

ABSTRACT

Authoritarianism and the Catholic Church in Latin America

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This research examines the relationship between the Catholic Church and the military regimes in Latin America in the latter half of the twentieth century. Although prevailing theories explain church behavior regarding authoritarianism in reference to Protestant competition, I argue that church opposition is best explained by institutional arrangements in two ways. First, whether the church opposes authoritarianism is contingent on the degree of institutional autonomy the church possesses. Secondly, the strength of the opposition depends upon the presence of structural carriers, which are institutions connecting the church to society. The cases of Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay are examined through a historical institutionalist lens to test these hypotheses. Findings from these historical case studies indicate that both institutional autonomy and structural carriers are necessary for opposition. Ultimately, this study sheds light on the question of why religious institutions operate in varying ways in similar political contexts. It is also a contribution to the “path dependent model,” which posits that the history of institutional arrangements serves as a strong influence on contemporary institutional behavior.

Authoritarianism and the Catholic Church in Latin America

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APDH	Permanent Assembly for Human Rights
CEA	Argentinean Episcopal Conference
CEB	Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (Ecclesial Base Communities)
CELAM	Conferencia Episcopal Latinoamérica (Latin American Episcopal Conference)
CONAR	Comité Nacional de Ayuda a Refugiados (National Committee for Aid to Refugees)
COPACHI	The Ecumenical Committee of Cooperation for Peace in Chile
DESAL	Latin American Center for Research and Social Action
DINA	Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (Directorate of National Intelligence)
FRAP	Frente Acción Popular (Popular Action Front)
HRO	Human Rights Organization
ICHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
MAPU	Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria (Movement of Unitary Popular Action)
MEDH	The Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights
MSTM	Movement of the Priests for the Third World
PAN	Partido Autonomista Nacional
PDC	Partido Democrático Cristiano (Christian Democratic Party)
SERPAJ	Servicio, Paz, y Justicia (Service, Peace, and Justice)
UFDC	Unión Federal Democrática Cristiana
UP	Unidad Popular (The Popular Unity)

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*For my parents
For all they have made me to be,*

*And for Joseph
For all we are and will be.*

CHAPTER ONE

The Politics and Religion Nexus

The point is that what is too easily dismissed as ‘context’ may in fact be absolutely crucial to understanding important social processes. Too often, contemporary social science simply drops out a huge range of crucial factors and processes, either because our methods and theories make it difficult to incorporate them, or because they simply lead us not to see them in the first place.

–Paul Pierson 2004, 169

Within the field of political science, the influence of religion on the political sphere has been a frequently overlooked subject due to the expectation that religious influence would decline and perhaps eventually even disappear with the modernization of nation-states and with the replacement of superstition with reason and science. Religion, however, continues to be a powerful source of influence.¹ Unexpected events of the 1970s and 1980s, such as the Islamic revolution in Iran, the Solidarity movement in Poland, and the emergence of Protestant fundamentalism as a political force in the United States all serve as examples of religion, ‘going public’ and confirm religion’s potentially significant effect within the political sphere (Casanova 1994, 3). Religion is influential in the arena of international politics in several ways, such as through the shaping of decisions of policymakers, and by providing a base of legitimacy from which governments can be supported or opposed (Fox 2001, 59). In general, religious institutions “are vital changing structures that project ideas and resources, thus shaping the contexts in which everyday experience is lived. They provide members with elements of identity, material services, and links to a larger universe of moral

¹For more on the theory of secularization and the staying power of religion see Berger 1999, Johnston and Sampon 1994, Casanova 1994, and Haynes 1993.

significance that undergird perceptions, commitment, and action” (Levine and Mainwaring 1989, 205). Such institutions occasionally have far-reaching consequences on the political sphere. This research is primarily concerned with why religious institutions support or oppose authoritarian regimes.

In the quest to understand the political implications of religious institutions, it is important first to recognize that religious actors, even those from the same tradition professing similar beliefs, often exhibit quite disparate behavior.² While religion can have powerful political consequences for international politics, its influence seems to be a double-edged sword that can thwart or buttress violence and authoritarianism. As Daniel Philpott observes, “Religion devastates not only New York skyscrapers but also authoritarian regimes” (2007, 505). Within the literature on the complex and multi-faceted interaction between religion and politics little research addresses why religious actors and institutions undertake seemingly contradictory political actions.

Latin America provides an insightful array of contexts within which to look for answers to the question of why similar religious groups occasionally take distinctive political stances. The Catholic Church is a dominant religious institution in Latin America and historically had a closely intertwined relationship with politics.³ Throughout the 1970s and 1980s most countries within Latin America fell under the control of authoritarian governments, which had little respect for the rule of law or for human rights. Although these repressive military regimes in many countries were very similar, the Catholic Church’s response to these governments varied widely. Within Latin America the Catholic Churches in Chile, Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador, and

²For more on this topic see Appleby 2000 and Philpott 2007.

³For a thorough history of church and state in Latin America, see Mecham 1966 or Dussel 1981.

Nicaragua actively opposed authoritarianism, while in many other countries, such as Argentina, Paraguay, and Guatemala, the church remained silent or even defended the repression and the human rights abuses committed by authoritarian military regimes. As the dominant religious institution in Latin America, the Catholic Church has the potential during times of authoritarianism to serve as “a catalyst in the process of mobilization. It often avoids direct participation, but nevertheless protects the opposition by providing an organizational and institutional framework which is independent of all-encompassing state control” (Johnston and Figa 1988, 36). Indeed, the Catholic Church was essentially the only institution that had any sort of opportunity to defend human rights from the repression of the military regimes (Bethell 1998, 121).

Whether or not the church opposed authoritarianism had an important affect on Latin American politics during authoritarianism (Mainwaring and Wilde 1989, 2). Church activity during the military regimes, “kept alive a degree of political pluralism, including support for parties of the Left, if not directly, at least indirectly through the support for trade unions, or popular organizations, or research centres where members of radical parties could organize opposition to the military regimes” (Bethel 1998, 119). In some instances, church opposition to authoritarianism led to the creation and empowerment of human rights groups. In Chile, for example, the support provided by the Catholic Church was crucial for the formation and protection of human rights organizations. The church provided a “‘shield’ of symbolic and moral legitimacy” as well as “multilevel organizational networks” that allowed human rights organizations to form quickly and to challenge the Pinochet regime (Loveman 1998, 508). Ultimately, the Catholic Church played a crucial role in Chile’s return to democracy (Lowden 1996, 1).

In general, groups that opposed military regimes over issues of human rights served an important function. To summarize, these groups:

Became core organizations of civil society as they embodied the moral opposition to authoritarian rule. They carried out this role in a forceful manner as the public spheres reopened in the transition to democracy. These self-managed organizations, autonomous from the state and linked to institutional networks, played a central role in forwarding human-rights issues and demands. Moreover, they provided through their mobilization 'from below,' a model of organization and participation that was relatively novel in the context of the Southern Cone. Despite their marginalization in recent years, their example has provided a long-term counter-legacy favouring the creation of a democratic culture rooted in society and the establishment of mechanisms of pluralistic control of the state (Roniger and Sznajder 1999, 271).

However, the Catholic Church's attempts to combat authoritarianism did not occur throughout all of Latin America. In contrast to what happened in Chile, human rights organizations in Argentina were weakened and "severely limited due to the lack of support from the Catholic Church" (Fruhling 1988, 161). Groups advocating for the protection of human rights and for a return to democracy in Argentina lacked the Catholic support, resources, and protection from direct persecution that the Chilean organizations had, which in turn severely limited their effectiveness (Loveman 1998, 511). As Lowden notes, "be it a question of lack of will, or resources, or the sheer immensity of the problem, the Church as an effective force of moral opposition to authoritarianism and repression has had a mixed record" (Lowden 1996, 19). While studies have shown how the Catholic Church can play an important role in opposition to authoritarianism, most particularly through the promotion of human rights, little research looks at why it chooses to do so in some cases but not in others.

Most of the literature that examines the role of the Catholic Church during the military regimes of the 1970s and 1980s in Latin America takes the form of case studies

that examine the church in one or two countries.⁴ Case studies such as these provide rich historical detail describing the diversity of church responses to authoritarianism, yet few studies systematically compare multiple cases in order to explain what caused differing responses. Ultimately, while many studies propose particular causes of individual church actions, few of these hypotheses are tested outside of singular cases, so the degree of wider explanatory power is unknown. This project seeks to explain the variety in religious responses to authoritarianism in Latin America through a comparison of three case studies.

Among the possible causes given for opposition to authoritarianism, the most common assumption is that progressive Catholicism leads to opposition. The term “progressive” is used as an umbrella term in order to denote not just the adherence to precepts of liberation theology (although this is a part of progressivism), but also to convey a wider and more general meaning. Mainwaring and Wilde describe progressivism in the Latin American Catholic Church as being defined by three primary characteristics: “an emphasis on the small, local religious groups known as ecclesial base communities (CEBs), an adherence to liberation theology, and the belief that the Church must assume a political responsibility to promote social justice” (Mainwaring and Wilde 1989, 5). Progressivism will be further delineated in the next chapter; for now it is important to note the strong assumption in the literature of a link between Catholic progressivism and opposition to authoritarianism. Daniel Philpott argues that “those who came to oppose authoritarian regimes most vigorously were those where the new liberal democratic thinking became most deeply lodged” (2007, 511). Even Anthony Gill, who

⁴See Lowden 1996; Mainwaring and Wilde 1989; Mignone 1988; Bouvier 1983; Smith 1982; Fleet and Smith 1997; Burdick 1995.

argues that religious competition was at the root of opposition to authoritarianism, says that competition for adherents caused the church to become more progressive and change its stance regarding the poor; accordingly, “This position, if it was to have any degree of credibility, eventually led the bishops to disassociate themselves from the political policies that hurt the parishioners they most needed to win back. Under the dictatorial rule of General Pinochet, this meant outright conflict” (Gill 1998, 136). In Gill as well as in much of the other literature on opposition to authoritarianism, progressivism is generally assumed to be the direct motivating force behind opposition.

Although there is a strong assumption within the literature that progressivism in the Catholic Church led to opposition to authoritarianism, there is vast disagreement about what led to the rise of progressive Catholicism in the first place. One commonly posited explanation for progressivism is the internal reforms made at the Second Vatican Council. The council led to reforms within the Catholic Church that placed a new emphasis on lay organizations, and has been hailed as a key turning point where the church opened itself up to a more progressive theology (Mainwaring 1986; Sigmund 1990; Levine 1992). There are however, two problems with this explanation. The first is that the “emphasis on the impact of Vatican II fails to explain variation in progressive Catholicism’s emergence in Latin America” (MacKin 2003, 501). Many churches, such as those in Argentina and Colombia, remained nearly uniformly conservative despite the reforms. The second problem with the Vatican II account is that it cannot explain why certain national episcopacies in Latin America (such as those of Chile and Brazil) were implementing progressive reforms even before Vatican II (Bruneau 1974, 1982; Smith 1982; Mainwaring 1986; Stewart-Gambino 1992). In certain countries “Vatican II did

more to ratify and perhaps accelerate change than to give it impetus” (MacKin 2003, 501). Given these reasons, explanations for the rise of progressivism within the Catholic Church that rely on Vatican II are insufficient.

Other commonly posited causes of opposition include external factors, which “are movements and ideas that emerge independent of (or hostile to) the church” such as Protestantism, communism, modernism, or repressive authoritarianism (MacKin 2003, 500). A first set of factors that scholars focus on is the role of repression in galvanizing the churches’ progressivism and eventual opposition (Berryman 1984; Mainwaring and Wilde 1989). These authors argue that the extreme repression carried out by some state regimes spurred the church into supporting human rights and democratization, and hence, into opposition. Mainwaring and Wilde state that “When committed Catholics were imprisoned, tortured, and even killed, bishops in a significant number of cases then denounced the state, setting off a spiral of greater repression against the church, followed by new Church denunciations of authoritarianism” (1989, 13). In a similar manner to the previous critique, this approach cannot explain why certain national episcopacies were taking progressive stances even before the onset of repressive regimes. Neither can this account explain why in some countries where Catholic priests faced persecution, such as Argentina, there was not a similar outcry against the military regime.

The second external factor put forth as leading to opposition to authoritarianism is the presence of competition from Protestant churches (Gill 1994, 1998; Cleary and Stewart-Gambino 1992). Gill’s hypothesis (referred to above), is perhaps the most sweeping and bold model put forth because he attempts to explain the rise of progressivism—and hence opposition to authoritarianism—throughout Latin American

with a mono-causal argument. Gill proposes an economic theory of church-state relations that stands on two assumptions. The first is that the state wants to “minimize the costs of rule;” the second is that the church wants to retain and gain parishioners (Gill 1998, 187). From this foundation Gill posits that in most cases the church and the state can be expected to work together, and that if conflict begins, it will most likely be initiated by the state. What then accounts for the Chilean Church’s opposition to the Pinochet regime? From this perspective, the causal factor that led the Chilean Catholic hierarchy to speak out against the military repression and eventually oppose the military regime itself was the existence of Protestant competition. In short, Gill argues that in areas where Protestant competition existed, such as Chile, the church adopted progressivism and hence took a stance that was supportive of the lower classes; it opposed repressive regimes in order to maintain its credibility (and hence its parishioners) among the lower class. On the other hand, there was a much smaller percentage of Protestants in Argentina, and this lack of religious competition led to apathy within the Catholic hierarchy regarding the masses and to cooperation with the military. According to Gill, in countries where religious competition existed, the Catholic Church opposed military regimes; but in states where Protestantism provided little threat to the Catholic Church, the church was not motivated to side with the poor and oppressed and hence to oppose authoritarianism.

Gill provides a valuable example of how a theory may be tested (and not just posited) by using the comparative case study method. There are, however, several reasons to examine Gill’s arguments regarding the explanatory power of Protestant competition more closely. Perhaps the most important reason is that the chronology of

events is unclear. It is difficult to determine whether progressivism actually followed Protestant growth, as Gill claims, in the given timeline. As MacKin shows in a case study on Mexico, progressivism within a Catholic diocese in Mexico actually preceded a rise in Protestantism. MacKin concludes that Protestantism played “little or no role” in the particular bishop’s radicalization; rather, the bishop’s progressivism “facilitated the growth of non-Catholic churches” (MacKin 2003, 499). This research suggests that it could have been possible that in Chile progressivism preceded an increase in Protestantism.

Another concern regarding the Chilean case study is the fact that the Catholic Church did not support the socialist candidate for President in 1970. If the Chilean Catholic Church became progressive and opposed authoritarianism primarily because it was concerned with legitimating itself in the eyes of the poor due to Protestant competition and with retaining lower class parishioners, it is reasonable to conclude that the church would have supported Salvador Allende, the socialist candidate for president, in the presidential elections of 1970. Throughout the 1960s, however, the church supported not the leftist party, which had the large majority of the lower classes’ support,⁵ but the centrist party, the Christian Democrats. Gill also calls attention to the role of the relationship between the church and the state, but it is unclear whether church-state separation leads to Protestant competition, and hence opposition to authoritarianism, or if it is Protestant competition that leads to church-state separation. The overall vagueness of the historical chronology leads to doubts about whether Protestant competition is the central causal mechanism in these cases.

⁵Of the working class, 43.9% supported Allende in the 1970 election; only 23.4% of the working class supported Tomic, the candidate of the Christian Democratic Party in the 1970 election (Smith 1982, 132).

Although Gill's model demonstrates correlation between Protestant competition and progressive Catholicism, it does not necessarily indicate causation (MacKin 2003, 510). Moreover, Gill's model does not show consistent correlation between Protestant competition and opposition to authoritarianism. For example, although Gill classifies the Guatemalan Church as 'pro-authoritarian' the Protestant population (6.3%) was much higher than in several countries classified as 'anti-authoritarian' such as El Salvador, Panama, and Nicaragua. On the other hand, Ecuador, which is classified as anti-authoritarian, had a Protestant population of 2.9%, smaller than several of the 'pro-authoritarian' cases like Honduras and Bolivia (Gill 1998, 107). Although Protestant competition may help spur a church to become more progressive, Gill's own numbers suggest that it is not a sufficient cause (as in the case of Guatemala) or a necessary factor (as in the case of Ecuador). Protestant competition may have prompted some Catholics to turn towards progressivism, but this factor appears to be only part of the answer to the question of why certain Latin American Catholic Churches opposed authoritarianism while others did not.

A further critique of Gill's study is proffered by Daniel Philpott, who offers an alternative explanation for opposition to authoritarianism that emphasizes church and state relations as well as religious norms. Philpott asserts that Gill underestimates the role of ideology and overestimates the role of Protestant competition. The assumption that the church believed that opposing authoritarianism would help it to retain poor parishioners is especially questionable because throughout Latin America there were many cases "where both the poor and Protestant churches support[ed] authoritarian governments, and even more where both [were] apolitical" (Philpott 2007, 513). In

Chile, for example, another scholar summarizes Pentecostal reaction to the military coup as follows:

Many prominent Pentecostal pastors made public statements in support of the military. Later, in December 1974, several thousand Pentecostals enthusiastically welcomed General Pinochet who participated in the inaugural ceremony of their recently completed immense “Protestant cathedral,” Jotabeche, in Santiago. This was just two days after 2,500 Protestant pastors and laity (predominantly Pentecostals) had expressed their unconditional public support for the military government (Smith 1998, 36).

Philpott also notes that the factor of political theology can explain cases such as Guatemala, which Gill terms an outlier because Protestant competition existed, but the church took a pro-authoritarian stance. Philpott explains that the church in Guatemala was pro-authoritarian largely due to the conservative stance of a powerful cardinal, and when the cardinal was replaced by a progressive cardinal, the church’s stance shifted.

Philpott claims that there are two primary factors that shape how religious actors perceive and respond to political violence and democratization. The first factor is differentiation, or the “degree of autonomy between religious bodies and states in their basic authority” (Philpott 2007, 505). High differentiation exists when the institutions of the church and of the state are kept separate, such as in the United States, whereas in a condition of low differentiation the institutions of the church and the state would be linked or even overlap. Differentiation can also take either a consensual or a conflictual form. In a consensual relationship between church and state, “both parties are satisfied with the status quo;” but in a conflictual situation one or both parties are desirous to change the relationship between the church and the state (Philpott 2007, 507). Philpott theorizes that differentiation may allow the church the autonomy to challenge the legitimacy of regimes and therefore, “to influence politics more powerfully—and

democratically, through persuasion, protest, and appeals to legitimacy” (Philpott 2004, 41). Moreover, churches that had a long tradition of autonomy from the state in its finances, appointments, and doctrine, were more likely to preserve that autonomy during authoritarian periods (Philpott 2004, 42).

A second factor Philpott uses to explain why religious actors behave differently is political theology, or “a set of propositions about politics that people hold in their minds, share and develop through language and discourse, and use to persuade and motivate” (Philpott 2007, 509). Philpott hypothesizes that democratic reform and transition is more likely to take place when churches adopt a political theology that places importance on “human rights, religious freedom, democracy, and economic development.” The combination of high differentiation with progressive political theology leads to religious leaders and laypeople who reject “a quietist stance that demands blanket obedience” to a state or to a temporal authority (Philpott 2007, 510). Philpott usually refers to these two variables as if they are independent of one another; he posits that political theology, differentiation, and other influences all individually affect religious actors’ type of political activity.⁶

Philpott notes that there is a relationship between the two factors of differentiation and political theology in that where there is low differentiation political ideology will be more integrationist, conservative, and generally subservient to the state. Conversely, in cases where there is a progressive political ideology, differentiation between the church and the state tends to be high. Philpott explains:

Differentiation is the structural space that empowers liberal democratic political theology. Integrationism, by contrast, denies religious bodies the distance to oppose authoritarian regimes. When it is conflictual, they are

⁶See Figure 1 on page 509 for a diagram of Philpott’s argument.

effectively suppressed; when it is consensual, they often enjoy financial and legal privileges that make them unwilling to oppose the arrangement (2007, 510).

This suggests that the institutional relationship between the church and the state will influence the church's interests and its ideological norms and that these two factors, in turn, affect the political positions the church takes. Although Philpott notes that there is a link between his two variables, the nature of the relationship between them is underdeveloped. Additionally, how the existence of differentiation between church and state and a progressive political theology within the church come about is left unexplored.

Although progressivism appears to be correlated with opposition to authoritarianism, the general focus on progressivism as an explanation for opposition to authoritarianism within the literature assumes what Ivan Vallier calls the "Belief-Motivational Model," in which social phenomena are explained through observation of the way that religious beliefs and values lead to individual motivations (Vallier 1970a, 160). This model tends to ignore the interdependency between "religious structures and a society's total system of social control, power structures, and integrative base" (1970a, 161). Hence, norms are not unimportant, but focus should be given to the institutional arrangements that shape norms as well as interests.

In *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, Scott Appleby also notes the importance of the institutional structure between the church and the state. Although Appleby claims that the source of religious violence and conversely, opposition to violence, are both rooted in large part in religious norms and theological arguments advanced by religious leaders, he points out that "external or structural-environmental conditions dictate the range of choices available to religious leaders" (2000, 283). Although the political attitudes of

religious leaders matter in shaping their actions, basic structural factors will influence the attitudes themselves. Motivation is contingent on beliefs as well as on interests, which are shaped by the structural relationship between the church and the state.

While internal reform (such as Vatican II) and external factors (such as repression and competition) may have provided an “initial impetus” to the church to become more progressive and oppose authoritarianism (Mainwaring and Wilde 1989, 10), none of these factors fully explain the cross-national differences regarding opposition to authoritarianism that occurred. Philpott’s explanation of religious variance by degree of differentiation and political theology is compelling, yet untested at the cross-regional level. Mainwaring and Wilde conclude that the differences were due to the “differing contexts” the churches faced (1989, 12), but in order to assess this claim the varying contexts need to be fully explored and referenced to one another.

A fundamental yet frequently neglected part of the context in which churches develop norms and interests is the institutional relationship between the church and the state. This neglect is unfortunate because many scholars have noted the general importance of structural relations between church and state. As Casanova observes, “since the emergence of the modern state, the public character of any religion is primarily determined by the particular structural location of that religion between state and society” (1994, 9). More specifically, “the ways in which a church is involved with or connected to external systems of power and control significantly affect its adaptive modes and problem-solving styles, i.e., the way it handles threats, competition, and crises” (Vallier 1970b, 10). This suggests that the arrangement of institutions between the church, the state, and the larger society structure the sociopolitical choices of religious institutions.

Institutional arrangements between church and state appear to shape not only the interests of the church, as Gill shows, but also to influence the norms prevalent within a religious institution. As Philpott observed, progressive norms were stronger where the church was independent from the state. Although the presence or absence of Protestants, repression, and progressivism all are factors that help to explain the general context of opposition, the institutional relationship between the church and the state may prove to be an instructive place to begin understanding the variance in church behavior regarding authoritarianism.

Hypothesis

I hypothesize that if a national church has a historical tradition of autonomy from the state, then it is more likely to be willing to oppose authoritarianism. I do not intend to suggest that Protestant competition or repression or internal reforms do not matter. Rather, competition and internal reforms could very well have pushed the church to adopt progressive norms, and repression could have instigated the church to oppose the state. In order to understand why some of these factors successfully stimulated opposition, while in other countries they did not, I propose to look at the structure of church-state relations as providing the relevant context. I argue that religious institutions will be able to adapt and respond more easily when faced with competition and repression if separated from the state.⁷ Many factors are possible catalysts, but their varying strength depends on the history of church-state relations. Ultimately, my hypothesis is that whether the church had the freedom to adapt and respond to external factors, such as

⁷Many rational choice approaches to religion, including that employed by Gill, assume that the underlying relationship between church and state is a structural factor of importance. Yet its role is downplayed in the causal logic of Gill's study.

repression, Vatican II reforms, or Protestant competition, was highly contingent upon the degree of autonomy it possessed. Church autonomy from the state gave the church freedom to respond to new challenges. In other words, the seeds of Vatican II, competition, and repression grew differently in various national contexts because they were planted in different types of structural soil. I propose that understanding the relationship between the church and the state is fundamental to understanding the variety of responses to other stimulants, such as competition or reform.

My argument is that separation of church and state is necessary if the church is to oppose authoritarianism. Autonomy is not necessarily a sufficient cause—other factors may prohibit or aid in opposition—but autonomy is a necessary precondition. An autonomous church is defined as one having complete (or nearly complete) control over internal church affairs such as the appointment of bishops, whether to create a new diocese, religious teaching, etc. An autonomous church is also one that is independent of state subsidization, whether for its' social programs or clergy salaries. On the other hand, the established church is defined as a situation where the church is privileged and in some ways also regulated by the state. In the case of establishment the relationship between the church and state is usually a symbiotic one: the church is dependent on the state for financial support, and the state depends on the church to endow it with moral legitimacy. Furthermore, in this situation the state will have at least some control over internal church affairs.

In instances where the church became independent of the state, I expect to find that the church's interests and norms become distinctive from those of the state. More specifically, I expect that post separation progressive ideas will more readily take root

and grow than in states where the church remained established. Once the authoritarian regimes set forth on a program of systematic repression, the church's distinctive interests and norms provided the justification and the institutional freedom to oppose authoritarianism. Conversely, churches that remained established would retain more ties to the state and are expected to mirror the interests and the norms of the state and to take a subservient position to the state, regardless of who controls it at the time. To do otherwise may threaten their privileged position. In the case of the established church, I also expect to find that the church generally supports the state no matter the type of regime in power, unless the government turns against the church and threatens its privileges. Hence, I expect that established churches will accommodate authoritarian regimes not necessarily because of the nature of the regime as authoritarian per say, but simply because the established church tends to support the state regardless of particular administrations and policies.

Although I predict that church autonomy from the state will influence whether or not the church opposes an authoritarian regime, I do not assume that this factor is also responsible for the strength of the opposition. Rather, I hypothesize that the presence of "structural carriers," are necessary for a disestablished church to organize and allocate the resources necessary for robust opposition to authoritarianism. Structural carriers are church related institutions, such as Catholic unions, publications, and the Christian Democratic Parties, that linked the church with other secular components of society and spread the church's influence throughout society. These structural carriers helped lay the foundation for organizational strength of the church. Basically organizational strength, "concerns the number of capable leaders, committed members, useful communication

channels, and enterprise tools that can be coordinated to facilitate and sustain a social movement” (Smith 1991, 80). Without the structural carriers necessary for building the church’s societal influence and organizational strength, it seems unlikely that a church would be able to offer strong opposition to authoritarianism.

It is important to specify exactly what is meant by opposition to authoritarianism. There are three basic categories of opposition. The first type is moral criticism, which is when the church hierarchy makes sustained, public denunciations of the government or calls for a transition to democracy. A second type of opposition is through symbolic actions such as church organization of or support for hunger strikes. The last way the church can oppose authoritarianism is through organizational and material support for opposing groups and for victims of the military regimes, usually provided through human rights organizations. Although opposition to authoritarianism existed among many levels of the clergy, the current unit of analysis is the national episcopacy. While actions taken by individual clergy members may have been important for delegitimizing authoritarianism, this research question is concerned primarily with religion *as an institution* “choosing” to oppose authoritarianism.

