadership to effectively challenge fundamental institutional questions for each state.

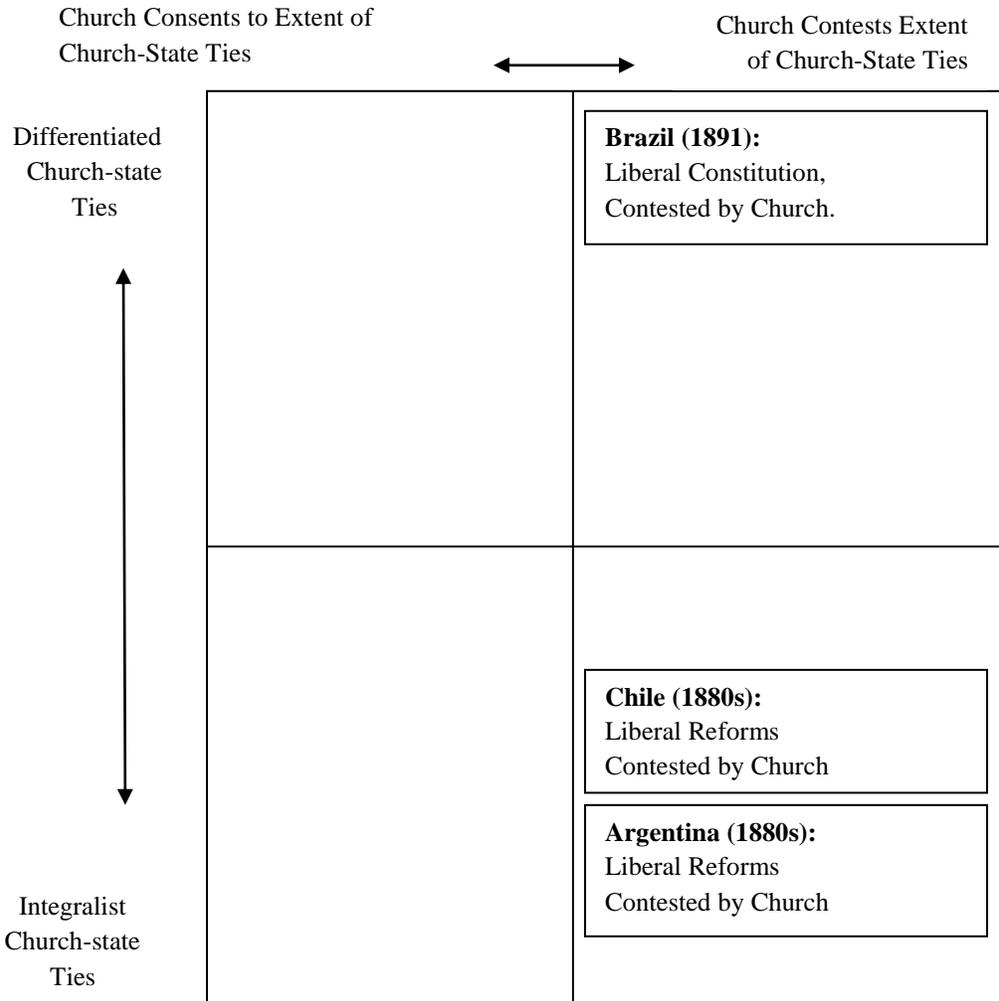
Major crises arose in Argentina, Chile and Brazil during the 1920s through the 1930s. During this period all three countries grappled with major shifts in the political mobilization of the working class (Collier and Collier 1991), episodes of large-scale social violence, and contestation or breakdown of the constitutional order, each of which were major issues in which the Church had a long-standing normative and political interest. During these tumultuous periods, competing political factions within the Church and among secular political figures (which coalesced around identifiable ideological

---

<sup>35</sup> Collier and Collier refer to this stage as the “cleavage” or crisis (1991, 30).

tendencies) adopted different positions with respect to the proper institutional relationship between Church and state.

**Figure 4.2 Church-state Ties and Antecedent Conditions**



Finally, the critical juncture itself is identified and described. The critical juncture is a discrete and relatively brief period of time during which status quo relations between

church and state might be rearranged with lasting effect.<sup>36</sup> During a critical juncture, choices are made about the institutions linking Church and state. These choices reaffirm, sever or reestablish Church-state ties. These choices are made by key figures with the power to redesign state institutions; and, in all three cases considered here, these figures seek input from key players in the Church.

A shift in Church thinking about the ideal institutional relationship between Church and state occurred during this period as well. After 1917, many Church leaders were more receptive to renegotiations of Church state ties. In the 1910s, several other nominally Catholic countries underwent intense periods of conflict involving the issue. Many of these conflicts produced forms of church disestablishment in which the Church lost all privileges previously held while still being heavily controlled by the state. Examples of such “separations” included those in France (1905), Portugal (1911), and Mexico (1917) (Smith 1982, 75-6). Then, in 1922 Pius XI was elected pope and began actively pursuing negotiations with numerous governments to update institutions and protect the interest and status of the Church (Coppa 2008, 102-3). Pope Pius XI’s papacy was much more willing to accept church-state separation schemes so long as they prevented internal church conflict and burdensome restrictions imposed on the church by the state (Smith 1982, 76).

In all three cases, a major social or political crisis related to the rise of middle and working class political participation gave way to a critical juncture. Entire systems of government were literally rewritten in new constitutions in Chile (1925) and Brazil (1934

---

<sup>36</sup>Collier and Collier use the term “mechanism of production” referring to the initial choice affecting an institution. Mechanisms of production are distinct from mechanisms of *reproduction*, which are institutions that stabilize the long term trajectory of the initial choice made in the mechanism of production. Mechanisms of reproduction will be discussed in the next chapter (See Collier and Collier 1991, 30-1).

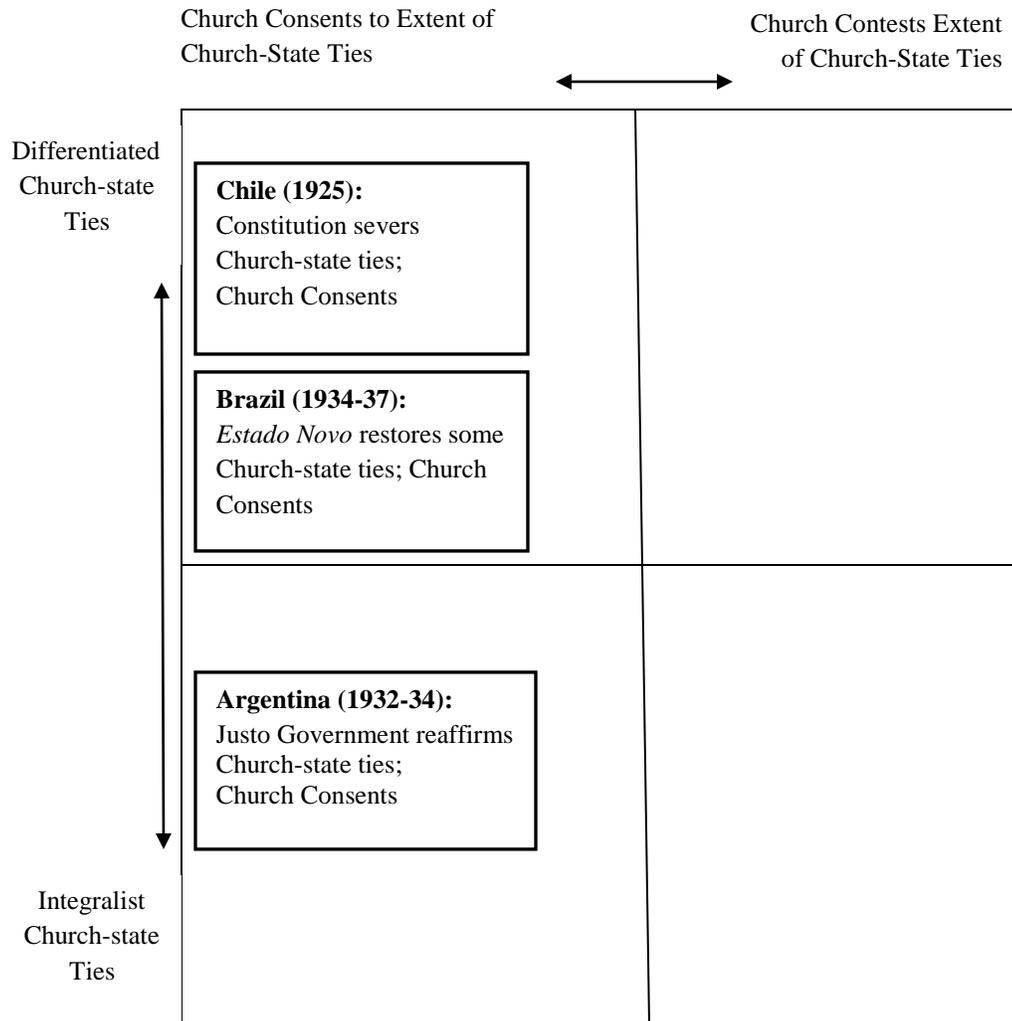
and 1937), and the constitutional order challenged in Argentina (1930). By this period (1920s-1930s), Church-state ties were not the most high-profile issues of the day. However, major decisions were made in all three cases that solidified the particular institutional relationships between Church and state as each polity experienced broader changes. In all three cases this was due largely to two factors: the Church's increased political leverage as it sought alternative forms of social influence and political calculations made by state actors about including or excluding the Church and its allies in a political coalition.

In Chile, a political crisis sharply dividing Liberals and Conservatives produced a critical juncture in the Constitution of 1925 that severed Church-state ties with the consent of the Church. In Argentina, a socio-political crisis culminating in the 1930 military coup produced a critical juncture during the first two years of the Justo government (1932-34). During this critical juncture, existing dense, consensual Church-state ties were strengthened in ways that benefitted the Church significantly. In Brazil, the political crisis that unraveled the Old Republic produced a critical juncture in the 1937 creation of the *Estado Novo* and the consensual reestablishment of moderate Church-state ties. Critical junctures as functions of integral versus separate ties and consensual versus conflictual Church sociopolitical response to those ties are summarized in Figure 4.3. Figure 4.4 summarizes the general sequence of these changes with respect to the stages of path dependence.

The lasting effect of each critical juncture is produced by specific mechanisms of reproduction, the recurring institutional and noninstitutional dynamics that reinforce the original choice made during the critical juncture. These mechanisms and the stances on

state-sanctioned human rights abuses they facilitated will be the subject of the next chapter.

**Figure 4.3 Church-state Ties and Critical Junctures**



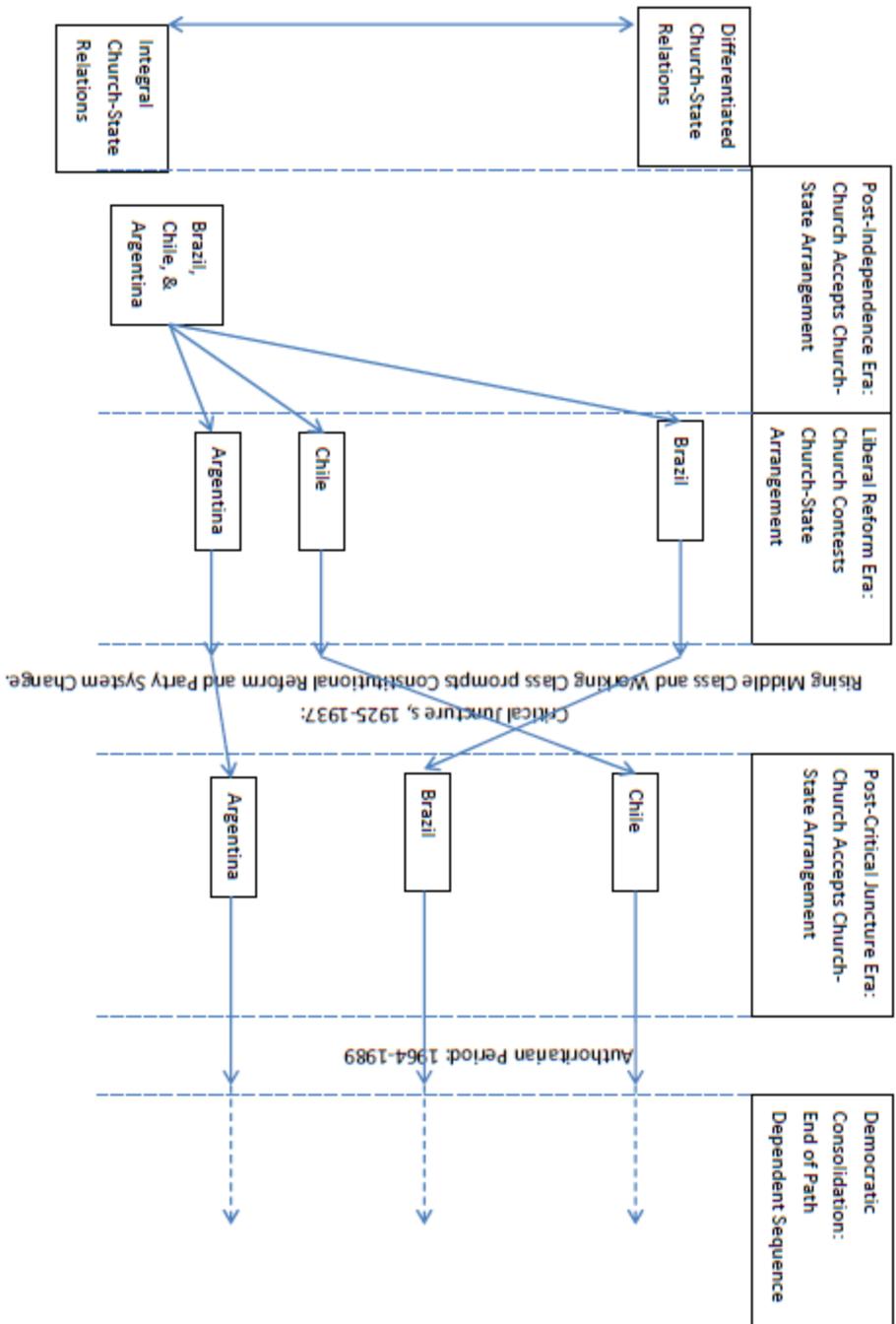


Figure 4.4: Church-State Trajectories in Argentina, Brazil and Chile

## **Chile**

Through the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Church and state in Chile were bound together through a dense network of Church-state ties and Church-state relations were largely congenial and collaborative. During the second half of that century, politically ascendant liberals promoted reforms eliminating many Church privileges. By the 1880s, Church-state ties and broader Church-state relations were eroding in the face of intense politicization. Many Church-state ties remained, but their future was much less certain and Church-state relations were often strained. The Church responded to this situation through the pursuit of a larger presence in civil society. By the 1920s, Catholic leaders began to voice concern about the politicization of Church activity and secular politicians associated with liberal and radical parties returned to calls for disestablishment. In 1925, in the midst of a tumultuous period of liberal rule, a new constitution was written and Church and state were disestablished through a process that included negotiation with the Vatican and Chilean bishops. By 1930, Church and state in Chile were bound by minimal institutional ties.

### *Antecedent Conditions*

Chile won independence from Spain in 1817. After independence, church-state relations remained largely as they had been during the colonial period. Church and state were substantially intertwined institutions. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was the preference of most bishops as well as the Vatican to retain an integral relationship with the state because it guaranteed the Church special social status, formal authority over the private lives of citizens and privileges all granted by the state. An integral relationship was also the preference of many conservative state actors who could rely on support from the Catholic episcopacy that came from the same elite social network. In exchange, the state

retained significant authority over church inner-workings, including clerical appointments, clerical pay and some forms of official communication with the Vatican. Due to the Church's specific authority in discrete areas of Chilean social life and the state's oversight of internal Church affairs, the Chilean Church often resembled a component of the state's bureaucracy.

Within this framework, the specifics of close church-state relations fluctuated in the post-independence period and through the civil wars of the 1820s. However, a dense network of church-state ties was institutionalized in the Constitution of 1833. After the constitution's implementation, Catholicism became the official religion of the country and the public exercise of other religions was prohibited. The oath of office for the presidency included swearing to observe and protect the Catholic religion. In turn, the Chilean president played a key role in church-state affairs. The president was responsible for nominating all archbishops, bishops and various other special positions within the Chilean Catholic hierarchy. Nominees were selected from a list of three candidates prepared by the Council of State (a small body of presidential advisors chosen by the President and the Chilean Congress) and nominations were subject to approval by the Senate.<sup>37</sup> In addition, the President and Council of State oversaw all patronage decisions, held the right to refuse decrees, councils or papal bulls sent from the Vatican and maintained diplomatic relations with the Vatican, including the negotiation of concordats.<sup>38</sup> In addition, the state paid the salaries of all bishops and priests and

---

<sup>37</sup> The constitution mandated the inclusion of certain representatives within the Council of State. In addition to representation of Cabinet Ministers, Generals, the Treasury, etc., one member of the Council was to be chosen from the appointed members of the Chilean Catholic episcopacy (Chilean Constitution of 1833, Art.102).

<sup>38</sup>Constitution of 1833 Chapter III; Chapter VIII, Art.59-83, 102, 104; See also Mecham (1966, 206).

controlled any internal organizational changes such as expanding the number of dioceses to accommodate demographic changes. The Chilean Congress held ultimate authority over these matters (Smith 1982, 73, fn 20).

In exchange for surrendering an enormous amount of its autonomy to the state, the Church became an important repository of information and gained formally recognized authority over significant moments in the private lives of Chileans. Through baptism, the Church maintained the only civil registry, recording of the birth and known lineage of children. The Church ran its own schools in an era prior to the emergence of widespread public education, and it retained exclusive authority to administer the institution of marriage. Prior to 1853, the state administered all tithing on behalf of the Church. After 1853, tithing was replaced with appropriations channeled directly from the state treasury. In addition, the Church administered all cemeteries, which included the right to refuse burial. Consequently, even though 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Chile is sometimes noted for its lack of practicing Catholics, average Chileans were beholden to the Church for basic services (education, burial of family members) and legitimation of family units (marriage, baptism/civil registry) (Mecham 1966, 201-207).

Some privileges benefited the Church more than others. Most notably, the constitutional restrictions barring the practice of competing faiths often were unenforced or circumvented. The prohibition of non-catholic religious practices was typically understood not to apply to religious activity conducted indoors. Thus, British investors and managers working in the budding nitrate industry were able to establish Anglican enclaves and non-Catholic missionaries began arriving in Chile as early as the 1830s (Mecham 1966, 207).

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, power shifted from Conservatives to the Liberal party. The affinity between the Chilean episcopacy and oligarchy that once fostered the creation of dense church-state ties now led to the politicization of Church privileges. Liberal ideology criticized close church-state relationships and liberal platforms typically sought measures to sever church-state ties. Legislation passed by the Chilean Congress began to roll back some Church privileges. First, toleration of non-Catholic religious activity practiced indoors was established in law in 1865. In addition, Protestant schools were allowed to form and provide instruction in non-catholic religious doctrine (Mecham 1966, 207).

Between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some powerful segments of the Chilean episcopacy responded to the changing political fortunes of the Church's traditional class allies by reevaluating how the Church might best continue to exert social influence. Many Chilean bishops experienced two fundamental socio-political reorientations. The first reorientation involved calls for increased autonomy from the state. The second reorientation involved calls for increased Church presence in Chilean civil society.

During the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century some bishops began to identify some types of church-state ties as conditions that restrained or prevented necessary Church activity. The most influential and outspoken of these bishops was Rafael Valdivieso, Archbishop of Santiago for an impressive 30-year tenure (1847-1878). Valdivieso and other like-minded bishops sought to protect and expand the Church's state-provided privileges, while decreasing state involvement in internal Church affairs. The archbishop often issued

public calls for the dissolution of the latter form of Church-state ties, though these calls for reform were generally unsuccessful (Scully 1992, 33-4).

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the episcopacy at large experimented with efforts to forge deeper connections to Chilean society. This reorientation was encouraged by *Rerum Novarum*, the first major social encyclical issued by the Vatican in the modern era. Promulgated by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 this statement criticized what the Vatican viewed as the excesses of both socialism and capitalism. *Rerum Novarum* also recognized the legitimate right of labor to organize collectively, but cautioned that the goal of such organization must be the pursuit of social harmony rather than class antagonism. Thus, the Chilean episcopacy sought connection to society through the construction of various Catholic worker organizations as the 19<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close. After the turn of the century, these were replaced by Catholic trade unions. By the early 1920s, earlier efforts evolved into the forerunners of Chilean Catholic Action and included Catholic women's and student groups (Landsberger 1970, 78-9; Adriance 1992, 53).

Despite these two efforts to increase the Church's influence in Chilean society, Church privileges remained frequent targets of attack, some of which were successful. In 1883 and 1884, President Santa Maria and Minister of the Interior Jose Manuel Balmaceda encouraged the Chilean congress to adopt a series of reforms wresting power from the Church. Congress was dominated by a coalition composed of the Liberal, Radical and Nationalist Parties. All three parties in the coalition were anti-clerical and the reforms passed. First, the civil authority replaced exclusive Church control of cemeteries (in 1883), marriage (in January, 1884) and the state began maintaining its own civil

registry (in July, 1884). From the mid-1880s through the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the vocally anti-clerical Radical Party led a series of legislative efforts in congress to end all legal prohibitions of non-Catholic religions and formally sever all Church-state ties. These efforts were narrowly defeated (Mecham 1966, 213-6).

The wave of 1880s reforms subsided after 1884, and Church-state relations entered a 35-year period during which the Church routinely sought the restoration of its privileges via alliance with the pro-clerical Conservative Party (Blakemore 1993, 58; Loveman 1988, 207). However, the mere absence of additional major reforms should not imply the existence of a stable Church-state relationship. The 1880s do not constitute a critical juncture in Church-state relations because this shift in differentiation produced sustained conflict rather than consensual reform. This first wave of liberal anti-clerical reforms typified antecedent conditions in Church-state relations because the level of church-state differentiation remained a politicized issue and thus subject to dynamics and outcomes of post-1880s political struggle. The influence of the pro-clerical Conservative Party waxed and waned as the party joined various coalitions with nationalist parties and segments of the ideologically amorphous Liberal Party (Blakemore 1993, 58). The potential for future revision prevented the 1880s reforms from founding an established relationship.

#### *Crisis: Liberal-Conservative Clashes and the 1924 Coup*

The opportunity for drastic change arose in 1920 as Arturo Alessandri ascended to the presidency. Alessandri's electoral success came on the heels of just over two decades of social turmoil involving increasingly militant labor unrest, major conflict between executive and legislative branches of government and partisan-legislative paralysis.

Between 1895 and 1920, Chile's population increased from just fewer than 2.7 million to over 3.7 million inhabitants (Blakemore 1993, 59). This leap was accompanied by accelerating urbanization, rapid growth of the working class and increasing calls for social reforms. Meanwhile, Chile's voting franchise remained highly restricted and the party system proved resistant to pressure in this area (Blakemore 1993, 58-9). These political struggles unfolded in the midst of tremendous volatility in the nitrate market, an export sector which formed the centerpiece of the Chilean economy by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

With the nitrate sector deeply embedded in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Chilean economy, shocks to nitrate export revenue filtered through virtually all of Chilean society. With each crash of the nitrate market, thousands of workers lost their jobs and homes and began to migrate south in search of work (Blakemore 1993, 69). Meanwhile, with each crash imports fell and state revenue and spending declined (Stanton 1997, 3). This cycle proved relentless as the nitrate market experienced major periods of decline during the periods 1896-98, 1907, 1909, 1914-15, 1919-20, and 1922 (Loveman 1988, 203). Between 1919 and 1920, exports fell by 66 percent, recovered and then fell again by 50 percent the following year (Collier and Sater 2004, 202).

To economic instability was added expanding labor organization and militancy, with dramatic events unfolding in the years just prior to the 1920 election. The frequency and magnitude of major strikes increased from 16 strikes involving 18,523 workers in 1916 to 105 strikes involving 50,439 workers in 1920 (Loveman 1988, 203). Repressive responses on the part of the government often followed. During a strike in Puerto Natales in February 1919, fighting between workers and soldiers killed 15 people and seriously

injured another 28. In September of 1919 a general strike was called in Santiago and by November 50,000 workers in that city joined a massive demonstration (Blakemore 1993, 69)

Recurring economic and labor crisis caused a heightened sense in many sectors that Chile's basic institutions were incapable of adequately addressing the problem (Stanton 1997, 3).<sup>39</sup> In Chile's parliamentary system, 60 ministries were formed between 1891 and 1915 (Blakemore 1993, 68).<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, after 1915 opposing coalitions unable to compromise on any significant legislation dominated each house of Chile's legislature, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

Alessandri's electoral victory came from a campaign employing vitriolic rhetoric promising major social reforms and confrontation with the opposition. During the campaign, Alessandri successfully assembled the Liberal Alliance coalition, which drew support from the middle class Radical Party, the Democratic Party and some progressive members of the Liberal Party. Conservatives joined mainline Liberal Party members in support of an opposition candidate, but Alessandri narrowly won the election (Blakemore 1993, 71).

While economic, institutional and labor reforms took center stage, Alessandri's platform also included calls for complete separation of Church and state. However, additional circumstances helped bring the Church-state question to a head. First, some of the most prominent church leaders were uncomfortable with clerical involvement in

---

<sup>39</sup> In their seminal work, Collier and Collier (1991) argue that the same political crisis gave rise to the critical juncture that then shaped the incorporation of the working class into Chilean politics.

<sup>40</sup> During Alessandri's first administration, 16 cabinets were formed and fell in a period of only 4 years (Blakemore 1993, 73)

politics. Archbishop of Santiago Crescente Errázuriz wrote a pastoral letter in 1922, “strictly forbidding priests from participating in political rallies, meetings, and banquets, and from acting as agents or representatives of parties” (Smith 1982, 73).

Second, other nominally Catholic countries were undergoing intense periods of conflict as Church-state separation continued to spread across the globe. Many of these conflicts produced forms of church disestablishment in which the Church lost all privileges previously held while still being heavily controlled by the state. Examples of such “separations” included those in France (1905), Portugal (1911), and Mexico (1917) (Smith 1982, 75-6).

Third, Pope Pius XI was elected pope in 1922. Pope Pius XI’s papacy was much more accepting of church-state separation schemes so long as they prevented internal church conflict and burdensome restrictions imposed on the church by the state. Pius XI’s papacy would become known for responding to dictatorships in Portugal, Italy and Germany with diplomacy and signing concordats that disestablished Church and state (Smith 1982, 76).

Alessandri took office in May of 1920 and began the pursuit of his reform program. On June 1, 1923, Alessandri delivered a speech to congress calling for the dissolution of church-state ties, arguing that a politicized Church served the interests of no one, including the Church. However, all aspects of Alessandri’s reform effort met legislative deadlock. The Liberal Alliance that made possible Alessandri’s election did not control a majority in the Chilean Congress. Conservatives blocked all Liberal-proposed reforms to the extent that no significant legislation was passed between 1920 and 1924. After a new round of congressional elections in 1924, the Liberal Alliance

won a majority, but divisions within the coalition continued to prevent any meaningful legislative progress (Collier and Collier 1991, 176).

By September 1924 the military began to show signs that it planned to intervene. Anticipating such action, Alessandri invited the military to present Congress with a list of demands. Within two days, led by Majors Carlos Ibáñez and Marmaduke Grove, the military offered a list of reforms that included the provision of a legal basis for unionization and various forms of social assistance. Under pressure, Chile's congress passed the measures quickly, but when the military failed to dissolve the junta that served as the military's political leadership, Alessandri resigned and left the country. In short order, a conservative faction of the military took control of the state in a military coup and the military closed the Congress (Collier and Collier 1991, 177).

*Critical Juncture: The Catholic Church and the Constitution of 1925*

During Alessandri's time abroad, the deposed president began negotiations with the Vatican, including a visit to Rome, in an effort to achieve amicable separation of Church and state. Negotiations took place mainly between Alessandri, Pope Pius XI, the Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Gasparri and the Archbishop of Santiago Mgr. Crescente Errázuriz. These negotiations produced a successful dialog and both sides saw advantages in avoiding protracted conflict over the issue as had occurred in the midst of disestablishment in France, Mexico and elsewhere (Smith 1982, 75-6). For Alessandri, amicable Church-state separation laid out in a new constitution would remove an issue from the political arena that the Conservative Party was able to use to galvanize voters. Consequently, Alessandri could focus electoral politics on his social agenda, through which he believed he had a strong advantage over Conservatives (Smith 1982, 72-3). For

the Chilean Church, separation could free the institution from a number of burdens such as the *patronato* and legislative control over the creation of new dioceses. The Church's main goal was to avoid terms of separation that restricted Church freedoms or stripped it of its assets as had occurred in Mexico after the revolution (Smith 1982, 76). When a compromise was reached that allowed the Church to retain its property, schools and financial support from the state over a brief transitional period, Church representatives believed disestablishment to be in the Church's best interest (Mecham 1966, 219).

Alessandri's brief exile ended when a second military coup occurred in January of 1925. This coup, led by Ibáñez and Grove, overthrew the first military junta and recalled Alessandri to complete his presidential term. However, congress was not reconvened and Alessandri, now with military support, proceeded with large-scale sociopolitical reforms backed by Ibáñez and the military. In addition to social reforms, the military also supported Alessandri's efforts to write a new constitution for Chile (Collier and Collier 1991, 177). This profound moment of institutional redesign created an opportunity to codify in Chilean law the terms of disestablishment that Alessandri had negotiated in Rome.

The process of writing the new constitution was completed in June of 1925 and Archbishop Errázuriz personally oversaw the drafting of all portions pertaining to religion and the Church (Smith 1982, 77). The Vatican approved of the final document and, via the papal nuncio, Chile's bishops were instructed to support it. Though some bishops had previously spoken out against church-state separation and many more were hesitant about the reforms (Klaiber 1998, 44), following the pope's instructions, the bishops did not offer any strong opposition to the constitution when it was offered as a

plebiscite to the nation's voters in September 1925. The Conservative Party abstained from the plebiscite in opposition to Church-state separation (Blakemore 1993, 78). However, after ratification the bishops issued a pastoral letter accepting the decision and the new constitutional order. The letter struck a conciliatory tone recognizing the increased freedom the new set of institutions would provide for the Church (Smith 1982, 73-4).

When the new constitution was promulgated on September 18, 1925, church and state were separated and nearly all church-state ties were severed. The constitution disestablished church and state, no longer recognizing Catholicism as the official state religion. Old forms of state involvement in internal church affairs were also eliminated. The *patronato* ended, thereby excluding the state from the process of selecting and installing Church leadership and the Church alone now made decisions about the creation of new dioceses.

State funding for Church activity ended, with a few significant exceptions. For five years, state funding of church activity would continue as the Church underwent a transitional period. After 1930, all preferential financial ties between church and state were severed as well. However, the language of the 1925 constitution only banned state payment of clerical salaries and funding for the maintenance of church property. Later, the specifics of this prohibition would allow the return of heavy state subsidization of Catholic education in the 1950s.

Finally, freedom of religion was guaranteed. However, the Catholic Church was granted juridical personality while other organized faiths were not. No other special distinctions were given to the Church. All organized faiths were given tax-exempt status

on assets used exclusively for the promotion of faith. The Church was given no role in public education and all organized faiths were given the right to establish their own schools (Mecham 1966, 221).

Two key features of Chile's disestablishment stand out. First, the process was relatively amicable. Alessandri negotiated the change directly with the pope, and an influential archbishop was given a meaningful oversight role as relevant portions of the new constitution were drafted. Segments of the Church had long viewed some Church-state ties as contrary to Church interests, and Catholic leaders who disagreed with disestablishment were urged by the pope himself to accept the new institutional arrangement. Second, the 1925 Constitution succeeded in thoroughly separating the two institutions. No longer would the Church depend on the state for financial support, nor would the state play a role in the Church's internal affairs. In the decades to come, this new institutional relationship would help to create an autonomous Church, which sought to defend its interests and advance its mission through both private channels and increasingly public political activity.

### **Argentina**

From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Catholic Church and the state in Argentina were bound together by a dense network of church-state ties. However, Church-state ties gave the state the upper hand in this institutional relationship and the Church spent the better part of 200 years in a subordinate position in its relationship with the state. Thus, while Church leaders were not always satisfied with the specifics of the relationship, instances of major Church-led confrontation with the state were rare in 20<sup>th</sup> century Argentina. Elsewhere in Latin

America during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, modernizing forces within the international Church, dissatisfaction with state interference in internal Church affairs, and ascendant liberal or radical parties led to disestablishment of Church and state. When Church and state passed through such a period in Argentina during the first period of Radical Party governance (1916-1930), the major institutional tenets of this intertwined historical relationship went largely unchallenged. Then, in the wake of the 1930 military coup, a critical juncture in Argentine Church-state relations occurred in which the Justo government (1932-1938) reaffirmed Church-state ties and strengthened the ideological affinity between conservative forces in both institutions.

#### *Antecedent Conditions*

Argentina won independence from Spain in 1810 and from the beginning, Church subordination to the state was a cornerstone of Argentine Church-state relations. First, during the chaos of the civil wars of the 1820s, communication with the Vatican became extremely difficult. Bishopric vacancies went unfilled, including Buenos Aires' diocese. In the meantime, the state assumed authority over the Church, imposing secular authority over monastic orders (Mecham 1966, 226-7). With the return to a semblance of order in the 1830s, Pope Gregory XVI was allowed to appoint a bishop to the Buenos Aires diocese, but his choice, Mariano Medrano, was required to swear an oath to obey all laws of the state. In subsequent decades, state involvement in Church appointments and organizational activity allowed the dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas (1835-52) to effectively control the Church and use it as a propaganda machine for his government (Rock 1993a, 19; Mecham 1966, 232-3).

Rosas was overthrown in 1852 by General Justo José de Urquiza, and representatives from provincial areas were assembled to write a new constitution (Skidmore and Smith 2001, 70; Mecham 1966, 233). Promulgated in 1853, this constitution articulated a set of Church-state ties that perpetuated the Church's dependent and subordinate position to the state. Religious freedom was guaranteed to individuals but otherwise a dense network of ties linking Church and state was established. Key clauses included that, "The Federal Government supports the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion" and that Congress was empowered to promote conversion among indigenous peoples and to reject concordats with the Vatican (Mecham 1966, 234). The president was required to be Roman Catholic and was empowered to nominate bishops from a list of three candidates submitted by the Senate and accept or refuse statements, councils, bulls or instructions issued by the Vatican, and conclude and sign any agreements with the Vatican. State support for the Church included significant financial contributions from the state treasury to its religious activities (Mecham 1966, 234-5).

State authority over internal church affairs ensured that the dependent and subordinate position of the Church persisted even as the Church enjoyed numerous privileges. The Church wielded little independent political power, but as long as the traditional oligarchy retained control of the state, Church interests and authority in the social sphere were protected.

During the 1880s, changes in the Argentine economy resulting in liberal challenges to the traditional oligarchy's power structure arose to threaten the status quo Church-state arrangement. This was the period of liberal ascendance in Argentina. Parties allied with liberals made substantial inroads in the Argentine Congress, sponsoring and

passing several reforms stripping the Church of several privileges. These reforms included:

- Ecclesiastical tribunals were made subordinate to civil courts, subjecting clergy to civil law for the first time since the 1820s (1881).
- Parochial registration of births, marriages and deaths were replaced with a state civil registry (1884).
- Civil marriages and secular cemeteries replaced final Church authority in these matters (1888).
- Educational Reform Law 1420, created a national administrative structure for primary education and mandated that primary schooling be tuition free, lay and obligatory. After its implementation, there was no clerical religious education in public schools until 1943 (1884) (Burdick 1995, 23-5).

These reforms, especially the education reform, were vigorously opposed by the Church, which formed alliances with conservative political forces. Nonetheless, efforts to prevent reform failed. From the 1880s to the 1920s the Church actively sought to roll back these reforms. As in the Chilean case, politicized Church-state relations remained a common feature of Argentine political competition. Potential for future revision of this relationship prevented the 1880s reforms from founding an established, accepted relationship.

During this period, the Argentine Church was presented with a unique opportunity to claim a new source of influence over Argentine society. From the 1870s through the 1920s, a massive wave of immigration brought workers to Argentina from southern Europe. When they arrived, they found harsh working conditions in urban areas and significant hurdles to owning land in rural areas. As social problems multiplied, the

Church began playing a major role in serving immigrants through the creation of institutions like mutual aid societies and Catholic labor unions. Much of the ideological impetus behind these moves was to produce “class conciliation” by addressing the immediate material concerns of the poor and bringing workers and management together. One strategy for accomplishing this goal was the creation of Catholic Workers’ Circles, which, despite the name, brought together workers and management for dialogue (Deutsch 1993, 37). Later, additional efforts to extend the Church's reach into civil society included the creation of Catholic Action Argentina (ACA) in 1928.<sup>41</sup> The result of the Church’s new role, according to Burdick, was two-fold. First, through the social welfare programs and organizational efforts the Church regained some social and political status eroded by the anti-clerical reforms of the 1880s. Second, the Church became an active and willing participant in the acculturation of immigrants (Burdick 1995, 17). Thus, the Church regained some political and social power while helping to construct a perception of common, nationalist, Argentine values.

Thus, the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a period in which the Church lost privileges, but gained some socio-political influence by deepening connections to immigrant and working-class populations. However, church-state ties largely remained intact, and the Church maintained closer political ties with the Conservatives, the one party perceived to be ideologically predisposed to restore Church privileges.

However, the political relevance of the Conservatives soon entered a period of decline, once again calling into question the future of Church-state ties. During the first

---

<sup>41</sup> At its peak in 1945, ACA counted over 66,000 members (Gill 1998, 154-6).

decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, political agitation among many of Argentina's working-class sectors grew and middle-class parties saw workers as a potentially important source of support. Partially a result of these dynamics, universal male suffrage was granted in Argentina in 1912 over the objections of many in the traditional oligarchy (Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992, 178, 198). Ill-equipped to rapidly adjust to this massive change, the oligarchy's Conservative Party lost any remaining assurance of electoral dominance for at least the next two decades. Meanwhile, the reforms produced no immediate results for workers as the state continued to aid management during strikes, most notably during a major railroad worker strike in 1912 (Rock 1975, 92).

In 1916, under the banner of the Radical Civic Union (UCR), Hipolito Yrigoyen was elected president, ushering in a period of liberal (or “Radical”) electoral dominance lasting until 1930. On the right, the UCR faced opposition from Conservatives who were still reeling from disorganization in the wake of expanded voting rights. On the left was the Socialist party, which was benefiting from the waves of European immigration and increased labor militancy.

As a result of these developments, the period between 1916 and 1930 was the first serious opportunity to secure separation of Church and state in Argentina since the 1880s. Conservative disorganization would have prevented serious political opposition, Socialists were already calling for such action, and the UCR had inherited the legacy of liberals who had stripped the Church of several privileges during the 1880s. In neighboring Chile, calls for separation of Church and state were being issued as well, and formal disestablishment of Church and state would occur there in 1925. However, Yrigoyen and the UCR sought to attract partisan support from segments of the Argentine

Church rather than antagonizing the entire institution in pursuit of support from some other constituency.

Yrigoyen and his populist wing of the UCR attempted to build a constituency that encompassed parts of the elite, middle and working class segments of the population. Anticlericalism beyond the liberal reforms of the 1880s was not part of the UCR's agenda. Yrigoyen attempted to attract support from within the Church in a variety of ways. In addition to donating his presidential salary to a clerical charity, Yrigoyen frequently employed Catholic imagery in his political rhetoric and his views on class relations sought the 'common good' through class conciliation, much like Catholic social teachings elaborated in *Rerum Novarum*. Some of Yrigoyen's social reform programs were based on pre-existing Church proposals (Rock 1993b, 60-3, Mendez 1985, 227). Yrigoyen also opposed Socialist legislative proposals to legalize divorce (Burdick 1995, 25). Rock observes that from the outset, Yrigoyen's administration was "more markedly clerical than most of their predecessors" and cites an April 1918 article in *La Vanguardia* stating that, "Never has the influence of the Church been greater than at present...The government is pursuing a Christian Democrat policy with the help of the Church, a paternalistic and protective attitude towards the workers, so long as they remain submissive and resigned" (Rock 1975, 96).

For the most part, Church-state issues were not a major national issue during the period of Radical government. Instead, labor militancy and multiple rounds of related retaliatory violence that erupted in the streets of Buenos Aires during the *Semana Trágica* in 1919 came to dominate Yrigoyen's first period in office. Yrigoyen and his faction within the UCR responded to increasingly militant labor unrest by taking populist

positions, increasing government spending dramatically and expanding the bureaucracy to reward supporters with political patronage. Thus, Yrigoyen dramatically increased the national debt in the years before the onset of the worldwide depression. Generally, Yrigoyen navigated this period by attempting to retain the support of the middle class and segments of the elite. One component of this goal included courting the Church by retaining Church-state ties and supporting its interests, at least at the margins, and its preference for continued ties to the state. Faced with comparable pressures and alternatives in Chile, Alessandri did exactly the opposite.

Despite Yrigoyen's overtures, most Church leaders remained suspicious of liberal ideology. It was in this environment, particularly during the 1920s, that Catholic nationalism began to mature as a force in Argentine politics. The Catholic nationalist ideological tendency was born in the Church's service to the immigrant community in decades past and was now articulated and promoted by Catholic intellectuals. Burdick refers to Catholic nationalism as a "religio-political movement," describing it as generally hostile toward liberalism, socialism and democracy (1995, 4). The ideology's foundation was the idea that Catholicism was a basic part of the Argentine national identity and thus Catholicism was an essential component of efforts to counter any actor perceived as stoking social divisions, be they Marxist, liberal or democratic in origin. The ideology lent itself quite well to support for integralist notions of continued Church-state union and governing schemes seeking to rid society of politicized divisions. This ideology became politically powerful as it brought together conservatives, nationalists, the armed forces and other defenders of the status quo within a common and superficially benign framework (Burdick 1995, 29-31).

