

Distributive Justice in Transitions

Morten Bergsmo, César Rodríguez-Garavito, Pablo Kalmanovitz and
Maria Paula Saffon (editors)



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Agrarian Reform, Land Occupation, and the Transition to Democracy in El Salvador*

Elisabeth Wood**

What accounts for the transition to democracy in El Salvador via a negotiated settlement to civil war? In light of the country's long history of authoritarian rule, political exclusion, and economic inequality, the outcome did not appear likely on the eve of the civil war. In polities such as El Salvador, victory by insurgents is highly unlikely given the cohesiveness of economic and regime elites, in contrast to countries with personalist regimes such as Nicaragua under Somoza. Though it did not succeed in capturing the state, insurgent mobilization culminated in a negotiated transition to democracy. El Salvador is an unusual case in which a transition to democracy was forged from below.

The outcome is particularly puzzling given the long history of violent opposition by elites – particularly agrarian elites – to political and economic change. In Central America and most of Latin America, the distribution of agrarian property rights was rarely the product of the decentralized coordination of markets whereby voluntary exchange results in efficient outcomes. Rather, historical patterns of property rights distribution reflect the exercise of coercion on the part of social actors, sometimes by private means but often with the collusion of state forces. In the extreme case of El Salvador, the oligarchic alliance

* This paper draws on previously published works, especially: Elisabeth J. Wood, 1996, "The Peace Accords and Post-war Reconstruction", in *Economic Policy for Building Peace* James Boyce (ed.), Boulder: Lynne Rienner; Elisabeth Wood, 2000, *Forging Democracy from Below: Insurgent Transitions in South Africa and El Salvador*, Cambridge University Press; Elisabeth Jean Wood, 2003, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*, New York: Cambridge University Press. Thanks to María Paula Saffon, Kai Thaler, and Tess Lerner-Byars for research assistance.

** Political Science Professor, Yale University and Professor, Santa Fe Institute.

between agrarian elites and the military over decades protected and even deepened a highly unequal distribution of land and opportunity. The alliance was both local and national: landlords called on local security forces to repress nascent attempts to organize agrarian labor, military officers ruled the polity with little political competition, and elite representatives controlled economic policy. While reformist elements of the military occasionally attempted to modernize agrarian social relations, renewed coalitions of hardline military officers and economic elites repeatedly defeated those efforts, if necessary by carrying out coups.

When the Salvadoran regime responded to rising rural and urban mobilization with increasing repression in the late 1970s, the result was civil war as many activists joined the hitherto weak guerrilla forces (which united in 1980 as the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional, the FMLN). Despite a period of intense state violence, the insurgency was not defeated but nor could it win, as evident in the military failure of its 1989 offensive in San Salvador.

Nonetheless, the processes of insurgency – and counterinsurgency – laid the structural basis for eventual compromise, namely, the decline of export agriculture, which in El Salvador was associated with coercive labor relations. The political basis for compromise reflected not only the military stalemate but also political learning by formerly recalcitrant social actors, particularly economic elites who founded a political party that competed successfully in elections. In contrast to the highly unequal distribution of property rights on the eve the civil war, post-war land distribution was significantly more equal as a result of various processes, including the agrarian reform carried out as part of counterinsurgency policies imposed by the United States, the war-time occupation (and post-war titling) of other properties by poor rural residents, and the deep transformation of the country's political economy away from its long dependence on export agriculture.

I analyze these processes both at the national level and in the department of Usulután. The analysis draws on field research in El Salvador between 1987 and 1996, particularly in several municipalities of the department of Usulután, including interviews with representatives of armed groups, political parties, state agencies and non-governmental

organizations, as well as primary documents from various agencies, property rights data banks, and maps drawn by *campesino* leaders.

5.1. Origins of the War

Democracy's difficult birth in El Salvador may be traced to the peculiarity of its economy over the preceding century, a long-standing pattern of state enforcement of coercive agrarian labor relations and an extremely rigid class structure, which had been forged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as coffee cultivation rapidly expanded in areas of dense indigenous settlement, a pattern unique in Latin America.¹ In El Salvador the factors of production for the expansion of coffee were secured not in land or labor markets but by a deliberate redefinition of property rights by coercion.² Though driven by divergent interests on some issues, the oligarchic alliance of agrarian elites and the military agreed on the bottom line: the maintenance of the country's rigid class structure and exclusionary political regime. Military officers ruled, usually through a veneer of tightly controlled elections always won by the official party, while economic elites controlled key economic ministries. The majority of Salvadorans labored for little pay with little access to education or medical services. When challenged, the regime responded with savage repression, as in 1932 (*La Matanza*) when state agents killed approximately 17,000 people (largely indigenous) after a brief uprising. The development of cotton, sugar, and cattle production after World War II did little to diversify economic elites who controlled cultivation and processing of the new crops as of the old. On occasion, moderate military officers attempted to carry out significant reform, but they were regularly defeated by

¹ William Roseberry, 1991, "La Falta de Brazos: Land and Labor in the Coffee Economies of Nineteenth-Century Latin America", *Theory and Society* 20: 351, 359.

² Hector Lindo-Fuentes, 1990, *Weak Foundations: The Economy of El Salvador in the Nineteenth Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press; Robert G. Williams, 1994, *States and Social Evolution: Coffee and the Rise of National Governments in Central America*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press; William Stanley, 1996, *The Protection Racket State: Elite Politics, Military Extortion, and Civil War in El Salvador*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

renewed coalitions of economic elites and hardline military officers that overrode efforts at reform.³

The result was a highly unequal distribution of land.⁴ Farms of more than 200 hectares constituted less than 0.5% of all farms, but they held over one-third of the land; while half of the farms were smaller than 1 hectare but together comprised just 4% of the land. Poverty and landlessness intensified in the decades preceding the civil war. The fraction of the economically active rural population with access to more than 1 hectare of land declined in relative terms from 28.5% to 14.4% between 1961 and 1971, while the landless population increased from 40.0% to 51.5%.⁵

³ Stanley, *supra* n. 2.

⁴ Figure 1, which shows data from the 1971 census, the last before the war; 1974; Dirección General de Estadística y Censos (DGEC), 1974, *Tercer Censo Nacional Agropecuario*, Volumes 1 and 2, El Salvador; William Durham, 1979, *Scarcity and Survival in Central America: The Ecological Origins of the Soccer War*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

⁵ Mitchell Seligson, 1995, "Thirty Years of Transformation in the Agrarian Structure of El Salvador", *Latin American Research Review* 30: 43. Based on data from the 1961 and 1971 agricultural censuses.

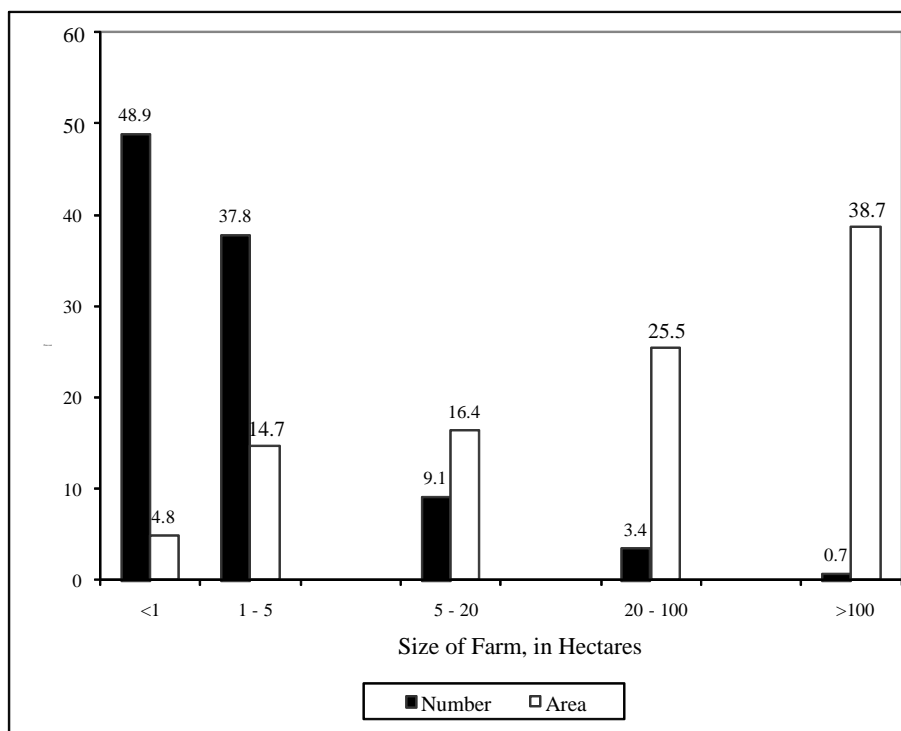


Figure 1: Farmland Distribution, 1971. Source: DGEC 1974, Tables II and III, pp. xxx-xxxi.