Theoretical Approach

The central hypothesis posited here is that the variance of church reaction to authoritarianism can be best explained in reference to the social structure of institutional arrangements between the church and the state, which is created through time. My argument, then, is essentially historical-structuralist in nature in that it emphasizes the “enduring consequences that often stem from the emergence of particular institutional arrangements” (Pierson 2004, 11). Historical institutionalism is an approach to research

that analyzes the development of organizational and institutional configurations through time; it emphasizes attention to critical junctures and long-term processes in order to understand the “overarching contexts and interacting processes” that shape political outcomes (Pierson and Skocpol 2002, 693). Another basic assumption of the historical institutionalist approach is that “organizationally embodied routines play a crucial role in allocating resources and structuring the incentives, options, and constraints faced by political participants” (Pierson and Skocpol 2002, 706). One of the advantages of using this approach is that it allows one to trace transformations over time and to examine long-term causal processes. Pierson and Skocpol note that “When either structural causes or threshold effects are at work, analysts adopting a short time frame are likely to focus erroneously on the more idiosyncratic or precipitating factors that trigger outcomes” (2002, 703-704). Since institutional arrangements become deeply embedded over time, in order to understand variety in institutional arrangements it is necessary “to reframe the topic as one of institutional development rather than institutional choice” (Pierson 2004, 15). Essentially, detailed examinations of processes are needed in order to evaluate claims about causal mechanisms (Pierson and Skocpol 2002, 699).

A central assumption of this approach is that history matters; particular events can result in self-reinforcing patterns of behavior which influence options and choices in the long-term. This emphasis on the necessity of history to provide context for understanding modern events is primarily what distinguishes historical institutionalism from the rational choice approach (Thelen 1999, 370). In order to understand the institutional arrangements between church and state that existed during authoritarianism, the historical development of these institutions must be considered. As Sewell notes,

“structure is the cumulative outcome of past events” (2005, 199). Historical events “reshape history, imparting an unforeseen direction to social development and altering the nature of the causal nexus in which social interactions take place” (Sewell 2005, 227). The theoretical foundation of this research project is the assumption that the historical context of relationships between the church and the state is critical for understanding proceeding institutional arrangements and the way in which these arrangements influenced the willingness and the ability of the hierarchy to oppose authoritarianism. In order to understand the relationship between the church and the authoritarian state, the historical events that shaped the development of the institutions of church and state must be analyzed. This research attempts to contribute to the debate on variation in church response to authoritarianism through an analysis of how the historical context of church-state development affected the modern relationship between the church and the state. Thus, this research is primarily concerned with the structural preconditions necessary for particular outcomes.

To clarify, the assumption in this study is that events create and shape social structure, which in turn can foster particular norms and interests. I do not suggest or assume that institutions are fully determinative of particular actions. Rather, the relationship between institutions on the one hand and interests and norms on the other is reflexive: they influence each other. While structure and interests and norms are mutually co-constitutive, historical events that shape particular social structures are a productive and practical initial place to begin looking for answers about differing institutional arrangements.

In order to analyze the different types of connections that exist between the church and society and to assess the development of institutional relations between the church and state through time, I employ Ivan Vallier's typology of five subsequent stages of church-state relations in Latin America. In essence, "Between stages one and five a church system moves from an original position of deep fusion and multiple interdependencies with society to a position of specialized involvement at the cultural and the associational levels" (1970b, 27-28). Vallier's model of church-state development presents a dynamic model that allows one to look at how church-state relations transition and evolve over time. Analyzing the variety of institutional arrangements between church and state can shed light on the puzzle of how national churches came to have distinct interests, norms, and capabilities.

In the first stage, structural fusion, the church is constitutionally guaranteed political support and special privileges by the state. The church is established as the national church and hence is protected from competition. This stage can be recognized by the fact that the church "holds an established legal position in society, draws financial support from the public treasury, consorts with the upper class, and defines the role of the clergy as one of diffuse, public authority." In this situation Vallier hypothesizes that "church leaders will attempt to meet competition and threats by defending the political status quo" (1970b, 11). This model of church-state relations generally prevailed throughout Latin America until the early twentieth century.

The second stage, the political church, is when the church moves from a position of guaranteed privilege to one where its privileges are contested and fought for in the political arena. This stage occurs when the church is threatened with the removal of its

privileges and possibly even disestablishment. In Latin America, this frequently occurred when liberal political forces gained power in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In response to this threat the church will typically create a Catholic political party in an attempt to protect its interests, or it will throw its support behind an established political party it believes to be capable of defending its interests. The inevitable result is that the church is drawn into partisan conflict (Vallier 1970b, 16).

If institutional separation between church and state occurs, then the church moves into the third stage of development, which is called the insulative stage. Vallier describes how after the church loses its state-guaranteed established privileges and protection, then the church stops relying on “formal, legal arrangements as guarantees of ecclesiastical privilege or relying on open coalitions with organized political groups” and instead begins to “fortify its internal bases” by creating clerically supervised programs (1970b, 19). Similarly, Dussel notes that separation of church and state “slowly produced the freedom of conscience that signifies for the Church the discovery and creation of new ways and means by which to do its work in a pluralistic society” (Dussel 1981, 82). In this stage there is a “two-level change: on one level the institutional church withdraws from organized politics and promulgates a strong a-political norm of religious action; on another level the church undertakes to resocialize the laity, to guard them from secular forces, and to mobilize them into specialized missionary groups” (1970b, 19). If the insulative stage is successful, meaning the church “consolidates itself organizationally and motivationally,” then the church elites will be able to use a well-structured hierarchy to link the church in specialized ways to the rest of society (1970b, 29).

The fourth stage is called the social development stage. The move from stage three to stage four, “is the beginning of re-entry into society and the main instrument for regaining visibility and legitimation is service programs that are aimed at relieving social problems or helping better the living conditions of marginal, dispossessed people” (Vallier 1970b, 20). Social problems and the creation of development and economic programs to meet these needs gain central importance for the church in this stage. Some clergy will also assume a progressive political position, often resulting in division and conflict with conservative church elites.

In the final stage, integrated autonomy, the church is “autonomous from legal privileges, eschews political alignments, and focuses its efforts to influence people around pastoral activities, specialized programs of religious education, and the participation of the laity in decision-making processes” (Vallier 1970b, 12). At this stage the church’s “main center of gravity is found at two levels: in the local church which is focused on meeting the spiritual-social needs of the laity and, second, at the cultural level, involving the development of ethical norms and symbolic frameworks that tie Catholic teachings to the values of a modern society” (1970b, 22). The bishops’ primary function at this stage is to serve as a socio-ethical spokesman; in this role the bishop is a “propagator of values and ethical principles that bear a positive relevance to all men as human beings. Instead of promoting confessional interests or performing rituals during community events, he articulates norms and ideas that stimulate all men to value freedom, preserve liberty, promote the community’s well being, and augment the principles of social justice” (1970a, 87). In the last stage the church’s socio-ethical position does have political implications, but the political dimension at this stage “does

not identify a particular party or ideological group as the single mechanism of change or as the major conservator of tradition” (1970a, 87). In essence, the foundations of the Christian belief system are drawn upon to give meaning and universal status to certain structural societal arrangements, but the clergy do not endorse particular prescriptions for meeting the general values. Particularly “Significant here is the degree to which it [the church] gains autonomy from central political arenas while at the same time providing religious support for the general values of development, change, and collective achievement” (1970a, 85). In a stage of integrated autonomy, the church is autonomous from the political sphere, but integrated into society through numerous structural carriers. The church exerts a moral influence, but not a political one, over society.

As the stages of institutional arrangements progress in Vallier’s model of church-state development, the church goes through two primary changes that I argue influence opposition to authoritarianism. The first big change is from an established church to a church that is autonomous. In other words, an autonomous church no longer relies on the state for its financial well-being or other privileges, and is able to control its internal affairs. The second important change occurs after disestablishment, and this is the creation of church sponsored institutions that connect the institutional church to the broader society. To reach the final stages of development, the church must not only become autonomous from the state but must find alternative modes of influence in society. Without the connection to the state provided by the legal establishment of the church, it must find other carriers of influence if its powerful position in society is to be retained.

My central hypothesis is that if a national church reaches the last stage of development, it will be able and willing to oppose authoritarianism. Disestablishment allows the autonomous space for interests and norms to develop independently of the state. A church that reaches the last state of development not only has autonomy from the state, it also has structural carriers which give the church the societal influence and resources necessary for opposition. On the other hand, if a church continues to be established, and hence in the first or second stages of development, I expect to find that the church's interests and norms align with those of the state and hence, the church would be unwilling to oppose authoritarianism. Lastly, if a national church is in the middle stage of insulation, when it is no longer established but has not yet been able to develop other modes of influence in society, I expect to find partial and perhaps weak opposition.

Research Strategy

In order to test this hypothesis, I plan to use qualitative case studies. I have chosen a qualitative approach because it is generally more conducive for the investigation of questions about historically or culturally defined social phenomena (Ragin 1987, vii). As discussed above, there is no lack of detailed information about the cases involved that can be drawn on for research purposes. I will also be using primary sources such as statements from bishops. Most of my findings, however, are synthesized from secondary publications. As opposed to researching a singular case study, the comparison of case studies allows for the analysis of which factors are important across a number of cases, therefore increasing the explanatory power of certain factors. Yet unlike large-n cases I will only be looking at three case studies, so as not to lose the advantages that attention to specificity and complexity can bring. A possible disadvantage of the case study approach

identified by Charles Ragin is that certain social phenomena are limited. Thankfully, because of the wave of democracies that occurred around the world in the 1980s and 1990s there are a large number of case studies to draw on.⁸

The three case studies presented here come from the Southern Cone in Latin America and have many historical and cultural similarities. Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay share, “a basic history of Spanish colonization, of Catholicism, of political independence in the early nineteenth century, of mass European immigration (more prominent in Argentina and Uruguay than in Chile since the late nineteenth century), and a basic modeling of society according to Western ideas of development” (Roniger and Sznajder 1999, 8). They are all three relatively affluent, with homogenous populations, mostly European, and comparatively high levels of social development (Gonzalez 1995, 138). The three countries also share a “dual cultural dynamic.” One prominent cultural aspect is “respect for hierarchy, authority, and order;” yet another defining cultural element is the presence of Western ideas of the enlightenment and nation-building adopted by many Latin American elites (Roniger and Sznajder 1999, 8). In all of the cases the Catholic Church was each state’s dominant religious institution.

In the three countries presented as case studies, all experienced authoritarianism roughly at the same time – between the 1970s and the 1980s. Authoritarianism took a similar form in each country; the military regimes were committed to national security doctrines that expressed the “military’s historical mission and duty, as ultimate protector of the ‘patria’ from external and internal threats, to eradicate ‘subversive’ elements from society” (Loveman 1998, 486). All three of the military governments “systematically violated human rights within the framework of political repression (Roniger and Sznajder

⁸For more on this ‘third wave’ of democracies, see Huntington 1991 and Philpott 2004.

1999, 18). The military regimes also repressed organizations, such as unions and political parties, and individuals associated with the left. The repression did differ in some ways. In Argentina there were more deaths and disappearances than in Chile and Uruguay, but in Chile and Uruguay there were far more extra-judicial prisoners (Loveman 1998, 519). While many factors throughout the countries are the same, Catholic opposition to authoritarianism varied in each country.

Not all cases are clearly categorized as complicity with authoritarianism or strong opposition to authoritarianism. Opposition in Chile to the Pinochet regime was strong and enduring, while in Argentina the church refused to criticize the military regime. While examples of clear cut cases exist (such as Chile and Argentina), opposition is best understood as a continuum. In other countries such as Uruguay the church initially opposed authoritarianism but was later silent, while in some countries such as Guatemala and Brazil there were initial delays but eventually the church did oppose the regime. I have chosen three countries that represent different positions on this continuum. Chile is a clear case of strong opposition to authoritarianism; in Uruguay the church initially protested the authoritarian regime but was later silent, and in Argentina the church supported and justified the authoritarian regime.

Structure of the Dissertation

The following chapter presents a brief general overview of historical church-state relations in Latin America with special reference to events that shaped religio-ecclesiastical institutional arrangements throughout Latin America. The first section examines the fusion of church and state in the colonial era, followed by the anti-clerical movements and church response to threats to its privileges. The chapter then presents a

historical account of Vatican II and the subsequent impacts this had in the Latin American context. The final section of the chapter gives a brief overview of the Catholic Church and authoritarianism throughout the world.

The third chapter uses the theoretical perspective of institutional relationships developed in the first chapter to assess the different roles the Catholic Church has played in Chile's history. The majority of the chapter traces the five stages of institutional arrangements between the church and state in Chile and focuses on key events such as the reduction of church privileges in the latter nineteenth century, the peaceful separation of church and state in 1925, the creation of structural carriers in the mid-twentieth century, and finally, the search for political neutrality and autonomy in the years immediately preceding the Pinochet regime. The chapter concludes with a summary of the role the church played in resisting authoritarianism and restoring democracy in Chile.

The second case study analyzes the case of church and state in Argentina. When the military regime came to power in Argentina the church was still established as the official church and was dependent upon the state for its financing. Hence, the church had a powerful incentive to support the military regime and to remain quiet regarding its abuses of human rights. The chapter analyzes the numerous ways that the church and state were intertwined in Argentina and pays special attention to the historical practice of accommodation to the state by the church. In keeping with the theoretical orientation of the study, this chapter contends that the reasons for the church's action can be best understood by placing these events into the context of institutional arrangements.

The last case study examines the case of Uruguay. Unlike Chile, the relations between the church and state in Uruguay failed to evolve to a state of integrated

autonomy. Rather, the church in Uruguay achieved separation but failed to develop structural carriers connecting it to Uruguayan society. This kept the church in a state of insulation and weakened the church's ability to oppose the military regime. Although the church in Uruguay initially attempted to protest the military regime's takeover in 1973, it was easily silenced by the government and the burgeoning movement was unable to withstand this repression. Furthermore, the lack of structural carriers meant that the church was not able to help those suffering from the military regime.

The sixth chapter provides an analysis of the preceding case studies. Through the use of the theoretical perspective employed, it becomes apparent that at the time the military regimes took over in Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay, each country was at a different institutional stage of its relationship between the church and state. Argentina was at the second stage of church-state relations (political dependence), Uruguay was at the third stage (insulation), and Chile was at the last stage (integrated autonomy). Argentina's dependence on the state gave the church a strong incentive to defer to the military regime, but Chile's autonomy from the state and strong connections with society in general allowed it to play a substantial role in opposition to the Pinochet regime. Existing between these examples is Uruguay, which had autonomy from the state but weak connections with the broader society, and hence was unable to oppose authoritarianism as effectively as did the Chilean Catholic Church. Ultimately both autonomy and structural carriers appear to be necessary for opposition to take place. The chapter also examines the conditions that influenced two key events for the Catholic Church in each country, the separation of church and state and the formation of structural carriers. In the conclusion I discuss the implications of this finding for studies on religion

and politics, as well as studies of institutional arrangement. The potential for this finding to 'carry' is also assessed; in essence, its relevance for other areas of the world where church opposition to authoritarianism has, or could, occur.

CHAPTER TWO

Historical Church and State Relations in Latin America

At one level, of course, all social scientists agree that ‘history matters.’ The existing conditions that influence current social outcomes came into being at some point in the past. Those earlier processes are relevant to a full understanding of contemporary social events.

–Paul Pierson 2004, 45

The Roman Catholic Church, which has over one billion adherents, has a long tradition of engagement with world affairs. In the past, popes raised armies, formed political alliances, and anointed kings. Church authorities sought to “wield the two swords of spiritual and temporal authority to perpetuate its vision of a united Christendom” (Hertzke 2009, 49). Although this arrangement was ended in the west with the Protestant Reformation, the idea that church and state should be melded together remained influential in Latin America until the twentieth century. With around 44 percent of all the world’s Catholics, Latin America contains the world’s largest regional Catholic population, making Catholicism an integral part of Latin American society (Hertzke 2009, 57). This chapter begins with a brief look at the structural composition of the global Catholic Church, and then provides a broad overview of the history of the Catholic Church and its political role in Latin America. The fusion of church and state in the colonial era as well as the patronage disputes upon independence are analyzed. This is followed by a section on the growth of progressivism and Vatican II and the subsequent affect this had on Latin American. Although the particular histories of each case study country will be examined in detail in later chapters, a general understanding of key events in the history of church and state in Latin America provides a basis from

which to understand the subtle differences of developments within particular countries. The chapter concludes with an overview of the relationship between global Catholicism and authoritarianism.

Composition of the Roman Catholic Church

The Catholic Church is a vast organization that encompasses an “array of national or regional Episcopal conferences, religious orders, relief and development organizations, charities, hospitals, and educational associations enmeshed in politics and government” (Hertzke 2009, 51). The church is arranged hierarchically, and there are several levels of authority that exist within Catholicism. The pope is the head and spiritual leader of the church. The church is divided up into dioceses, which are each administered by a bishop. The dioceses are then further divided into parishes, which contain at least one priest. Although there is uniformity of liturgy and dogma, the church is divided along national lines. In each country there is a National Conference of Bishops, which is comprised of all the bishops in the country and which coordinate church policy within the nation. These national conferences came into being in Latin America in the mid-twentieth century and were formally established at Vatican II.

The church maintains remnants of state sovereignty, such as an elaborate diplomatic structure that sends and receives ambassadors, and has observer status at the United Nations. No other religious institution in the modern world “functions as both a church and a political organization that exchanges diplomatic representatives and claims total recognition as an independent member of the community of nations” (Murphy 1974, 542). A particularly important characteristic of the Catholic Church is its transnational base. This aspect means that the papacy can provide spiritual and material support for

particular groups, even those that may be situated in authoritarian or totalitarian countries (Linz and Stepan 1996, 260-261). This gives the church a unique ability to promote pluralism under repressive conditions. Although the potential and the organization of the Catholic Church is similar throughout the world, Catholic political behavior varies widely (Hertzke 2009, 48).

Colonial Christendom

For centuries after the middle ages came to a close in Europe, the Catholic Church continued to cling to its vision of *Respublica Christiania*, the idea that government and the church should work hand in hand for the good of society (Philpott 2004, 33). Such a vision maintained a strong hold in the countries of Spain and Portugal until recent times. In 1494 Pope Alexander VI gave the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies the “right and duty of propagating the Catholic faith” (Vanden and Prevost 2009, 135). At this time the Spanish crown viewed itself as elected by God to “be the instrument of salvation of the world” (Dussel 1981, 38). Hence, the church and state worked “hand-in-hand for the governance of a Christian kingdom” (Tombs 2002, 17). Predictably, this relationship between church and state was extended in Latin America through the Spanish and Portuguese conquests and colonization in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Throughout this era, the state used the Roman Catholic Church to endow its endeavors with legitimacy. Clergy seeking converts arrived along with the conquistadores and provided ideological justifications for the conquest and hierarchical social structures that resulted (Vanden and Prevost 2009, 131). As Gustafson notes, “In an era when almost all conquistadores and colonialists were Catholics, the crown wanted religion to help legitimize empire building” (Gustafson 1992, 21). The church willingly complied and

emphasized the rewards people would receive in the hereafter, rather than the pleasures of the current world, thereby reducing “the pressure on the political authorities to provide a good life in the here and now” (Vanden and Prevost 2009, 132). The church also propagated the belief that all people were born in sin, but that through God’s grace some were better suited to rule than others. Hence, politics should elevate only a few particular people to power so that they could do God’s will; this “natural law” provided a justification for monarchy and elite rule. There were, of course, occasional clergy who protested the cruel treatment of the Indians, such as the famous Dominican priest Bartolomé de las Casas in the early sixteenth century. This priest gave up his land, freed his slaves, and for fifty-two years fought for the rights of the Indians of Latin America (Herring 1961, 174-175). The dominant church stance, however, was to support and defend the conquistadores and the rule they imposed throughout Latin America.

In return for the church’s support, it was given many privileges, such as land, wealth, and the freedom to develop the educational system. The king enforced the collection of tithes and supported the church financially. This arrangement is described as ‘Christendom’ because the church and state were closely integrated and ‘colonial’ because the church was dependent on Spain for its power (Tombs 2002, 18). The Spanish and Portuguese monarchs set up a system of patronage under which the rulers had full administrative control over the church. Indicative of this control is the fact that the Latin American church was forbidden from direct communication with Rome in 1524 (Dussel 1981, 39). All communication between the church in Latin America and Rome went through the crown. This successfully cut off any opportunity for the Catholic

Church to develop institutional independence and kept the church firmly in the control of the secular rulers.

The close institutional relationship between the church and political authorities in the colonial era came about through several decrees – called bulls – issued by the pope. As previously mentioned, in 1494 Pope Alexander VI, “conceded to the Catholic Kings the dominion of the Indies and the exclusive privilege of Christianizing the natives” (Mecham 1966, 12-13). In 1501 the pope further intertwined the Catholic Church with the Spanish crown by giving the king the “access to all the tithes and rents collected by the church to compensate for the expenditures incurred by the crown during the conquests.” In return, the crown was expected to defend the church and provide it with monetary support and appropriations (Bouvier 1983, 3). In 1503 Queen Isabella decreed that the Indians of Latin America should not become slaves but, in order to convert them to Catholicism, they should work on the estates of the Spanish settlers (Tombs 2002, 7). These decrees led to a close relationship between the church and elites in Latin America. For the most part, Catholicism and its leaders tended to support the interests of the elites in exchange for converts and financial assistance.

The crown’s power over the church was advanced with the pronouncement of Julius II in 1508 that granted the Spanish crown the right of patronage over the church in Latin America. The essence of patronage, or the *patronato real*, was the power to appoint church personnel and to make decisions regarding the building of churches and monasteries in Latin America. Due to the distance between Spain and the viceroyalties of Latin America, the king did not personally make clerical appointments but rather delegated the duty to governors of the provinces (Mecham 1966, 23). The Spanish king’s

right to patronage “served to strengthen the bonds between Spain and the church in America and to insure the mutual interdependence of the church and the crown. The church continued to rely on the crown for protection, grants, privileges, and exemption from taxes. The crown, in turn, relied on the church to implant Spanish civilization in the new world and to imbue a colonial spirit of obedience to the Spanish monarchy” (Bouvier 1983, 3). The patronage system in Latin America was a unique institutional arrangement in that, “Never before or since did a sovereign with the consent of the pope so completely control the Catholic Church within his dominions” (Mecham 1966, 36). By the time the independence movements began, church and state were intricately intertwined.

Independence and the Problem of Patronage

The cozy institutional relationship between church and state in colonial times was disturbed by the independence movements in Latin America that occurred in the early nineteenth century. Religion was not a cause of the revolutions, but clergy were involved (Mecham 1966, 43). Church leaders were divided regarding independence, usually according to position. Lower clergy, who were creole or mestizo, tended to support the revolution, (such as Fathers José Maria Morelos and Miguel Hidalgo in Mexico), while higher clergy, who were primarily Spanish-born and were appointed by the patronage system, remained loyal to the Spanish crown. When it became evident that the colonialists would win their independence, many clergy prudently began to sympathize with the revolutionary cause. Those who remained loyal to the crown fled the continent. Hence, the independent movements resulted in vast disorganization and “enormous and irretrievable losses, especially of its [the church’s] professors of theology, religious communities, seminaries, churches and ecclesiastical projects in general” (Dussel 1981,

87). Throughout the independence movements, however, among the general public there remained “manifested undiminished allegiance to the Catholic Church” (Mecham 1966, 60).

After the wars for independence the new republics were “profoundly Catholic” in nature and chose to continue the pre-existing policies regarding church and state relations (Dussel 1981, 91). The new governments maintained Catholicism as the national religion, and in many countries clergy were intimately involved in the drafting of the new constitutions. In 1822 Pope Pius VII declared his neutrality regarding independence, in effect breaking the religio-political alliance with Spain. The new leaders of the Latin American countries assumed they would inherit the right of patronage since they were now sovereign. Yet the papacy argued that the church should reclaim the *patronato real* in Latin America since the monarchy no longer ruled. The pope claimed that giving the right of patronage to Spain had been a special concession, and therefore was not necessarily connected to sovereignty. The new states, however, regarded patronage as “an inherent, secular right, inseparable from sovereignty” (Mecham 1966, 49). Hence, they refused to concede their power to present bishops to Rome for appointment.

In 1827 Pope Leo XII deigned to recognize six candidates for vacant bishoprics presented by the government of Colombia; the act was condemned by Ferdinand VII as “giving aid and comfort to the rebels” (Mecham 1966, 82). In response, Bolivar announced that the government of Gran Colombia assumed the right of patronage. Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846) first recognized the Latin American republics as independent in 1835, but did not officially recognize the republics as having the right of patronage.

The conflict over patronage between the papacy and the new independent state remained unresolved for several decades.

Just as the Spanish government had used the church to legitimize its conquest of the Americas, so the new nations wanted the church to legitimize their sovereignty and authority. Hence, in most cases the state usurped the role played by the Spanish government in relation to the church, and virtually every country's constitution established the Catholic Church as the official state church. Although the church was able to retain most of its privileges, the conflict between the papacy and the state over patronage disorganized and weakened the church throughout Latin America. With no agreement about who should appoint clergy, dioceses were left vacant. In most countries, however, there eventually came to be a *modus vivendi* regarding patronage. Usually the state and the papacy would approve clergy so that vacancies could be filled, yet the formal relationship between them remained undefined and a source of tension until the twentieth century.

Institutional Secularization

The word secularization is generally associated with a decline of religion. There are, however, three different categories of secularization. The first is the differentiation of institutions; the second is a decline in individual participation in institutional religion, and the last refers to the decline of religious belief among individuals. The first, differentiation, also known as institutional secularization, occurs when religious institutions become distinguished from other societal institutions. Institutional secularization of church and state varied greatly throughout Latin America. Although in a few places secularization was associated with being anti-religious, in most cases

secularization was primarily anti-clerical in that it was against the church's political powers, but not against religion per se. Hence, the process of secularization in some countries attempted to repress the church and make it a weaker institution, (such as Mexico), but in other cases the primary goal of secularization was to create autonomy for the church and state, with each working within its own sphere.

Until the 1850s, most governments in Latin America can more accurately be labeled conservative than liberal; thus they tended to be relatively supportive of the church (Dussel 1981, 91). The stance of most members of the church hierarchy in the nineteenth century is characterized as follows:

The church's priority was usually to protect its institutional interests rather than present a prophetic voice on the suffering of the disadvantaged. Although the old Christendom ideal had broken down, it continued to remain the ideal to which the vast majority within the church clung to and hoped to see restored. This failure of imagination prevented the church from finding a better way forward to confront the future (Tombs 2002, 41).

Most church authorities interpreted any attempt to alter the status quo as being dangerous to religion; hence, the church frequently entered into alliances with other conservative elements, such as landholders, who also sought preservation of current arrangements (Mecham 1966, 417). In addition to patronage, the issues that preoccupied the church during this time regarded control of education, marriage, the cemeteries, and the register, as well as issues of church property and toleration of religious sects.

Despite Pope Pius's condemnation of separation of church and state in the infamous *Syllabus of Errors* in 1864, the later part of the nineteenth century marks the beginning of institutional secularization in Latin America. This process of institutional secularization in Latin America turned repressive towards the church in some countries (such as

Colombia in 1861 and Mexico in 1917), yet remained peaceful in others (such as Uruguay in 1917 and Chile in 1925). The process usually was confined primarily to elites and began when liberal parties opposing the church's privileges gained power. These governments frequently removed particular privileges from the church, such as control over cemeteries, marriage, and the birth registry, and in some countries these actions culminated in the complete institutional separation of church and state.

Liberal political groups, influenced by the French and other foreigners, called for a complete break with tradition. They tended to be primarily from the middle class and perceived the church as an institution that impeded modern progress. When the liberals gained power in many countries in the latter half of the nineteenth century, they frequently attempted to remove the church's privileges and/or disestablish the church in order to reduce its' social power. In most cases, "The rise in anticlerical feeling was not necessarily an objection to Catholicism itself, but rather to the political and economic power of the corporate church" (Bouvier 1983, 11). Liberal elites generally thought the church should be confined to a strictly religious sphere and deprived of the privileges that allowed it to exercise political power (Mecham 1966, 417). Hence, in the latter part of the mid-nineteenth century, anti-clerical laws were passed throughout Latin America.