State-provided Church privileges were not seriously threatened by the Radical Party government. However, the long-term interaction between liberal leaders in control of a state and a Church dominated by conservative forces was a source of persistent friction. Open Church-state conflict occasionally erupted over the operation of Church-state ties rather than threats to the continuance of those ties. The most prominent example was the protracted conflict over the selection of a new archbishop in Buenos Aires. Under the terms of the *patronato* as they existed in the 1920s, the state selected all bishops and archbishops while the Vatican only granted final approval. In 1923, President Marcelo Alvear (successor to Yrigoyen and also a member of the UCR) selected Monsignor Miguel de Andrea to be the new archbishop for the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires. Monsignor de Andrea's selection was of political significance because de Andrea had assumed a major role in the Argentine labor movement as an advocate of labor reform during the *Semana Trágica* in 1919. However, the Vatican refused to recognize de Andrea's selection. Alvear and the Vatican remained at loggerheads and the position remained vacant for three years. The crisis was resolved in 1926 when the government offered an alternative selection and the Vatican accepted (Mendez 1985, 227-8). As the 1920s began to draw to a close, ideological incongruity between leaders in control of the state and the dominant tendency within Argentina's episcopacy made Church-state relations strained and instable in a political arena where these two institutions were tightly bound to one another.

#### *Crisis: Radical Party Mismanagement and the 1930 Coup*

In 1928, a split within the UCR led to the reelection of Yrigoyen as president. During the same year, the Argentine episcopacy founded Argentine Catholic Action and

*Criterion*, a weekly Catholic magazine. While Catholic Action was strictly forbidden from engaging in political activity, by 1930 *Criterion* became an outlet for traditionalist, nationalist Catholic commentary (Mendez 1985, 229-30; Klaiber 1998, 68). In 1930, Yrigoyen was overthrown and replaced by the military government of José Uriburu, who drew on both Catholicism and nationalism to legitimize his seizure of power (Burdick 1995, 28). *Criterion* supported the coup (Klaiber 1998, 68). Ironically, Yrigoyen's Church-state partnership was solidified by the coup that overthrew him.

Uriburu justified the coup in part by publicly berating the Radical Party, blaming it for eroding the "spiritual and social cohesion of the Argentine nation" and emphasizing Catholic values as the basis for national reconciliation (Mendez 1985, 232). Once in power, Uriburu appointed other Catholic nationalist figures to high-ranking positions in his corporatist military government. In subsequent interviews, Uriburu named *Criterion* and *La Nueva República* as two publications that significantly influenced his political evolution. Both periodicals were founded by Catholic intellectuals and both provided forums for the Catholic nationalist movement (Burdick 1995, 30-1).

Despite this, the episcopacy played almost no role in Uriburu's coup and found itself in the difficult position of being praised by a figure who helped end 80 years of constitutional rule in Argentina. In navigating this difficult moment, the episcopacy's response to the Uriburu government was "conciliatory yet unenthusiastic" (Mendez 1985, 232). Specifically, in preparation for elections in 1931, the Argentine bishops published a letter designed to be a voting guide for Argentine Catholics promoting many of the views espoused by Uriburu, though not defending or promoting Uriburu's government,

and advising Catholics not to support any party that advocated church-state separation, a laicized education system or legalized divorce (Mendez 1985, 232).<sup>42</sup>

*Critical Juncture: Strengthening Church-State Ties*

During the turmoil of the 1930s, Argentina's *decada infame* (infamous decade), the Church avoided controversy in service to its calls for national unity and garnered new favors while Catholic nationalists and the nationalist faction of the military forged lasting alliances. In 1932, Uriburu was replaced by General Agustín Justo, a member of the liberal tendency within the military, who won dubious national elections through fraud and military coercion (Burdick 1955, 35). Despite Justo's liberal outlook, to the extent that Catholicism was embedded in prevailing notions of nationalism, support for the Church helped bind together much of the Argentine episcopacy, military and the oligarchy. Consequently, Justo set about providing a number of benefits for the Argentine Church. Most important, in 1933, Justo exercised the *patronato* to double the number of dioceses and bishops in Argentina and elevate six dioceses to the status of archdioceses (Mendez 1985, 235). This was the first diocesan reorganization in 25 years and it dramatically increased the organizational capacity of the Argentine Church (Burdick 1995, 33).<sup>43</sup>

After the new appointments were complete, the episcopal conference's ideological center shifted away from bishops who emphasized action against social problems through, for example, the creation of organizations like Catholic workers' circles. As a result, the influence of Argentina's social Catholicism movement declined. By the end of

---

<sup>42</sup> When Radical Party candidates won a majority in Buenos Aires, the results were annulled.

<sup>43</sup> During this restructuring, Justo deferred to Rome in the selection of new bishops and the delineation of diocesan boundaries (Ivèreigh 1995, 84).

the 1930s, the transformed episcopal conference was more closely tied to organizations like Argentine Catholic Action (ACA), which sought to Catholicize Argentina's existing institutions rather than establish Catholic unions, professional organizations or women's organizations that competed with secular counterparts (Ivereigh 1995, 85-86).<sup>44</sup>

Founded in 1931, ACA fell under the direct authority of the bishops who selected its lay leaders and were responsible for shaping its theological orientation. ACA's lay leaders tended to be middle class professionals and operated as a kind of activist arm of the bishops. By design, this activism tended to be on behalf of the institutional Church rather than of a partisan or syndicalist nature. However, episcopal leaders defined the interests of the institutional Church in ways that entered the partisan arena, such as the 1931 voting guide. From its inception, ACA grew rapidly, with formal membership peaking at 98,000 in 1943 (Burdick 1995, 32-3).

With Church expansion underway, Buenos Aires hosted the International Eucharistic Congress (IEC) in 1934, which was organized through a major collaborative effort between Church leaders, the state and elites.<sup>45</sup> This international gathering brought together 200,000 Catholics, the armed forces, political leaders and the future pope, Pius XII, who visited from Rome. The chief episcopal organizer was Archbishop Santiago Luis Copello, the episcopal head of ACA at the national level (Burdick 1995, 33). However, right-wing intellectuals and major families from Buenos Aires elite circles dominated the main planning committee. In support of the conference, Justo secured

---

<sup>44</sup> Ivereigh (1995, 85) offers Mgr. De Andrea as a chief example of an episcopal leader who worked to foster Catholic Workers' Circles in the 1910s-20s and who later conceded his lost influence in the episcopal conference in the wake of the expansion of the 1930s.

<sup>45</sup> See Mendez (1985) and Klaiber (1998, 69-70).

legislation exempting all ships carrying pilgrims from port taxes, docking fees and inspections; Buenos Aires mansions were used to house foreign delegations; and a national holiday was declared to encourage attendance (Mendez 1985, 233-6). The proceedings were dominated by Catholic integralists who supported Church-state union. Addresses offered by Catholic nationalist intellectuals celebrated Argentina's Catholic and Hispanic heritage while denigrating the excesses of liberalism. Meanwhile, in separate ceremonies the military pledged itself to the Virgin of Luján with 14 generals and 3 admirals in attendance, 7,000 soldiers in uniform received communion on their knees and Justo consecrated the nation to the 'protection of the Blessed Sacrament' (Ivereigh 1995, 80; Klaiber 1998, 69-70; Mendez 1985, 241).

Conciliation with Uriburu, the transition from Catholic worker's circles to the integralist ACA, and Church-state collaborations of 1932-34 were precedent setting moments in the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of Church-state relations in Argentina, with the pattern of Church-state interaction they established remaining largely intact through at least the 1980s.<sup>46</sup> The transformative importance of this decade is noted by many. Summarizing the lasting effect of the 1930s, Klaiber writes, "From that moment on [Catholic nationalism] became the connecting link between generations of the military right up to and including the military regime presided over by General Videla," and "all political leaders in the country---the military, Perón, and even the weak democratic governments that followed Perón---felt obliged to have recourse to the church to legitimate themselves" (1998, 68-69). Similarly, describing the legacy of changes experienced in the 1930s, Ivereigh (1995) observes that the IEC marked the beginning of

---

<sup>46</sup> One brief exception, between 1954-55, is discussed in chapter 5.

a period of accelerating linkage between the Church and the nation. Ivereigh also characterizes the 1930s as a decade in which the Church and the army forged lasting ties, as "the increased presence of the Church was evident in field masses, army chaplains, the blessing of swords issued to graduates of military academies, and the frequent proclamations of loyalty to patron saints. Equally, the presence of the Army in major Church events...became common" (1995, 80).

## **Brazil**

Church-state relations and Church-state ties experienced pendular swings in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Brazil. But by the 1930s, Church-state ties came to rest in an intermediate position with a denser network of institutional ties linking Church and state than existed in Chile, but far sparser Church-state ties than existed in Argentina. Church and state were completely disestablished in Brazil in 1889. This early separation prompted the Church to begin building a presence in civil society. However, beginning in the 1910s, the Brazilian episcopacy devoted serious and sustained effort to establishing close informal relations with each successive government. During Brazil's politically tumultuous 1930s, this two-pronged strategy for increasing the Church's social influence enjoyed considerable success. The Church experienced noteworthy organizational success among the middle class and established a very close relationship with presidential candidate turned modernizing corporatist dictator, Getúlio Vargas. As a result, the Church regained significant state support for its activities in the new constitutions of 1934 and 1937.

### *Antecedent Conditions*

After independence from Portugal, Article 5 of the Brazilian Constitution stated, "the Roman Catholic, apostolic religion will continue to be the religion of the Empire."<sup>47</sup> Church and state remained largely intertwined in Brazil until the late 19th century. During the period between Brazil's independence from Portugal in 1822 and the end of monarchical rule in 1889, the Brazilian state was heavily involved in various internal affairs of the Brazilian Church. The emperor, for example, had authority over Church appointment of bishops and all papal laws and decrees. The emperor also controlled Church finances by collecting tithes and paying clerical salaries. Thus, for the majority of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the relationship between Church and state in Brazil closely resembled that which would persist in Argentina.

However, the 1870s witnessed the rise of the "religious question" in Brazilian politics. In brief, a conflict erupted between the Brazilian Emperor Pedro II, Brazilian Freemasons and elements of the Catholic episcopacy. Papal encyclicals forbidding clerical association with freemasonry were never approved by the Emperor and some segments of the Church became intertwined with freemason associations. In an effort to pull the Brazilian Church in line with the Vatican, some bishops began attempting to discipline clergy too closely tied to the organization. Pedro II intervened and a dispute erupted about who had ultimate authority over religious matters in Brazil. At its height, the controversy provoked hostile denunciations of Catholicism by the Freemasons' national leadership, a letter from Pope Pius IX, and two of the 12 Brazilian bishops sentenced to four-year prison terms with hard labor for impeding the lawful use of executive power. The result was a growing sense among much of the Brazilian clergy and

---

<sup>47</sup>Cited in Bruneau (1982, 15-6).

several bishops that the state's significant authority over the Church was harmful to Church interests (Mecham 1966, 270-4).

In 1889 the Brazilian Empire fell and the provisional government that took its place severed nearly all ties linking Church and state. Such separation was in line with calls from contemporary Republicans, Positivists and Socialists who sought to limit Church influence in Brazilian society. Following Pedro II's heavy intervention in Church affairs, the episcopacy generally accepted the separation. However, the separation included the loss of several important state-provided privileges, to which Church leaders did object (Mecham 1966, 275-6). Taking shape officially with the ratification of the new Constitution in 1891, the Republicans initiated freedom of worship, secularized public education (which removed religion from the curriculum and prohibited the subsidization of religious education), phased-out over a period of one year the state payment of clergy, ended the civil recognition of religious marriages, and disenfranchised priests and all others who had taken a vow of obedience (Bruneau 1986, 16-7).

During the resultant period of strict separation from 1891 to 1930, the church was forced to grow, doing so through its own organizational efforts and with the support of the Vatican. Detached from the state, the Brazilian church was, for the first time, allowed to accept the appointments and decrees of the Church in Rome. As the Brazilian Church underwent a process of "Romanization," it remained oriented toward and influential among the middle and upper classes. Also, a number of new dioceses, seminaries, convents and monasteries were established, adding to the density of the Church as a nationwide network (Bruneau 1982, 17). Meanwhile, during this period hundreds of thousands of mostly urban, middle-class Catholics were organized into lay movements.

Important organizations ranged from the League of Brazilian Catholic Women active during the 1910s to Workers' Circles organized during the 1930s (Mainwaring 1986, 31).

These organizations included a conservative strain, akin to Catholic nationalism in Argentina. Such lay organizations included *Acção Integralista Brasileira* which was founded in 1932. Such organization's found some support among the "Neo-Christendom" faction of the episcopacy which sought "the reconquest of society by an elite corps of Catholics" (Klaiber 1998, 21). Klaiber cites the leadership Leme, Alceu Amoroso Lima, and Hélder Câmara, as playing a crucial role in preventing this faction within the Church from rising to a position of dominance (1998, 21).<sup>48</sup>

Beyond efforts within civil society, the Brazilian episcopacy clung to the political strategy of attempting to establish close informal ties with each successive executive and his administration. Leme was able to establish close relationships with the presidents of the 1920s (Mainwaring 1986, 27).<sup>49</sup> This "neo-Christendom" strategy was pursued from 1916 to at least the mid-1940s under the leadership of Dom Sebastiao Leme, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro.<sup>50</sup>

#### *Crisis: Breakdown of the Old Republic and the "Revolution" of 1930*

Brazil's 1930 presidential election was disastrous. Sitting president Washington Luiz undermined the terms of a bargain reached by regional elites by endorsing a candidate from his home state of São Paulo rather than Minas Gerais. Luiz's preferred candidate won the election, stoking long-simmering divisions among elites in São Paulo,

---

<sup>48</sup> Hélder Câmara was actually an early member of the Integralist movement prior to experiencing a political evolution of his own.

<sup>49</sup> Presidents Epitacio Pessoa (1918-22) and Artur Bernardes (1922-26).

<sup>50</sup> Mainwaring dates the "neo-Christendom" period in Brazil from 1916 to 1955 (1986, 24-42).

Minas Gerais and smaller states (Roett 1978, 36). Meanwhile, Brazil's currency value and coffee exports were thrown into chaos with the onset of the global depression of the 1930s. Regional and economic sector cleavages erupted into major elite conflict, culminating in the military overthrow of President Luiz and the installation of Getúlio Vargas as chief executive during October and November of 1930. Vargas attempted to manage elite conflict by centralizing power in the national government, shifting regulation of coffee production and trade from state governments to the federal government, appointing new state governors and creating a new Ministry of Labor aimed at depoliticizing the growing labor movement (Collier and Collier 2001, 172-3). Between the end of 1930 and 1937, Brazil was thrown into a period of political turmoil which included the promulgation of two new constitutions, the outbreak of regional armed rebellions against Vargas in São Paulo and Pernambuco, the foundation and rapid mass mobilization of the fascist Integralist movement (1932-1935), the ascent and subsequent repression of Brazilian workers under the National Liberation Alliance (ALN) in early 1935, and a brief communist insurrection in November 1935. This period of turmoil, and the communist insurrection in particular, made it possible for Vargas to seize emergency power with the consent of the Congress and begin a period of rule by decree. During this period, Vargas intensified repression, targeting both the Communist Party and the fascist Integralists (Skidmore and Smith 2001, 155-8; Roett 1978, 37-8).

Meanwhile, during the 1930s the Brazilian episcopacy – led by Archbishop Leme – continued its dual sociopolitical strategy of building lay organizations and pursuing close informal relationships with successive governments. Clerical movements of the 1930s included Bible Circles and the Catholic Youth Workers, which were established to

offer alternatives to more progressive trade unions (Mainwaring 1986, 33; Della Cava 1976, 15). In 1932, Leme created the Catholic Electoral League (LEC), which advised Catholics how to vote. Advice typically steered Catholics toward conservative parties and candidates who supported Catholic issues. The LEC's biggest impact came in 1933 when most of the candidates it supported were elected to the Constituent Assembly that drafted a new constitution in 1934 (Mainwaring 1986, 33; Della Cava 1976, 15; Williams 1974).

During this period, Archbishop Leme built a close personal friendship with Vargas and the pair often dined together privately (Levine 1970, 28). Vargas's religious beliefs tended toward agnosticism, but Vargas' and Leme's views aligned on a number of important political issues each found pressing. Both shared a commitment to halting the influence of communism in Brazil; Vargas maintained a strong distaste for Spiritism (arguably the Church's chief religious competitor at the time); and Vargas saw expanding the Church's role in education as an important cost-saving measure (Levine 1998, 36). The mutual benefits of Church-state collaboration were obvious.<sup>51</sup> Leme could offer public support from the Church for Vargas' efforts to stomp out communism while Vargas could provide the Church with a level of access to power it had not enjoyed since disestablishment (Bruneau 1982, 19). Though Brazil's bishops never explicitly declared public support for the Vargas regime, most bishops, clergy and religiously active lay people approved of his government.<sup>52</sup> This was due at least in part to the congruity between corporatist structures Vargas created and Catholic social teaching regarding class conciliation issued by Pope Leo XIII and Pius XI (Mainwaring 1986, 32; Levine

---

<sup>51</sup> For a full discussion in terms of cost-benefit analysis, see Todaro (1976, 454-61).

<sup>52</sup> Asserted by Mainwaring (1986, 32); Documented by Todaro (1971).

1998, 37). Vargas welcomed any legitimacy the Church was able to provide for his regime (Levine 1998, 36). Consequently, the two became political allies, establishing a relationship that would come to serve Church interests remarkably well.<sup>53</sup>

*Critical Juncture: The Catholic Church and the Foundation of the Estado Novo*

The Church's construction of new organizational strength, its close ties to Getúlio Vargas and its influence on the election of candidates to the Constituent Assembly in 1933 were sociopolitical strategies that came to full fruition in the period between 1934 and 1937.

In 1934 the Constituent Assembly produced a constitution with a preface that invoked God and content that restored many of the state-supplied privileges stripped from the Church under the terms of the 1891 disestablishment. After 1934, the Church reentered public politics with the return of substantial state financing for the Church in the pursuit of the 'collective interests' of both, religious education in public schools, subsidization of Catholic schools, the return of voting rights to clergy, the prohibition of divorce and legal recognition of religious marriage (Mainwaring 1986, 33; Bruneau 1982, 19). The Church's public political strategies, typified by the gradual increase of Church clergy and dioceses, investment in lay movements, and finally the LEC, succeeded with the promulgation of the 1934 constitution.

The failed Communist insurrection of 1935 facilitated Vargas' seizure of power and in November 1937, Vargas issued a new constitution giving birth to the *Estado Novo* (New State). Vargas' new regime further centralized power in the hands of the national government, but the 1937 constitution retained the special privileges given to the Church

---

<sup>53</sup> Vargas and his cabinet even participated in the dedication of famous Christ the Redeemer statue overlooking Rio de Janeiro in May 1931 (Serbin 1996, 727).

by the Constituent Assembly three years earlier. By 1938, Vargas outlawed elections, banned all political parties, and began a state-led drive toward modernization. Still, Church access to power was retained through the efforts of Archbishop Leme to maintain close personal ties with Vargas. Thus, while perhaps the public strategy to secure sociopolitical influence for the Church first prompted the return of Church-state ties, Leme's private interactions with Vargas helped secure their institutionalization. Both Bruneau (1982) and Della Cava (1976) explicitly acknowledge the transformational importance this moment held for the future of Church-state relations. Bruneau highlights the enduring impact of this reconfiguration stating, "the significance of these constitutional measures was that religious influence was guaranteed through political power" (1982, 19). Della Cava points to the historically contingent nature of the reconfiguration, stating that its occurrence "owed much to both the 'unique' historical conjuncture of the 1930s as well as to Leme's consummate political skill in acting upon that moment " (1976, 13). Although not a complete return to the pre-republican type of Church-state union, the separation between Church and state had once again become blurred.

Two key features of Brazil's reestablishment of Church-state ties stand out. First, the ties resulting from the 1934 and 1937 constitutions were of an intermediate density. Far more ties linking Church and state -- significant financial support, subsidization of religious education, and informal access to power -- returned to the Brazilian Church than was available to Chile after 1925. Conversely, even after the 1930s the Brazilian Church was not as closely bound to the state as was the Argentine Church. Unlike in Argentina,

the Brazilian Church was not recognized as Brazil's official religion and it retained full control over its internal affairs.

Second, to arrive at this juncture, the Brazilian Church had pursued a two-pronged strategy of gradually building its influence in middle-class civil society (even through the creation of overtly political organizations like the Catholic Electoral League) and attempting to establish lines of private influence with each successive government. As this strategy began to mature, the Brazilian Church was well-positioned to exert influence privately, to a large extent, *because* it had the capacity to exert influence publicly should it choose to do so. The inducements and constraints of this Church-state relationship would profoundly influence the Brazilian episcopacy's political behavior in the decades to come.

### **Critical Junctures in Authoritarian Cases**

Between the 1910s and the 1930s, Chile, Argentina and Brazil designed distinct institutional arrangements with varying levels of Church-state ties. Secular political figures and Church leaders were, of course, influenced by historical contingencies of their day. However, institutional choices were not pre-determined by broad antecedent conditions in part because Church-state issues were at best of secondary importance to the crises that gave rise to calls for reform. In Chile, Alessandri could have excluded pursuit of Church-state disestablishment from reforms focused on more pressing issues of institutional paralysis and economic instability. Instead, he personally negotiated amicable severance of Church state ties while in exile in 1924 and then allowed a major figure in the Chilean episcopacy to oversee the drafting of all Church-state related segments of the 1925 constitution that formalized disestablishment. In Argentina, Justo

could have pursued the severance of Church-state ties as a member of the liberal faction of the military. Given the episcopacy's lukewarm reaction to both Yrigoyen and Uriburu's efforts to attract their support, the political benefits of retaining formal Church-state ties and expanding the Church's privileges were not obvious. In Brazil, near total Church-state separation could have been retained by Vargas in the modernizing, state-centric wake of the "Revolution" of 1930, but both the Constituent Assembly convened in 1933 and Vargas in his 1937 Constitution went to great lengths to re-establish a significant network of Church-state ties. This is likely due in no small measure to the historical contingency of the personal relationship that took shape between Archbishop Leme and Vargas, an agnostic.

Also of note is the relative political clout of the Church in all three cases. All three episcopacies, spurned by the liberal-led rollback of Church privileges, had spent at least two decades pursuing efforts to better permeate society. In Argentina, this included the provision of services for the waves of Southern European immigrants. In Chile, it included the creation of Catholic worker organizations and, later, Catholic trade unions and middle class organizations. In Brazil, middle class Catholic associations began to grow in number and membership during the 1910s. While it is certainly true that all three cases involve different degrees of successful Church presence in civil society, all three Churches entered the critical juncture in the midst of efforts to increase their social influence and organizational capacity irrespective of the future of Church-state ties.

Though in every case there was significant dissent, the most powerful segments of each episcopacy reached different conclusions about the role of Church-state ties in securing social influence and acted accordingly. In Chile, the Church moved to establish

better connections with the working class after the 1880s, but relatively dense Church-state ties remained intact by the early 1920s. However, through negotiation with the Archbishop of Santiago and the pope, the hesitant Chilean bishops were instructed by the Vatican to accept what the pontiff considered favorable terms of Church-state separation in 1925. In Argentina the Church moved to establish connections with immigrant populations and the middle class and increasingly sought to attach itself to Argentine nationalism. This effort could have turned in a progressive direction, akin to Bishop Andrea, that advocated for reform on behalf of working immigrant communities. However, the episcopacy sought to avoid Church-state separation even after a protracted dispute over the *patronato* with the Alvear government and after the neighboring Chilean Church achieved successful separation in 1925. After the critical juncture, as we shall see in the next chapter, bishops like Andrea lost sway to conservative nationalists. In Brazil, after Church-state separation in 1891, Church leaders moved to increase Catholic influence among the middle class and establish informal relationships with successive heads of state. Bruneau (1973), Della Cava (1976), Mainwaring (1986), and Klaiber (1998) all describe the ethos of this activity as the construction of a kind of "Neo-Christendom" that was neither progressive nor particularly democratic. Despite the prevalence of such ideas in the episcopacy and the presence of groups like the Catholic Integralists, under the leadership of Archbishop Leme the episcopacy successfully sought a return to collaborative Church-state ties rather than an Argentina-type, nationalist Church-state union.

Church and state leaders chose different types of Church-state relationships during periods of social and political upheaval between the 1910s and 1930s. New

upending changes were yet to come. During the period between the 1950s and the 1980s, the episcopacies in Chile, Argentina and Brazil all responded to major reform in the international Church, the rise of repressive national security states and, in some cases, competition for adherents from evangelical Protestants. Faced with similar challenges but situated within different types of church-state relationships, each national-level episcopacy would respond to these challenges differently. Episcopal responses were shaped by the legacy of critical junctures that created lasting Church-state relationships in each country. Mechanisms of reproduction, specific institutional inducements and constraints rooted in Church-state ties, which would later structure the Church's response to human rights abuse, are the subject of the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5: Mechanisms of Reproduction in**

### **Argentina, Chile, and Brazil**

From the conclusion of each critical juncture to the eve of political crises that helped provoke military coups, a clearly discernible trajectory of Church-state relations existed in Argentina, Chile and Brazil. The central claim of this chapter is that the consensus on Church-state relations forged by actors during the critical juncture was reinforced during this period by the formal and informal ties linking church and state. These ties functioned as self-reinforcing mechanisms of reproduction that sustained the core attributes of each trajectory in Church-state relations into at least the 1970s. In the chapter that follows, I first discuss the concept of a mechanism of reproduction. I then describe mechanisms of reproduction at work in Chile, during the period from 1925 to the end of the 1960s; Argentina, during the period from 1934 to the early 1970s; and Brazil, from 1934 to the early 1960s. I conclude with a brief comparison of the mechanisms at work in each case. Chapter 6 will describe how these same mechanisms guided the response of each episcopacy during pre-coup crises and post-coup waves of human rights abuse.

#### **Mechanisms of Reproduction in Path Dependence**

Mechanisms of reproduction are the "ongoing political institutions and processes" that perpetuate the "stability of core attributes" created during the critical juncture (Collier and Collier 1991, 31). These stable attributes constitute the legacy of the choices made during the critical juncture. Once in operation, these mechanisms are the key theoretical explanation at work. This is because the mechanisms structure subsequent

events in the absence of the conditions that originally gave rise to the mechanisms themselves (35). The trajectory of Church-state relations in 20<sup>th</sup> century Latin America is sustained by the type of mechanism of reproduction that Mahoney terms "self-reinforcing sequences" (2000, 508-9).<sup>54</sup> Such sequences are "characterized by the formation and reproduction of a given institutional pattern" (508). The logic of self-reinforcing sequences draws on insight from economic notions of increasing returns. In self-reinforcing sequences, mechanisms of reproduction are recurring sets of incentives and disincentives that "lock-in" institutions which then become very difficult to terminate. Once these mechanisms become routinized following the critical juncture, they establish institutions that persist in the long term and these institutions structure events that play out in the short term (512-7). However, in self-reinforcing sequences, increasing returns may arise from non-economic modes of behavior, such as the pursuit of normative returns or power-based returns (517-25).<sup>55</sup>

As these mechanisms of reproduction operate, various other consequential variables may have an impact on the course of events, particularly if they occur in self-reinforcing sequences that are triggered more slowly (Mahoney 2000, 515) or at a moment in time that closely follows the critical juncture (Pierson 2004, 44). However, once routinized the mechanisms of reproduction sustain a set of core attributes which may amplify, mitigate or redirect the impact of new events or social forces. Thus,

---

<sup>54</sup> In contrast, reactive sequences are "chains of temporally ordered and causally connected events" set in motion by a historically contingent event (Mahoney 2000, 509). In reactive sequences, mechanisms of reproduction are the step-by-step cause and effect reactions that connect a historically contingent choice made during a critical juncture and the temporally distant outcome it produces (526-35).

<sup>55</sup> Pierson (2004, 44) describes this process as one in which a moment of multiple equilibria is altered by contingent events during a critical juncture. Then, depending on the timing and sequencing of those events, choices made by actors become embedded in an institution that persists as a single equilibrium. This equilibrium then persists with considerable institutional inertia because various inducements and constraints make change too costly.

understanding the basic mechanisms that sustain a particular type of relationship between two institutions is an essential prerequisite for assessing the impact of constant cause variables. Be they historical constant cause variables that span decades or historically "synchronic," short term constant cause variables, significant institutional differences may systematically alter their impact on a given set of cases (Pierson 2004, 45-6).

In the case of Latin American Church-state relations, the type and extent of Church-state ties in each case operate as self-reinforcing mechanisms of reproduction. The most consequential of these ties are: involvement of the state in the selection of bishops and the creation of dioceses; constitutional guarantees for the Church, such as privileged status, guaranteed subsidization or other material support, and religious requirements for office-holders; official government posts reserved for the Church or direct clerical participation in policy-making (such as education or healthcare); routinized (but not constitutionally-guaranteed) state funding for Church activity; routinized (but not constitutionally-guaranteed) consultation with Church officials in the policy-making process; and state restrictions on the activity of competing religious organizations. In each case, the overall density of Church-state ties grew out of the dissimilar levels of Church-state ties permitted by the outcome of critical junctures described in chapter 4. These ties determined many of the costs and benefits associated with denouncing, defending or ignoring state practices and policies. In addition, the operation of these institutions over the course of several decades affected the ideological center of gravity within each episcopacy as well as each episcopacy's willingness and organizational capacity to denounce state practices it opposed. This occurred because struggles within each episcopacy over the proper relationships between the Church, its religious

adherents, the state, and society in general, were filtered through different configurations of church-state interaction privileging some actors, organizations, strategies, and alliances, and weakening others.

The stable core attributes reinforced by these ties and dominant perspectives within each episcopacy established and maintained the trajectory of Church-state relations in each case. These trajectories are the modal basis of interaction between Church and state, which the Church uses with greatest effect to defend and promote the interests defined by the bishops. Such patterns of interaction may include reliance on personal relationships to influence the state, the routinized political activity of lay organizations or episcopal conferences, and alliances with political parties. These trajectories may also establish whether these interactions tend to play out publicly or privately. These mechanisms of reproduction and the core attributes they sustained shaped the response of each national-level episcopacy to most major political developments during the period between the 1930s and the transitions to democracy that accelerated during the late 1980s, including the waves of human rights abuse during military rule.

### **Self-reinforcing Mechanisms in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil**

The self-reinforcing mechanisms and core attributes evident in Argentina, Chile and Brazil are the levels of state control over the internal affairs of the Church and the level of state support for Church activity. A third mechanism, which is an extension of the first two but capable of producing its own self-reinforcing effect, is the relative influence of conservative and progressive tendencies within each episcopal conference. A

brief description follows of the configuration of those mechanisms, their interrelationships and the set of core attributes they sustained in these three cases.

In Argentina, where substantial levels of Church-state ties were retained during the critical juncture, self-reinforcing mechanisms included high levels of state control over the internal affairs of the Church and high levels of state support for Church activity. These mechanisms sustained a set of core attributes in which the Church attempted to maintain close and noncontentious relationships with successive governments, several of which were military regimes that came to power via the overthrow of civilian governments. From the 1930s through the 1960s, extreme examples of military governments promoting Church privileges came and went. However, Church-state union allowed the state to prevent the appointment of many bishops regarded as ideologically incompatible with each regime. With a quiescent episcopacy, Church-state union made granting privileges or favors to the Church a reliable political tool available to governments that sought to promote nationalist goals or bolster their own nationalist credentials. Conversely, after the 1930s, to seriously attack Church-state union was to attack Argentine nationalism at large.

As a result of these dynamics, the Argentine Church reaped significant social, financial and organizational rewards. These rewards were not typically the result of any confrontational public pronouncements or explicitly partisan political mobilization. Instead, the Church's interests were best promoted when Church leaders defined and articulated the institution's chief political interests in terms of what would benefit the Church as an organization (as opposed to what would benefit segments of its adherents such as the middle class, the poor, workers, etc.) and otherwise remained a voice for

national unity in times of crisis. Thus, Church leaders protected their institution's privileges and influence by protecting its position as a nationalist organization. In this way, advancing Church interests came to rely on conciliation, and at times collaboration, with nationalist forces. Chief among these nationalist forces was the nationalist tendency within the Argentine military, which frequently initiated interventions in Argentine political struggles or civilian government between the 1930s and the 1960s.<sup>56</sup> The Church's symbolically powerful but materially and organizationally dependent position was evident in patterns of frequent nationalist appeals involving Catholicism during periods of social and political upheaval; an increasingly close relationship between powerful segments of the hierarchy and the military; the gradual accumulation of benefits provided by the state to the Church, often by military governments; and the ideologically-contingent nature of the episcopacy's relationship with clergy or laity attempting to organize Catholic political mobilizations beyond the direct control of bishops.

In Chile, where Church-state ties were severed during the critical juncture, self-reinforcing mechanisms included low levels of state control over the internal affairs of the Church and only moderate levels of state support for Church activities. These self-reinforcing mechanisms sustained a set of core attributes in which the Chilean episcopacy was strongly influenced by the Vatican and heavily involved in partisan politics. Church-state separation gave the Vatican a free hand in the appointment of bishops and the Church complete control over its internal affairs and strategic alliances. Free to define its interests as it saw fit, but cut off from guaranteed privileges, access to the policy-making process, or state support, Chilean bishops used shifting, informal alliances with political

---

<sup>56</sup> Public confrontation with the state initiated by the Church only occurred when the entire institution of the Church was threatened by the state during the final 18 months of Perón's regime.

parties to defend and promote their interests in society. These informal alliances formed between the dominant tendency within the episcopacy and the political party that best matched its interests. When the dominant tendency shifted or the electoral viability of the party changed, so too did the alliance. This pattern of interaction began with a strong informal alliance with the Conservative Party after 1925, eventually gaining the Church some state funding for private Catholic schools. Then during the 1950s, Papal Nuncio Sebastiano Baggio and the Vatican used a rapid succession of bishop appointments to bolster the progressive tendency within the Chilean episcopacy. Separation of Church and state allowed this change to be accomplished rapidly because it could occur without state interference or the risk of antagonizing policymakers who might withdraw financial support from Church activities. As the electoral prospects of the Conservative Party declined and the influence of progressive bishops increased, the episcopacy shifted to an informal (and briefly, formal) alliance with the socially progressive Christian Democratic Party (PDC). Once again, the PDC pursued major social reforms supported by the Chilean episcopacy, rewarding the Church for its partisan activity. When the PDC began to falter in the late 1960s, the episcopacy distanced itself from the party. Thus, between 1925 and 1970, lack of state control over the Church heightened the influence of the Vatican, strengthened the position of progressive bishops and encouraged active episcopal conference participation in party politics. The result was that Chile's episcopacy became not only increasingly progressive, but also a full beneficiary of Chilean democracy.

In Brazil, where intermediate Church-state ties were reinstated during the critical juncture, self-reinforcing mechanisms included low levels of state control over the

internal affairs of the Church and high levels of state support for Church activity. Extensive financial ties combined with full autonomy in other respects bound Church and state together more closely than in Chile, but less closely than in Argentina. Substantial Vatican intervention unencumbered by state interference bolstered the progressive tendency in the episcopacy. With this tendency helping to define the Church's interests partially in terms of its social mission, the Church came to rely on state funds to support its own social development programs. This configuration of self-reinforcing mechanisms sustained a set of core attributes that included both generally cordial relationships with successive governments and the forging of ties between the Church and multiple classes, sectors and marginalized groups. In this sense, the Brazilian episcopacy's trajectory mimics parts of the trajectories of both Argentine and Chilean Church-state relations. Subsidies increased state leverage over the Church, but organizational autonomy allowed the Church to define its interests with relative independence. As the grievances of some of the groups with which it had forged ties became politicized during the 1950s, the Church became politicized too. Reformists in the Church partnered with like-minded political figures. Unlike the Chilean episcopacy's partisan alliances, cooperation with successive governments on the provision of social services continued for decades through private negotiation and lobbying. But, whereas the Argentine episcopacy cooperated with multiple seizures of power by the military, the Brazilian Church collaborated on the creation or extension of social services with a series of conservative (e.g. Dutra), reformist (e.g. Kubitschek) and populist (e.g. Goulart) governments. The result was a divided episcopacy with conflicting interests. One set of interests included providing assistance to groups subject to repression after the 1964 coup, while the other needed to

retain a publicly congenial relationship with the state that permitted and funded the Church's social missions in the first place.

In the section that follows, these self-reinforcing mechanisms and the core attributes they created and sustained are described in greater detail.

## **Argentina**

Argentina's antecedent conditions and critical juncture (described in chapter 4) set up three self-reinforcing mechanisms in that country's Church-state relations. During the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Church and state became closely bound by a dense network of institutional ties first laid out in the constitution of 1853. These ties were challenged and, in some instances, rolled back in subsequent decades. Then, during the critical juncture (the first years of the Justo government, 1932-1934), ties were increased and solidified by a military government after an extended period of uncertainty for the Church. This period of uncertainty included an extended period of liberal party governance, the appearance of an electorally competitive socialist party, and a military coup that employed substantial pro-Church rhetoric.

These strengthened ties established two self-reinforcing mechanisms: high levels of state control over the internal affairs of the Church and high levels of state support for Church activities. Both mechanisms afforded successive nationalist governments with leverage over the Church's socio-political role in Argentine society. In addition to these ties, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Church played a significant role in fostering cultural assimilation among waves of southern European immigrants. This work helped revive the association between Argentina's Catholic Church and Argentine nationalism. In the midst of the critical juncture, this association solidified a third self-reinforcing mechanism: the

sustained influence of bishops who subscribed to a conservative political theology involving Catholic nationalism. This tendency within the episcopal conference was a particular strain of Argentine nationalist thought which conflated Catholic values with "Argentine values," used the prophetic voice of the Church to call for conciliation, stability, and national unity in moments of crisis (rather than reform), and sought to protect and advance the privileges afforded the Church by the state.<sup>57</sup>

These mechanisms produced enduring dynamics because Catholic nationalism and the dense network of official Church-state ties interacted, reinforcing each other. The association between nationalism and the Church made the provision of new benefits or privileges to the Church a potent nationalist gesture available to political figures who were not otherwise anticlerical. Conversely, constitutionally mandated state support for Catholicism provided the Church with subsidies for basic operations and privileges that bolstered its social influence so long as the institution remained in good standing with nationalist social forces such as the military. Furthermore, the state held veto power over the appointment of new bishops and the creation of new dioceses. Meanwhile, avowedly nationalist bishops were best able to secure the expansion of Church privileges, inflating such bishops' influence within the Argentine episcopacy. This interaction sustained a decades-long trajectory of collaborative, nonpartisan Church-state relations in Argentina. Even a brief period of Church-state conflict prior to Juan Perón's overthrow points to the constraints associated with altering this trajectory of Church-state relations.

#### *Catholic nationalism and Church-state ties*

---

<sup>57</sup> Argentine Catholic nationalism features prominently in the literature on Argentine Catholic politics. See the ideology's centrality in the analyses of Kennedy (1958); Mendez (1985); Burdick (1995); Ivereigh (1995); and Klaiber (1998, 66-91), among others.

Over the decades that followed the Justo government, the exercise of state power in Argentina was often accompanied by: conservative civilian governments that left Church privileges as they were, appeals to Catholic nationalism to legitimate the overthrow of civilian governments or related actions, and the expansion of Church benefits or privileges by military governments. The conservative civilian governments of Roberto Ortiz and Ramon Castillo that followed Justo left Church privileges unaltered and the conservative, integralist, episcopacy-dominated Argentine Catholic Action (ACA) continued to grow. However, in 1943, Castillo was overthrown in a military coup by General Arturo Rawson, who was quickly replaced by General Pedro Ramírez due to factional struggles within the military (Burdick 1995, 36-7).

The Ramírez military dictatorship (1943-44) strengthened Church-state ties in an echo of the Justo period. Ramírez began with the appointment of several prominent Catholics and Catholic nationalists to provincial, cultural and diplomatic posts in the government (Ivereigh 1995, 139). Of greatest importance to the Church, however, was the reinstatement by decree of clerical religious education in public schools in 1943. This change satisfied a high-priority, integralist, political goal held by the episcopacy since the 1880s (Leonard 1980, 34-5, fn 3). The decree was accompanied by the appointment of Catholic nationalist Martinez Zuviria to the Ministry of Education and Justice.<sup>58</sup>

The reintegration of Catholic education into public schools garnered support for the military government from the Catholic episcopacy and even resulted in a personal note of thanks from Pope Pius XIII (Burdick 1995, 24, 37; Leonard 1980, 35). After General Ramirez's 1943 decree, the leadership of ACA issued a directive to all members

---

<sup>58</sup> Zuviria, whose pen name was Hugo Wast, was also notorious for his anti-Semitic novels blaming Jews for creating many of Argentina's problems (Mendez 1985, 234).

stating, "If members criticize the policies of the government they will be expelled from the organization" (Dunne 1945, 414; Burdick 1995, 37). Then, a pastoral letter issued by the bishops just prior to the November 1945 elections once again ruled out Catholic support for any party or candidate advocating divorce, laicized education and/or Church-state separation.<sup>59</sup> In doing so, the episcopacy lent indirect support to presidential candidate Juan Perón (Leonard 1980, 35; Burdick 1995, 33, 37-8), which some observers interpret as having a crucial impact on the outcome of the election (Ivereigh 1995, 113).<sup>60</sup>

Juan Perón's bid for the Argentine presidency in 1945 was successful. Consistent with existing self-reinforcing patterns in Church-state relations, Perón's intensively nationalist public campaign and early years in power involved a very deliberate public effort to elicit the support of Catholics, and the approval of the episcopacy. Perón had risen to power within the Argentine military during the 1930s and early 1940s, in part by aligning himself with anti-communist, nationalist tendencies. Thus, from early in his political ascent, Perón's political allegiances were compatible with those of the Argentine episcopacy. When General Ramirez overthrew the Castillo government in 1943, Perón was appointed to head the Labor Department and later the Ministry of War. These positions made it possible to build significant support within both the military and the working class. By June of 1944, Perón was named the minister of war, in July vice president, and in August president of the National Council on the Postwar Era, gathering

---

<sup>59</sup> The 1945 pastoral letter essentially restated the main tenets of a previous pastoral letter issued prior to elections in 1931, near the end of Uriburu's regime.

<sup>60</sup> Kennedy (1958, 184-5) expresses reservations about the assumption that the bishops were attempting to control or shift a bloc of voters. He argues instead that they were issuing instructions defending the long-term interests of the Church as an institution and probably changed the party preferences of very few voters. However, bishops did have direct authority over Catholic Action, an organized bloc of voters at its height in the mid-1940s. Moreover, that the episcopacy was pursuing its long term institutional interests does not make efforts to delegitimize some parties and sanction others less partisan.

additional support from segments of the military, political class and elites along the way (Collier and Collier 1991, 332-3; Burdick 1995, 48).