Before the war, Usulután was one of the most productive departments of El Salvador, supplying 34% of the nation's cotton and 10% of the coffee as well as a substantial fraction of basic grains.⁶ Extensive cotton and cattle farms dominated the fertile coastal plain, while coffee estates covered the mountainous highlands. Sandwiched between the coastal plain and the coffee highlands was a belt of small family farms. Labor relations and general living conditions in Usulután also reflected those of El Salvador generally.

Some *campesinos*, particularly in the coffee area, lived on the estates, providing labor and guarding property in exchange for access to a simple house and permission to plant a cornfield. But most were landless or nearly so, living along railways and roadsides, as well as in

⁶ Figures 2 and 3.

village settlements scattered throughout the department. Reflecting the importance of export agriculture in the department, the distribution of farmland in Usulután was even more concentrated than in El Salvador generally. In 1971, farms of more than 100 hectares cultivated 38.7% of farmland in El Salvador; while in Usulután, such farms cultivated 46.9% of farmland.⁷

This unequal distribution of land, income, and opportunity was maintained by coercive labor practices. Figure 3 – one of the maps drawn for me by local residents – shows the Hacienda La Normandía, a very large property (1,500 hectares) on the Usulután coast, extending from the coastal highway to the mangrove forests along the Bay of Jiquilisco. Before the war, the farm was owned by the Del’Pech family, a major coffee-producing family.⁸

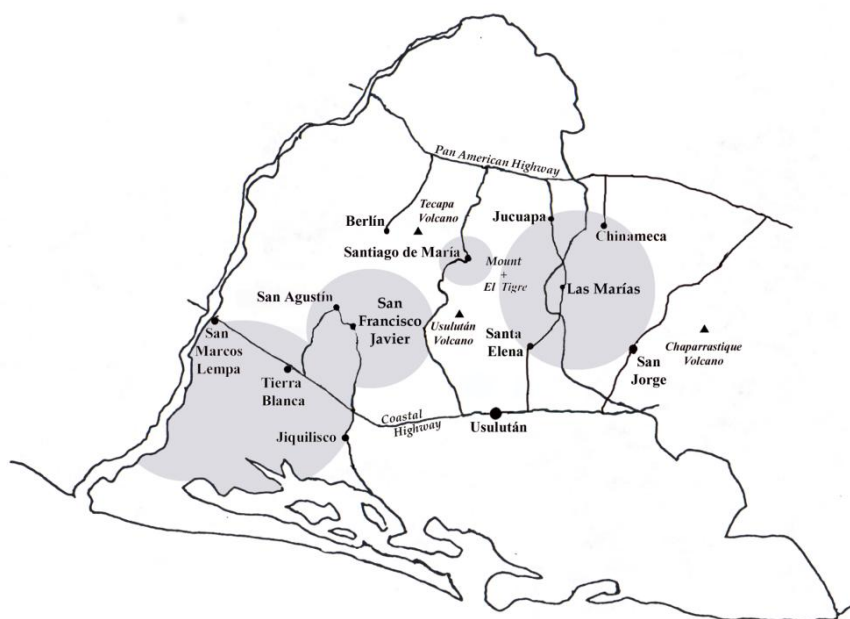


Figure 2.

⁷ Dirección General de Estadística y Censos (DGEC), 1974, *Tercer Censo Nacional Agropecuario*, Volumes 1 and 2, El Salvador.

⁸ Jeffrey M. Paige, 1987, “Coffee and Politics in Central America”, in *Crises in the Caribbean Basin*, Richard Tardanico (ed.), Newbury Park: Sage Publishers: 141, 178.

Except for corn raised to feed the cattle that grazed the salt marshes along the southern border, cotton was the only crop (indicated by the lollipop symbol). Toward the upper left hand corner, the authors show the barracks of National Guard troops that were stationed on the farm as well as the airstrip for planes dropping pesticides on the crop. As elsewhere in areas of major export production, the presence of the National Guard was complemented by village patrols and networks of military reservists that reported suspicious activity.

One result was a political culture among *campesinos* of apparent quiescence in which resistance was extremely muted. Scholars such as Segundo Montes⁹ and Ignacio Martín-Baro¹⁰ noted pervasive attitudes of self-deprecation, fatalism, and conformism among *campesinos*. Given the immediate repression of attempts to organize workers in the countryside, *campesinos* had little reason to expect any change in life circumstances; fatalism and conformism reinforced each other.

Schooling provided little opportunity for social mobility as few attended school past the first or second grade (as indicated by the 63% illiteracy rate in 1971).¹¹

5.1.1. From Mobilization to Insurgency

Nonetheless, new pastoral practices informed by liberation theology overcame peasant quiescence in many areas of the countryside, impelling a wave of popular mobilization.¹² By the mid 1970s, networks of rural Catholic catequists, Christian Democratic Party members, and

⁹ Segundo Montes, 1986, *El Agro Salvadoreño (1973-1980)*, Colección: Estructuras Y Procesos.

¹⁰ Ignacio Martín Baro, 1973, "Psicología del campesino salvadoreño", *ECA (Estudios Centroamericanos)* 28, 297-98: 476.

¹¹ Montes, *supra* n. 9: 98. Citing the 1971 population census.

¹² Carlos Rafael Cabarrús, 1983, *Génesis de una revolución*, Mexico: Ediciones de la casa, Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social; Rodolfo Cardenal, 1985, *Historia de una esperanza: vida de Rutilio Grande*, San Salvador: UCA Editores; Sara Gordon Rapoport, 1989, *Crisis Política y Guerra en El Salvador*, Mexico, D.F.: Siglo Vientiuno Editores; Tommie Sue Montgomery, 1995, *Revolution in El Salvador: From Civil Strife to Civil Peace*, 2nd ed., Boulder: Westview Press; Jenny Pearce, 1986, "Promised Land: Peasant Rebellion in Chalatenango, El Salvador", London: Latin American Review.

covert members of the guerrilla organizations provided the political coordination for massive demonstrations and marches in the streets of San Salvador.

In response to the increasing demands for land reform on the part of the Catholic Church and new social organizations of *campesinos*, landlords of the coastal plain united in a bitter campaign against a limited agrarian reform decreed by a moderate military president in 1976. Targeting the highly concentrated cotton sector, the reform declared a ceiling on farm size of 35 hectares in an area of nearly 60,000 hectares in Usulután and the neighboring province San Miguel.¹³ Despite assurances of compensation from USAID and Sweden, landlords together with the national business associations unleashed a campaign that combined vitriolic rhetoric with intimidation of prospective beneficiaries along the coast.¹⁴ The government soon backed down, to the later regret of at least one leading Usulután landlord who mused, in a 1992 interview, that a willingness to compromise then might have averted the civil war.

¹³ Montes, *supra* n. 9: 148.