The church responded to threats to its privileges from liberals either through reinforcing its alliance with conservatives or, alternatively, through attempting to create a new political party to defend its interests. Although these measures were at times successful in delaying separation, in most countries in Latin America the church and state were separated in the early twentieth century. Although with separation came the loss of its state privileges, in many situations separation actually conferred certain advantages on

the church. The church could now appoint its own clergy without reference to the state and could make its own decisions regarding expansion. Dussel notes that “until the church was separated from the State, the governments of the nineteenth century were able to prevent anything in the Church deemed undesirable and thus could impede any significant reform of the Church itself” (1981, 81). For churches that remained tied to the state, what was deemed ‘desirable’ largely depended on what the state thought to be best.

Generally, the relationship between political authorities and religious authorities was clarified throughout Latin America in three distinct ways in the early part of the twentieth century. In some countries, such as Mexico and several Central American republics, church and state were separated but the state continued to exercise its “oppressive supervision” over the church; Mecham’s term for this arrangement is the “burdened church” (Mecham 1966, 418). On the other hand, complete separation (or close to it), was established in Cuba, Panama, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Chile. In these countries church and state were separated in a way that allowed each institution to retain its autonomy. In the third case, church and state were not separated, and Catholicism retained certain privileges. This did not necessarily mean that the church and state had good relations; in some situations the anti-clericals did not desire separation but rather preferred to dominate the church through maintaining close ties with it. National churches that remained established through the first part of the twentieth century were Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, and Venezuela. In these cases the extent of state control and of church privileges varied greatly (Mecham 1966, 420).

The Rise of Progressivism

The encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, issued in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), marked the inception of a new and more progressive Catholic attitude on social matters. Although the church had occasionally commented on social issues and had advocated for charity, it had “not attempted to systematize its teaching in a serious way... *Rerum Novarum* provided the first clear principles for the church to move beyond this and address social justice” (Tombs 2002, 44-45). The encyclical critiqued both liberalism and socialism and supported private property while noting that it should be used responsibly. It also called for Catholics to apply Christian values to the problems of the industrial age. Unlimited capitalism, child labor, inequality, and revolution were all social issues, and ones that the church needed to address. Hence, the encyclical called for the rights of working men to be protected and advocated for the formation of Catholic trade unions (Sigmund 2003, 65). Forty years later (in 1931), Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) issued a new encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno* (After Forty Years), which reviewed and advanced the social issues previously examined in *Rerum Novarum*. In this encyclical the pope elaborated on the economic exploitation and other deficiencies of liberal capitalism; he further noted that sin could be potentially collective. Hence, the encyclical called for not only individual actions, but also for social structures to be reformed.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century the Catholic Church had generally assumed that it had a strong influence among the peasants and workers of Latin America. The processes of modernization and urbanization, however, brought new sources of influence, and the Catholic Church increasingly found itself “unsuccessfully competing for the allegiance of the people against secular unions, left-wing political

groups, African-derived spiritualist cults, and newly arrived Protestant groups” (Smith 1991, 14). In response to these challenges, many churches undertook a strategy to revive Catholicism as a dominant influence within Latin American society. A main part of this program was the importation of European models of Catholic Action. Catholic Action was an institutional creation that began in Europe in response to the ideas of the Catholic lay philosopher Jacques Maritain as well as in response to concerns about the influence of socialism among factory workers (Smith 1991, 80). The goal of Catholic Action was to train laity in Catholic values and thus to create educated lay leaders who would participate in the church and help “Christianize society through their commitment to Catholic principles in public life” (Mainwaring and Scully 2003, 35). Catholic Action was not only concerned with orthodoxy but also with orthopraxy. Members were taught to “see and describe the situation in which they worked or lived, to judge the situation in light of Christian principles (such as justice and charity), and then to act realistically to correct or enhance their milieu” (Cleary 1985, 4). The goal was to “promote the moral values of traditional Catholicism in the wider and more secular society” (Tombs 2002, 59). Catholic Action was an inclusive program that organized people according to age and sex, regardless of class. It gained momentum in Latin American in the 1930s, and many specialized Catholic Action groups were created including the Young Catholic Factory Workers (*Juventud Operaria Católica*), Young Catholic University Students (*Juventud Universitaria Católica*), and the Young Catholic Farmers (*Juventud Agraria Católica*). Catholic Action played a major role in the life of the Catholic Church in Latin America and in many countries it successfully “nurtured a whole generation of Catholic

leaders who would eventually rise to positions of national, political, and intellectual leadership” (Smith 1991, 81).

Catholic Action groups helped to lay the groundwork for another important development, the rise of the Christian Democratic Parties (PDCs) in Latin America. In the late 1940s and onwards a number of Christian Democratic parties inspired by the progressive Catholic encyclicals began to form in Latin America. Although the parties were created by lay Catholics who were committed to carrying Catholic social teachings into politics, clerics often played an important role by “disseminating the Church’s social doctrine, which indirectly provided the inspiration for creating Christian Democratic parties” (Mainwaring and Scully 2003, 37). Yet the Catholic Church was not formally tied to the new parties.

A defining characteristic of these parties was the emphasis on promoting a third way between communism and capitalism. Christian Democrats criticized communism for undermining individual liberties and rights, for the assumption that classes have inevitably conflicting interests, and for placing the state over the community. On the other hand, they critiqued capitalism for “unbridled individualism and for generating social inequalities” (Mainwaring and Scully 2003, 42-42). Although there were disagreements about how this third way should be defined, the parties generally agreed that the common good could be best achieved when there was a role for the state as well as for civil society and autonomous organizations. Among the more successful of these parties were those in Venezuela, Chile, and later in Costa Rica. Christian Democratic parties formed in other countries as well but remained small and lacked significance (Bethel 1998, 28).

In this same time period the Cuban revolution occurred. In 1959 Fidel Castro marched into Havana, Cuba and took power. This event shocked the Latin American Catholic Church because a communist government, one that was avowedly atheist, had taken over a Catholic nation. Moreover, Castro's success inspired other such movements throughout Latin America in the 1960s. For many Catholics the Cuban revolution confirmed that "the status quo was unacceptable, that some kind of significant changes were necessary if the Church was to survive and prosper in Latin America" (Smith 1991, 91). Essentially it encouraged the church to expand its commitment to social reforms and economic development, especially through the programs of the Christian Democratic parties. This event legitimized and strengthened many Christian Democratic parties, which offered "a middle way between revolution and reaction" (Mainwaring and Scully 2003, 36). The Cuban Revolution also turned the attention of the Latin American church to the poor. Many church clergy attempted to fight the roots of communism by helping the impoverished and exploited. Hence, "pastoral workers all over Latin America left their positions in wealthy parishes and elite schools and went to work among the masses. This shift had a major impact on the social and political perspectives of these pastoral workers" (Smith 1991, 93).

The Cuban Revolution also turned the attention of the Vatican on Latin America. After Castro came to power the Catholic Church in Cuba was severely repressed; in an effort to prevent this from happening to other national churches the pope called on Latin American bishops to deepen the faith of their people. He also appealed to North American and European Catholic Churches to send missionaries to Latin America. Thousands of priests, sisters, and brothers responded to his call (Smith 1991, 93). These

churches sent personnel resources as well as financial resources to the Latin American churches. In general, the Cuban Revolution strengthened the conviction that social reform was needed, and increased the church's attention to the problems of the poor; these in turn helped to strengthen the Christian Democratic Parties of Latin America.

An important advancement for the Catholic Church throughout Latin America in this time period was the formation of national councils as well as of the Latin American Bishops Conference (CELAM), established in 1955 by Bishops Hélder Câmara of Brazil and Manuel Larraín of Chile. Until 1955 the Catholic Church in Latin America was organized around the diocese. Each diocese was formally separate and had a bishop which communicated directly with Rome. The effects of this structural arrangement were "institutional fragmentation, organizational isolation, and uncoordinated policy" (Smith 1991, 81). In 1952 the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops was organized, and other Latin American countries quickly followed their example. This structural change allowed the bishops to jointly address problems and coordinate their policies "more comprehensively, systematically, and effectively" (Smith 1991, 82).

This organizational advancement led to the creation of the first meeting of the Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM). The meeting was held in 1955 in Rio de Janeiro with the purpose of bringing back people into the Catholic faith and renewing the mission of the church. The main threat to Catholicism was deemed to be "atheistic communism," and much emphasis was put on the importance of developing alternatives to communism. Hence, the conference marked the creation of Christian trade unions, cooperatives, literacy campaigns, and peasants' and women's organizations. CELAM

eventually “became a major organizational facilitator of the emergence and growth of liberation theology” (Smith 1991, 83).

Vatican II

The Second Vatican Council, which took place in four fall sessions throughout 1962 – 1965, considered the issues of the nature of revelation, liturgy, and ecumenism; the primary goal of the council, however, was to discuss how the church should relate and respond to the challenges of the modern world. Vatican II placed a new emphasis on the temporal world, and the council concluded that efforts to further justice, economic equality, and religious and political freedom were an important part of preaching the gospel. The conference, which was attended by over 700 Latin American bishops, led to a new openness within the Catholic Church to issues of social justice. The resulting documents “emphasized renewing the internal spiritual life of the church by bringing it closer to the people and expanding its role of service to the secular world” (Smith 1986, 156). Indeed, “the documents of Vatican II stressed the need for the church to analyze structural and global causes of injustice” (Bouvier 1983, 17). One of the most significant events of the Catholic Church in the modern age, Vatican II became the inspiration for a new understanding of the relationship between the church and the world.

Perhaps one of the most important developments at Vatican II was the conditional acceptance of ideas, such as freedom of religion, democracy, and disestablishment, once considered to be anathema to the Catholic Church. One of the most important Council documents was the Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*). Its central thesis is encapsulated in the following excerpt from the declaration:

“This Vatican Synod declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom... The Synod further declares that the right to religious

freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person, as this dignity is known through the revealed Word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed. Thus it is to become a civil right” (quoted in Weigel 1992, 72).

This declaration significantly affected the church’s approach to politics and more specifically, to political institutional arrangements. It not only defended freedom of religion, but it called on states to defend the freedom as part of their legal systems. More importantly, this freedom of religion was rooted in the idea that all individuals deserved dignity. “*Dignitatis Humanae* made the Church politically ‘disinterested’ in the sense of partisan politics: the Church was not merely another faction in society, but was rather the *defensor hominis*, the defender of the rights of man” (Weigel 1992, 73).

In the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), the Council declared its approval of democracy, stating: “It is in full accord with human nature that juridical-political structures should with ever better success and without any discrimination, afford all citizens the chance to participate freely and actively in establishing the constitutional bases of a political community, governing the state, determining the scope and purpose of various institutions, and choosing leaders” (quoted in Sigmund 2003, 69). Moreover, the Council also accepted disestablishment, noting that, “The Church and the political community in their own fields are autonomous and independent from each other.” It then elaborated on the idea of institutional autonomy: “She [the church] has no fiercer desire than that in pursuit of the welfare of all she may be able to develop herself freely under any kind of government which grants recognition to the basic rights of person and family, to the demands of the common good and to the free exercise of her own mission” (quoted in Gremillion 1976, 277). With such a strong

declaration the church put itself strongly on the side of autonomy and against establishment.

In the 1963 encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris*, written during the Council, Pope John XXIII declared the church's first endorsement of human rights (Philpott 2004, 35). Another ideological change announced in this encyclical was the tentative acceptance of socialism. The letter declared that the church would henceforth "make a clear distinction between false philosophical teachings... and movements which have a direct bearing on either economic and social questions, or cultural matters or on the organization of the state, even if these movements owe their origin and tenets to these false doctrines" (quoted in Weigel 1992, 69). Hence, the pope suggested that socialism as a political movement could be distinguished from its original ideological underpinnings and therefore could possibly evolve and become a form that was acceptable for Catholics.

Throughout the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church promised to take on a role within society in which it would defend the values of justice, human rights, and freedom; the documents that were produced at the Council urged all Catholics to share the "joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are in any way afflicted" (Smith 1982, 4). Vatican II was the "most important single influence to modernize and galvanize the Latin American Church" (Sigmund 1990, 23). In opening itself up to the modern world, the church, especially in Latin America, simply "could not escape the social conflicts which were shaking the world, nor the influence of various philosophical and political currents" (Lowy 1996, 45).

Subsequently, Vatican II led to an "explosion of activity" in the Catholic Church in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s (Lowy 1996, 44). The church's sense that

their doctrine and practice needed to be formed around the modern conditions of underdevelopment and injustice so prevalent in the region had been growing throughout the twentieth century; this sense was galvanized by the Cuban Revolution and then confirmed by the Catholic Church at Vatican II. The Second Vatican Council also helped to accelerate pastoral changes in particular areas of Latin America. Its endorsement of working for social justice, decentralized church structures, and a larger role for the laity in its ministries, reinforced initiatives of the bishops already engaged in these areas (Fleet and Smith 1997, 51).

The importance of social issues to the Latin American Church was expanded at CELAM II in Medellín, Colombia in 1968. The conference at Medellín began with a ‘Sociography of the Continent,’ which exposed the harsh reality of life and rampant institutionalized injustices suffered by the people in Latin America. This radical opening address shows the immediate effect of Vatican II in directing the course of the conference as one that would address how theology should apply to the temporal concerns of the Latin American people. The Medellín Documents on peace and justice stated that “Justice, and therefore also peace are won through the dynamic action of the awakening and organization of the popular sectors of society which are capable of pressing action by public officials who are often impotent in the carrying out of their social projects without popular support” (Bouvier 1983, 18). For the very first time in Catholic history, resolutions were adopted that “not only denounced existing structures as based on injustice, the violation of the fundamental rights of the people and ‘institutionalized violence,’ but also asserted the Church’s solidarity with the people’s aspiration to ‘liberation from all servitude’” (Lowy 1996, 44). For the most part the clergy at the

conference at Medellín concluded that change was necessary, and that the decisions made at Vatican II called on the church to help work for social change on the side of the poor.

Ultimately, the Medellín assembly “produced a document unprecedented in its prophetic tone and content, in which the Bishops committed themselves to a leading role in changing the structures of oppression and injustice prevailing in the region” (Lehmann 1990, 117). Change could come about, they said, through evangelization and lay participation. Rather than simply protect the poor from oppression and poverty, a reactive position, the priests wanted to organize the poor into effective political actors (Wiarda and Mott 2003, 163). This resulted in a necessarily new and expanded definition of evangelization. Evangelization was no longer focused only on spiritual change; it also included working for earthly and physical virtues, such as justice or human rights. Furthermore, Medellín documents stated that under extreme circumstances even revolutionary insurrection was appropriate.

It was also at Medellín that Liberation Theology was first recognized and supported as an ideology in many ways distinct from former Catholic thought (Wiarda and Mott 2003, 163). Gustavo Gutierrez, the leading Latin American theologian of liberation, helped prepare and promote many drafts of documents used at the Medellín conference. One of the main tenets of Liberation Theology promulgated at this conference was the idea that the gospel needed to be relevant to the context people live in. This foundation led to the bishop’s condemnations of neo-colonialism, exploitation, and the violence inherent to capitalist systems (Jenkins 2002, 145). Medellín, then, officially marks the introduction and promotion of the theology of liberation in the Latin American Church (Lehmann 1990, 117). Both Vatican II and CELAM II helped to

reinforce the ideological shift towards the left that occurred in the hierarchies of particular countries throughout the middle of the twentieth century. They also further encouraged support for social programs that emphasized the need to reform structural causes of poverty and injustice.

Lastly, it was at Medellín that the Commission of Peace and Justice came into existence and became based in Rio de Janeiro. This institution would eventually play an important role in documenting and publishing human rights abuses in Brazil and “served as a precedent for similar initiatives in Chile and El Salvador a few years later” (Tombs 2002, 160). In conclusion, the final document of the Medellín conference was ultimately approved by the vast majority of bishops participating in it, effectively putting the church in Latin America on the road to change.

Progressivism and Conservatism

Throughout the twentieth century many Catholic Churches in Latin America exhibited increasing signs of progressivism. Vatican II and Medellín furthered the development of a progressive ideology distinct in many ways from traditional Catholic thought about the place of church in society. As noted in the first chapter, progressivism had a substantial affect on politics in Latin America and seems to be strongly correlated with opposition to authoritarianism, but in itself is not an adequate explanation for opposition. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize a general definition of this important ideology. There are three central components to Catholic progressivism: a commitment to work for social justice, an emphasis on the poor, and the promotion of Ecclesiastical Base Communities (CEBs).

The first characteristic of the progressive church is its commitment to social justice. This commitment is based on the idea that “salvation can be understood both individually and collectively;” hence, the “Christian faith requires a commitment to social justice and human rights, which in turn requires working to change the world” (Mainwaring and Wilde 1989, 7). Societal transformation was believed to be necessary for social justice and for at least a minimal equality for the poor. At the essence of this belief is the denial of the traditional dualist account of salvation. Dualism is the idea that heavenly matters are separate and distinct from earthly problems or joys (Lowy 1996, 34); previously, the church took this to mean that it should stay aloof of earthly affairs so that it could remain distinct and separate from society. Progressive Catholics came to believe that the goal of Christians should be to help reveal the kingdom of God not just in the hereafter but also while here on earth. The essence of the kingdom of God is liberation, which is not thought of as simply freedom from a spiritual fate, but it is freedom from the evils present on earth. In order to fight for heavenly and earthly freedom, progressives found it necessary to reject the dualism between the religious and the political, and between the spiritual and the material (Lowy 1996, 35-36).

The focus of progressivism is the poor; liberation theologians argued that “God has a particular love for the poor, and those who wish to follow him must exercise what the church has called ‘the preferential option for the poor’” (Sigmund 1990, 7). Brazilian Liberation theologian Leonardo Boff explained that Jesus:

Always begins concretely with the needy and poor. His message is truly universal because it starts from them. An evangelization that does not directly involve the poor, and confirm their hope in a new, different society, an evangelization that does not take up the cause of the poor, their struggles and their lives, loses its Christian density, and betrays the

historical Jesus, who was a poor person in this world, and who identified with the poor (Boff 1990, 77-78).

The way the Church could bring the kingdom of God to all people, and therefore become relevant, is through the active embrace of the “cause of the poor and their self-emancipation” (Lowy 1996, 45). This is what is known as the “Church’s preferential option for the poor.” Progressivism is deeply intertwined with political action that invokes calls for social reform because it is inspired by religious and ethical consideration of the poor.

The third component of progressivism is the Base Ecclesiastic Communities, or CEBs, which evolved from the idea that, “theology must be related directly to the Word of the Bible” (Sigmund 1990, 7). These groups were usually formed by clergy but led by laymen. The CEBs were an outcome of the recognition of the importance of the laity by the church. Indeed, the purpose of CEBs was to increase lay activity and to make the gospel relevant for the poor (Lehmann 1990, 142). Whether the activity was focused on prayer and Bible reading or political consciousness-raising was largely dependent on the individual CEB. This was done usually in two main ways: first, through the reading of the gospel and discussion about how people could apply that gospel to their lives, and secondly, through community projects. Projects would usually start at the local level, such as demanding better sewer systems or educational opportunities, but would often move to the national level, where people would rally in protest of the high cost of living, unemployment, lack of public transportation, etc. The CEBS functioned as base communities, which “could work toward the transformations of society and the church in practical ways at local and national level” (Tombs 2002, 158). Eventually, the CEBs helped to create “a grass-roots regeneration of the church in Latin America” (Tombs

2002, 165). Since the research in this project is primarily concerned with opposition to authoritarianism at the national episcopacy level, the work of individual CEBs will not be analyzed, but CEBs are important because they formed a connection between laity and clergy, and hence were a source of social influence for the Catholic Church.

Many clergy members, however, did not adopt progressivism. Conservatism, or the attempt to preserve the status quo, has a long history in Catholic tradition. When European powers settled the Thirty Years' War by establishing the system of sovereign states in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, Pope Innocent X reacted by declaring that settlement "null, void, invalid, iniquitous, unjust, damnable, reprobate, inane, empty of meaning and effect for all time" (quoted in Philpott 2004, 33). The Catholic authorities continued this enmity of the state (and by extension, democracy), into the nineteenth century. The Catholic Church adopted the state system on the condition that it was ruled by a sovereign that "upheld the church's authority and proclaimed and enforced the faith in its realm—in effect creating a local remnant of Christendom" (Philpott 2004, 34). When ideas regarding suffrage and human rights began to emerge in the eighteenth century, the church had a similar reactionary response. Pope Pius IX's Syllabus of Errors, released in 1864, not only condemned separation of church and state but also religious freedom and "progress, liberalism, and recent civilization" (quoted in Philpott 2004, 34). Traditionalists, or conservatives, within the church emphasized authority, unity, and conformity; they considered the church to be "a spiritual monarch that functions along hierarchical and paternalistic lines, from top to bottom" (Klaiber 1998, 15). The conservative commitment to preserving the status quo usually created a strong incentive to ally with the dominant elites (Mainwaring and Wilde 1989, 1). Hence,

conservatives often took an integralist position regarding the proper role of church and state. Conservatives responded to the rise of progressivism and Vatican II as “a grave threat to unity and a betrayal of the ancient purposes of the institution (Mainwaring and Wilde 1989, 2).

The Church and Authoritarianism Globally

Before Vatican II the Catholic Church played a very limited role in challenging authoritarianism. Perhaps one exception to this is the case of Mexico, where the Cristero rebellion rose up to protest against the anticlerical measures in the Constitution of 1917. Two of the leaders of the movement were priests, Father Vega and Father Pedroza. Yet this revolt was due more to the government’s measures repressing the church, and was not necessarily directed towards opposing general authoritarianism.

Since Vatican II, however, there have been multiple instances of the Catholic Church challenging the state. In analyzing the “third wave” of democratization that occurred between 1974 and 1990, Samuel Huntington noted that three quarters of the countries that made the transition were Catholic (Huntington 1991, 76). This wave began in Spain. In the 1960s the Spanish church moved from supporting the Franco regime to becoming a major source of opposition. In 1971 a joint assembly of priests and bishops led to the 1973 Episcopal declaration called *The Church and the Political Community*, in which the Spanish hierarchy declared its support for democracy and political pluralism. The church support for democratization in Spain and its calls for respect for human rights undercut the legitimacy of the Franco regime and aided in the peaceful transition to democracy (Lowden 1996, 14).

In Eastern Europe the church was influential in bringing down communist regimes that “sought to control Church governance and finances; suppress religious education and ban Catholic schools, presses, newspapers, and civic organizations; confiscate Church property; take control of Church hospitals, nursing homes, and orphanages; abolish monastic houses; and imprison or murder dissenting priests and prelates” (Philpott 2004, 38). Through the strategy of *Ostpolitik* the Vatican sought diplomatic dialogue with the communist regimes in order to protect the church. In Poland, particularly, the church was a symbol of the resistance to communism and supported the key opposition group: the trade union called Solidarity.

In a similar manner, Cardinal Jaime Sin played a vital role in the overthrow of the Marcos regime in the Philippines. Martial law was declared in the Philippines in 1972, and in 1974 the church became increasingly critical of human rights violations. Cardinal Sin’s declarations against the regime and his use of *Radio Veritas* “provided moral guidance and institutional shelter for the moderate opposition movement” (Lowden 1996, 16). The Cardinal also allowed for the use of church infrastructure by the opposition group NamFREL (National Citizens Movement for Free Elections), which was created by lay activist José Concepcion. Cardinal Sin was also influential in helping to maintain a nonviolent opposition to the regime. The church’s efforts culminated in huge protests that forced Marcos out of power in February 1986 (Philpott 2004, 40).

In several Central American countries such as Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, Catholic clergy and laity were deeply evolved in opposing repression. Archbishop Oscar Romero is possibly the most renowned Catholic martyr in Latin America. As the leader of the Salvadorian Church from 1977 to 1980 he threw the

support of the church unequivocally behind the poor and supported human rights. His efforts culminated in an emotive sermon where he called on army soldiers to disobey their officers' order to kill. The day after this sermon he was assassinated. Many laity as well as clergy even believed it to be their Christian duty to take up arms to fight for revolution (Mainwaring and Wilde 1989, 2). According to Camilo Torres, a Colombian priest who joined a leftist guerilla group until he was killed in 1966, "The revolution is not only permitted but is obligatory for Christians who must see in it the only effective and complete way to achieve love for all" (Jenkins 2002, 146).

The Catholic wave of democratization, "culminated a centuries-long rapprochement by which the Church and the democratic state each slowly came to tolerate the other in doctrine and practice...Once the Church did give its approval to toleration, however, it found itself free to become an agent of change in states, predominantly Catholic in population, where democratic toleration had not yet achieved preeminence" (Philpott 2004, 32-33). Moreover, many of these movements were supported by the Vatican. In Pope John Paul II's first encyclical in 1979 he supported human rights and identified the Catholic Church's role as defending freedom, "which is the condition and basis for the human person's true dignity" (quoted in Huntington 1991, 83). As Huntington noted, Pope John Paul II had a way of "showing up in full pontifical majesty at critical points in democratization processes," thus helping to legitimize and give impetus to the need for democracy (Huntington 1991, 83). Yet the Catholic Church did not uniformly transform in the twentieth century. Although the Catholic hierarchies of many Latin American countries played a role in the third wave of democracies there were also countries where the church complied with authoritarianism or was silent in the

face of authoritarianism. In Guatemala, Hungary, and Argentina, the church has seemingly refused to play a prophetic role in standing up for basic human rights. This, then, is the central issue this research project tackles. Despite of all the changes in the church's history regarding the issues of democracy, religious freedom, and human rights, the church hierarchy did not respond in similar ways to comparable authoritarian regimes that occurred in Latin America in the latter half of the twentieth century. The following case studies will examine three countries that all responded in distinct ways to authoritarianism in order to shed light on this issue.

CHAPTER THREE

The Catholic Church in Chile: Integrated Autonomy

On September 11, 1973, General Augusto Pinochet led a coup against the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende. Pinochet's rule in Chile lasted for seventeen years and in the most repressive period, the first four years, resulted in at least 4,000 deaths, 60,000 extra-judicial imprisonments, and 40,000 exiles (Loveman 1998, 519). During these seventeen years the Chilean Catholic Church provided Pinochet with a formidable opponent. The Chilean episcopacy publicly denounced the Pinochet regime and created several institutions for the purpose of protecting human rights that arranged safe exile for refugees and provided monetary, legal, and medical assistance to victims and their families; eventually these church-protected institutions became a "surrogate" political opposition to the regime (Loveman 1998, 515). Why did the Chilean Catholic Church take a strong, and at times perilous, oppositional stance to the Pinochet regime? In the previous chapters I posited that the key to explaining opposition lies in the church's relationship to society and in particular to the state. In cases where the church is autonomous from the state but connected to society through structural carriers I expect that the church will oppose authoritarianism. In order to understand the unique position the church held in Chilean society at the time of the coup, this chapter examines the history that produced this relationship. The majority of this chapter will trace the five stages of institutional arrangements between the church and state in Chilean history and will focus on key events such as the reduction of church privileges in the latter nineteenth century, the peaceful, legal separation of

church and state in 1925, the creation of structural carriers in the mid-twentieth century, and finally, the search for moral neutrality in the years immediately preceding the Pinochet regime. Understanding these stages helps to establish why the church was able and willing to oppose authoritarianism in the latter half of the twentieth century. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the role the church played in restoring democracy in Chile.