Once in power, Perón sought opportunities to link his nationalist government with the Church, which often involved elevating the Church's status and providing it with new privileges. Perón frequently asserted that his social policy was “inspired by the Papal encyclicals” (Burdick 1995, 51; Mecham 1966, 248).<sup>61</sup> Perón also personally administered the oaths of office at the installation ceremonies of some bishops and issued decrees recognizing religious holidays and Catholic saints (Burdick 1995, 53). Furthermore, Perón successfully converted into law the 1943 decree restoring religious education in public schools. This effort met with sharp criticism within the Peronist party and provoked serious debate in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate despite both bodies having Peronist majorities. However, when Law 12.987 eventually passed, it earned Perón praise from the Argentine episcopacy and the pope. Perón helped engineer the revision of the Argentine constitution in 1949, but status quo Church-state ties remained completely intact (Burdick 1995, 53). State subsidization of the Church remained in full force during this period as well. In addition to long-standing subsidization of various operating costs of existing Catholic churches, schools and seminaries (Mignone 1986, 78-9, 87-9) the federal and provincial governments paid for the construction of several new Churches and seminaries, including many new churches in the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires designed to meet the uniform architectural specifications of the Archbishop, Cardinal Santiago Luis Copello (Leonard 1980, 35).

---

<sup>61</sup> This was also a frequent assertion during his campaign.

Perón was appealing to many Catholics in ideological terms as well. Perón's populism demonstrated social concern by building support among working class sectors, establishing a welfare state, nationalizing some foreign-owned property and engaging in distributive justice. However, through the construction and pursuit of official Peronist doctrine, *Justicialismo*, Perón was demonstrably neither a socialist nor a liberal. From the perspective of Catholics who trusted neither, Perón seemed to offer a legitimate third way (Ivereigh 1995, 151-2; Klaiber 1998, 70-1). During the 1951 election, the bishops issued another pastoral letter discouraging Catholic voters from supporting any candidate supportive of laicized education or divorce which at that time essentially provided continued support for Perón's government (Leonard 1980, 35).

During Perón's second administration, particularly between 1954-55, Perón's position with respect to the Church changed dramatically. By 1954, the Church was one of the very few remaining social institutions not controlled by the Peronist corporatist structure. In the midst of economic decline, Perón saw Church influence as a threat capable of legitimating grievances among segments of workers, students and the military (Burdick 1995, 59) or of aligning with liberals and conservatives opposed to the Peronist program (Ivereigh 1995, 152-3).

In an effort to counter Church influence, Perón began to attack the Church's legal and administrative privileges. This episode reveals the tremendous obstacles associated with altering a path dependent Church-state relationship once it was established. Throughout the conflict, Perón held to the position that his moves were to counteract the influence of disloyal individual priests and bishops, not to attack Catholicism. Meanwhile, clinging to its position as a nationalist institution interested primarily in

national unity, episcopal statements responded by defending the Church as an apolitical institution, not subject to Perón's political authority. Thus, the conflict pitted Perón's strategy of politicizing the Church as an organization against the episcopacy's strategy of defending the Church as a nationalist institution that was above politics. Indicative of the strength of Argentina's Church-state trajectory, the Church won out.

In May of 1954, Perón used state funds to sponsor a meeting of Pentecostal Pastors, prompting public complaints from the bishops.<sup>62</sup> Afterwards, Cardinal Caggiano reported to Pope Pius XII on the deterioration of the Argentine Church's relationship with Perón (Burdick 1995, 60). In September 1954, after a confrontation between the Peronist *Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios* and a Catholic student youth group in Córdoba, Perón's preoccupation with what he feared was a Church "plan of agitation" intensified (Burdick 1995, 61; see also Ivereigh 1995, 171-2). Afterwards, Perón began delivering speeches to unions calling for religion to stay out of union affairs just as unions did not interfere with religious affairs. The tenor of those speeches grew harsher, with Perón later accusing some priests and bishops of taking part in a communist conspiracy to overthrow his government. In November, Perón delivered a series of public speeches attacking Church figures, including the lay leaders of ACA (Burdick 1995, 61-2). One such speech, delivered November 10, named specific bishops and clergy as enemies of his government.<sup>63</sup> In December, Congressional legislation officially terminated all religious education in public schools (Burdick 1995, 63). During the peak of the crisis in May of

---

<sup>62</sup> In the months that followed Perón seems to have actively sought to build ties with other non-Catholic religious organizations as well, including favors and privileges granted to Jewish, Spiritist and Protestant organizations (Ivereigh 1995, 176).

<sup>63</sup> This speech is printed in full in Pike (1964).

1955, Perón suspended the religious portions of the oath of office, suspended state subsidies for Catholic schools, revoked the Church's tax-exempt status and proposed a constitutional amendment to formally separate Church and state (Burdick 195, 66-68).

Catholic responses to these attacks on Church privileges varied, but in general, Argentina's bishops exercised enormous public restraint. Burdick characterizes the response of the bishops as "cautionary" and "retaining decorum" as they continued to meet with Perón periodically, respond to attacks with public letters to his office that avoided demands for specific conciliatory action by Perón, and defend Church privileges and social status in pastorals (1995, 57, 62-71).<sup>64</sup> The bishops' response, even when faced with Peron's rapid and aggressive turn, was consistent with a strategy of defending the Church's nationalist and supposedly apolitical role in Argentine society. The bishops' reaction contrasts sharply with reactions emanating from other sectors of the Church. Clergy and organized lay Catholics responded to attacks on Church privileges in a number of ways, including criticism of Perón in Catholic periodicals (Burdick 1995, 65-6), a widespread pamphlet campaign (Burdick 1995, 63-5; Ivereigh 1995, 177-8), and the formation of small, armed groups that attempted to protect clergy and Church property (Ivereigh 1995, 178). Meanwhile, between December 1954 and September 1955, there were 12 major Catholic demonstrations in Buenos Aires and many more spontaneous protests after Sunday masses (Burdick 1995, 66). At the height of the crisis, Perón was excommunicated by Rome (Ivereigh 1995, 179).

On June 16, 1955 in the midst of a Peronist rally, an unsuccessful coup attempt took place involving an air force bombing of La Casa Rosada, Argentina's presidential

---

<sup>64</sup> Ivereigh's characterization of the bishops' response is similar (1995, 178).

palace. Hundreds of civilians were killed and loyalist troops quickly restored order in the capital. However, that night while loyalist troops patrolled the city and enforced martial law, mobs successfully ransacked and set fire to 18 major Catholic Churches in Buenos Aires (Burdick 1995, 69; Ivereigh 1995, 179).<sup>65</sup> Perón remained in power, but was weakened by the coup attempt. Conciliatory gestures toward the Church followed in the form of new appointments in the Ministry of Education, the release of imprisoned clergy and lay activists and offers to rebuild burned Churches with state funds (Ivereigh 1995, 181). In July, Perón announced the end of the Peronist revolution and called for national pacification, including the easing of some press censorship and government repression. The bishops responded with a pastoral letter titled, "Our Contribution to the Peace of the Fatherland" (Burdick 1995, 69). The letter was consistent with decades of episcopal political behavior rooted in self-reinforcing patterns of Church-state relations. The episcopacy assumed a nationalist position that urged a return to normalcy and Argentine values in the midst of crisis, but linked calls for the return to those values with calls to restore state support for the Church. According to Burdick, the letter supported Perón's call for national pacification, reasserted the Church's role as fundamentally nonpolitical, listed the attacks on the Church, and called for restoration of Church privileges as well as basic civil liberties. In contrast, the pamphlet campaign, which had waxed and waned since June, redirected its attention to the military, urging it to overthrow Perón (Burdick 1995, 70).

The situation remained tense throughout August, and on September 16, 1955, in the midst of renewed social violence, the military revolted, staging a coup and ousting

---

<sup>65</sup> Ivereigh goes further, asserting (without citation) that the police supervised the burning of Churches and that fire brigades had been ordered not to respond (1995, 179).

Perón from power and forcing him into exile. The coup's causes were complex and involved the untenable nature of the coalition Perón had built combined with his intensifying efforts to retain significant top-down authority over that coalition while meeting opponents with confrontation (Collier and Collier 1991, 348). The Church-state conflict was but one expression of that effort, but some cite the symbolic importance of Perón's attacks on the Church as helping to consolidate middle class opposition to his government, stoking disorder and hastening the military coup (Burdick 1995, 57).<sup>66</sup>

The overt nature of Church-state conflict during the 1954-55 episode is symptomatic of Perón's larger miscalculations about how to consolidate power over a raucous coalition of support. The reaction of the Argentine episcopacy and the symbolic importance of Perón's attacks on the Church are entirely consistent with broader patterns of Church-state relations. Displaying a pattern of Church-state interaction traceable to the Justo era, episcopal reaction to a contentious political environment did not push the Argentine episcopacy into alliance with a rival political party or rapid and forceful denunciations of Perón. Rather, when criticism of Perón surfaced after sustained forceful attacks on Church privileges and property, denunciations of Perón's authoritarian tendencies remained restrained, especially compared to reactions emanating from Catholic laity, clergy and Rome. When criticism did become pointed, such as in "Our Contribution to Peace and the Fatherland," the episcopacy cited Perón's attacks on the special institutional status of the Church as evidence of his anti-democratic policies (Burdick 1995, 72, 74). To the episcopacy, attacks on the Church constituted attacks on the Argentine nation, rather than one of several important social institutions. Defense and

---

<sup>66</sup> At the very least, Collier and Collier suggest that the proximate cause of the coup attempt in June 1955 was the coalescing of middle class opposition to Perón in response to attacks on the Church (1991, 348).

restoration of Church privileges were the paramount public rallying point for an episcopacy that derived its political power from claims that the Church was a *nonpolitical* institution seeking national conciliation.

In addition, Perón's position in the conflict was relatively weak. Because of the Church's special and protected status and strong ties to conservative social forces, Perón was forced to confront the Church's organization and its political allies over issues related to altering Argentina's constitution. In this sense, the Church's state-provided privileges raised the stakes of the conflict, forcing Perón to justify his consolidation of political power in new ways. Ultimately, the obstacles associated with doing so proved too resistant.

#### *Church-state Ties and Catholic Nationalism after Perón*

General Eduardo Lonardi assumed power in the immediate aftermath of Perón's overthrow and set to repairing Church-state relations. Lonardi's government was avowedly Catholic nationalist, contrasting sharply with the final 18 months of Perón's regime. Lonardi appointed several Catholic nationalist officials to government positions and several Peronist officials who had resigned their government posts in response to Perón's persecution of the Church (Burdick 1995, 86; Ivereigh 1995, 185). Dismantling the Peronist Party and its influence in society was a priority for the new regime, but Lonardi also sought reconciliation between Peronists, the working class, nationalists and liberals. Unable to accomplish such reconciliation, in less than a year, Lonardi was deposed by the liberal tendency within the military and replaced by General Pedro Aramburu (1955-58). Aramburu turned more harshly against the Peronists, but also removed high-ranking Catholic nationalist appointees from the government and

maintained a cooler relationship with the Church than had Lonardi. Despite this, Aramburu exercised more power than Lonardi; under his rule, almost all Church privileges lost during 1955 were reinstated and the Peronist-era legalizations of divorce and prostitution were annulled. The only Church privilege Aramburu did not restore was Catholic education in public schools (Burdick 1995, 97).

Though the episcopacy viewed this failure as a setback, further reforms provided new benefits to the Church. The Aramburu government issued a decree allowing the creation of private universities, which permitted the founding of two Catholic universities by 1959, with more to follow. Meanwhile in 1957, under the *patronato*, Aramburu allowed a new expansion of the Argentine episcopacy. The Argentine Church added two new provinces and twelve new dioceses and increased the number of bishops appointed to serve each diocese. Restructuring also created a military chaplaincy, which effectively created a diocese with its own bishop serving only the military, rather than each military installation falling under the auspices of the local diocese (Burdick 1995, 96). In granting the expansion, the Aramburu government acknowledged in a public statement that advancing the interests of the Church in this instance contributed to the "strengthening of the moral base that will always contribute to the political organization and progress of the country" (press release quoted in Burdick 1995, 96-7).

Reforms benefiting the Church continued after the transition to civilian government in 1958. In addition to calling on the Church to provide leadership in restoring tranquility to the country during his campaign, the Frondizi government (1958-62) granted private primary and secondary schools, including Catholic schools, greater autonomy over issues such as curriculum and the hiring and firing of faculty. In addition,

the Frondizi government entered into negotiations with the Vatican to achieve a *Concordat* that would retain Church privileges while granting it greater autonomy (Burdick 1995, 95-8).<sup>67</sup>

However, weak civilian government in Argentina was once again subject to military intervention only a few years later when in 1966 the military overthrew President Arturo Illia. Once again, the new military regime, this time led by General Juan Carlos Onganía, strengthened Church privileges in the wake of the coup seeking Church approval for its nationalist intervention. Once in power, Onganía set about creating a 'Catholic corporatist' regime, which was intended to remain in power indefinitely rather than return power to a reconstituted civilian government. Onganía went to great lengths to tie his *Revolución Argentina* to the Church (Burdick 1995, 174). Onganía himself was a devout, ascetic Catholic who participated in the *Cursillo de Cristiandad* movement along with four of his cabinet ministers and other high-ranking political appointees (Burdick 1995, 158, fn 56). *Cursillistas* were a messianic group with a theological vision that sought the construction of a new Christendom. Consequently, intertwined with Onganía's obsessively anti-communist ideological commitments and military professionalism was a pre-Vatican II theology that sought an integral institutional relationship between Church and state (Burdick 1995, 128-9).

Beyond Onganía's personal ties to the *cursillista* movement, his government made several public gestures that benefited the Church. Onganía began by appointing several alumni of ACA to top government positions. Among the most public manifestations of the regime's integralist political theology was its relationship with Cardinal Primate

---

<sup>67</sup> The Concordat would not be signed and go into effect until 1966 under the Onganía dictatorship.

Antonio Caggiano, who was both Archbishop of Buenos Aires and Bishop of the Argentine Military from 1959 to 1975. Caggiano was a fervent supporter of Onganía and played a high profile role in the regime. Caggiano was invited to sign the documents establishing the new government, a first in Argentine history (Burdick 1995, 128). Later in 1966, Onganía signed the *Concordat* negotiated with the Vatican over the previous decade, which retained state support for the Church while bringing to an end several levers of state control over the Church, including the *patronato* (Ivereigh 1995, 200). Dame (1968) describes the decision to sign this Concordat as an opportunity for the regime to enter into a new negotiated and legally binding international agreement that demonstrated friendly relations with the international Church. As such, the concordat was one of several post-coup foreign policy moves intended to demonstrate the regime's anticommunism and responsibility to Western powers and international investors (Dame 1968, 107-8). In 1969, Onganía consecrated the nation to the 'Immaculate Heart of Mary,' with Caggiano presiding over the ceremony (Burdick 1995, 148; Klaiber 1998, 71-2).

Unable to appeal to the working class or students during a period of increased militancy, Onganía was overthrown in 1970 in the mist of new waves of social unrest. Onganía's successor, General Roberto Levingston, maintained a mildly uneasy relationship with the episcopacy as his government appeared more skeptical of the post-Vatican II Church in its public comments (Burdick 1995, 174). By contrast, Levingston's successor, General Alejandro Lanusse, was an ardent *cursillista* like Onganía, and under his administration greater trust existed between the military government and the episcopacy (Burdick 1995, 174, 182). Despite these machinations, no significant changes

to Church-state ties occurred during the Levingston or Lanusse governments (1995, 170-3).

From 1966 to 1973, the Onganía, Levingston and Lanusse governments struggled to maintain order in the midst of a deteriorating economic situation and increasing social unrest and violence. Finally, in a bid to restore order, the Lanusse government arranged a return to civilian government and national elections in which the Peronist party was allowed to participate. Peronists won national elections and, after a short caretaker Peronist government, in 1973 Juan Perón returned to Argentina and assumed power in a national referendum. The following three years produced a series of economic, social and political crises culminating in a military coup and seven years of violent, repressive military government.

Argentina's self-reinforcing mechanisms included high levels of state control over internal Church affairs, high levels of state support for Church activities and a generally conservative, nationalist political theology within the episcopal conference. Between 1932 and the late 1960s, these mechanisms interacted with successive military governments that overthrew civilian governments during moments of national crisis. The cumulative effect of this interaction, structured by these mechanisms, was that the Argentine Church accrued substantial benefits during periods of military rule. One indicator of this pattern is the expansion of dioceses, which required state approval, necessitated state involvement in the selection of a bishop for all new dioceses and involved substantial state funding for the endeavor. Between 1916 and 1999, 57 new dioceses were created in Argentina. Of those, 39 (68%) were created under military governments (Esquivel 2000, 23). The steady accrual of state-provided privileges is

summarized in Table 5.1. This relationship helped construct and condition the Argentine episcopacy to respond to large-scale crises by playing the role of the conciliator, which if necessary would made prophetic calls for a return to nationalist values, stability and support for the Church. In ideological terms, Richard (1987) notes that through the social, economic and political turmoil between 1955 and 1976, the Argentine Church became more and more "polarized around two antagonistic positions: one position sought a solution to the crisis in a military regime tied to the dominant classes, and the other looked for a socialist type of solution, tied to the popular classes." Despite this, "Between these two *clearly defined* positions was to be found a *hesitant majority*" (Richard 1987, 102, original emphasis).

## **Chile**

Though Church state relations were remarkably close in Chile through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in 1925 a new constitution severed all church-state ties through an arrangement that key players in the Chilean episcopacy, Vatican and Chilean state found acceptable (Smith 1979, 76-8; Scully 1992, 114). This separated institutional relationship created three self-reinforcing mechanisms of reproduction in Chile: very low levels of state control over the internal affairs of the Church, limited state support for Church activities, and an ideologically moderate episcopal conference heavily influenced by a vocal progressive tendency.

This institutional environment contrasted sharply with that of Argentina and forged a different path for 20<sup>th</sup> century Church-state relations. Organizational autonomy from the state in its internal affairs leant Chile's papal nuncios and the Vatican greater influence over the ideological evolution and political activities of the Chilean episcopacy.

<b>Table 5.1: Expansion and Withdrawal of Church Privileges in Argentina, 1930-1970</b>			
<b>Head of Government</b>	<b>Tenure in Office<sup>68</sup></b>	<b>Significant Expansion of Some Privilege for Catholic Church<sup>69</sup></b>	<b>Withdrawal of Significant Church Privilege</b>
Jose Felix Uriburu*†	1930-32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic nationalist appointees</li> </ul>	
Agustin Justo	1932-38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diocesan/ Episcopacy Expansion Allowed</li> <li>• Support for International Eucharistic Conference</li> </ul>	
Roberto Ortiz	1938-40		
Ramon Castillo	1940-43		
Arturo Rawson*	1943		
Pedro Ramirez*	1943-44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic nationalist appointees</li> <li>• Educational decree (religious instruction in public schools)</li> </ul>	
Edelmiro Farrell*	1944-46		
Juan Peron	1946-55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Reform (Law 12.987 religious instruction in public schools becomes official law)</li> <li>• Recognition of religious holidays</li> <li>• Extensive participation in civil-religious ceremonies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdrawal of nearly all Church privileges</li> <li>• Divorce and prostitution legalized</li> </ul>
Eduardo Lonardi*†	1955	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic nationalist appointees</li> </ul>	
Pedro E. Aramburu*	1955-58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restored privileges/prohibitions lost under Peron</li> <li>• Private universities allowed</li> <li>• Diocesan/Episcopacy expansion allowed</li> <li>• Creation of Military Episcopate</li> </ul>	
Arturo Frondizi	1958-62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Granted autonomy to private schools</li> <li>• Initiated <i>concordat</i> negotiations</li> </ul>	
Jose Maria Guido	1962-63		
Arturo Illia	1963-66		
Juan Carlos Ongania*†	1966-70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic nationalist appointees</li> <li>• Concordat signed with Vatican</li> </ul>	
*Denotes Military Government			
†Denotes Catholic Nationalist Regime (Burdick 1995)			

<sup>68</sup> Source: Collier and Collier (1991, 775).

<sup>69</sup> Information on privileges and their withdrawal compiled from Mendez (1985); Burdick (1995); Ivereigh (1995).

This increase in Vatican influence coincided with a period of reform in the international Church, including heightened engagement with modernity encouraged by Rome. This ideological evolution led the Chilean episcopacy to define and pursue its interests in ways that differed substantially from the Argentine Church. To defend and pursue its interests, which involved engaging with the middle and working classes and attempting to speak on their behalf, the Chilean episcopacy maintained informal, shifting ties to political parties. The strategy proved beneficial to the Church in securing state funding for Catholic education in the 1950s and state-led pursuit of Church-endorsed social reforms in the 1960s. As Chile entered the crisis years following the election of Allende in 1970, these self-reinforcing mechanisms had constructed and conditioned an episcopacy that was a politically relevant member of civil society. Chile's episcopal conference was an independent supporter of state practices and policies it endorsed and an independent critic of practices and policies to which it objected.

#### *Church-State Autonomy and Church-Party Alliances*

As the 1925 constitution was promulgated and the separation of Church and state took place, Chilean politics were also experiencing a period of upheaval resulting from changing class dynamics. Between 1900 and 1925, a dramatic rise in the number of organized urban sector workers took place. Between 1925 and 1932, these workers were incorporated into the party system, fundamentally altering the realities of political competition in Chile (Collier and Collier 1991; Scully 1992). Older parties, including the Conservatives, Liberals and Radicals, persisted in their reliance on the clerical-anticlerical cleavage to mobilize supporters, but with declining results. Gradually, this

cleavage was replaced by the division between owners and workers, and parties wishing to remain electorally relevant were forced to deal with social questions (Scully 1992, 62).

Cut off from the state, the episcopacy's strategy for maintaining political influence adapted to this new environment. After the 1925 separation of Church and state, the Conservative Party remained the only party espousing clerical ideology and the party's leaders actively sought Catholic support (Smith 1982, 78, 82).<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile, the episcopacy viewed ascendant leftwing parties with suspicion, due in part to the left's anticlerical positions. Bishop Errázuriz, who had advocated some socially progressive positions, such as support for some of Alessandri's labor reforms in the early 1920s, remained a vocal opponent of forming any partisan alliances.<sup>71</sup> However, Errázuriz died in 1931 and most Chilean bishops named after 1925 were conservative, including Errázuriz' successor as Archbishop of Santiago, José Horacio Campillo (Fleet and Smith 1997, 38). In November of 1933 the bishops voted to announce public support for the Conservatives in a public letter (Smith 1982, 79).

Nonetheless, freed from state interference in the Church's internal affairs, the Vatican quickly became involved. Chile's papal nuncio, Bishop Hector Felice, urged the bishops to delay publishing the letter until they shared its content with the Vatican. The Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli (who would become Pope Pius XII in 1939), replied in June of 1934, insisting the Chilean bishops not publish the letter and avoid formal alliances between the institutional Church and any one party. Instead, Pacelli

---

<sup>70</sup> As late as 1961, Conservative Party declarations continued to make specific reference to the party's support for the Church and its doctrine (Smith 1982:95). See also Valenzuela and Valenzuela (2000).

<sup>71</sup> Errázuriz issued a strongly worded pastoral letter instructing priests to avoid such commitments in 1922 (Smith 1982, 73).

urged Chile's bishops to concentrate their efforts on building a Catholic Action lay movement (Smith 1982, 78-9). In accordance with Pacelli's message, the bishops issued a pastoral letter acknowledging that Chilean Catholics had the right to associate with different political parties. Thus, formal alliance with the Conservatives was abandoned and generally peaceful relationships persisted between the episcopacy and successive governments from 1938 to 1952 (Smith 1982, 94). Informally, however, much of the episcopacy retained ties to the Conservative Party until the 1950s (Fleet and Smith 1997, 39-40) and most practicing Catholics continued to vote for Conservative Party candidates through the 1950s (Smith 1982, 89; Scully 1992, 115).

The same self-reinforcing mechanisms that shaped the contours of this relationship with Conservatives eventually led to the decline of the informal Church-Conservative Party alliance. This decline was already underway by the mid-1930s. First, the influence of the Vatican (made possible by a lack of state controls over the Church) led to a slow accumulation of moderate and progressive bishops appointed by Rome between the 1930s and 1940s. This trend accelerated in the 1950s. Second, the lack of state support for Church activities encouraged the Church to seek out its policy preferences via continued engagement with civil society and partisan politics. The Church's progressive tendency was presented with an alternative to Conservative policies with the founding and ascent of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), which retained close relations with various influential moderates and progressives in the episcopacy. Episcopal appointments combined with the PDC's gradual electoral gains facilitated changes to the Church's relationship with conservative partisans and the state, influencing the outcome of intra-ecclesial struggles over the Church's social doctrines.

The earliest significant progressive Vatican appointment of this period came in 1938 in the aftermath of the election of a center-left, Popular Front coalition government. As Communists joined other elements of the left in forming the governing coalition, rumors of an impending coup spread and conservative Archbishop Campillo refused to maintain relations with the government. Campillo resigned shortly thereafter and was replaced by the Vatican with Bishop José María Caro, bishop of La Serena. Weeks before his appointment, Caro issued a letter acknowledging the Popular Front's legitimacy, promising Church cooperation and suggesting that Chileans were duty bound to obey duly elected governments (Fleet and Smith 1997, 43-4). Caro remained Archbishop of Santiago from 1939 until his death in 1958.

Another important early episcopal appointment was that of Manuel Larraín, bishop of Talca (1939-1966). As bishop, Larraín was a frequent advocate on behalf of workers and Catholic Action. Larraín went to great lengths to implement the social encyclicals in his diocese and was the first bishop to transfer the Church's land holdings in his diocese to their tenants (Mecham 1966, 224). Larraín was also one of the most outspoken progressive voices from Latin America during Vatican II, and Pope Paul VI asked him to lead preparations for the 1968 CELAM conference in Medellín (Klaiber 1998, 45; Smith 1982, 110).<sup>72</sup>

By the final years of Caro's tenure, Vatican appointments had shifted the political center of gravity in the Chilean episcopacy. This was due in part to the work of papal nuncio Msgr. Sebastiano Baggio (1953-59). Foreshadowing Vatican II-era reforms, Baggio believed that the Church needed to confront communism via socially progressive

---

<sup>72</sup> Bishop Larraín died in a car accident in 1966 during what was arguably the height of his influence in Chile.

ideas and organizations. In 1953, of the 21 bishops in Chile, 5 were considered conservative, two social Christian (or generally progressive on social issues), and 14 neutral. Between 1955 and 1959, ten bishops were appointed to fill vacancies. Selections made with Baggio's support included six social Christians, two conservatives and two ideologically neutral bishops. Consequently, by 1959, the number of socially progressive bishops grew to 7 while the number of conservative bishops remained at 5, with the remaining 9 being ideologically neutral (Fleet and Smith 1997, 47).

Finally, Bishop Raúl Silva Henríquez, who had been director of Caritas Chile and earned a reputation for great concern for the poor, was appointed bishop of Valparaíso in 1959, then appointed Archbishop of Santiago and elected president of the Chilean Episcopal Conference in 1961 and elevated to Cardinal in 1962 (Aguilar 2003, 716-7). Between 1958 and 1966, both Silva and Larraín played the most prominent leadership roles in the Chilean episcopacy (Aguilar 2003, 717; Smith 1982, 112).

As the size and influence of the progressive segment of the Chilean episcopacy increased, a pro-Church alternative to the Conservative Party emerged in the form of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC). In 1935, a core group of young Catholic intellectuals, who would eventually go on to found the PDC, joined the Conservative Party as an organized and devoutly Catholic youth movement. This group, known first as the National Movement of Conservative Youth and later the National Falange, included several of the most prominent future leaders of the PDC, including Eduardo Frei, Manuel Garretón and Radomiro Tomic (Fleet 1985, 44). The members were heavily influenced by currents of European social Catholicism, which many of them studied under clergy in Catholic high schools, early Catholic Action groups, and, especially, the *Asociación*

*Nacional de Estudiantes Católicos* (ANEC) and the Catholic University of Santiago (Huneus 2003, 128; Scully 1992, 115; Fleet 1985, 44). Chilean Catholic Action, which was first established in October of 1931, was particularly adept at attracting young, middle class members, growing from 30,000 members during its first few months to 47,000 members by 1936. This early core membership formed the organizational base of social Catholicism in Chile, which would flourish in the 1950s (Fleet and Smith 1997, 41). Chief among the clerics who inspired this group was Fr. Manuel Larraín, then vice-rector of the Catholic University of Santiago. At the university, Larraín taught students who went on to found the Falange, including Eduardo Frei (Mecham 1966, 223-4). In addition to Larraín, Fr. Alberto Hurtado had a significant impact on the PDC's founding members. A well-known progressive priest, Hurtado worked as the national director of Chilean Catholic Action, which counted many PDC founders as members.<sup>73</sup>

In programmatic terms, the Falange's members were most committed to advancing the social doctrines of the Church as articulated in papal social encyclicals. However, they joined the Conservative party because of its default status as the Catholic party. Interested in social reforms, the Falange was continually at odds with a majority of Conservatives. After an intense dispute over the Conservative Party's candidate for the 1938 presidential election, the Falange broke away from the Conservatives and founded its own political party (Huneus 2003, 128-9; Scully 1992, 115-6).<sup>74</sup>

The fledgling National Falange Party articulated a new programmatic option in the Chilean party system that was opposed to liberal anticlericalism and communism but

---

<sup>73</sup> Hurtado later founded a Catholic workers' union in 1948 and *Mensaje*, an important progressive Catholic magazine in 1951 (Klaiber 1998, 45). Additional clergy influential among the PDC's early membership included Fathers Francisco Vives and Jorge Fernández Pradel (Fleet 1985, 44).

<sup>74</sup> The National Falange was renamed the Christian Democratic Party of Chile in 1957.

also rallied around social justice issues. However, during its first two decades, the party never achieved electoral support from more than 4 percent of the electorate, winning only three seats in congressional elections between 1941 and 1953 (Huneus 2003, 129; Fleet 1985, 48).

Despite the growth of progressivism in the episcopacy, from its creation in the late 1930s through the early 1950s the National Falange remained somewhat distant from most members of the episcopacy and sometimes clashed with individual bishops. This stemmed, in part, from confrontations between the party and the conservative tendency within the episcopacy. According to Fleet and Smith's (1997) account, the most prominent of these conflicts erupted in 1947, when auxiliary bishop Augusto Salinas openly criticized the Falange for a number of left-leaning positions and tactical decisions, including calling for diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, forming electoral alliances with communists and encouraging Catholics to join Marxist-dominated unions. The Falange responded with harsh criticism of bishop Salinas, including a call for the Church to leave political matters to the discretion of lay Catholics so that the episcopacy could focus on religious matters. Most of the Chilean episcopacy, including Archbishop Caro, rallied around Salinas' right to espouse his views. Falange leaders then asked the episcopacy if they wished the party to dissolve, and after the intervention of progressive bishops Larraín and Berrios (of San Felipe) and later Caro, no action was taken against the party (Fleet and Smith 1997, 44-5). The following year, some conservative bishops attempted to remove the Falange from the list of parties Chilean Catholics were permitted to support because the party joined a coalition that called for the Communist Party to be allowed to participate in elections. This effort by conservative bishops prompted

intervention from the Vatican, which reiterated that Catholics were "free to support any candidates who respected 'religion and the doctrine and rights of the Church'" (Fleet and Smith 1997, 46).

While the relationship between the Falange and the episcopacy remained tenuous, the Conservative-dominated congress of the early 1950s secured the only substantial change to Church-state ties in Chile between 1925 and 1973, which concerned education. By the early 1950s Catholic education in Chile was struggling financially. A longstanding pattern of insufficient financial contributions from its members and rising inflation contributed to the problem. Then dominated by the Conservative Party, the state offered its assistance. Through legislation passed in 1951, 1952, 1957 and 1958, the state began to substantially subsidize private education. In private schools that did not charge fixed tuition, the state began subsidization on a per pupil basis equal to 50% of the cost of educating each student in a public school. Private schools that did charge regular tuition received subsidies according to a similar scheme, but at a rate of 25% (Smith 1982, 103, fn 32).<sup>75</sup>

Unprecedented as it was, the Conservative Party's gesture did not forestall a shift in the Church's informal partisan alliance shortly thereafter. Between 1958 and 1964, the bulk of the episcopacy and Catholic voters abandoned the Conservatives in favor of the PDC. Despite its strained relationship with the episcopacy during the 1940s when it was still known as the National Falange, by the late 1950s the PDC had managed to retain its programmatic interest in social Catholicism while the episcopacy grew more progressive. As this took place, changes in the Chilean electorate substantially reconfigured Chilean

---

<sup>75</sup> This singular but significant Church-state tie remained in force through the 1973-1989 military government (Smith 1982, 103, fn 32).

politics. Discontent with Conservative economic policies under Alessandri and rising inflation led to a dramatic decline in the Conservative Party's share of the electorate while the PDC and leftwing coalition made up of the Communist and Socialist parties, *Frente de Acción Popular* (FRAP), increased their vote shares in congressional and municipal elections. Between 1957 and 1963, FRAP's share of the electorate increased from 10.7 percent to 23.5 percent. Over the same period, the PDC's share of the electorate increased from 9.4 percent to 22 percent, becoming the largest single party in Chile (Stallings 1978, 80-90). Part of this shift was a dramatic migration from the Conservative Party to the PDC among voters who were practicing Catholics (Smith 1982, 107-9) and the emergence of Eduardo Frei as a visible party leader with mass appeal after his election to the Senate in 1957 (Hunees 2003, 130-1).

The slow but steady operation of Chile's self-reinforcing mechanisms helped generate a profound political opportunity at the beginning of the 1960s. Just as the electoral viability of the PDC improved dramatically, the Chilean episcopacy began issuing calls for structural reform and establishing related social programs, bringing the two groups into political and programmatic alignment. In 1961, under the leadership of Archbishop Silva Henríquez, the bishops announced that 13,200 acres of Church-owned land would be divided and sold to families. The Church created the Institute for Agricultural Development to coordinate this transfer and provide assistance to recipients (Aguilar 2003, 717; Mecham 1966, 224). Then, in 1962 the bishops issued two highly publicized pastoral letters calling for agrarian reform on behalf of peasants and industrial reform on behalf of urban workers, respectively.<sup>76</sup> These two pastoral letters denounced

---

<sup>76</sup> The letters were titled, "La iglesia y el campesinado chileno" and "El deber social y político en la hora presente" (Smith 1982, 109 fn 4 & 5).

poverty and the maldistribution of wealth as an “anti-Christian reality,” arguing, “It is essential to promote in every way possible the study of social problems in light of the doctrine of the Church, because it forms an integral part of the Christian concept of life” (quoted in Mecham 1966, 224).

The two pastoral letters never mention or endorse the PDC by name, but their high degrees of policy specificity make the letters an overt and unmistakable political statement with partisan implications. The bishops called for measures such as increasing taxes on land to fund credit and training for peasants, the regulation of farm commodity prices, emphasizing the production of consumer goods rather than luxury goods and guarding against capital flight (Fleet and Smith 1997, 303-4, fn29-30). The letters categorically denounced Marxism at length, an addition necessary to secure the support of more conservative members of the episcopacy, such as Bishop Alfredo Silva Santiago and Archbishop Alfredo Cifuentes of La Serena (Smith 1982, 111 fn 10).

Meanwhile, in the wake of the Cuban Revolution, Pope John XXIII called for a substantial redirection of personnel and an increase in financial aid to Latin America from elsewhere in the international Church. As the Chilean Church received its share of this aid, the Church began establishing new or strengthening existing social programs that targeted marginalized groups. Programs included education and training initiatives as well as the creation of neighborhood and trade union organizations. Groups receiving such assistance from the Church included peasants, slum residents and some trade unions (Fleet and Smith 1997, 51; Smith 1982, 122-3).

During the 1964 presidential campaign, the congruence between the episcopacy and the leadership of the PDC was made even clearer. The same experts who advised the

bishops on their 1962 pastoral letters helped draft the PDC's platform for the 1964 elections. It is not surprising, therefore, that though the pastoral letters preceded the release of the PDC's platform, they were remarkably similar in terms of "analysis, tone and policy recommendations" (Fleet and Smith 1997, 51). Moreover, 7 of the 14 bishops appointed between 1955 and 1964 had been educated during the 1930s and 1940s at the same schools and universities that gave rise to the PDC and its early leadership. Afterwards they served as chaplains of Catholic Action groups which were also closely tied to PDC's origins (Smith 1982, 112).

When PDC candidate Eduardo Frei was elected president in 1964, his government launched major reform programs expanding tax collection, agrarian reform, unionization, and social services, including education, housing and healthcare initiatives. In effect, many social development priorities of the Chilean bishops conference were realized through the PDC's "Third way" and "Revolution in Liberty" public policy. Among these were the PDC's large-scale literacy programs which specifically aimed to increase literacy among Chilean peasants. Designed by Paulo Freire, the pedagogical approach of these programs was heavily influenced by early stirrings of liberation theology, and sought to raise political consciousness and a sense of empowerment among the adults it enrolled. Literacy class "facilitators" led small groups of adults in discussion sessions around topics and themes from peasants' day-to-day lives in a method meant to stress that peasants were the subject rather than the object of history (Kirkendall 2004, 691-9). As with the PDC's simultaneous unionization drives and agrarian reforms, these Catholic social teaching-inspired programs were meant to vigorously pursue reforms and activate expanded sources of political support for the PDC (Kirkendall 2004, 700-10).

However, the pace of reform failed to slow mounting political polarization in Chilean society. Reforms moved too quickly for those on the right, many of whom had supported the PDC in 1964 to prevent a Communist Party victory. Reforms moved too slowly for many on the left, some of whom had been supportive of the PDC's clearly reformist campaign rhetoric. These divides played out within the Chilean Church as well. Conservative Church organizations such as *Tradición, Familia y Propiedad* (TFP) and *Opus Dei* attracted the support of wealthy Catholics who believed the PDC and the pronouncements of the Chilean episcopacy went too far. Many priests, sisters and lay people living and working in impoverished areas called for a quicker pace of reform, joining left-leaning intellectuals, peasant activists and some tendencies within organized labor. Criticism from these groups increased in 1967, when declining economic conditions resulted in cuts by the PDC government to social spending (Fleet and Smith 1997, 52-3).

Recognizing declining support for the PDC, and one year after the death of progressive leader Bishop Larraín, in late 1967 the Chilean episcopacy began to step back from overt alliance with the PDC and its reform program (which was, by then, already being implemented) and to focus instead on addressing political polarization. Statements from the episcopal conference ceased discussion of reforms like that of the 1962 pastorals, and instead began to emphasize social solidarity, dialogue, reconciliation and cooperation (Smith 1982, 134). In an October 1969 pastoral issued after a public show of force by the military related to salaries and social unrest, the bishops condemned the

prospect of a military coup, warning that such a course would inevitably lead to violence and injustice (Smith 1982, 135).<sup>77</sup>

The bishops also began to criticize the PDC for an overemphasis on technocratic details rather than broader humanistic values, which bishops observed in policies promoting economic growth at the expense of social assistance. During the tense 1970 presidential election, the episcopal conference did not denounce Socialist candidate Salvador Allende, or any other candidate or party, by name. Public statements by the episcopacy and Cardinal Silva explicitly stated that the Church favored no party or candidate and forbade priests and deacons from becoming activists for any party or ideology (Smith 1982, 135). However, episcopal statements during the election did warn against 'leftist' and 'rightist' extremes, which to some implied episcopal support for the centrist PDC facing competition from the Conservative Party on the right and the *Unidad Popular* (UP) on the left (Fleet and Smith 1997, 53). In a pattern resembling the decline of the informal episcopacy-Conservative Party alliance, which came on the heels of the restoration of state funding for Catholic education, by the end of the 1960s the Chilean episcopacy was once again backing away from a partisan attachment. When the PDC's prospects began to decline, its policies began to moderate and political tension continued to mount, the episcopacy distanced itself from a party that pursued major reforms first proposed in episcopal statements only a few years before.

Between 1925 and 1970, the Chilean episcopacy's political orientation and strategies stood in stark contrast to those in Argentina. Chile's self-reinforcing mechanisms of low levels of state control (and, thus, heightened Vatican influence),

---

<sup>77</sup> A military coup would also, of course, undermine the episcopacy's decades-old strategy of seeking influence through informal alliances with competitive and like-minded political parties.