¹⁴ Charles D. Brockett, 1988, *Land, Power, and Poverty: Agrarian Transformation and Political Conflict in Central America*, Boston: Unwin Hyman.

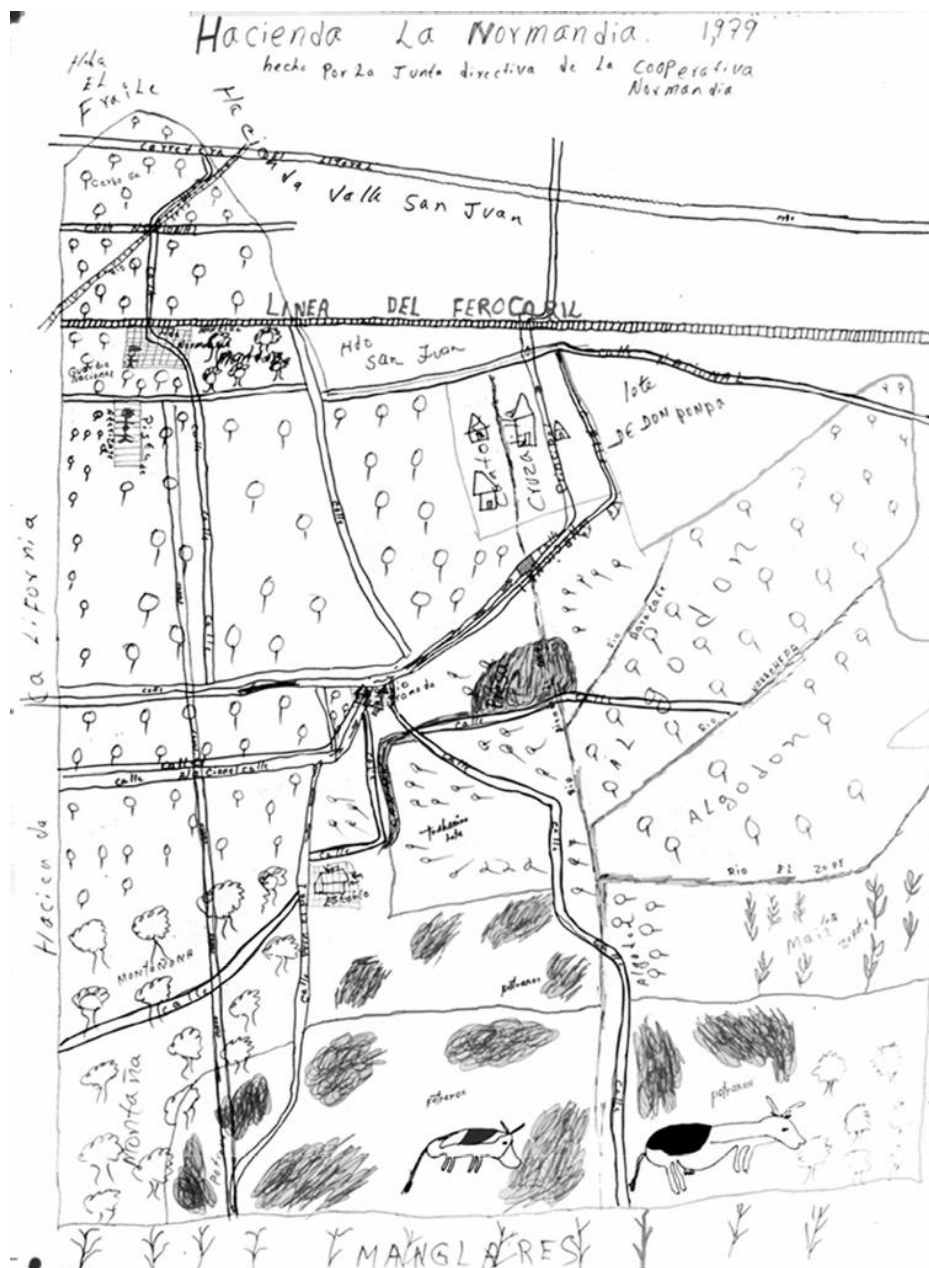


Figure 3: Hacienda La Normandia, 1979.

The failure of such efforts at reform led not to acquiescence but to further mobilization by peasants, workers, and students in the late 1970s. The response of the Salvadoran state was brutal. In 1980 alone, state forces killed about 20,000 civilians amidst a wave of state violence that included the assassination of Monseñor Oscar Romero. As a result, many hitherto non-violent activists decided to support the previously inconsequential Salvadoran guerrilla forces. Some were driven by moral outrage at the violence, some judged violence a legitimate means toward the realization of social justice in the circumstances of extreme state violence, some grasped the opportunity to defy oppressive social authority, and some sought vengeance.¹⁵ Drawing on unprecedented networks of such insurgent campesinos, the FMLN maintained a significant presence in widespread areas and developed a rural intelligence capacity that outperformed – by far – that of the government during the civil war.¹⁶ By the mid 1980s, insurgent mobilization had forged a military stalemate and had comprised the FMLN as an insurgent counter-elite whose agreement to a negotiated settlement or whose military victory would be key to any resolution of the war.¹⁷

5.2. The Structural Origins of Compromise: The Wartime Transformation of Agrarian Property Rights

5.2.1. Agrarian Reform as Counterinsurgency

The threat posed by mobilization and repression to the military as an institution led to a coup by reformist officers in late 1979. The reformists were soon displaced by hardline officers, but the latter agreed to carry out land reform to secure the support of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) and the United States.¹⁸ The land reform carried out by this counterinsurgency alliance in 1980 resulted in the expropriation of about one-quarter of the country's farmland, including 38% of the land

¹⁵ Wood, 2003, *supra* biographix footnote on page 157.

¹⁶ A. J. Bacevich, James D. Hallums, Richard H. White, and Thomas F. Young, 1988, "American Military Policy in Small Wars: The Case of El Salvador", Paper presented at John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

¹⁷ Wood, 2000, *supra* biographic footnote on page 157.

¹⁸ Stanley, *supra* n. 2.

planted in coffee on large farms (greater than 100 hectares in area), 28% of all land planted in cotton, and 11% of that in sugar.¹⁹ Under Phase I of the reform, which focused on the largest farms, approximately 15% of the nation's agriculture land (that held in estates over 500 hectares) was transferred to cooperatives formed of former workers.

Usulután was among the areas most affected by the Phase I reform,²⁰ based on a tracing I made of a map on the wall in an office of the agrarian reform agency. An example of a Phase I cooperative is the Cooperative La Normandía, depicted in Figure 5, a map showing Hacienda Normandia after the war drawn for me by cooperative members over the course of two days in 1992. The permanent workers lived in the *cantón* La Cruzadilla. At the close of the war, the approximately 175 cooperative members cultivated individual plots of corn, sesame and, near the old farmhouse, chile; many cooperative members raised a few head of cattle as well. Notably, the National Guard post was gone. For cooperative members, this was a way of life far different from their lives as permanent employees before the war.

¹⁹ Calculated from Tables VI, V, and VI of Wise (1986) and from the 1971 agricultural census.

²⁰ Figure 5.



Figure 4: Agrarian Reform Phase I Cooperatives, Usulután. Map by Carolyn Resnicke, SFI.

conflict deepened, agricultural profitability declined for several reasons.²¹ The agrarian reform, including the prospects of the Phase II (which was repeatedly postponed), reinforced elite insecurity concerning the future profitability of their estates. The guerrilla forces targeted export crops for sabotage and extracted “war tax” payments that eroded profits. As a result, many economic elites exported significant fractions of their capital; some moved their families and operations to Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, or Miami. Moreover, in a classic instance of “Dutch disease”, an extraordinary inflow of dollars (both official U.S. transfers and a growing flood of remittances from Salvadorans who had relocated to the U.S. to avoid the war) caused the price of non-tradables to soar compared to those of tradables, further undermining the export sector and increasing the value of other sectors.

