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Analysis

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Sarah Zukerman Daly

Anecdotal evidence points to a significant relationship between repression and rebellion and yet the quantitative civil war literature ignores state strategies, deeming them endogenous or perfectly correlated with polity type. This article seeks to bring the state back in again and examine the causes of states' strategies and the effects of these strategies on non-violent mobilisation. It finds that, under certain circumstances, a state's response to a peaceful opposition movement depends not on its institutions or

capacity; rather, it is a function of the state's control of the national security apparatus, autonomy from its constituents, and resources fungible for reform. Additionally, the article concludes that state policy can play a more significant role in explaining the onset of civil conflict than do structural variables such as per capita income, terrain and population size. Historical analysis of coercion and insurgency in the counterfactual case of Honduras illustrates the plausibility of this argument.

Introduction

Why do some states experience civil violence while others remain at peace? Understanding the conditions under which civil wars erupt is of critical importance to political scientists

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and policy-makers alike. This article focuses on one causal pathway to civil war highlighted by the qualitative literature: that of indiscriminate state coercion. Specifically, the article seeks to explore two questions: (1) why, when faced with popular mobilisation, do some states opt to coerce that mobilisation while others accede to its demands? (2) What is the differential effect of these state strategies on mobilisation? To gain analytic leverage on these questions, the article exploits counterfactual evidence from the Honduran case.[1]

This case suggests that when a state has autonomy from the interests jeopardised by the reforms demanded and resources fungible for such reforms, it will not repress. Only in the absence of these factors will it opt for coercion of peaceful mobilisation. The empirical material further points to a process by which socio-economic and political grievances create divided, non-violent mobilisation in the absence of repression. State coercion is the spark that transforms this non-violent mobilisation into armed rebellion.

Examples of the counterproductive effects of indiscriminate violence abound. Stathis Kalyvas cites no fewer than 100 studies and 45 historical cases in which repression triggered or intensified rebellion by driving droves of recruits into the arms of the insurgents.[2] Despite this abundant qualitative evidence, we have relatively little theoretical understanding of why states choose to repress.[3] The proliferating quantitative studies of civil war, meanwhile, exclude state repression as an explanatory factor of insurgency because without detailed case-level work, they cannot be assured of its independent effect; repression can only be claimed a *cause* of, rather than a *response* to, armed struggle if it precedes it.[4] Due to these data challenges, recent civil war scholars focus on structural variables (GDP, terrain, population size) at the expense of political ones; state strategies have come to be disregarded.[5] This article demonstrates how, through careful process tracing of each case in our dataset, we can ensure against circular causality problems and can 'bring the state back in' to studies of civil war as an intervening variable between structural conditions and violence.[6] Drawing on detailed historical analysis of state strategies and mobilisation in Honduras, the article traces a causal path to rebellion that it argues merits greater investigation.

This study uses an 'off-the-line' case selection strategy to choose a case with maximum variation from the trend line on the outcome variables of interest—coercion and insurgency. The paper employs the regression trend as an implicit comparison to the Honduran case and the well-documented 'on-the-line' case of El Salvador as an explicit comparison, which controls for the most common explanations of civil war, such as economic development, population size, rough terrain, anocracy[7] and socio-economic

grievances (See Appendix A).[8] Given the countless and often contradictory findings of variables correlated with civil war onset in quantitative studies,[9] this article nests a 'thick' investigation of a few cases within existing statistical analyses of repression and insurgency with the ultimate goal of more precisely specifying the causal processes that generate these outcomes. It posits that causal processes may not be homogenous across cases of civil war as proposed by the quantitative literature.

This case selection provides a further benefit. Null, counterfactual cases are under-utilised in conflict and peace studies; scholars study where wars occurred, not where they did not. Our understanding of the causes of state coercion and insurgency can be greatly enhanced by examining cases in which these outcomes were averted. This article thus offers detailed tracing of an understudied, counterfactual process.

The two variables of autonomy and resources have the greatest leverage in explaining Honduras's observed divergence from the trend line in levels of state violence and insurgency.[10] Specifically, intensified grievances prompted non-violent organisation across Central America to pressure the government for reforms. Confronting such organisation, the states assessed their resource bases able to redress the grievances and the political consequences of enacting reform. Where the governments had a monopoly of force, diverse constituencies and policy flexibility, they conceded reforms and abstained from repression. Where they lacked these endowments, the states coerced the reformists. State coercion, in turn, caused disparate, apolitical organisations to form broad coalitions, radicalise and eventually endorse the armed alternative, providing fuel to the insurgency. Absent repression, mobilisation remained non-violent and focused on limited social and economic concerns, starving the 'zealot' rebels of recruits and refuge.

These two variables, the article argues, merit incorporation into large-n studies of political violence to evaluate their general application. Existing explanations of civil war that highlight structural variables such as terrain, gross domestic product (GDP), population size and lootable resources perform less well at accounting for the onset of rebellion in resource-poor contexts such as Central America in which co-optation of social networks and organisations is critical to amassing sufficient recruits and refuge for insurgency. To explain variation in rebellion onset, therefore, it is necessary to account for the variation in the rebels' ability to co-opt existing organisational capital. On the state side, explanations of the state's decision to repress that focus on armed forces' lack of discipline and capacity cannot explain the observed variation between Honduras and its neighbours.[11] Honduras had the weakest military apparatus in Central America and yet it

did not engage in indiscriminate violence against its population. Finally, the argument that states employ indiscriminate coercion when the insurgencies they face are weak also finds little support in the Central American empirical record.[12]

The remaining sections of the article trace the lack of coercion and insurgency in Honduras, exploiting cross-sectional and longitudinal data where possible. The article concludes with a discussion of different empirical strategies for evaluating the general application of the proposed causal logic and how we can bring state strategies back into the study of civil war beyond small-n case studies.

A *climate of escalating grievances*

Honduras and its neighbours experienced elevated grievances in the 1960s and 1970s (see Appendix A for comparative statistics). Conversion of land to export crops occurred without a commensurate expansion of land allocated to food crops, generating a decrease in food supply and increase in food imports and prices. Additionally, these new crops expelled many *campesinos* (peasants) from their land and offered fewer employment opportunities and much less unital employment; jobs came to depend on the seasons, world prices and climate. As a result, many peasants, experiencing economic and food insecurity in the countryside, migrated to the cities. The urban industrial sector, however, proved incapable of absorbing this enlarged labour force. Urban unemployment increased, shantytowns and slums grew, and living conditions deteriorated. In addition, population growth rates rose substantially. Between 1950 and 1974, the population increased 96 per cent in Honduras, putting further pressure on scarce resources.[13] The extent of inequality and landlessness also rose.[14] In 1974, the Gini coefficient for land distribution reached 0.78.[15]

Additionally, throughout the period under examination, Honduras was ruled by authoritarian regimes with polity scores averaging negative one.[16] The regimes also suffered instability with Honduras experiencing five coups between 1955 and 1980.[17] As a result, levels of social and economic grievances became elevated.

This climate of grievance catalysed an upsurge in *peaceful* mobilisation in Honduras and its neighbours in the 1960s and 1970s to pressure the government for reforms. Peasants organised, labourers unionised, political opposition materialised and clergy mobilised. However, lacking a common enemy (the state) and common objectives, a myriad of *distinct*, if not rival, groups emerged. Moreover, the demands of these groups were, for the most part, economic. Peasants and labour sought to secure food, land and wages before

contemplating access to the political arena. Meanwhile, deeming the state the entity able to fulfil their requests, the progressive groups proved receptive to state aid and financing. This receptivity, in turn, enabled the government to influence, even control, popular organising and avert its radicalisation. The emergence of these non-violent movements constituted the extent of the impact of intense social and economic grievances. The article thus concludes that 'grievance' theories adequately explain only 'peaceful strife', strife existent in all Central American countries at the end of the 1960s. However, these theories cannot explain the divergent political outcomes thereafter; why, with roughly constant and equal grievances in Honduras and its neighbours, the former descended into civil war while the latter remained an oasis of peace. This analysis finds that variation in the states' strategies explains this divergence.

State strategies towards non-violent mobilisation

Faced with intensifying social, economic and political grievances, the Honduran government responded not with violence, but with several meaningful reform initiatives in stark contrast to its neighbours.