Stage One: Structural Fusion

In the first stage, structural fusion, the church is established as the national church and is hence constitutionally guaranteed political support and special privileges. Traditionally, the Catholic Church as an institution in Chile was “dependent on state concessions and subsidies,” and “aligned with landed elites whose wealth and power it defended” (Fleet and Smith 1997, 36). The initial constitution of Chile proclaimed Roman Catholicism to be the religion of the state. The Constitution of 1818 declared that the “protection, conservation, purity, and inviolability [of the Catholic Church] will be one of the duties of the chiefs of society” (quoted in Mecham 1966, 202). The constitution also asserted the state’s right of patronage, despite the pope’s refusal to recognize the new nation as sovereign, and provided for government paid salaries for the clergy. A law passed in 1823 further declared all other religions to be prohibited. This was followed by a more liberal constitution adopted in 1828, which allowed private worship by non-Catholics and declared that “no one could be persecuted or molested for his private opinions” (Mecham 1966, 206). Although public exercise of other religions was still prohibited, it was not strictly enforced and religious groups were generally tolerated (Mecham 1966, 207). The Chilean state lived under several different

constitutions throughout the 1820s, and the Catholic Church was given a privileged legal position in all of them.

The Constitution of 1833 was in force until 1925 and maintained the legal intertwining of church and state. In brief, the constitution declared that Catholicism was the official religion of Chile, that the public exercise of other religions was not allowed, and that part of the president's oath of office was to swear to observe and defend the Catholic faith. Regarding the issue of patronage, the constitution gave the president the power to nominate—with the approval of the Senate—archbishops, bishops, canons, and pre-bends of cathedrals and to exercise patronage regarding churches and benefices (Mecham 1966, 206). The 1833 Constitution also established a presidential system and a bicameral legislature with a winner-take-all list system (Scully 1995, 102-103).

In the 1850s the clerical-anticlerical cleavage in Chile became more pronounced due to a seemingly insignificant incident in which the firing of two canons resulted in a conflict between the archbishop and the Supreme Court (Mecham 1966, 210). In response, in 1857 Archbishop Valdivieso encouraged elite Catholic laymen to “coordinate efforts to defend the Church against the designs of those who sought to perpetuate state control over it. These moves constituted the first step toward formally creating a political party,” which would become the Conservative Party (Scully 1995, 103). In 1857 dissident members of the Liberal party abandoned President Montt and joined with the clerical conservative faction in an electoral alliance against Montt. This alliance, however, angered the members of the Liberal party that were anticlericals and resulted in the creation of a third party, the Radicals. Hence, between 1857 and 1861 “political opinion in Chile divided into three discrete political tendencies along the

clerical-anticlerical axis,” with the anticlericals represented by the Radicals, supporters of the church represented by the Conservatives, and the Liberals in a middle position. The multiparty system led to the strengthening of opposition parties and “led parties increasingly to form coalitions and alliances” (Scully 1995, 103-104).

In 1865 a law called the *Ley Interpretativa* passed in Congress, declaring that the ‘public exercise’ of non-Catholic faiths did not refer to religious services held indoors. Protestants were also allowed to establish schools (Mecham 1966, 207). Although the constitutional prohibition of the exercise of other faiths had never been wholly enforced, the hierarchy protested vigorously against the passage of this law. Although the law passed, Catholicism remained firmly structurally intertwined with the Chilean government. In 1857 the government declared that marriage between Catholics must be established by the church, that non-Catholics should also be married by a priest, and that marriage lasted until the death of one of the parties. This meant that the Catholic clergy maintained firm control of the registry and of the resources that control over marriage provided (Mecham 1966, 209-210).

Stage Two: Political Opposition

Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century the ‘theological questions’ of separation of church and state, civil marriage, and secularization of cemeteries became major issues in Chilean politics. In response to the potential removal of their privileges, in the 1860s the Catholic Church formed an official partnership with the Conservative Party of Chile. Hence, church funds were used to support Conservative Party candidates during elections, a number of bishops were official party members, and several priests even held positions in the legislature as members of the Conservative Party (Fleet and

Smith 1997, 37). The sum effect of all these changes was to place the Catholic Church on the defensive and to create an alignment between the church and the Conservative Party (Mecham 1966, 215). The church's privileges in society were now contingent on a political alignment with the conservatives.

At the beginning of the Errázuriz administration (1871-1876), the government was composed of a conservative-liberal coalition. Contention over church-related issues, however, led to the dissolution of the coalition government in 1873. The liberal bloc eventually gained dominance, and while it did not enact far-reaching reform, it did remove some privileges from the Chilean Church. New laws passed declared that clerics were subject to public trials and penalties in civil and criminal cases (Mecham 1966, 211). The removal of these privileges caused a fierce reaction from the church. The Archbishop of Santiago, Rafael Valentín Valdivieso, even resorted to measures such as the excommunication of those who had supported the laws (Mecham 1966, 211). Yet the reforms continued and in the early 1880s the state took control over the cemeteries, mandated civil marriage, and took over the register of births, marriages, and deaths that had formerly been kept by priests (Mecham 1966, 214).

Not only was Archbishop Valdivieso against the reduction of church privileges, he also protested the exercise of patronage by the government (Mecham 1966, 211). When President Pinto (1876-81) tried to replace Archbishop Valdivieso, who passed away in 1878, by nominating a more progressive priest, the pope refused to approve of the decision, in essence reviving the longstanding conflict over patronage. Although the pope had acquiesced to install several of the Chilean government's prior proposed candidates, there had never been a concordat established between Chile and the papacy.

The conflict led to the breaking off of relations between the Vatican and the Chilean government. Relations were re-established in 1887; where after, relations remained cordial for a quarter-century. The fact that relations with the Vatican were cut off for less than a decade, a significantly shorter period than in other Latin American countries, meant that the flow of communication among the hierarchy was basically preserved.

In 1906 the Radical Party attempted to reform church and state relations. Three systems of church-state relations were considered. The first, favored by the church, was to have union of church and state and to prohibit other religions, but to not allow government the power of patronage. The second system, proposed by the state, was to have union of church and state, for the state to have patronage, and to allow other religions. The last alternative, favored by the Radicals, was to separate church and state; in this arrangement the church would have to sacrifice its legal position as the only religion allowed in Chile, and the state would have to give up its patronage power. With the help of the conservatives, however, the church was able to thwart disestablishment by the radical party. Although the church's alliance with the Conservative Party allowed it to retain some of its privileges, it also had harmful effects. The church's obviously one-sided political stance, evident through clergy and church funding involvement in local electoral campaigns, eventually began to hurt the church's moral credibility in society. Furthermore, this political involvement created internal divisions in the church between laity and between bishops and priests (Smith 1982, 71). In the second stage the Chilean Catholic Church aligned itself with one particular party in the face of liberal threats to remove its privileges. Hence, the church moved from a state of structural fusion and

dependency on the government as a whole to an alignment with and dependency on the Conservative Party.

Separation of Church and State

In 1925 the church and the state were officially separated in Chile. This process involved much less ideological conflict than in many other Latin American countries because both church leaders and political leaders came to believe that their particular interests could be obtained through separation. In 1920 the Radical Party's candidate for president, Arturo Alessandri, became Chile's first "middle-class president" (Mecham 1966, 218). Although Alessandri initiated the separation of church and state, he was not anti-clerical; rather, Alessandri saw separation as politically pragmatic. Alessandri "wanted to remove the possibility of future religious conflicts in society so as to focus public attention on social reform and widen his own coalition's political base of support. Extrication was seen as an important strategy to weaken the Conservative Party, which continued to present itself as the staunch and necessary defender of Church interests" (Smith 1982, 72). Alessandri thought that if an amiable separation that guaranteed the rights of the church could be arranged, then he would be depriving the conservatives of a powerful ally that gave them Catholic votes and hence successfully stalled social and economic reform.

The Chilean Church's willingness to separate was in part due to Archbishop Crescente Errázuriz's increasing concern that the church's alliance with the Conservative Party was damaging its moral credibility as well as causing internal divisions among Catholic laymen and clergy. Errázuriz was also worried about the Conservative Party's manipulation and use of the church to shore up its own influence (Smith 1982, 71). In

1922 he issued a pastoral letter forbidding clergy from participation in political rallies and meetings and from representing parties. He argued that the church needed to preserve its independence and to remain loyal to the hierarchy and not to politicians. The church also stood to gain more control over internal organization and if separated, would be allowed to set up new dioceses, seminaries, and religious communities without having to first ask for congressional approval (Smith 1982, 73).

Another important factor that increased the clergy's eventual acceptance of disestablishment was the negotiations that occurred between the president of Chile, the pope, the Vatican Secretary of State, and the Archbishop of Santiago in 1924 and 1925. In 1924 Alessandri traveled to Rome and discussed possible separation with Pope Pius XI and the Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Gasparri. Gasparri told Alessandri that although the Vatican opposed separation in *principle*, that it might be acceptable in *practice* as long as the church was allowed to keep her properties, religious courses in school continued to be allowed, and there was no recognition for atheism in the new constitution; essentially, as long as the church was not unduly restricted. Part of the Vatican's willingness to accept possible separation came from a desire to avoid the useless conflict that had recently occurred in several other nominally Catholic countries such as Mexico in 1917 and Uruguay in 1919 (Smith 1982, 75-76). Furthermore, the Vatican stood to gain with disestablishment because without state control it could maintain more direct ties with the national churches and control church expansion. Alessandri agreed to respect the conditions given to him by Gasparri, and once a final version was worked out Alessandri sent it to Rome and Gasparri sent back his approval.

On June 1, 1923 Alessandri proposed to Chile's national congress that they free the church and the state from their mutual bonds. The church promised it would not oppose separation as long as the state allowed the church to keep its properties, to maintain its schools, and provided the church with some financial aid for a five-year transitional period (Mecham 1966, 219). Alessandri argued that accomodationism hurt both the state and the church and in support of his argument quoted Bishop Valdivieso as saying, "When ministers become affiliated with political groups, they compromise the sacred interests of their charge. The future of the Church, the most precious interests of religion, are then tied up to the fortunes of a party" (quoted in Mecham 1966, 218). Archbishop Crescente Errázuriz agreed with this position and in a pastoral letter on September 20, 1925, the Chilean bishops publicly stated their acquiescence to the separation, stating:

It is just to note that the authorities of Chile, in establishing this separation, have not been actuated by the spirit of persecution which characterizes other countries where Catholicism has been attacked. By the sacrifice of separation, the Church acquires, at least, the liberty which divine law accords it; and, finally, the State is separated from the Church; but the Church is not separated from the State, and will always be ready to serve it (quoted in Mecham 1966, 220).

Although the Chilean Church lost its privileges, it gained institutional freedom.

The separation thus secured at least the reluctant support from the Chilean hierarchy.

The Constitution of 1925 abolished all the laws regarding the interactions between church and state. The state was no longer allowed to appoint ecclesiastical positions and did not allow for any religious tests for public office. The constitution also provided for freedom of conscience and the free exercise of all religions, and it exempted

all church holdings, regardless of religion, from taxes. The church was “recognized as independent possessor and administrator of its revenue producing properties, as well as churches, monasteries and convents, primary and secondary schools, seminaries, hospitals, and the Universities of Santiago and Valparaiso” (Mecham 1966, 220-221). The church was given freedom to manage its internal affairs without reference to the state. While the constitution did not provide for religious teaching in public schools it did continue the state-subsidization of chaplains in the armed forces (Smith 1982, 82).

Ultimately, the separation of church and state in Chile was a peaceful, even friendly affair due to the church and state’s belief that separation would give them mutual advantages. A couple of key factors facilitated this peaceful separation. The first, as mentioned above, was that both the church and the state thought that separation would serve their individual interests. This meant that the agreement was not one-sided but mutual. The second factor is that there was flexibility in the approach of the political elites regarding separation. The state took a moderate stance on separation, allowing the church to retain state funding for a five year transition period and continuing to fund a few church activities deemed to have state importance, such as the funding of chaplains. This moderation helped assure the church that they were not under attack from the state. Lastly, links to the Vatican facilitated unity among the bishops regarding disassociation. Smith calls the international linkage between the Chilean Church and the Vatican “perhaps the most decisive factor both in facilitating a compromise with the state over the conditions of separation and in neutralizing opposition within the Chilean Church to extrication from its traditional alliance with the Conservative Party” (Smith 1982, 84).

Vatican influence on Catholic Church elites in Chile would also be important for maintaining church neutrality in the future.

Stage Three: Insulation

After the legal separation of church and state, Vallier predicts that the church will enter a stage of insulation where it works on fortifying its internal bases and consolidating itself organizationally. In this stage the church encourages and enforces political neutrality among the clergy and strengthens internal lines of authority in order to preserve Episcopal unity and authority. The church not only attempts to disengage from its traditional interdependencies, but will also endeavor to create new forms of religious activity in order to consolidate as an institution. While both religious activity and institutional consolidation came about in Chile from a desire to strengthen the church and allow it to work independently from the state, another factor that spurred the church towards religious activity was the threat of communism.

Although the church legally separated from the state in 1925 when the new Constitution was passed, separation did not stop long-established patterns of interaction between church and state elites. The church continued to have ties with the Conservative Party throughout the early part of the twentieth century and the vast majority of individual bishops, priests, and lay Catholics still supported the Conservative Party. After the death of Archbishop Errázuriz in 1931 the Chilean hierarchy found it hard to resist being pulled back into political affiliation with the Conservative Party. In 1933 at the annual meeting of the Chilean bishops, Bishop Fuenzalida urged the hierarchy to rally behind the conservative political forces, and the bishops decided to publicly support the Conservative Party. In part due to the uprising of a Marxist Socialist Party in early 1933,

the hierarchy feared the possibility of leftists coming to power and the accompanying anticlerical sentiment. Before announcing their public support of the Conservative Party, the papal nuncio, Bishop Hector Felice, asked the hierarchy to wait while he contacted the Vatican and gained their opinion over the matter. The Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, answered the question in 1934 “by strongly reaffirming the position taken by Archbishop Errázuriz twelve years before. Pacelli stated that it was the conviction of the Holy See that ‘the Church could not bind itself to the activities of a political party without compromising its supernatural character and universality of its mission.’ He also warned that bishops and priests must not engage in partisan politics” (Smith 1982, 79). He stipulated that the laity should be free to participate in any party “that respects the rights of the Church and of citizens in general,” but that church leaders should resist involvement in political parties. He further encouraged the formation of Catholic Action programs to provide for the teaching of Catholic social doctrine to the laity.

Upon reception of the letter, the Chilean bishops deferred to the Vatican’s stance and instead of taking a public position of support for the Conservative Party, they released general guidelines for Catholics regarding electoral politics in the *Bulletin of Catholic Action* in 1935. Smith notes that “the two key variables of transnational linkages and hierarchical authority flows preserved and finalized the official disassociation of the Chilean Church from the Conservative Party.” By invoking its higher authority in the chain of command Rome stopped Chilean clerical efforts to reclaim political privileges from the state and reestablish formal ties to the Conservative Party (Smith 1982, 81).

While formal arrangements, such as the legal separation of church and state, were managed by political and religious elites, most Catholic laity continued to support the Conservative Party and the Conservative Party continued to proclaim itself as the party most supportive of Catholic doctrine; as this party declaration in 1961 stated, “The [conservative] party holds as its highest ideal a Christian social order, and in economic affairs espouses measures that promote the common good according to principles of justice and charity. It bases its fundamental doctrine on the teaching of the Church. It understands and supports rights, duties and liberties in a Catholic perspective” (quoted in Smith 1982, 94-95). Important laity within the Church, such as professors of history, law, and philosophy at the Catholic University in Santiago, continued to articulate and defend a conservative political philosophy based upon corporatist and even fascist principles. In 1958, 44 percent of regularly practicing Catholic Chileans still identified with the conservatives, while only 21 percent identified with the center and 19.5 percent with the left (Smith 1982, 90). Although the “lay attitudinal and behavior variable did not act as a drawback in separating the Church legally from the state nor officially from the Conservative Party in the 1920s and 1930s, it acted as a check against *de facto* extrication of Catholicism from electoral identification with political conservatism and, in some aspects, reactionary, political philosophy” (Smith 1982, 83). While support for the Conservative Party remained high among the laity, institutional separation was preserved. Furthermore, in this same stage the church created many types of organizations that helped to strengthen its social visibility and to consolidate its societal influence.

In the 1930s and 1940s several studies of Catholics in Chile described “appallingly low levels of practice, inadequate numbers of priests and sisters, little or no

contact between the Church and ‘nonsacramental’ Catholics, little attachment or loyalty to the Church in the population at large” (Fleet and Smith 1997, 42). The church attempted to remedy these problems through several strategies. Foremost among the different approaches was a strong effort to revamp and promote religious education programs. Catholic Action was one of the church’s principal tools in this effort. Chilean Catholic Action was formed in 1931 in order to “coordinate existing programs of spiritual formation and social assistance and to ensure that socially committed Catholics acted in harmony with Church authorities and policies;” it specifically helped the Chilean Church to attract workers, young people, and other middle class persons who had drifted away from the church (Fleet and Smith 1997, 41). By 1936 more than 47,000 people had joined. Participants were taught about social Christian values of equality, social justice, and human dignity.

Catholic Action in turn led to the creation of a multitude of church affiliated groups. In general, “Catholic Action activists ventured out from their parish bases to factories, farms, secondary schools universities, and professional circles, where they mingled with the people they wished to influence (secular and lapsed-Catholic activists). Their efforts to adapt their appeals to these environments afforded the Church a more effective presence in areas where its influence had been weak” (Fleet and Smith, 1997, 47). The way that Catholic Action groups helped to foment and develop organizations that were outside of the church yet connected to it is exemplified by the case of the Institute of Rural Education in Chile. The Institute of Rural Education was created in 1955 and was a training center in agricultural and mechanical skills for rural youth. The center was promoted by Monsignor Rafael Larraín, who was also the director of rural

Catholic Action. The vocational activities of the center were closely related to Catholic Action and the two worked together, resulting in development programs that helped mobilize rural people (Vallier 1970a, 67).

In 1937 young lay leaders developed within Catholic Action organized into a political association, the *Falange Nacional*, within the Conservative Party. A year later the *Falange* decided that they would not support the conservative candidate for the presidency and formed their own separate party of the same name. The party provided an alternative to the Conservative Party for Catholics; although it was anticommunist, it called for social justice measures and reform (Klaiber 1998, 44). The goal of the *Falange* party was to “transmit the social teachings of the Church into a secular political program” (Smith 1982, 88). *Falange* provided a partisan political voice of social Christianity, which aspired to create a ‘third road’ alternative to liberal capitalism and Marxist socialism, and emphasized the reconciliation of individual and social interests, and the defense of both freedom and social justice (Fleet and Smith 1997, 45).

Members of the *Falange* took part in two different administrations in the 1940s and pushed for political and social justice measures such as the implementation of labor laws. By 1957 the party had two senators and fourteen deputies in the congress. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s “social Christians pushed the Church toward greater social involvement and led younger Catholics away from the Conservative Party” (Fleet and Smith 1997, 41). While most bishops remained advocates of the Conservative Party, a few bishops and a number of priests and lay people began to sympathize with and support the *Falange*. Mounting support for the *Falange* is at least in part explained by the Vatican’s increasing concern about the spread of communism. Bouvier points out

that “This preoccupation with the rise of communism inspired increases in financial support to the *Falange Nacional*, which then channeled this money into Catholic organizations of peasants, workers, women, and students” (Bouvier 1983, 26). Although the *Falange* remained relatively small at this period, it continued to grow and would eventually evolve into a major party, the Christian Democratic Party (*Partido Democrático Cristiano* or PDC).

Another institution formed during this time period was the Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM). The first meeting was held in 1955 in Rio de Janeiro with the purpose of bringing back people into the Catholic faith and renewing the mission of the Catholic Church. The main threat to Catholicism was deemed to be “atheistic communism,” and much emphasis was put on the importance of developing alternatives to communism. Hence, the conference marked the creation of Christian trade unions, cooperatives, literacy campaigns, and peasants’ and women’s organizations. Furthermore, the Latin American Center for Research and Social Action (DESAL), sponsored by the Catholic Church, was created in Chile in order to “promote professional research on social problems” (Bouvier 1983, 16).

By the 1950s there were three main groupings of political parties in Chile, the centrists, the leftists, and the conservatives, each attracting about a third of the popular support. No group was dominant and hence could gain the majority needed to pass legislation; thus, when presidential elections were held every six years new coalitions had to be forged. The failure of the centrist Ibáñez government (1952-1958) to deliver needed agricultural, industrial and tax reforms led to the decline of the Radical Party, thus

creating a vacuum in the center of the political spectrum (Fleet and Smith 1997, 48). The Christian Democratic Party, however, rapidly filled this open spot.

In July of 1957 the Falange joined with several other small social Christian movements to create the Chilean Christian Democratic Party. In 1958 they ran their first presidential candidate, Eduardo Frei, who ran on a platform of “agrarian reform, profit-sharing by workers, and industrial concentration on basic consumer goods rather than luxury goods” (Smith 1982, 89). Although Frei lost the 1958 presidential election, he won 20 percent of the vote and the winner, Jorge Alessandri, won with only 31.2 percent (Fleet and Smith 1997, 48). The PDC was now one of three major contenders in Chilean politics.

Stage Four: Social Development

In the fourth stage Catholic Church focuses on developing economic and social programs to meet the needs of the people. Throughout the 1960s one can observe a gradual increase in power for the left in Chilean politics. The Communist and Socialists, united in a coalition called *Frente de Acción Popular*, or FRAP, jumped from 10.7 percent of the vote in 1958 to 22 percent in 1961. The centrist Christian Democrats (PDC) went from 9.4 percent of the vote in 1957 to 22.8 percent in 1963 (Scully 1995, 119). The swell of electoral support for the Christian Democrats is due to several factors. The “disruptive 1952 Ibanez campaign, electoral reform legislation, falling productivity in the rural sector and the resulting decline in peasant living standards, and Church intervention on behalf of peasants during these years” all contributed to the Christian Democrats’ successful penetration of the right’s traditional electoral strongholds in the rural sector (Scully 1995, 119). Between 1958 and 1964 there was also a substantial shift

among Catholic political opinion. As Smith says, “Whereas in 1958 a plurality of all types of Catholics identified with the Right, six years later those who attended Mass regularly or occasionally were decidedly more in the Center and a plurality of non-practicing Catholics defined themselves as leftists” (Smith 1982, 107). This shift meant that there was huge support among Catholics for the centrist party, the Christian Democrats, and for their presidential candidate in 1964, Eduardo Frei. Seventy-four percent of practicing Catholics supported Frei in the 1964 election (Smith 1982, 108).

The increasing movement to the left in Chilean politics can be explained partly by the economic failures of the previous conservative administration, and partly by fear regarding the spread of communism. Alessandri, the candidate of the right, won the 1958 election and while president Alessandri attempted to stabilize the Chilean economy by encouraging free enterprise and foreign investment. He also tried to decrease inflation with a conservative IMF-style policy of budget cutting and devaluation to a fixed exchange rate (Skidmore and Smith 2001, 122). Alessandri’s policies led to cuts in public expenditures, incentives given to private investors, and prevention of wage increases, all of which resulted in considerable middle and lower class frustration. While these measures did succeed in decreasing inflation they did little to solve the multitude of social problems, such as the severe shortage in housing and jobs, and the lack of education that plagued Chile and especially Santiago.

Alessandri’s presidency was only one factor that pushed Chilean society and the church to the left; another event that stimulated the Chilean Catholic Church towards more social involvement was the Cuban Revolution of 1959. Frightened by the socialist Cuban revolution and its “devastating effects on Cuba’s ultraconservative Church,” the

Chilean Catholic leaders gained additional motivation to proceed with both reform and social initiatives (Fleet and Smith 1997, 49). Hence, the Chilean Church responded to the threat of communism by supporting the centrist alternative provided by the Christian Democrats. The communist threat also led to a significant increase in financial and material resources into the country. After Fidel Castro made a public commitment to Marxism in the early 1960s, Pope John XXIII called for a major new missionary effort in Latin America, which was met with a quick response. Organizations led by West European and North American bishops provided over \$34 million in money, food, clothing, and medicines to Church-affiliated social and pastoral projects in Chile from 1960-1964 (Smith 1982, 121-122). These resources subsidized new programs to assist the poor such as agrarian reform on Church lands, low-income housing construction, technical training and basic education for peasants.

The Catholic Church also increased emphasis on responding to the plight of the poor. In 1961 Raúl Silva Henríquez, who had been the former director of Caritas-Chile, a Church-sponsored social welfare program, was appointed archbishop of Santiago and was elected president of the Chilean Episcopal Conference. Silva's emphasis on social reform and his endorsement of agrarian and other reforms helped to strengthen the social Christian movement in Chile. In 1961, for example, the Chilean bishops offered to sale 13,200 acres of church land, and in 1962 the National Conference of Chile issued a document entitled *The Church and the Chilean Peasantry*, which strongly criticized the limited agrarian reform of the Alessandri government and created an agrarian reform institution to be run by the church. Although this initiative was modest in size, "it did achieve its broader objective of legitimising further reform as a national rather than leftist

concern, and so was of great political significance” (Lowden 1996, 20). Using financial support from abroad, the Church also created housing cooperatives, peasant training programs, slum-dweller organizations, and trade union federations in order to attack the causes of poverty. Low-income housing was established by the church in the slums and many priests and nuns went to work and to live in the shantytowns. The work done in these impoverished areas had the effect of radicalizing the Catholic leaders involved in work with the poor (Bouvier 1983, 27). Hence, throughout the 1950s and 1960s the Chilean episcopacy grew increasingly more progressive and strived to establish social programs benefitting society. One of the most important tools the Church used to encourage reform was support of the Christian Democratic Party.

Although there was never an explicit alignment between the Catholic Church and the PDC, in the early 1960s there was “a decided congruence, and even over-lap, between roles and structures of the Church and those of the Christian Democratic Party” (Smith 1982, 115). Not only was the PDC made up of many members of Catholic Action but the PDC emphasized the same values that were articulated and encouraged in the Second Vatican Council. There were two central pillars of the PDC: “concern for the dignity of man and the improvement of his condition as urged in Papal encyclicals from *Rerum Novarum* to *Mater et Magistra*,” and “a technical approach to economic problems” (Mecham 1966, 223). Thus, it is not surprising that the church hierarchy began to closely identify itself with the Christian Democratic Party in the 1960s. Although statements issued from the church prior to the 1964 election never explicitly called on people to vote for the PDC, they nevertheless had a partisan tone (Fleet and Smith 1997, 51). In September of 1962 in a declaration entitled *The Social and Political Duties of the*

Moment the bishops called for “reforms of the social structure” and “institutional changes such as an authentic agrarian reform, reform of the enterprise, reform of the system of taxation, administrative reforms, and others” (quoted in Landsberger 1970, 90). The bishops also condemned communism as being “diametrically opposed to Christianity.” (quoted in Lowden 1996, 20). In both word and action the Catholic hierarchy provided legitimacy for Frei’s structural reforms (Smith 1982, 134). In summary, overlapping associational relationships between Catholic Action and the PDC created unofficial, yet powerful alliances between church and party.

In the 1964 presidential election Salvador Allende again ran with the leftist coalition, FRAP. Liberals and Conservatives (both parties which belonged to the right) decided that to prevent Allende, a strident critic of capitalism, from becoming president they would have to join forces with the centrist Christian Democrats. The coalition of the centrist Christian Democrats and the Liberals and Conservatives on the right successfully voted in Eduardo Frei. There is no doubt that the Chilean “bishops’ words were influential in Frei’s 55.7 percent majority, since they had clearly espoused reformism and condemned the only existing alternative” (Lowden 1996, 20).