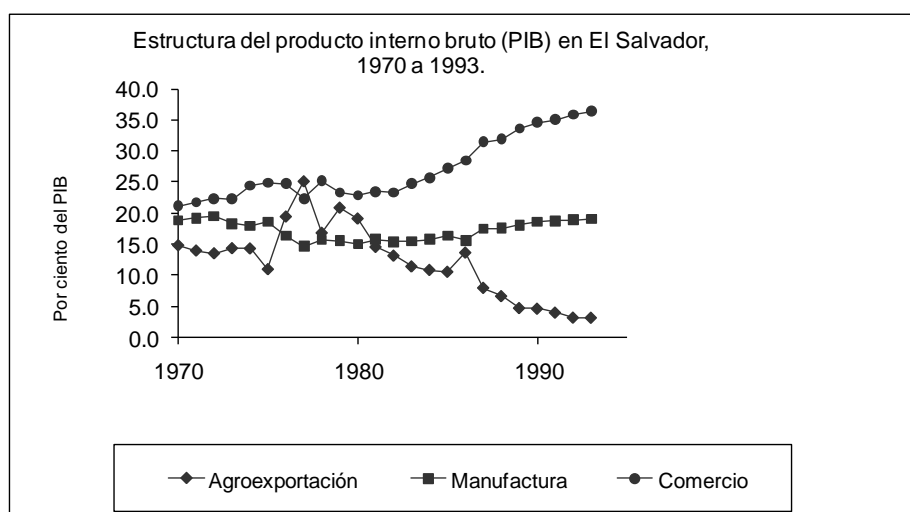


Figure 6: Structural underpinnings of compromise.

As a result of these wartime processes, there was a very significant shift in the relative contributions of the composition of El Salvador's economy: as a share of domestic product, export agriculture declined sharply, while the commercial and service sectors surged.²² The

²¹ Wood, 2000, *supra* biographical footnote on page 143.

²² Figure 7.

decline in agro-export profits would have been even greater had it not been for the labor policies maintained throughout the war: real wages for agricultural workers declined by 63% between 1980 and 1991.²³ By the late 1980s, economic elites in El Salvador drew much more of their income from the commercial and service sectors fueled by the boom in remittances sent from the United States²⁴ than from the traditional export agricultural production and processes.

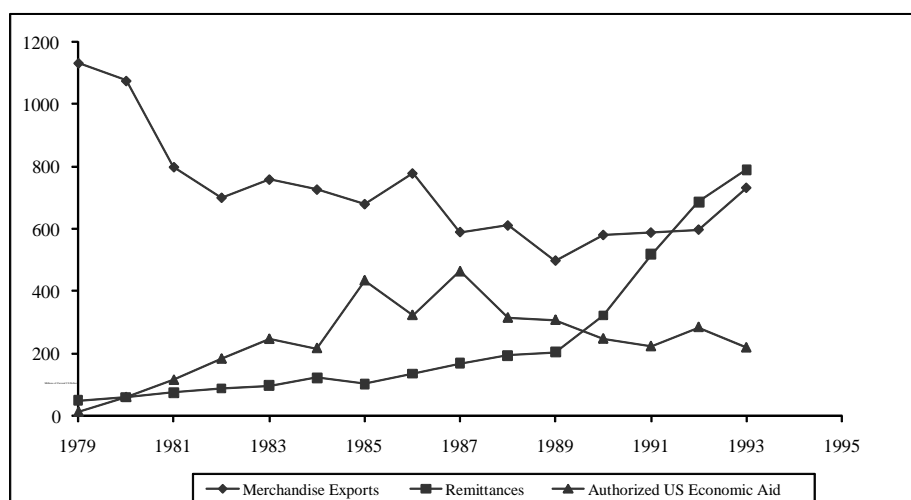


Figure 7: Inflows of Foreign Exchange to El Salvador, 1979-1993. Millions of current US Dollars.

5.2.2. Insurgent Land Occupations Under the Shadow of Civil War

Despite the government's counterinsurgent efforts, significant numbers of rural residents collaborated with the insurgents, providing a steady flow of high-quality information. Even some agrarian reform beneficiaries continued to support the insurgents covertly; this was true, for example, of many members of agrarian reform cooperatives located on the coastal plain of the municipality of Jiquilisco, Usulután, including Cooperativa La Normandía. The FMLN responded to the govern-

²³ Wood, 1996, *supra* biographical footnote on page 143: Table A.12.

²⁴ Figure 8.

ment's counterinsurgency policies with a new strategy, dispersing guerrilla forces in smaller, more mobile units to strengthen or develop civilian organizations. As a result of the FMLN's continued military capacity, government forces were unable to maintain a continuous presence in many areas, and landlords retreated from the conflicted areas of Usulután.

In the absence of both landlords and state authorities, local *campesinos* planted corn on the unsupervised properties, and those who could afford to do so grazed cattle as well. Beginning in 1984, the FMLN urged local supporters to occupy such properties. Initially, they refused to do so, judging it too dangerous; but after 1986, many organized self-constituted cooperatives, formally notified landlords of their occupation of land, and eventually claimed those properties at the close of the war under the terms of the peace agreement.²⁵ These cooperatives founded or joined federations of cooperatives that pressed for legalization of cooperatives, sought credit from sympathetic international NGOs, and provided a degree of protection, as harassment of one cooperative could be answered by the mobilization of all.

An example of land occupation by such a cooperative is shown in Figure 8. The *cantón* Los Arenales, which lies along the southern edge of Usulután's coffee growing region, between the towns of Santa Elena and Jucuapa, is typical of the area. The largest coffee farm in the immediate vicinity was the Finca Leonor, a small but well-capitalized farm of 38.5 hectares (55 *manzanas*), which may be seen in the map's center. The farm had a well-developed infrastructure of water tanks, store-houses and patios for drying coffee, as I was able to confirm when I visited the now-dilapidated property in 1992. Other properties high above the main road were also planted in coffee, as indicated on the map by the branch with fairly straight leaves and red berries close to the branch. In the lower altitudes other crops were cultivated, including oranges and maguey.

The mapmakers, all members of an insurgent cooperative, numbered each plot and listed the corresponding owners down the lower left-hand margin of the map. The workers mostly lived in the village of

²⁵ Wood, 2003, *supra* biographical footnote on page 143.

Los Arenales, to the right of the main road; before the war, a few had lived as *colonos*.²⁶

As shown by the cornstalks drawn on the post-war map of the area (righthand side), during the war residents cultivated corn on the properties closest to the roadway. The crosses mark the sites where two *campesinos* died at the hand of the Atonal Battalion in 1983 and where Comandante “Miriam” of the armed wing of the Communist Party (shown by its acronym AFAL) died in 1984, as can be seen with the legend in the lower left hand corner, which includes the names of the dead. In 1987, local residents founded the Cooperativa San Pedro Los Arenales, as indicated by the map title midway down the lefthand side of the map (the inclusion of the formal name of the cooperative emphasizes the cooperative’s legal claim). The cooperative gradually occupied ten local estates, including the Finca Leonor, which are listed by landlord and area on the left hand legend. Not all the properties in the area were occupied; a few are visible within the cooperative boundary. Cooperative members stated that they only occupied abandoned farms or those with “uncooperative” owners.

²⁶ While the *colono* form of labor had been legally abolished in 1965, the practice continued in many areas.



Figure 8: Map of Los Arenales.