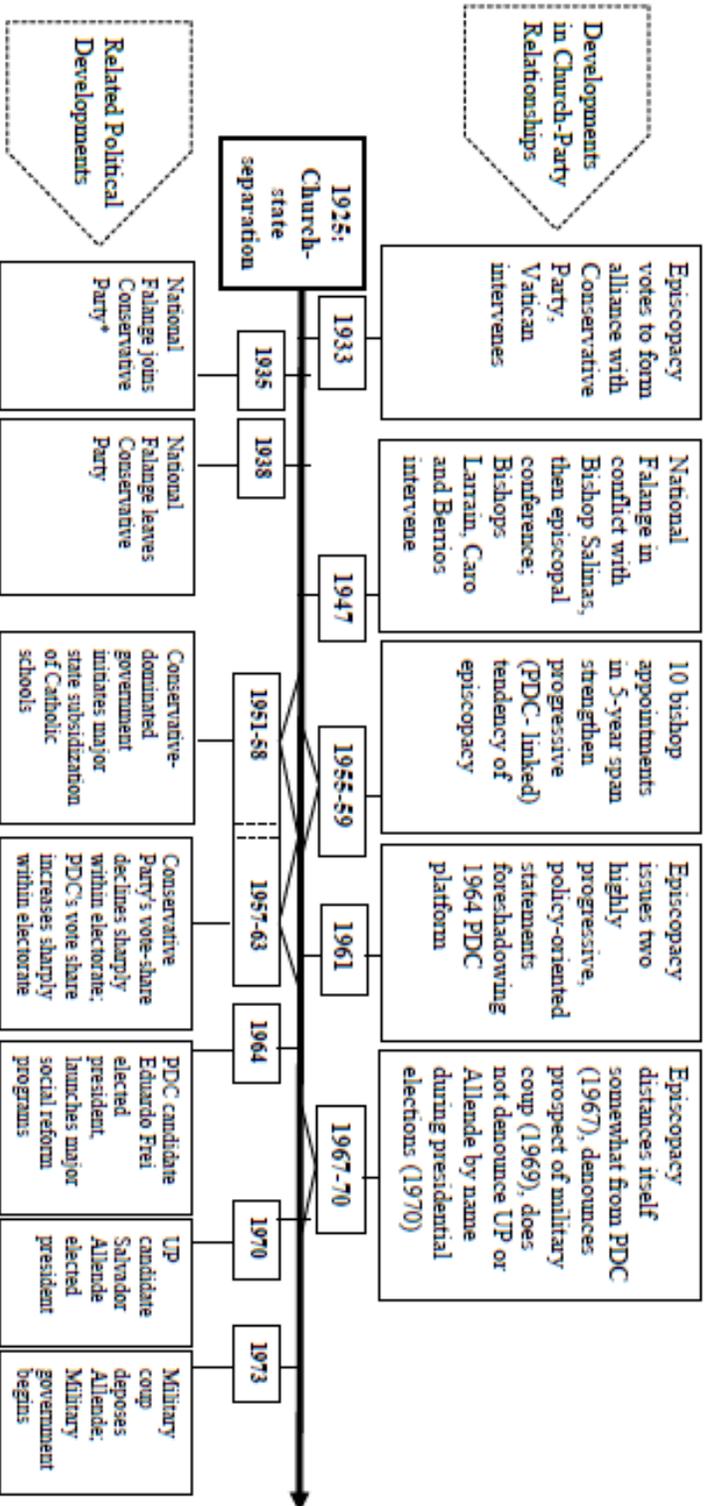
limited levels of state support for Church activities (and, thus, minimal dependence on collaborative relationships with the state), and a relatively progressive episcopal conference (that defined some Church interests in terms of broad structural reforms in Chilean society) combined to motivate and facilitate the Chilean episcopacy's social concerns and overt, partisan involvement in politics. A timeline of major developments in Church-party alliances is presented in Figure 5.1. Influenced by Vatican appointments, successful and shifting participation in partisan politics, and intensive, independent implementation of its own social development programs, the Chilean episcopacy was an autonomous political actor that valued democracy and relied on it to pursue its interests. As the deepening conflict of the Allende period loomed, the Chilean episcopacy was an active and independent voice that spoke frequently about social problems and injustice.

### **Brazil**

During the 28-year period between the 1937 foundation of Getúlio Vargas' *Estado Novo* and the 1964 military coup, the Brazilian Church was less bound to the state than the Argentine Church, but more closely tied to the state than the Chilean Church. Through the leadership and influence of Dom Sebastião Leme, archbishop of Rio de Janeiro and close personal friend of Vargas, the new constitutions of 1934 and 1937 secured the renewal of several privileges lost by the Church in the 1891 disestablishment. The result was a critical juncture in Brazilian Church-state relations.

The long term impact of this critical juncture was sustained by three self-reinforcing mechanisms of reproduction: low levels of state control over the Church's internal affairs, high levels of state support for Church activities, and the sustained influence of a progressive sector within the episcopacy. After 1937, the internal affairs of

Figure 5.1 Timeline of Informal Church-Party Alliances in Chile in Political Context



\* National Falange renamed PDC in 1957.

the Church, such as the appointment of bishops or administrative personnel and the restructuring of dioceses and social work programs, remained under the control of the episcopacy and the Vatican, not the state. During the same time, significant levels of state financial support for the Church were restored, religious education was once again permitted during school hours, state subsidies for Catholic schools were restored, members of religious orders regained the right to vote, religious marriage was once again recognized by the state, and divorce was prohibited. The state's lack of control over the Church's internal affairs facilitated significant Vatican influence over the development of the Brazilian episcopacy during the period of reform in the international Church. Meanwhile, state financing of Church social work encouraged the development of substantial Church programs that reached deeply into popular and marginalized sectors. In combination, these institutional relationships fostered the emergence of a vocal and well-organized progressive sector in the Brazilian episcopacy beginning in the early 1950s.

The self-reinforcing nature of these relationships centers on the specific configuration of the intermediate level of Church-state ties. Church privileges came to be sustained as part of a so-called "moral concordat" through which "Church and state established an informal pact of cooperation" (Serbin 2000, 25). Under this pact, state financing effectively allowed the Church to become the social arm of the state (Serbin 1995). As Bruneau observes, the significance of this arrangement "was that religious influence was guaranteed through political power" (1982, 19). State funding was maintained, at times, through the cultivation of personal relationships and private lobbying at elite levels, while gradually deepening the Church's financial dependence on

the state (Serbin 2000, 25). Consequently, by 1964 the Church had spent three decades in pursuit of both congenial relationships with successive governments and closer engagement with popular and marginalized sectors of society. When human rights abuses worsened in the late 1960s and socially progressive activists, organizations and parties became targets of state repression, the most advantageous position for the institutional Church to take with respect to the state was a less clear-cut choice in Brazil than it had been in Argentina and Chile.

#### *Between Autonomy and Dependence*

After 1934, the Brazilian constitution allowed financial assistance from the state to be directed to the Church in the pursuit of their "collective interest" (quoted in Bruneau 1982, 19). The paramount interest shared by the Brazilian state and the Church was the creation and implementation of strategies to prevent the spread of communism (Mainwairing 1986, 33, 41; Serbin 1992, 24). In doing so, both institutions attempted to extend their reach into areas where they lacked a strong presence, such as the Amazon, the Northeast and urban locales with dense immigrant populations (Serbin 1992, 13, 22). A key means through which the state pursued this goal was bankrolling aid administered through private charities. Between 1931 and 1942, the total amount of state subsidies to private charitable organizations increased from 1,000 to 21,000 *contos* (Serbin 1992, 8). Meanwhile, the number of institutions receiving such aid increased from 458 in 1930 to 1,731 in 1943 (Serbin 1992, 6).<sup>78</sup> The Church, which was the most expansive and well-organized private institution interested in charitable aid, quickly became the largest

---

<sup>78</sup> Each Catholic-affiliated organization is counted separately in this number. Serbin notes that it is impossible to provide an exact number of Catholic institutions receiving such aid and impossible to assess the exact monetary total of aid given to Catholic institutions (1992, 31-32, fn 1, 2, 3).

recipient of these monies (Serbin 1992, 8, 29 fn 1). Beyond this basis for collaboration, defining the contours of this Church-state collective interest was a task left to elite-level interaction between Church leaders and high-ranking government officials. The expansion of subsidization for Church activity continued from 1934 through the mid-1960s despite significant changes in the electorate, the ideological disposition of successive governments and regime type. The specifics of Church-state cooperation evolved between 1934 and 1964, but generally joint action involved attempts by the Church to accommodate itself to the state whenever possible (Mainwaring 1986, 40).

In 1931, during Vargas' provisional government, state subsidization of charitable works was centralized in an executive body known as the *Caixa de Subvenções* (Subsidy Fund). The purpose of the Caixa was to rationalize the distribution of subsidies to charitable organizations, in part by wresting this power from the National Congress (Serbin 1992, 6). The decree creating the Caixa explicitly recognized the moral duty of the state to provide such assistance, though subsidization of the Church was not yet constitutional. After 1932, the Caixa was placed under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Health (MEH), which granted effective control over subsidization requests to then Minister Francisco Campos and his successor Gustavo Capanema, both of whom were advocates of closer Church-state collaboration generally (Serbin 1992, 7).<sup>79</sup> With the promulgation of the 1934 constitution, the Caixa was the first body to oversee the expansion of subsidies to Catholic social works. From its earliest period, subsidization was heavily directed to Church asylums, schools, hospitals, charity health centers, orphanages, men's and women's groups, and seminaries (Serbin 1992, 8).

---

<sup>79</sup> Capanema would hold this position from 1934 to 1945 (Serbin 1992, 8).

Then, in 1937, Vargas consolidated and expanded executive power, promulgating a new constitution with the support of the military, ruling through emergency powers and decree, and suspending the National Congress. These measures culminated in the creation of the *Estado Novo*.<sup>80</sup> Through the use of decree powers, in 1938 Vargas replaced the Caixa with the *Conselho Nacional de Serviço Social* (National Social Service Council, CNSS). The CNSS further centralized executive authority in the dispersal of subsidies because the main responsibility of the CNSS was to collect and investigate subsidy requests and then make recommendations to Vargas himself before he granted final approval (Serbin 1992, 9).

In addition to assessing subsidy requests, the CNSS was also responsible for conducting studies determining the needs of the poor, determining the eligibility of organizations requesting funding, and organizing social services more generally (Serbin 1992, 9). Through the duration of the Vargas government, Capanema remained Minister of MEH and retained a key vote in all matters decided by the CNSS. In addition to his support for Church-state cooperation, Capanema relied on Archbishop Alceu Amoroso Lima as a close advisor. Together with Vargas, Capanema and Lima selected several additional members of the CNSS who were supportive of Catholic social works (Serbin 1992, 11).

Under the auspices of the CNSS, the state expanded subsidization to a wide variety of different Catholic social programs. Funding continued to go to Catholic schools, hospitals, asylums, orphanages and St. Vincent de Paul Societies, which were groups of local Catholic laity that created and managed various charitable organizations

---

<sup>80</sup> These institutional changes remained in effect until Vargas was forced to cede power in 1945.

serving the poor. Subsidization was also directed to Catholic organizations, including Catholic workers' circles (forerunners to class-conciliatory Catholic unions), youth and student organizations, fraternities and women's groups. Subsidies were also directed to Catholic evangelization activities, such as missions established in the Amazon and celebrations held by parishes and dioceses. Finally, many subsidies assisted the Church with its own organizational development, including funding for seminaries (Serbin 1992, 8, 21-6). Under the CNSS, the Church remained the primary organizational recipient of social service-oriented state subsidies during the first Vargas government and among the largest thereafter (Serbin 1992, 8, 29 fn 1).

Vargas' regime fell in 1945 and a gradual re-democratization of Brazilian politics followed. This included the re-opening of the National Congress and a new constitution in 1946, which once again permitted state support for the Church. Despite Capanema's departure as head of the MEH, the centralized system for distributing subsidies to aid organizations as well as significant subsidization of Catholic institutions continued during the Dutra government (1946-1950).<sup>81</sup>

Mainwaring characterizes the period between 1945 and 1964 as one in which democratic governments continued to attempt to trade "favors" for support but that the relationship was less "favorable" and "stable" than under Vargas (Mainwaring 1986, 39). In 1951, congressional legislation revoked the discretion over subsidies exercised by the CNSS, returning this power to the National Congress (Serbin 1992, 17-8). Subsequently, the Church faced more competition for public monies. Despite this, the Church continued to win major funding for a variety of high-profile projects. Large grants and subsidies for

---

<sup>81</sup> Serbin reports (without specifics) that in 1947, a new major collaborative effort between Church and state began providing social services in urban slums (1995, 40).

Catholic universities, seminaries and various diocesan festivals were approved during the 1950s and 60s. In 1954, Congress allocated 5 million cruzeiros for the construction of the national basilica (Serbin 1996, 15). In the same year, Congress created the National Fund for Secondary Education, increasing scholarships and financial aid to Brazil's secondary schools including Catholic schools (Serbin 1992, 19-21). Finally, the state collaborated closely with the Church in the planning and execution of the 1955 International Eucharistic Conference (IEC) held in Rio de Janeiro. The conference attracted 1.5 million participants and was of enormous benefit to the promotion of tourism in Brazil. In preparation for the IEC, substantial assistance in terms of planning, financing and infrastructure improvements were provided by Presidents Vargas (during his elected return to power from 1951 to 1954) and Kubitschek. Government financing alone constituted 29 percent of the conference's budget (Serbin 1996, 24, 28). Thus, some sectors of the Church may have benefited from the return of discretion over subsidy dispersal to the congress by allying with a broader set of social forces that shared the Church's interests.

Additional subsidization of Church activity remained extremely strong through the administrations of Dutra, Vargas's return to the presidency, Kubitschek, Quadros and Goulart (Serbin 1996, 13). However, this financial relationship took the form of clientelism between various tendencies, regions and ecclesiastical units of the Church and various parties and political figures in congress. Serbin presents private correspondence among party leaders who affirm the electoral value of awarding funding to Catholic-affiliated projects in parishes or dioceses where specific Church figures were influential among voters. Meanwhile, personal correspondence between representatives of Church-

affiliated organizations and political figures requesting funds reach the highest-ranking Brazilian political figures of the time, including Quadros, during his presidency, and Goulart, while leader of the PTB (1992, 19-20).<sup>82</sup>

During this period, it should be noted that Brazil had its own Christian Democracy Party (PDC). However, unlike its counterpart in Chile, the Brazilian PDC was not an important ally or voice for the Brazilian Church or the episcopacy. This is likely due to the confluence of a number of different factors that minimized its political importance. Brazil's party system during the period between 1945 and 1964 remained notoriously weak (Mainwaring 1995), with numerous parties of varying size that experienced substantial intra-party divisions and ineffectual programmatic trans-party alliances (Johnson 2001, 88-101). As a result, three parties dominated Brazilian politics (PTB, PSD, and the UDN) and meaningful alliances with the PDC ebbed and flowed with the electoral fortunes of the PDC (Johnson 2001, 39). As a result, the Brazilian PDC was of minimal political importance because it rarely achieved much electoral success, never gaining more than 5 percent representation in the Federal Chamber of Deputies during the early 1960s (de Kadt 1970, 43). According to de Kadt, even more important to understanding the PDC's unimportant role was its total lack of ideological cohesion. While the party was nominally united across regions, the PDC's leadership and membership ranged from hardline conservatives in Rio Grande do Sul to leftwing radicals in São Paulo to emphasis on moralizing in Rio de Janeiro (1970, 43-4).

In the 1950s, Brazil's self-reinforcing mechanisms converged, activating a progressive sector within the Church. During this decade, an early core group of

---

<sup>82</sup> Many of these financial ties linking Church and state persisted after the 1964 military coup, a subject to be taken up in the following chapter.

reformist clergy and bishops emerged in the most underdeveloped locales, particularly Brazil's impoverished Northeast (Mainwaring 1986, 41). This political awakening coincided with the politicization of peasant and worker grievances in Brazil (Collier and Collier 1991, 380-3, 386-9) and new currents of reform circulating in the international Church (Cleary 1985, 12-29).<sup>83</sup> Mainwaring convincingly argues that the confluence of these factors helped trigger the political awakening of those segments of the Brazilian Church most closely tied to recently politicized sectors (Mainwaring 1986, 41, 45).

However, two additional factors must be emphasized to fully account for the activation of the progressive sector of the Brazilian Church. First, as described above, state funding for many Church activities made it possible for the Church to extend its reach over the preceding decades and engage in a sustained way with these sectors in the first place. Since 1934, state funding for Church activity generated important collaborative ties between Church and state, but by the early 1950s state funding was supporting a very large and growing network of Catholic social institutions. Through this state-funded network, clergy at all levels came into close contact with workers, peasants, students and residents of urban slums. Second, the lack of state control over the appointment of bishops and the creation of new dioceses made it possible for the Vatican to exert far more influence over the Brazilian episcopacy than was possible in a case like Argentina. As a consequence of these factors, a small core of reformist clergy and bishops grew into a prominent faction within the Church by the late 1950s. Catholic reformists were interested in social justice, political involvement and anti-communism via the promotion of social and economic development.

---

<sup>83</sup> Reforms included increasing support for democracy (Mainwaring 1986, 45) and the role of bearing witness to suffering as a form of socioethical leadership (Levine 1981, 36).

This incipient progressive tendency in the Brazilian Church received support and encouragement from the Vatican. This occurred through two forms of intervention from Rome, the approval and promotion of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB) and the appointment of new moderate and progressive bishops between 1954 and 1964.

Dom Helder Camara first proposed the creation of the CNBB to the Brazilian *Papal Nuncio* in 1950. At the time, the Brazilian Church had over 110 ecclesiastical units and no clear leader since the death of Archbishop Leme in 1942. The conference was to be a permanent organizational structure that facilitated communication between bishops about how to overcome common administrative problems. Though its charge appears mundane on the surface, when it was approved by the Vatican in 1952 the CNBB was the first organization of its kind in the entire international Church (Della Cava 1976, 32). Due to the organization's focus on diocesan development, early participation in the organization was dominated by peripheral dioceses, especially those from the Northeast. Because the Northeast was one of the areas where the progressive tendency was taking root, in its early years the CNBB consisted of several progressive bishops. In this sense, the CNBB's participating membership made it a reformist organization within the Brazilian episcopacy that helped coordinate and unite this tendency alone. Unsurprisingly, this group elected progressive bishop Helder Camara as its first general secretary.<sup>84</sup> In support of the CNBB, the Vatican dispatched a new papal nuncio, Dom Armando Lombardi, in 1954. Lombardi played an active role legitimating the body's authority to speak on behalf of the Church in Brazil and making Bishop Camara the *de*

---

<sup>84</sup> Camara would continue to serve as president until the organization took a conservative turn in 1964.

*facto* successor to Cardinal Leme (Della Cava 1976, 33, see also Mainwaring 1986, 48; Bruneau 1982, 53). Due to this support from the Vatican and the organization's novelty in the international Church, during the early years of the CNBB, conservative bishops were outmaneuvered by statements that remained strongly reformist in content and claimed to speak on behalf of the entire Brazilian episcopacy (Bruneau 1982, 51-2).

Della Cava indicates the significance of the Vatican's role in reshaping the future of the Brazilian Church, noting that, "in no country of Latin America had the Vatican chosen, until then, to play such a direct role in the internal affairs of a 'national' Church" (1976, 32-3). Over the next decade, the result of the Vatican's intervention would become even clearer. Through the CNBB, progressives in the episcopacy gained influence because the organization "served as an entity which on the one hand established new links with Rome and its more progressive teachings on social matters, and on the other hand joined progressive elements in the government" (Bruneau 1973, 40).

In addition to his role legitimating the authority of the progressive CNBB, Papal Nuncio Lombardi also played an active role in the expansion of Brazil's organizational structure and the appointment of dozens of bishops. Lombardi's influence spanned a decade from his appointment in 1954 to his death in 1964. During that time Lombardi oversaw a wave of reform. Between 1950 and 1964, the number of ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the Brazilian Church was increased from 116 to 178. As papal nuncio for most of that period, Lombardi was directly involved in the creation of 38 new bishoprics, 11 new archbishoprics, and 16 prelatures (Della Cava 1976, 37). This expansion, combined with his ten-year tenure allowed Lombardi to play an influential role in shaping the ideological direction of the Brazilian episcopacy. According to Bruneau,

Lombardi was directly involved in the nomination of 109 candidates for bishop and 24 candidates for archbishop, many of whom were progressives (1974, 117). Della Cava is more cautious in his assessment of the ideological bent of Lombardi's appointments, but he concedes that Lombardi's appointments were at least part of a concerted campaign to marginalize Brazil's conservative tendency (1976, 38).

. In addition to Vatican influence, pre-existing Church-state collaboration also helped facilitate the rise to prominence of the progressive tendency within the Brazilian episcopacy. A series of reformist, populist governments (from 1950-1964) advanced the interests of reformist bishops and clergy through the pursuit of collaborative social welfare programs, focused on development rather than charity. Two programs exemplify this Church-state collaboration. The first was the *Superintendência do Desenvolvimento do Nordeste* (Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast, SUDENE).

SUDENE, a new federal administrative agency created to guide and encourage economic development in the Northeast, was designed in part by the Church-organized Natal Conference in 1959. The proposal sought greater government involvement and coordination in regional development efforts. After successful lobbying efforts led by segments of the Church, the Kubitscheck administration created the agency (de Kadt 1970, 74-5; Pang 1974, 365; Mainwaring 1986, 58; Bruneau 1973, 41).

A second example of collaboration between reformist governments and reformists in the Church was the Church's Movement for Grass-roots Education (MEB), which was funded by the state through an agreement reached with President Quadros in 1961. State funding was planned to run from 1961 until at least 1965, and in its first year alone, the Quadros government promised the MEB a total of 400 million cruzeiros for the creation

of 15,000 radio schools (de Kadt 1970, 124). MEB developed popular education strategies in the country's most underdeveloped regions, the Northeast and the Amazon. The program was staffed by members of Brazilian Catholic Action, many of whom viewed the work as a form of political activity (de Kadt 1970, 138-43). Sessions were conducted mostly via radio schools. However, as in Chilean literacy programs under the PDC, the programs were heavily influenced by Paulo Freire and emphasized "that people must be the agent of their own history" rather than relying on other forces to produce social change (Mainwaring 1986, 67; Mainwaring 1984, 100-1). In 1962 MEB publicly declared its support for radical social transformation and began to describe popular education as a mechanism for bringing about that change. Between 1962 and the 1964 coup, the MEB became a high-profile organization within the Catholic left, influencing other Catholic left movements like the Catholic University Youth (JUC) (Mainwaring 1986, 58, 66-75). In return for these and other collaborative efforts, between 1956 and 1963, the CNBB supported reformist governments on most social issues (Mainwaring 1986, 58).<sup>85</sup>

By the late 1950s and early 1960s several progressive voices within the episcopacy began publically calling for reforms extending beyond existing state commitments, a strategy distinct from decades of collaboration with the state on social works. The earliest such calls pertained to agrarian reform and took shape in the early 1950s, though these were limited to a handful of reformist bishops in the Northeast (Mainwaring 1986, 54). However, calls for serious reform to unjust social structures in the countryside and cities became the subject of several CNBB statements issued between

---

<sup>85</sup> Some disagreement did exist on reforms to the education system.

1958 and 1963 (de Kadt 1970, 72-7). Even as the reformist tendency within the episcopacy gained strength, relations between the episcopacy and reformist governments were generally cordial until the months immediately preceding the 1964 coup (Mainwaring 1986, 56-8).

By the mid-1960s, the Brazilian episcopacy was pushed in a reformist direction by the influence of its papal nuncio, long-term state funding, and collaboration with recent reformist and populist governments. The result was a strong faction of bishops who adopted a social justice-oriented political theology but had little incentive to begin pursuing their priorities via partisan politics. During the turmoil of 1964, these forces would divide and begin pulling the episcopacy in two directions. Ascendant reformist political theology would continue to demand political involvement and public calls for justice, democracy and equitable distribution of resources. State financing of Church activity, now controlled by a bureaucratized military regime, would discourage criticism of the state.

### **Mechanisms of Reproduction in Authoritarian Cases**

Between roughly the 1930s and the 1970s, different configurations of Church-state ties in Argentina, Chile and Brazil operated as self-reinforcing mechanisms of reproduction that sustained distinct, identifiable trajectories in Church-state relations. State controls over the Church, state support for Church activities, and the relative influence of conservative and progressive tendencies within each episcopacy sustained a stable set of core attributes in Church-state relations.

#### *State controls over the Church*

In Argentina, Church and state remained bound together through a dense network of formal ties. The state controlled extremely important internal affairs of the Church such as the creation of new dioceses and the appointment of bishops. Consequently, the Argentine episcopacy was assembled according to a system that granted the state considerable leverage. Moreover, as Argentine bishops attempted to plan for the future of the Argentine Church, anticipating the state's actions was at least as important, if not more so, than any direct influence of the Vatican, clergy, or the laity. Nonetheless, the Argentine Church's association with Argentine nationalism, which was buttressed by these formal Church-state ties, gave the episcopacy considerable leverage in defending its privileges when they were threatened. As a result, even the most serious such threat, made by Perón between 1954 and 1955, was ultimately unsuccessful. In sharp contrast, Church and state in Chile and Brazil were both thoroughly separate from the state in terms of formal state authority over internal Church affairs. In both Chile and Brazil, the Vatican had a free hand to direct the ideological makeup of the episcopacy. During the era of Church reform during the 1950s and the 1960s, the Vatican approved the appointment of progressive or moderate (but far fewer conservative) bishops in these two episcopal conferences. For decades, the bishops who defined and prioritized the Church's interests in these three countries were chosen according to different criteria and, once selected, influenced by the anticipation of a different set of political and institutional circumstances.

#### *State support for Church activities*

In Argentina and Brazil, the state was a major financier of Church activities, which was legal under the Brazilian constitution and mandated by the Argentine Constitution.

Thus the Church was financially dependent on the state in both cases. This relationship discouraged bishops' public criticism of the state. However, the priorities of these two episcopacies differed, and, to a lesser extent, so too did the ideologies of the regimes providing them. As a result, the types of Church activity funded by the state were different. In Argentina, state funds paid some clerical salaries and helped establish new dioceses. In Brazil, in addition to subsidization of some Church infrastructure projects, state funds supported the extension of programs associated with the Church's increasingly reformist social mission. Often these programs served popular sectors, including the creation of popular education programs, rural development offices and Catholic unions. In this way, state subsidization facilitated the Brazilian Church's deepening ties with marginalized sectors of society as they became increasingly politically active after the 1930s. In contrast, in Chile there was no significant state financing of Church activities until the 1950s. After the 1950s, state subsidization increased substantially, but only in the area of private Catholic education. Consequently, the Chilean episcopacy was less dependent on state support than was the case in Brazil and Argentina. Despite the lack of state subsidization in other areas, the Chilean episcopacy pursued programs comparable to those of the Brazilian Church, including the redistribution of Church-owned land and promotion of broader agrarian reform and popular education programs.

#### *Episcopal ideological tendencies*

All three Churches were composed of conservative, moderate and progressive tendencies. Moreover, in all three cases the moderate tendency was the largest. However, Vatican appointments and intervention marginalized conservatives and strengthened the influence of progressives in Chile and Brazil, especially during the 1950s and early

1960s. This heightened influence was evident in the social programs and episcopal statements issued by both episcopal conferences. These public activities focused on major social and economic programs and reforms directed at the poor. In contrast, Argentina's episcopacy developed a stronger conservative tendency that effectively marginalized progressive bishops. Conservative bishops worked to defend and promote Church interests defined in terms of nationalism, which was tied to the Church's privileged status and state-provided support, and calls for national unity in the face of crises. This set of interests, the Church's constitutional position with respect to the state, and the strategies they induced overrode any effort to prioritize serious political activity targeting the specific problems of more narrowly defined groups (such as non-unionized workers, peasants, and residents of urban slums) excluded from political influence. These mechanisms are summarized in Figure 5.2.

#### *Stability of core attributes*

The result of decades of these mechanisms of reproduction in operation was a stability of core attributes in the Church-state relations of each case. In Argentina, high levels of state control over Church affairs, high levels of state support for Church activity and a powerful conservative tendency in the episcopal conference reinforced a pre-conciliar political theology. This political theology defined the Church's chief political interests in terms of the maintenance of special status and privileges guaranteed by the state. To protect and advance these interests, the Argentine episcopacy cultivated a close association with Argentine nationalism and continually sought close and congenial relationships with successive governments, regardless of regime type, ideology, constituency or program. Though this discouraged the Argentine episcopacy from

advocating on behalf of specific groups, this position proved remarkably resilient in defending Church privileges from attack in the final years prior to Perón's overthrow.

<b>Figure 5.2: Mechanisms of Reproduction</b>			
	<i>Chile</i>	<i>Brazil</i>	<i>Argentina</i>
<i>State Controls on Church</i>	<p><b>Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church selection of bishops autonomous from state.</li> <li>• Church controls diocesan organization.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church selection of bishops autonomous from state.</li> <li>• Church controls diocesan organization.</li> </ul>	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant state involvement in selection of bishops.</li> <li>• State authority over expansion of dioceses.</li> </ul>
<i>State Support for Church Activity</i>	<p><b>Low/Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantial state subsidies for private Catholic schools after 1950s.</li> <li>• No state subsidization or support for Church in other areas.</li> </ul>	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantial state subsidies for wide array of Catholic social programs, missionary activity, infrastructure, etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitutional guarantee of state support for the Church.</li> <li>• Catholic presence in public education.</li> </ul>
<i>Episcopacy's Ideological center of gravity*</i>	<p><b>Progressive Influence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong progressive tendency influence evident after 1960.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progressive Influence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong progressive tendency influence evident after 1958.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Conservative Influence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservative tendency dominates from 1930s through 1980s.</li> </ul>
<p>* Episcopacy's ideological center of gravity is influenced by state controls on the Church and state support for Church activity among other factors. However, each episcopacies' ideological center of gravity exerts its own <i>self-reinforcing</i> influence on the trajectory of Church state relations in each case.</p>			

In Brazil, low levels of state control over Church affairs, high levels of state support for Church activity and, eventually, a powerful progressive tendency in the episcopal conference reinforced the Brazilian Church's social mission while retaining a large measure of dependence on the state. The result was an episcopacy that, encouraged by the Vatican, came to define its interests with greater attention to alleviating social problems affecting particular groups of its adherents than was the case in Argentina. To pursue those interests the Brazilian episcopacy took advantage of available state support and tended to protect and expand this support via lobbying and private negotiation rather than partisan alliances or public confrontation. In Chile, low levels of state control over Church affairs, moderate levels of state support for Church activity and, eventually, a powerful progressive tendency in the episcopal conference reinforced the Chilean Church's social mission and autonomy from the state. Without the realistic possibility of a return to sweeping state support for the Church, the episcopacy worked to achieve its goals via participation in partisan politics. By the early 1960s, the Chilean episcopacy was an outspoken proponent of social reforms intended to benefit the poor and an outspoken supporter of the Christian Democratic Party.

Between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s, these Church-state trajectories collided with profound social, economic and political crises. These crises provoked military coups and subsequent waves of repression. Each episcopacy reacted differently to these events based on pre-existing core attributes of each Church-state trajectory and the mechanisms of reproduction that continued to operate during this period. The dynamics of this interaction are the subject of chapter six.

## **Chapter 6: Catholic Bishops' Responses to Human Rights Abuses in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil**

As democracies grew unstable through much of Latin America in the late 1960s and 1970s, a diverse array of voices within the Catholic Church responded with expressions of concern about the dangers of civil unrest, political polarization and the influence of communism. But when the armed forces seized power aiming to eradicate the basis of these concerns by means of violent repression and the closure of democratic institutions, Catholic bishops' conferences varied considerably in their responses. This chapter argues that these responses were consistent with long-established modes of interaction with the state that ignited or suppressed public confrontation with the state when the Church came under attack.

In 1964, the Brazilian military deposed the democratically elected, left-leaning Goulart government in the midst of growing economic constraints, and rising social and political turmoil. This event marked the beginning of a new wave of authoritarian government that, in the wake of the Cuban Revolution and unrest of the 1960s, would consume much of the region in the two decades that followed. In 1966, the Argentine military staged a coup, inaugurating a military government that would last until 1972. After a brief return to democracy, the Argentine military seized control of the state again in 1976, deposing the government of Isabel Perón during a period of economic crisis and political polarization. In 1973, the Chilean military seized control of the state, three

tumultuous years into the democratically elected government of socialist Salvador Allende.<sup>86</sup>

In all three countries, the Catholic episcopacy reacted to coups with cautious relief given the difficult circumstances that contributed to the breakdown of democracy. However, as it became clear that the new military governments' intention was to retain power in each country indefinitely and waves of state-sanctioned human rights abuse peaked, each episcopacy responded differently. In Argentina, a vibrant progressive sector of clergy existed at the Church's grassroots. Military repression targeted some segments of the Church, including a small group of bishops who denounced the violence of the new regime. Despite this, all collective statements issued by the Argentine episcopacy mention political repression but cast no blame on the military or the state for causing it or carrying it out. Meanwhile, a small group of high-profile bishops publicly defended the regime and its actions. Like Argentina, the Chilean Church also included an active progressive sector of the clergy that was a target of government repression. However, in stark contrast to Argentina, within two years of the 1973 coup, collective statements of Chilean bishops began to unequivocally denounce the state for its human rights abuses. Meanwhile, the highest profile bishop in the episcopacy founded a Church organization that documented reports and evidence of human rights abuse across the country and helped organize an international human rights conference. In the large Brazilian Church, yet another vocal sector of progressive clergy and bishops existed and were subject to state repression. However, in Brazil the episcopacy at large remained publicly silent

---

<sup>86</sup> There were, of course, many other concurrent examples of authoritarianism during this period as well, including Paraguay (since 1954), Peru (after 1968) Uruguay (after 1973), Mexico (one-party rule since 1929), Guatemala (since 1954), Nicaragua (until 1979), and El Salvador .

during the early years of the military government, even as small groups of bishops spoke out about the repression and many more expressed concerns in private. As repression escalated the episcopacy initiated a 4-year series of secret negotiations with the military to curb rights abuses. Achieving little, these negotiations were followed by public and unambiguous denunciations of the military regime and its human rights abuses.

Straight-forward responses to long-term constant causes or short-term proximate causes proposed elsewhere in the literature, such as alternative configurations of grassroots-hierarchy relationships and varying patterns of repression, played a role in the response of each episcopal conference. However, these divergent reactions and the immediate circumstances that surrounded them were largely extensions of the broader historical trajectory of Church-state interaction in each country. These trajectories were established during critical junctures earlier in the century (chapter 4) and sustained by mechanisms of reproduction at work in the intervening decades (chapter 5).

In Argentina, a long history of close Church-state ties and close Church-military ties produced an episcopacy that, in general, stood to gain by cooperating with a long-time socio-political ally, the Argentine military. As a less active participant in partisan politics and civil society, the Argentine episcopacy also stood to gain relatively little from a quick return to democracy. In Chile, a long history of Church-state separation helped form an episcopacy accustomed to participating in a democratic polity, including partisan politics and civil society. In addition, this separation allowed the Vatican a freer hand in the selection of Chile's bishops during the era of reform in the international Church. Without longstanding ties to the military, the Chilean episcopacy at large was willing to tolerate a military coup aimed at the restoration of order, but stood only to lose influence

by quietly enduring a long-term military government. In Brazil, the Church possessed longstanding organizational autonomy vis-à-vis the state, but received significant financial support from the state to help offset costs associated with its social work. While the Brazilian episcopacy stood to gain little additional assistance from a long-term military government, it did run the risk of losing a great deal by denouncing the military. In addition, like the Chilean episcopacy, an increasingly reform-minded Vatican appointed bishops during the 1950s and 1960s with minimal state interference. These factors produced an episcopacy divided in terms of ideology, but especially political strategy. Aversion to public confrontation and efforts at private influence are consistent with long-standing patterns of Church-state interaction at the episcopal level in Brazil. Many bishops had to be convinced this established pattern was no longer in the Church's interest prior to securing broad support for prophetic denunciations of the military regime. The remainder of this chapter examines these three cases, focusing on the presence of ideological diversity at the grassroots in all three cases, the extent of post-coup repression directed at the Church, and the evolution of the episcopal response to that repression.

### **Argentina**

Juan Perón returned to the presidency in Argentina in 1973 in the midst of growing economic, social and political turmoil. Successive crises mounted in the years that followed. When the military seized power in 1976, the Church reacted in a manner consistent with patterns of behavior well established since the 1930s. The conservative nationalist tendency within the episcopacy lent support to the regime, the regime strengthened Church-state ties and, with the exception of 5 bishops, the episcopacy at

large withheld any serious criticism of the state even as Catholic priests and bishops fell victim to repression.

### *Ideological Diversity in the Argentine Church*

In any national context, to discuss “the Church” as though it were a single monolithic entity would be a gross oversimplification. The Argentine Church is no exception. From the end of Perón's first period in government in 1955 to the military coup in 1976, the Church became increasingly politically polarized (Richard 1987, 102). Despite a clearly conservative “center of gravity” among the Catholic episcopacy, progressive and left-leaning factions within the Argentine Church did exist. Bishops, clergy and Catholic laity worked to call attention to unjust social conditions throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and to denounce rights abuse during the Dirty War. However, this segment of the Church (1) never rose to a position capable of dominating the Argentine Church, (2) began to break apart in the years immediately prior to the 1976 coup, and (3) were targets of repression during the Dirty War.

The growth of a small progressive sector was inspired by the international Church's opening in the wake of Vatican II (1962-1965), and especially CELAM's Medellín Conference (1968). At the level of clergy, the “worker-priest” movement arrived in Argentina in 1960. Participating priests took factory jobs alongside factory workers, often became radicalized by the experience, and began participating more actively in leftwing politics (Dodson 1979, 54). A handful of Argentine bishops supported this work, but in general the episcopacy worked to minimize the influence of activist clergy. Progressive priests whose political activity was deemed to have gone too far faced suspension or transfer to remote parishes. Foreign priests faced possible

deportation, a strategy requiring episcopal collusion with the state. At least one bishop, Jerónimo José Podestá, was removed from his diocese in 1967 following his own public support for social activism and worker organization (Dodson 1979, 55-6).

Despite this, The Movement of Priests for the Third World (MSTM) was founded in Córdoba in 1968. The movement brought progressive priests together in association with strikes, student demonstrations, peasant mobilizations, and neighborhood organizations (Dodson 1979, 58; See also Burdick 1995). At its height, this organization counted approximately 500 priests among its ranks (about 9% of the Argentine clergy) (Klaiber 1998, 72-3). The movement criticized the Onganía government and its unjust policies, and allied closely with the Peronist movement. However, the MSTM eventually splintered and declined after 1974 (Dodson 1979, 61-2; Klaiber 1998, 73).

#### *Repression Targeting the Church*

As discussed in chapter 3, after the military seized power in 1976 it unleashed a wave of repression, resulting in tens of thousands of deaths and disappearances, political prisoners and instances of torture. During this period, thousands of victims and their families made appeals to Catholic clergy, especially the episcopacy, to intervene on their behalf (Anderson 1993, 191; Klaiber 1998, 80).

The small progressive sector of the Argentine Church fell victim to repression during the post-1976 period. Enrique Angelelli, Bishop of La Rioja, was known for having given public support to peasant cooperatives in his diocese in the late 1960s. When two priests were kidnapped and killed in June 1976, Bishop Angelelli submitted a report to the papal nuncio, who spoke to General Videla about the incident. Subsequently, Angelelli visited the workplace of the two priests, collecting documents with information

about the likely assassins. On his return trip, Angelelli was murdered in a staged car accident and the documents were stolen (Anderson 1993, 188-91). Bishop Carlos Ponce de Leon, bishop of San Nicolas, spoke at Angelelli's funeral, describing his death as a violation of human rights. Bishop Ponce de Leon was killed in similar circumstances later that year. Three other bishops publicly denounced rights abuses during the period between 1976 and 1983 as well. They included Jaime de Nevares, bishop of Neuquen; Jorge Novak, bishop of Quilmes; and bishop Miguel Heseyne (Klaiber 1998, 82-3).

Progressive priests and laypeople were targets of repression in the years leading up to the military coup and throughout the Dirty War. In May of 1974, Carlos Mugica, who Klaiber identifies as the main spokesperson for the MSTM, was assassinated by a death squad outside his parish church. Other members of the MSTM were killed or forced into exile during 1976-1977 (1998, 73).

In sum, according to information compiled by Mignone (1986, 130-3), between 1974 and 1980, two bishops, Angelelli and Ponce de Leon, were killed under mysterious circumstances; at least 16 priests and 6 seminarians were murdered or disappeared; and at least 62 priests and 5 seminarians were arbitrarily detained (many of whom were also tortured and later forced into exile).

#### *The Argentine Episcopacy's Response to the Coup and Human Rights Abuses*

In response to these abuses, most members of the Argentine episcopacy remained silent. Meanwhile, several high-profile bishops publicly denied human rights abuses were taking place. In October 1976, six months after the military coup, Archbishop Tortolo, elected president of the episcopal conference, said to the press, "I have no knowledge, I have no reliable proof, of human rights being violated in this country" (Mignone 1986,

4). Other members of the episcopacy followed suit. As late as 1982, Cardinal Aramburu of the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires told the press there were no disappearances in Argentina. In 1983, Bishop Quarracino suggested those who had been disappeared had simply left the country (Klaiber 1998, 80-1).

In other instances, prelates publicly defended or attempted to justify the military's seizure of power and violent campaign against 'subversion.' Archbishop Tortolo attended a meeting with military leaders on the night before the coup. The next day, the Archbishop attended a second meeting with the military as the coup was underway. He emerged from the meeting urging the people of Argentina to "cooperate in a positive way" (Mignone 1986, 2). Six months later, Bishop Victorio Bonamin, vicar of the military, explained in a speech given at a conference at the Universidad Nacional del Litoral, "The antiguerrilla struggle is a struggle for the Argentine Republic, for its integrity, but for its altars as well... This struggle is a struggle to defend morality, human dignity, and ultimately a struggle to defend God... Therefore, I pray for divine protection over this 'dirty war' in which we are engaged" (Mignone 1986, 6).

Collectively, the Argentine bishops issued four letters to the military government pertaining to human rights during the period between 1976 and 1978, the height of the repression.<sup>87</sup> These letters used language that excused or justified the regime's repression. Typical of this tendency is one letter from 1977, which states, "We are aware of the threat to national life that subversion has meant and continues to mean. We understand that those who are responsible for the welfare of the country have found it necessary to take extraordinary measures" (quoted in Torres 1992, 165). Each document was couched in

---

<sup>87</sup> Letters were issued on May 15, 1976 and March 17, May 7, and November 26, 1977. The November 26<sup>th</sup> letter was kept from the public and not available to the public until 1982.

terms that avoided accusing the regime of bearing any responsibility for human rights violations and framed reports of human rights abuses as accusations that may or may not be true (Mignone 1986, 20-1, 25-33).

Several recorded instances of direct clerical involvement in interrogation of political prisoners exist as well. *Nunca Más*, the official report of the Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared, includes testimony from various political prisoners and victims of torture who report visits from priests and higher-ranking clergy during interrogation. Visiting clergy urged prisoners to reveal everything they knew, even as prisoners would plead that they were innocent and ask for information about family members they feared had been executed. Among these clergy members were Bishop Jose Miguel Medina and priest Cristian von Wernich, who would later flee to Chile under an assumed identity (Mignone 1988, 7-9; Feitlowitz 1998, 221; CONADEP 1992). Von Wernich was later discovered, tried, and convicted for these crimes.