Frei’s goals for Chile were essentially moderate; he wanted to offer a solution that struck a balance between the unbridled capitalism of the right and the Marxism of the left. He also promised to bring about reforms that would create a more efficient capitalist economy while still respecting the constitution. Frei was successful in many of his reforming efforts; the Chilean government acquired partial ownership of U.S. copper companies and also enacted agrarian reforms that resulted in 28,000 new farm ownerships (Skidmore and Smith 2001, 125). However, Frei had promised that the land

reform would change the lives of 100,000 peasants, but the land program's results were slower than expected. Thus, the reforms were seen by the left as inadequate in comparison to Chile's vast social ills. Meanwhile, due to the vehement opposition of the landowners to the expropriation process, the land reform precluded any possibility of an alliance between the right and the center for the 1970 election. Thus, by taking a moderate stance, Frei and the Christian Democratic Party eventually disappointed both the right and the left and set the stage for a heated election.

Stage Five: Autonomous Integration

In the final stage, integrated autonomy, the church is autonomous from the political sphere, but integrated into society through numerous structural carriers. The church is "autonomous from legal privileges, eschews political alignments, and focuses its efforts to influence people around pastoral activities" and through the cultivation of ethical norms and symbolic frameworks that connect Catholic values to society (Vallier 1970b, 12). In this stage the church exerts a moral influence, but not a political one, over society. Significant here is a high degree of church autonomy from "central political arenas while at the same time providing religious support for the general values of development, change, and collective achievement" (Vallier 1970a, 85).

The Chilean Catholic church reached this stage, strangely enough, due to the increasing polarization of society and the conflict this created within the Catholic laity and clergy. The church's close affiliation with the PDC harmed the Church's unity and image during Frei's presidency from 1964-1970. As Lowden explains, "growing national political polarization came to be reflected within the institution and its faithful, particularly after 1967 when the PDC itself began to split over the issue of the pace and

depth of the reform process (Lowden 1996, 21). A group called the *rebeldes*, or rebels within the PDC wanted Frei to push more agrarian reforms through in the second half of his presidency. This group, frustrated with the lack of progress, split from the PDC in 1969 and formed a socialist Christian, but non-Marxist, group called MAPU.

As the PDC and Chilean society in general became more polarized, more people were discontented with the church's centrist political position. Leftist Catholics were generally unhappy with Frei's reforms, claiming that they were too slow and fell far short of expectations. On the other hand, right-leaning Catholics who had supported Frei only to stop Allende from gaining power began to criticize the church's "partisan support for the PDC agenda" (Fleet and Smith 1997, 52). Meanwhile, the Catholic Church was experiencing a serious personnel shortage, since the PDC had "replaced the Church as a more effective channel for societal reform" (Smith 1986, 157). Of even more concern for the Catholic hierarchy was the fact that the Catholic Church had become closely identified with the PDC in the view of the Chilean people, thus alienating Catholics on the right and on the left. These problems persuaded the bishops that the PDC was "a merely mortal political force, and that a more neutral stance would be better for the Church in the now more likely event that a right- or left- wing candidate would win the next presidential election" (Fleet and Smith 1997, 53).

In 1967 the Catholic Church began to distance itself from the PDC and to take on the role of an overtly nonpartisan moral agent. In order to show that the church was not directly associated with the PDC, the hierarchy pointed out the problematic areas of Frei's reform strategies and called for further initiatives to strengthen social justice. The hierarchy decided that their primary goals should be to develop "a spirituality more in

tune with the times that would include an ongoing commitment to work for social justice; recruit new cadres of leaders into positions of responsibility for the local church... and remain sufficiently independent of political parties to avoid the identification of church apostolates with the face of any political movement” (Smith1986, 160). The church still continued to place emphasis on social justice, but balanced their calls for justice with political impartiality.

In the months preceding the 1970 election the bishops stressed their neutrality and underscored the importance of “democratic procedures and the importance of avoiding civil war and military rule” (Fleet and Smith 1997, 54). The tone and emphasis of the Episcopal letters were distinct from those written in the early 1960s in that “there was no attempt to link Catholic social norms with a reformist analysis as had been done earlier.” The statements reflected a “certain distancing of the hierarchy from the reformist ideology and technocratic style of the PDC” and “an attempt on the part of the bishops to play a new public role in society at large.” (Smith 1982, 134). For example, six weeks before the election Cardinal Silva gave a television interview in an attempt to provide a source of unity for the country and emphasized that the church wished to be a home for all Chileans regardless of political persuasion. As Chilean politics became increasingly contentious and the popularity of the PDC declined, “the hierarchy shifted their position to one of support for basic democratic procedures. No longer were the bishops primarily concerned about providing legitimacy for reform... Rather they placed their moral prestige behind traditional constitutional and electoral processes as the best way to resolve disagreements about the pace and content of change” (Smith 1982, 134).

Although the bishops refused to take sides politically, they continued to support procedural democratic norms.

In the 1970 election the Conservative Party decided to run its own candidate, former president Jorge Alessandri. The Christian Democrats, meanwhile, supported a left-leaning candidate, Radomiro Tomic. Yet the PDC was weakened by the defection of the leftist but non-Marxist group MAPU, which joined the leftist coalition, the *Unidad Popular* or UP, hence giving the left vote a slight increase. The Communists, Socialists, and MAPU joined together under the *Unidad Popular* party and chose Salvador Allende as their presidential candidate. Salvador Allende centered his campaign on calls for radical change in Chile such as the total nationalization of the copper companies. Allende won the election, but just barely; he won a plurality of 36.3 percent while Alessandri was a close runner up with 34.9 percent of the vote.

Throughout the three years Allende remained president the Catholic Church maintained their neutral stance. They generally urged all parties to respect the constitutional procedures and to compromise in order to resolve conflict. True to their stated position, the bishops refused to endorse attempts by the right-wing extremists to prevent Allende from being confirmed by the Congress and rejected a request by Conservative Party leaders to denounce Allende (Fleet and Smith 1997, 55). They also recognized the UP government as legitimate. In a document issued by the Chilean Episcopal Conference in 1971, the church said that Catholics were not bound to support any specific economic or political agenda. They spoke strongly, however, about the necessity of systems that supported justice. Lastly, the hierarchy reiterated that it was of the utmost importance for clergy to not publicly identify with any party, “nor use their

moral authority to promote partisan positions” (Smith 1982, 176). Although the clergy emphasized important ends government should meet, it did not prescribe particular means through which it should try to meet those ends.

When the Allende government began to run into economic and political problems half way through 1972, the bishops maintained their neutral stance by refusing to take sides in the conflict, and instead encouraged negotiated compromises. The hierarchy condemned attempts to create instability or violence, and remained committed to a democratic resolution to the mounting crisis. In a public letter issued by Cardinal Silva and eight other prelates in early June of 1973, they entreated Chileans to settle their political differences in the interests of the common good. The bishops stated:

People count more than systems – persons are more important than ideologies. Ideologies divide people, but history, blood, common language, human love and the common project which all Chileans share should help us form one family. Our words have no other objective or hope than to see each other as equals, as brothers. We as a people do not deserve to live amidst anxiety, uncertainty, hatred and vengeance (quoted in Lowden 1996, 24).

Essentially, in the years before the coup the bishops used their moral authority to promote moderation and democracy. Although the Chilean Church had arrived at a position of political neutrality, the political conflict escalated and polarization increased to the point that military intervention became imminent.

The use of Vallier’s typology of relations between the church and society allows us to understand the different roles the Catholic Church has played in Chile’s history. In the first stage the church was intertwined with the state through constitutional arrangements that ensured state power over the church and guaranteed state support of the church. In the second stage, political opposition, the church allied itself with the

Conservatives, and in order to maintain its privileges, became dependent on its affiliation with a particular political party. The move from the first stage to the second stage was brought about by an anti-clerical movement to remove the church's privileges. The next stage, insulation, was a response to the legal separation of church and state in 1925. Throughout this stage the church focused on creating unified neutrality among church officials and on solidifying its parishioner base through the creation of programs such as Catholic Action. In the 1960s the church moved into the fourth stage, attempting to exert an influence on politics through Catholic based secular institutions like the Catholic Democratic Party. Although a normative consensus on social justice issues linked Chilean society and the Chilean Catholic Church together in the 1960s, as tension mounted in the second half of the Frei government and throughout the short-lived Allende government the church decided to distance itself from direct political action and to take a neutral stance regarding politics. In the years leading up to the coup the Church reached the final stage, autonomous integration, because the church was fully autonomous from the political sphere, but it was integrated into society through a number of structural carriers.

The Pinochet Regime and Church Resistance

On September 11, 1973 General Augusto Pinochet led a coup against the democratically elected socialist government of Chile. Pinochet invested the military junta with executive power and removed all government workers, "from the President of the Republic to heads of local neighborhood communities" (Lowden 1996, 27). Moreover, he dissolved the Congress and the Constitutional Tribunal, and burned the electoral register. Pinochet did not just want to reform the political system; he wanted to

annihilate all leftist and, to a lesser degree, centrist political parties. The UP was declared illegal, and all other political parties were told they were in recess. Despite these repressive actions, at the time the army took power they issued a decree stating that they would remain in power “only for the length of time that circumstances may require in order to ‘restore the institutional framework that had been broken’” (Lowden 1996, 28). This initial promise to remain in power only as long as it took to restore “order and constitutional rule” reinforced the church’s erroneous expectations that the military intervention would be brief. It took little time, however, before the church became aware of the intense repression following the coup.

The takeover was the most violent military coup in twentieth century South American history (Skidmore and Smith 2001, 131). While there was little to justify the prolific bloodshed, the excessive force was probably used in order to persuade supporters of the Allende government to not resist the coup (Ensalaco 2000, 26). The week after the coup Pinochet moved quickly to obliterate those who might challenge him and to consolidate power into the military’s hands. Many people were swept up in factory and shanty-town raids and were killed immediately or taken to the National Stadium, where they were executed; Popular Unity supporters were specifically sought out and arrested, and then killed. Many of the UP politicians did not flee; rather, “an astounding number of Chileans dutifully turned themselves in at a military checkpoint or police station after they heard their names broadcast over the radio” (Ensalaco 2000, 28). Most were exiled or killed without a trial. According to the Report of the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, 1,213 people were killed between September and December of 1973 as a result of political violence (Lowden 1996, 27). A curfew was enacted and followed

by a decree stating that troops had the authority to shoot any Chilean who violated the curfew. The repression that followed the takeover in the first few months is described as follows:

More extensive than imprisonment and execution by order of the Tribunals was the practice of mass detention without trial in military establishment and concentration camps throughout the country... Torture, including until death, was widely practiced, but not, of course, publicized... there was also a series of secret, extralegal or simply criminal executions and disappearances of prisoners both in Santiago and throughout the country. Although the left's political militants, labour leaders and intellectuals were specific targets of the repression, it was on such a large scale that it was also arbitrary, particularly in poor urban and rural neighbourhoods (Lowden 1996, 29).

The Pinochet military regime justified this repression as necessary to win the war against communism, and claimed that the leftist coalition had been planning a coup and an eventual war on all Chileans that attempted to prevent their totalitarian rule.

Power was gradually consolidated in the hands of Pinochet. In March of 1974 the government said that the "salvation" of the nation would take longer than foreseen. The *Declaration of Principles of the Government of Chile* stated that "the armed forces and the police do not set timetables for their management of the government, because the task of rebuilding the country, morally, institutionally, and economically requires prolonged and profound action" (quoted in Lowden 1996, 29). In June of 1974 Legislative Decree 527 declared the military to have constitutional and legislative power and made General Pinochet the President and Supreme Chief of the nation. Pinochet also had direct control over the new intelligence service, the Directorate of National Intelligence (DINA), whose mission it was to eliminate leftists (Ensalaco 2000, 55). Pinochet's consolidation of power was undoubtedly a factor that enabled the regime to last much longer than other Latin American military authoritarian regimes in the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, "The

consolidation of one-man rule in the person of Pinochet gave the regime considerable structural strength by virtue of his dual role as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and president of the republic” (Lowden 1996, 7). The immense power wielded by Pinochet in the first decade after the military coup made him almost impossible to resist.

There was little protest of the military junta in the first few months after the coup due to a multitude of reasons. It is generally accepted that a majority of the public supported the military intervention of the Allende government. Like the political leaders of the PDC and of the Conservatives, the Catholic Church expected that Chile’s strong constitutional norms would help ensure that the military intervention would be short and relatively bloodless. Virtually no one expected a military takeover and the harsh suppression of human rights that followed. People were also generally initially ignorant of the severe repression that ensued as the junta tried very hard to “invest their actions with the character of law” (Lowden 1996, 30). Furthermore, several institutions that might have spoken out against the Pinochet regime’s violation of human rights chose not to. The judiciary branch, for example, became an ally of the military regime and the Supreme Court “made no effort to protect human rights during the worst years of the dictatorship” (Ensalaco 2000, 53). Supreme Court President Enrique Urrutia Manzano even expressed his “delight” over the actions of the junta to “respect and enforce judicial decisions” (Lowden 1996, 30). At this point there was little dissent regarding the coup or the subsequent actions of the military regime.

In the first six months of the regime the collective statements of the bishops were careful and amenable to the new military government. The first formal reaction to the coup was a declaration on September 13 made by Cardinal Silva and the Permanent

Committee of the Episcopal Conference. The statement mourned for “the blood which has reddened our streets... the blood of civilians and of soldiers” and asked for “moderation towards the vanquished and that there be no needless reprisals;” however, the statement also declared the hierarchy’s belief that the junta was acting out of patriotic and selfless intentions, and asked the nation to “cooperate with those who have taken on the difficult task of restoring the country’s institutional order and economic life” (quoted in Lowden 1996, 31). In this first statement the church did not condemn nor did they legitimize the coup; rather, the church showed that they accepted what had occurred and desired to help restore order and peace. On September 28, 1973 the Catholic Church offered to help collaborate with the regime in the work of reconstruction, and on October 9 Cardinal Silva met with the new military leaders and reached an agreement. They decided that the government would not curb the institutional freedom of the church to conduct both pastoral and humanitarian activities, and in exchange, the church would accept the legitimacy of the government and help in the reconstruction of Chilean society (Smith 1982, 290).

Institutional Shelter

Soon after the coup the Catholic Church began to realize that the degree of repression was much higher than what was reported. Since nearly all social institutions had been outlawed, placed in recess, or were under heavy surveillance, the church became the focal institution that people suffering repression turned to for help. Hence, “the offices of the archbishopric began to fill with people desperate for protection for help for themselves and family members arrested or ‘disappeared’” and this situation was the same in parishes throughout Chile (Lowden 1996, 31). In response to these requests

for aid, in late September Catholic, mainline Protestant, and Jewish leaders formed the National Committee for Aid of Refugees (CONAR) in affiliation with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. The organization was ecumenical but was set up on Catholic premises and served to aid the safe exit of non-Chileans. By February of 1974 CONAR had helped around 4,500 people get out of Chile. This ecumenical cooperation led to the formation of The Ecumenical Committee of Cooperation for Peace in Chile (COPACHI), or the Committee for Peace, an organization that would help Chileans who were suffering from the repression.

Like CONAR, the Committee for Peace was ecumenical. This connection to other churches was important because it provided the institution with access to resources. The committee's finances totaled \$1.8 million, of this 52.5 percent came from evangelical sources (most of it from the World Council of Churches), 43.7 percent from Catholic funds and the remaining amount came from either organizations abroad, many of which were Catholic in nature, and from Caritas Chile, the Catholic Church's largest social aid agency in Chile (Lowden 1996, 40). Since the church was "embedded within influential organizational networks at the international level" the church could serve as a "funnel for foreign funds" (Loveman 1998, 495). Without financial connections to non-Catholic sources of funding, the Committee for Peace would have been much more limited in what they achieved.

The Committee for Peace began cautiously, and when its creation was announced the advertisement specified the legal nature of the organization. The announcement said: "Workers lacking resources who, as a result of the present national situation, wish for information as to how to receive the assistance to which they are legally entitled in

resolving employment or penal problems afflicting them, may come to the Committee offices, Santa Monica St. 2338” (quoted in Lowden 1996, 34). The Committee for Peace initially had five staffers but by August of 1974 they had expanded to 103 staff members in order to meet the increasing demand for help. It also expanded its human rights activities to include a number of social and economic services, such as medical care centers in poor city districts, an employment cooperative, and a lunch service provided for malnourished children that eventually came to feed over 20,000 with daily meals (Lowden 1996, 39). The Peace Committee was able to form and expand as quickly as it did because of the “Preexisting ties and solidarity among certain religious leaders, academics, politicians, and professionals (e.g., lawyers, social workers)” (Loveman 1998, 492).

Apart from its work with the public, the leaders of the Committee for Peace also continued to make contact with government officials in an effort to expedite and clarify issues as they arose, particularly regarding matters of political asylum. The Committee additionally tried to find ways to help people who had disappeared without any evidence of why or where they were taken. Bishops and other clergy began to present Chilean courts with writs of habeas corpus, which were comprised of a list of individuals (the first one provided 131 individuals) who were missing as well as documentation providing evidence of arrest (Lowden 1996, 42). Although the writs were often rejected as being invalid, leaders continued to take concrete action through official government channels and to document the problematic aspects of the government’s judicial system. In 1974 they estimated that the committee “was receiving details of 80 per cent of the cases of detention in Santiago” that lasted for more than 48 hours duration (Lowden 1996, 34).

Since the Committee for Peace was the only institution defending basic political rights at the time, it was able to gather a large amount of information that no other institution did. By March of 1975 the Committee had addressed 15,982 cases in the provincial offices and 2,051 in Santiago (Lowden 1996, 39). This information was turned in to a 60 page report the Committee for Peace produced detailing the facts of many credible cases, including 134 cases of torture. This report led to an important Episcopal declaration, entitled *Reconciliation in Chile* made public in April of 1974. This marked the first time that the bishops collectively criticized the Pinochet regime for specific abuses of power and human rights violations. The statement said:

We are concerned that in some cases there are no effective juridical safeguards to insure personal safety against arbitrary or prolonged detentions which result in neither those affected nor their families knowing the specific charges against them. We are also troubled by interrogations which include physical or moral constraints, by limitations on the possibilities of legal defense, by unequal sentences given for the same charges in different parts of the country, and by the restriction of the normal right of appeal in the court system.

Although the bishops tempered this statement by saying that they had no doubts about the good intentions of the government authorities, and that they recognized the legitimacy of “short-term suspension” of some rights, they concluded by saying that there existed certain rights which “pertain to the very dignity of the human person, and those are absolute and inviolable” (Smith 1982, 295). The Committee’s work was crucial in the respect that the information gathered was trusted by the bishops and as *Reconciliation in Chile* exemplifies, the balance of clerical opinion was shifting against the military regime.

The information the Committee provided over these cases also had an important influence in international circles. For example, at the end of 1974 the Chilean

government received the first of what was to be a repeated vote of censure against the Chilean government in the UN; this vote was largely due to the Committee's reports (Lowden 1996, 50). The Committee for Peace was also important because it provided "the only systematic source of protest against the arbitrary governmental actions in Chilean society" in the first few years of Pinochet's rule (Cleary 1997, 4). Although the Catholic Church preferred to not have a major confrontation with the government at this time period (preferring to be left free to engage in their social work) the Committee's main enduring achievement in Chile was that it convinced much of the Catholic leadership, especially Cardinal Silva, "that the repression was not the result of isolated abuses of power, but rather it was systematic in the full sense of the word: that is, inherent to the regime's system of rule" (Lowden 1996, 50).

Although Cardinal Silva was not directly involved in the everyday affairs of the Committee for Peace, he supported the organization against mounting pressure from the government to close it down. Although the Committee was ecumenical, it was the Catholic hierarchy's support for the Committee that was politically essential because of the institutional protection and legitimacy its involvement gave to the Committee (Lowden 1996, 41). In 1975 Cardinal Silva met with Pinochet, who said that he had evidence that the Committee for Peace was protecting terrorists and that if the Cardinal would not dissolve the institution, then Pinochet would order it to be done by force (Lowden 1996, 48). The Cardinal complied with the request, but in his reply he defended the record and purpose of the Committee for Peace, and emphasized that despite its dispersion, the church reserved the right to continue the charitable and religious work

carried out by the ecumenical organization (Lowden 1996, 53). The Committee for Peace was closed in November of 1975.

At the New Year Council of the Vicars of the Archbishopric of Santiago, Cardinal Silva proposed the creation of a new Vicariate that would continue the work of the Peace Committee. On January 1, 1976, the council voted unanimously in favor of the proposal and established the Vicariate of Solidarity by decree of the Archbishopric. This organization was distinct from the Committee for Peace in a very important way. The Vicariate of Solidarity represented the Catholic Church of Santiago and its vicar would thus be a member of the hierarchy. The institution then was directly protected by the Catholic Church, and “now to attack the Vicaría would mean direct confrontation with the institutional prerogatives of the Catholic Church” (Lowden 1996, 53). Indeed, Cardinal Silva’s proposal was supported not only by the Chilean Church, but by the Vatican as well, despite the fact that the creation of a vicariate charged with promoting human rights was unprecedented in Catholic life. Cardinal Silva believed that in the face of a severely contracted Chilean civil society, however, church supported institutions were vital for the people’s welfare. In a pastoral letter entitled the *Pastoral of Solidarity* that became a reference point for the Vicariate, Cardinal Silva explained that the evolution of a social dimension in the Catholic Church’s work was crucial in order to protect human dignity, of which an important part was collective or economic rights (Lowden 1996, 55). Hence, Cardinal Silva was reminding the Pinochet government that to interfere in the Vicariate would be to interfere in the essential practices of Christianity.

Father Christian Precht, the Peace Committee’s secretary, remained as the *Vicario*, or the leader of the Vicariate. Initially, there was much more clerical leadership

present in the Vicariate than in the Committee for Peace in order to imbue the institution with the identity of the Catholic hierarchy, but lay persons were eventually adopted as leaders of departments. The number of staff quickly swelled to 150 persons and was composed of people from both centrist and leftist political persuasions. Within a year of its creation the Vicariate proceeded to establish 12 sister offices throughout Chile and created five departments: legal-welfare; zones; national coordination; labor and rural; and a secretary of communications which was in charge of administrative and publicity functions. Furthermore, in May of 1976 the Vicariate created a bulletin entitled *Solidaridad*, which was distributed for free on a semi-monthly basis and included statistics on malnutrition, unemployment, and people who had been arrested or disappeared (Bouvier 1983, 64). The Vicariate also made announcements by *Radio Chilena*, which was Catholic-owned and the only media outlet not controlled by the government.

Catholic resources meant that the church hierarchy could create institutions that provided a shield that protected people from the abuses of the Pinochet regime. Although the Committee for Peace and the Vicariate of Solidarity could not completely stop the trampling of human rights, they were able to document it and present the information to Chilean society and the wider international community. With its ecumenical ties the Catholic Church was able to gain resources it could not have access to otherwise. Since the church had institutional autonomy, the church could create new institutions where it saw fit. The church also was able to create modes of communication and hence, ways to disperse information that was not controlled by the government. The Vicariate was “embedded within extended organizational networks that included the Catholic Church;

as a nexus linking immediate social networks of committed individuals to those in need of assistance, the Church as institution played an invaluable role” (Loveman 1998, 493).

Denouncing Pinochet

In 1976 there was another fierce wave of repression, focused not only on the communist party members but also on the Christian Democrats. By the end of 1976 the Vicariate had registered 552 political arrests for the year. It was in this year that one can begin to see a substantial change in the Catholic Church’s statements regarding the military regime. In the past the bishops had been very careful to condemn the *actions* of the government, and not the regime itself. However, in a public statement made by the Permanent Committee of the Episcopate Conference in August of 1976 the hierarchy stated:

The actions which we denounce and condemn are not isolated incidents. They are part of an overall process or system that is very clearly delineated in its characteristics and which threatens to impose itself relentlessly throughout Latin America. By a constant appeal to national security, a model of society is being consolidated which takes away basic liberties, runs roughshod over the most fundamental rights and subjugates citizens to a dreaded and omnipotent police state . . . The Church cannot remain passive or neutral in the face of such a situation. The legacy which she has received from Christ demands that she speak out in favor of human dignity and for the effective protection of the liberty and rights of the person (Bouvier 1983, 65-66).

In this statement the hierarchy declared that the injustices perpetrated by the government were not just random mistakes, but rather were an intrinsic part of the authoritarian regime. Hence, the clergy began to not only oppose specific violations of the government, but the regime itself. By condemning the regime the Catholic Church made opposition a legitimate, and even a morally necessary, position.

The Catholic Church also denounced Pinochet in the international arena. In April of 1976 the U.S. Senate approved the Kennedy Amendment suspending arms sales to Chile. The information on human rights abuses provided by the Committee for Peace and the Vicariate, and the respect granted them as religious organizations “served to lend considerable weight to the argument that the Pinochet regime should be treated as a pariah” (Lowden 1996, 61). This decision was corroborated by the car bombing assassination of former Chilean government minister Orlando Letelier and his American assistant that occurred in September in Washington DC. These two events, in turn, led to a drastic cut in aid funding from \$20.6 million in 1976 to \$0.6 million in 1977 (Lowden 1996, 62). The Chilean government reacted by releasing 302 political prisoners and dismantling DINA, thus showing itself to be susceptible to international pressure.

The Catholic Church capitalized on Pinochet’s apparent need for international legitimacy by organizing hunger strikes and declaring a “Year of Human Rights.” This event culminated with a series of national meetings and a symposium entitled *The Church and the Rights and Duties of Man in the World Today*, which underscored the importance of basic political freedoms. The symposium was a huge success and was attended by around one thousand people including several representatives from international human rights groups, Cardinal Paulo Arns of Brazil, workers, professionals, youth groups, intellectuals, artists, and prominent Christian Democrats. Furthermore, at the symposium the Vicariate of Solidarity was awarded the UN’s esteemed human rights prize, which gave the Vicariate’s work international recognition (Lowden 1996, 68).

In the 1980s the Pinochet regime began a campaign to discredit priests, bishops, and the Episcopal conference leadership. Newspapers, radio, and television controlled by

the government vilified the Catholic Church. In 1980 the bishops' committee released a public letter boldly titled "I am Jesus, Whom You Persecute." In it, the bishops stated that although the government was persecuting them for doing so, they could not stop talking about the problems of human dignity and social justice because "they are an integral part of the gospel of Jesus Christ." The statement continued to assert that, "It would be easier for us to disregard the suffering of the poor and the cries of those who have been abused and tortured. It would be easier not to be concerned about justice in our country. But if we were not to speak out, we would be irresponsible... We reaffirm that faith and Christian morality are preached to be lived and form the basis of the social teachings of the Church, which are obligatory for every Catholic" (Cleary 1989, 205-206). This bold statement bluntly acknowledged the critical attacks of the military regime against the church but then declared that human rights and their protection was not only an fundamental part of Catholicism, but that it was also essential that all Catholics participate in the effort to help and protect those who were being repressed.

In 1987 the opposition received a new mantle of legitimacy during a visit by Pope John Paul II to Chile. The Pope visited the Vicariate of Solidarity and expressed his support for their work; he met with a delegation of opposition leaders including a communist, and also met with people who had been victims of Pinochet's brutal repression. Furthermore, the Pope criticized the current condition and practices of the regime, and vocally supported the opposition's efforts to restore democracy. When asked if the Chilean Catholic Church could possibly help foster a transition to democracy, the Pope replied that it was "not only possible, but also necessary as part of the pastoral mission of the Church" (Lowden 1996, 116). Ultimately, the Pope's visit "helped to

counter the regime's depiction of its opponents as unworthy of attention or respect" and validated both the opposition and the Catholic Church's efforts to restore democracy in Chile (Fleet and Smith 1997, 132).