In contrast to the occupation of property, the emergence of cooperatives, and the founding of new organizations in contested areas of Usulután, continuity rather than change characterized the evolution of social relations in Santiago de María, a town high in the coffee highlands referred to by *campesinos* as the *cuña de la oligarchía*. Before the war, the politics and economy of the town and the surrounding area were dominated by a handful of elite families that held highly productive coffee estates and built modern mills, including one of the biggest and most modern in the country. Some landlords of properties outside Santiago were forced to pay “war taxes” to the FMLN during some years of the war, according to interviews with FMLN commanders. But property rights in the town and the immediately surrounding area were relatively untouched by the war (with the exception of the formation of a few agrarian reform cooperatives in the area). Even though several wealthy families of the area owned more than the 500-hectare threshold for expropriation under Phase I of the agrarian reform, their various farms were legally held by different family members and so were not expropriated.

Another reason for the continuity of agrarian property rights in Santiago was the presence of a local death squad. In the late 1970s, Hector Antonio Regalado, a landlord and dentist in the town began to recruit young men for what appeared to be a Boy Scout troop. The group, which on one account may have numbered as many as a hundred “scouts”, wore uniforms in marches through town. Rather than the usual scouting activities, Regalado’s troop killed dozens of activists and suspected activists, including teachers, unionists, cooperativists, and students, not only in Santiago but also in neighboring cities and towns. In interviews at the end of the war, townspeople told stories of cadavers appearing at the edge of town, of a decapitated head found in a ditch, and other public displays of extreme violence to intimidate those involved in the opposition organizations. Like others throughout El Salvador, the death squad operated with the cooperation of elements of the Salvadoran military: the scouts were sometimes ferried around eastern El Salvador in Army helicopters, for example.²⁷ In the after-

²⁷ Regalado was in close touch with Roberto D’Aubuisson, the director of death squad operations in San Salvador, and after D’Aubuisson’s election to the Consti-

math of the death squad killings, local activists either left the area or abandoned their overt political engagement. Santiago remained relatively calm throughout the war, as fighting rarely came close to the town itself. The landlords of Santiago continued to grow coffee in the nearby estates. During the harvest (when coffee wealth was most vulnerable to sabotage and theft) and when necessary during the rest of the year, the town was occupied by the Sixth Brigade, which moved into the area from their base in the nearby city of Usulután.

With the exception of Santiago, by the end of the civil war, new patterns of land tenure, land use, social organization, and rural authority had been forged throughout the contested municipalities of Usulután. Scores of self-constituted cooperatives like Cooperativa San Pedro Los Arenales first occupied land and then claimed it under the terms of the peace agreement. Some cooperatives formed during the agrarian reform were, by the war's end, affiliated with opposition federations of cooperatives. While most families remained desperately poor – indeed, with the collapse of education and health services and a sustained fall in real wages, their situation was arguably worse at war's end despite increased access to land – social relations in the case-study areas were nevertheless transformed in two dramatic and obvious ways.

The first was the *de facto* transfer of agrarian property rights as *campesinos* took advantage of the landlords' retreat and the absence of consistent enforcement of property rights to farm properties in the area. Such properties were largely planted in corn, reflecting both the poverty of the residents and symbolizing their reclaiming of land previously given over to agro-export crops. By the war's end, such furtive squatting had become a formal occupation as peasants organized cooperatives and occupied tens of thousands of hectares of prime agricultural land.

tuent Assembly, Regalado served as head of security for the subsequent Legislative Assembly, directing death squads from that office until a group of businessmen complained to D'Aubuisson that he might be killing "too many people". See Tom Gibb and Douglas Farah, 1989, "Magazine Story on Death Squads in EL Salvador", Typescript; Wood, 2003, *supra* biographical footnote on page 143, and the sources cited there.

The second was the emergence of a dense network of *campesino* political organizations, a profound change in political organization and authority from before the war. *Campesinos* and their collaborators – sometimes the FMLN, sometimes national *campesino* organizations of varying political ties, sometimes with no assistance at all – built dozens of organizations, including the self-constituted cooperatives, in which local interests were articulated and strategies for the assertion of property rights negotiated. In sharp contrast to the pre-war domination of rural social relations by a small elite and their allied security forces, *campesinos* came to lead as well as participate in *campesino* organizations, political parties and cooperatives, establishing an unprecedented degree of representation of and participation by a previously excluded sector. In none of the case-study areas had any such organizations existed before the civil war; yet by that war's end, they comprised a vibrant local civil society.

Thus in some areas (among some residents – about one-third in the contested areas of Usulután), more than a decade of political mobilization left behind a legacy of political participation, a network of civic organizations, and a new political culture based on values of citizenship, entitlement, and a rejection of deference toward rural elites.²⁸ In interviews in the contested areas of Usulután, for example, civilian activists and supporters of the FMLN expressed pride in their collective achievements during the war and asserted an unprecedented claim to political equality.²⁹ Several erstwhile landlords of properties in Usulután recognized this transformation of rural culture, expressing concern that should they return to their properties after the war, they would face assertive and well-organized workers supported by a panoply of new organizations.

The consequences for political authority and legitimacy in the case-study areas even, surprisingly, in Santiago de María, were pro-

²⁸ Mario Lungo Uclés, 1996, *El Salvador in the Eighties: Counterinsurgency and Revolution*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press; John L. Hammond, 1998, *Fighting to Learn: Popular Education and Guerrilla War in El Salvador*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press; Wood, 2003, *supra* biographical footnote on page 143.

²⁹ Wood, 2003, *supra* biographical footnote on page 143.

found: the local alliance of landlord and security forces that had dominated these areas no longer existed after the war, and popular organizations contested the authority and legitimacy of those landlords and government authorities that did remain. Moreover, many organizations had political allies in San Salvador and in some cases the U.S. or Europe; this unprecedented accountability was another result of the civil war and contributed to the impossibility of any return to the uncontested exercise of authority and power by landlords and security force officials.

5.3. The Political Origins of Compromise

Of course a transformation of elite economic interests and military stalemate does not in itself lead to political compromise: elite political actors must emerge who recognize that in the country's new situation, they would be better off with peace than continued war. Ironically, an organization that came to recognize this change emerged from origins in the profound political violence of the early years of the war. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, rightist hardliners led by Roberto D'Aubuisson with the financial help of wealthy Salvadoran exiles in Miami developed death squads to deter political mobilization through intimidation and violence. Most such squads were not private groups, but members of state security and intelligence forces. The rightists also founded the National Republican Alliance party (ARENA) to contest power in elections rather than relying on the military – a new development in El Salvador. However, the subsequent limited electoral competition under conditions of civil war had unintended outcomes for the chief sponsor of counterinsurgency efforts, the United States. ARENA, rather than the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), won the 1982 constitutional assembly elections – a win for precisely those hardline elements that the liberal reforms were designed to undermine. After the United States made clear its strong opposition to D'Aubuisson's nomination as interim president, a compromise was reached whereby ARENA gave up the presidency but took control of the Ministry of Agriculture and the agrarian reform institutions, effectively ending agrarian reform.

No longer able to rely on military allies to govern, ARENA leaders sought to broaden the electoral base of the party by appealing to new constituencies, including middle-class voters and small businessmen. A significant step in this process occurred in September 1985 when Alfredo Cristiani replaced D'Aubuisson as party president, signaling a shift within the party away from the hardliners of the Miami group. Cristiani's faction with its diversified economic interests was more tolerant of democratic norms and aspirations than were those members of the elite with interests narrowly based on coffee cultivation, as documented by Paige³⁰ in his extensive interviews with Salvadoran elites. For these moderate elites, the decline of export agriculture lessened their reliance on coercive labor practices.

With the help of a U.S.-funded think tank, the Cristiani faction developed and proposed a set of neoliberal policies.³¹ Neoliberalism was attractive to these elites for several reasons: its emphasis on private sector innovation could justify re-privatizing the nationalized sectors, its agenda of neoliberal reforms would render the state incapable of threatening elite economic interests even if a party hostile to elite interests later governed, and liberalization of capital flows would discipline the state against redistributive measures.³² In the 1989 presidential elections, the revamped ARENA party appealed to voters more than the PDC or the social democratic alternatives, and Cristiani was elected president.