In other instances, members of the episcopacy attempted to discourage or subvert the work of human rights organizations. In response to a 1978 letter from Amnesty International denouncing rights abuses in Argentina, Archbishop of La Plata Antonio Jose Plaza denied that there were any political prisoners in Argentina at all (Mignone 1986, 66). In 1979 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (ICHR) of the OAS visited Argentina to investigate allegations of rights abuses. Several bishops publicly denounced the visit either on the basis that serious rights abuses were not occurring or that the visit amounted to a violation of Argentine sovereignty (67-70). In at least one case, staff working for the Curia of Buenos Aires helped the military hide prisoners from human rights observers. Shortly before the 1979 ICHR visit, Monsignor

Emilio Grasseli, a Military Chaplain, arranged for the Church to sell to the military a small island in the Tigre Delta. Called *El Silencio*, the island was owned by the Buenos Aires Archdiocese and used by Archbishop Aramburu for weekend retreats.<sup>88</sup> After its sale, the island was used to hide prisoners suffering from torture-related injuries during the month-long visit (Feitlowitz 1998, 219)

Consistent with decades of Church-state interaction, the Church gained increased benefits by remaining nationalist in orientation, refraining from criticism of the state, and retaining close ties to the military in the midst of national crisis. In February 1977, General Videla issued law 21,540 mandating that all retiring archbishops and bishops would be paid a life-long monthly salary equal to 70% of the first stage salary of federal judges. In March of 1979 General Videla approved a government measure that began paying the salaries of archbishops, bishops and other high-ranking members of the Church hierarchy (Mignone 1986, 80-4). Despite a progressive activist sector at the grassroots, a small core of progressive bishops, and repression targeting these members of the Church, the long alliance between the Church's dominant right wing and the military held fast via Church-state ties.

## **Chile**

During the Allende government, Chile's sharp class divide became even more polarized stoking broad social and political disorder and prompting the Catholic episcopacy to call for reconciliation. When the Chilean military staged a coup on September 11, 1973, a wave of human rights abuses followed, as did the closure of democratic institutions. Though an important segment of the Church quickly organized in

---

<sup>88</sup> No Church officials names appear on the documents of sale (the recorded seller's name is the name of a prisoner held by the military; his signature was forged).

support of victims of repression, the episcopacy assumed a cautious 'wait and see' posture for the first 18-24 months. As it became clear the military intended to remain in power indefinitely and sectors of the Church became targets of repression, the Chilean episcopacy began to denounce the regime publicly while deepening its work on behalf of victims. This response was consistent with patterns established during the late 1920s. For decades the Church's interests and ideology were shaped by forces outside the state during the era of Church reform; the Church pursued its interests by participating in public, partisan politics; and the Church relied on relatively little support from or cooperation with the state in order to pursue its own programs. Upon recognition of repressive practices that targeted segments of society to which it had ties, the Church began to act among those groups. When the indefinite closure of its mode of influence became clear and repression targeting the Chilean episcopacy began, the Church defended its interests and partisan allies (now banned) with public pronouncements and organizational activity that unambiguously denounced the state's actions.

#### *Ideological diversity in the Chilean Church*

Decades of political autonomy with respect to the state created a politically diverse Chilean Catholic Church that was deeply affected by the class divide. In the 1970 presidential election, working class, regularly practicing Catholics were more likely to support Allende than other candidates. Meanwhile, middle and upper class, regularly practicing Catholics were more likely to support conservative candidate Jorge Alessandri (Smith 1982, 132). By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Chilean episcopal conference included progressive, moderate and conservative bishops. However, the episcopacy's political 'center of gravity' stood apart from both Allende's Popular Unity (UP) coalition

as well as traditional alliances with conservative social forces. Episcopal statements followed defending the constitutional framework, warning against violence, and encouraging cooperation with programs and reforms that favored the poor (Smith 1982, 183).

Despite the bishops' careful political neutrality, many Catholics, including priests, nuns and lay people in poor areas, were openly supportive of Allende. Between 1968 and 1973 there arose a number of leftwing Christian organizations, including the Movement of Unified Popular Action (MAPU), The Eighty, The 200, and Christians for Socialism (CpS) (Dodson 1979, 56). Bishops affirmed the right of Catholics to support Allende, especially as his government generally respected the freedom of religion and the rights of the Church. However, during the Popular Unity government CpS emerged at the forefront of clerical involvement in politics, counting among its members approximately 350 priests and nuns, or 5% of all religious in Chile (a proportion smaller than Argentina's MSTM) (Fleet and Smith 1997, 57).

CpS members contended that critical analysis of Chilean reality combined with Christian values could only lead one to support the Popular Unity government. Consequently, CpS worked to push the Church to support the UP to the exclusion of all other parties and actors. For example, in the congressional elections of 1973, CpS campaigned openly for Popular Unity candidates only. Some CpS clergy also made support for Popular Unity a requirement for participation in Christian Base Communities. Bishops repeatedly requested that clergy cease such practices, but when it continued, the bishops condemned the movement and banned clergy from participating in it (Dodson 1979, 63-4; Fleet and Smith 1997, 57).

A smaller, but well-organized rightwing existed within the Chilean Church as well. The Chilean Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property was founded in 1967. The organization founded a magazine, which frequently denounced progressive sectors of the Church, accusing it of aiding communism. Many of its members left Chile after Allende's election in 1970 (Klaiber 1998, 46). Despite this, in 1976, the organization published a book titled *The Church of Silence in Chile* that criticized the episcopacy for its supposed movement to the ideological left. The book also interpreted the bishops' work related to human rights as a manifestation of its affinity with the left (Lowden 1996, 57).

Diversity within the Church during the Allende period revealed a core tension within Chile's Church-state trajectory. Until the late 1960s, the episcopacy pursued its interests and social concerns via partisan politics and public pronouncements. However, amid the decline of the Church's most recent partisan ally, the PDC, and growing polarization, the episcopacy backed away from partisan alliances. To the bishops conference, the moment instead called for public neutrality and calls for reformist compromise and dialog. In contrast, among much of the popular sector laity and the clergy who served them, the appeal of partisan attachments intensified because their preferences trended to the left. Many organizations comprising the Christian left then defied episcopal leadership and persisted in their pro-Allende activism, even attempting to pressure the episcopacy to support the Allende government. The bishops resisted.

#### *The Episcopacy and Allende*

Though the Chilean episcopacy declared itself to be neutral during the 1970 presidential election, after Allende's victory the Chilean episcopacy remained heavily

involved in politics. Rather than act as a partisan organization advancing policy preferences, the bishops took action and issued statements encouraging dialogue and national unity. The Church's task was incredibly difficult. Allende's election and revolutionary program intensified political polarization and social conflict rooted in Chile's class divide.

Prior to Allende's inauguration the episcopacy denied support to several attempts aimed at preventing Allende from taking office. Once Allende took office, the Church adopted a tolerant posture. After the inauguration, Archbishop Silva stated publicly that the Church supported Allende's proposed reforms, noting that socialism was more in line with many "important Christian values" than was liberal capitalism. In May 1971, the episcopal conference issued a statement with essentially the same message. The Chilean bishops' letter followed the release of an apostolic letter by Pope Paul VI which "discussed Marxism in more nuanced, less negative, terms than in previous social encyclicals" (Fleet and Smith 1997, 55).

The episcopacy's *strategic* shift to relative partisan neutrality, tolerance, and calls for compromise during a period of political turmoil and reform were not without precedent. As Smith observes of the period, "As in the case with the separation of Church and state in 1925 and the coexistence of the Church with a Popular Front government in 1938, strategies and secular leaders were nonthreatening to one another and operationalized mutually overlapping interests effectively" (1982, 184-5). That the Chilean episcopacy had met earlier challenges with comparable flexibility does not imply that the episcopacy avoided criticism. Calls for respect for the constitutional order were interpreted by the right (and much of the PDC) as support for Allende's legitimacy in

pursuing his policy objectives, but the same statements were interpreted by the Popular Unity government as calls to abandon Allende's push toward socialism (Fleet and Smith 1997, 57).

As tensions rose, Chile's bishops issued a number of statements cautioning all parties about the consequences of violence and civil war and calling for negotiations and compromise. By mid-1973, as tensions rose further, Cardinal Silva attempted to arrange meetings between Allende and PDC president Patricio Aylwin to prevent the impending military coup (Aguilar 2003, 718; Klaiber 1998, 48). The effort was unsuccessful.

### *Repression Targeting the Church*

A wave of human rights abuses followed the coup and among the thousands killed and tens of thousands imprisoned for political reasons were members of the Catholic laity, clergy, and, eventually, some members of the episcopacy.<sup>89</sup> Early Church-affiliated victims of repression were members of Christians for Socialism and other segments of the Catholic left. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, three worker priests, Fr. Joan Alsina Hurtos, Fr. Michael Woodward, and Fr. Gerardo Francisco Poblete Fernández, were arrested, tortured and murdered by security forces. By December of 1973, over 45 additional priests had been arrested and another 50 foreign missionaries had been deported (Aguilar 2004, 30). A seminal moment (discussed below) took place in August 1976, when a group of progressive bishops were attacked as they returned from a conference in Ecuador (Smith 1982, 306). During this period, individuals with ties to the Church's human rights office, the Vicariate of Solidarity (see below), were also subject to threats and harassment (Lowden 1996, 58, 60)

---

<sup>89</sup> For a broader accounting of repression in post-coup Chile, see chapter 3.

*The Chilean Episcopacy's Response to the Coup and Human Rights Abuses*

In the wake of the coup and the wave of repression targeting the left that followed, the Chilean episcopacy at large demonstrated an initial willingness to work with the military government. This acceptance continued from September of 1973 through April 1974, at which time it showed signs of breaking down. By September of 1975, the Chilean episcopacy at large had denounced rights abuses perpetrated by the military government. By January of 1976, through the leadership of Cardinal Silva and the Archdiocese of Santiago, the Chilean episcopacy began work documenting cases of abuse and assisting in legal actions on behalf of victims.

In the days after the coup, Chilean bishops displayed a range of different reactions. Privately, most of the bishops believed military intervention was necessary in September 1973, though many distinguished between the need for intervention and the violence that followed (Smith 1982, 210). Six of the thirty members of the Chilean episcopacy publicly thanked the military for 'saving' the nation via individual statements. On September 16, Cardinal Silva met with the military government and agreed to preside over the traditional prayer service with the military celebrating Chile's independence day on September 18, though the celebration was moved to a less prestigious location, the Church of National Gratitude, rather than the customary cathedral. Meanwhile, auxiliary bishop of Santiago, Fernando Aristia, marked the occasion by sending a letter to Pinochet denouncing ongoing human rights abuses committed by the military (Klaiber 1998, 50). The Permanent Committee of the Chilean Episcopal Conference issued a public statement urging the military to "show moderation to the vanquished" while requesting

that the Chilean people cooperate with the military government in the hopes of a quick return to “institutional normality” (Smith 1982, 288).

In October of 1973, Pope Paul VI sent a private letter to Chile’s Bishops that expressed concern about the violation of human rights in the wake of the coup and called for the immediate restoration of democracy. The Pope wished the letter to be made public. The military visited Cardinal Silva and asked him to convince the Pope not to do so, suggesting that he had been misinformed. The Cardinal traveled to Rome in an effort to persuade the pope not to publish the letter so that the Chilean episcopacy might maintain a cooperative relationship with the military government. The letter was not published.<sup>90</sup> On November 5<sup>th</sup>, Cardinal Silva stated publicly that the Church would cooperate with the military government. In his remarks, which were published in *El Mercurio* the following day, the Cardinal likened the Church’s cooperative position vis-à-vis the military junta to that pursued by the Church during the Allende government. However, Silva requested that the military extend the same level of autonomy to the Church as had been the case from 1970-1973 (Aguilar 2004, 50-1). On January 2, 1974 the press was informed that the Cardinal and a group of Chilean bishops met with members of the military junta to discuss plans for the year (58).

During this period families of victims approached the Church for help locating relatives who had been arrested by the military government, as well as material aid after losing jobs. Cardinal Silva responded by making the first phone calls that culminated in the creation of the ecumenical Committee of Cooperation for Peace (*Comite de*

---

<sup>90</sup> Later in 1975 in the midst of repression against the Church, the Cardinal asked the Pope to issue a statement, but he did not do so, saying that 1973 had been the Cardinal’s only chance at such a statement (Aguilar 2004, 50-1).

*Cooperation para la Paz en Chile*, COPACHI). COPACHI was created by a number of religious leaders on October 9, 1973. The organization's founding members included Chilean leaders from the World Council of Churches, the Baptist Church, Methodist Church, Pentacostal Methodists, Lutheran Church, Orthodox Church and the Jewish community in addition to the Catholic Church (Aguilar 2004, 49; Lowden 1996, 32). COPACHI began offering legal advice to those who had lost their jobs for political reasons, but "very soon it started providing legal advice to relatives of those who had been arrested, killed or disappeared" (Aguilar 2004, 49). Though originally conceived as a temporary relief organization, COPACHI grew very quickly and by mid-1974 had 103 personnel in Santiago and 95 staff members working in the provinces, and by the end of the year there were 24 different offices spread throughout the country (Aguilar 2004, 62; Lowden 1996, 34-6).

COPACHI would later collapse in 1975 as repression targeting its leadership and rank-and-file members increased, and some religious organizations withdrew their support. That year, DINA captured members of the MIR who had received shelter and medical aid from priests and nuns in Chilean convents and then been turned over to COPACHI (Lowden 1996, 47). Ultimately, Pinochet himself sent a request to Cardinal Silva to dissolve the organization and the Cardinal complied (Aguilar 2004, 96-101).

Despite being in operation for only a short period, the COPACHI provided assistance to many. It presented more than two thousand habeas corpus demands in Chilean courts and defended 550 accused in military courts. COPACHI also denounced 435 cases of forced disappearance as well as other leadership actions in response to political violence. In addition to this overtly political activity, COPACHI provided legal,

medical, educational, and material assistance to tens of thousands more workers, students and families (Aguilar 2004, 101-103).

The Chilean bishops' conference at large became more critical of the military regime by mid-1974, though their tone remained cautious. The first collective statement marking a slight move towards criticism of the military government's rights abuses, titled "Reconciliation in Chile," was issued on April 24, 1974. In it, the bishops raise concerns about the "lack of efficient judicial safeguards for personal security which results in arbitrary and excessively long detentions...[and] interrogations under physical and moral duress" (Klaiber 1998, 51). However, the document as a whole is politically ambiguous as it prefaces its diplomatically worded criticism by acknowledging the military's "good intentions" (51). Despite the ambiguity, three bishops expressed disagreement with the statement.<sup>91</sup>

In August of 1974, a number of religious leaders including Cardinal Silva wrote privately to Pinochet. The letters signatories requested "the end of the 'state of war,'" and suggested "a general amnesty for all political prisoners" (Aguilar 2004, 64). In addition to explaining the reasons for the state of war, Pinochet responded by questioning the premise of the letter, contending that "he would not consider requesting changes within ecclesiastical organizations" despite his belief that the Church had been infiltrated by Marxists (Aguilar 2004, 64). Pinochet then published these letters, which had been confidential up to that point.

Episcopal denunciation of rights abuse sharpened the following year when on September 5, 1975 the episcopal conference issued "Gospel and Peace." In this document

---

<sup>91</sup> Among the dissenting bishops was Bishop Juan Francisco Fresno who would later be appointed to succeed Cardinal Silva as Archbishop of Santiago.

the bishops asserted that without total fulfillment of 10 conditions there would be no lasting peace in Chile. The listed conditions included respect for: "the universal right to life," "the right to physical and moral integrity," "the right to create," and "the right to participate" (Aguilar 2004, 94-5). Aguilar (2004, 94) suggests that each condition could be read as a direct critique of government policy and Klaiber contends that this document marks a turning point for the Chilean bishops (1998, 52). Smith (1982, 298), however, correctly notes that this document never explicitly states that torture was actually occurring in Chile or that the right to participate was significantly restrained. Moreover, the document reserved space for further statements of thanks to the military for saving the nation from Marxism. Such restraint on the part of the bishops is symptomatic of their widespread belief during the years immediately after the coup that private dialogue with the military was a more effective strategy for curtailing rights abuses than were public denunciations (Smith 1982, 298-9).

Repression helped trigger unambiguous denunciations of regime abuses in 1976. In mid-August of that year, a group of Latin American bishops met in a conference in Riobamba, Ecuador to discuss continued application to pastoral work of Vatican II and Medellín documents. Accusing the bishops of Marxist subversion, Ecuador's military government detained and then expelled all bishops in attendance, including three members of the Chilean episcopacy, Enrique Alvear, Fernando Ariztía and Carlos González. These events were covered widely in the Chilean media, which was critical of the bishops, claiming they were "leftist bishops" and too heavily involved in politics. When these three bishops arrived at the Santiago airport they were met by a group of pro-

government demonstrators and members of DINA. The group physically attacked the bishops, shouting insults and throwing stones (Smith 1982, 306).

The Permanent Committee of the Episcopal Conference responded by denouncing the media attacks against the bishops and the demonstrations. The statement identified members of DINA who took part by name and noted that canon-law requires excommunication of anyone who does violence to a bishop or archbishop. However, the statement proceeded with a much broader and direct condemnation of the regime and its pattern of abuses:

The actions which we denounce and condemn are not isolated incidents...By a constant appeal to national security, a model of society is being consolidated that takes away basic liberties, runs roughshod over the most fundamental rights and subjugates citizens to a dreaded and omnipotent police state...The Church cannot remain passive or neutral in face of such a situation. The legacy which it has received from Christ demands that it speak out in favor of human dignity and for the effective protection of the liberty and rights of the person. (quoted in Smith 1982, 307)

Subsequent Episcopal Conference statements criticized the regime with the same vigor. March 1977 saw the publication of "Our Life as a Nation," which analyzed the Chilean political system's structural weakness and positioned the Church behind those calling for constitutional reform and representative government. During Christmas 1977, the Episcopal Conference issued a statement calling for an amnesty for those forced into exile and a public letter asking that the recently announced constitutional referendum be

postponed to guarantee meaningful participation. In 1978, statements were issued on salary restrictions and workers' rights, information on the fate of the disappeared and repression leveled against the clergy. In 1979, statements criticized government treatment of the Mapuche and the government's agrarian program. The bishops also called for the return of the remains of all those killed and buried in mass graves in the wake of the coup. In 1980, the Episcopal Conference again called for increased information, freedom and participation in the debate over the new constitution. In December of 1980, five bishops issued a statement (without the support of Cardinal Silva) excommunicating anyone in their dioceses complicit in torture, including torturers themselves, those who order torture, and those with the power to stop it but who do not act (Smith 1982, 308-11).

The shift to unambiguous denunciations of regime abuses in 1976 was accompanied by the Church's second effort at organizing opposition to human rights abuses. This effort was the Vicariate of Solidarity. The Vicariate was the idea of Cardinal Silva and designed to replace COPACHI, this time with an organization under the direct authority of the Archdiocese of Santiago (Lowden 1996, 53). In addition to its exclusive organizational ties to the Church, the Vicariate was distinct from COPACHI in the sense that it was tasked with putting into practice those social teachings of the church articulated in Vatican II and Medellín documents, taught at Catholic universities, and preached in homilies (Aguilar 2004, 107). The central idea of solidarity was the result of the Cardinal's reflections on what COPACHI had been working toward (Aguilar 2004, 105; Lowden 1996, 54-5). The Cardinal asked a young priest, Cristián Precht, who had worked with COPACHI, to head the Vicariate (Aguilar 2004, 105-6). Officially founded

by the decree of Cardinal Silva on January 1, 1976, and the creation and work of the Vicariate was supported by a majority of the Chilean episcopacy (Lowden 1996, 53).<sup>92</sup> The offices were housed in a very central location, Plaza de Armas 444, beside the Metropolitan Cathedral in Santiago. The Vicariate's staff included "lawyers, social workers, administrative staff, [and] doctors" as well as many volunteers (Aguilar 2004, 106).

From its first days, the Vicariate of Solidarity confronted the human rights situation with enormous energy. After its first 8 months of work, the Vicariate produced a report in September of 1976 documenting its activity to date. The office's work included 11,242 appointments with Vicariate lawyers, in addition to hundreds of food distribution centers, worker and peasant training programs, and pension programs (Aguilar 2004, 125-6).

By the end of the 1976, the Vicariate became even more aggressive in its response to human rights abuse. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 1976, the Vicariate filed a petition to the Chilean Supreme Court to appoint an ad hoc judge to investigate 415 cases of disappearance (Aguilar 2004, 134). By 1978, the Vicariate began a serious effort to document every case of disappearance (Aguilar 2004, 162-63).

The Vicariate also organized the International Symposium on Human Rights that took place over three days starting on November 22, 1978. The symposium was the largest international meeting to be held in Chile since the coup. The event included three days of gatherings of relatives of the disappeared that drew 750 attendees. One of the speakers was Bishop Alejandro Jiménez. Also present was Sola Sierra who, since the

---

<sup>92</sup> The Vicariate of Solidarity was closed on December 31, 1992 (Aguilar 2004, 106).

1976 disappearance of her husband, was a highly visible leader of family members of the disappeared. The conference issued press releases, created a sphere in which Chileans could meet and organize, and drew international attention (Aguilar 2004, 164-7; Lowden 1996, 67-9).

The last example of a major organizing effort on the part of the episcopacy in response to political repression comes from the successor to Cardinal Silva, Archbishop of Santiago Francisco Fresno. Beginning in 1983, Fresno helped organize and mediate talks between rival opposition parties, including the PDC, the National Party, the Radical Party and the Christian Left. This occurred despite the fact that all political parties technically remained either illegal or suspended. The meetings produced the *National Accord on the Transition to Democracy*, which called for the immediate normalization of Chilean politics. The ultimate result of these negotiations was the *Concertación de Partidos por el NO*, the leading organization in the final push for democratization during 1988-1989. Afterwards, this organization became *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia*, the organizational basis for the coalition that ruled Chile for the next twenty years (Meacham 1987; Aguilar 2004, 113-4).

As in Argentina, the Chilean episcopacy's response to post-coup human rights abuses was consistent with patterns of Church-state interaction that had been established for decades. Following a brief 'wait and see' period, the Chilean episcopacy used public political strategies, including pronouncements, organization, and the legal system to criticize and embarrass a regime that it came to oppose. Whereas in Argentina, silence on human rights was followed by state payment of bishops' salaries, in Chile one of the most

outwardly conservative bishops helped organize the political opposition and rebuild a party system in which the Church had once wielded considerable influence.

## **Brazil**

Like the Church in Argentina and Chile, the Brazilian Church's immediate public reaction to the military coup was one of thanks and relief. However, as state repression escalated and it became clear that the military planned to retain power indefinitely, the Church in Brazil responded to the military government's human rights abuses with a pattern distinct from those followed by Chile and Argentina. From the March 1964 coup until 1970 Brazil's bishops played no significant role in opposition to the military government. Then, from 1970 to 1974, the Church entered into secret private negotiations with the military in an effort to curtail human rights abuses while bishops serving in more marginalized and politicized areas began to denounce the state more forcefully. After 1976, the CNBB began to openly criticize the military regime and its rights abuses with broad support from the episcopacy at large. Then, after 1977, the CNBB's criticisms became unambiguous denunciations.

### *Ideological diversity in the Brazilian Church*

By the time of the 1964 military coup, a well-established progressive sector of the Catholic Church already existed in Brazil, just as in pre-coup Argentina and Chile. Emboldened by the CNBB's pre-1964 support for Goulart's social reforms, a number of organizations played a role in the progressive sector of the Church. Most prominent was Brazilian Catholic Action (ACB). The ACB encompassed many Catholic Action organizations with progressive inclinations. The most radical of these included the Catholic Youth Workers (JOC), Catholic University Youth (JUC), and Catholic Workers

Action (ACO) movements. An additional component of the Brazilian Catholic left was the Basic Education Movement (MEB), which performed consciousness-raising work among marginalized groups, especially in rural areas (Serbin 2000, 36; Mainwaring 1986, 60-75; de Kadt 1970, 58-72). The influence of the Catholic left in Brazil during the early and middle 1960s should not be overstated, however. Though progressive bishops came to dominate the country's Northeast prior to 1964, other regions later associated with Catholic progressivism such as the Amazon and São Paulo would not experience this transition until the 1970s (Mainwaring 1986, 84-94, 103-8). Moreover, by the early 1960s, the JUC was drawing public criticism from moderate bishops who viewed it as too radical and too autonomous from episcopal control (de Kadt 1970, 77-80).

An important rightwing tendency existed within the Brazilian Church at this time as well. Between 1963 and 1968 the Catholic right, which possessed close ties to the military, played a high-profile role in Brazilian politics (Mainwaring 1986, 81). This tendency within the Church included Tradition, Family and Property (TFP), which routinely denounced the Catholic left and Bishop Hélder Câmara (Klaiber 1998, 28) In addition, after the 1964 coup, General Castelo Branco publicly praised the Family Rosary Crusade and expressed gratitude for its contribution in sustaining opposition to Goulart (Gribble 2003, 551). Led by Irish priest Fr. Patrick Peyton and with financial support from the CIA and shipping magnate J. Peter Grace, this fervently anti-communist missionary organization organized enormous public prayer sessions across Brazil between July of 1962 and the end of 1965 (Gribble 2003, 543-551). The actual contribution of the Family Rosary Crusade to the coup is debatable, but Branco's public rhetoric is an indication of both the presence and the perceived importance of the

Catholic right. A substantial conservative presence remained in the episcopacy and rose to prominence in the CNBB after 1964 as well (see below). Thus, but the early 1960s, progressives were temporarily able to marginalize conservative voices, but the future of this progressive dominance was uncertain.

During Kubitschek's, Quadros', and Goulart's governments, the Church retained cordial relations with the state. Some criticism emanated from the Catholic right, but the CNBB continued to issue a number of progressive documents in support of major reforms similar to those pursued by the state. As Mainwaring puts it, "The bishops perceived the state as the instrument for social change, and throughout the late populist years (1956-63), the CNBB supported the government" (1986, 58). This continued well into Goulart's presidency. In June of 1963, when Goulart moved to the left, this support faded away not unlike the shifting views of Brazilian moderates during the same time. This helped clear the way for the Catholic right to ascend to a position of temporary power in the episcopacy and publicly support the military as it conspired to overthrow Goulart.

### *Repression Targeting the Church*

Human rights abuses peaked in the immediate aftermath of the March 1964 coup and reintensified during a second wave between 1968 and 1974.<sup>93</sup> Progressive segments of the Brazilian Church were targets of repression during both waves. Immediately after the coup, the Catholic left, especially the JUC, was among the most targeted groups (Skidmore 1988, 17). In the Northeast, bishops' statements were censored by the military after 1964. After 1971, bishops in the Amazon were subject to similar treatment as they

---

<sup>93</sup> Chapter 3 provides an overview of repression under post-1964 military rule in Brazil.

became increasingly outspoken on issues of human rights and development. Repression targeting bishops included police intimidation, arbitrary searches, and death threats (Mainwaring 1986, 88-93). More severe repression was directed at clergy and laity. Particularly in the Amazon, Northeast, and São Paulo, priests with ties to progressive movements or who publicly denounced the regime often risked arrest, torture and formal charges of subversion (Mainwaring 1986, 89, 99-101). Church members were sometimes subject to private violence and death squads as well. After 1966 in the Amazon, the repressive violence organized by landowners broadened its focus from secular activists to include progressive priests and religious workers as well (Mainwaring 1986, 84-9). The first clergyman assassinated during the military regime was Father Antônio Henrique Pereira, a young priest who worked with the JOC and who collaborated with Bishop Hélder Câmara. Pereira was tortured and shot by a death squad in 1969 (Klaiber 1998, 27-9; Mainwaring 1986, 99-100). Serbin (2000, 39) cites a "partial Church tally" of documented "acts of repression" against the Church that includes actions taken against 33 bishops, between 1968 and 1978. Also included in the tally are "hundreds of arrests of priests, seven deaths, and numerous cases of torture, expulsion of foreign priests, invasions of buildings, threats, indictments, abductions, infiltration by government agents, censorship, prohibition of masses and meetings, and forgeries and falsifications of documents and publications" (39).

*The Brazilian Episcopacy's Response to the Coup and Human Rights Abuses*

In May of 1964, a group of 33 leading bishops assembled to draft a public response to the coup. Characteristic of the Brazilian episcopacy as a whole, this group was divided between conservatives and progressives with contrasting perspectives about

what the document should say. The progressive group produced a draft that recognized the "martyrdom" of Catholic victims of repression (such as members of the JUC), criticized the military for formulating and disseminating its own distinction between Christianity and Marxism, and denounced the regime's lack of respect for the pope (Serbin 2000, 37). Meanwhile, the conservative group produced a draft that thanked the military for the coup. The final draft issued on June 2<sup>nd</sup> was an attempt at compromise between the two drafts in a document Serbin describes as a "confusing, self-contradictory pronouncement" that both thanked the military for the coup and appealed to the military to protect the Brazilian people from "the abuses of liberal capitalism" and end attacks on Catholic activists (quoted in Serbin 2000, 37).<sup>94</sup> From the publication of this statement until the early 1970s, most bishops, including Hélder Câmara, avoided public criticism of the regime (Serbin 2000, 38).

In 1964, a confluence of events tipped the precarious balance of the ideologically divided Brazilian episcopacy in a conservative direction. In addition to Goulart's disintegration and the March coup, Dom Armando Lombardi died. Lombardi was the papal nuncio who for a decade had worked to marginalize conservatives in the Brazilian episcopacy. Then, two archbishops important to the CNBB's progressive evolution, Dom Carlos Coelho and Dom Mousinh, died the same year (Bruneau 1982, 53). A conservative resurgence in Brazilian episcopal structures followed. In October of 1964, a slate of conservative candidates was elected to top positions in the CNBB, including a new conservative secretary general, Bishop José Gonçalves (Mainwaring 1986, 82). For

---

<sup>94</sup> Mainwaring offers a similar assessment of this document, describing it as "contradictory" and indicative of the divisions within the episcopacy at the time (1986, 80-2). The document's inconsistencies are also noted by de Kadt (1970, 190-1).

the next four years, the CNBB's pre-1964 interest in social justice took a backseat to "internal housekeeping" and attempts to rein in the Catholic left (Mainwaring 1986, 82). In 1966, the JUC was dismantled by the CNBB. During the same period, MEB was brought under closer control by the bishops and forced to moderate much of its rhetoric (Mainwaring 1986, 67-8, 82). The CNBB continued to issue statements on social conditions, but they were abstract critiques of capitalism with no reference to ongoing repression, the military regime, or the regime's economic reforms (Mainwaring 1986, 83). Emblematic of the period is the CNBB's first statement after the 1968 CELAM conference in Medellín. In it, the bishops explained, "The Church recognizes the autonomy of the civil authority and expresses the support that this authority deserves from us. Furthermore, with its authority, the Church hopes to collaborate with those responsible for the common good" (cited in Mainwaring 1986, 83).

By 1970, however, state repression targeting the Church and the persistence of large, region-based progressive sectors of bishops, clergy and grassroots activists pushed the episcopacy at large to change tactics. Part of this shift involved profound but private exchanges between bishops who shared a commitment to human rights, but who valued different strategic interactions with the state. Those advocating greater public confrontation, such as Archbishop Hélder Câmara, Archbishop Paulo Arns and Catholic intellectual Alceu Amoroso Lima, hoped to pressure the regime in the international arena. Those advocating caution, such as Dom Eugênio de Araújo Sales, sought to protect the private, congenial component of Church-state relations as a means of resolving disagreements (Serbin 2000, 76-8). Such tactics, this latter group reasoned, were

especially important in a dictatorship where "open protest could only serve to irritate those in power" (Serbin 2000, 78).

During this time, a number of bishops interested in defending human rights participated in precisely the type of official dialog Dom Eugênio sought to protect. Called the Bipartite, representatives of Church and the regime began meeting in a secret commission that lasted from 1970-1974.<sup>95</sup> For the Church, two main themes drove the discussion. The first was the preservation of cordial Church-state collaboration on mutually shared goals, and the second was the Church's defense of human rights. In this way, the church hierarchy was reacting to the influence exerted by the reform-era Vatican and activist clergy and bishops at the periphery while attempting to preserve a major, historically successful mode of influence: private dialog with public officials (Serbin 2000, 52-3). Because these discussions were conducted without public knowledge, the Bipartite reveals continuity in the collaborative nature of private, post-1930s church-state relations.

Ultimately, however, the Church gained less from the discussions than the state. Through the dialog, the state was able to get the hierarchy to rein-in the public denunciations of the CNBB. Meanwhile, the Church gained a brief and limited reprieve from attacks by the state, but little progress was made in addressing the broader problem of human rights abuse (Serbin 2000, 224). This process of engaging in fruitless dialog combined with ongoing discussion between bishops with differing strategic inclinations helped persuade many moderate and conservative bishops that public denunciations of the regime's human rights abuses were warranted.

---

<sup>95</sup> For a full accounting of this commission see Serbin (2000).

Meanwhile, other crucial developments involving Vatican influence set the stage for more contentious interaction with the state over the issue of human rights. In 1970, Cardinal Rossi, conservative archbishop of São Paulo and president of the CNBB, was recalled to Rome to head the Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples. Rossi was replaced in São Paulo by progressive Archbishop Paulo Arns and the following year moderate Archbishop Aloísio Lorscheider succeeded him as CNBB President (Klaiber 1998, 30).<sup>96</sup>

In the years that followed, Arns joined Hélder Câmara as an outspoken critic of the regime. In addition, under Arns' leadership, the Archdiocese of São Paulo began pursuit of human rights organizing via its Peace and Justice Commission. Promoted by the Vatican, the commission was founded in 1968 and headquartered in Rio de Janeiro. The organization remained unassertive while overseen by conservative Bishop, and later Archbishop, Eugênio Sales. However, in 1972 Arns founded his own São Paulo chapter of the commission. Under Arns, the commission conducted extensive investigation and documentation of allegations of human rights abuse. It also provided assistance to victims and their families (Klaiber 1998, 31). With Arns' expansion and acceleration of the commission's work, the commission grew to include offices in four regions and 42 student groups by 1978 (Bruneau 1982, 80). Given the tasks it assumed and the organization's reach, the commission was comparable to the Vicariate of Solidarity in

---

<sup>96</sup> It is also important to note that in 1971, the Vatican appointed the relatively conservative Archbishop Eugenio de Araujo Sales to the Brazilian Church's other center of power, the Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro (Klaiber 1998, 30).

Chile. Documentation of abuses was eventually compiled and published in a volume titled *Brasil: Nunca Mais* (Klaiber 1998, 32).<sup>97</sup>

Meanwhile, after 1970, Lorscheider's position as president of the CNBB, coupled with his status as a moderate, helped secure his influence in conservative sectors of the episcopacy. In 1973, the CNBB began planning an international conference on human rights that would eventually take place in 1978 (Bruneau 1982, 81) In the same year, Lorscheider was assigned the position of Archbishop in an archdiocese in the Northeast, bringing him into increased contact with this progressive regional bloc of bishops. From this position, Lorscheider worked with great efficacy as a consensus-maker on the issue of human rights during a period of increased repression aimed specifically at the Church (Klaiber 1998, 34-5).

When the Bipartite finally broke down in 1974, Lorscheider helped convince moderates and many conservatives who cautiously avoided direct confrontation with the state to join in public denunciations of abuse. After 1973, the episcopacy's position on human rights hardened with a gradual progression of CNBB statements offering restrained criticism of the regime (Bruneau 1982, 75-7; Mainwaring 1986, 111-2, 152), and episcopal involvement in protest following the murders of student Alexandre Leme (Serbin 2000, 200-18) and journalist Vladimir Herzog and two priests in 1976 (Klaiber 1998, 31-4). Then, in November 1976, the bishops' conference released an official statement titled "Pastoral Message to the People of God," which unambiguously denounced regime policies the bishops blamed for creating a general sense of

---

<sup>97</sup> This volume was later published in English under the title *Torture in Brazil*. See Catholic Church, Dassin and Wright (1998) in the works cited list.

lawlessness, insecurity, and inequality.<sup>98</sup> The following year, under the leadership of Archbishop Lorscheider, the CNBB approved and published an even more forceful message titled "Christian Requirements for the Political Order," which unambiguously denounced the regime's use of torture as well as the basic premise of the national security doctrine. This document was passed by a 210 to 3 vote of the bishops (Mainwaring 1986, 152).<sup>99</sup> These denunciations and the publication of *Brasil: Nunca Mais* in 1979 were followed by heavy involvement in the democratization movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s, including support for workers on strike and pro-democracy jurists (Klaiber 1998, 38). Consistent with patterns of avoiding direct partisan alliances, the Church refrained from endorsing either the newly formed Worker's Party (PT) or the opposition PMDB throughout the process (Klaiber 1998, 38).

### **Church-State trajectories, Constant Causes and Proximate Causes**

The responses of episcopal conferences to waves of human rights abuse during the authoritarian period in Argentina, Chile and Brazil were structured by the accumulation of ideological preferences and strategic assumptions generated by historical interaction with the state, Vatican and other forces. It is only with reference to these path dependent trajectories that serious study can make sense of arguments that seem entirely persuasive within single cases, but inconsistent when applied across cases. This is most obviously the case with reference to two pervasive arguments attempting to explain varying episcopal commitments to human rights advocacy: the importance of a pre-

---

<sup>98</sup> Mainwaring (1986, 152-3 ), Bruneau (1982, 77-8) and Klaiber (1998, 35 ) all recognize this document and the subsequent 1977 statement as definitive moments in the episcopacy's clear opposition to the regime and defense of human rights.

<sup>99</sup> For complete English translations of these two pronouncements, see LADOC (1976) and LADOC (1977).

existing progressive sector in the Church and the importance of repression targeting the Church.

At the start of the authoritarian period, high-profile progressive movements with varying levels of support from bishops existed in Chile, Brazil, *and* Argentina. This is significant for a number of rival hypotheses proposing various proximate causes. The development of a popular Church in response to religious competition is an essential part of the logic of Gill's (1998) hypothesized link between religious competition and pro-human rights episcopal conferences. According to Gill, religious competition helped create acceptance for progressive theologies serving the poor, which in turn created greater affinity between the Church and groups later targeted by state repression. Refuting this logic is the emergence of the progressive Priests for the Third World in Argentina despite relatively little competition from evangelical protestants. In Chile, the radicalization of Christians for Socialism (and related groups) and its subsequent conflict with Chile's bishops raises questions for Gill's argument as well. If Chile's bishops perceived CpS as a threat in the Church's competition with Marxism, why come to the defense of such competitors after they were subject to repression unless bishops were primarily motivated by other forces, such as deep religious conviction, Vatican II and Medellín-era reforms, and/or broader political strategy? Finally, the emergence of Brazil's progressive sector in the 1950s substantially predates the rise of religious competition in that country which is not clearly discernible until the 1980s (Philpott 2007, 513). Rather than religious competition, explanations of varying responses to rights abuses must lie elsewhere.

Suggesting an alternative proximate cause, Mainwaring (1986) convincingly argues that early progressivism, at least in the Brazilian Church, came from close Church interaction with popular sectors as they became politically activated and the Church entered a period of theological change (115). Then, repression of these sectors and eventually the Church pushed bishops into public defense of human rights (111). Smith (1982) makes a similar argument in the case of Chile. The logic of this argument is more persuasive than Gill's, but if this argument is valid, why did the presence of progressive Catholics and clergy in Argentina, as well as the repression of those sectors of the Church by the military regime, not prompt human rights advocacy among the episcopal conference at large? In Argentina, two progressive bishops were killed under suspicious circumstances, but the rest of the episcopacy refrained from accusations that the state bore any responsibility for their deaths, let alone the deaths/disappearances of thousands of other, lower-profile victims of repression. Moreover, why did Brazil's first wave of repression, which heavily targeted Catholic youth activists, not trigger confrontation over human rights abuses more quickly?

Finally, an implication of Levine's (1981) theoretical understanding of Church politics suggests an alternative, constant cause argument. Levine argues that institutionally weak Churches are necessarily more tolerant of a multiplicity of voices within their organization. Thus, a plausible extension of Levine's theory might suggest that varying institutional strength might instigate greater Church affinity with popular sectors. When these sectors became victims of repression episcopal conferences were more likely to permit and later support the Church-affiliated human rights organizations that emerged to defend them. Here too, a convincing argument exists, but alone it cannot

explain all evident variation. If the episcopacy takes its cues from the grassroots in such contexts, why was so much of the Chilean and São Paulan Churches' human rights activism organized from the top-down (as in the Vicariate of Solidarity and the Commission on Peace and Justice, respectively), while activism in the Brazilian Northeast appeared to have come from the bottom-up?

Gill's competition hypothesis notwithstanding, these proximate and constant cause hypotheses are convincing and well-evidenced at the national and subnational level. However, their inconsistency across cases is explained via the elaboration of the historical evolution and sustained effects of varying Church-state relationships. Where Church and state were bound together by a dense network of official and financial ties, the episcopacy's interests were defined in part by the state. Moreover, these interests were best protected by cultivating the identity of a nationalist institution and remaining outside most partisan battles. To such a Church, development of a progressive sector at the grassroots in the wake of Vatican II and Medellín is not unexpected, though such voices were marginalized by an episcopal conference dominated by conservative nationalists. When these sectors became targets of repressive violence, coming to their defense (or the principled defense of human rights in general) would have been a stance that ran contrary to a long-established source of political influence that came from making nationalist, conciliatory appeals during moments of national crisis.

Where Church and state were long-separated, as in Chile, the Church derived its interests from sources other than the state (such as the Vatican) and pursued those interests via strategic participation in public politics long before the breakdown of democracy. Such episcopacies lost a great deal of influence with the rise of an

authoritarian regime. With greater room from progressive and moderate voices in the episcopacy, the repression of Church-affiliated activists and political parties that spoke on behalf of popular sectors was of greater importance in Chile than in a context where bishops worked to marginalize such voices and activities. In such a context, taking a 'wait-and-see' approach was anathema to decades of episcopal engagement with public political struggles. This was especially true after it became clear that the military did not plan to hand power back to a civilian government and when the Church became a target of repressive violence. Working publicly to discredit the military regime and defend like-minded individuals and organizations was therefore consistent with the political interests of the dominant faction in the episcopal conference.

In Brazil, where the Church and state lacked formal ties but retained financial ties, even moderates and conservatives were receptive to concerns about human rights in the wake of Vatican II and Medellín. However, substantial delays in united public response took place because moderates and conservatives feared loss of traditional, private modes of influence, material support, and problem-solving strategies. In this environment, failed experiments in private negotiation that coincided with increased state repression against the Church tipped the scales, leading to substantially delayed (but forceful) public denunciation of the regime.