First, it enacted a substantive land reform, redistributing 207,433 hectares of land to 34,364 rural families, a move that was unparalleled in other Central American countries.[18]

Second, the government protected peasants' land rights against export agriculturists. For example, the National Agrarian Institute (INA) ordered the return of lands to peasant communities, which had been illegally, or quasi-legally, expropriated by landlords.[19]

Third, the Honduran state broke with the tradition of military amnesty and tried and convicted officers for human rights abuses. In a historic example, three army officers and two landowners faced charges of murder for the Horcones massacre (a clash between landed elites and peasant reformists). These defendants were convicted not by a military, but by a civilian court. The commission also castigated the Honduran National Federation of Growers and Cattlemen (FENAGH) for 'conducting a campaign of hate and fear against peasants and the INA'.[20]

Fourth, the Honduran government attacked the traditional political parties and incorporated opposition leaders into its administrations. In a speech in 1972, President López Arellano declared: 'The unionised workers of our country are the forgers and creators of our collective wealth. [. . .] The Armed Forces are composed of workers and peasants [. . .] the Armed Forces are not enemies of the workers and the peasant'.[21] Acting

on this position, López posted liberals and leftists to key positions in his cabinet[22] and ensured the government's responsiveness to the underprivileged 'pressure groups'.[23]

Fifth, in the late 1970s, the government permitted the expansion of the political arena; nine candidates competed in the 1981 election, 81 per cent of the population voted, and the military surrendered power to a democratically elected civilian government. This elected administration, moreover, was from the moderate Liberal Party, the party historically allied with the labour movement and the progressive North Coast population.

When the Honduran state complemented its policy of reform with targeted coercion,[24] it sponsored repressive activity only in response to specific episodes of civil unrest. Unlike in El Salvador, the human rights violations in Honduras never became widespread, indiscriminate or public. In El Salvador, government forces were killing 1000 per month in 1980, and even embellishing their killings to heighten fear. For example, in San Salvador, morning commuters encountered severed limbs or heads at bus stops.[25] In contrast, Honduras' security forces executed 70 Honduran nationals between 1980 and 1987[26] and did so by 'disappearance': armed men in plain clothes arrested 'subversives', took them away in unmarked cars, and denied knowledge of their whereabouts. Therefore, 'very few [Hondurans] even knew or acknowledged that such abuses were occurring'.[27]

The puzzle thus becomes why, when faced with similar popular mobilisation, demands for reform and risk of rebellion as El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala, was Honduras able to accede to the mobilisation's demands and avoid crushing the dissidents?

Conditions favouring state coercion: autonomy and resources

It is proposed that a regime's response to its opposition depends on four factors: (1) the interests threatened by the popular demands and reforms; (2) the ruling authorities' power base; (3) the extent of regime autonomy; and (4) the availability of resources to meet the demands. Resources here imply not the resources necessary to mount a military counter-insurgency, but those required to enact significant reforms and avert the emergence of an insurgency in the first place.

In Honduras, as in its neighbours, reformists' demands focused on land distribution and labour conditions. However, unlike in its neighbours, these demands jeopardised the interests of a *diverse* set of actors. Having never produced a strong domestic elite, foreign capitalists and immigrant entrepreneurs largely controlled the Honduran economy.

Hondurans even joked that their country 'is so poor it can't even afford an oligarchy'.[28] These diverse elite actors advocated *divergent* responses vis-à-vis the popular movement, ranging from progressive reform to systematic repression. The landed elite, as in El Salvador, promoted repression of popular demands because the reforms threatened their status and interests. However, unlike in El Salvador where the economy remained concentrated in the hands of a legendary 14 (coffee) families,[29] the Honduran landed oligarchy was highly divided along political (liberal or nationalist), regional (north or south) and crop lines (coffee, banana, sugar, cotton or cattle) and therefore proved unable to organise collectively.[30] The banana companies meanwhile maintained intimate ties with the US government and therefore advocated the US paradigm of winning the 'hearts and minds' of organised labour through negotiation.

Last, the immigrant (Arab)-dominated urban commercial bourgeoisie 'demonstrated little solidarity with the repressive role and tactics of the local political elites' and instead promoted reform.[31] This was in part due to 'the ethnic schism created when non-Arab merchants ostracised their Middle Eastern counterparts creat[ing] more obstacles to a united commercial and industrial opposition to worker militancy'.[32]

As a result of the diversity of economic actors and elite postures with respect to the popular movement, collective action remained low among the *targets* of reform. When the Honduran banana companies confronted the demands of their workers, they could not appeal to their industrial counterparts; the industrial elite had joined organised labour to forge a broad cross-class coalition. Likewise, when the popular movement expanded its demands to include redress for the illegal land enclosure movement, the landed elites' lobby for state repression met with a strong, autonomous counter-lobby from the North Coast industrial bourgeoisie. Thus, in advocating a range of responses, the heterogeneous elite offered the government a sustainable support base irrespective of its policy choice. Accordingly, the Honduran state enjoyed sufficient manoeuvrability to yield to the popular opposition without risking overthrow.

Contrast this with the Salvadoran military state, which lacked autonomy from the oligarchs whose monopoly over the economy rendered any social reform contrary to their interests.[33] The oligarchs had founded the Salvadoran military and moulded it into an actor subservient to elite volition. Such allegiance to the oligarchy greatly inhibited the military's flexibility and afforded the military no alternative base of political support; subverting the interests of the unified elite meant inevitable overthrow.

State autonomy: the militaries' constituencies and bases of support

The Honduran military regime[34] proved disposed to enact meaningful reform for four reasons.

Armed forces' origins

First, the military had come into existence to protect Honduras against *external* threats (the invading armies, overflowing populations and political refugees of its neighbours) and retained this as its *raison d'être*.[35] It thus owed allegiance to its citizenry at large. Moreover, it entered the political arena not on behalf of the elite to restore order, serve elite interests and maintain internal security, as in El Salvador,[36] but because the political system broke down, leaving a political vacuum, which the military, acting in the 'national interest', sought to fill.

Diverse constituencies

Second, the military's alliances with any single interest group proved both convenient and transient. For example, in 1957, it backed the liberals and accommodated the workers. Thus, the banana companies realised they could not 'count on ... [the military] to suppress striking workers'.[37] In 1972, the military mounted a direct attack on the traditional parties and subverted landed elite interests through land reform. And, in 1976, the military favoured the National Party, causing the progressive sectors to lose their clout to more conservative business interests.[38] As a result of these transient loyalties, no group could rely on the armed forces to protect its interests. The military meanwhile avoided relying on any single constituency for political support. It enjoyed independence in its policy-making and, importantly, could find backing for reform. Because of its lack of association with repression and the 'oppressive' economic structure, the military could gain political support among the masses and the industrial elite, thereby enabling it to disassociate itself from conservative factions and institute changes that jeopardised their interests. The Confederation of Honduran Workers (CTH) demonstrated this support: 'The organised working class considers that the military, when acting within its own juridical regime and helping with development plans, constitutes a positive factor for the nationality.'[39] The military could also generate the backing of the elite to undermine the masses. Such epitomises the essence of political flexibility.

Military's monopoly on force

Third, the Honduran military further derived its ability to enact reform from its monopoly on force; no checks existed on its autonomy. The military guaranteed this monopoly by participating in the writing of the 1957 constitution and overthrowing the regime, which in 1963 sought to place its forces under civilian command. In addition, there never existed paramilitary forces in Honduras answerable to civilian groups.