Thus, a fundamental change wrought by the civil war was the emergence of Salvadoran elites who agreed that renewed war should be avoided even if uncomfortable compromises might have to be made in the implementation of a negotiated settlement. The unprecedented acceptance of electoral competition by many actors on the right reflected not only the structural changes in the political economy, but also the process of political learning during the course of the war. By

³⁰ Jeffrey Paige, 1997, *Coffee and Power: Revolution and the Rise of Democracy in Central America*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press.

³¹ Kenneth Johnson, 1993, "Between Revolution and Democracy: Business Elites and the State in El Salvador during the 1980s", Ph.D. Thesis: Tulane University.

³² Wood, 2000, *supra* biographical footnote on page 143: 244-46.

the early 1990s, ARENA had built a formidable party base and had proved very successful in competing on the new electoral terrain. Involvement with liberal international actors, initially as a result of U.S. insistence on liberalizing the political regime and promoting neoliberal policies in the 1980s, and later as a result of UN mediation and peace-building, was essential to this increasing acceptance of liberal political norms.³³

Elite compromise occurred not only as a result of the military stalemate and the constitution of the FMLN as an insurgent counter-elite but also because the changes in the political economy of the country lessened elite dependence on coercive labor institutions and because elite political leaders had learned they could compete well in elections.³⁴ Of course other factors also contributed. The regional peace process provided additional impetus for compromise. The killing of the six Jesuit priests by the government's Atlacatl Battalion during the FMLN's 1989 offensive resulted in renewed congressional opposition to U.S. funding of the Salvadoran military.³⁵ Because (thanks to the insurgent threat) the military was dependent on U.S. funding, a shift in U.S. policy toward negotiation ensured the military's compliance. As the military stalemate dragged on, FMLN moderates willing to compromise gained influence. The end of the Cold War reinforced the domestic dynamics pushing the parties toward compromise.

³³ Mark Peceny and William Stanley, 2001, "Liberal Social Reconstruction and the Resolution of Civil Wars in Central America," *International Observation* 55, 1: 149.

³⁴ Figure 10.

³⁵ Teresa Whitfield, 1994, *Paying the Price: Ignacio Ellacuria and the Murdered Jesuits of El Salvador*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

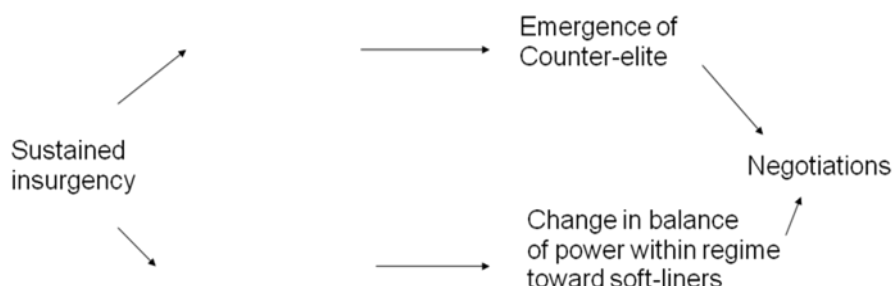


Figure 9: Logic of compromise.

5.4. The Peace Agreement and its Implementation

The core of the peace agreement consisted of reforms intended to create a transition to a democratic political regime. The FMLN would lay down its arms and pursue its political agenda as a political party in competitive elections (and some combatants would join the new civilian police force), while the government agreed to carry out reforms of the military, judicial, and electoral institutions that would make political competition possible. The peace agreement (and preliminary agreements) defined constitutional reforms to the mission and prerogatives of the military as well as to the judicial and electoral systems, including the founding of a human rights office, the Procuraduría Nacional para La Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (National Ombudsman for the Defense of Human Rights), the strengthening of the election supervisory body toward broader political party representation and increased autonomy from the executive, and the strengthening of the autonomy of the National Judicial Council. The peace agreement also mandated the founding of a new, civilian police force (PNC) and a new police academy, as well as the dissolution of two infamous security forces. The parties also agreed that two extraordinary commissions would assess human rights violations during the course of the war. As a result, the “ad-hoc” commission recommended that more than a hundred officers be purged from the ranks of the military. The Truth

Commission documented the pattern of human rights violations by all parties and recommended further reforms to judicial institutions.³⁶

Through an extended process of ongoing negotiations involving pressure on government officials (and to a lesser extent on the FMLN) on the part of the United Nations in its role as observer and verifier of the peace agreement and donor countries in their capacity as funders of reforms, these provisions were generally carried out.³⁷ Despite the difficult legacies of the past – principally the ongoing weakness of police forces and judicial officials that together with high unemployment and the presence of many guns and ex-combatants fueled a crime wave – peace has endured and competitive elections now decide who governs.

A key provision of the peace agreement was that ex-combatants of both sides and civilian supporters of the FMLN occupying properties in the contested areas, that is, the *tenedores*, would be entitled to land, which they would purchase over a long period at subsidized interest rates from government agencies. Because the peace agreement was vague on key points, a long process of negotiations mediated by the United Nations between government and FMLN representations eventually defined the scope and terms of the land transfer. The process was difficult, occasioning in several instances the suspension of the FMLN's staggered demobilization of forces and eventually precipitating the intervention of the Secretary General to settle the outstanding issues.

The best measure of the extent of occupation by cooperatives at the end of the war comes from that negotiating process over land transfer.³⁸ An interim accord (the New York Accord, signed in September

³⁶ Truth Commission, 1993, "From Madness to Hope: The 12 Year War in El Salvador", in *Report of the Commission on the Truth for El Salvador*, New York and San Salvador: United Nations.

³⁷ On the implementation of the peace agreement, see: Montgomery, *supra* n. 12; Margaret Popkin, 2000, *Peace Without Justice: Obstacles to Building the Rule of Law in El Salvador*, University Park: Pennsylvania State Press; Elisabeth J. Wood, 1995, "Agrarian Social Relations and Democratization: the Negotiated Resolution of the Civil War in El Salvador", Ph.D. Dissertation: Stanford University; and various reports by *Hemisphere Initiatives*.

³⁸ Because the peace process was one of log-rolling compromises across various other issues, the June 1992 inventory is not an ideal measure of occupation. How-

1991) stated that ex-combatants of both sides and civilian supports of the FMLN occupying land in conflicted zones would win title to land, not unconditionally but on subsidized terms. Central to the negotiating process was the FMLN's inventory of occupied private properties, which was much debated until the government and the multi-party agrarian commission appointed by the National Peace Commission accepted the one presented by the FMLN in June 1992.

According to that inventory, Usulután was the leading department in terms of area occupied, more than double other departments,³⁹ and the average size of occupied properties was significantly greater there as well. Cooperatives in Usulután representing approximately 10,000 people claimed 482 properties comprising approximately 66,500 hectares, which was approximately 32% of the surface area of Usulután. In the municipality of Jiquilisco alone, 89 insurgent cooperatives claimed properties amounting to 19,000 hectares. Land claims by cooperatives were also very high in Jucuapa, San Agustín and San Francisco Javier.

The post-war land transfer depended on landlords' willingness to sell. Confronted with this unprecedented degree of organization, together with the declining returns to agricultural investments throughout El Salvador as a result of the varied processes of the civil war, many landlords agreed to sell their properties. Some Las Marías landlords eager to sell bargained directly with FMLN officers in an attempt to force government officials to approve a fast transfer.

I have elsewhere analyzed the bargaining over the terms of the land transfer.⁴⁰ While negotiations were made significantly more feasible by the willingness of international organizations to provide funding to buy out the landlords, the process ran aground repeatedly for various reasons. One was the linkage in the peace process's complicated chronology of mutual compromise between land transfer and the implementation of other terms of the peace agreement, such as the dissolution of particular security forces. Another was technical difficulties of

ever, my interviews and observations in several of the municipalities suggest that it is in fact a fair estimate of land occupied at the end of the war.