Institutional Mediation

The Catholic Church also helped serve as a mediator between the regime and the opposition. When Cardinal Fresno, who replaced Cardinal Silva in June of 1983, became the new cardinal he sought to open dialogue between government officials and opposition leaders. Although meetings between Minister of the Interior Sergio Jarpa and leaders of the newly formed Democratic alliance occurred three times, all meetings were completely fruitless due to the Pinochet regime's stubbornness. The lack of success in these meetings, however, actually worked to discredit Pinochet because it made him appear highly irrational and outrageously unwilling to negotiate even with the encouragement of church officials. These overtures for peace made by the church hierarchy failed in providing a resolution but succeeded in further eroding Pinochet's legitimacy.

Pinochet often defended his reluctance to negotiate, or even talk with the opposition by asking, "With whom should I be talking? No one represents anyone" (Fleet and Smith 1997, 122). In 1985 Cardinal Fresno launched an attempt to solve this problem by developing a united position among opposition leaders. Cardinal Fresno issued invitations and structured individual meetings with different political and societal leaders that all opposed Pinochet, which were held at his house. At each meeting, the opposition leader discussed his views with Fresno, while a Catholic businessman, José Zabala, took notes and later summarized the leader's position as well as what commonalities in position he shared with other leaders, as well as identifying what

compromises he might be willing to make. After this process all the leaders met together with the Cardinal at a Jesuit retreat house, where they learned that they agreed on more than they had thought, and created the first draft of what would become the National Accord on the Transition to Full Democracy, to be signed later in August by eleven distinct political parties. The document called for an end to restrictions on party activity as well as on internal and external exile, called for the holding of direct presidential elections, and for changes to be made to the constitution regarding the powers of the Congress and the Council of State (Fleet and Smith 1997, 123). The National Accord was crucial in developing a united opposition with the ability to collectively challenge Pinochet.

The opposition would have a chance to depose Pinochet in the October plebiscite of 1988. A provision in the Constitution of 1980 stipulated that the armed forces would choose a candidate (which was Pinochet) to serve as president from 1989 until 1997, subject to ratification. If this candidate was rejected, than general competitive elections for a president and a congress would be held in 1989. The Catholic Church made three important contributions to the plebiscite process. Catholic activists played a large role in convincing opposition groups to unite and endorse the registration for the plebiscite. The strong alliance against Pinochet (known as *Concertación por el No*) has been heralded as one of the main reasons the plebiscite vote was allowed and Pinochet beaten (Fleet and Smith 1997, 133). Secondly, in 1988, the church hierarchy helped broker a social pact between trade unionists and entrepreneurs which greatly alleviated the fear that a chaotic situation would result if Pinochet was ousted from power. As it became known that the plebiscite would actually take place, Catholic leaders additionally served an important

function by ascertaining that conditions surrounding the re-call vote would be fair and by encouraging registration and voting. Church leaders helped to ensure that there was fairness in media attention given and that there was no government intimidation (Klaiber 1998, 63). The plebiscite resulted in 54 percent of voters rejecting giving Pinochet power for an additional eight years. The military dictatorship ended officially on March 11, 1990, when General Pinochet handed over his presidential sash in Congress (Verdugo 2001, 185).

In general, the Catholic Church, and especially the Vicariate of Solidarity, had several effects on the political environment in Chile. Most importantly, the documentation of abuses as well as the hierarchy's criticisms "revealed the true state of affairs underlying the public image of the authoritarian regime" (Fruhling 1992, 127). This was an especially important service since it was nearly impossible to access any information in Chile other than official, regime-censored media. The bishops were taken very seriously by all Chileans because they were perceived to be respected moral authorities. Their protest of the government, then, helped to legitimize the protest of the opposition groups in the eyes of more moderate citizens. The Vicariate also helped support grass-roots level organizations by providing them with an official backing as well as resources. Although the Vicariate of Solidarity was founded as a response to the abuse of power by the military regime, it evolved into an organization that was "committed to strengthening the popular organizations and to searching for new ways to resist and denounce arbitrary abuses" (Fruhling 1992, 128). Throughout the military regime, the Vicariate of Solidarity was one of the most vital human rights groups in all of Latin America, as evidenced by winning the UN human rights award. Moreover, political

parties began to re-emerge in Chilean society in the beginning of the 1980s in large part due to the Vicariate's support and defense for opposition groups (Fruhling 1992, 136).

In Chile, autonomy from the state allowed the church to pursue its own interests after 1925. By the time of the coup, the Catholic Church had achieved autonomy from the state, a neutral position regarding politics, and had created numerous structural carriers that connected the institutional church to different components of society. Indeed, the infrastructure of the Catholic Church in Chile was well developed and could communicate effectively with a wide variety of people. Loveman notes that a key part of the Vicariate's success lay in the "institutional connections between the Church, Catholic left political parties, labor unions, community organizations, and Catholic universities [that] facilitated the prior development of personal networks linking individuals from these spheres of society" (1998, 491). Hence, church leaders were already in a role conducive to calling on people to provide their skills to the Committee for Peace and later to the Vicariate prior to the onset of the military regime. Because the church was autonomous from the state but integrated within the larger society at the time of the military regime in 1973, it was able to provide institutional shelter, legitimacy, mediation, and support for democracy; all things which helped revive a broken and repressed political system and eventually led to the return of democracy.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Catholic Church in Argentina: The Established Church

In 1976 the Argentine military executed a coup that ousted the administration of Isabel Perón and instilled a bureaucratic military authoritarian regime that lasted until 1983. This time period is known in Argentina as the “dirty war” due to the rampant extra-judicial deaths, disappearances, and imprisonments that occurred at the hands of the military. It is estimated that at least 10,000 people were killed or disappeared, more than 30,000 were held as political prisoners, and 500,000 were exiled (Loveman 1998, 519). During the time period church authorities took little initiative either to criticize the military regime or to help those who were suffering from the repression. In many ways, the institutional church was compliant with and even supportive of authoritarianism. As Argentine scholar Anthony Kennedy notes, however, “It has never been consistent with the character of the Argentine hierarchy to offer general opposition to any government in power” (Kennedy 1958, 205). This chapter traces the historical development of church-state relations and analyzes the effects of the enduring establishment of the church in Argentina. Special attention is paid to the way that strong historical church-state ties fostered a deferential hierarchy that consistently accommodated the government and hesitated to object to any government measures unless those measures directly threatened the special status of the church. The second section of this chapter examines the role the Catholic Church played during this phase of authoritarianism in Argentina.

Stage One: Structural Fusion

From the very beginning of Argentina's independence from Spain, in 1810, the new government established the Catholic Church as the national church and took on the rights and responsibilities of ecclesiastical patronage. Faced with an empty Episcopal see, the new government consulted with two famous canonists about what should be done regarding the appointment of a bishop. Both persons consulted agreed that patronage was "a prerogative attached to the *sovereignty* of kings, not their *persons*. Hence it should be regarded as having passed on to the independent national government" (Mignone 1988, 74). It is no surprise then, that the first national constitution to govern Argentina, adopted April 22, 1819, asserted the national right of patronage. This gave the executive the right to name the bishops and archbishops and decide on whether and where new church buildings should be constructed. In return, the constitution pledged to give the church "its most efficacious and powerful protection" as well as financial support (Gustafson 1992, 26). It also gave the church permanent representation in the form of a bishop and three lesser clergy in the Senate. Bishops and Archbishops were given the same respect and privileges as civil functionaries (Mecham 1966, 226). The constitution did guarantee freedom of conscience but decreed that all persons should respect the church. Although Argentina was ruled by several different constitutions in the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church was adopted as the state's official religion in all of them.

Disagreement between the Pope in Rome and the Argentine government regarding the issue of patronage meant that in the early nineteenth century the Catholic Church in Argentina was essentially free of papal control. The Vatican refused to recognize the Argentine government's right of patronage, and the government viewed

patronage as a matter of authority and sovereignty; hence, an agreement with the pope could not be reached. The Assembly of 1813 passed several laws that exercised the right of patronage independently from the King of Spain and declared that the United Provinces were no longer under the jurisdiction of Spain's papal nuncio (Gustafson 1992, 26). In other words, not only did the Assembly declare independence from Spain, they also declared independence from Rome. In 1821 the government declared that until a concordat could be agreed upon, the government would establish a national church and deny to Rome any control over it (Mecham 1966, 228). The Constitution of 1826 further weakened connections between Rome and the Argentine Catholic Church by declaring that the Supreme Court had the responsibility of examining all pontifical briefs and bulls and deciding whether the executive should allow or ban them (Gustafson 1992, 26). Although Rome did recognize Argentine independence in the 1830s, the initial delay reinforced church separation from Rome and dependence on the state. The Argentine Church "therefore remained a captive of nationalism," and lacked the independence of both means and mind to challenge the "government's anxiety to harness the Church to the priority of reestablishing order" after the chaos of the war for independence (Ivereigh 1995, 43).

Bernardino Rivadavia, the first president of Argentina, attempted to construct a liberal, centralist political system and to subordinate and control the church (Kennedy 1958, 19). He created a university in Buenos Aires to provide an institution of study that was free of church control. In 1822 his administration passed a reform law that abolished the ecclesiastical *fueros* (courts and laws exclusively for clerics), prescribed rules of discipline for religious orders, secularized the cemeteries, and limited membership in the

monastic orders. Property of the orders was either confiscated or regulated by the government and lands and properties not used for direct religious reasons were confiscated by the government and used for government buildings. This meant that the church no longer had an independent means of income, and was now reliant on the state, which used the wealth obtained from the confiscation to support the church (Gustafson 1992, 25). A further decree in 1823 declared that the state would provide support for the church and would also control the construction of churches. By 1823 Rivadavia had “established state control over the church in almost all of its personnel and property aspects” (Kennedy 1958, 19).

There are several explanations for Rivadavia’s actions concerning the church. One is that his goal was the creation of a national church that was firmly tied to the state rather than to Rome. Another explanation is that Rivadavia was attempting to reform the church in order to stem corruption. According to Argentine authority José Ingenieros, “the immediate object of the reform was to correct the habits of an undisciplined and licentious clergy. . . . the corruption of the monastic orders was great, and their reform was hoped for and desired by Catholics themselves” (quoted in Mecham 1966, 226). The clergy in Buenos Aires strongly favored the reforms, yet there was some protest. The Vatican representative, Vicar Apostolic Mgr. Juan Muzi, accused the Argentine government of “pretending to form a National church separated from the Universal Church and its head” and argued for the importance of maintaining relations with Rome (quoted in Mecham 1966, 227). Regardless of the nature of Rivadavia’s motivations, his actions resulted in consolidating state power over the Catholic Church.

The issue of patronage remained controversial for the next decade, and in order to place an end to the debate, the government appointed a special committee of thirty-nine theologians and jurists to delineate the components of the state's patronage. With the exception of only two members, the committee accepted fourteen propositions, among them being the following: 1) that sovereignty entitled the government to the right of patronage; 2) the government had the right to allow or refuse papal documents and communications; 3) the government had the right of presentation to ecclesiastical positions; 4) the government could change ecclesiastical jurisdictions; 5) the pope could not himself appoint clergy to vacancies; 6) the bishops' oath did not remove their obligations to the state; 7) as part of their oath, bishops should recognize the national patronage and swear loyalty and respect to the government; 8) and relations with the Vatican would be cut off until the papacy recognized these national rights (Mecham 1966, 231). These fourteen propositions were known as the *Memorial Ajustado de 1834* and were incorporated into the Constitution of 1853. They thus set the future pattern for church and state relations in Argentina as one where the church was clearly subservient to the state.

Throughout the early nineteenth century the defining political cleavage in Argentina was a worker-owner divide. "In Argentina landowners had more power than merchants," and they aligned themselves with the military in order to gain political influence (Rock and Lopez-Alves 2000, 178). The general struggle for power was between the Federalists, who wanted more autonomy for the provinces, and the Unitarians, who wanted a more centralized system of government. Unitarians were made up primarily of elites from cosmopolitan Buenos Aires and were known as anti-clerical

liberals, while Federalists were people from the interior who were committed to traditional Catholicism (Gustafson 1992, 22). Although there was an element of conflict regarding the church between the Federalists and the Unitarians, the primary conflict was over autonomy for the provinces versus centralized governmental power.

Juan Manuel de Rosas, a Federalist, ran a dictatorship in Argentina from 1835-1852 and was able to unify the country through the creation of a powerful government in Buenos Aires that ruled the city as well as the rural areas (Rock and Lopez-Alves 2000, 183). Within this effort to consolidate his control, Rosas used the Catholic Church as an instrument to support his rule (Mecham 1966, 232). He protected the church and undid many of Rivadavia's reforms by restoring ecclesiastical houses and allowing the Jesuits to return to Argentina. Because Rosas was kindly disposed to the church's interests, the church supported his rule. The protection of church interests, however, was granted on the condition that Rosas have unlimited power over the church. Although Rosas began his reign friendly to the church, he increasingly attempted to exert control over it. Rosas passed many decrees which removed or jailed priests for immoral behavior, reduced the number of religious festival days, and reformed the ecclesiastical tribunals. Rosas also abused the power of the patronage, using it to force the clergy to condemn the Unitarians and preach loyalty to the Federalists. Hence, he used the clergy to buttress the strength of his own party, going so far as to make the Federalist color red compulsory in altar decorations (Mecham 1966, 233). When the Jesuits refused to disseminate state propaganda and submit to the state's political objectives, Rosas expelled them again in 1843 (Ivereigh 1995, 46). According to Mecham the church "allied itself with the tyranny at the start, and in the end was hopelessly subjected by it... after the absolutism

of the tyranny was converted into a regalistic absolutism of the worst kind, the clergy were unable to extricate themselves” (1966, 232). The Rosas dictatorship also weakened the church for the long-term, because “the dictator’s political subordination of the Church further undermined the creation of a proficient and independent clergy” (Ivereigh 1995, 47).

When Rosas was overthrown, the previous relationship between church and state was reinstated with one exception. The Constitution of 1853 did not declare Catholicism to be the official faith of the state, but rather stated that, “The federal government supports the Roman Catholic religion” (quoted in Mecham 1966, 235). This is distinct from previous constitutions which had recognized Catholicism as the official state religion; although this may appear to be a loosening of the ties between church and state, the document actually extended the power of the state over the church (Kennedy 1958, 12). Congress was given the authority to “arrange the exercise of the ecclesiastical patronage in the whole nation” and to control the admission of religious orders into the country (quoted in Kennedy 1958, 15). The state continued to financially support the hierarchy, cathedral chapters, seminaries, and Indian missions; since the priests were given their salaries by the government, they were essentially regarded as government employees (Mecham 1966, 244). Clergy were subject to governmental nomination, the president and vice-president were compelled to be Catholic, all religious ceremonies in which the state participated were Catholic in nature, and pontifical documents were subject to approval or rejection by the government. Hence, Catholicism was still very much the state religion.

President Justo José de Urquiza took office in 1854 and worked tirelessly to renew relations with Rome. In order to ensure the church's favor, he guaranteed economic support for the creation of new dioceses as well as to train new clergy (Mignone 1988, 78). Relations with the Holy See were finally reestablished in 1855 after a series of diplomatic visits to Rome. Although the Argentine state appointed official representatives to Rome and papal consent was given to certain actions, a concordat was never concluded. Appointments were generally achieved as follows: the president notified the Senate of the vacancy. The Senate then submitted three names of potential clerics to the president, who selected one of those names and presented it to the Holy See. Without any acknowledgement of the president's presentation, Rome then authorized the person presented to become bishop in the form of a papal bull. The president then submitted the bull to be approved by the Supreme Court, which usually responded with approval, yet noted the right of patronage (which was conspicuously absent from the bull). The president then issued a decree of appointment. This elaborate system enabled both the state and Rome to save face, but while the "modus Vivendi has been a useful device, it can prove inadequate to certain situations. It leads both parties to respect each other's positions, but it does not oblige either of them to concede any part of its own interest" (Kennedy 1958, 17). While the Cardinal-Secretary agreed to a *modus vivendi* regarding national patronage, the primary conflict over the issue of whether the government could disallow papal bulls remained unresolved. Patronage continued to be controversial, but in 1927 the Vatican's representative to Argentina was elevated to the rank of ambassador and the clergy were allowed to freely communicate with Rome (Mecham 1966, 243).

Stage Two: Mild Anticlericalism and Opposition

Throughout the history of Argentina there have been two divisive and contending ideologies. One of the prevailing ideas, which was favored by Argentina's political cultural elites, was logical positivism. Positivism "stressed material progress, a scientific approach to man and society, and visions of impending greatness for the country based on material accomplishments" (Burdick 1995, 17). Positivists saw Argentina as the Europe of the Americas and believed that education and the immigration of Europeans would civilize (ie: Europeanize) Argentina. Their goals were the creation of wealth and industrial expansion; economic or political egalitarianism were not among their aims. For the positivist, any vestige of the Spanish colonial past (including Catholicism), "was seen as an hindrance to progress and civilization" (Burdick 1995, 19). The contending theory that responded to positivism was that of traditionalism, or what later came to be known as nationalism. Nationalists lauded the native values of the country and claimed that these must be protected from European trends. Both philosophies were mutually exclusive and deduced distinct forms of government (Burdick 1995, 17-18).

Liberal positivists gained the upper hand in Argentine politics in the 1880s and in their quest to modernize Argentina subsequently began to remove the church's privileges. The most controversial measure was regarding the issue of religious education. Until 1884 religious instruction was a routine part of the public school system. In 1884 the congress created "secular, compulsory, and free school" essentially giving control of education to the state (quoted in Gustafson 1992, 29). Furthermore, religious instruction was prohibited during regular hours in public schools although religious instruction could voluntarily be provided after official hours. The effect of these new measures was that no

religious instruction was offered in public schools. When Professor José Manuel Estrada protested these measures at a congress of Catholics later that year, General Roca dismissed him from his teaching posts, accused the papal nuncio of fomenting insubordination, and broke diplomatic relations with the Vatican (Gustafson 1992, 30).

The government of President Julio Roca subjugated ecclesiastical tribunals to civil ones in 1881. The government also took over the birth and marriage registries and cemeteries in 1894, and mandated civil marriages and secular cemeteries in 1888 (Burdick 1995, 23). The state retained its right to make ecclesiastical appointments, to inhibit papal documents, and to alter the boundaries of ecclesiastical units. The church retained the guarantees of state subsidies given to bishops, Episcopal sees, and the mandate that the president and vice-president had to be Catholic. Although the liberals removed some of the church privileges, the church was never threatened with separation and was allowed to keep most of its privileges. The liberals did not disestablish the church from the state, but rather opted to control the church through the power of patronage. Liberal reasoning was that the people were not prepared to let reason rule; hence, religion would be tolerated as the “state’s legitimating and moralizing agent” (Ivereigh 1995, 53). Indeed, the state benefited “from the legitimization a controlled church provided.” As long as the church was controlled, the liberals saw no benefit in the separation of church and state (Gustafson 1992, 31).

There was some resistance to the removal of what the church perceived as her rights. The outcry led to the rise of a Catholic Party, the *Unión Católica*, in 1884. Yet the party was never powerful enough to exert a strong influence and was not able to prevent the marriage bill of 1888. This was in part due to election laws, which allowed

for the monopoly of one party and would be not be reformed until 1912. Another reason was that the upper levels of the clergy, which were selected and controlled through patronage, had accepted their “role as guardians of ‘national’ values” and were anxious to maintain social cohesion (Ivereigh 1995, 66). After the death of its most prominent figure in the 1890s, the party dissolved (Ivereigh 1995, 61).

After the passage of the above-mentioned marriage and education laws, religion was not a dominant issue. The two major parties, the Conservatives (National Democrats) and the Liberals (Radical Civic Union) both supported the establishment of the church. They were generally in agreement that the church should be “cultivated by the leading classes as a force of social order” (Ivereigh 1995, 62). Disestablishment was supported only by the Socialists, who never became a major party. Since neither major party supported disestablishment, the church never took sides with a particular party. Church elites primarily put the blame on liberalism, and not a particular party, for the loss of their traditional privileges and what they perceived to be persecution in the latter part of the nineteenth century (Burdick 1995, 14). With the establishment of the church never seriously under threat, the church grew to be more worried about what it perceived as the threats of liberalism and socialism, which resulted in “a strong antiliberal mentality among Catholic leaders” (Burdick 1995, 25).

Ecclesiastical Expansion and Catholic Nationalism

Waves of immigrants to Argentina in the latter part of the nineteenth century led to an increase in the middle and working classes and a subsequent increase in support for democracy. In 1910 the Saenz Pena Law established universal suffrage for men; this new law led to the emergence of the middle and lower classes as key political actors (Klaiber

1998, 67). In 1916 this law helped facilitate the presidential election of Hipólito Yrigoyen, a member of the Radical Civic Union Party. In order to win the election, Yrigoyen courted the favor of the Argentine Catholic Church and after elected he vetoed a congressional bill legalizing divorce (Burdick 1995, 25). Yrigoyen was president from 1916-1922 and from 1928-1930. His election ended direct oligarchic rule but the corruption and inefficiency of his administration confirmed the suspicions of traditionalists and of the church hierarchy that democracy was fundamentally inadequate (Burdick 1995, 29). When the depression hit in 1930 elites worried that the unemployed would try to revolt; consequently there was little resistance to General José F. Uriburu's ensuing coup. The Catholic magazine *Criterio* even explicitly supported the overthrow of Yrigoyen in 1930. After the Yrigoyen administration there was increasing discontent among the general population regarding the perceived failure of democracy (Klaiber 1998, 68). The nation's failed experiment with democracy created a vacuum, but the church, with their nationalist counterparts, were eager to provide an alternative.

Church leaders responded to the perceived failure of liberalism by attempting to increase the church's influence by "expanding the church's organizational presence throughout Argentine society" (Burdick 1995, 3). The church founded pro-Catholic newspapers and journals such as *La Nueva Republica* in 1927, and *Criterio* in 1928, established schools, and formed their own political party, *Unión Católica* (Burdick 1995, 14). The church hierarchy also increased its presence in the public by forming Argentine Catholic Action through a collective pastoral in 1928. Catholic Action was intended to "Christianize" society by encouraging mass participation, and loyalty to the church and its doctrines. Catholic Action in Argentina was a powerful force and by 1943 it had over

98,000 formal members. The rapid growth of Argentine Catholic action played a major role in expanding the Catholic Church's influence (Ivereigh 1995, 78).

The church also created programs which sought to alleviate the growing social problems brought about by massive immigration in the early twentieth century. The church created mutual-aid societies, labor unions, and educational programs, all of which helped to socialize and acculturate immigrants. Immigrants were taught "principles of a Catholic morality, respect for authority and private property—all deemed essential for their proper assimilation into Argentine society. The ongoing organization of the workers was also an attempt by the church to defend its social ideals and to counter the secular labor unions that ardently vied for the worker's allegiance" (Burdick 1995, 26). The success of these programs helped to restore the Catholic Church's prestige in the 1920s and 1930s. According to Burdick, "the church's attempt to expand its influence in society led to it retaining its semblance of being a necessary institution for the inculcation of national values" (1995, 4).

In the early part of the twentieth century there emerged a new nationalist sentiment, in large part resulting from the "efforts of the descendants of immigrants to identify with their new country" (Klaiber 1998, 68). The church's programs meant to assimilate immigrants into the Argentine culture emphasized Catholicism as a traditional and integral element of Argentine life. Catholicism was perceived to be the foundation of security for society as well as the provider of long-established values. The synthesis of Catholicism and nationalism, which engendered a powerful coalition of social, political, and religious groups in Argentina, came to be known as Catholic Nationalism (Burdick 1995, 28). This was an ultraconservative movement that sought to preserve the nation's

fundamental values and feared the threats of immigration, liberalism, socialism, and corrupt democracy. This new Catholic nationalism “became the ideological banner of many Argentines of the upper and the lower classes, but it was especially so in the church and the military, both of which sought to strengthen national unity in the turbulent thirties” (Klaiber 1998, 68). According to Burdick, “Catholic Nationalism best flourished as a mentality of opposition [to liberalism] that occasionally coalesced into party politics, and it provided the needed civilian support for a military intervention” (Burdick 1995, 28). Although Catholic Nationalists frequently formed political parties, they repeatedly failed to garner enough votes; hence, they turned to other methods to gain power. Catholic Nationalist military officers such as General Uriburu (1930), Lonardi (1955), and Onganía (1966), led three successful coups against civilian governments throughout the twentieth century.

The bishops used their expanding prestige not only to merge Catholicism with Argentine national identity, but also to buttress and defend their political interests. In 1931 the bishops published a pastoral letter with the intent of instructing the laity on proper voting behavior. The bishops stated that “a Catholic in good conscience could not vote for a candidate or party that proposes the separation of church and state, suppresses legal dispositions which recognize the rights of religion, implements a laicized system of education, or proposes a divorce law” (Burdick 1995, 33). Although the hierarchy did not explicitly endorse a candidate, they used their moral influence to encourage Catholics not to vote for anyone who would threaten the church’s privileged position and traditional interests. The issues of establishment, religious education, and the sanctity of marriage were evidently considered by the church to be its paramount religious interests.

In October of 1934 the International Eucharistic Congress was held. It was organized by Archbishop (later Cardinal) Santiago Luis Copello, and President Agustín Justo was “patron” of the event. A huge number of people, over one million, attended the Congress (Ivereigh 1995, 78). It was controlled by Catholics who wanted to meld together ever more tightly the church and state, and thereby strengthen the links between Catholicism and national identity. It was at this meeting that “in the face of an uncertain future the church presented itself as an anchor of security and a bulwark of traditional values, which many Argentineans now yearned to possess” (Klaiber 1998, 69). During the ceremonies the armed forces formally consecrated themselves to the Virgin of Luján and 7,000 soldiers received communion on their knees. The congress gave rise to an alliance “between the church and the armed forces, and certain groups of civilians who rejected liberalism and socialism” (Klaiber 1998, 69). From this point on all Argentine leaders “felt obliged to have recourse to the church to legitimate themselves.” Indicative of this trend is the fact that President Justo from then on included clergy at state banquets and ceremonies (Ivereigh 1995, 84).

For Catholic Nationalists (also known as integralists), the “most desirable situation for the church is that found in the ‘Catholic State;’” in this arrangement the power and the legitimacy of the state and of the church would be shared and would reinforce each other (Mignone 1988, 95). The alliance between the church and the military led to a Catholic corporatist society. The links between the church and the state (and especially the military), supported a symbiotic relationship between the church hierarchy and state. In some ways, this alliance was natural, since both the military and the church shared skepticism regarding democracy. The church and the military also had

similar ideological persuasions and goals for the country is that they “both believed in order, hierarchy, social harmony, and both rejected communism and liberalism” (Klaiber 1998, 70). The bishops and armed forces mutually regarded the other as an institution that upheld order within society. The alliance between the military and the church helps explain:

Why the church in Argentina did not make great efforts to promote the creation of a Catholic party, or a party linked to the church such as the Christian Democratic Party in Chile. In Argentina a party like that was not necessary because the church could deal directly with the political establishment, without intermediaries. Furthermore, the church had no particular reason to deal with a political party when it could deal directly with the other great national corporation that subscribed to the same ideas as the church: the armed forces (Klaiber 1998, 69-70).

Since the Argentine Church already maintained direct contacts and influence within the political establishment, it was unnecessary for it to establish the type of structural carriers that expanded the connections and influence of the Catholic Church throughout society in Chile.

Perón

In 1943 Juan Perón aided in the overthrow of civilian President Ramon Castillo. The new military government sought an alliance with the church and in 1943 decreed that Catholic teaching be reinstated in public schools, which immediately gained the new administration the support of the church. Perón, meanwhile, was assigned to the National Labor Department and later appointed as the Minister of War. In this latter post Perón was able to expand his influence throughout the military, and his “political views, his virulent anticommunism, corporatist leanings, and quasi-fascist philosophy, found a receptive audience throughout much of the armed forces” (Burdick 1995, 47). In 1945 Perón announced that he would run for President in the elections of 1946, and in the

election campaign of 1945-1946 the hierarchy indirectly supported Perón by urging people not to vote for the opposition, the Democratic Union, a liberal body which supported separation of church and state as well as the end of religious instruction and legalization of divorce. Perón's bid for the presidency was successful and notable for the fact that the election was relatively very fair (Burdick 1995, 49). In the congressional campaign two years later the church again urged people to not vote for "enemies of the church" (Mecham 1966, 247).