In sharp contrast, in the rest of Central America, the oligarchy effectively controlled several of the security forces and death squads. The oligarchy could thus check the military if it swayed from the desired course (i.e. flirted with reform).[40] An illustration from the well-documented Salvadoran case proves illuminating. On several occasions during the Salvadoran military's 70 years in power, younger officers initiated coups, which brought reform-minded regimes to power. However, as soon as these regimes began to realise their reformist platforms, the alliance of conservative oligarchs and state elites (empowered by their control of the Democratic Nationalist Organisation [ORDEN],[41] the National Guard, Salvadoran National Special Services Agency [ANSENAL][42] and various death squads) either fomented a counter-coup (overthrowing the regime) or generated a terror campaign against the junta's reformists or the masses. Terror campaigns against the junta's reformists forced them to resign while repression of the masses served to erode any popular support the military regime had generated and produced a wedge between the reformist government and its civilian allies. The terror also incited opposition groups to coalesce into broad opposition fronts. Once these fronts emerged, the hardliners could, in turn, convince the progressive officers of the need for a forceful 'crackdown'. Essentially, the hardliners' manipulative use of violence (cloaked in 'national security' rhetoric) created conditions that *required* the use of repression (to drain the sea[43] and avert revolution). As a Christian Federation of Salvadoran Peasants (FECCAS) informant explained, 'Since we don't challenge the government militarily, it has to have an excuse for attacking us. If ORDEN provokes us and we react, then the army comes in "to pacify" the situation.'[44]

Military's institutional flexibility

A last significant factor, which enabled the Honduran military to oscillate in its alliances, remain flexible in its policies and realise reform, was its relative freedom from organisational pathologies. Ropp writes that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, 'no military institution existed in Honduras [. . .] While there was always the semblance of structure, the

military did not develop to the extent that any real institutionalisation occurred.'[45] This process of institutionalisation only began in the 1960s, fuelled by US military aid and training. Whereas an established military generates a set of standard operating procedures and 'focuses only on specific areas stemming from their past experience, recent training and current responsibility',[46] the nascent Honduran military proved relatively flexible in its policy-making. Whereas an institutionalised military, according to organisational theorists, commonly concerns itself with the perpetuation of its power and prerogatives, the Honduran armed forces voluntarily surrendered the political reins to a civilian government in 1982.[47]

It merits mention that accounts of repression that rely on the capacity, discipline and the strength of opposition find little support here. For example, James Fearon and David Laitin argue that a state favours 'brutal and indiscriminate retaliation', which they characterise as police and counter-insurgent weakness, if it has 'low overall financial, administrative, police and military capabilities', terrain 'undisciplined' by roads, and rural society 'unpenetrated' by the central authorities.[48] Stathis Kalyvas proposes that armed forces are more likely to engage in indiscriminate violence if they (a) lack discipline; (b) lack capacity (organisational incompetence or weak security infrastructure), but most importantly if (c) they face a weak insurgency unable to protect civilians.[49] By these accounts, Honduras, as the second poorest and most underdeveloped country[50] with the weakest security apparatus and infrastructure in the Americas after Haiti, should have been more likely to engage in indiscriminate repression than, for example, the Salvadoran military, the strongest in Central America with institutional discipline and capacity. Additionally, Honduras, as El Salvador, faced a very weak insurgency in the 1970s. Against these accounts, this article finds that effective counter-insurgency depends on information about insurgent activities. Access to good information does not perfectly correlate with levels of development or the strength of the military; rather, in the case under investigation, support for the government better captures this variable. As a result of its popular support,[51] the Honduran government enjoyed key requisites of 'relative state strength':[52] intelligence and 'local knowledge' superior to that of the insurgents.

Resources

In addition to autonomy, a government's response to popular mobilisation also depends on its access to resources. If the state's supply of a given resource exceeds the population's demand for that resource, low and acceptable political costs accompany a policy of reform

and reform thus proves feasible. Conversely, if the demand exceeds the supply, the state proves more likely to coerce its citizenry. Given that agrarian reform constituted the core demand of the popular movements in Honduras, this study evaluates not resources in general, but those most fungible to satisfy the demands: land. A comparison with El Salvador proves useful here.

While requests for land in Honduras were acute, Honduras had between 43 and 613 per cent more arable land[53] and fewer people than El Salvador (it was one seventh as populated).[54] The Honduran state thus faced relatively lower demand for land. At the same time, it had a greater capacity than its Salvadoran counterpart to distribute land to peasants because (1) it possessed *ejidal* (national) lands; 52 per cent of Honduran territory remained in ejidal title whereas El Salvador had abolished these lands in 1880;[55] (2) it received large land donations from foreign banana companies in the aftermath of several devastating hurricanes,[56] falling banana prices and the 1975 Bananagate corruption scandal;[57] and (3) it had the ability to free up land by expelling 300,000 Salvadoran immigrants from its territory.[58] Salvadoran immigrants 'contributed significantly to the process of land competition in Honduras'[59] and thus, their expulsion presented a logical means of reducing the demand for and increasing the supply of land at no cost to the Honduran citizenry.[60] In effect, the Honduran government reversed the historic tides of migration; it began to export rather than import a land crisis. El Salvador meanwhile had to deal with 300,000 additional landless agriculturalists.[61] The Honduran state thus possessed not only the autonomy to enact reform without jeopardising the interests of its constituency and its rule, it also had the requisite resources at its disposal to do so.[62] The Salvadoran government, in contrast, lacked both; land reform was a zero-sum game and directly targeted the regime's chief support base: the landed elite.[63] Thus, perceiving no other way to quell dissent, it systematically repressed its populace.

How state strategies impact insurgency onset

> *No one had any inclination to take up arms, but when they saw the treatment*
> *of the people [. . .] by the Guardia [. . .] it was as though you had lit a little*
> *fire, and with each little twig you put on it, the flame rises even stronger. In the*
> *same way, the people were seized by the heat and decided to fight.*
>
> Vidal, a Salvadoran *campesino* (peasant)[64]

It is argued here that the Honduran state's strategy towards its non-violent, popular mobilisation averted insurgency onset and accounts for its outlier status. As proposed above,

resource-poor armed movements achieve large-scale collective action by appropriating organisations with pre-existing collective frames, social capital and mechanisms for overcoming commitment and monitoring problems.[65] In the civil war literature, these resource-deficient groups require strong networks, ethnic or other, to mobilise.[66] Central America does not fit this model; it did not afford historically strong community, ethnic or even ideological networks; rather, it was the very act of mobilising to seek redress of socio-economic grievances that created these powerful networks.[67] State coercion, meanwhile, can have the unintended consequence of fomenting insurgency by prompting bonding patterns among these networks and rendering them amenable to insurgent co-optation.

Specifically, it causes popular organisations to become united and radical and thus enables the 'first-mover' rebels to appropriate these organisations in order to generate large-scale armed mobilisation.[68] These mass popular coalitions shift to an armed approach in the face of repression and, in so doing, not only facilitate the insurgents' collective action, but also afford them ample recruits. The mechanisms by which an organisation brings its members to the rebellion and provides it with a strong social network base are threefold. First, the organisation applies social pressure to 'follow' those to whom its members are densely connected; (2) it links its members' identities and status to those of the group; and (3) it provides reassurance that, if a faction of the network mobilises, others would follow and that it would be safe and meaningful to follow. In so doing, the opposition organisations facilitate insurgent enlistment, solidarity, retention and non-denunciation. Absent repression, grievance-driven peasant organisations, unions, opposition parties and church associations remain unallied, interacting only bilaterally with the state. Their un-radicalised and non-violent character is preserved, denying the irreconcilably risky, 'zealot' militants the inputs necessary to mount an effective insurgency. Under these conditions, 'resource-poor'[69] rebellions do not get off the ground; instead, they remain restricted to a small, isolated group of militants.

In Honduras, as shown above, the upsurge in socio-economic grievances generated peaceful mobilisation similar to that in its neighbours. Like its Salvadoran counterpart in the 1960s and early 1970s, the Honduran popular movement sought to secure only its participants' economic rights and divided into a myriad of moderate organisations, which, perceiving few objectives in common, collaborated minimally. However, unlike in its neighbours, the divided, peaceful and apolitical nature of the 1960s Honduran movement persisted into the 1970s and 1980s, starving the insurgents of recruits, sanctuary and materiel.

Whereas in El Salvador, human rights abuses were prevalent, pervasive and manifest, Honduras' security forces assassinated 140 people between 1980 and 1987,[70] of whom only 70 were Honduran, the rest non-nationals (See Table I).[71] Therefore, very few Hondurans felt the impact of the state coercion. Additionally, the popular organisations largely escaped the repression. Only *three* known union members and nine academics 'disappeared' during the seven-year period, implying that guilt was ascertained on an individual basis and that the deaths directly touched only a few in the highly divided popular movement. Collective action and alliance formation across popular organisations thus proved difficult. The selectivity of the repression also raised the cost of participating in the insurgency far beyond that of non-participation; the state-sponsored coercion could be avoided. Thus the state could reliably induce compliance and provide a clear structure of incentives for non-collaboration with and non-defection to the insurgents.[72]

In some senses, Honduran counter-insurgency policy, in spite of the weakness of the Honduran military, embodied the key tenets of US counter-insurgency strategy today: selective repression and 'winning hearts and minds'. However, the implications of the Honduran experience go beyond these tenets to suggest that, in addition to selectivity (notoriously difficult to achieve due to the blurry line between insurgents and civilians), the number and dispersion of targets within organised groups and the covertness with which the coercion is carried out[73] may also matter for the effectiveness of counter-insurgency strategy.