Finally, rival hypotheses stemming from antecedent conditions bear mentioning as well. The distinct trajectories of Church-state interaction that culminated in the human rights commitments of each episcopacy during the authoritarian period were set in motion decades earlier during critical junctures. These critical junctures reconfigured Church-state ties at moments when sociopolitical crises disrupted the influence of antecedent

conditions on Church-state relationships. Prominent features of Church-state relationships that existed prior to each critical juncture either ceased to determine the contours of Church-state politics or were incorporated into subsequent patterns of interaction.

The most notable of these pre-existing features was the presence of conservative ideological factions seeking integral Church-state ties. Indeed, Catholic nationalist ideology was a pronounced force in the Argentine Church prior to the critical juncture and clearly played a role in the episcopacy's response to rights abuses after 1976. However, comparable ideological currents existed in Chile and Brazil prior to their critical junctures as well. Chilean bishops' hesitance to accept Church-state separation and subsequent support for the Conservative Party are one manifestation of the desire among some bishops to retain Church-state union.<sup>100</sup> The Brazilian Church also contained a staunchly conservative faction. This took the form of the Neo-Christendom faction among Brazil's bishops and the *Acção Integralista Brasileira* at the clergy and grassroots levels. In each case, these conservative lines of thought persisted through the authoritarian period, most noticeably in the TFP movements discussed in this chapter. However, the critical juncture's Church-state-military alliance in Argentina *elevated* the status of the conservative faction at a time when a significant social reform-oriented faction still possessed some influence in the Argentine episcopacy. In Chile's and Brazil's critical juncture, pre-existing conservative factions did not benefit from such an increase in status. Then, when the era of international Church reform swept each national-level Church, these conservative factions became marginalized.

---

<sup>100</sup> Even the birth of the National Falange explicitly sought the eventual enactment of Church-inspired policy.

Prior to critical junctures in Chile and Argentina, both episcopacies were tied to participation in partisan politics through alliances with each country's Conservative Party. By the authoritarian period, these alliances had ceased to exist. In Argentina, the episcopacy's exit from partisan politics and alliance with conservative social forces in control of the state proved a more valuable strategy for protecting its institutional interests than did continued partisan commitments. Thus, participation in democratic politics ceased and this served the Church well as it accrued privileges and favors from subsequent regimes. In Chile, during the decades following the critical juncture, partisan commitments remained a key component of exerting influence in Chilean society. However, prompted by Vatican influence (which was far less present in Argentina) during the era of reform in the international Church, the Chilean episcopacy's partisan alliances shifted substantially. The Chilean episcopacy's interests benefited, not by retaining close ties to subsequent regimes, but from participation in Chilean democracy. During its critical junctures, the Argentinian episcopacy dropped the partisan politics, but kept the conservative nationalist orientation. The Chilean episcopacy kept the partisan politics, but eventually dropped its conservative orientation.

In Brazil, where partisan activity was less important prior to the critical juncture, the episcopacy was also largely shut out of successive regimes. This changed when Vargas effectively granted the Brazilian Church a much bigger stake in the future of Brazilian policy-making and, by extension, democracy. What Vargas could not grant, however, was a stronger party system through which the episcopacy could form partisan alliances. The result was the birth of a lobbyist Church, an organization with its own interests and priorities but that depended on *continued* access to power to achieve them.

As Neo-Christendom and Catholic integralism declined in the international Church, the Brazilian Church's priorities shifted as well. This occurred, however, without the obvious partisan manifestations present in Chile.

Thus far, this study has staked out a theoretical and empirical argument on the basis of close comparative analysis of three ostensibly similar cases. I have argued that each case followed a different historical trajectory resulting in distinct responses to human rights abuses during the authoritarian period. The next chapter adds analytical leverage to this study by taking up three additional cases in which episcopal responses to waves of human rights abuses diverged once again, this time in the midst of full blown civil wars.

## **Chapter 7: Path Dependence and Episcopal Responses to Human Rights Abuse during Civil Wars**

Faced with the rise of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes after 1964, some national-level bishops' conferences played leadership roles in nascent human rights movements, others delayed public criticism while pursuing private human rights advocacy, and still others responded with silence or public support for repressive governments. Yet to be addressed is the puzzling historical span and contextual scope of this divergence in the response of bishops waves of human rights abuses. In terms of chronology, diverse reactions to periods of human rights abuse appeared in the years immediately following Vatican II (1962-1965), but remained identifiable until at least the early 1990s despite the emergence of ostensibly homogenizing forces. During this period, communication and organization between the region's bishops increased and successive papacies took an active interest in the issue of human rights. Moreover, Church leaders in nearly every Latin American country were attempting to manage tumultuous divisions between assertive right and left wings. The former demanded anticommunism coupled with a return to social order, while the latter demanded firm commitment and public proclamations in support of radical redistributive social change. In reaction to these extremes, there grew a middle faction in the regional episcopacy committed to the idea that the Church must reunite the faithful by remaining outside politics and providing broader moral guidance for society as a whole. By the conclusion of the 1979 CELAM

conference in Puebla, this third group remained the most powerful within the region's episcopacy (Levine 1981, 50-1).

Despite these common forces, diverse episcopal responses to human rights abuse appeared once again in a new decade and in a political context distinct from that present in Argentina, Chile and Brazil. Throughout the 1980s similar patterns of divergent responses to human rights abuses occurred again in the midst of major civil wars that were sparked or reignited in El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, and Nicaragua. These conflicts produced waves of human rights abuses, sometimes committed by insurgents, but more often by the military, the police, and private militias and death squads tied to the state. As is often the case in such polarized situations, political neutrality's tacit approval of the status quo inevitably produced contradictions for Church moderates because the Church's professed values necessarily drew the Church into struggles over a wide range of overtly political values observed in society. Inevitably forced to risk being perceived as sympathetic to one side or another in each civil war, the willingness and capacity of each episcopal conference to denounce state-sanctioned abuses varied considerably, much like it had roughly a decade earlier under bureaucratic authoritarian regimes.

Varied episcopal responses to human rights abuses during civil wars of the 1980s closely resembled patterns exhibited by southern cone Churches when they responded to the rise of repressive bureaucratic authoritarian regimes in the 1960s and 1970s. Resembling the Chilean Church's vocal human rights advocacy and organizational work via the Vicariate of Solidarity during the 1970s, prior to El Salvador's civil war of the 1980s, the Archdiocese of San Salvador denounced human rights abuses and created

support networks for the victims of state repression (via *Socorro Jurídico*). During the civil war, the archdiocese remained a public human rights advocate and deepened the assistance and documentation component of its human rights work (via *Tutela Legal*). Resembling the Brazilian Church's extended period of silence prior to joining the human rights movement in the mid-1970s, in Guatemala, public episcopal denunciations of state abuses were forthcoming in the mid-1980s only after several years of delay. Resembling the Argentine Church's general silence during a massive wave of repression beginning in the mid-1970s, in Colombia, episcopal denunciations of rights abuses did not emerge until the mid-1990s, a decade after they might have contributed to human rights advocacy or peace negotiations during the resurgence of the war with the FARC and ELN in the 1980s.

This chapter argues that even in the context of full blown civil war, patterns in episcopal conferences' varying responses to state-sanctioned human rights abuses stemmed from the same source outlined in previous chapters: a path dependent process that sustained distinct historical trajectories in Church-state relationships. These trajectories were reinforced by different densities in the network of institutional ties linking Church and state. Where ties were dense, the Church derived its interests in conjunction with conservative social forces in control of the state, relied on the state to pursue those interests, and worked to ensure a close and generally collaborative relationship with successive governments via generally non-contentious political behavior. These dynamics produced episcopacies that eschewed or undermined human rights activism in the 1960s-1980s period. This pattern is typified by the cases of Argentina and Colombia. Where Church-state ties were minimal or nonexistent, the

interests of larger sectors of the Church were derived from sources other than the state (such as the varying ideology and experience of bishops, the Vatican, the experience of clergy and/or adherents) and the Church did not rely on state approval or support to pursue those interests. These dynamics blocked opportunities for Church-state collusion that could become institutionalized and it removed obstacles that discouraged the Church from confrontation with the state when it was faced with state practices or policies that it opposed. Such episcopacies publicly and unambiguously denounced human rights-abusing states with minimal or no delays and they are typified by the cases of Chile and El Salvador. Where the network of Church-state ties is of intermediate density, the interests of large sectors of the Church are derived from non-state sources (such as the Vatican, clergy, and grassroots), but pursuit of those interests via Church programs are contingent on state support or approval. As a result, engaging in contentious interaction with the state necessitates difficult cost-benefit analysis, provokes sharp division between bishops, and produces significant delays prior to denouncing waves of human rights abuses. This pattern is typified by Brazil and Guatemala.

To demonstrate the broader applicability of this argument, this chapter sketches the evolution of Church-state ties and their impact on subsequent human rights commitments made by Catholic bishops in Colombia, Guatemala and Brazil. The same path dependent theoretical framework and related concepts used to explain Argentina, Brazil, and Chile hold sway in these civil war cases. Chapter 8 will offer some concluding comparisons and discussion of all six cases examined by this study.

### **Colombia: Complicity**

The episcopacy has long been tied to conservative social forces in Colombia. Throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, this took the form of partisan alignment with the Conservative Party. During this time the fate of Church-state ties was closely related to changes in the party system, deepening during period of Conservative rule and eroding (once even severed) during periods of Liberal Party rule. However, the disastrous consequences of a civil war in the late 1940s and early 1950s led to a critical juncture in Church-state relations. With the beginning of the National Front in the late 1950s, Liberal-initiated threats to an existing, dense network of Church-state ties ceased. So too did the episcopacy's exclusive alliance with the Conservatives, aligning instead with the broader, power-sharing political regime. These ties to the state insulated the Colombian bishops conference somewhat during the era of international Church reform, sustained a collaborative relationship between the Church and the post 1950s political regime, and curtailed support for human rights advocacy among bishops during a wave of abuses in the 1980s.

#### *Antecedent Conditions*

In mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Colombia, the privileged position of the Catholic Church was a highly contentious political issue. After securing the presidency in mid-century, the Liberal party formally disestablished the Church on June 15<sup>th</sup> 1853 (Mecham 1966, 122). However, Liberal dominance in Colombian politics was not permanent, and neither was the Liberal-imposed experiment with church-state separation. In 1884, Colombian president and "Liberal turned Conservative" Rafael Núñez helped forge a compromise between Liberals and Conservatives by reestablishing close church-state ties that included heavy state involvement in Church activity. This compromise took shape

formally in 1888 through two documents approved by the legislature in that year, the new constitution and a concordat with the Vatican. The Constitution of 1888 rolled back anticlerical legislation enacted over the previous 30 years and officially reunited church and state. This constitution recognized “the primacy of the Catholic Church” in Colombia by "proclaim[ing] God as the supreme fountain of all authority" and that "Roman Catholicism was to be respected as an essential factor of the social order" (125-6).

The terms of the concordat delineated close administrative and financial ties between church and state. All candidates for bishop and archbishop were to be nominated by the president and then approved by the Vatican. The Church was granted authority over education, including supervision of textbook content. The state also assumed the role of financier for many organizational activities, agreeing to grant a lump sum every year to the Colombian Church to aid in the operation of various church units. The state also agreed to lend financial support to the Church’s mission work within the country (129-32). At the time, the Church regarded the concordat as “the most satisfactory agreement possible” (126). The main precepts it established remained in effect through at least the early 1980s (Levine 1981, 71; Mecham 1966, 126).<sup>101</sup>

Following this compromise, church-state relations remained a politicized issue in Colombia's party system, though its prominence ebbed and flowed. Though relatively unchallenged in the early 1900s, but the 1930s Liberal Party reforms again sought to roll back Church privileges (Mecham 1966, 133). During this time, the episcopacy retained close ties to the traditional landed oligarchy and the Conservative Party. Consequently,

---

<sup>101</sup> Minor renegotiations of the concordat took place in 1942 and 1973.

until the late 1940s, the Colombian episcopacy's ideology, mode of political influence, and position relative to the state were directly related to the waxing and waning influence of the Conservatives. The Church benefited greatly from access and influence among Conservatives during their period of uninterrupted rule, which lasted from 1880 to 1930 (Levine 1981, 63).

### *Crisis and Critical Juncture*

In 1948, Colombia experienced its own profound break with routinized political competition that involved the Church. In that year, a period of civil war known as *La Violencia* erupted, provoking communal violence that pitted Liberals against Conservatives and claimed several hundred thousand lives (Levine 1977, 227). Though Liberal anticlerical sentiment had begun a return to latency by this period, the Church's alliance with Conservatives pulled the Church into the conflict. Despite a few important voices of dissent, the Colombian episcopacy publicly supported Conservatives during the conflict, participating in campaigns, denouncing Liberals as atheists and communists, and describing the conflict in messianic terms (Mecham 1966, 134; Levine 1977, 229). Much of the civil war came to take on elements of a religious conflict between Catholics, Liberals, and, occasionally, small Protestant communities. However, as the war proceeded the Church became the target of widespread violence, including the burning of the residence of the Archbishop of Bogotá (Levine 1981, 84; Mecham 1966, 134). Reacting defensively to these attacks, during the mid-1950s the episcopacy at large attempted to extricate itself from the conflict by calling on both sides for an end to the violence (Levine 1981, 86).

Initially, the episcopacy's calls for peace included support for the caretaker military government of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953-1957) and its efforts to restore order. At the outset of his government, Rojas saw Church-state collaboration as an essential part of the restoration of order and his government sharply curtailed the proselytizing activity of Protestant sects (Bushnell 1993, 215). However, as Rojas expanded efforts at nation-building, his government withdrew some state support previously directed to the church. Rojas also began to challenge the *Unión de Trabajadores de Colombia* (UTC), the labor union with which the Church had allied in order to exert an anticommunist influence among urban workers. Rojas sought briefly to build his own support within organized labor via the *Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores* (CNT), though he would later back away from this effort (Bushnell 1993, 220-227).

In response, the episcopacy partnered with the Conservatives to protect the Church's interests (Palacios 2006, 152; Mecham 1966, 136), a move that coincided with the Conservative Party's decision to join the anti-Rojas coalition (Palacios 2006, 134). Despite this, the bishops firmly asserted their independence from partisan politics (Wilde 1984, 11-12). In June of 1956, when Rojas announced the creation of the Third Force, a corporative state project, Cardinal Cristano Luque denounced the plan as "fascistic" with other episcopal complaints against the dictatorship and its police repression following suit (Mecham 1966, 136; Wilde 1984, 13).

After Rojas' negotiated and peaceful resignation of executive authority, a new era of Colombian politics began and with it came the critical juncture in Church-state relations. From 1958 through 1974, Colombia was governed by the National Front, the

organizational face of a power-sharing agreement between Liberals and Conservatives. After its formal dissolution in 1974, heavy influence of this power-sharing arrangement persisted until 1986. During this latter period, the winner of each election was obliged to invite the runner-up to join the government (Bushnell 1993, 224-5, 250; Chernick 1988, 83, fn 1).

The Colombian episcopacy's exclusive alliance with Conservatives ended with the creation for the National Front, producing a critical juncture in Church-state relations. This development was actively pursued by both episcopal leaders and secular elites. Deeming it to be a necessary condition for peace, Colombia's bishops welcomed and endorsed the National Front agreement enthusiastically (Levine 1977, 231; Bushnell 1993, 239).

This choice was not a foregone conclusion, as a significant faction of bishops preferred at the time to retain the Church's relationship with the Conservative Party. A simultaneous and critical contingency was that the Liberal Party publicly agreed to cease any return to questions of the Church's special status or privileges (Wilde 1984, 7-10). Assessing the important transition of this period, Levine and Wilde (1977) argue that the disastrous unfolding of *La Violencia* compelled many Colombian bishops to regard involvement in socio-political conflicts in subsequent decades as dangerous. The effective extrication of the episcopacy from such conflicts, however, was only made possible via the historical contingency of the National Front agreement and its alternation of Colombia's political environment. The National Front agreement dismantled the logic of the Church's old partisan alliance allowing the episcopacy to renounce any further partisan activity (Levine and Wilde 1977, 231). Wilde argues that the episcopacy

ultimately came to see that support for such an oligarchical government that included Liberals and provided more security for the Church than partisan alliance with Conservatives (1984, 9-10). This pronouncement, combined with the effective exclusion of non-National Front voices from the political arena (Bushnell 1993, 224), essentially ended the possibility of altering ongoing Church-state ties.

### *Mechanisms of Reproduction and Outcomes*

The consolidation of an uncontested, dense network of Church-state ties in Colombia in 1958 established a Church-state relationship that discouraged involvement of the Church in partisan struggles. The configuration of these ties included state authority over important internal Church affairs, state support for Church programs and activities, and an ideologically conservative episcopal conference. Operating as self-reinforcing mechanisms of reproduction, these ties bound together the interests the Colombian episcopacy with those of successive Colombian governments, undermining both the ideological and strategic appeal of public confrontation with the state.

The most important Church-state ties consolidated by the critical juncture were first put into place by a 1942 reform of the 1887 concordat. From this time until the renegotiation of Colombia's concordat with the Vatican in 1973, the Church was afforded special privileges. The state allowed heavy Catholic involvement in public education, substantial state financial support for religious education, and state support for Church activities in official designated "mission territory" (encompassing two-thirds of Colombia's territory) continued unabated (Neuhouser 1989, 241). During the same period, bishops continued to be nominated by the president and approved by the Vatican. After the 1973 concordat, the Vatican assumed more control over the selection of

bishops, but the state retained the right to reject any nomination on political grounds (Williford 2005, 211-2; Wilde 1987, 8). Emblematic of the growing closeness between the hierarchy and Colombia's military, the 1973 concordat granted an honorary generalship to the Archbishop of Bogota. In the Colombian bishops' formal statement on the concordat, the bishops praised the military describing it as a permanently mobilized force essential for achieving internal peace (Wilde 1987, 9). With its status no longer threatened and its participation in partisan politics abandoned, the episcopacy's partisan messages were replaced with calls for national unity after the mid-1950s. Significantly, these calls continued to insist that separation of Church and state would undermine this unity (Levine 1981, 86-7).

Nevertheless, the proximity of this critical juncture to the height of the international era of Church reform affected episcopal rhetoric. Shortly after their withdrawal from partisan politics (after 1958) and Vatican II (1962-65), the episcopacy engaged in a brief period of broadly progressive pastoral statements commenting on unjust social structures (Levine 1981, 88-95; Bushnell 1993, 227). This period included the episcopacy's 1961 call for agrarian reform, a stance that would have been unimaginable only a decade earlier (Mecham 1966, 136).

The episcopacy's period of progressive political pronouncements came to an end in the late 1960s. The majority of Colombia's bishops rejected the final documents of the Medellín Conference, pronouncements often noted for their progressive content and calls to social and political involvement (Mutchler 1971, 133). By 1971, the Colombian episcopacy completed an abrupt about-face and became one of the harshest critics of the Catholic left (Levine 1981, 90-94). In essence, the Colombian episcopacy's established

eschewal of partisan political activity contributed to a broader aversion to progressive political statements they viewed as divisive. The episcopacy began to describe structural explanations of social problems and *dependencia* as naïve and overly simplistic and warn of the dangers of Church involvement in political entanglements. This was particularly the case in the 1976 document *Christian Identity in Actions for Justice*, which openly criticized clerical progressive political activity as distracting for priests and a source of crippling division within the Church (Levine 1981, 92). However, perhaps nowhere is the rejection of political involvement of the church more evident than in the 1971 episcopal document, *Justice in the World*, which is worth quoting at length:

Perhaps in the past his [the Christian's] revulsion from violence led him to minimize injustice or resign himself to it, but today sensitivity to injustice and oppression tends to aggravate itself and run the risk of contributing to escalation of the struggle between men who should be brothers. It is said that now no way out is seen other than the defeat of an adversary. The eschatological teachings of the Sermon on the Mount and their culmination in the nonviolence of the Cross cannot be converted directly into norms of human conduct for complex situations, but they can and must be translated into love in the midst of even the most difficult and intractable conflicts. (quoted in Levine 1981, 92)

To the Colombian bishops, sensitivity to injustice on the part of the episcopacy was a dangerous proposition because it could lead to the Church's political involvement in contentious disputes that might undermine a valuable alliance with the post 1958 political regime. Therefore, from 1971 onward episcopal documents instead emphasized moral failings as the root cause of social problems (Levine 1985, 305), which remained

otherwise uncritical of the status quo (Wilde 1984, 24). For example, in the episcopacy's 1984 statement on drug trafficking and addiction, individuals involved in immoral actions are the subjects of criticism, but this almost never extends to the state, its leadership, or its policies (Colombian Episcopal Conference 1984). Similar themes were paramount in other documents issued during this time. The result was an episcopacy since recognized as one of the most outwardly conservative in all of Latin America (Gauding 1991; Richard 1987).

Outside of the episcopacy, progressive political ideologies and political activity existed, though they were marginalized within the Colombian Church. Some progressive voices appeared among Colombia's religious orders, which were not under the direct ecclesiastical authority of local bishops. Other voices appeared among members of the clergy. From such sources sprung some clergy-led popular organizing, including Jesuit-inspired trade unions and radio schools aimed at rural populations (Levine and Wilde 1977, 231). The well-known case of Fr. Camilo Torres notwithstanding, progressive clergy were less prevalent in Colombia than in Brazil, Peru and El Salvador (Bushnell 1993, 245).<sup>102</sup> Ultimately, however, progressive voices emanating from the Colombian clergy, such as the Galconda Group, were regarded by the episcopacy as rebelling against Church hierarchy (Wilde 1984, 24). This dynamic, born in the episcopacy's support for the National Front, was replayed during the human rights crises of the 1980s and 1990s.

In the late 1970s, Colombia's long-simmering civil war reignited. Despite the presence of competitive elections, by the early 1980s an already serious human rights

---

<sup>102</sup> Though a single figure in a radical minority in the Colombian community of Catholic clergy, much attention has been paid to Camilo Torres and his fascinating political evolution. For brief biographical sketch, see Theisen (1974). For Torres' collected writings, see Torres and Gerassi (1971).

situation was growing far worse. Civilian authorities granted broad autonomy to the armed forces in matters of internal security (Aviles 2001, 33). During this time, security forces lent direct support to paramilitary organizations that "targeted social and community leaders, local public employees, human rights defenders and trade unionists, among others... [and] terroris[ed] the population through torture, selective homicide, and massacres" (UNHCR 2005, para. 18, 21). Death squads linked by both activists and academics to security forces also grew in urban areas during the 1980s (Chernick 1988, 56). This war against subversion suppressed political opposition parties and movements (IACHR 1999, Ch. IX) and included the systematic eradication of members of the *Unión Patriótica*, the emergent political wing of the FARC during peace negotiations, including the murder or disappearance of over 3,500 party members (Pardo 2000, 72).<sup>103</sup> By the mid-1990s, the military and various paramilitary forces were responsible for "kill[ing] thousands of peasants suspected of supporting the guerrillas and displac[ing] hundreds of thousands" (Goodwin 2001, 241).

Victims of violence during this period included Church personnel. According to a UN report that the state has formally accused some Church members of maintaining ties with guerrillas, and that, "between 1984 and 2002, more than 50 lay workers and clergy were killed, including a Bishop, and a further 17 were kidnapped and 38 threatened" (UNHCR 2005, para. 113)

The growing human rights problem of the 1980s prompted few if any public episcopal responses, other than moral condemnation of terrorist attacks attributed to the FARC and the ELN. The episcopacy framed the civil war in terms identical to those

---

<sup>103</sup> For a thorough treatment of the UP and its demise, see Dudley (2004).

employed by the regime, Colombia's problems stemmed from the breakdown of "authority and security rather than social justice and democracy" (Wilde 1984, 24). State-sanctioned rights abuse during the 1980s did not sufficiently threaten church interests to risk alienating those in control of the state and various resources afforded the Church. Although the episcopacy denounced the broad moral failings it saw in Colombian society, the scope of its political pronouncements remained very narrow, excluding denunciation of the officials, governments, or institutions that tolerated human rights abuses (Wilde 1987).<sup>104</sup>

The Colombian episcopacy also actively resisted involvement in grassroots efforts to document military and paramilitary-linked rights abuses. The most prominent of these was the Intercongregational Commission for Justice and Peace which was founded by Javier Giraldo, a Catholic priest and Jesuit. By 1986, Giraldo was able to secure a resolution of support for his work from various leaders of religious orders in Colombia, but the bishops conference blocked this work (Tate 2007, 115-6). After 1988, Giraldo and his network of supporters were able to resume their work with international financial support. After 1989, very tentative episcopal support began, but only for investigation into cases of the persecution of clergy (Tate 2007, 59-60). Episcopal involvement in human rights advocacy became more significant in the mid-1990s, when Giraldo's organization became a part of the episcopacy's organizational structure, called the Commission on Justice and Peace. Afterwards, the episcopacy began to speak more openly about the human rights, particularly the plight of the internally displaced. In sum, the Colombian episcopacy remained remarkably united and silent during a wave of

---

<sup>104</sup>For statements issued from 1991 to the present, see the Colombian Episcopal Conference's extensive online record of such documents, available at: <http://www.cec.org.co/>.

human rights abuse in the 1980s and provided minimal or no assistance to victims of repression until the 1990s.

### **Guatemala: Delayed Advocacy**

The evolution of Church-state ties in Guatemala follows a very different path than that of Colombia. Church and state in Guatemala formally separated in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in the midst of a bitter liberal-conservative conflict. Some limited Church-state ties persisted for over a half-century. Then in 1954, the US-sponsored coup that overthrew the Arbenz government created a political opportunity to re-establish Church-state collaboration on the basis of anticommunism. The first years of the Armas dictatorship, culminating in the 1956 constitution, witnessed a critical juncture in Church-state relations. Following the critical juncture, the Guatemalan Church retained control over its internal affairs, but secured new and significant state support for its activities. This support allowed the Church to expand its presence in rural areas. As the rural episcopacy came into greater contact with the peasantry during the era of Church reform and in the context of development initiatives, this section of the episcopacy moved away from conservatism. The urban episcopacy, however, remained closely tied to conservative social forces in control of the state. The result was an episcopacy that, while small, became extremely divided in ideological terms. This division, combined with conservative dominance in Guatemala's only archdiocese and intensive state repression, delayed the episcopal conference's rhetorical and practical support for the human rights movement for several years.

#### *Antecedent Conditions*

The separation of church and state in Guatemala was the direct result of the Liberal revolution of 1871. The first act of the revolutionary government of García Granados in May of 1871 was to expel the Jesuits and expropriate their properties (Mecham 1966, 317-8). Attacks against the church mounted throughout the rest of the 1870s. The archbishop of Guatemala and his auxiliary bishop were permanently exiled. All religious orders and communities were forcibly disbanded, and all church-owned property was expropriated by the state. Religious education was suppressed and the education system was secularized, with expropriated Church buildings turned into state-run schools. Civil marriage was legalized, cemeteries were secularized, and the Church was denied juridical personality (Klaiber 1998, 221; Mecham 1966, 318-9). By December of 1879, these restrictions and the official disestablishment of the Church was codified in a new Constitution that would last until 1945 (Mecham 1966, 318).

In spite of all of these restrictions, the de facto separation of church and state was not absolute. Although the state surrendered its right to nominate bishops, it continued to exile most archbishops until the late 1930s (Mecham 1966, 319-20). The state also paid meager salaries to some members of the clergy and the Concordat of 1884 mandated the transfer of 30,000 pesos from the state to the church annually (Mecham 1966, 319). Such measures allowed the state to play a role in the construction of an episcopacy that was less antagonistic in its dealings with the political elite.

Guatemala's small size allowed it only one archdiocese until 1996, a reality that inflated the influence of the country's only archbishop. As a result, the most powerful members of the episcopacy in Guatemala's post-1870 period were archbishops that were ideologically compatible with conservative elites. Following disestablishment,

Archbishop Ricardo Casanova Estrada (1886-1913) established ties with the new coffee oligarchy that would last into at least the 1960s (Klaiber 1998, 223). Casanova was succeeded by a number of archbishops with comparatively short tenures. However, as the 1930s came to an end, Mariano Rossell y Arellano (1939-64) was elevated to the position of archbishop. Rossell would come to play a decisive role in the reconfiguration of Church-state ties.

### *Crisis and Critical Juncture*

Guatemala experienced destabilizing social and political reforms between 1944 and 1954, culminating in the crisis of the 1954 coup. Elected reformist governments of the period were led by Juan José Arévalo (1944-1950) and Jacobo Arbenz (1951-1954). Reforms began under the quasi-ideological umbrella of Arévalo's "spiritual socialism," which, though vague, involved reforms aimed at improving the social and economic position of Guatemala's peasants and workers. Built on support from a shifting coalition of revolutionary parties, reforms promoted increased credit to small farmers, the formation of some cooperatives, the strengthening of unions, and the establishment of an "extensive" social security network (Handy 1994, 27, 30-2). Rising coffee prices in the international market helped offset the expense of the reforms. However, a high inflation rate and a growing deficit necessitated tax reform, which the government attempted to formulate equitably. In addition to restructuring the income tax, the state increased taxes on imports and exported agricultural commodities (Handy 1994, 27). These reforms provoked intense opposition among landowners and conservative parties, and over the course of his term of office, Arévalo withstood nearly 30 coup attempts (Handy 1994, 32-3).

Matters intensified after the contentious election of Arévalo's successor, Jacobo Arbenz, in 1951. Opposition to his government gathered momentum and international support by focusing on his cooperation with the Guatemalan Communist Party (Handy 1994, 36). Of greatest controversy in programmatic terms was Arbenz' proposal for agrarian reform, passed by Congress in 1952, which further stoked conflict with landowners. In addition to the expropriation of land owned by the United Fruit Company, the Agrarian Reform Law raised concerns in the CIA and Eisenhower administration about the influence of communism in Guatemala (Handy 1994, 173-9). Subsequently, the US lent critical support to the small "Liberation Army," which was in training abroad since 1952, fervently anticommunist, and led by Castillo Armas. In late June 1954 the "Liberation Army" invaded and the Guatemalan military declined to defend the Arbenz government. Arbenz was overthrown and went into permanent exile. By September 1954, Armas had consolidated his power and on October 10 he was "elected" president by an oral public vote (Handy 1994, 178-9, 189-90, 193-4).

After assuming control of Guatemala, Armas began an effort to 'reconstruct' the country. One partner in this endeavor was Guatemala's Catholic episcopacy. The most powerful figure in the Guatemalan Church at the time was Mariano Rossell y Arellano, Archbishop of Guatemala City's archdiocese. Elevated to his position as archbishop in 1939, Rossell strengthened ties to elites via his own fervently anticommunist rhetoric, which was consistent with international Catholic social doctrine. From 1945 until the Arbenz' overthrow, Rossell and other Guatemalan bishops were publicly critical of communist influence in the Arévalo and Arbenz governments (Holden 2008, 497, 503-6). During the early years of this criticism, however, the exclusive pursuit of staunchly

conservative anticommunism was not a foregone conclusion. Early episcopal statements paired denunciations of communism with criticism of Guatemala's exploitative social structure that included vague calls for reform (Holden 2008, 508-12). However, by the early 1950s, Rossell became one of the most prominent opponents of the Arbenz government. In 1954, as tension mounted in the prelude to Arbenz' overthrow, Rossell called on Guatemalans to "rise up as one man against the enemy God, of our fatherland," and against "the worst of the atheistic doctrines of all time, anti-Christian communism" (quoted in Handy 1994, 175; see also Pike 1959, 110).

As a result, Rossell became the ally of Carlos Castillo Armas, both before and after his 1954 coup. Once Armas was in power and institutions were fundamentally redesigned, the historically contingent relationship between Armas and Archbishop Rossell produced a critical juncture in Guatemalan Church-state relations. Klaiber marks the formation of this alliance as a major turning point in Guatemalan church-state relations, stating that, "From that moment on, rightwing groups recognized the church as an important ally and rewarded it. The 1956 and 1966 constitutions eliminated nearly all of the anticlerical restrictions" held over from 1871 (1998, 223). This included the lifting of bans on Church ownership of land, clerical freedom of association, clerical participation in questions of labor, and prohibitions on religious instruction in public schools (Pike 1959, 92-3).<sup>105</sup> Prior to Armas' assassination in 1957, the general presented Rossell with a national award for his anti-communist work (Mecham 1966, 320).

### *Mechanisms of Reproduction and Outcomes*

---

<sup>105</sup> Pike specifically notes that Guatemala's 1956 constitution (1) worked out a more favorable arrangement from the perspective of the Church than any other Central American country, and (2) contrasts sharply in these terms with the unfavorable terms of El Salvador's 1950 constitution (1959, 93).

Out of Guatemala's critical juncture came self-reinforcing mechanisms of reproduction in which based the institutional ties between Church and state on anticommunism. State authority over the internal operations of the Church was not part of that reconnection and so, unlike Colombia, the state possessed no discretion over the selection of bishops. Thus, the role of the Vatican took on heightened importance in Guatemala. Despite this, collaboration with the state after 1954 ultimately pulled the Guatemalan episcopacy in two directions. Archbishop Rossell's association with the oligarchy, anticommunism, and Armas laid the foundation for the provision of two crucial benefits for the Church. The first was state permission for the entry of a wave of foreign clergy. The second was state permission and support for Church-initiated rural development projects. However, these benefits created secondary, long term effects within the Guatemalan Church. The influx of foreign priests coupled with Catholic Action's work in the countryside became a center-piece in the Church's effort to accomplish its spiritual and organizational mission. This brought some sectors of the Church, including the episcopacy, into closer contact with popular sectors, especially peasant and indigenous communities in rural areas. The Church outside of Guatemala City's archdiocese began to develop interests apart from Rossell, his like-minded successor, Archbishop Mario Casariego (1964-1983), and the Guatemalan oligarchy. The result was an episcopacy intensely divided about its social mission and how to achieve it during the rampant state-sanctioned violence of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Under Rossell's leadership, over 100 foreign priests were permitted to enter the country, increasing the total number of priests to 250 by 1956. Negotiated by the papal nuncio, foreign priests were needed alleviate Guatemala's severe priest shortage (Pike

1959, 107-8). In part, this was made possible by Rossell's successful efforts to win the trust of Armas and other powerful Guatemalan conservatives. In addition to securing the return of the Jesuits to Guatemala, Rossell's influence made it possible for the influx of missionaries to organize peasants into Catholic Action and other Church-affiliated groups. Catholic Action proved remarkably successful in the Guatemalan countryside and Rossell planned to put it to use strengthening Catholic orthodoxy (Pattridge 1995, 26; Grandin 1997, 11).

Catholic Action trained rural Guatemalans who returned to their homes and interacted with various local authority structures. Prior to 1954, this often provoked conflict with traditional leaders, which Catholic Action members often attempted to overcome via anticommunist appeals. This work contributed to the breakdown of many traditional authority structures in rural areas (Pattridge 1995; Grandin 1997, 11). However, after Armas' consolidation of power, independent peasant organizations were repressed and Catholic Action became one of the sole sources of developmental work and community organizing in Guatemala's countryside (Grandin 1997, 14; Garrard-Burnett 2010, 120). By the late 1950s, Catholic Action "initiated community improvement projects such as the construction of schools, the repair of roads and bridges, and the creation of savings and loans cooperatives" (Grandin 1997, 14). By the mid-1960s this work evolved into the organization of peasant leagues and by the late 1960s Catholic Action catechists became involved in participatory literacy campaigns inspired by Paulo Freire and the formation of Christian Base Communities (CEBs). As a result, Guatemalan Catholic Action provided the impetus for organized (and eventually politicized) claims-

making arising in the 1960s (Garrard-Burnett 2010, 120-6; Grandin 1997, 14; Klaiber 1998, 223).

Many of these demands would be taken up by rural bishops in the 1960s, forming the basis for an ideological transformation necessary to produce the episcopal denunciations of the mid to late 1980s. Although clearly an unintended consequence from the perspective of Rossell, his work to extend the reach of the church into the countryside would form the basis for the church's gradual renewal over the next two decades.

Archbishop Mario Casariego (1964-1983), Rossell's successor, was an intensely conservative figure and during his tenure as archbishop, he continued Rossell's denunciations of communist subversion. This ideological stance included staunch opposition to nearly all of the progressive tendencies within the clergy as well as progressive organizations run by lay organizers (Klaiber 1998, 224). Casariego's first year as archbishop was also the first year of the Guatemalan Episcopal Conference. As Guatemala's only archbishop and head of the conference, Casariego was able to derail the efforts of progressive bishops, produce paralyzing internal division, and create the public image of a Church that remained silent on social issues.

It was in the midst of such bitter intra-episcopal conflicts that the Guatemalan Church was faced with what was arguably the worst wave of human rights abuse in the Americas in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Human rights abuse had been a persistent feature of the government's counterinsurgency during Guatemala's prolonged civil war (1962-1994). However, human rights violations rose steadily after 1974, and especially sharply during the regimes of Generals Romeo Lucas Garcia (1978-1982) and Efraín Ríos Montt (1982-

1983). During the late 1970s, successive waves of political murders targeted urban labor and grassroots leaders and activists. However, the total number of human rights abuses skyrocketed during Lucas' "scorched earth" highland counterinsurgency offensives during 1981 and early 1982, and stayed tremendously high during the Ríos Montt-led counterinsurgency offensives during the second half of 1982 and 1983. Serious rights violations continued after this time, but the period between 1980 and 1983 represents the peak of state-sanctioned repression and violence. Characteristic forms of human rights abuse during this period included village massacres, extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, rapes, irregular detentions and torture (REMHI 1999, 211-41, 302). Moreover, the vast majority of rights abuse was attributed to security forces tied directly to the state, including the army, civil patrols, and death squads (REMHI 1999, 290-91, fn 3).

Two key progressive figures in the Guatemalan episcopacy during this period were Bishop Mario Ríos Montt and Monsignor Juan Gerardi Conedera.<sup>106</sup> Both were first appointed to positions in the episcopacy by the Vatican during the height of reformism in the international Church and both began their work as bishops in rural areas.<sup>107</sup> Both bishops were frequently at odds with Archbishop Casariego over social issues, including human rights, and their political activities made them targets of repression. Gerardi was the bishop of the diocese of El Quiché, which experienced a wave of particularly intense and violent repression in 1980. Returning from a visit to Rome in December of 1980, Gerardi was denied entry to the country. Gerardi became involved with the Guatemalan

---

<sup>106</sup> Remarkably, Bishop Mario Ríos Montt was the brother of future military dictator and rights abuser Efraín Ríos Montt.

<sup>107</sup> Gerardi was made a bishop in 1967 and his first assignment was the diocese of Verapaz, Cobán. Mario Ríos Montt was first made titular bishop of Tiguá in 1974.

Church in Exile (IGE), a group that attempted to monitor the human rights situation in Guatemala from Mexico City. Both Gerardi and Ríos Montt routinely received death threats and in 1980 an attempt was made on Gerardi's life (Jonas, McCaughan and Martínez 1984, 145-8).<sup>108</sup>

Even as growing numbers of progressive clergy and lay workers became victims of death squads, Casariego was non-cooperative, at times even obstructive, when dealing with progressive clergy and bishops. In both 1974 and 1976, the archbishop refused to sign documents addressing the problems of violence, and poverty and injustice, respectively. In 1978, after the bishops had prepared a document to orient churchgoers prior to municipal elections, Casariego "took the document, eliminated the parts that did not please him, and published it without consulting the other bishops" (228). This incident prompted six bishops to write the Vatican asking for his removal (228).

Despite the Lucas and Ríos Montt regimes' sweeping use of brutal violence and intimidation during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and despite Bishop Gerardi's forced exile, the forced closure of the El Quiché diocese, and the targeting of progressive priests and catechists, the Guatemalan episcopacy at large remained silent as an organization. It is possible that escalating repression forced the progressive church into silence, particularly in rural dioceses. There is little doubt that the exile and repression of figures such as Bishops Gerardi and Ríos Montt significantly impacted the potential of progressive episcopates to create their own human rights organizations. Indeed, had Casariego possessed a greater personal concern for human rights, it is unclear how effectively he would have been able to protect activist clergy and laypeople from state

---

<sup>108</sup> Monsignor Gerardi would go on to lead the Archdiocese of Guatemala's REMHI Recovery of Historical Memory Project. Following its publication in 1998, Gerardi was brutally murdered.

repression. It is also unclear how effectively Casariego would have been able to create a human rights-oriented archdiocese that more closely resembled that of Oscar Romero's or Arturo Rivera y Damas' in San Salvador. Nevertheless, repression leveled against the Church in El Salvador was extreme as well. More than half of the 40-plus priests and nuns murdered in Central America between 1971 and 1990 died in El Salvador (Peterson 1997, 63). Meanwhile, the Archdiocese of San Salvador demonstrated perhaps the clearest commitment to denouncing state human rights abuses of any other in the region. Thus, repression alone does not completely explain the Guatemalan episcopacy's delayed response.

Essential to understanding this delay is the ability of the ultra-conservative faction of the episcopacy, led by Archbishop Casariego, to block forceful denunciations of state rights abuses that unambiguously spoke on behalf of the Guatemalan Church (Klaiber 1998, 227). Throughout 1980 and 1981 episcopal statements that involved Casariego remained "conciliatory" and "did not point to those responsible for the repression" (Jonas, McCaughan and Martínez 1984, 146). Public statements in 1982 took a slightly harsher tone, but still sought dialogue with the military regime (146).<sup>109</sup>

The impasse in the Guatemalan episcopal conference would not be undone until the end of the Efraín Ríos Montt regime. That events that set this development in motion played out between 1982 and 1983. When Ríos Montt came to power in a junior officer coup he was a retired general who had converted to an evangelical sect called the Church of the Word. His evangelical zeal became a main feature of his tenure as head of the military government. Once in power, Ríos Montt "surrounded himself with advisors

---

<sup>109</sup> Klaiber characterizes the pre-1983 Guatemalan episcopacy's response in similar terms (1998, 227-9).

from his church and every Sunday gave a televised message to the nation on "'morality and the family'" (Klaiber 1998, 220). Evangelical missionaries were welcomed into the country in large numbers and Rios Montt even earned praise from Pat Robertson. Under Ríos Montt's direction, the military forces, which previously had mistrusted all religious organizations in the countryside, now distinguished between Protestant groups that it viewed as allies, and Catholic groups, particularly catechists and Catholic activists, that it viewed as enemies, regardless of whether or not they practiced liberation theology (Klaiber 1997, 220-1; REMHI 1999, 240-42). Finally, the regime restricted the freedom of Caritas, the Church's main social welfare agency (Cleary 1989, 137). Not surprisingly, Ríos Montt's appeals to Protestant groups "irritated many Catholics and some Protestants" (221). Ríos Montt's isolation also effectively sidelined any remaining ability of Church elites to privately pressure his regime on human rights.