Church support for Perón's presidency was readily forthcoming, with only a few clergy such as Bishop Miguel de Andrea protesting the church's stance. Several clergymen even became Peronist deputies (Burdick 1995, 52). There are multiple explanations for church support of Perón; foremost among them is the assertion that the church supported Perón in return for Perón's protection and extension of church interests such as the decree mandating religious education in the public schools (Kennedy 1958, 196). Church support for Perón also had an ideological component. Many clergy supported Perón because they initially perceived him to be an integralist who would create a strong nationalistic state and show social concern without being a socialist or a liberal (Klaiber 1998, 71). Perón espoused a third way between communism and capitalism, what he called *justicialismo*, and claimed that its "objective is the happiness of man in human society achieved through the harmony of materialistic, idealistic, individualistic, and collectivistic forces, each valued in a Christian way" (Burdick 1995, 51). An important part of the doctrine of *justicialismo* was Catholic social teaching as embodied in the papal social encyclicals. Perón explicitly stated that "My work shall be done having the Encyclicals of Leo XIII, Pius XI and Pius XII for its basis" (quoted in

Burdick 1995, 51). In return for Peron's favors to the church, the church represented his positions as the same as the social programs set forth in the encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. In general, "The bishops' acute sense of antiliberalism and anticommunism coupled with their desire to maintain (and if possible, expand) the church's constitutional privileges led them to endorse political leaders whose objectives for the country seemingly coincided with their own" (Burdick 1995, 46). Interests and ideology combined gave the church strong motivation to support Peron.

As president, Perón sent legislation to congress that made the 1943 decree regarding Catholic education into a law. The law was approved in 1947 and not only ratified religious education in public schools, but also provided parochial schools with state subsidies. The decision was met with enthusiasm from the clergy and when the law was validated by Congress in 1947, Cardinals Lius Copello and Antonio Caggiano and the archbishops called on Perón to express their gratitude for supporting the decree (Mecham 1966, 245). Even Pope Pius XII sent a personal letter of appreciation to the government, thanking it for its recognition of the rights of the Catholic Church (Burdick 1995, 37). From the perspective of the church, the breach in relations between church and state that emerged out of the anticlericalism of the 1880s was never wholly reconciled, and the church still needed to reclaim its "rightful place in Argentine society" (Burdick 1995, 46). The church had maintained steady pressure on various governments for years to re-instate religious education. Peron's actions suggested a chance, therefore, for the church to recover what it perceived as its proper role in Argentine society. Essentially, in Peron's first term there was a mutually supportive relationship between the Perón administration and the church, and "Perón repeatedly identified himself with

Catholicism by participating in public religious ceremonies, by promulgating governmental decrees on behalf of religious holidays and saints, and by reaffirming the Christian basis of justicialismo” (Burdick 1995, 53). The new Constitution of 1949 continued the privileged position of the church in Argentina by mandating that the federal government would support the Catholic Church, which included economic support; it also required the president and vice-president to be Catholic and gave the Congress the power to exercise ecclesiastical patronage, although the power to appoint bishops was reserved for the president. The president also had the power to admit or withhold Vatican decrees (Kennedy 1958, 14-16).

In the early 1950s, however, the relationship between the Argentine Church and Perón began to disintegrate when Perón decided to extend the network of Peronist organizations to include high school students through the creation of a national organization called the Union of Secondary School Students (Potash 1980, 172). The union competed with Catholic Action for student support, and the Catholic clergy worried that it posed a threat to parental and religious influence. The first signs of conflict came when in 1950 Perón suppressed several religious holidays without explanation, and in 1951 he refused to participate in religious functions. In 1954 Perón decided that he would never be able to completely rely on the support of the church, and hence decided to “crush Catholic dissidents before they became a threat to his authority” (Mecham 1966, 249). Perón “was fearful of a resurgent church which he believed was playing politics and renewing its old alliance with the oligarchy, or Conservative privileged class, which was one of the principal targets of his social revolution” (Mecham 1966, 248). In a speech on November 10, 1954 Perón accused the church of attempting

to undermine the government and singled out three bishops as “evil shepherds” and of taking part in “illicit activities” (Mecham 1966, 249). These charges were followed with the government closing Catholic newspapers, prohibiting religious processions and religious festivals, the raiding of Catholic student clubs, and the legalization of divorce and prostitution. In 1955 the obligation of public schools to teach religion was renounced, and state aid to Catholic schools was cut off.

The Catholic hierarchy was generally reluctant to confront the government’s repression (Burdick 1995, 62). Yet the attack on the church did not go completely unanswered; the bishops produced a public letter to the clergy and laity reminding them of their duties to defend the church’s traditional rights and interests. The church has clearly defined enemies, argued the bishops, the most prominent being “atheistic and materialistic communism, divorce, and obligatory lay education” (quoted in Burdick 1995, 62). In response Catholic lay leaders initiated a pamphleteering campaign to retaliate against Perón and used these pamphlets to appeal to the military’s sense of honor and patriotism on behalf of the fatherland (Burdick 1995, 64). Despite the falling out between the church and Peron, the church leaders failed “to criticize the authoritarian features of Peron’s rule that had antagonized the considerable number of Argentines who sincerely believed in liberal democratic principles and who thought that these principles deserved a place in a truly representative program of Argentine nationalism” (Pike 1970, 60). Rather, the church hierarchy only spoke out in order to defend its traditional interests.

The conflict expanded on May 20, 1955, when the Perón government announced plans to introduce a constitutional amendment to disestablish the Catholic Church.

Although the amendment was never voted on, the threat of disestablishment was a “watershed mark for the church-state crisis” (Burdick 1995, 68). The Catholic hierarchy responded by issuing a strongly worded statement to be read in all churches that claimed the church to be a “perfect society” and that the sin of heresy was committed when people affirmed the church as “merely an human institution” (quoted in Burdick 1995, 68). This led to a Catholic demonstration, which was then followed by a Peronist rally in the Plaza de Mayo. At this rally, Air Force planes marked with the slogan “Christ Conquers” bombed the plaza, killing hundreds of civilians (Klaiber 1998, 71). In retaliation, that same night Peronist mobs ransacked and burned Catholic churches. The following day Pope Pius XII excommunicated all governmental authorities, including Peron, who had “trampled on the rights of the Church” (Mecham 1966, 250).

Increasing Polarization

Perón was overthrown on September 23, 1955 by Eduardo Lonardi, a prominent Catholic Nationalist. Those that opposed Peron, however, were divided into two camps: the liberals and the Catholic nationalists. The primary conflict was over the future of Peronism. While the liberals wanted to completely eliminate all traces of Peronism, the Christian nationalists “sought a conciliatory stand towards the deposed Peronists” (Burdick 1995, 83). Lonardi’s short rule was ended when a liberal military faction ousted the nationalists from the new government. General Pedro Aramburu, a liberal, succeeded Lonardi as president in 1955, and promptly dismissed the Catholic Nationalists from his cabinet. He also quickly reversed course regarding the Peronists: he outlawed the Peronist party and imprisoned Peronist leaders, and Perón was tried by an army tribunal and found guilty of incitement to crime and violence and the violation of the Constitution

and in turn deprived of his military rank (Burdick 1995, 87). Another source of conflict between the nationalists and the liberals was over the role of the church; while the nationalists wanted to form a Catholic corporatist state with leadership given primarily to the church and the military, the liberals wanted to encourage democracy and marginalize the public role of the church. Although the new liberal Aramburu government consented to repeal the divorce and prostitution laws, they refused pressure from the church to reinstate religious education in public schools.

The attempt by the Aramburu administration to remove vestiges of Peronism from society was mostly unsuccessful and led to even greater societal division. Although Peronism was technically outlawed, it “became the dominant political and trade union allegiance of the Argentine working class” (Burdick 1995, 111). Although Perón was outside Argentina in exile, he still had considerable influence in the country and continued to communicate with his followers. As left-wing nationalism continued to increase in Argentina and influence a new generation of workers and activists, Peronist leaders reconceptualized Peronist ideology to include more socialist tenets, and “Perón in exile fully exploited the generational differences – the result being irreconcilable contradictions within Peronism” (Burdick 1995, 165). In the 1958 presidential elections Arturo Frondizi of the Radical Party made a bid to attract Peronist votes by making an electoral pact with Peron; this alliance resulted in Frondizi winning the election. In return for his victory, Frondizi granted amnesty to imprisoned Peronist labor leaders and legalized the Peronist party (Burdick 134). Afraid of a resurgent Peronism, the military ousted Frondizi and held elections the following year, from which the Peronists were banned.

In the years after Peron's overthrow the Catholic Church went through a period of institutional expansion. The church responded to Peron's repression in a manner similar to the way it had responded to the liberal Yrigoyen administration in the 1920s: it attempted to expand its societal influence. The hierarchy established private Catholic universities and a national Catholic news service which helped to strengthen the institutional presence of the church. The Vatican also created two new ecclesiastical provinces and twelve new dioceses in Argentina. Since the church was still subject to patronage, these expansions had to be approved by the Aramburu government. Although the approval was controversial, in the end the plan was approved.

Catholic anti-Peronist opposition also resulted in the formation of Catholic social groups. In 1954 the Christian Democratic Party emerged as a middle-class alternative to Peronism and to the traditionally anticlerical Radicals (Burdick 1995, 92). Unlike Chile, however, the PDC never gained strength in Argentina, and has never gained more than five percent of the vote in a legislative election (McGuire 1995, 227). It lacked a charismatic leader as well as a grassroots organization; furthermore, it had to compete with a Catholic Nationalist party called the *Unión Federal Democrática Cristiana* (UFDC) that attracted conservative Catholics and advocated for a strong church-state alliance. These two Catholic parties also disagreed primarily over the question of religious education in public schools. Neither party gained much electoral support, and in the late 1950s the UFDC dissolved itself. In the 1958 presidential elections the PDC received only 3.8 percent of the popular vote but continued to attempt to gain support (Burdick 1995, 94). Eventually, the party split over whether it should remain faithful to

its democratic creed or support Juan Carlos Onganía's Catholic corporatist military regime (Klaiber 1998, 70).

During this same time the church and state took measures to strengthen their institutional ties through the creation of a military vicariate. In 1905 priests were organized as a permanent body of chaplains within the military and subject to its discipline. In this system, priests who are chaplains are "subject to military regulations and to the authority of the military command. In rank they are officers and receive the corresponding salary, and have a right to promotion, retirement, and other privileges" (Mignone 1988, 6). In 1957, the Permanent Commission of the Episcopal conference in Argentina and the Aramburu government created a military chaplaincy. Although laws passed early in the twentieth century provided for military chaplains that were paid and promoted by the military, were given military rank, and served under military regulations, they still reported to the bishops in the diocese where they served (Gustafson 1992, 38). But when the military vicariate was created, this meant that the military chaplaincy was a distinct parish and pastoral mission; the chaplains were directly accountable to the military provicar and not to the resident bishop at the location of the military installation (Burdick 1995, 96-97). The Vicariate was set up as a diocese where chaplains were pastors and the military and their families were the sole parishioners. Hence, the establishment of the vicariate resulted in widening the gap between the military and the rest of society; moreover, it "set the conditions for the elaboration of a religious doctrine to suit the aims and mind-set of the armed forces" (Mignone 1988, 7).

In 1966 the military, led by General Juan Carlos Onganía, took power (again) in a bloodless coup, ousting President Arturo Illia, who had won the 1963 elections. General

Onganía intended to rule indefinitely and consolidated his power through measures such as declaring all political parties illegal (Burdick 1995, 128). Onganía was a devout Catholic and installed a Catholic corporate regime (Klaiber 1998, 71). He maintained close ties with the ultraconservative wing of the Catholic Church, and courted church support for his *Revolución Argentina*, which was a “combination of liberal economic policies, technological and industrial modernization, and a staunch Catholic nationalism based on messianic beliefs and a fervent anticommunism” (Burdick 1995, 218). One way Onganía obtained Catholic support was through the approval of an agreement with the Holy See. In 1966 the Onganía government signed an agreement weakening the state’s power of patronage and transferred more power regarding particular issues to the church. It allowed Rome the power to create or end ecclesiastical jurisdictions and to appoint archbishops and bishops. Although the government retained the right to object to appointments, it gave up the authority to approve or reject papal documents. The agreement also continued state involvement in maintaining dioceses (Mignone 1988, 76). Onganía appointed many Catholics to positions in the government and in 1969 he consecrated the nation to the “Heart of Mary” (quoted in Klaiber 1998, 72). Cardinal Primate Antonio Caggiano was one among many clergy who enthusiastically supported the General, stating “It is a miracle. Our country, thanks to God, marches towards greatness” (quoted in Burdick 1995, 128).

Onganía’s attempt to rapidly modernize Argentina combined with a campaign of widespread repression and an alliance with conservative Catholics “exacerbated class divisions and social tensions throughout society and helped to bring about the revolutionary left” (Burdick 1995, 218). Onganía was unable to appease the restless

working classes and in 1969 Peronists called for a national strike, which resulted not only in protests but riots participated in by labor groups and students. Increasing unrest convinced the military that only bringing back Perón would decrease the chances of the country falling into chaos (Gustafson 1992, 37). Protests and strikes continued to escalate and violence increased until General Alejandro Lanusse gained control in 1971. Although he promised an eventual return to democracy, he postponed elections for two more years. In 1973 the military allowed free elections, although Perón was not allowed to run. Peronistas put up Héctor Cámpora for the election but made it clear that Perón would actually have power. The unofficial campaign slogan was even “Cámpora in government; Perón in power” (Burdick 1995, 193). Cámpora won the election and worked to enable Perón to become the real president. He held new elections in September and this time, Perón became the real president once again.

Political conflict over the outlawed Peronists “became the basis for the growing polarization of forces within the Argentine church and society at large” (Burdick 1995, 166). In the 1960s and 1970s the state of Catholicism in Argentina is best characterized by growing conflict between conservative and liberal Catholics over “correct interpretation” of Catholic social doctrine and what the rightful role of the church was regarding social change. From 1968 to 1974 a group of several hundred priests representing the Catholic left opposed the military regime and urged socialist reform. This group was known as the Movement of the Priests for the Third World (or MSTM). Essentially, MSTM called for a “restoration” of Peronism. This group was the “most visible challenge to a traditional preconiliar Catholicism firmly entrenched in the Argentine episcopacy” (Burdick 1995, 111). MSTM, however, was extremely divided,

and when the coordinating committee met in 1970 to draw up a pronouncement for Peronist Loyalty Day, the members could not agree on the relationship between Peronism and socialism. Two factions, the Peronists and the socialists, emerged, and after Perón returned to power, the divisions with the MSTM caused the movement to disintegrate into regional and ideological factions (Burdick 1995, 192). By 1974 the organization had disbanded and the conservative faction of the church controlled the Episcopal Conference (Smith 1979, 113).

As some priests in the Argentine Catholic Church moved to the left, the Argentine bishops moved father to the right. Archbishop Adolfo Tortolo of Parana was elected President of the Argentinean Episcopal Conference (CEA). In 1968 the Archbishop was appointed to be the military vicar. During this time conservative Argentine priests wrote extensively with the purpose of countering what they called the “heresy” of Liberation Theology, and in 1979 the Argentine representatives at the conference of Latin American bishops in Puebla, Mexico, attempted to prevent the use of the word *liberation* in any document (Gustafson 1992, 40). In 1970 the Argentine Permanent Commission of the episcopacy met and released a document explaining the errors of the MSTM, highlighting their lack of obedience to the church. The bishops also “repudiated the call for a popular and democratic socialism, stating that private property.... Was an indispensable right as shown by natural law” (Burdick 1995, 171). As unrest and violence increased, the bishops appeared to grow increasingly uneasy and in 1971 the CEA’s Permanent Commission made an exception to their general silence regarding political issues and published a pastoral letter that called for elections and a return to civilian rule. The bishops stated:

We are absolutely convinced of their [the Argentine people's] capability of constructing—through their active and responsible participation—a political society that guarantees the fulfillment of the most noble aspirations. For them it is necessary to remove the causes that have deteriorated the institutional life of the country and which sustained doubts concerning our capacity for coexistence, solidarity, order and progress (quoted in Burdick 1995, 183).

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the church continued to be constrained and manipulated by the state for political gain. President Onganía attempted to associate the church hierarchy with his *Revolución Argentina*, and President Roberto M., Levingston created a smear campaign “against conciliar Catholicism, which sought to create as much scandal as possible for the church” (Burdick 1995, 174). Levingston was openly hostile to the MSTM and exerted pressure on the hierarchy to adopt severe measures against the priests within the MSTM. Perón, meanwhile continued to attempt to manipulate the church by supporting the MSTM as “disseminating the truth” against the hierarchy, which they claimed was aligned with the right and powerful at the expense of the people (Burdick 1995, 179).

Making social unrest even deeper were the leftist movements formed in the 1960s and 1970s such as the Peronist Montoneros and the People's Revolutionary Army. These groups violently opposed the military regime and attacked military and police installations, assassinated military and police officers, kidnapped people for ransom, and stole money from banks (Smith 1979, 112 and Burdick 1995, 167). They were highly effective; “these organizations formed the best equipped and most effective guerilla movement in Latin America by 1973” (Smith 1979, 112). In response to leftist violence, paramilitary groups formed and conducted their own kidnappings and assassinations.

Even for the short time that Perón was president, violence continued to flourish throughout Argentina.

Once Perón became president for the second time in 1973, it became increasingly clear that by “national restoration” Perón actually meant the revitalization of capitalism and not socialism, thus alienating leftist supporters (Burdick 1995, 197). Perón also wanted to unify the Peronist party, and in order to do so he dismissed his leftist supporters, including the MSTM, the Montoneros, and the Peronist Youth from Peronism. The hierarchy meanwhile issued a formal statement calling for national reconciliation and peace and unity. Regarding the Peronists they stated that they “were willing to accommodate the new government as long as it respected the church’s traditional privileges, including the right to maintain private schools, the freedom of worship, and the indissolubility of marriage” (Burdick 1995, 198). Once again, the church acquiesced to the government as long as it did not threaten its interests.

Perón died in July of 1974, and his wife, Isabel Perón, became president in his place. Violence escalated across the country and the economy became increasingly volatile. Inflation reached an annual rate of 700 percent by March 1976. A state of siege was imposed and 3,000 persons were consequently placed in “preventive detention” and 1,500 people were assassinated, most by death squads that were assisted by the government” (Smith 1979, 112). As the chaos escalated, it became increasingly inevitable that the military would intervene.

The Military Regime and Church Accommodation

Due to the increasing economic and political volatility of the country, the coup in March of 1976 led by General Jorge Videla was not unforeseen by most Argentines

(Klaiber 1998, 75). Indeed, some leaders of the church called for a military intervention before it occurred. In September of 1975, for example, the provicar for the military, Bishop Victorio Bonamín said that the military was being “purified in the Jordan of blood so that they could place themselves at the head of the whole country. The army is expiating the impurity of our country. May not Christ some day want the armed forces to go beyond their normal function?” (quoted in Gustafson 1992, 38). Bonamín stated this in a homily that General Jorge Rafael Videla attended. Many of the Argentine bishops “frankly shared the same mentality as that of the military as regards the identification of Catholicism with country. For both, communism represented a virus that had infected the national body, and the elimination of that virus constituted a step toward health for the church and for society” (Klaiber 1998, 78). The night before the coup General Videla, the coup leader, met with two of the leaders from the episcopate, and on the day of the coup three members of the new military junta met with Archbishop Tortolo. Tortolo welcomed and publicly promised church support for the military government and urged Argentines to “cooperate in a positive way” with the new government (quoted in Gustafson 1992, 39).

The regime quickly began to carry out their “dirty war” in the name of defending Western Christian civilization (Burdick 1995, 218). The military government planned to restructure society and named this the Process of National Reorganization. The dual goals were to fix the economy and to eliminate subversives. The junta released a statement, declaring “This intervention is not made against a particular sector, political party or economic system, but to correct excesses, impede deviations, reorder, and rechannel integrally the national life, changing the Argentine attitude with respect to their own

individual and social responsibility” (quoted in Burdick 1995, 223). Unlike previous military interventions, the military took control of the entire “upper echelon of the state;” hence militarizing not just the head but the whole of government. The military junta suspended the constitution, dismissed the Congress, banned political parties, outlawed labor unions, censored the press, overturned due process of law, and suspended writ of *habeas corpus*. Although strikes and protests erupted after these measures were enacted, the military responded with quick and brutal efficiency. Not only did the military target people who had committed violent actions, but anyone who might be considered “subversive” as well. According to President Videla, a subversive was “anyone who opposes the Argentine way of life” (quoted in Burdick 1995, 222). Videla further stated that “Terrorism is not defined only by killing with an arm or placing a bomb; it is also defined by inciting others to act by the force of ideas contrary to our western Christian civilization” (quoted in Klaiber 1998, 75).

Disappearances were more prevalent in Argentina than in Chile. In part to avoid the international criticism the Pinochet regime in Chile had confronted, the armed forces of Argentina utilized clandestine state terror more prevalently than in Chile (Loveman 1998, 512). Brysk describes the technique of a general disappearance as follows:

‘Disappearance’ involved kidnapping of unarmed citizens (usually in the middle of the night, from their family homes) by a gang of armed men, followed by forced removal of the victims to clandestine detention centers, extensive torture, and mistreatment, and (almost always) murder.... Although the kidnappers usually sought a specific person, other family members or visitors often ‘disappeared’ in lieu of or in addition to the intended victim (1994, 36-37).

The military regime attacked not only communists and peronists, but in general, their stated goal was to remove all “subversive cancers” from the nation. By November of

1976 the number of killings and disappearances totaled 1,200 (Smith 1979, 113). The armed forces had virtually eliminated the Montoneros and the People's Revolutionary Army, yet a high number of disappearances continued throughout 1977 and 1978 (Burdick 1995, 223).

In a situation similar to that of Chile, immediately after the military coup in Argentina, the church was assailed by families of the disappeared and those imprisoned or exiled who were seeking help (Mignone 1988, 20-26). Unlike the church in Chile, however, the Argentine church publicly supported and defended the military regime, in most cases refusing to assist victims of persecution, and failing to support programs to defend human rights (Loveman 1998, 507). Two months after the coup the episcopacy responded to public pressure by issuing a letter that condemned kidnapping and torture but defended the military regime:

We must keep in mind that it would be easy to err with good intentions against the common good, if one were to insist that the security forces must act with chemical purity of peacetime, while blood is being shed every day; that the kinds of disorders, whose depth we all know quite well, were to be straightened out without the drastic kinds of measures that the situation demands; or that we should be unwilling to accept for the sake of the common good the sacrifice of the measure of freedom that this moment requires; or that with justification allegedly based on the gospel, there should be an attempt to impose Marxist solutions" (quoted in Mignone 1988, 20).

In this letter the church hierarchy blatantly defended the military against claims of human rights abuses, and argued that it would hurt the common good if people were to insist that the military behave with what they called "chemical purity."

The bishops did produce several documents addressed to the military junta that expressed their concerns regarding the situation. The documents, however, were extremely deferential. One private letter dated March 17, 1977 is representative:

We today want to communicate to you, by means of this letter, the concerns that have been coming to our attention from all sides for some time now... These concerns have to do with the situation of a considerable number of our fellow citizens whose relatives or friends claim that they have been abducted or have disappeared at the hands of groups of persons who claim to belong to the armed forces or police and act in their name... Thus it is, your Excellencies, that with all due respect, and indeed certain that we will be heard, we request that you take specific measures to restore the confidence of so many of our citizens, who find themselves under attack and do not know who should be blamed (quoted in Mignone 1988, 28-29).

The bishops undermined the tentative criticism by only saying that people “claim” that relatives have disappeared and requesting the military to “restore confidence.” As Mignone notes, “the bishops simply transmit statements, without taking any stand on whether or not they are true” (Mignone 1988, 29).

Despite increasing evidence presented to the bishops by victim’s families of human rights abuses, the hierarchy refused to condemn the military. In October of 1976 Archbishop Tortolo declared to reporters regarding disappearances “I do not know, I have no reliable proof that human rights are violated in our country. I hear about it, I listen to it, but I am not convinced” (quoted in Mignone 1990, 356). In a public document released by the Bishops’ Conference in 1979, the Bishops stated the following about the disappeared: “Although it is true that the government has cleared up and made known the situation of many of them, and that law 22,068 deals with absence and presumed death, thus attempting to resolve some questions about legal and patrimonial rights, nevertheless the problem of disappeared persons still remains, whether as a result of subversion, or of repression, or of free choice” (quoted in Mignone 1988, 34). Although the bishops acknowledged the existence of the disappeared in this statement, they did not acknowledge the military as the cause of the disappeared, and noted that it

could be due to subversion or free choice. Some members of the hierarchy even insisted that disappearances were not occurring at all. Cardinal Aramburu publicly denied that the disappeared even existed and adamantly maintained this position (Lowden 1996, 18). In 1982 Cardinal Aramburu and in 1983 Cardinal Quarracino stated to the foreign press that there were no disappearances in Argentina (Klaiber 1998, 81).

The bishops' tentative statements regarding the military regime might have had more force if the church hierarchy had taken active measures to assist victims of repression. Yet many bishops refused to even meet with the families of the disappeared (Mignone 1988, 26). On an individual level, Emilio Mignone related that when he went to visit the army vicar, Bishop Victorio Bonamín, about his disappeared daughter, he was told by the Bishop's secretary that Bonamín "did not become involved in situations about prisoners, 'disappeared persons' and unemployed so as not to interfere with the actions of the armed forces" (Mignone 1990, 358). Furthermore, whenever the bishops would meet together, "they were confronted by hundreds of persons striving to meet with the leaders;" large gatherings of people would come together and meet in front of the building where the bishop's meetings occurred and would wait and hope for contact with one of the priests. Mignone quotes a news clipping reporting on one particular incident dated April 25, 1978 that is representative of many such occurrences: "Yesterday more than fifty men and women, most of them middle aged, spent a long and fruitless time waiting on the grounds of the Maria Auxiliadora retreat house. They were unable to achieve their main goal, which was to meet with the president of the Bishops' Conference of Argentina, Cardinal Raúl Primatesta. Instead they passed the bishops a letter" (Mignone 1988, 28). When Bishop Jaime de Nevares, who was the honorary president of

the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights (APDH) formally proposed to the bishop's assembly that a special vicariate, similar to the one in Chile, be formed in order to help protect victims of repression and their families, his proposal was rejected by a majority vote of bishops (Mignone 1988, 98).

Organizations attempting to protect human rights in Argentina did form during the military regime. The Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights (MEDH) was founded by ecumenical leaders including Catholic clergy. MEDH provided direct assistance to victims and their families in the form of legal aid and emergency relief. Individual religious leaders, lawyers, academics, politicians and other professionals formed the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights (APDH), which worked to collect and document human rights abuses and disappearances. The growth and activities of these human rights organizations, however, were severely limited due to the Church's lack of support. Neither organization was as effective or publicized as the activities of COPACHI and the Vicariate of Solidarity in Chile (Smith 1979, 113). Both organizations lacked resources and a source of protection from direct persecution. It was difficult for the human rights groups to solicit outside funding because any group receiving large amounts of outside funding was suspected of supporting guerilla activity (Smith 1979, 113). The lack of resources and repression endured by these groups "prevented these organizations from providing nearly the extent of support or protection from state violence that programs under the auspices of the Church in Chile were able to provide" (Loveman 1998, 511). The absence of the Church umbrella deprived Argentine human rights organizations of resources, protection from military repression, and the

“social and organizational networks that fostered the emergence, growth, and sustainability” of the human rights organizations in Chile (Loveman 1998, 511-512).