Honduras' reformist initiatives and limited repression preserved the popular movement in its initial form: divided, apolitical, conservative and non-violent.

First, in the absence of repression, the civic organisations did not have a common platform (ending state terror). The popular movement thus remained highly divided into a multitude of moderate organisations, incapable of the collective action and mass coalition formation present in El Salvador.[74] Each Honduran industry and sector had its own trade union while, in the countryside, the peasantry split its loyalty between three principal peasant organisations.[75]

Second, in the absence of state terror, economic and social grievances dominated the progressive organisations' platforms. A peasant claimed: '*Campesinos* don't want war. War only makes our lives more difficult than they already are. What we want is land and jobs, not war.'[76]

Third, the Honduran movement never became radical like its Salvadoran counterpart because the Honduran Church and Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT)[77] remained conservative and hegemonically in control of the movement.[78] State

Table I. Human rights abuses: Honduras, 1980–1987

Victims' Nationality	Total Disappeared	Alleged Responsibility	Victims' Occupation
Honduran	69	FUSEP: 10; Security Forces: 1; DNI: 32	3 Union Leaders; 9 Students; 5 Peasants; 18 Entrepreneurs; 4 health workers; 34 Other
Salvadoran	27	DNI:23; Honduran Armed Forces: 4	5 Students; 3 Peasant 19 Other
Nicaraguan	36	*Contras*: *31*; DNI: 1; *FDN*: *2*; Unknown: 2	4 Students; 19 Peasants; 13 Other
Costa Rican	5	DNI: 4; Honduran Armed Forces: 1	2 Students; 1 Union leader; 2 Unknown
Guatemalan	3	Honduran Armed Forces: 3	3 Unknown

Note: DNI: National Investigations Directorate (Branch of the Armed Forces); FDN: Nicaraguan Democratic Force; FUSEP: Public Security Force

⋆ These figures were calculated from *Honduras, The Facts Speak for Themselves: The Preliminary Report of the National Commissioner for the Protection of Human Rights in Honduras, 1994*

violence in El Salvador induced dissidents to join independent, rather than government-controlled, organisations because the dissidents sought to directly change the practices of the state. The share of unionised workers in the pro-Salvadoran government Confederación General de Sindicatos dropped from 42 per cent in 1971 to 19 per cent in 1975 after four years of repression.[79]

In contrast, in Honduras, absent state-caused grievances, the marginalised populations found state-sponsored organisations sufficient to seek redress of their economic complaints. ORIT managed, by the mid-1970s, to successfully undermine the rival Communist-allied groups, obtain a near monopoly of industrial unions and recruit more than half of the organised peasantry.[80] It lost the other half of the peasantry to the Church-founded National Peasant Union (UNC). The UNC, however, remained moderate as the Honduran clergy, free from human rights violations, never became extremist like their Salvadoran counterparts.[81] Instead they shared the anti-Communist stance of their government and populace. For example, in 1972, when eight peasants were executed in Talanquera, the Honduran clergy, rather than speak out in defence of the 'voiceless' as in El Salvador, instead became concerned about its association with the rural Christian Social Movement and reduced its involvement to assume a 'cautionary low profile'.[82]

Additionally, the Honduran government's reforms co-opted dissidents into the economic system, mitigating their militancy. For example, beneficiaries of land reform ('formerly the most mobilised and combative peasants') abandoned their struggle for land in order to participate in the economic apparatus and somewhat selfishly focus their demands on improving credit or technical assistance rather than on obtaining land for the still landless population.[83] Essentially, since neither the state nor violence had directly caused these grievances, targeting the state with violence was not the logical means to seek redress.[84] The 'dissident groups' retained faith in the potential to achieve their objectives through institutional routes, which had thus far yielded meaningful reforms. A peasant in the early 1980s confirmed this: 'We're still determined to struggle through legal means: through protests, demonstrations, recoveries, dialogue . . .'.[85]

In contrast, in El Salvador, exposed to state repression, the formerly divided, relatively moderate labour unions, student groups, peasant organisations, teacher associations, shantytown entities and clergy groups united into four blocks and then into a single alliance: the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). These organisations began to participate in mass demonstrations as opposed to protests confined to identifiable association members.[86] The imperative of resisting state terror reduced disagreement between the varied groups and

the salience of their potentially divergent economic and social missions. Political grievances moved to the forefront, creating a common agenda. Celebrating their alliance, a crowd (200,000 strong) cheered: 'Because the colour of blood is not forgotten [. . .] the massacred will be avenged'.[87]However, even this unified, mass group became subject to state sanctioned terror, prompting discussions within the FDR ranks as to how to preserve the character of the struggle without running unnecessary risks. They understood that the peaceful, public route no longer offered a viable means to achieve their goals or ensure their organisations' survival. Accordingly, the popular movements went underground and pledged latent or active support to the armed struggle. Different organizations underwent this two step process—(1) cooperation with other organisations and (2) alliance with militarised groups—at different rates depending on the organisation's goals, its vulnerability to state attack, and its leadership's preferences and 'tipping points'. In this sense, the Salvadoran, resource-poor guerrilla movement, dependent on appropriating social networks and organisations,[88] embodied Mao's notion of a 'prolonged war' in which insurgents had to wait for popular associations to radicalise.[89] By the autumn of 1980, all factions within the FDR concluded that a shift in the repertoires of protest was imperative. Violent mobilisation co-opted mass, non-violent mobilisation and civil war ensued.[90]

Impact of reform/targeted repression on dissidents: war averted

The effects of the two-pronged Honduran policy of substantive reform and limited coercion, meanwhile, rendered armed mobilisation unattractive. If the success of a guerrilla movement requires core 'conditions' and ultimately rests, according to the literature, on the capacity of insurgents to (a) overcome collective action problems (co-opt strong pre-existing organisations); (b) recruit; (c) hide from government forces; and (d) amass financial resources and military supplies, Honduras conferred to the guerrillas none of the requisite ingredients. As the preceding section demonstrated, the state's reformist policies rendered the pool of guerrilla recruits limited. The armed movement thus failed to recruit beyond a core of militant activists numbering between 48 and 200.[91] The splintered, apolitical organisations proved resistant to rebel co-option. In contrast, the FLMN in El Salvador amassed 6,000–8,000 guerrillas, up to a million sympathizers, and 100,000 militiamen. Due to state coercion, 'workers and teachers, in growing numbers, mov[ed] from civil disobedience in the cities to guerrilla training camps in the countryside'.[92]

The lack of popular support in Honduras also denied guerrillas a sanctuary. The Honduran guerrilla combatants did not 'overlap' with the civilian population; rather, they operated amidst communities which, unsympathetic to the rebel cause, refused them camouflage. Even the mountains could not provide the Honduran guerrillas safe refuge because the residents of these rough, rural regions felt little solidarity with the intruding guerrilla groups and consequently denounced them to the government, providing it the intelligence and 'local knowledge' necessary for effective counter-insurgency efforts. Three of the nascent insurgent groups—The Cinchoneros Popular Liberation Movement (MPLC), the Morazanist Front for the Liberation of Honduras (FMLH) and the Lorenzo Zelaya Popular Revolutionary Forces (FPR-LZ)—were conceived by urban university students and political parties with only very weak ties to the rural poor.[93] Meanwhile, the other rebel group, the Honduran wing of the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers (PRTCH), proved insensitive to national conditions, focusing instead on regional concerns. Last, the populations of Honduras' 'rough', mountainous terrain consistently voted for the conservative National Party and thus offered their support to the military government and its counter-insurgency campaign.