³⁹ Figure 11.

⁴⁰ Wood, 1995, *supra* n. 37; Wood, 1996, *supra* biographical footnote on page 143.

implementation, particularly given the inadequacies of the Salvadoran land registry. Another was the post-war mobility of potential beneficiaries that complicated the definition of lists of cooperative members. It was also in part due to foot dragging by those government officials with close ties to the governing party who feared a rapid transfer would bolster the FMLN's standing in post-war elections. Later in the process, delays and problems arose as the inadequacies of the demobilization benefits (various packages of training and credit) became evident.

Department	Number of Properties (% of inventory)	Area (% of inventory)
Usulután	10.3	25.3
San Salvador	3.4	5.8
Chalatenango	21.2	17.0
La Paz	1.4	2.6
Morazán	5.8	6.4
Cuscatlán	10.7	8.0
San Vicente	5.4	11.7
La Unión	0.2	1.8
Cabañas	5.7	3.3
Santa Ana	0.6	4.3
San Miguel	7.2	11.3
La Libertad	0.4	1.8
Human Settlements		
Chalatenango	20.9	0.3
Morazán	6.9	0.5
TOTALS	4666 properties	268,451 hectares

Figure 10: The FMLN's inventory of private property (CEA-COPAZ version), by department.

As a result, the eventual land transfer was significantly less than the claims summarized in Figure 10. Nonetheless, insurgent cooperatives and the FMLN forced a transfer of approximately 10% of the nation's farmland, compared with the 15% of Phase I of the agrarian reform and 5% of Phase III (the "land to the tiller" component). Land was transferred to nearly 35,000 beneficiaries, of which 27,000 were FMLN combatants and supporters. Although the transfer of land was much less than claimed in Usulután as well, approximately one-third of FMLN-affiliated beneficiaries acquired land in Usulután, and just over

one-quarter of land transferred under the program lay in the department. The process in Usulután benefited from a European Union initiative that targeted ex-combatants of both sides in the department and that made available more training and credit than was available in most other areas. (USAID funded the transfer to civilians in Usulután in a parallel but not as well-funded program). Figure 11 shows the land eventually transferred to the FMLN and its supporters (as well as a few properties to ex-soldiers). In the department as a whole, about 6% of surface area was transferred. The number of beneficiaries settled on the plots transferred made it unlikely that any substantial fraction of them could make anything but a marginal living farming the land.



Figure 11: Land transfer under the peace agreement.

Post-war political mobilization eased the terms of transfer for both civilians and ex-combatants alike. Between 1995 and 1997, peasant organizations carried out further land occupations and mass

marches; this sustained pressure on the government eventually led to a substantial easing of the debt carried by most cooperatives and of other neoliberal conditions originally attached by government agencies.⁴¹ However, little progress was made in implementing Phase II of the 1980 agrarian reform.

In the aftermath of the war, Salvadoran *campesinos* were still poor and the distribution of wealth and opportunity remained unequal but significantly less so than before the war. The fraction of the economically active agricultural adult population that had land increased from 14.4% in 1971 to 23.3% in 1998, while the fraction that had no land decreased from 38.1 to 27.4%.⁴² Land distribution had also improved, with the fraction of farms over 100 hectares falling from 0.8% in 1971 to 0.5% in 1998, and the area held by such large farms falling significantly, from 38.7 to 23.1% of farmland.⁴³ The land held in small farms (between 0 and 20 hectares) increased from 35.9 to 45.7% of farmland.

5.5. Post-war El Salvador

Thus the changes wrought by the civil war made possible a transition to democracy despite the country's long history of authoritarian rule. The two principal achievements of the peace process were the withdrawal of the military from politics and the inclusion of the political left in democratic political competition for electoral offices – both unprecedented and essential prerequisites for a democratic political regime.

While the military retains a high degree of institutional autonomy,⁴⁴ both the military as an institution and individual military offi-

⁴¹ M. Foley, G.R. Vickers and G. Thale, 1997, *Land, Peace, and Participation: The Development of Post-War Agricultural Policy in El Salvador and the Role of the World Bank*, Washington DC: Washington Office on Latin America.

⁴² V. J. McElhinny, 2006, *Post-war Decentralization and Development in El Salvador, 1992-2000*, PhD Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh: 431.

⁴³ McElhinny, *supra* n. 42: 433; Seligson, *supra* n. 5.

⁴⁴ Stanley, *supra* n. 2; K. Walter and P. J. Williams, 1993, "The Military and Democratization in El Salvador", *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 35: 39.

cers appear to have little influence on government policy or within the main political parties. Since 1992, the military has accepted an unprecedented civilian purging of its officer corps, a limited degree of civilian input into military training, and a significant reduction in size, budget, and mandate. This sea change in Salvadoran politics is in sharp contrast to the continuing role of the military in Guatemalan politics in the post-war period where although the military is smaller than during its civil war, officers continue to exert power over civilian governments and to enjoy unusual prerogatives. One exception to the declining role of the military was its participation in internal security in the form of patrolling areas against crime, usually jointly with the PNC, a practice justified in the eyes of many elites and civilians by the country's high crime rate.

Political inclusion and competition, the *sine qua non* of democracy, is the second principal achievement of the past decade. Several presidential elections have been held and democracy seems to be the "only game in town".⁴⁵ Few influential voices at national or local levels call for any abrogation or lessening of elections as the principle of governance: ARENA accepted the results of elections that sharply reduced its control of the legislature and most social mobilization is channeled through democratic institutions via strikingly ordinary processes of coalition building and lobbying, as in the campaign for the forgiveness of agrarian debt. Democratic values such as political tolerance and support for the (democratic) system increased strongly between 1991 and 1999.⁴⁶ Moreover, irrespective of political party membership, Salvadorans polled in 1997 strongly agreed with the statement that even if people do not vote intelligently everyone should be allowed to vote.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Adam Przeworski, 1991, *Democracy and the Market*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁶ Mitchell Seligson, José Miguel Cruz, and Ricardo Córdova Macías, 2000, *Auditoría de la Democracia: El Salvador 1999*, San Salvador: IUDOP/UCA, University of Pittsburgh and FUNDAUNGO: 58-61, 78-86.

⁴⁷ Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública (IUDOP), 1997, "La opinión pública sobre las elecciones de 1997", *Estudios Centroamericanos* 52: 581-83; Table 5.

Not only is the left now pursuing political power via elections, the degree of electoral competition is increasing at both the national (in legislative though not in presidential elections) and the municipal levels. In coalition with other parties, the FMLN made a respectable showing in the 1994 presidential elections, forcing the presidential election into a runoff round (which it lost to ARENA by a wide margin). On its own, the FMLN won 21 of the 84 seats in the legislature.

Despite some splits within the party,⁴⁸ the FMLN made a surprisingly effective transition from a guerrilla organization to a political party, increasing or retaining its share of votes (except in presidential races), legislative seats, and municipalities from election to election.⁴⁹ In 1997, the FMLN won 27 seats in the legislature, only one less than ARENA's 28 seats. The party performed poorly in the 1999 presidential election, failing even to force a second round, perhaps because of the well-publicized conflict between the two party factions in choosing a candidate. After the March 2000 elections, however, it was the leading party in the national legislature, holding 31 seats to ARENA's 29. However, this lead position did not translate proportionally into power over policy as other parties voted with ARENA. In 2003, the FMLN retained its 31 seats, and then increased its seats to 32 in 2006 and 35 in 2009. The transition from guerrilla organization culminated in the FMLN's victory in the 2009 presidential elections, taking 51.3% of the vote to ARENA's 48.7%.