In June of 1983 Casariego died and in August Ríos Montt was overthrown. The result was an opportunity for renewed episcopal unity around the desperate human rights problem, which by this period was more aptly described as genocide. At the start of the new year, the Vatican's selection for Casariego's successor ended decades of conservative control of Guatemala's only archdiocese and tipped the scales in the ideological stalemate within the Guatemalan episcopal conference.

In January of 1984 the Vatican appointed Bishop Próspero Penados, then bishop of San Marcos, to become Archbishop. Penados would become a high-profile human rights advocate helping to present the new unity position of the episcopacy that called for respect of human rights and an end to violence. In 1984 the bishops conference published *To Construct Peace*, a document that described the massacre and exploitation

of the peasantry at the hands of the military and proposed specific steps to address the problem. These included lifting restrictions on the Church's ability to provide material assistance and legal aid to Guatemalans, a return to respect for Guatemala's constitution, and legislation to "condemn, as abominable crimes of a warped humanity, the abduction, torture, and disappearance of persons. The practice of these crimes which, to Guatemala's disgrace, have become so frequent, is an affront to Guatemala and has placed us in a sad position in our relationships with other civilized nations" (Guatemalan Episcopal Conference 1984, 144). In 1989, Penados founded the Office of Human Rights of the Archdiocese of Guatemala, which rapidly grew from a staff of 4 to a staff of 29, including "lawyers, educators, sociologists, [and] economists" (Klaiber 1998, 229). After considerable delay the Guatemalan Catholic Church came into its own as an important public defender of human rights.

### **El Salvador: Contentious Denunciation**

Archbishop Oscar Romero's denunciations of the Salvadoran regime and his tragic assassination is perhaps the most widely known instance of Church-state interaction in Latin American history. Less known are the historically contingent set of circumstances that set Salvadoran Church-state relations on a remarkably different path than Guatemala. Though both experienced Church-state separation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, ties were never re-established despite a moment that might have prompted such a reconfiguration. Unlike Guatemala, in El Salvador the rise of a Marxist left during the early 1930s did not prompt the state to restore Church-state ties to facilitate programs meant to undermine the influence of the left. As a result, the Salvadoran episcopacy at large lacked some of the resources that allowed the Guatemalan Church to become

organized in rural areas. At the same time, El Salvador's only archdiocese was heavily influenced by the Vatican, rather than the constellation of conservative social forces in control of the state. The era of international Church reform affected San Salvador greatly. Untethered to the state, the episcopacy became a public, if dissonant, voice in Salvadoran partisan politics. The result was a rural episcopacy that remained largely disconnected from the political activation of the peasantry and conservative in the countryside. At the same time, a stridently progressive episcopacy centered in San Salvador took shape, sending its own personnel to work with campesino communities in rural dioceses. This division persisted. Though never united in the defense of human rights, the institutional weight of the archdiocese facilitated the organization of early human rights activists and pulled the Salvadoran Church into the forefront of human rights advocacy.

#### *Antecedent Conditions*

The story of 19<sup>th</sup> century liberal-driven separation of church and state in El Salvador is remarkably similar to that of Guatemala. Church and state were separated in 1871 with the Liberal overthrow of a conservative regime. Since that time, the Salvadoran state has held no right to participate in the selection of bishops or other ecclesiastical officers. Moreover, religious freedom was restored, civil marriage legalized, cemeteries secularized, education removed from the control of the clergy, monastic orders declared illegal, and Church acquisition of new properties banned.<sup>110</sup> These restrictions were codified and maintained in all of El Salvador's subsequent constitutions until 1962 (Mecham 1966, 324-5).

---

<sup>110</sup> Unlike Guatemala, church properties were not nationalized and members of the episcopacy were not exiled.

As the church worked to reorient itself to the new liberal-dominated Salvadoran reality, the episcopacy sought to build informal ties with social and political elites. This was most likely the case through at least the 1920s, when church prelates joined the ruling coalition of "coffee-growing oligarchs, foreign investors and military officers" (Klaiber 1998, 173). However, the episcopacy's informal ties did not secure a reversal of liberal-era restrictions on the Church. These remained in place through the mid-20th century and beyond. Indeed, the only noteworthy changes during the 20th century were provisions in the 1962 constitution allowing clergy to teach religion classes in public schools at the request of parents, and granting the Church the right to acquire property (Mecham 1966, 325). In subsequent decades, this separation would hold fast.

#### *Crisis and Critical Juncture*

Between 1929 and 1932, El Salvador suffered through a series of crises like most of the region. With the onset of the Great Depression, commodity prices fell sharply. Coffee comprised 85 percent of El Salvador's exports and its price fell by 45 percent in only six months. Between 1928 and 1931, national income declined by 50 percent. Credit disappeared, plantation workers' already meager wages declined by 50 percent, and approximately one-third of peasant tenants lost their land because they could no longer pay. State revenue declined by 30 percent and the Salvadoran government defaulted on loans while owing back pay to civil servants and soldiers (Dunkerley 1982, 22).

This economic catastrophe coincided with the election of liberal Arturo Araujo in 1930. Araujo assumed the presidency in the midst of large-scale demonstrations by workers and students, the appearance of various Marxist organizations with international ties, and the founding and rapid growth of the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS)

(Anderson 1971, 25-37; Dunkerley 1982, 24). When Araujo rejected pressure from the oligarchy to devalue the *colon* and a wave of arrests targeting popular sector activists failed to stem protests, the military deposed him after having served in office for only five months. Araujo was replaced by General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez. This move provoked even more popular mobilization particularly in central and western regions of the country, areas where the PCS had been most active (Dunkerley 1982, 24).

In January 1932, after municipal and congressional elections called by the Martínez regime were tightly controlled by the National Guard, the PCS launched an insurrection centered in western rural areas. By all accounts, the insurrection resulted in disaster. Three principle leaders of the PCS, including Farabundo Martí, were arrested before the rebellion began and later executed. The revolt proceeded anyway, though the PCS lacked both sufficient organization to direct it and a sufficiently large working class base to carry it into urban areas (Dunkerley 1982, 27-31). Estimates of casualties in the initial revolt range, but Anderson suggests no more than 35 soldiers, police and civilians combined were killed and few posit more than 100 total casualties (Anderson 1971, 136). However, the revolt triggered a massive, state-led wave of violence in the countryside known as *la matanza* (the massacre). Approximately 30,000 peasants were killed, including women and children (Dunkerley 1982, 29).<sup>111</sup>

The aftermath of the 1932 insurrection and the massacre that followed reconfigured the means through which the Salvadoran oligarchy, along with the repressive capacity of the National Guard, ruled El Salvador in previous decades. After

---

<sup>111</sup> Anderson discusses variation in the totals given by various sources, suggesting the actual totals may be significantly lower, though the disproportionate scale of violence was sweeping and egregious regardless of the precise total (1971, 134-6).

the massacre, subsequent regimes would continue to partner the Salvadoran oligarchy with the military and rely on alternating periods of easing political concessions in urban areas and violent repression of popular sector organization in the countryside (Byrne 1996, 23-4). Martínez remained in power for 12 more years, followed by a period of intra-military factional struggle (1944-1948). Once settled, an extended period followed typified by military authoritarianism with the façade of electoral democracy and a party system that was extremely weak if not totally irrelevant.<sup>112</sup>

Absent from the Salvadoran military-authoritarian regime's strategy to end rural, class-based dissent was any formal collaboration with the Salvadoran Catholic Church. This was true from 1932 onward. General Martínez avoided any cooperation with the Church comparable to that arranged in Guatemala between Archbishop Rossell and Castillo Armas. This decision could *not* have had its source in a lack of concern about the influence of Marxism on the part of Church leaders. Anticommunism had been a high-profile concern in the international Church since *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. Moreover, in 1927, three years before the founding of the PCS, Archbishop of San Salvador Monsignor Belloso y Sánchez issued a pastoral letter stating that "a Catholic who pledges himself to *any of the systems of socialism* runs the grave risk of heresy" (Dunkerley 1982, 108, emphasis added). Instead, the lack of formalized collaboration between Martínez and the Church stemmed, at least in part, from among the most idiosyncratic of historical

---

<sup>112</sup> *La Matanza* and the Martínez regime are frequently cited as the historical juncture from which the repressive Salvadoran state would spring and endure through the horror of the 1980s. Stanley's (1996) account stands out in this regard, drawing direct lines from 1932, through the continued reliance on the repressive capacity of the state after the 1948 coup, and then on to the dynamics of repression in the 1980s. Dunkerley (1982) describes the stability of Martínez' coalition in terms similar to Byrne, though he only attests to its full institutionalization following the 1948 coup (31, 35). Mahoney also dates the birth of the military's central role in successive Salvadoran regimes to the immediate aftermath of the 1932 insurrection, though he too notes increased 'military-authoritarian consolidation' after 1948 (2001, 240).

contingencies, Martínez' own religious views. Martínez was a theosophist who believed in reincarnation of the human soul in addition to various other "occult manifestations" at odds with even the most syncretic practitioners of Catholicism (Anderson 1971, 50; Dunkerley 1982, 24).

*Mechanisms of Reproduction and Outcomes*

Free of ties to the state, El Salvador's episcopacy followed a trajectory in which support from the state was sought, but achieving little in the area, confrontation with the state risked little. Consequently, the Salvadoran Church became a public, partisan advocate on behalf of its own interests. Without state interference in the selection of bishops, these bishops were shaped primarily by the Vatican and the experience of bishops themselves.

Martínez' period in power stretched from 1932 to 1944. During that time, Martínez' religious views continued to preclude anticommunist-oriented collaboration with the Church. Even more, the insertion of those views into other facets of his political agenda antagonized Church leaders. In accordance with one of Martínez' directives, in 1940 public schools began implementing a new curriculum related to moral instruction. This curriculum had been personally revised by Martínez and "embodied his own theosophical beliefs" (Parkman 1988, 57). Citing this effort as well as speeches given to Martínez' Pro-Patria party that attacked Church doctrine, the Church took up public, self-organized opposition and protested with public letters and pamphlets. These materials were then confiscated by the state (Parkman 1988, 57).

In larger institutional terms, when the Salvadoran Constitution was revised in 1939 and again in 1944 the Church lobbied the state to alter some of the anticlerical

tenets in effect since the 1871 constitution. However, these efforts were entirely unsuccessful. The 1939 constitution added language stating that "ministers of religious cults must abstain from putting their spiritual authority at the service of political interests" and placed private schools under the control of the state (Parkman 1988, 57). After Martínez was ousted, the Church fared no better in this arena. Despite the Church's lobbying, the 1949 constitution retained the 1939 prohibition as well as all other pre-existing limitations on the Church. Once again, when reforms were not forthcoming, El Salvador's bishops issued a joint pastoral letter criticizing the constituent assembly (Pike 1959, 94).

As efforts to lobby the state remained ineffective, Church-state separation allowed the Vatican a free hand to appoint bishops and otherwise influence the actions of the Salvadoran Church. In 1938, the Vatican appointed a new archbishop of San Salvador, Luiz Chávez y González. Ideologically moderate and strategically flexible, Chávez' impressive tenure as archbishop spanned four decades (1938-1977). During this time, Chávez followed the Vatican line and embraced the evolving social position of the Church established during Vatican II and Medellín. This adaptability allowed Chávez to play a prophetic role in politics when he deemed such action appropriate. One early example took place in April of 1944. As General Martínez faced the earliest of a series of military insurrections that would eventually depose him, he ordered a wave of executions. Archbishop Chávez along with members of the clergy called on those executions to cease (Parkman 1988, 59-61).

Archbishop Chávez consistently implemented Catholic programs and their reorientations during the era of Church reform. The result was that the Salvadoran

Church developed an independent political voice, ties to independent political organizations, a demonstrated willingness to publicly criticize the regime. These included a commitment to Catholic Action and related organizations working on specific social problems such as alcoholism (Pike 1959, 110), Catholic unionism, and the creation of peasant cooperatives as early as the 1940s and 1950s. In 1958 Chávez founded the Diocesan Social Secretariat, which “coordinated and promoted assistance programs and self-help projects in parishes in the archdiocese of San Salvador” (Peterson 1997, 49; see also Pike 1959, 104). In the 1960s, Chávez spread progressive reforms and themes adopted at Vatican II and Medellín by promoting the reading of their documents and issuing a series of socially progressive pastoral letters (Brett 2008, 718; Peterson 1997, 49; Klaiber 1998, 173). Grassroots organizing led by the Church accelerated after 1964 with the formation of the country's first CEB's and the Christian Federation of Salvadoran Peasants (FECCAS), both of which began with the support Chávez (Bakhtiari 1986, 29; Montgomery 1983, 62; Dunkerley 1982,98-9). Both efforts were supported by major reforms in the training of priests and laity pursued by Chávez and Bishop Rivera Damas in conjunction with Jesuit seminary faculty members (Brett 2008, 719; Byrne 1996, 28). By the time of his retirement in 1977, Chávez frequently collaborated on pastoral letters with the most progressive Bishop in El Salvador at the time, Bishop Arturo Rivera Damas (Brett 2008, 717-22). In 1976, despite being attacked as "communist" by members of the oligarchy, Chávez was able to unite both conservative and progressive bishops in a public call, in conjunction with emerging *campesino* organizations, for the conversion of some unused cotton and coffee plantation lands into small holdings for peasants (LaFeber 1983, 222; see also Wood 2003, 61; Dunkerley 1982, 108).

The Salvadoran episcopacy had a potential ally in the Christian Democratic Party (PDC). Until the late 1970s, the Salvadoran PDC espoused some progressive positions in line with pastoral letters, particularly on the issue of agrarian reform, though these issues remained a relatively low priority for the party (Dunkerley 78-9). Some ties existed between Bishop Rivera and the PDC (Brett 2008, 726); however, ties with the rest of the Salvadoran episcopacy were relatively weak, perhaps due in part to the minimal influence of political parties in El Salvador. During Oscar Romero's tenure as archbishop (see below), Romero's hostility toward the regime and those complicit Romero distanced the official Church (and especially its progressive sectors) from the PDC (Dunkerley 1982, 134).<sup>113</sup> By the early 1980s, Rivera's continued association with the PDC drew criticism from progressive sectors of the Church at a time when Rivera was being criticized for being too cooperative with the regime (Brett 2008, 726, 728).

Despite its separation from the state and the progressive activity of Archbishop Chávez, the Salvadoran episcopacy at large remained ideologically conservative. However, this characterization requires some important caveats. The Salvadoran Episcopal Conference was predominantly conservative in the sense that bishops in peripheral dioceses tended to be conservative and they outnumbered moderate and progressive bishops who typically worked in San Salvador (Bakhtiari 1986, 29-38). Relying on this arithmetic alone produces an overly simplistic characterization of the episcopal conference's ideological configuration. Until 1968, there were only 5 dioceses in El Salvador, including the Archdiocese of San Salvador. Thus, throughout the

---

<sup>113</sup> Romero's position with respect to the PDC, followed by his assassination, helped stoke internal division within the party. Shortly thereafter, this division produced the withdrawal of a large, left-leaning, anti-regime faction which helped form the *Frente Democrático Revolucionario* (FDR) (Dunkerley 1982, 134).

twentieth century the entire episcopal conference was very small. Moreover, during the descent into civil war, the Archdiocese of San Salvador contains 40 percent of the country's population and 57 percent of its priests, nuns, and brothers (Montgomery 1983, 68), making San Salvador more than just the symbolic center of the Church in El Salvador. Many of Archbishop Chávez' efforts to reform seminary training and promote CEB's demonstrate the ability of this position to circumvent, if not ignore, El Salvador's peripheral diocese and their bishops.

Finally, the sustained influence of conservatives in the Salvadoran episcopacy also can be traced, in part, to El Salvador's conservative papal nuncio. This ideological inclination had the Vatican's official representation in El Salvador working at cross-purposes with a human rights-oriented pope during one of the most progressive periods of the papacy. From 1973-1980, Emanuele Gerada served as El Salvador's papal nuncio. As the official representative of the Salvadoran Church both to and from the Vatican, Gerada was himself a conservative and sided with conservative bishops in rural areas (Brett 2008, 723, 724; Bakhtiari 1986, 39). As a result, the final years of the era of reform in the international Church arrived in El Salvador through the filter of an ideologically conservative lens.

By the late 1970s, this conflict within the episcopal conference was faced with a rapidly deteriorating human rights crisis. From these years into the next decade, professing social progressivism in El Salvador was to invite state repression (UN 1993, 43). Rights abuses committed by the state during the late 1970s and early 1980s were rampant, with the total number of victims reaching into at least the tens of thousands

(Goodwin 2001, 237).<sup>114</sup> Frequent victims of murder and disappearance included trade unionists and members of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), a social-democratic coalition of parties which would align itself with the FMLN (Goodwin 2001, 238). Indiscriminant violence in the countryside, extrajudicial killings in both rural and urban areas, and the widespread use of torture against suspected subversives (which included nearly all of the political opposition) were characteristic of the late 1970s, and particularly the early 1980s (UN 1993, 43-44). In addition, no military personnel were prosecuted for any rights abuses throughout the entire decade of the 1980s (Goodwin 2001, 238).

In the midst of this brutal counterinsurgency, Archbishop Chávez was succeeded by Oscar Romero (1977-80), despite Chávez' preference that progressive Bishop Rivera assume his position (Brett 2008, 722). Vatican officials would later explain to Rivera that he was passed over due to fears that he was too confrontational in dealing with the government (Brett 2008, 722). When Romero was first appointed he was believed by many to be relatively conservative.<sup>115</sup> Prior to 1977, he had remained relatively silent on political matters and when he did offer public criticism it was, at least on one occasion, directed at the Jesuits for promoting views too close to Marxism (Whitfield 1994, 102-3; Brett 2008, 721). However, Romero was motivated by a genuine conviction to defend the people of El Salvador (Whitfield 1994, 105; Klaiber 1998, 174) and acting through a

---

<sup>114</sup> By the end of the eleven-year civil war (1980-1992), this conflict would claim the lives of approximately 75,000 people (Byrne 1996, 213).

<sup>115</sup> Indeed, Romero's appointments as bishop and Archbishop were the only ordinary bishop appointments overseen by conservative Papal Nuncio Emanuele Gerada.

Church organization that was autonomous from the state. This position of autonomy allowed Romero flexibility, as it had his predecessor.

After the assassination of Fr. Rutilio Grande, a progressive Jesuit priest and friend of Romero's, along with two others traveling with him in 1977, Romero quickly became the central organizer and prophetic voice of the Salvadoran Church (Whitfield 1994, 104-9). Romero drew heavily on the support of the Jesuit faculty of the University of Central America (UCA) (Whitfield 1994, 104-7, 112). Romero's early actions were typically to draw on information collected by the Archdiocesan office of *Socorro Jurídico* (Legal Aid) and make forceful and specific denunciations of rights abuses during his Sunday sermons and weekly radio broadcasts. However, as violence intensified in early 1980, Romero's denunciations broadened to include general condemnations of state repression of peaceful demonstrations and ultimately a call to soldiers not to obey orders to kill civilians. This work drew attention and praise from progressives in El Salvador and human rights advocates around the world (Klaiber 1998, 174). The force of Romero's denunciations meant that even he, the most powerful and well-known church figure in the country, was no longer safe, and on March 24, 1980, Romero was killed by an unknown sniper while celebrating mass (UN 1993, 127-31).<sup>116</sup>

Although Romero's work was sufficient to push the institutional strength of the Salvadoran church in a human rights-oriented direction, his actions stoked harsh division present within the church since the time of Archbishop Chávez. Siding with Romero, and defending his positions after his death, were sympathetic moderates, Bishop Arturo Rivera Damas and Auxiliary Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chávez. The majority of the

---

<sup>116</sup> According to the official UN Truth Commission Report, in "closed circles" Major Roberto D'Aubuisson took credit for planning the assassination (UN 1993, 127).

Salvadoran Episcopal Conference, which resided outside of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, was more conservative and voiced criticism of Romero's work. Anti-Romero conservative bishops included Bishop Romeo Tovar, Marco René Revelo, Jose Eduardo Alvarez, and Pedro Arnaldo Aparicio (Klaiber 1998, 176; Bahktiari 1986, 29). Conservative Catholic groups such as the Traditional Catholic Movement also rejected the legacy of Romero's popular church (Klaiber 1998, 186).

Despite this division, Arturo Rivera y Damas (1983-1994) succeeded Romero and continued his work.<sup>117</sup> Rivera's appointment, which came during the papacy of John Paul II and the end of the era of international Church reform, signaled the Vatican's desire to maintain a careful balancing act in El Salvador. On the one hand, given Rivera's background, the Vatican's selection demonstrated support for Romero's prophetic defense of human rights. On the other hand, Rivera was closely monitored by the Vatican and not formally elevated to Archbishop of San Salvador until 1983, long after Rivera had extricated the Church from some of its more confrontational stances with respect to the government (Brett 2008, 726). During this period, Rivera continued Romero's practice of denouncing specific cases of human rights abuses on his weekly radio addresses. However, Rivera immediately inherited the conservative backlash to Romero's forceful progressivism. As a result, unlike Romero, Rivera also included information about supposed abuses committed by the FMLN and backed away from Romero's evolution that some feared would lead him to legitimize revolutionary violence. Rivera also

---

<sup>117</sup> Rivera was appointed Coadjutor Bishop of San Salvador immediately following Romero's assassination. From this point forward, Rivera performed all the administrative duties of an Archbishop, although he lacked the title and official authority of an actual Archbishop until his elevation in 1983.

criticized the FMLN when it launched major offensives (Brett 2008, 727; Klaiber 1998, 175).

But denunciations were not the sum of Rivera's human rights advocacy. He also founded *Tutela Legal* (Legal Defense) in 1982, which succeeded Romero's Legal Aid and functioned like the Vicariate of Solidarity in Chile, by documenting, publishing and pursuing human rights cases, in addition to providing a support network and relatively secure environment for victims of repression and their families. The archbishop drew on their findings for his own radio denunciations. Legal Defense became an effective tool in the international arena, unmatched for its ability to draw international attention to the egregious human rights situation in El Salvador (Klaiber 1998, 177). Rivera also went on to play a central role in the early stages of negotiations that would eventually result in the 1992 peace accords (Brett 2008, 731-8).

Although the Salvadoran episcopacy did not produce a united document denouncing repression, the dominance and leadership of progressive archbishops, free to act without state interference in internal church affairs, allowed the Church to come to the aid of many victims of repression and call international attention to the El Salvador's egregious human rights violations by presenting a forceful and credible critique of the regime's security forces and their practices.

## **Conclusion**

The Catholic episcopacy's response to waves of state-sanctioned human rights abuse during counterinsurgencies in Colombia, Guatemala and El Salvador differed substantially. Faced with an increase in human rights violations that accelerated rapidly in the 1980s and remained high into the 1990s, the Colombian episcopacy remained

largely absent from discussions of human rights that cast any blame on the state. Episcopal statements on violence focused on individual moral failings and a lack of respect for rule of law and authority, rather than identifying and denouncing culpable parties with ties to the state. Only at the end of the 1980s did the episcopacy move from a posture of obstruction to hesitant acquiescence with respect to clergy who wished to investigate abuses and promote of human rights. Even then, its focus remained on victims of rights abuses who were members of the clergy until the mid-1990s. In Guatemala, sharp increases in human rights abuses in the late 1970s and early 1980s were followed by intra-episcopal conflict about how to respond, rather than a decisive response. Bishops from rural areas moved to denounce rights abuses relatively early but faced obstruction from the archbishop. After the archbishop's death, the Vatican moved to replace him with a human rights-oriented bishop. The next four years produced a sharp political turn for the episcopacy that came to include denunciations of the regime and the creation of a human rights office. Finally, in El Salvador intra-episcopal division of a different kind took place. Under the leadership of Archbishops Oscar Romero and Arturo Rivera, the Archdiocese of San Salvador denounced rights abuses early and often. The Archdiocese also assisted in early phases of the organization the human rights movement and collaborated with it in the years that followed. Meanwhile, bishops of rural dioceses tended to be more conservative and resisted association with the human rights movement. Though their recalcitrance prevented a unity statement on human rights abuses from the episcopal conference, the actions of the archdiocese successfully threw the weight of the institutional Church behind the human rights movement.

*Church, State and Path Dependence*

These differing responses coincided with different trajectories in the evolution of Church-state ties that privileged some forms of Church interaction with the state over others. Indeed, the twentieth century evolution of Church-state relationships in Colombia, Guatemala, and El Salvador exhibits a collection of distinct path dependent trajectories. In all three cases, opportunities to alter Church-state ties arose in the wake of a deep socio-political (and sometimes economic) crisis. Each crisis led to fundamental shifts in the political arena and major revisions to the institutions of government. As an important social institution that was openly skeptical of the politically ascendant Latin American left, the Catholic Church was a potentially influential resource for political elites navigating an altered landscape. These critical junctures afforded Church leaders and those who assumed control of the state an opportunity to reconfigure Church-state ties.

Each critical juncture presented viable options to both sets of leaders, and historical contingency, rather than antecedent conditions like episcopal conservatism, weighed heavily on their choices. In Colombia, the consolidation of dense Church-state ties was made possible by Rojas' political miscalculations in his effort to secure the support of the episcopacy in the wake of *la violencia*, the abrupt willingness of the Liberal party to abandon anticlericalism, and the preference of Church leaders to extricate the Church from partisan politics. In Guatemala, episcopal concern with unjust social structures gave way to the strident anticommunism of Archbishop Rossell during a period of major social reforms. Armas' US-sponsored coup created an opportunity for a new regime to partner with the Church via a common interest in stamping out Marxism. In El Salvador, outspoken episcopal denunciation of socialism in all its forms did not translate into renewed Church-state ties in the wake of the 1932 insurrection and the state-led

massacre that followed. Though the Church sought the restoration of some state-guaranteed privileges, general-turned-dictator Maximiliano Martínez dismissed the idea, publicly attacking the Church and pursuing policies that further alienated Church leaders.

Whether the opportunity for change was seized or not, decisions made about the ties between Church and state produced lasting effects because they established mechanisms of reproduction. In Colombia, the retention of Church-state ties under the National Front also placed alteration of these ties out of the normal boundaries of partisan politics. This configuration upheld state participation in the selection of bishops and sustained state leverage over Church activities. These ties constructed a politically quiescent bishops conference that defended its interests by defending the post-1958 regime. Such a conference had little ideological interest and few material incentives that might induce it to take up contentious political issues, let alone denunciation of the state in the name of defending human rights.

In Guatemala, a renewed Church-state alliance provided the Church with resources that allowed it to expand its organization into rural areas without allowing the state to participate in the appointment of Church leaders. Bishops assigned to rural dioceses were appointed by the Vatican during the era of Church reform and were in contact with the peasantry while it was being organized by Catholic Action. These bishops would later demonstrate a relatively early interest in confrontation with the state over human rights. Meanwhile, the archdiocese, which helped create the renewed Church-state collaboration at mid-century, retained its affinity with conservative forces in control of the state and obstructed rural bishops' efforts to speak out against the regime collectively. When the Vatican, free from state intervention, appointed a new archbishop

in 1984, the rift within the bishops conference was resolved in favor of public confrontation with the state and support for human rights activism.

In El Salvador, the regime rejected collaboration with the Church in its efforts to repress and marginalize the left. In doing so, the state accrued no control over the appointment of bishops or material support to use as leverage with Church leaders. It followed that members of the Salvadoran episcopacy who were not ideologically compatible with the regime faced few incentives to remain silent on issues of interest to the Church, other than the risk of repression. As a result, the episcopacy was relatively free, if not unanimously ideologically inclined, to lead, join, or alter its participation in social and political struggles including public criticism of the state.

#### *Proximate Causes*

As in the bureaucratic authoritarian cases, Church-state ties and the Church-state relationship trajectories they induce cannot fully explain episcopal responses to human rights abuse. Rather, a number of proximate causes acting in conjunction with one another explain episcopal responses. The interaction between the bishops and these forces was structured by the ties linking Church and state and the broader patterns of political behavior these institutions helped perpetuate. However, systematic variation between proximate causes and episcopal responses cannot be identified without first acknowledging the different types of institutional arenas in which Church and state interacted and their relationship evolved. The basic framework of these arenas was the network of institutions linking Church and state.

Two key sets of variables entered these different arenas, and together, prompted alternative responses from each episcopacy. Arguably, the most important was state

antagonism of Church personnel. At its worst, this involved outright violent repression in which agents of the state were either directly involved or provided tacit approval. State obstruction of Church programs or use of anti-Church rhetoric fall within this set of variables as well. State antagonism of at least some sectors of the Church was present in Colombia, Guatemala and El Salvador. However, it was far more extreme in El Salvador and Guatemala than in Colombia.

State antagonism of Church personnel in Colombia provided little impetus for the Colombian episcopacy to denounce the state. This was because the Colombian episcopacy interpreted the forms of progressive political activity that invited repression as dangerous to the Church at large. Participation in partisan or socio-political struggles by clergy or laypeople acting in the name of the Church was strongly discouraged. Disobedience in such matters was seen as a direct challenge to episcopal authority. Thus, when overtly political and progressive Church-people became the victims of rights abuses, subsequent episcopal denunciations of the state would have been made on behalf of activists who were actively antagonizing Church leaders. In conjunction with the episcopacy's own established political strategy of avoiding political challenges to the status quo, the deck was stacked against such denunciations.<sup>118</sup>

Meanwhile, in El Salvador the archdiocese had been acting on behalf of progressive causes and helping to organize progressive political claims-making among *campesinos* since at least the early 1960s. When Church personnel were harassed in this work, forthcoming criticism of the state was not on behalf of those perceived to be acting

---

<sup>118</sup> It is noteworthy that when the Colombian episcopacy began, with extreme tentativeness, to assist in the investigation of alleged abuses, the bishops restricted the Church's involvement to investigation of attacks against clergy.

against the edicts of the archdiocese. Reservations about defending priests or laypeople who had become too 'radical' did exist, but assessing a victim's radicalism was a different matter than judging a victim's basic loyalty to the Church hierarchy. The well-known narrative of Archbishop Romero's shift to a confrontational position after the assassination of Fr. Rutilio Grande is one such iconic moment. In the case of El Salvador, repression against the Church fueled the archdiocese's human rights advocacy. After Archbishop Romero's assassination, though some of the outlines of confrontation with the state were altered, it would have been unthinkable for the archdiocese to abandon its broader stand on human rights.

In Guatemala, the effect of state antagonism of the Church was greater still. This is because the Guatemalan episcopacy was at an impasse when antagonism accelerated. The ascent of Efraim Rios Montt, was followed by the harassment of Caritas and no doubt further excluded from state power even the most conservative voices in the Guatemalan episcopacy. Combined with repression targeting clergy and prominent Church figures like Bishop Gerardi, state antagonism of the Church diminished the state's leverage over Church programs and helped tip the balance in favor of episcopal confrontation.

Another set of variables that interacted with varying Church-state trajectories was the influence of the Vatican. A key argument of this study has been that fewer Church-state ties increased the influence of the Vatican over a given episcopacy's long-term ideological evolution and medium-term political behavior. The general assumption embedded in this argument has been that greater Vatican influence during the era of international Church reform increased the influence of progressives relative to conservatives either through the intentional promotion of moderates or the intentional

marginalization of conservatives. However, for a variety of reasons, conservatives were sometimes appointed to fill open positions in episcopal conferences. The stakes of such appointments were higher in small episcopacies, such as those in El Salvador and Guatemala, where a single position might determine the ideological center of gravity within the bishops' conference.

In Guatemala, the 1964 appointment of conservative bishop Casariego to the position of archbishop was not typical of the period, though it represented ideological continuity in the Archdiocese. When Archbishop Casariego was replaced in 1984, the Vatican selected Bishop Penados in the midst of a rift between the archdiocese and rural dioceses. In this instance, the Vatican's selection helped make possible the episcopal conference's confrontation with the state over human rights abuses.

In El Salvador, a conservative papal nuncio, secured the appointment of Oscar Romero as a bishop and then archbishop at a time when he was believed to be relatively conservative and non-confrontational with the state. The latter appointment, which was to succeed progressive Archbishop Chávez, passed over the progressive Bishop Rivera. However, untethered to the state via any formal state controls or state leverage over Church programs, Romero's political orientation was free to evolve in response to local developments. Thus, he became a forceful human rights advocate, in spite of the efforts of the Vatican's official liaison in El Salvador.

These cases' path dependent trajectories and their interaction with proximate causes are strikingly similar to those of the bureaucratic authoritarian cases examined in previous chapters. The next chapter draws comparisons between these two sets of cases. It then concludes this study with a discussion of its main findings and implications.

## **Chapter 8: Path Dependence and Catholic Responses to Human Rights Abuse in Latin America**

This chapter summarizes and discusses the key analytical findings in terms of all six cases examined in this study. The first section notes key analytical similarities via pairs of cases with similar outcome types: contentious denunciation in Chile and El Salvador, delayed advocacy in Brazil and Guatemala, and complicity in Argentina and Colombia. Next, the chapter presents a brief synthesis of the central comparative evidence consistent with the presence of path dependence in Latin American Church-state relations. This section takes up the key empirical questions a robust critical junctures argument must answer to convincingly demonstrate the existence of a path dependent process. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the external validity and implications of these findings.

### **Contentious, Delayed and Silent Episcopacies**

The central theoretical claim of this study has been that the density of ties linking Church and state form the foundation of path dependent trajectories of Church-state relationships during significant portions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Latin America. The core attributes of these trajectories had a profound impact on the development of ideological tendencies within each episcopal conference, the strategies and tactics each episcopacy used with greatest effect to exert influence on the state, and the impact of various outside forces on the Church. These path dependent trajectories enhanced or mitigated the effects of important outside forces including reforms in the international Church during the

1960s and 1970s, the growth of the left, and state repression targeting progressive, politically active sectors of the Church. The result was that the core attributes of each trajectory shaped Catholic episcopacies' responses to waves of human rights abuse that accompanied both bureaucratic authoritarian regimes and counterinsurgencies. Important case characteristics are summarized in Table 8.1 and the trajectories of all six cases are summarized in Figure 8.1.

### *Complicity*

In Argentina and Colombia, the institutional reconfiguration that occurred during critical junctures gave the state a measure of control over internal Church affairs and institutionalized state support for Church operations and programs. In this context, both episcopacies derived social and political influence by avoiding contentious interaction with the state, including partisan politics, unless the Church itself came under attack by the state (an exceedingly rare occurrence in this group). During times of crisis, each episcopacy's political involvement focused on calls for national unity and, especially pronounced in the case of Argentina, nationalism. This trajectory mitigated the impact of the era of international Church reform following Vatican II, the immediate influence of Rome, and the scale and targets of repression. Radical and progressive movements emerged among clergy and the grassroots, but their inherently partisan or contentious political stances threatened dominant ideological factions and well-established modes for exerting influence. When nonviolent activists, either Church-affiliated or secular, encountered state-sanctioned violence and repression, the episcopacy stood to gain little (and risked losing quite a bit more) by defending victims of repression via some contentious or prophetic public stance.

Table 8.1: Summary of Case Characteristics						
	Argentina	Colombia	Brazil	Guatemala	Chile	El Salvador
Duration of BA Regime/Conflict <sup>1</sup>	1976-1983	1962-ongoing	1964-1979	1962-1994	1973-1989	1980-1992
Period of heaviest military repression targeting civilians <sup>2</sup>	1976-1980	1985-1989	1964, 1969-1973	1978-1983	1973-1977	1979-1983
Religious Repression <sup>3</sup>	12	10	2, including extensive funding for Church	6, moderate funding for Church	2	3
Scale of Human Rights Abuses <sup>4</sup>	Dead/Disappeared: 20,000-30,000 Political Prisoners: 30,000 Exiles: 500,000	"Indiscriminant, extensive human rights abuses" committed by incumbent regime	Dead/Disappeared: 284-664 Political Prisoners: 25,000 Exiles: 10,000	"Indiscriminant, extensive human rights abuses" committed by incumbent regime	Dead/Disappeared: 3,000-5,000 Political Prisoners: 60,000 Exiles: 40,000	"Indiscriminant, extensive human rights abuses" committed by incumbent regime
State Repression Against Church on Church	Moderate	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Moderate	Significant
Church Action	No group condemnation of human rights abuse during or shortly following wave of rights abuses in the 1980s.	No group condemnation of human rights abuse during or shortly following wave of rights abuses in the 1980s.	Public criticism of regime's human right record delayed 6-12 years after wave of abuses following 1964 military coup.	Public criticism of abuses targeting noncombatants delayed 6-7 years after sharp increase in the late 1970s-1980s.	Denunciations followed 6 months after coup, unequivocal denunciations followed within 3 years of coup.	Early and frequent denunciations preceded and persisted throughout the civil war.
	No organizational assistance provided to victims	No organizational assistance provided to victims.	Assistance provided to victims during delay and after.	Assistance provided to victims after delay.	Assistance provided to victims.	Assistance provided to victims.

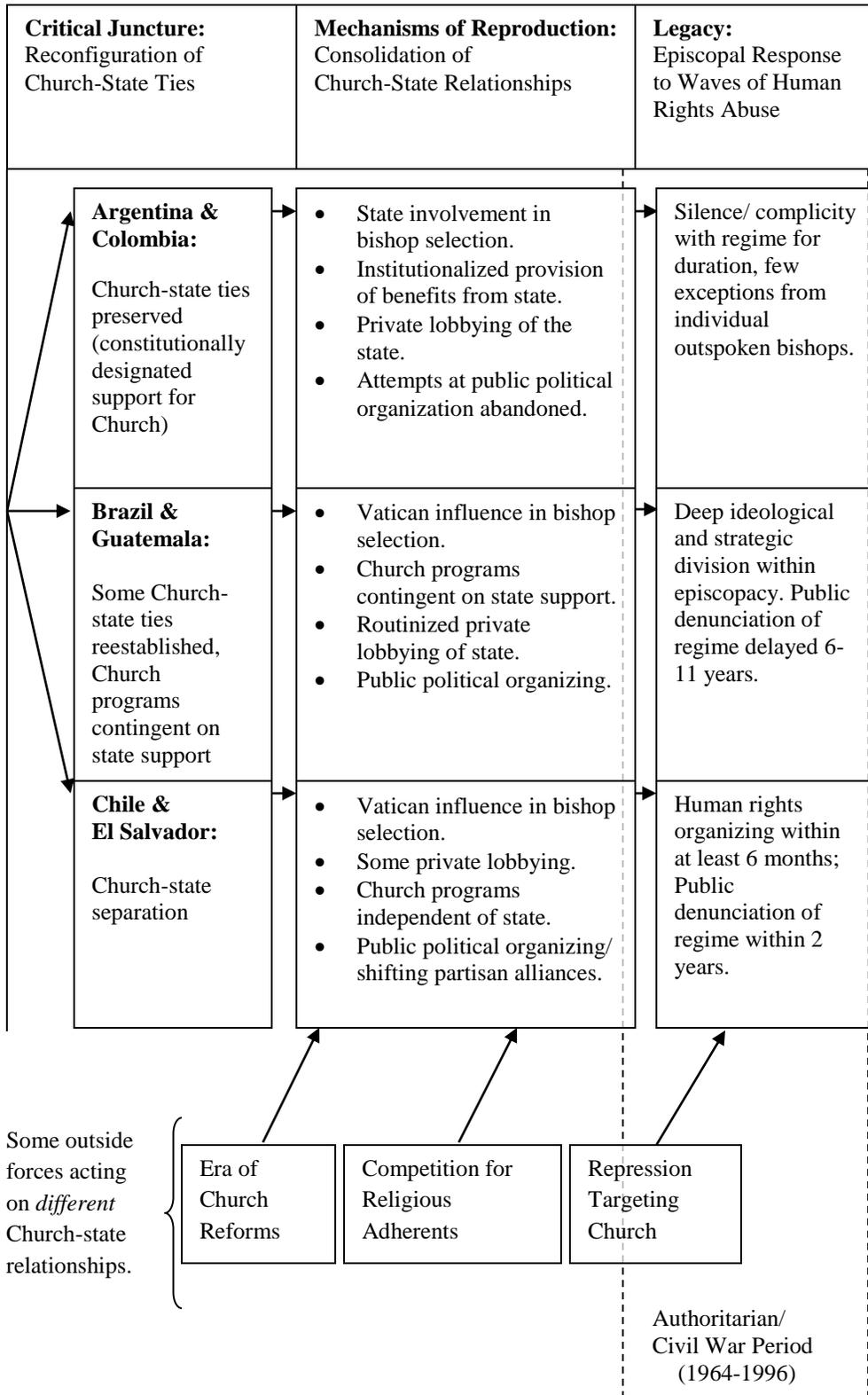
<sup>1</sup> Pereira (2005, 244) provides BA regime dates, Goodwin (2001, 244) provides conflict dates.

<sup>2</sup> Pereira (2005, 244) provides dates for heaviest repression in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Pardo (2000, 72) provides dates for Colombia's eradication of the UP. Garrard-Burnett (2010, 45-52, 60) provides dates for Guatemala, emphasizing the Lucas and Rios Montt periods. Wood (2003, 9) provides dates for El Salvador.

<sup>3</sup> Gill (1999, 300): This index variable is a count, with 21 different categories, of religious regulations that gave privileged status to the Catholic Church up to at least the 1970s. High scores indicate close church-state ties.

<sup>4</sup> Pereira (2005, 21) provides repression figures for Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Though varying in severity, Goodwin (2001, 244) characterizes human rights abuses in the civil wars in Colombia, El Salvador and Guatemala as comparable.