In contrast, state violence in El Salvador conferred to the rebels a sanctuary. One rebel expressed, 'at first glance, one might think that the topography of El Salvador, the lack of high mountains, the abundance of roads, and the high population density are obstacles for training and furthering the militia organisation'.[94] This was the case in the 1960s and early 1970s; Salvadoran rebels lacked both economic and social endowments and thus their prospects of launching an insurgency were slim. State terror changed this. By repressing its citizenry, the government provided the guerrillas a human camouflage made of an anti-regime population. One insurgent explained:

> [The enemy] doesn't find the camps because our people are with the revolution ... Moreover, since [...] the guerrilla forces are immersed in the people, who suffer the criminal repression of military operations against entire villages [...] the repression motivates the Salvadoran people to supply invaluable aid in foodstuffs, information and guidance in our movements that enables us to steer clear of ambushes on highways and side roads [...] so you see the unbeatable rearguard of the EPL, the 'mountain retreat' where the EPL fighters find a secure haven, is the Salvadoran people.[95]

Honduras also denied its insurgents access to arms and financial assets. The citizenry, unsympathetic to armed mobilisation, would not directly supply insurgents these goods. Meanwhile, the borders over which this materiel generally flowed had been largely secured.[96] Thus, when the Honduran guerrilla movements formed, arms and materiel were not forthcoming.[97]

Denied conditions conducive to successful insurgency, the Honduran guerrilla movements proved easy targets for Honduran counter-insurgency. Between 1980 and 1984, the Honduran military systematically eliminated the nascent Honduran guerrilla groups. By 1983, all that remained of the PRTCH was 'a very small, weak group, with most of its militant members either dead or in exile'. Counter-insurgent sweeps similarly decimated the Cinchoneros group and left the remaining guerrilla groups 'simply ineffective'.[98] Schulz and Schulz describe one such sweep: acting on a denunciation, the 'roads leading to the zone [of the rebel groups] were militarised. The civil defence committees were reactivated. Dozens of suspected guerrilla sympathisers were detained. Eight rebel camps were discovered.'[99] It follows that Honduras, on the brink of war, escaped such an outcome.[100]

Conclusion

This article exploits counterfactual data on Honduras to develop theory about one causal pathway to civil conflict, one that anecdotally we know to be important and prevalent. By bringing the state back in to the study of rebellion, the article has offered a political explanation of regimes' decisions to repress and the effects of state strategy on mobilisation in resource-poor contexts. Specifically, it finds that state policy can be explained not by looking only at institutions and capacity, but also by examining the state's control of security forces, ability to appeal to distinct constituencies and extent of organisational pathologies.

The analysis suggests that when a state confronts an opposition movement, it will only enact reform rather than repressing those demanding change if it has the autonomy and resources to do so without threatening its political survival. This autonomy is contingent on three factors.

First, the state must have a monopoly over the state's coercive apparatus; its constituents cannot possess the means to overthrow it.

Second, the state must prove able to generate an alternative base of support, most likely among those demanding reform, to replace or supplement the constituency it alienates through reform.

Third, the state must have flexibility to alter its policy; policy must not be so institutionalised as to avert change. The state must also have the resources (either financial or materiel) to meet the opposition's requests. If it has these two endowments, it will prove able to avoid repressive means. If instead a state lacks sufficient manoeuvrability or resources to concede change without risking overthrow by those threatened by the reform, it will perceive no alternative but to repress in order to perpetuate its reign.

Additionally, the article concludes that state policy plays a significant role in explaining the onset of civil conflict, a role at times greater than that of structural variables identified by the quantitative literature such as per capita income, mountainous terrain and population size. The state has long featured prominently in the social movement literature; it should similarly feature in the contemporary civil war scholarship.

The article further argues against the traditional 'grievances' approach, which proposes that where socio-economic[101] or political[102] grievances are high, insurgency is likely. Instead it finds, in line with Fearon and Laitin,[103] that grievances do not directly generate armed mobilisation as they exist in many places that do not experience rebellion. However, in contrast to the recent 'feasibility of insurgency' scholarship, the article concludes that grievances *do* matter because they produce non-violent, divided and often apolitical mobilisation, which can serve as the kindling for an armed movement.[104]

This article highlights several avenues for future research. It suggests the importance of including state policies (coercion versus reform) in quantitative analyses of civil war and cleansing the analyses of cyclicality through process tracing to ensure repression precedes rebellion or through highly predictive models of state repression. An additional research agenda would clarify the effects of different *types* of repression on dissidence. Unfortunately, as established in the literature, repression sometimes works.[105] The degrees of state coercion in El Salvador and Honduras were, in absolute terms, at extremes (Salvadoran security forces killed 50,000 citizens,[106] the Honduran forces 75[107]). However, the state coercion also differed in type, hinting at potentially important intervening variables, which may mitigate the effect of repression on insurgency: (1) the degree of covertness of repression's execution (disappearances versus public assassination; (2) the geographic distribution of its targets (concentrated versus widespread); (3) the class/ethnic distribution and collective action capacity of its victims; and (4) the 'resource-richness' of the regions in which it was applied.

Finally, the analysis begs the question of general application. Do the proposed causal mechanisms apply only to ideological or also to ethnic struggles?

The Tamil Tigers, IRA, Kashmiri JKLF and Kurdish KLA are examples in which grievances (in this case resulting from the denial of the right to national self-determination) initially sparked a moderate and non-violent movement divided between multiple sub-ethnic groups, which defied cohesive, collective action. However, when the government responded with coercion, these movements became united, maximalist in their claims and armed. There is evidence that the proposed dynamic recurs in other contexts and therefore may merit further investigation to locate the limits of the framework's applicability.

Policy implications

Although there are limits to what can be learned from a single case, the implications - of this research are potentially important from a public policy perspective as well.

First, the article shifts the analytic focus away from physical geography and demographics to state policy and underscores the importance of the *state* in determining outcomes.

Second, the findings indicate the need to differentiate 'personal integrity'[108] violations from other types of grievances. Relations between state and social elites, particularly in the form of deep-rooted oligarch-military alliances, also prove causally important. Where such alliances have been largely absent, reformist policies abetted by the military have proven feasible and likely as indicated by the cases of Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, Brazil and Honduras. Policies directed at weakening such alliances may prove effective preventive methods. The analysis further highlights the dangers of paramilitary forces and the benefits of consolidating the means of force in one professionalised entity devoted to the *national* interest. Trying and convicting military officers for human rights violations and punishing terror campaigns by non-state actors is recommendable to guard against impunity and deter coercion. Finally, the data suggests that the more decentralised the political and economic[109] spheres, the more stable the state in the face of a nascent insurgent movement in that the state can transfer its loyalties between constituencies, find support for progressive platforms, and thus diffuse insurgent sentiment. Accordingly, policies favouring the devolution of political and economic influence, such as land reform, may play a constructive role, particularly in cases where resources fungible for reform are available.