⁴⁸ The FMLN split soon after the elections, when the leadership of one guerrilla faction (the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* [Revolutionary Army of the People]) together with some leaders of a second faction (the *Resistencia Nacional* [National Resistance]) dramatically broke with the FMLN in the inaugural session of the new legislature. The group subsequently founded a new party, a severe miscalculation as most supporters remained with the FMLN. A second split occurred in 2002, when Facundo Guardado led his *renovador* faction out of the FMLN, with similarly poor results in the subsequent election.

⁴⁹ Figure 13.

Presidential (% of vote)	1994	1999	2004	2009
ARENA	68.3	52.0	57.5	48.7
FMLN	31.7	29.0	35.7	51.3

Legislative seats	1994	1997	2000	2003	2006	2009
ARENA	39	28	29	28	34	32
FMLN	21	27	31	31	32	35
Mayoral elections won						
ARENA	207	160	132	117	147	122
FMLN**	13	48	71	67	52	75

Figure 12: Elections in El Salvador. ** Does not include alcaldías won in coalition with other parties.

Particularly striking is the FMLN's increasing ability to compete in municipal elections. The number of municipalities the party governed (either solely or in coalition) increased steadily from 13 in 1994 to 75 in 2009, a pattern of increasing support stronger still in Usulután (El Salvador's 265 municipalities encompass the entire country and constitute the sole form of local government). There appear to be two underlying patterns to the FMLN's growth at the municipal level. The party has broad appeal in urban areas:⁵⁰ for example, in coalition with other parties it governed San Salvador for most of the post-war period. The party won the 2000 municipal elections in 13 of the 15 largest municipalities while ARENA did not win in *any*. And the party has increasing appeal in some (but not all) former contested zones.

Despite these achievements, post-war El Salvador faces several difficult challenges – low and declining rates of voting, institutional weaknesses that appear to undermine the value of democracy to ordinary people, extraordinarily high rates of crime and (non-political) violence, and continuing poverty and social exclusion.⁵¹ The persistence of poverty appears to be a principal reason for democratic disenchantment among Salvadoran citizens. It is important, however, to note

⁵⁰ Rubén R. Zamora, 1998, *El Salvador: Heridas que no Cierran. Los Partidos Políticos en el Post-Guerra*, San Salvador: FLACSO: 265-7.

⁵¹ Wood, 2005, *supra* n. biographical footnote on page 143.

that poverty rates have declined since the end of the war. Official poverty rates show a decline in total poverty (combining relative and extreme poverty rates) from 58.7% in 1992 to 44.6% in 1998 to 37% in 2002, and in extreme poverty (household income less than the cost of a single basket) from 27.7% to 18.9% to 15%.⁵² The under-five mortality rate (per 1000 live births) fell from 162 in 1970 to 39 in 2001.⁵³ The decline in poverty and infant mortality reflect both the ongoing influx of remittances and reasonably high post-war growth rates that have kept urban unemployment rates fairly low, especially for women.

Despite this decline in urban poverty, rural poverty rates fell much less, from 65% in 1992 to 58.6% in 1998 to 49.8% for total poverty, and from 34% to 25.6% to 24.5%, respectively, for extreme poverty.⁵⁴ Significant disparities exist between urban and rural life expectancy and adult literacy rates, which in 1996 varied between 70.4 years and 90.1%, respectively, in San Salvador to 64.8 years and 55.4% in Morazán. According to Conning, Olinto and Trigueros,⁵⁵ the human development index rankings for San Salvador are comparable to Cuba, Perú, and Jordan, while those of the three poorest departments are similar to Kenya and Pakistan (a difference in the HDI of 50 points). The ongoing decline in rural wages – the real minimum wage for coffee and sugar harvests fell 12.1% and 11% respectively between 1993 and 1998 – and worsening terms of trade for agricultural goods also contributed to enduring rural poverty.⁵⁶ Rural landlessness remained

⁵² Jonathan Conning, Pedro Olinto, and Alvarado Trigueros, 2000, “Land and Labor Adjustment Strategies during an Economic Downturn in Rural El Salvador”, University of Wisconsin Land Tenure Center, Broadening Access and Strengthening Input Market Systems Program: Unpublished Paper: Table 2; World Bank, 2005, Report No. 29594-SV, *El Salvador. Poverty Assessment. Strengthening Social Policy* (Poverty Reduction and Economic Management and Human Development Sector Management Units Latin America and the Caribbean Region) (for 2002 data).

⁵³ United Nations Development Programme, 2003, “Human Development Indicators: El Salvador”, Available online at: www.undp.org/hdr2003/indicator/cty_f_SLVUNDP2003; Table 8.

⁵⁴ Conning, Olinto, and Trigueros, *supra* n. 52: Table 2; World Bank, *supra* n. 52.

⁵⁵ Conning, Olinto, and Trigueros, *supra* n. 52: 10.

⁵⁶ *Id.*, 9.

high after the war as we saw above, despite the improved distribution of land from the 1980 agrarian reform and the land transfer program after the peace agreement.

5.6. Conclusion

A principal legacy of El Salvador's agrarian insurgency was the significant redistribution of land forged by agrarian insurgency, state counterinsurgency, and their ensuing political and economic consequences (not all of them anticipated). This redistribution was consolidated through post-war political mobilization that took advantage of the fundamental legacy of the civil war, the constitutional reforms that brought a profound redistribution of political power. Those reforms were in part made possible through the wartime transformation of the Salvadoran political economy that dramatically reduced the importance for economic elites of export agriculture, as well as the political learning by elites formerly profoundly opposed to any redistribution of political power.

The negotiated settlement that brought an end to the civil war was a classic democratic bargain in which both parties gained something valued by their adherents: insurgent forces achieved political inclusion, agreeing to politics by democratic means and consolidating a significant redistribution of land, while economic elites protected their control of assets through constitutional provisions that (in a liberal world economy) diminish any prospect for significant economic redistribution when the erstwhile insurgents, now a political party, won the presidential election in 2009.

The transformations wrought by civil war in El Salvador stand in sharp contrast to those in Colombia to date. Instead of a transformation of the economic interests of locally powerful elites away from the agrarian sector, in Colombia those interests have deepened with the intensified production of illicit drug crops, particularly coca, and the expansion of commercial crops such as African palm. Relatedly, the Salvadoran civil war brought a fragmentation of landholding and a more egalitarian distribution of agrarian property rights, while Colombia has seen a concentration of landholding rather than its fragmentation.

While the Salvadoran civil war ended via a liberal, capitalist, and democratizing pact, such an outcome is unlikely in Colombia. While coercive practices are widespread in the Colombian countryside, particularly in the form of forced displacement of rural families by armed actors, they do not take the form of labor repressive agriculture that so shaped the Salvadoran political economy and regime. Although leftist political parties such as the Unión Patriótica suffered terrible violence in the late 1980s and 1990s and democratic practices have been profoundly corrupted by the *parapolitica* alliance between many local politicians and the paramilitaries, Colombia's political regime is significantly more democratic than that of El Salvador before and during the civil war. The degree of local political competitiveness varies dramatically across Colombia, however, with local agrarian elites dominating political power in many municipalities over long periods with little opening to democratic opposition.

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Distributive Justice in Transitions

Morten Bergsmo, César Rodríguez-Garavito, Pablo Kalmanovitz and Maria Paula Saffon (editors)

The chapters of this book explore, from different disciplinary perspectives, the relationship between transitional justice, distributive justice, and economic efficiency in the settlement of internal armed conflicts. They specifically discuss the role of land reform as an instrument of these goals, and examine how the balance between different perspectives has been attempted (or not) in selected cases of internal armed conflicts, and how it should be attempted in principle. Although most chapters closely examine the Colombian case, some provide a comparative perspective that includes countries in Latin America, Africa, and Eastern Europe, while others examine some of the more general, theoretical issues involved.

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