**Figure 8.1: Church-State Path Dependence Causal Diagram**



### *Delayed Advocacy*

In Brazil and Guatemala, the institutional reconfiguration that occurred during critical junctures gave the state no significant control over internal Church affairs but institutionalized the Church's reliance on state approval or support for many of its important operations or programs. In this context, both episcopacies derived and sustained political influence via private lobbying of the state. Later, they pursued broader social influence via the programs the state supported or, in the more repressive context of Guatemala, merely allowed. This trajectory elevated the influence of the Vatican relative to the state during the era of reform in the international Church and extended the reach of the Church into marginalized sectors. But, this trajectory also preserved some state leverage over the Church. When confronted with state policies and practices to which they objected, delayed advocate episcopacies experienced particularly sharp internal division about how to respond. Public denunciation risked the effective termination of important Church activities. In effect, reliance on private lobbying or dialog to protect such privileges temporarily sidelined post-Vatican II calls for bishops to engage in socioethical leadership. Overcoming these divisions took time and involved different processes in Brazil and Guatemala. However, Vatican-directed changes in Church leadership, a demonstrated loss of influence with the regime, and state repression targeting the Church helped trigger both episcopacies' eventual movement toward public involvement in human rights movements already underway.

### *Contentious Denunciation*

In Chile and El Salvador, the institutional reconfiguration that occurred during critical junctures gave the state no control over the internal affairs of the Church and

permitted relatively little or no state support for Church operations or programs. In this context, political, ideological and theological interests were shaped far less by the state than by Vatican appointments and instructions during the era of international Church reform. Moreover, the state possessed minimal leverage over the tactics used to pursue those interests. To exert influence, pursue reform-oriented state policy, and/or respond to crises, these episcopacies did not hesitate to engage in private dialog, mediation, or public politics. Such efforts were sometimes partisan, sometimes contentious, and occasionally both. Lacking leverage over the Church, the state was not in a strong position to curtail or delay denunciations. Consequently, these episcopacies were able to play a contentious prophetic role much earlier, positioning them as leaders in the early stages of the human rights movement. When these movements began to mature, these episcopacies shifted their focus to a new set of concerns such as the transition to democracy and the facilitation of peace negotiations.

### **The Catholic Church and Path Dependence in Latin America**

The path dependent trajectories described in the previous section helped shape the broader political behavior of Catholic episcopacies because they maintained a set of stable core attributes. These attributes were created during a critical juncture, sustained by mechanisms of reproduction, and not pre-ordained by conditions established prior to that critical juncture. Adoption of a critical junctures perspective requires clear answers to three key comparative questions. These questions are: (1) If antecedent conditions present plausible rival hypotheses, do those conditions vary systematically with the outcome to be explained? (2) Did factors pre-dating the critical juncture predetermine the "choices" made by key actors during the critical juncture itself? (3) Once a set of

institutions was chosen, did mechanisms of reproduction readily permit shifts to an alternative set of institutions? Affirmative answers to these questions cast doubt on the presence of path dependence. The evidence presented in this study suggests the most appropriate answer to each of these questions is *no*.

Antecedent conditions that offer the most plausible rival hypotheses took shape during the era of liberal political ascent, mainly during the 1870s and 1880s. At this time, the Church was an active participant in otherwise secular political struggles between liberals and conservatives. One might suspect that sustained periods of political dominance by anticlerical, liberal forces between the 1870s and a case's critical juncture might systematically correspond to a subsequent separation of Church and state. Conversely, one might expect that conservative dominance during this period might have secured the perpetuation of a dense network of Church-state ties. However, such systematic variation was not the case. The experiences of Argentina and Colombia, where critical junctures left Church and state closely bound, refute such hypotheses. Prior to its critical juncture, Argentina had just exited an extended period of liberal government via military coup. However, Church-state ties were not consolidated by the Catholic nationalist Uruburu regime that followed. Instead, consolidation of Church-state ties was accomplished during the government of General Justo, who had been the leader of a relatively liberal rival faction in the military. In Colombia, Church-state ties were reaffirmed in the midst of a power-sharing agreement between the Liberal and Conservative Parties. Meanwhile, Guatemala and El Salvador experienced protracted periods of liberal dominance after the 1870s, but Guatemala went on to re-establish ties to the state, whereas El Salvador did not.

If not a function of partisan dominance, one might instead hypothesize that the density of Church-state ties prior to the critical juncture systematically varies with institutional designs selected during a critical juncture. Three alternatives stand out. First, one might expect institutional inertia to discourage change. Second, one might expect Church frustration with status quo arrangements to induce change in Church-state ties during a period of reform. Third, one might expect Church-state separation to produce better organized Churches that were more politically appealing partners for Church-state re-establishment. However, none of these conditions systematically varies with later outcomes.

By the 1870s and 1880s, every case experienced some measure of liberal-driven reform to Church-state ties. Church and state were formally separated in 1871 in Guatemala and El Salvador and in 1889 in Brazil. Liberal reforms stripped the Church of various privileges related to education and the civil registry during the 1880s in Argentina and Chile. Church and state were disestablished in Colombia in the 1850s only to resume official ties in 1888 via a political compromise.

Though the institutional position of the Church changed frequently, all six cases entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century with varying levels of Church-state ties. Colombia, Argentina and Chile retained the densest network of ties. Meanwhile, Church and state remained entirely separate in Brazil, Guatemala and El Salvador. Each set of Church-state ties was still subject to political contestation. The Church in all six cases uniformly sought to defend its interests or restore lost privileges, typically by forming alliances with conservative social forces and/or political parties. In Argentina, Chile and Brazil, by the 1920s such efforts were coupled with early measures to increase Church influence among

non-elites, including organizing activity among different configurations of immigrant, working class, and middle class populations. Despite political activity that was uniformly pro-clerical and traditional in its objectives, the Church fared differently across the six cases. Colombia and Argentina retained dense networks of ties, Chile's network was severed, Brazil and Guatemala's networks were partially re-established, and El Salvador's network remained separate.

Finally, one might suspect that pre-existing conditions within each Church or episcopacy might have systematically predisposed the selection of dense Church-state ties. The most obvious such hypothesis might argue that where various forms of Catholic nationalist ideology held sway within the episcopacy, conservative political forces may have seen a potential ally for the regimes they hoped to defend or construct. Argentina clearly presents a case in which Catholic nationalism and conservative political forces began to come into alignment prior to the critical juncture. However, a high-profile faction of Argentine bishops interested in social reforms benefiting workers remained important until losing influence *after* the ecclesiastical expansion approved by the Justo government in 1932. A comparable divide existed in Guatemala prior to the Rossell-Armas alliance. Furthermore, variants of Catholic nationalism, neo-Christendom, or Catholic integralism existed in nearly all episcopacies prior to or during critical junctures without necessarily resulting in the creation of dense networks of Church-state ties. Brazil's Catholic integralist movement predated Vargas' reconfiguration of Church-state ties. Catholic integralist sentiment in Chile's episcopacy prompted the Vatican to explicitly instruct Chile's bishops to accept Church-state separation and, later, not to endorse the pro-clerical Conservative Party.

As each case entered its own critical juncture, leaders of both the Church and the state had viable alternatives in the types of Church-state ties they selected. The selections themselves depended on immediate or short-term historical contingencies. Each of the six cases offers examples of such contingencies. Close personal ties between Archbishop Leme and Vargas in Brazil and a personal ideological affinity between Archbishop Rossell and Armas in Guatemala facilitated re-establishment of Church-state ties in those critical junctures. Alessandri took the personal and political initiative to negotiate Church-state separation directly with the Vatican while he was in exile. Colombia's Church-state ties were only consolidated after the Liberal Party decided to cease contestation of Church privileges as part of the National Front accord. And, perhaps most historically contingent of all, despite Church lobbying to regain lost privileges, El Salvador retained Church-state separation due in large part to Martínez' personal religious views.

Finally, once Church-state ties were established, mechanisms of reproduction made changing course a difficult proposition. In a sense, the preponderance of evidence in support of this claim resides in the rarity of serious efforts to alter established norms in Church-state relations. In Brazil, for example, state funding for Church programs continued despite substantial executive (and later legislative) discretion over funding decisions *and* significant changes in the ideological orientation of successive administrations. Furthermore, Church-state ties did not return as a subject of political contestation when the National Front regime was dissolved in Colombia. When challenges to Church-state ties did take shape, the resilience of post-critical juncture Church-state ties was apparent. The clearest such example is Perón's attempt to sever

Church-state ties, a political miscalculation that stoked opposition more than it achieved any gains for Perón or his supporters. Challenging an established nationalist institution proved too costly and Perón backed down only to be deposed shortly afterward and watch from exile as Church-state ties were normalized by the regime that succeeded him.

### **End of Church-State Path Dependence**

By the end of the 1990s, the legacy of the path dependent processes described in this study appeared to be breaking down. This was the result of a number of forces that began chipping away at the mechanisms of reproduction that influenced episcopal political commitments in previous decades. As discussed in chapter 3, the papacy of John Paul II brought the era of reform in the international Church to a close. Appointments of conservative bishops, while not universal, shifted the attention of some episcopacies away from social issues in favor of issues related to individual morality. Democratization and the rise of religious pluralism contributed to this shift as well. Though occurring unevenly at the cross-national level, these forces added new dimensions to the complex logic of episcopal political commitments. Caught between the secular left and right, it is often difficult for the Church to find allies that are simultaneously on the socio-economic left and moral right (Hagopian 2008). Episcopacies that are tolerant of significant pluralism *within* the Church may prove better able to negotiate this new environment, whereas episcopacies that insist on orthodoxy may find exerting political influence increasingly difficult.<sup>119</sup>

---

<sup>119</sup> On this issue, see Levine (2009), which essentially applies the best insights of his influential earlier work (specifically 1981), and calls attention to the heightened value of those insights in the current pluralistic political and religious environments.

Nevertheless, recent comparative research on post-democratization Catholic episcopacies in Latin America suggests that a divergence in attention to different types of social issues still exists. Some episcopacies have become more involved in social justice issues and others have become more involved in ‘public morality’ issues such as abortion. Hagopian (2008) found a divergence in public political positions taken by the preponderance of bishops in Mexico, Brazil, Chile and Argentina since 2000. Analyzing 620 episcopal statements, letters and messages from bishops in her four cases, Hagopian finds that the episcopacy in Chile and Argentina focus on moral issues like opposition to abortion and homosexuality, while Brazilian bishops tend to focus on social justice issues including human rights and poverty. Mexico occupied a sort of middle ground in which bishops make public statements about social justice and human rights, but with less frequency than their Brazilian counterparts.

Hagopian’s findings may suggest a final reactive sequence in the legacy of 20<sup>th</sup> century Church-state ties.<sup>120</sup> The contemporary Brazilian and Argentine cases reflect their respective human rights commitments from previous decades, whereas the Chilean case does not. Hagopian's empirical findings may suggest that cases of contentious denunciation from earlier decades no longer prioritize episcopal human rights advocacy in a new environment of left-right political competition. Meanwhile, cases of delayed advocacy may have retained an internal pluralism capable of sustaining an interest in (and ability to propagate) meaningful human rights critiques.

Additional anecdotal evidence is consistent with this trend. Chile's Vicariate of Solidarity was converted from a working human rights office to an historical archive in

---

<sup>120</sup> On reactive sequences in path dependence, see Mahoney (2000, 526-35).

1992. In the other case of contentious denunciation, El Salvador, a similar pattern may have played out in the years following the end of the civil war. Many observers expected (and subsequently noted) a pronounced conservative shift in the episcopacy with the announcement that conservative Bishop Fernando Sáenz Lacalle would succeed Archbishop Rivera as Archbishop of San Salvador. Budget cuts reduced the staff of Tutela Legal after the Peace Accords, despite a significant continued workload.

Despite this possibility, further research is needed. A significant portion of Tutela Legal's budget cuts were the result of a loss of international donors rather than the episcopacy's conservative shift. In addition, more recent developments in El Salvador have demonstrated greater variability, particularly as the Archdiocese has taken some interest in recent violence against anti-mining activists. The Colombian episcopacy's statements with respect to the rights of the internally displaced pose questions for this extension as well.

### **Institutions and Agency**

As noted in chapter 1, while emphasizing the centrality of Church-state ties to understanding the political behavior of Latin American episcopacies, this study does not assert that Church-state ties constitute a mono-causal explanation. Rather, this study argues that a confluence of forces interacts in the context of cross-nationally varied Church-state relationships. As a result, Church-state ties and their impact on episcopal political behavior demonstrate an interesting interplay between the dual roles of institutions and agency. Institutions created modal forms of episcopacy-state interactions, established varied sets of inducements and constraints, and influenced the ideological center of gravity in each conference. However, these forces did not pre-determine the

actions or efficacy of individual bishops. Even in institutional environments less favorable to mounting criticism of the state, it was possible for agency to fly in the face of institutional constraints. A handful of Argentine bishops worked to denounce human rights abuses, though two paid the ultimate price for doing so. In institutional environments like Brazil and Guatemala, the importance of agency seems greater still as early episcopal calls for a strong stand on human rights emanated from specific subnational groups of bishops who helped to persuade others in the national-level conference.

Environments with fewer constraints on criticism of the state reveal the importance of agency as well. The agency of Archbishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador and Cardinal Silva in Chile are noteworthy in this regard. Both became forceful human rights advocates, but with some hesitance. As discussed in chapter 7, Romero underwent a profound personal conversion to arrive at this position. Romero's agency (and, of course, the advice he received) accounts for the decision to begin organizing *Socorro Jurídico*. When Pope Paul VI expressed a desire to criticize the Chilean military in a letter shortly after the 1973 coup, Cardinal Silva asked the pontiff not to publish it. In the midst of separate tensions with the regime, Silva stepped down as chancellor of the Catholic University in 1974 and complied with Pinochet's insistence that COPACHI be dissolved. Silva would go on to play central leadership roles in the challenging task of organizing the episcopal conference's denunciations of the regime and the Vicariate of Solidarity. Silva's evolution was perhaps less dramatic than Romero's, but he evolved from seeking dialog with the regime to denouncing it. For both men, it would seem a delicate negotiation took place between their perception of the challenges they faced,

their understanding of their own moral obligations, and the strategies and resources at their disposal. Church-state separation, repression, and ideology played roles in presenting the contours of the alternatives available to bishops, but navigation through successive challenges, confrontations, and setbacks relied on agency.

Given the role of agency and the deep historical roots of the Catholic Church in Latin America, the external validity of the argument presented in this study must be assessed with caution. The extension of these findings from the bureaucratic authoritarian cases to the counterinsurgency cases is a promising indicator of broader generalizability. Similar processes unfolded in bureaucratic authoritarian environments *and* in the midst of full blown civil war. Also, the long-term effects of these path dependent processes persisted into the early years of the papacy of John Paul II, a conservative shift in the Vatican signaling the end of the accelerated international Church reforms of the period from the 1950s through the 1970s.

These findings are consistent with Philpott's (2007) much broader findings that Church-state differentiation and changes to political theology are the most important variables influencing support for democracy across multiple world regions and faith traditions. Though Philpott oversimplified the full range of variance in these two variables within Latin America, under closer scrutiny of the 1960s-1980s period, Philpott's broader argument about the centrality of these two variables remains persuasive.

Despite these positive indications, important questions remain unaddressed in this study and warrant future research. In particular, cases of dense networks of Church-state ties examined here involved states where conservative social forces tended to dominate

the institutions of government. Despite this, progressive political theology in Brazil was encouraged via intermediate Church-state ties under reformist governments in the early 1960s. Thus, dense networks of Church-state ties during sustained periods of left governments (democratic or not), such as Peru after 1968 or Nicaragua after 1979, remain unexamined. Further study of such cases may reveal that regime ideology is an important additional variable in the production of a distinct trajectory not fully examined here. Such cases may provide stronger Latin American tests of arguments that emphasize the causal importance of Church-state ties. Additional extensions of this argument should take up examples of Church-state separations that are so intensive they more closely resemble heavy state regulation of religion and thus dense networks of conflictual Church-state ties. The two most prominent examples of such scenarios would be post-revolution Mexico and Cuba.

More generally, tests of the extension of this argument outside of Latin America are warranted as well. The most logical starting point would be an examination of other predominantly Catholic, Iberian/Iberian-influenced countries with similar authoritarian experiences. Spain under Franco, Portugal under Salazar, and the Philippines under Marcos are natural candidates.

Should future research convincingly demonstrate broader generalizability of these findings, some important implications are evident in the findings presented here. Clear institutional separation of Church and state allowed and encouraged Church leaders and organizations to act as vibrant participants in civil society and defenders of democratic norms and institutions. Thus, institutional separation of Church and state is distinct from notions of Church-state separation that would exclude religious participation from the

public debates about government action. Rather, separation of these institutions fosters more dynamic participation in public politics. This ultimately encourages a vested interest in the maintenance of democracy among religious organizations. The boundaries of this participation must, however, preclude the state's ability to co-opt religious organizations with the dispersal of state funds or other resources. Moreover, state guarantees of disputed moral codes or other privileged roles not broadly shared by society at large risk demobilizing an important source of support for democratic norms. In essence, the price of religious support for democracy is paid by religious organizations' willingness to remain separate from the state.

## References

- Adriance, Madeleine. 1992. "The Paradox of Institutionalization: The Roman Catholic Church in Chile and Brazil." *Sociological Analysis*, 53(Spring): S51-S62.
- Aguilar, Mario. 2003. "Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez, the Catholic Church, and the Pinochet Regime, 1973-1980: Public Responses to a National Security State." *The Catholic Historical Review* 89(4): 712-731.
- Aguilar, Mario I. 2004. *A social history of the Catholic Church in Chile 1, The First period of the Pinochet government, 1973 - 1980*. Lewiston, NY: Mellen.
- Americas Watch Committee. 1991. *El Salvador's Decade of Terror: Human Rights Since the Assassination of Archbishop Romero*. New Haven, CT: Yale University.
- Anderson, John. 2007. "The Catholic contribution to the 'third wave' of democratization: Altruism, hegemony or self-interest?" *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 20(3): 383-99.
- Andersen, Martin Edwin. 1993. *Dossier secreto: Argentina's Desaparecidos and the myth of the "Dirty War"*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Anderson, Thomas. 1971. *Matanza: El Salvador's Communist Revolt of 1932*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Aviles, William. 2001. "Institutions, Military Policy, and Human Rights in Colombia." *Latin American Perspectives* 28(1): 31-55.
- Bakhtiari, Bahman. 1986. "Revolution and the Church in Nicaragua and El Salvador." *Journal of Church and State* 28(1): 15-42.
- Berryman, Philip. 1984. *The Religious Roots of Rebellion*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Blakemore, Harold. 1993. "From the War of the Pacific to 1930." In *Chile since independence*. Leslie Bethell ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Boudon, Lawrence. 1996. "Guerrillas and the State: The Role of the State in the Colombian Peace Process." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28(2): 279-97.
- Bouvier, Virginia Marie. 1983. *Alliance or Compliance: Implications of the Chilean Experience for the Catholic Church in Latin America*. Syracuse: Maxwell School.
- Brady, Henry and David Collier. 2004. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

- Brett, Edward. 2008. "Archbishop Arturo Rivera Damas and the Struggle for Social Justice in El Salvador." *The Catholic Historical Review* 94(4): 717-739.
- Bruneau, Thomas. 1973. "Power and Influence: Analysis of the Church in Latin America and the Case of Brazil." *Latin American Research Review* 8(2): 25-51.
- Bruneau, Thomas. 1974. *The Political Transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bruneau, Thomas. 1982. *The Church in Brazil: The Politics of Religion*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Burdick, Michael A. 1995. *For God and Fatherland: Religion and Politics in Argentina*. Albany: The State University of New York Press.
- Bushnell, David. 1993. *The Making of Modern Colombia: A Nation in Spite of Itself*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Byrne, Hugh. 1996. *El Salvador's Civil War: A Study of Revolution*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Calvo, Roberto. 1979. "The Church and the Doctrine on National Security." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 21(1): 69-88.
- Catholic Church, Joan Dassin, and Jaime Wright. 1998. *Torture in Brazil: a shocking report on the pervasive use of torture by Brazilian military governments, 1964-1979*. Austin, TX: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas.
- Chernick, Marc W. 1988. "Negotiated Settlement to Armed Conflict: Lessons from the Colombian Peace Process." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 30(4): 53-88.
- Cleary, Edward L. 1985. *Crisis and change: the Church in Latin America today*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books.
- Cleary, Edward L., ed. 1989. *Path from Puebla: Significant Documents of the Latin American Bishops since 1979*. Phillip Berryman, trans. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, Inc.
- Cleary, Edward L. 1997. *The Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Collier, David (ed). 1979. *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Collier, Ruth Berins, and David Collier. 1991. *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame.
- Collier, David and James Mahoney. 1996. "Research Note: Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research" *World Politics* 49(1): 56–91.
- Collier, David, James Mahoney and Jason Seawright. 2004. "Claiming Too Much: Warnings about Selection Bias." In *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, Henry Brady and David Collier eds. 85-102, Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Collier, Simon and William F. Sater. 2004. *A History of Chile, 1808-2002*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Colombian Episcopal Conference. 1984. "Statement on Drug Addiction and Drug Trafficking." In Edward Cleary, ed. 1989. *Path from Puebla: Significant Documents of the Latin American Bishops since 1979*. Phillip Berryman, trans. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, Inc.
- Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación. 1991. *Informe Rettig*. Santiago: Government of Chile.
- Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas (CONADEP). 1984. *Nunca Más*. Buenos Aires: Martes.
- Conferencia Episcopal America Latina (CELAM). 1968a. "Justice." Available at <http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/medjust.htm>
- Conferencia Episcopal America Latina (CELAM). 1968b. "Peace." Available at <http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/medpeace.htm>
- Conferencia Episcopal Peruana. 1970. *Between Honesty and Hope: Documents from and about the Church in Latin America*. Transl. by John Drury. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Maryknoll Publishers.
- Coppa, Frank J. 2008. *Politics and the Papacy in the Modern World*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Crahan, Margaret E. 1992. "Religion: Reconstituting Church and Pursuing Change." In *Americas: New Interpretive Essays*, Alfred Stepan Ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dame, Hartley. 1968. "Argentina, A Violent Society? Part II." *World Affairs* 131(2): 101-113.
- De Kadt, Emanuel. 1970. *Catholic Radicals in Brazil*. London: Oxford University Press.

- Della Cava, Ralph. 1976. "Catholicism and Society in Twentieth-Century Brazil." *Latin American Research Review* 11(2): 7-50.
- Dodson, Michael. 1979. "The Christian Left in Latin American Politics" *The Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 21(1): 45-68.
- Deutsch, Sandra McGee. 1993. "The Right under Radicalism, 1916-1930." In *The Argentine right: its history and intellectual origins, 1910 to the present*. Sandra Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolkart, eds. Wilmington, Del: SR Books.
- Dudley, Steven. 2004. *Walking Ghosts: Murder and Guerrilla Politics in Colombia*. New York: Routledge.
- Dunkerley, James. 1982. *The Long War: Dictatorship and Revolution in El Salvador*. London: Junction Books.
- Dunne, Peter. 1945. "Church and State in Argentina." *Review of Politics* 7(4): 391-417.
- Esquivel, Juan Cruz. 2000. "Iglesia Católica, política y sociedad: un estudio de las relaciones entre la elite eclesiástica argentina, el Estado y la sociedad en perspectiva histórica." In *Informe final del concurso: Democracia, derechos sociales y equidad; y Estado, política y conflictos sociales*. Buenos Aires: Programa Regional de Becas, CLACSO.
- Falcoff, Mark. 1991. *Modern Chile: 1970-1989*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Feitlowitz, Marguerite. 1998. *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fleet, Michael. 1985. *The Rise and Fall of Chilean Christian Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fleet, Michael, and Brian H. Smith. 1997. *The Catholic Church and Democracy in Chile and Peru*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame.
- Fox, Jonathan. 2006. "World Separation of Religion and State Into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." *Comparative Political Studies* 39(June): 537-69.
- Fox, Jonathan. 2007. "Do Democracies Have Separation of Religion and State?" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 40(1): 1-25.
- Fox, Jonathan and Shmuel Sandler. 2005. "Separation of Religion and State into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." *Comparative Politics* 37(3): 317-35.

- Frigerio, Alejandro. 2007. "Analyzing Conversion in Latin America: Theoretical Questions, Methodological Dilemmas, and Comparative Data from Argentina and Brazil." In *Conversion of a Continent: Contemporary Religious Change in Latin America*, Timothy Steigenga and Edward Cleary eds., 33-51, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Garrarad-Burnett, Virginia. 2010. *Terror in the Land of the Holy Spirit: Guatemala under General Efraín Ríos Montt, 1982-1983*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gauding, Anna-Karin. 1991. *Esmejorencenderunaluzquemaldecir la oscuridad*. Santiago, Chile: Diakonia.
- Geddes, Barbara. 1991. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." In James A. Stimson, ed., *Political Analysis*, vol. 2: Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- George, Alexander and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Gerschenkron, Alexander. 1962. *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gibney, Mark, L. Cornett and Reed Wood. 2010. *Political Terror Scale 1976-2010*. <http://www.politicalterrorsscale.org/> (June 15, 2012).
- Gill, Anthony. 1994. "Rendering unto Caesar? Religious Competition and Catholic Political Strategy in Latin America, 1962-1979." *American Journal of Political Science* 38(2): 403-25.
- Gill, Anthony. 1998. *Rendering Unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Gill, Anthony. 1999. "Government Regulation, Social Anomie and Protestant Growth in Latin America." *Rationality and Society* 11(3): 287-316.
- Goldfrank, Benjamin and Nick Rowell. 2012. "The Church, the State, and Human Rights in Latin America." *Politics, Religion and Ideology* 13(1): 25-51.
- González, Ondina E., and Justo L. González. 2008. *Christianity in Latin America: a History*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Goodwin, Jeff. 2001. *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*. New York: Cambridge University.

- Grandin, Greg. 1997. "To End with All These Evils: Ethnic Transformation and Community Mobilization in Guatemala's Western Highlands, 1954-1980." *Latin American Perspectives* 24(2): 7-34.
- Gremillion, Joseph. 1976. *The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching since Pope John*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Gribble, Richard. 2003. "Anti-communism, Patrick Peyton, CSC and the C.I.A." *Journal of Church and State* 45(3): 535-58.
- Guatemalan Episcopal Conference. 1984. "To Construct Peace." In Edward Cleary, ed. 1989. *Path from Puebla: Significant Documents of the Latin American Bishops since 1979*. Phillip Berryman, trans. Washington, D. C.: United States Catholic Conference, Inc.
- Gutierrez, Gustavo. 1973. *A Theology of Liberation*. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson trans. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Haas, Liesl. 1999. "The Catholic Church in Chile: New Political Alliances." In *Latin American Religion in Motion*, Christian Smith and Joshua Prokopy eds. 43-66. New York: Routledge.
- Hagopian, Frances. 2008. "Latin American Catholicism in an Age of Religious and Political Pluralism: A Framework for Analysis." *Comparative Politics* 40(2): 149-68.
- Handy, Jim. 1994. *Revolution in the Countryside: Rural Conflicts and Agrarian Reform in Guatemala, 1944-1954*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Holden, Robert. 2008. "Communism and Catholic Social Doctrine in the Guatemalan Revolution of 1944." *Journal of Church and State* 50(3): 495-517.
- Huneus, Carlos. 2003. "A Highly Institutionalized Political Party." In *Christian Democracy in Latin America*, edited by Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully. 121-161. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). 1999. *Third Report on the Human Rights Situation in Colombia. Organization of American States*. <http://www.cidh.oas.org/countryrep/Colom99en> (April 10, 2012).
- Ivereigh, Austen. 1995. *Catholicism and Politics in Argentina, 1810-1960*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- John XXIII. *Pacem in Terris*. Encyclical of Pope John XXIII on Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity and Liberty. April 11, 1963. [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/encyclicals/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/index.htm) (July 15, 2011).

- Johnson, Kenneth. 1976. "Guerrilla Politics in Argentina." *Conflict Studies* (October).
- Johnson, Ollie Andrew. 2001. *Brazilian Party Politics and the Coup of 1964*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.
- Jonas, Susanne, Ed McCaughan, and Elizabeth Sutherland Martínez., eds. 1984. *Guatemala Tyranny on Trial: Testimony of the Permanent People's Tribunal*. San Francisco: Synthesis Publications.
- Kaufman, Edy. 1979. *Uruguay in Transition: From Civilian to Military Rule*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Keck, Margaret, and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Kennedy, John J. 1958. *Catholicism, Nationalism, and Democracy in Argentina*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Klaiber, Jeffrey. 1998. *The Church, Dictatorships, and Democracy in Latin America*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Kirkendall, Andrew, 2004. "Paulo Freire, Eduardo Frei, Literacy Training and the Politics of Consciousness Raising in Chile, 1964-1970." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 36(4): 687-717.
- LADOC. 1976. *LADOC Keyhole Series*. V. 15.
- LADOC. 1977. *LADOC Keyhole Series*. V. 16.
- LaFeber, Walter. 1983. *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Landsberger, Henry. 1970. "Time, Persons, Doctrine: The Modernization of the Church in Chile." In *The Church and Social Change in Latin America*. Henry Landsberger, ed. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Leo XIII. *Rerum Novarum*. Encyclical of Pope Leo XII on Capital and Labor. Vatican Web site. May 15, 1891.  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/index.htm) (July 15, 2011).

- Leonard, Virginia. 1980. "Education and the Church-State Clash in Argentina, 1954-1955." *The Catholic Historical Review* 66(1): 34-52.
- Levine, Daniel H. 1981. *Religion and Politics in Latin America: The Catholic Church in Colombia and Venezuela*. Princeton: Princeton University.
- Levine, Daniel H. 1985. "Continuities in Colombia." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 17(2): 295-317.
- Levine, Daniel H. 2009. "Pluralism as Challenge and Opportunity." In *Religious Pluralism, Democracy, and the Catholic Church in Latin America*, Frances Hagopian ed., 405-428, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Levine, Daniel H. and Alexander W. Wilde. 1977. "The Catholic Church, 'Politics,' and Violence: The Colombian Case." *The Review of Politics* 39(2): 220-249.
- Levine, Robert. 1970. *The Vargas Regime: The Critical Years, 1934-1938*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Levine, Robert. 1998. *Father of the Poor? Vargas and His Era*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, Paul. 1993. "The Right and Military Rule, 1955-1983." In *The Argentine Right: Its History and Intellectual Origins, 1910 to the Present*. Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolkart, eds. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc.
- Loveman, Brian. 1976. "The Transformation of the Chilean Countryside." In Arturo Valenzuela and Samuel Valenzuela, eds. *Chile: Politics and Society*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books.
- Loveman, Brian. 1988. *Chile: The Legacy of Hispanic Capitalism*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Loveman, Mara. 1998. "High-Risk Collective Action: Defending Human Rights in Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina." *The American Journal of Sociology* 104(2): 477-525.
- Lowden, Pamela. 1996. *Moral Opposition to Authoritarian Rule in Chile, 1973-1990*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Mahoney, James. 2000. "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology." *Theory and Society* 29(4): 507-548.
- Mahoney, James. 2001. "Radical, Reformist and Aborted Liberalism: Origins of Nationalist Regimes in Central America." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 33(2): 221-256.

- Mainwaring, Scott. 1984. "The Catholic Church, Popular Education and Political Change in Brazil." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 26(1): 97-124.
- Mainwaring, Scott. 1986. *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Mainwaring, Scott. 1995. "Brazil: Weak Parties, Feckless Democracy." In *Building Democratic Institutions: Parties and Party Systems in Latin America*, edited by Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Mainwaring, Scott, and Alexander Wilde. 1989. "The Progressive Church in Latin America: An Interpretation." In *The Progressive Church in Latin America*, Scott Mainwaring and Alexander Wilde eds., 1-37, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Meacham, Carl. 1987. "Changing of the Guard: New Relations between Church and State in Chile." *Journal of Church and State* 29(Autumn): 411-33.
- Mecham, J. Lloyd. 1966. *Church and State in Latin America: A History of Politico-Ecclesiastical Relations*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina.
- Mendez, Jesus. 1985. "Church-State Relations in Argentina in the Twentieth Century: A Case Study of the Thirty-second International Eucharistic Conference." *Journal of Church and State* 27(Spring): 223-243.
- Mignone, Emilio. 1986. *Witness to the Truth: The Complicity of Church and Dictatorship in Argentina*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Moore, Barrington, Jr. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Montgomery, Tommie Sue. 1983. "The Church in the Salvadoran Revolution." *Latin American Perspectives* 10(1): 62-87.
- Munck, Geraldo. 2001. "Tools for Qualitative Research." In *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, Henry Brady and David Collier eds. 105-122, Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Mutchler, David E. 1971. *The Church as a Political Factor in Latin America: With Particular Reference to Colombia and Chile*. New York: Praeger.
- Neuhouser, Kevin. 1989. "The Radicalization of the Brazilian Catholic Church in Comparative Perspective" *American Sociological Review* 54(2): 233-44.

- Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. 2004. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*. New York: Cambridge University.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo A. 1973. *Modernization and bureaucratic-authoritarianism: studies in South American politics*. Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo A. 1988. *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Argentina, 1966-1973, in Comparative Perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo A. 1999. "State and Alliances in Argentina, 1956-1976." In *Counterpoints: Selected Essays on Authoritarianism and Democratization*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Palacios, Marco. 2006. *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002*. Richard Stoller, trans. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Palmer, David Scott. 1994. "Conclusion: The View from the Windows." in *The Shining Path of Peru*, David Scott Palmer ed., 259-73, New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Pang, Eul-Soo. 1974. "The Changing Roles of Priests in the Politics of Northeast Brazil, 1889-1964." *The Americas* 30(3): 341-372.
- Pardo, Rafael. 2000. "Colombia's Two-Front War." *Foreign Affairs* 79(4): 64-73.
- Parkman, Patricia. 1988. *Nonviolent Insurrection in El Salvador: The Fall of Maximiliano Hernandez Martínez*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Patterson, Eric. 2005. *Latin America's Neo-reformation: Religion's Influence on Contemporary Politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Patridge, Blake. 1995. "The Catholic Church and the Closed Corporate Community during the Guatemalan Revolution, 1944-1954." *The Americas* 52(1): 25-42.
- Pereira, Anthony. 2005. *Political (In)Justice: Authoritarianism and the Rule of Law in Brazil, Chile, and Argentina*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Peterson, Anna L. 1997. *Martyrdom and the Politics of Religion: Progressive Catholicism in El Salvador's Civil War*. Albany: State University of New York.
- Philpott, Daniel. 2007. "Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion" *American Political Science Review* 101(3): 505-526.
- Pierson, Paul. 2004. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Pierson, Paul and Theda Skocpol. 2002. "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science." In *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, eds. Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner. New York: Norton.
- Pike, Fredrick. 1959. "The Catholic Church in Central America." *The Review of Politics* 21(1): 83-113.
- Pike, Fredrick. 1964. *The Conflict between Church and State in Latin America*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Publishers.
- Pion-Berlin, David. 1988. "The National Security Doctrine, Military Threat Perception, and the 'Dirty War' in Argentina." *Comparative Political Studies* 21(3): 382-407.
- Pion-Berlin, David. 1989. *The Ideology of State Terror: Economic Doctrine and Political Repression in Argentina and Peru*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Pio-Berlin, David and George Lopez. 1991. "Of Victims and Executioners: Argentine State Terror, 1975-1979." *International Studies Quarterly* 35(March): 63-86.
- Pius XI. *Quadragesimo Anno*. Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Reconstruction of the Social Order. Vatican Web site. May 15, 1931.  
www.vatican.va/holy\_father/pius\_xi/encyclicals/index.htm (July 15, 2011).
- Policzer, Pablo. 2009. *The Rise and Fall of Repression in Chile*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Przeworski, Adam and Henry Teune. 1982. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company.
- Recovery of Historical Memory Project (REMHI). 1999. *Guatemala: Never Again!* Gretta Tovar Siebentritt, trans. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Rock, David. 1975. *Politics in Argentina, 1890-1930: The Rise of Radicalism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rock, David. 1993a. "Antecedents of the Argentine Right." In *The Argentine Right: Its History and Intellectual Origins, 1910 to the present*, Sandra Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolkart, eds. Wilmington, Del: SR Books.
- Rock, David. 1993b. *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History and Impact*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Roett, Riordan. 1978. *Brazil: Politics in a Patrimonial Society*. New York: Praeger.
- Romero, Luis Alberto. 1994. *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*. University Park, PN: Pennsylvania State University Press.

- Richard, Pablo. 1987. *Death of Christendoms, Birth of the Church*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, Evelyne Huber Stephens and John D. Stephens. 1992. *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Scully, Timothy. 1992. *Rethinking the Center: Party Politics in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Chile*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Serbin, Kenneth. 1992. "State Subsidization of Catholic Institutions in Brazil, 1930-1964." Kellogg Institute Working Paper #181. Notre Dame University.
- Serbin, Kenneth. 1995. "Brazil: State Subsidization of the Church Since 1930." In *Organized Religion in the Political Transformation of Latin America*, Satya Pattanayak, ed. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Serbin, Kenneth. 1996. "Church-State Reciprocity in Contemporary Brazil: The Convening of the International Eucharistic Conference of 1955 in Rio de Janeiro." Kellogg Institute Working Paper #229, Notre Dame University.
- Serbin, Kenneth. 2000. *Secret Dialogues: Church-State Relations, Torture and Social Justice in Authoritarian Brazil*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Sigmund, Paul E. 1977. *The Overthrow of Allende and the Politics of Chile, 1964-1976*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Sigmund, Paul E. 1986. "Revolution, Counterrevolution and the Catholic Church in Chile." *Annals of the Academy of American Political and Social Science* 483: 25-35.
- Skidmore, Thomas E. 1988. *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-85*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Skidmore, Thomas. 2007. *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy*. 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Skidmore, Thomas E. and Peter H. Smith. 2001. *Modern Latin America*. Fifth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Brian. 1979. "Churches and Human Rights in Latin America." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 21(February).

- Smith, Brian. 1982. *The Church and Politics in Chile*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Stallings, Barbara. 1978. *Class Conflict and Economic Development in Chile, 1958-1973*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Stanley, William. 1996. *The Protection Racket State: Elite Politics, Military Extortion, and Civil War in El Salvador*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Stanton, Kimberly. 1997. "The Transformation of a Political Regime: Chile's 1925 Constitution." Conference paper. 1997 Meeting of the Latin American Studies Association, Guadalajara, Mexico, April 17-19, 1997.
- Stark, Rodney. 1999. "Secularization, RIP – Rest in Peace" *Sociology of Religion* (Fall).
- Steigenga, Timothy and Edward Cleary. 2007. "Understanding Conversion in the Americas." In *Conversion of a Continent: Contemporary Religious Change in Latin America*, Timothy Steigenga and Edward Cleary eds., 3-32, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Stepan, Alfred C. 1973. "The New Professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion." In *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies, and Future*, Alfred Stepan ed. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Stepan, Alfred C. 1978. "Political Leadership and Regime Breakdown: Brazil." In *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Latin America*, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Stepan, Alfred C. 2000. "Religion, Democracy, and the Twin Tolerations." *Journal of Democracy* 11(4): 37-57.
- Stinchcombe, Arthur. 1968. *Constructing Social Theories*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.
- Tarrow, Sidney. 1994. *Power in Movement*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tate, Winifred. 2007. *Counting the Dead: The Culture and Politics of Human Rights Activism in Colombia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Theisen, Gerald. 1974. "The Case of Camilo Torres Restrepo." *Journal of Church and State* 16(2): 301-315.
- Todaro, Margaret. 1971. "Pastors, Prophets and Politicians: A Study of the Brazilian Catholic Church, 1916-1945." Ph.D. diss. Columbia University.

- Todaro Williams, Margaret. 1974. "The Politicization of the Brazilian Catholic Church: The Catholic Electoral League." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 16(3): 301-325.
- Todaro Williams, Margaret. 1976. "Church and State in Vargas's Brazil: The Politics of Cooperation." *Journal of Church and State* 18(3): 443-462.
- Torres, Camilo, and John Gerassi. 1971. *Revolutionary priest; the complete writings & messages of Camilo Torres*. New York: Random House.
- Torres, Carlos. 1992. *The Church, Society and Hegemony: A Critical Sociology of Religion in Latin America*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Trejo, Guillermo. 2009. "Religious Competition and Ethnic Mobilization in Latin America: Why the Catholic Church Promotes Indigenous Movements in Mexico" *American Political Science Review* 103(3): 323-42.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). 2003. *Final Report*. Lima: Truth and Reconciliation Commission.  
<http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/ifinal/conclusiones.php>. (August 14, 2007).
- United Nations. 1997. "Demographic Yearbook, Historical Supplement." United Nations Website. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/DYBHist/> (June 1, 2011).
- United Nations. 2006. *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision Population Database*. <http://esa.un.org/unpp> (June 1, 2011).
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2005. *International Protection Considerations Regarding Asylum-Seekers and Refugees*.  
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,UNHCR,,COL,422c832e4,0.html>. (June 15, 2012).
- United Nations Truth Commission for El Salvador. 1993. *From Madness to Hope: The 12 Year War in El Salvador. Report of the Commission on the Truth for El Salvador*. New York and San Salvador: United Nations.
- Valenzuela, Arturo. 1995. "The Military in Power: The Consolidation of One-Man Rule." In *The Struggle for Democracy in Chile*, Paul Drake and Ivan Jaksic, Eds. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Vallier, Ivan. 1970. *Catholicism, Social Control, and Modernization in Latin America*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Vatican Council, and Austin Flannery. 1996. *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents : Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*. Northport, N.Y.: Costello Publishing Company.
- Verbitsky, Horacio. 2005. *The Silence: from Paulo VI to Bergoglio, the Secret Links Between the Church and the Navy Mechanics School*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana.
- Warner, R. Stephen. 1993. "Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 98(5): 1044-93.
- Weigel, George. 1999. *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Whitfield, Teresa. 1994. *Paying the Price: Ignacio Ellacuria and the Murdered Jesuits of El Salvador*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Wilde, Alexander. 1984. "Redemocratization, the Church, and Democracy in Colombia." Working Paper #22, Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies. Notre Dame.
- Wilde, Alexander. 1987. "Creating Neo-Christendom in Colombia." Working Paper #92, Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies. Notre Dame.
- Williford, Thomas J. 2005. "Armando los espíritus: Political Rhetoric in Colombia on the Eve of La Violencia, 1930-1945." Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University.
- Wood, Elisabeth J. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. New York: Cambridge University.
- Wright, Thomas C. 2007. *State Terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and International Human Rights*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.