Acknowledgements

Endnotes

1. See Fearon, 'Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing' on counterfactuals, the comparative method, and hypothesis testing.
2. Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*.
3. This study builds on the excellent scholarship of Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*; McAdam et al., *Dynamics of Contention*. This literature looks at the relationship between repression (threat) and mobilisation, but not at *why* states repress.
4. To solve this problem, scholars often conflate repression and regime type with the latter proxying for the former (Collier and Hoeffler, 'Greed and Grievance'; Fearon and Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency'). This generates measurement bias; dictatorship is an imperfect measure of indiscriminate state repression. Additionally, despite being lagged, democracy and political instability variables suffer endogeneity as a country is coded as having a civil war only after its level of violence has crossed a certain threshold (and therefore likely already affected the regime type). The quantitative studies that do examine the effect of repression on rebellion are also plagued by endogeneity of a more extreme type where it is impossible to tease out causality (Poe et al., 'Repression of the Human Right'; Gurr and Moore, 'Ethnopolitical Rebellion'). And while some scholars engage in sub-national research designs with detailed data on repression, they examine the role of indiscriminate violence only after the wars have begun and thus offer little insight into the role of repression on insurgency *onset* (Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*; Lyall, 'Indiscriminate Violence').
5. See Sambanis, 'A Review of Recent Advances'; Hegre and Sambanis, 'Sensitivity Analysis'; and Blattman and Miguel, 'Civil War', for reviews of these studies.
6. Qualitative studies indicate the importance of state policy, but often do so anecdotally. The works of Theda Skocpol and Timothy Wickham-Crowley are exceptions. Unfortunately, since Skocpol brought the 'state back in' in the 1980s, state policies have been forgotten as causes of violence; geography and economics have come to dominate the literature (Buhaug and Gates, 'Geography of Civil War'; Le Billon, *Political Economy of War*; Ross, 'Closer Look at Oil'). This article builds on Skocpol's work to bring the state back in again.
7. Anocracies are regimes that mix democratic with autocratic features. They include regimes that score between -5 and 5 on the difference between Policy IV's democracy and autocracy measures (the difference ranges from -10 to 10). See Fearon and Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency'. Huntington, *Political Order*, calls autocracies 'praetorian regimes'.
8. Honduras and El Salvador share a common colonial history, similar levels of economic development, human development, democratisation, inequality, population size and rough terrain, but exhibited strong and consistent variation on the outcome of state strategy towards popular mobilisation. These cases follow the guidelines for case selection of Lijphart, 'The Comparable-Cases Strategy'. Other scholars have engaged in comparisons of the two cases: Booth, 'Socioeconomic and Political Roots'; Brockett, *Land, Power, and Poverty*, 2nd ed.; Goodwin, *No Other Way Out*. Goodwin demonstrates the link between repression and civil war. He does not, however, delineate the causal process by which coercion versus reform influences opposition organisations. He also does not provide evidence that repression, as it was applied, did not occur prior to civil war onset. Moreover, in the case that repression did antedate the insurgency, Goodwin fails to provide insight into why, in the absence of armed opposition, a regime would choose a violent (and ostensibly doomed) policy. Booth emphasises variation in income inequality grievances and repression to explain variation in outcomes. However, as Goodwin, he shows correlations, but does not specify causal mechanisms. He also does not account for the marked variation in state strategies of the Central American countries. Brockett documents and explains variation in agrarian reform across Central America. His approach falls into the traditional grievance approach and cannot account for the fact that grievances are nearly universal, but insurgency is not.

9. See Hegre and Sambanis, 'Sensitivity Analysis', for a discussion of the 88 variables found to correlate with civil war onset.

10. See Trimberger, *Revolution from Above*; Stepan, *State and Society*, for a discussion of autonomy.

11. Fearon and Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency'.

12. Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*.

13. The data for this section comes from Brockett, *Land, Power, and Poverty*; Williams, *Export Agriculture*; Browning, *Landscape and Society*; Dunkerley, *The Long War*. The population similarly increased 91 per cent in El Salvador during this period.

14. The percentage of landless rural families swelled from 31.4 per cent in 1970 to 36 per cent in 1974 (Ruhl, 'Agrarian Structure', 48; Brockett *Land, Power, and Poverty*, 74).

15. Muller and Seligson, 'Inequality and Insurgency', 445–446. The gini coefficient reached 0.82 in El Salvador. See Brockett, 'Measuring Political Violence', for alternative measures of land inequality including minifundización (the reduction in average plot size of land) and landless scores.

16. The Polity Project. http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/polity/. From 1949 to 1954, the case could be made that Honduras was a semi-democracy, but not thereafter (See Bowman et al., 'Measuring Political Democracy'). The Polity score averaged −0.5 in El Salvador during this period. The polity score for Honduras rose to 6 in 1982 and dropped to −6 for El Salvador in 1977 after the states had chosen divergent policies towards their popular mobilisation.

17. El Salvador experienced four coups during these years.

18. Ruhl, 'Agrarian Structure'; Rudolph, *Honduras: Country Study*, 44.

19. Lapper and Painter, *Honduras: State for Sale*.

20. Rudolph, *Honduras: Country Study*, 47.

21. *El Tiempo*, 2 May 1972, quoted in Morris, *Honduras: Caudillo Politics*.

22. In addition to members of the conservative National Party to which President López was allied.

23. Euraque, *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic*.

24. The United States influence over Honduran policy grew after 1980. During the 1980s, the US stationed many troops on Honduran soil and supplemented Honduras' military expenditures with 53–99 million US dollars per year (See Acker, *Honduras*, 117; Ruhl, 'Agrarian Structure', 39–44; Morris, 'Honduras: The Burden', 211). Moreover, the US strategy with respect to imminent guerrilla movements changed in 1979 and it began to promote 'development and democratisation' over 'coercion and militarisation'. Accordingly, its military and economic aid became conditional on the presence of democracy and reduction in human rights violations.

Thus, the Honduran two-pronged strategy of reform and selective coercion was continued, but came to be dictated by a foreign actor. Many studies have focused on the external-dependence of Honduras as an explanatory variable of its relative stability (Coatsworth, *United States*; Weeks, 'Interpretation'). However, Nicaragua and Honduras demonstrated the greatest external dependence and experienced divergent outcomes (Goodwin, *No Other Way Out*, 153).

25. Stanley, *Protection Racket State*, 1–2. As has been well documented in the literature, in the 1970s, the Salvadoran state engaged in indiscriminate repression of the popular mobilisation and refused reform on nearly all fronts. 'Guilt' was determined not on an individual basis, but on a collective one: guilt by association (Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*). The UN Truth Commission of 1993 concluded that violence in the countryside was 'indiscriminate in the extreme' in the first years of the 1970s (UN, *De la locura*, 65). Security forces raided villages chosen almost arbitrarily because of the large presence of FECCAS unions. The scale of these massacres increased from those of 1974–78–La Cayetana (19 dead), Aguilares (50 dead)–to those of 1980 — Sumpul River (600 dead), El Mozote (1000 dead) (See Danner, *Massacre at El Mozote*; Alas, *El Salvador*). Moreover, the peaceful vehicles for change were mostly halted; elections in 1974 and 1977 proved fraudulent (Webre, *José Napoleón Duarte*).

26. *Honduras: The Facts Speak*.

27. Schulz and Schulz, *The United States*, 159.

28. Benjamin, *Don't Be Afraid*, xvi.

29. These families controlled the agrarian sector and 51 per cent of capital in commerce, 49.9 per cent in construction, 43.7 per cent in services and a majority of the top industrial corporations and private-sector associations with powerful lobbying capabilities. See Dunkerley, *The Long War*; Colindres, *Fundamentos económicos*. Also, in contrast to Honduras, most of the 50 foreign companies, which invested in El Salvador in the 1960s, entered into joint ventures with the dominant Salvadoran capitalists (the agrarian elite).

30. Honduras has no *one* traditional domestic crop like El Salvador (coffee).

31. Ruhl, 'Honduras: Militarism and Democratization', 38.

32. Euraque, *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic*, 38.

33. The domestic agricultural elite effectively retained control over the economy, and the bourgeois groups consequently 'lacked significant autonomy from the "oligarchic" families' (Stanley, *Protection Racket*, 97) The Salvadoran society thus generally lacked economic leaders willing to promote reform contrary to oligarch interests (Paige, *Agrarian Revolution*).

34. For parsimony, this article refers to the 'Honduran military regime' or state as a singular entity between 1963 and 1982, despite the existence of several regimes during this period. In comparison to El Salvador, however, the regimes' values on the key variables of interest are similar enough to warrant the regimes being pooled together.

35. See Article 272 of the 1982 Honduran Constitution. This external orientation was so strong that during the 1954 banana strike crisis, the military 'appeared more disposed to respond to a potential Guatemalan threat to the country's national security than to quell the north coast strikes'. Soldiers were even dispatched to patrol Guatemalan border posts (MacCameron, *Bananas, Labor, and Politics*, 26). The military's organisational structure reflected this external focus. The air force, a force charged with defence against a conventional external enemy, accounted for 32 per cent of Honduras' armed forces. In El Salvador, the air force comprised only two per cent of the military. (See Euraque, *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic*; Rudolph, *Honduras: Country Study*). It may be argued that the Honduran military's 1963 overthrow of Villeda was executed on behalf of the elite. I propose instead that the military used coups to prevent too far a swing to the right (1971) or left (1963) and thereby maintain *national* order, not 'order' as defined by any one group (See Acker, *Honduras*).

36. The Salvadoran military's principal *raison d'être*, namely the defence of national sovereignty in the face of an invading army, constituted 'the least of its worries'. Instead the military, as an institution, was oriented and designed not to fight a conventional war against a foreign enemy, but 'to defeat, instead, internal enemies of the state' (Williams and Walter, *Militarization and Demilitarization*, 51). The structure and ideology of its forces reflects this internal security orientation. The National Guard, which was founded to facilitate agricultural commercialisation in the late nineteenth century. through large-scale evictions of peasants and repression of the landless, enjoyed the greatest prestige and authority within the military structure. The military, especially the Guard, continued through the twentieth century to preserve order on private estates, arrest people for vagrancy, and serve the interests of the landed elite. See Americas Watch Committee and The American Civil Liberties Union, *Report on Human Rights*, xx–xxi. See also Stanley, *Protection Racket*.

37. Ruhl, 'Honduras: Militarism and Democratization'.

38. Euraque, *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic*.

39. Quoted in Euraque, *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic*.

40. Towards the end of the civil war, even the Salvadoran military acquired autonomy from the oligarchy.

41. The regime founded ORDEN in the early 1960s as a rural police force charged with informing on and taking action against any subversive activities. By 1970, ORDEN had a vast network in every village, numbering 10,000 combatants and 100,000 collaborators (Jung, 'Class Struggle', 74). ORDEN's command structure enabled social elites to gain control of its units (Stanley, *Protection Racket*).

42. ANSENAL served as 'an employment agency for landlords and industrialists looking for so-called *supernumerarios*: security personnel who would perform security tasks for companies and farms' (McClintock, *American Connection*, 220). Additionally, the elites themselves (with aid from military hard–liners) created armed groups: death squads. These answered directly to civilian elite. They included ARENA (National Republican Alliance), the UGB (White Warriors' Union), and FALANGE (Anti-Communist Armed Forces of Liberation by Wars of Elimination) to name a few.

43. Mao Zedong describes the guerrilla–civilian relationship: 'Because guerrilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathizers and cooperation [...]. The former [the people] may be likened to water and the latter [the guerrillas] to the fish who inhabit it' (Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 44, 92–93). Thus if the civilian populace constitutes the 'sea' in which the combatant 'fish' swim, counter-guerrilla warfare is a strategy that seeks to catch the fish by draining the sea (Valentino et al., 'Draining the Sea', 384).

44. *Guardian*, 23 October 1978, quoted in Dunkerley, *Long War*, 117.

45. Ropp, 'The Honduran Army', 505–506.

46. Sagan and Waltz, *Spread of Nuclear Weapons*, 53

47. The strongly institutionalised Salvadoran military, in contrast, had a myopic vision and organisational structure, which rendered inflexibility and state repression more likely for three reasons: one, the soldiers had extensive training in the use of repression; repression was institutionalised. Two, past experience had demonstrated repression's efficacy. One colonel expressed to Stanford Professor Terry Karl: 'In 1932 we killed 30,000 peasants, and they were quiet for 50 years. All we are asking for is another 50 years' (Karl, 'Expert Testimony', 71). Three, the military's organisational structure (brief presidential term and the Defence Minister's exclusive control of officer assignments)

enabled hardliners to marginalise reformists (Stanley, *Protection Racket*). See also the 'Woerner Report', a secret Pentagon document produced in 1981 by Brig. Gen. Fred F. Woerner.

48. Fearon and Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency', 6. See also Olson, *Logic of Collective Action*; Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*; and Poe and Tate, 'Repression of Human Rights' who argue that economic growth proves destabilising, prompting states to use force to maintain control.

49. Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*.

50. Penn World Tables.

51. It gained a 52.4 per cent majority in the free and fair elections of 1982.

52. The 'relative strength' model of Fearon and Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency' is based on the contest models of Gates, 'Recruitment and Allegiance', which builds on the conflict success functions of Hirshleifer, 'Macro-technology of Conflict'.

53. Of this arable land, in the 1960s, less than 25 per cent was incorporated into farms in Honduras, while in El Salvador, 75 per cent was.

54. Durham, *Scarcity and Survival*, 102; Seligson, 'Thirty Years of Transformation'.

55. Lapper and Painter, *Honduras*.

56. The banana companies suffered exorbitant losses in the September 1954 hurricane and consequently donated 62, 291 acres of land to the government for colonisation projects. The same occurred following 1974 Hurricane Fiji (MacCameron, *Bananas, Labor, and Politics*). See also Anderson, *Politics in Central America*.

57. United Brands paid a $1.25 million bribe to the Honduran economic minister. It transferred land as reparation (Volk, 'Honduras').

58. Prior to the outbreak of war, Salvadoran migrants occupied 293,000 of the best *manzanas* in Honduran territory and constituted 20 per cent of the Honduran agriculturally active population (Durham, *Scarcity and Survival*, 125). See also Torres-Rivas, *Interpretación del desarrollo social*; Carías and Slutzky, *La guerra inútil*.

59. Durham, *Scarcity and Survival*.

60. Large landowners assumed this logic, perceiving Salvadorans to be 'a convenient scapegoat [whose expulsion] offered a means of reducing the threat of land occupations and agrarian reform.' (Ibid, 125).

61. No less than 78.7 per cent of the Salvadoran refugees had laboured in an agricultural capacity, 81.8 per cent of which had worked land for themselves. See Capa and Stycos, *Margin of Life*; Durham, *Scarcity and Survival*.

62. Most of the land redistributed in Honduras was publicly owned and thus did not threaten the landed elite. Grants from the two major banana companies accounted for 28 per cent of the lands distributed by INA through 1980. The other lands divided as follows: expropriation or purchase (15 per cent, predominantly from foreign fruit companies), colonisation of unoccupied areas (44 per cent), and recovery of illegally occupied public lands (13 per cent).

63. Land reform finally initiated in 1980 reflects this; the reform involved expropriations of large properties, much of which was devoted to export agriculture. Phase One of the reform expropriated the 472 properties exceeding 1235 acres. This land accounted for 22 per cent of the nation's farmland: 31 per cent of the land devoted to cotton, 24 per cent of that for sugar, and 14 per cent of coffee land (See US Congress, *Status of Land Reform*; Simon and Stephens, *El Salvador Land Reform*; Brockett, *Land, Power, and Poverty*).

64. Pearce, *Promised Land*, 193.

65. Individuals, it is posited, will not join a rebellion (a public, collective good) if they can instead free ride. Thus to achieve collective action, the armed group must either provide selective incentives (Popkin, *Rational Peasant*; Olson, *Logic of Collective Action*) or co-opt networks (Granovetter, 'Strength of Weak Ties'; Coleman, 'Social Capital'; Tarrow, *Power in Movement*; Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*).

66. Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion*; Scott, *Domination*.

67. Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action*.

68. Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action*, employs James Coleman's term 'zealots' to describe the initial insurgent participants who she claims, 'appear to have been unusually inclined to defiance'.

69. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, asserts that nascent insurgencies, hoping to mobilise on a large-scale basis, require resources: either natural resources or networks (ethnic, religious or ideological). This literature, however, cannot provide an explanation for how resource-poor insurgencies (characterised by a lack of natural resource wealth, criminal opportunities and external support) embed themselves in pre-existing networks and why these networks' members opt for armed rather than peaceful mobilisation.

70. I calculated these figures from *Honduras: The Facts Speak*, which reports the victim's name and profession, the date of the human rights abuse, and the perpetrator.

71. Most of the non-nationals were temporarily in Honduras and suspected of having links with the Salvadoran, Nicaraguan or Guatemalan rebels. Some of these were killed by Nicaraguan security forces (FDN and the Contras): see italics in Table I.

72. Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*.

73. Tactics such as 'disappearances,' however, are extremely cruel because families do not know the truth as to what happened to their family member, do not have the remains of their loved ones, and thus, are unable to move forward with their lives and reconcile with the past. Author's interviews with victims of paramilitary and guerrilla violence, Colombia, September 2007– August 2008.

74. For example, subject to execution, exile and arrest, the Salvadoran National Opposition Union began 'a series of meeting with labour, peasant and other mass groups in hopes of coming up with a plan to pressure the government from several directions' (Quoted in Menéndez, *Voices from El Salvador*, 120) The Rural Workers Federation, meanwhile, came into existence when the Union of Rural Workers (UTC) 'realized that FECCAS was suffering the same forms of repression as [it]. At the next opportunity [it] formed an alliance to create a united front' (Pearce, *Promised Land*, 161). Becoming targets of state violence demonstrated to academics, mostly from middle-class backgrounds, that they would receive the same brutal treatment as the peasantry. Accordingly, the student union (National Association of Salvadoran Educators) united with the peasant (FECCAS and the UTC) and shantytown organisations (UPT) to forge the *Bloque Popular Revolucionario 30 de Julio*. This trend in organisation intensified over the course of the 1970s. See Almeida, *Waves of Protest*, for a comprehensive review of this process in El Salvador.

75. The Unión Nacional Campesina (UNC), Asociación Nacional de Campesinos Hondureños (ANACH), and Federación de Cooperativas de la Reforma Agraria de Honduras (FECORAH) briefly worked together in 1975 for land reform. However, the 'unity front' proved superficial with each group working independently towards its own objectives (Morris, *Honduras: Caudillo Politics*; See also Barry and Preusch, *AIFLD in Central America*).

76. Quoted in Benjamin, *Don't Be Afraid*, 111.

77. This is the American Federation of Labor's organisation in Honduras, which had links to the US government, CIA and Honduran state. It sought to make 'Honduran organized labor as politically impotent as possible' (McClintock, *The American Connection*, 123).

78. The US Agency for International Development also operated programmes in El Salvador. For example, it created the Salvadoran Communal Union programme (UCS) which benefited rural small-holders (McClintock, *The American Connection*, 156). Thus, the US'

involvement in organising labour to prevent communism taking root in the unions occurred equally in Central America's other countries as in Honduras.

79. Williams and Walter, *Militarization and Demilitarization*, 89.

80. Acker, *Honduras*.

81. Prior to civil war onset, security forces in El Salvador had murdered 51 priests, forced 60 into exile and assaulted 300 clergymen. There were also 19 bombings, 43 shootings, and 30 robberies of churches. In 1976, fliers circulated urging Salvadorans to 'Be a Patriot! Kill a Priest!' See US Congress, *Religious Persecution*; Montgomery 'The Church'; Menéndez, *Voices from El Salvador*; Goodwin, *No Other Way Out*.

82. Morris, *Honduras: Caudillo Politics*, 82

83. Ruhl, 'Agrarian Structure', 55

84. Those who protested human rights abuses in Honduras did not blame the Honduran government; rather they held the United States and the Contras responsible. The US military bases and Contra refugees occupied large amounts of land, displacing peasants and introducing a non-domestic war to Honduran soil. Rather than polarising the country as occurred in El Salvador, these protests had a unifying effect in Honduras, stirring nationalist sentiments and creating common ground for the Left and Right (Acker, *Honduras*). This was clear in the protests between 1984 and 1986 in which more than 100,000 Hondurans took to the streets to protest against the Contra war and the American and Nicaraguan military presence (Binns, *United States in Honduras*; Benjamin, *Don't Be Afraid*).

85. Quoted in Benjamin, *Don't Be Afraid*, 137.

86. See Tilly, *Regimes and Repertoires*, on repertoires of mobilization.

87. Villalobos, 'Why is the FMLN Fighting?', 27.

88. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*. These networks provide bonds of trust, collective action, and within-group policing. They provide 'activist or investor' combatants, recruited by appealing to nonmaterial interests and norms, and willing to assume a higher level of risk for less-assured returns.

89. A prolonged war, in which the armed faction patiently waits for each peaceful group to autonomously realise the imperative of combining the political with a military strategy.

90. The revolutionaries were actively involved in population mobilisation and utilised it in the latter part of the 1970s.

91. Becerra, *Evolución Histórica de Honduras*, estimates the number of armed combatants to have been a few dozen. Schulz and Schulz, *United States*, estimate 200.

Despite this discrepancy, the guerrilla groups 'had never shown any signs of having mass support, much less the ability to coordinate their activities' (Schulz and Schulz, *United States*, 217).

92. Armstrong and Shenk, *El Salvador*, 142. See also, UN, *De la locura*.

93. Benjamin, *Don't Be Afraid*, 157–8.

94. Quoted in Menéndez, *Voices from El Salvador*, 62

95. Ibid, 50.

96. The Honduran military focused its operations on the border areas in order to decrease the flood of Salvadoran and Nicaraguan guerrillas seeking refuge in Honduran territory and to police the areas in dispute after the 1969 Salvadoran/Honduran War (Rudolph, *Honduras: Country Study*; Binns, *United States in Honduras*). Additionally, in 1980, the Honduran and Salvadoran armed forces began joint counter-insurgency operations and intelligence. Finally, the US military and Contras also militarised the Honduran/Nicaraguan border, blocking the transport of Sandinista arms.

97. In contrast, in El Salvador, many civilians 'kept a gun and some ammunition in their hut or farm' to aid insurgents. In cities, neighbourhood committees supplemented the insurgents' resources with arms, ammunition, food, water, medicine and logistical support (Menéndez, *Voices from El Salvador*).

98. These guerrilla groups were either eliminated or went into exile. Some of those in exile returned in the early 1990s to launch political parties. For example, the FMLH established the Morazanist Liberation Party.

99. Schulz and Schulz, *The United States*, 215.

100. It is beyond the scope of this article to extend the analysis to the present. However, for an excellent review of the contemporary landscape in Honduras, see Ruhl, 'Honduras Unravels'.

101. These scholars focus on relative deprivation, inequality, poverty, and land distribution as driving violence. Representative of this approach are Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*; Huntington, *Political Order*; Paige, *Agrarian Revolution*; Muller and Seligson, 'Inequality and Insurgency'; and Russett, 'Inequality and Instability'.

102. These include grievances arising from the denial of political participation and cultural self-determination. See Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition* who emphasise ethno-nationalist policies as engendering armed movements; and Burton, *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, who highlights the denial of basic human needs (identity, recognition, role/participation, and psychological security) as the propeller of violence.

103. Fearon and Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency' and Collier and Hoeffler, 'Greed and Grievance', find political dictatorship, income inequality and discriminatory ethnic polices ('grievances') uncorrelated with the probability of civil war. They conclude that 'what is critical is not whether people actually have reason to commit violence, but what enables them to carry it out in particular circumstances [...] feasibility is a rare phenomenon' (Collier quoted in Sherman, 'Economics of War', 28). Combined, these circumstances weaken the state's policing capacity and confer rebels access to recruits, a sanctuary, and materiel and financial resources: the requisites of insurgent viability. The circumstances include rough terrain, cross-border sanctuaries, lootable natural resources, poverty and large populations.

104. For the mechanism-view of politics, see Tilly, 'Mechanisms in Political Science'.

105. Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*; Francisco, 'Coercion and Protest'.

106. Wickham-Crowley Guerillas and Revolution in Latin America, 228.

107. Calculated from *Honduras: The Facts Speak for Themselves*.

108. Poe and Tate, 'Repression of Human Rights', 854 coined this term. It refers to the grievances, which result from the denial of freedoms from arbitrary arrest, torture and death. Also emphasising personal integrity grievances are Goodwin, *No Other Way Out*; Lichbach, 'Deterrence or Escalation'; Gurr and Moore, 'Ethnopolitical Rebellion'; and Mason, *Caught in the Crossfire*.

109. This does not imply correlation between income inequality and conflict. Fearon and Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency' Collier and Hoeffler, 'Greed and Grievance', and the cases of El Salvador and Honduras undermine this correlation empirically. However, there may exist an indirect effect of income concentration on war in that the smaller the economic elite, and the more homogenous their interests, the greater the challenge for the state in generating durable multi-class support for reform.

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Appendix A: Comparison of variables predicting civil war onset

Explanation	Honduras	El Salvador	Nicaragua	Guatemala	Costa Rica
Low GDP, 1974 (Penn World Tables)	1.168	1.835	2.427	1.835	2.598
% of the Country that is Mountainous (Fearon & Laitin, 2003)	53%	10.3%	9.3%	42%	22.2%
Population Size*	2422	3230	1895	4799	1590
Lootable Natural Resources	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lack of Democracy (Polity Score)	−1	0	−8	3	10
Ethnic Heterogeneity (Ethnic Fractionalisation Index)	.162	.166	.179	.644	.071
Plural Society	90%	89%	76%	56%	87%
Inequality (Land Gini Coefficient) in 1974 (Muller & Seligson, 1987)	.78	.82	.80	.82	.82
Inequality (Landless Score) (Brockett, 1992)	32	36	27	32	20
Economic Growth, 1965–1978 (Penn World Tables)	2.19%	2.15%	2.38%	2.31%	2.66%

*Population measured in thousands.