Members of the church hierarchy did not just individually decide not to participate in human rights groups; they also inhibited clergy from participation. Two incidents reveal the extent to which members of the hierarchy were discouraged from joining human rights groups. Father Enzo Giustozzi was a member of APDH who lived in the dioceses of Avellaneda. The Auxiliary Bishop of Avellaneda, Rubén H. Di Monte, “threatened Giustozzi with the withdrawal of his priestly faculties if he did not resign from the APDH.” Eventually, Giustozzi was transferred to Mar del Plata, and the distance successfully restricted his APDH activity (Mignone 1988, 99). Another priest, Father Mario Leonfanti, was working with the MEDH to help families of the disappeared. He eventually had to withdraw from the MEDH due to threats by Archbishop Aramburu to withdraw his priestly faculties. Hence, pressure exerted at the upper levels of the hierarchy was frequently successful in discouraging priests among lower levels of the clergy from working with human rights groups.

Members of the church hierarchy were also critical of international attempts to monitor human rights in Argentina. When the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (ICHR) of the OAS visited in 1979, many bishops expressed annoyance with the visit and defended the military regime. In a statement regarding the visit, Bishop Octavio Nicolás Derisi, rector of the Catholic University of Argentina, stated:

I believe the ICHR should not have come... The government very generously allowed them. Thus, I also respect the commission, but there was no reason why a foreign commission should come to examine us. I believe that the government is now doing things well and all this was unnecessary. In any case, now that the commission has come, I pray to God that they may be objective and not be influenced by those who have

created this problem in Argentina: the families of those guerillas who engaged in killing, kidnapping, and robbery (quoted in Mignone 1988, 67).

Moreover, Mignone relates that before the arrival of the commission, he and an ICHR representative went to look for a place where family members of victims of human rights abuses could report their stories to the ICHR. Since they were seeking a place where people would feel safe, they sought to hold their meetings in a Catholic Church building. Their requests, however, were denied, and Cardinal Primatesta specified that he did not want to do anything “that could be considered critical of the government” (Mignone 1988, 69).

Although some divergence of opinions and attitudes regarding the military regime existed among members of the hierarchy, those who dared speak against the military regime were a “marginalized minority” (Loveman 1998, 508). Of 80 active Argentinean bishops, only four spoke out against the massive human rights violations carried out in the dirty war. Surprisingly, the complicity with the regime was such that the Episcopal Conference was silent even when clergy were persecuted. Sixteen priests were murdered or disappeared and two bishops died under suspicious circumstances (Lowden 1996, 18). Bishop Enrique Angelelli, for example, was mysteriously killed in 1976 while collecting evidence regarding the death of two priests in his diocese who had been assisting the poor; in 1986 the status on the death of Bishop Angelelli was changed from an accident to an undeniable murder. In response to his death Cardinal Aramburu stated publicly that “none of the investigations left any possibility” to think the Bishop might have been murdered (Mignone 1988, 143). He never changed this statement, even after the judicial decision was made that Angelleli was unquestionably murdered.

In 1980 political parties formed the *Concordancia Multipartida* in an attempt to negotiate the return of democracy. At the urging of this coalition, the bishops mediated between civilian and military sectors. In 1981 the bishops issued a pastoral entitled “The Church and National Community” which affirmed the need for democracy. According to the bishops, democracy was the only means to achieve common good, which included the “defense of the rights and duties of the person” (quoted in Burdick 1995, 225). The military junta however, did not respond to this call for democratization. In 1982 General Leopoldo Galtieri invaded the Malvinas/Falkland Islands, which was a popularly supported move. Bishops and clergy throughout the country supported and applauded the invasion from their pulpits. Moreover, the archdiocese of Buenos Aires “initiated a special collection for the Argentine Malvinas National Patriotic Fund, which was repeated throughout the country” (Burdick 1995, 226). The subsequent defeat stunned the country and led to riots after people discovered the misinformation the government had issued about the war (Burdick 1995, 227). General Galtieri resigned and General Bignone was installed as the new president and initiated a transition to democracy.

In 1983, two weeks before national elections, the military proposed a self-amnesty law which gave general amnesty for all criminal offenses committed by the armed forces between May 1973 and June 1982. Faithful to the military government to the end, senior members of the episcopacy expressed their support for military amnesty (Burdick 1995, 229). Archbishop Quarracino insisted that a “law of letting bygones be bygones” needed to be passed, Cardinal Aramburu said he was inclined towards amnesty, and Cardinal Primatesta urged forgiveness (Mignone 1988, 70).

What explains such unrelenting support on the part of the Catholic hierarchy for the military government? A significant part of the explanation is that the church's well-being was directly tied to state support. It is worth noting that the military regime was respectful of the church's interests, and that even during the military regime the episcopacy negotiated and obtained a state salary and a retirement fund for each diocesan and auxiliary bishop; a grant for a new house for Cardinal Aramburu of Buenos Aires was also arranged (Mignone 1990, 366). As Loveman notes, because of the Argentine Church's strong influence within society, their criticism of the military regime would have likely had a significant effect; although the Catholic Church was able to oppose authoritarianism, it was far from willing (1998, 508).

Throughout Argentina's history the church has remained under state control, most clearly in the Constitution of 1853, which established the Catholic Church and pledged to support it. This arrangement was still in force during the military regime. Throughout Argentina's history the state has used state patronage of the church in an attempt to gather the church's support of the governments' power and policies (Gustafson 1992, 19). It appears that the state's efforts have been mostly successful; throughout Argentine history, the church has compliantly accommodated the government, despite the differences in administrations and even military regimes. The Argentine church has only opposed governments when its interests and special relationship were directly threatened. Instances of church opposition, such as when the church spoke out against the Perón regime, only took place after the administration threatened or suspended church privileges. Hence, the church's response to the military regime during the 1970s and 1980s was historically conditioned by the church's dependence on the state.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Catholic Church in Uruguay: Willing but Weak

Like Chile, Uruguay had one of the strongest democracies in Latin America (Mainwaring 1990, 150). In 1973, the same year that Pinochet established his military regime in Chile, the military of Uruguay officially took over the government. Between 1973 and 1984 approximately 500,000 Uruguayans were exiled and 60,000 persons were detained in jails, which was over one in every 50 inhabitants in Uruguay (Loveman 1998, 519). Although the Catholic Church in Uruguay protested against many of these harsh measures, their attempts to oppose the regime were mostly unsuccessful, and they were unable to develop their own human rights organizations or to shield others. This chapter examines key points in the history of church-state relations in Uruguay, paying special attention to the separation of church and state and the failure to develop a strong Christian Democratic Party. It then looks at the limited oppositional role the church played during the military regime. Throughout the analysis, the comparative secularism of Uruguayan society will be highlighted as a unique variable that helps to explain the lack of influence exerted by the Catholic Church on Uruguayan politics.

Stage One: Structural Fusion

In 1726 the Spaniards established the city of Montevideo, which would eventually become the capital of Uruguay. Due to its remoteness and lack of precious metals, Uruguay was colonized significantly later than other countries in Latin America (Herring 1961, 698). This latter time frame is important because by the time colonization began in Uruguay in the eighteenth century, Europe was undergoing the process of secularization,

and “The religious fervor of the earlier generations and centuries had in considerable measure atrophied.” (Fitzgibbon 1953, 21). Moreover, free commerce between France, England, and Uruguay resulted in immigrants from these countries and the spread of European ideologies (Dussel 1981, 99). Therefore, Uruguay was not influenced nearly as much as other Latin American countries by the early “Spanish-Catholic colonial tradition” (Espinosa 1940, 4).

Due to the “royal enactment of 1776 instituting the viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata, Buenos Aires gained jurisdiction over the cities and rural regions of the interior, including the Banda Oriental, the territory that later became Uruguay” (Rock and Lopez-Alves 2000, 182). Hence, prior to Uruguayan independence ecclesiastical jurisdiction for the area belonged to the diocese of Buenos Aires in Argentina. This situation continued even after independence, until in 1830 the Uruguayan Congress ordered the president to petition Rome to create a separate diocese in the new republic. The legislators said that they were willing to fund the new diocese as long as the incumbent was a citizen of the state (Mecham 1966, 252). The establishment of an independent, Uruguayan diocese was not accomplished until 1878, nearly fifty years after independence. Hence, the Uruguayan Catholic Church was a “frontier parish” and under foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction from its’ founding in 1726 until 1878 (Espinosa 1940, 4).

Uruguay gained independence in 1828 with the help of mediation from the British, who were interested in maintaining a stable Uruguay that would be safe for commerce (Lindahl 1965, 448). The negotiations resulted in a treaty between Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, and Uruguay’s sovereignty was officially established in 1830 with the drafting of a constitution (Weinstein 1988, 18). In general, upon achieving

independence, Uruguay “adopted as its religious policy that of its mentor and guardian, Argentina” (Mecham 1966, 252). The first constitution of Uruguay was drafted by a convention, including five clerics, and it designated Catholicism as the established religion of Uruguay, bluntly stating that “The religion of the State is the Roman Catholic Apostolic” (quoted in Fitzgibbon 1953, 22). The constitution guaranteed financial support for the Catholic Church, yet the constitution also provided for the free exercise of other religions. It also gave the president the right of patronage, although this power was essentially moot due to the fact that the Uruguayan diocese was under the control of the diocese of Buenos Aires, and was thus unused by the Uruguayan government until the creation of an independent diocese in Montevideo in 1878.

The 70 years after independence were chaotic, yet the Constitution of 1830 remained essentially intact. Twenty-five governments ruled over Uruguay from 1830-1903, and of these governments nine were forced out of power, two leaders were assassinated, and ten successfully resisted attempted revolutions; only three were free of such disturbances (Hanson 1938, 3). Politics was dominated by two dominant and warring blocs: liberal urban groups and federalist rural groups. These two factions distinguished themselves by wearing different colored hatbands: the urban faction wore red (*colorado*) and the rural group wore white (*blanco*) and hence were born the two parties of Uruguay, the *Blancos* and the *Colorados* (Weinstein 1988, 19). Uruguayan political history is dominated by these two political organizations that eventually became the two prevailing political parties. As Luis E. Gonzalez says, “Uruguayan democracy was born within a two-party system;” meaning that Uruguayan parties preceded the unified nation-state and hence, often were the recipients of more loyalty than the state

itself (Gonzalez 1995, 139). Generally, the *Colorados* were liberal, cosmopolitan and urban-centered, and often took positions contrary to the interests of the Catholic Church. The *Blancos* represented the nationalist land-owning elites and also tended to attract the loyalty of Catholics (Mecham 1966, 253). Hence, Catholics tended to be associated with the more conservative *Blanco* party.

Beginning in 1865, control of the government was held for nearly a century by the *Colorados* (Whitaker 1964, 77). In order to control conflict between the *Colorados* and the *Blancos*, power-sharing pacts between the political parties were frequent. In 1872 the *Paz de Abril* ended a *Blanco* uprising by allowing the *Blancos* control of four of the thirteen political departments in Uruguay. In 1897 another *Blanco* uprising was resolved with the *Pacto de la Cruz* which gave the *Blancos* control over six of the now eighteen departments. By the end of the nineteenth century Uruguay had developed a political mechanism called co-participation that successfully contained most political conflict (Weinstein 1988, 19). Co-participation was the peaceful sharing of political and bureaucratic power by allowing members of both parties to hold bureaucratic positions in the government or on the boards of state corporations; the political mechanism was based on “the notion that the two traditional parties and their adherents had an inherent right to divide and share the process and product of government and governmental activities” (Weinstein 1988, 20).

Perhaps in part due to the secular nature of Uruguayans and in part due to the culture of negotiation and power-sharing that developed, the religious question never gained central importance within Uruguayan politics and, unlike Chile and Argentina, was never a major source of conflict. Although Uruguayan society did experience some

social cleavages, rural-urban distinctions were much more divisive than religious differences (Gonzalez 1991, 13). As Mecham notes, the lack of divisiveness over religious matters resulted in a situation wherein, “The *Colorados*, as a general rule, were mild and unaggressive anticlericals, and the *Blancos* were supine and lukewarm defenders of the State-Church” (Mecham 1966, 254). Without the strong support of either party, the privileges and the prestige of the church dwindled.

Stage Two: Increasing Anti-Clericalism

The Catholic Church definitely occupied a comparatively weak status in Uruguay. Throughout the nineteenth century the church suffered numerous attacks that were not violent or devastating but were “nevertheless unremitting and effective” in weakening the social position of the church (Mecham 1966, 253). A number of events illustrate this weakness. In 1837 the first president of Uruguay, General José Fructoso Rivera, legalized civil marriages in order that non-Catholics could be married without the Catholic Church’s consent. This action predictably resulted in lessening the church’s control over marriage. This act was followed in 1838 by the suppression of Franciscan convents and government appropriation of their property. In 1859 the Jesuits were expelled from the country. Public cemeteries were removed from church control in 1861 and put under the auspices of the state. In 1877 the Law of Common Education established free, secular, compulsory primary education, in effect removing the control of education from the church (Weinstein 1988, 11). The Catholic Church was able to retain some advantages regarding education though. Although schools were operated by the state they included religious instruction. For the most part, however, the privileges of the church were slowly and quietly being removed.

All of these events weakened the Uruguayan church throughout the nineteenth century, yet the Catholic Church was generally unable to effectively combat these measures. The removal of the church's privileges, however, did not go entirely without a reaction; "the Catholic answer to this Colorado hostility and Blanco neutrality in the field of politics was the organization of a professedly Catholic party" (Fitzgibbon 1953, 27). In 1872 the Catholic Church formed a Catholic party called the *Unión Cívica* with the stated goal of countering secularization. Although the party protested the reduction of church privileges, they were largely ineffective at preserving the church's position. The Catholic Church also attempted to find other ways to exert influence in society, and in 1878 it founded a Catholic newspaper called *El Bien Publico*. It tended to reflect the position of the *Unión Cívica*, and had very limited circulation. In the 1950s the circulation was at about 5,000 and was almost completely limited to Catholics (Fitzgibbon 1954, 193). In this same time period the church also created the Catholic Club of Montevideo, which was an important Catholic center, and founded the *Círculo de Obreros Católicos* (Catholic Workers' Organization) (Espinosa 1940, 11). The party and other organizations, however, were unable to galvanize Uruguayans, and the result was that the "privileged position of the Church was undermined and the so-called union of Church and State became more fiction than fact" (Mecham 1966, 253).

As in Chile and Argentina, the 1880s marks the period of increasing attempts to remove the Uruguayan Catholic Church's privileges. In 1880 the legislature established the Civil Register which completely removed any control the church had previously retained over births, marriages, and cemeteries. In 1885 civil marriage was made the only legal form and became compulsory for all those wishing to be married. Thereafter,

a child born from a church marriage alone would be considered by the state to be illegitimate (Mecham 1966, 255). Government aid to the church steadily decreased, and by 1892 it had dwindled to the point that the church received only \$19,712 per year from the government.

In 1903 *Colorado* leader José Batlle y Ordóñez, a man who would dominate Uruguayan politics until his death in 1929, was elected as president (Herring 1961, 702). Batlle's central goal was to strengthen and centralize the federal government, which led to a civil war that lasted for a year and a half. The *Colorados* won the war, resulting in decisive defeat for the *Blancos* and the dominance of the *Colorados* for the next half a century. Not only would the Colorado Party control the Uruguayan government until 1958, but Batlle's beliefs and programs, which came to be known as *Batllismo*, would have a profound effect on Uruguayan political institutions. Batlle was deeply influenced by his travels in Europe and was particularly impressed with the Swiss democracy, which had a pluri-personal executive called the Federal Council (Lindahl 1965, 448). Batlle planned to enact the programs he had seen in Europe in Uruguay; essentially, he envisioned a progressive Uruguay that would be a democratic and secular welfare oriented state (Weinstein 1988, 23). After the civil war and the *Colorado* victory, Batlle set out to make his vision for Uruguay a reality.

During his presidencies from 1903-1907 and 1911-1915 José Batlle y Ordóñez campaigned for a program he called *laicización*, a "public policy of secularization of education, divorce, and holidays" (Weinstein 1988, 27). His campaign resulted in several anticlerical laws including the legalization of divorce in 1907 and the 1909 prohibition of religious instruction in public schools. In response to this controversial law the Catholic

Church went on the defensive; they developed a network of Catholic organizations parallel to those of the state: schools, agricultural unions, savings and loan centers, banks and other economic and social institutions. Yet “Of this whole network, only the Catholic schools remain today, and they now collaborate with the state” (Barrett 1982, 734). The weakening of the church’s privileges would make the future transition to legal separation much smoother.

Separation of Church and State

Although many of the church’s privileges had been removed, official separation of the church and state did not occur until a new constitution was adopted in 1919. President Batlle y Ordóñez was largely responsible for the separation of church and state in Uruguay (Mecham 1966, 256). A central tenet of Batlle’s beliefs was that the ecclesiastical and the political institutions of Uruguay should be separated. The separation of church and state, however, was not the major issue that the new constitution dealt with. The most controversial item was Batlle’s proposal to abolish the presidency and replace it with a nine-member national plural executive. Batlle thought that the central threats to Uruguayan government were the dictatorship and instability caused by dominating presidents. His attempt to remedy this problem was “Batlle’s greatest and bitterest battle” (Fitzgibbon 1954, 132). Eventually a compromise was made that retained the presidency yet also created the *colegiado*, a National Council that allowed both parties to exercise some power within the executive branch through the existence of a pluri-personal executive where the party with the second most votes would receive a third of the seats. Although there was still a president, his powers were diminished, and most of the important powers of the executive were transferred to the nine-man *colegiado*.

The minority party was also given the power to block a significant portion of the majority party's program (Lindahl 1965, 447; 449).

In comparison to the immense conflict and negotiation surrounding the creation of the *colegiado*, the separation of church and state in Uruguay was a non-issue. By the time Batlle proposed to separate the two institutions, the bonds between church and state were already few and weak. The church retained few privileges from the state, and the amount of funding it received by the state was so little at this point that its absence would not impose a financial hardship for the church. Likewise, the state was not attached to the power of patronage, having rarely used it, and hence did not mind the sacrifice. Both institutions had little to lose from separation. Moreover, with separation the church would be free to name its own bishops. Hence, the separation occurred with little conflict. Indeed, "Considering the feeble ties which joined Church and State, prior to the adoption of the Constitution of 1919, the act of separation cannot be regarded as a radical step" (Mecham 1966, 256). The one group opposed to separation was the conservative, Catholic political party, *Unión Cívica*, which wanted to preserve the current policy regarding church and state. Despite this exception, separation was accomplished "with a minimum of rancor and hard feeling" (Mecham 1966, 256).

While most Uruguayan groups agreed with separation, there was some contention over what to do with the church's property. Eventually the moderate elements of both parties agreed that the church should be allowed to own and maintain its property and that it should not be taxed by the state. In return, government support would be completely withdrawn from the church. The new constitution guaranteed religious freedom and declared that the state should not support nor discriminate against any

religion. Similarly to Chile, the new constitution did not attempt to hurt the church, and it showed its goodwill by allowing the Catholic Church to keep all buildings constructed with national funds and by declaring that all temples intended for worship by any religious faith would be tax exempt. As in Chile, an endowment of 1,000,000 pesos was given to the church to help compensate for its loss of governmental financial support. Lastly, the state's diplomatic relations with the Vatican were terminated in 1919 and the Catholic Church was allowed to correspond freely with the papacy (Fitzgibbon 1953, 24). Regarding the issue of religious education, public education became entirely secular, but the Catholic Church was allowed to maintain private schools where religious instruction was a part of the curriculum (Mecham 1966, 258). Although religious schools were given an exemption from taxes in recognition of their valuable services, they were not given additional aid as in Chile.

Separation has been clearly maintained since the Constitution of 1919. The new constitutions of 1934 and 1951 made no changes regarding the relations between church and state. Although Fitzgibbon claims that the Batllista movement successfully shifted "the whole center of political gravity" regarding church and state, it appears that Batllista's policies simply extended and finalized the gradual removal of the Uruguayan Catholic Church's privileges. One of the key events in this narrative is the fact that the *Blancos* did not become ardent defenders of the Catholic Church but instead maintained a position of "official neutrality" (Fitzgibbon 1953, 27). Without the support of a major party there was little the church could do to maintain its privileges; and even after separation the church was not powerful enough to secure governmental aid for Catholic schools as in Chile.

Stage Three: Insulation

Post-separation there was little conflict between the church and the state, and separation was accepted by all political and religious groups. There was, however, an eventual “de-Christianizing” of public life. Separation was rigidly interpreted by the government. Religious holidays such as Christmas and Easter were still recognized as public holidays but given different names such as ‘Family Week’ and ‘Tourist Week’ (Mecham 1966, 258). The Catholic Church did not attempt to reverse separation, but did respond to separation by attempting to increase its influence throughout society. The church did have some positive results. In 1924 there were 85 churches and chapels, 200 clergy, and 150 nuns, but by 1960 the church had 477 churches, 688 priests, 237 schools, and 45 charitable institutions (Mecham 1966, 259). The *Unión Cívica* continued to represent the Catholic voice in politics; its professed aims were “Religion, Fatherland, Family, and Property” and it tended to attack social issues like gambling, divorce, and dueling (Fitzgibbon 1953, 27). Yet its success was limited. Catholic institutions like the *Unin Cívica* attracted only a Catholic membership, and many Catholics belonged to other parties; the inability of the party to attract non-Catholics, as well as its inability to garner the loyalty of most Catholics, severely limited the strength of the party as well as the strength of other Catholic organizations (Fitzgibbon 1954, 151). The *Unión Cívica* continued to be a minority party and never received more than five percent of the vote (Mecham 1966, 259).

In the 1950s right-wing Catholic nationalism declined in Uruguay and a progressive emphasis on social justice continued to grow and influence the Catholic Church. In 1957 the Uruguay Catholic Church restructured Catholic Action into

“specialized movements” that gave attention to problems of development and additionally began to increase the role of the laity through lay and parish groups. These changes were given further impetus due to the Medellín Conference’s influence and the papal encyclical ‘*Populorum progressio*,’ “which focused attention on the needs of society and contributed to the polarization of leftist and rightist wings in the church” (Barrett 1982, 734). Although Kaufman claims that the Second Vatican Council was strongly supported by the Uruguayan Church, “from the archbishop of Montevideo down to a great part of the clergy” (Kaufman 1979, 44), Barrett notes that the clergy who were linked to the upper class “remained on the defensive” (Barrett 1982, 734). Although many Uruguayan clergy began to push for social change, the result was not a unified acceptance of the progressive changes but rather increased polarization within the Uruguayan Catholic Church.

Increasing progressivism also influenced the Catholic political party. In 1961 *Unión Cívica* was threatened with a rift between its conservative and progressive members (Whitaker 1964, 79). Moderates within the party prevailed and in a national convention in 1962 the party voted to merge with a splinter group and form a Christian Democratic Party, the *Partido Democrático Cristiano* (PDC), in an attempt to follow the rise of international Christian democratic parties. Their goal was “to stem the rising tide of left-wing radicalism in Uruguay by promoting a social transformation through democratic means” (Whitaker 1964, 79). The Christian Democratic Party emphasized “society as a community of individuals, and, without challenging private property rights,” sought economic redistribution in the interests of the common good (Alisky 1969, 60). Regarding its goals the party was very similar to the PDC of Chile, yet was never as

successful. The merger was ineffective in that it did not strengthen the votes obtained, and in the 1962 election the PDC received 3.1 percent of the votes—which was a smaller percentage than received by the *Unión Cívica* in the 1958 elections (Gonzalez 1995, 150). In the 1966 elections the Christian Democratic Party won only 3 percent of the votes (Loveman 1998, 501).

Political Disintegration in the 1960s and Church Response

In the mid-1950s the Uruguayan economy began to stagnate and decline. In 1950s the Uruguayan peso was worth 50 American cents, but by 1960 it was down to nine cents. The economic turmoil resulted in the *Colorados* losing the elections for the first time in half a century, and in 1958 the *Blancos* were given power. This election signaled Uruguayans' increasing impatience with the economic crisis and with the government's apparent lack of power to halt the downward spiral (Gonzalez 1991, 39). Yet the *Blancos* were unable to halt or reverse the economic downturn either, and between 1959 and 1964 the cost of living quadrupled; in 1967 the GDP fell 5.4 percent and inflation rose 89.3 percent (Weinstein 1988, 36). The depreciated peso severely crippled the generous social-security system (Herring 1961, 708). Moreover, the recession led to a lack of social and economic mobility, and the ensuing absence of opportunities “produced resentment among workers, university students, and young professionals” (Klaiber 1998, 111). This disenchantment led to the formation of the Tupamaros in 1963. Convinced of the necessity of armed struggle in order to make any move towards social progress, the Tupamaros became a small, “radicalized group of left-wing militants” that built an urban guerilla movement in Montevideo in the 1960s (Gonzalez 1991, 39).

The formation of the Tupamaro Movement for National Liberation and the resulting guerilla activity led to increasing government repression. In 1967 President Oscar D. Gestido died and Vice-President Jorge Pacheco Areco assumed the presidency and immediately implemented “security measures,” through the form of several harsh decrees that began the process of turning Uruguay into a police state. President Areco froze wages and prices and invoked emergency powers that allowed him to repress protests; he also allowed the police to routinely engage in torture (Weinstein 1988, 40). Undeterred, the Tupamaros increased their activities; they robbed banks and the offices of transnational companies, and began to resort to terrorist violence (Klaiber 1998, 111). The violence enacted by the Tupamaros culminated in the 1970 kidnapping of several diplomats. One of them, Dan Mitrione, an American advisor to the Uruguayan police, was eventually murdered. In response, in 1971 President Pacheco put the armed forces “in charge of all antiguerilla activity” (Weinstein 1988, 41). Essentially, “the dialectic of increased repression and increased guerilla activity would lead Uruguay on a path that would continually weaken the constitutional norms and safeguards for which the country had been justly praised” (Weinstein 1988, 38).

In the years leading up to the coup, the Uruguayan Bishop’s Conference strongly supported the progressive positions of Vatican II and Medellín (Kaufman 1979, 44). The Episcopal Conference’s increasing progressivism was likely influenced by the Archbishop of Montevideo, Carlos Parteli. Parteli, a progressive, was named bishop of Tacuarembó in 1960 and then archbishop of Montevideo in 1976. As archbishop of the capital city he created a plan that emphasized the laity and the youth. Although the archbishop was progressive, there were several conservative bishops in Uruguay, the

most prominent being Carlos Mullin and Antonio Corzo (Klaiber 1998, 114). Although the church was divided between conservatives and progressives, Barrett claims that the “progressivist wing prevails” (Barrett 1982, 734).

As the state grew more repressive throughout the 1960s and 70s, the Catholic Church became more critical of the government, and especially of capitalism. Several bishops produced scathing critiques of the social problems in Uruguay. In 1968, for instance, Archbishop Parteli (at the time Bishop of Tacuarembó), and the Bishop of Melo issued a letter that pointedly critiqued the unjust social conditions in their dioceses. Following is an excerpt from the letter:

Our economy is designed to benefit a few and impoverish the many.... Young people, without a future to look forward to, flee to the cities only to be trapped in greater despair. Job opportunities and chances for an education do not exist. Ranch hands and workers in the cane fields cannot keep a family together; they do not get a fair wage and they are often fired, thus losing their right to work. Inequities in land distribution choke the small producer and benefit the large landowners. Confronted with this situation, we are compelled by Christ’s charity to say that God does not wish this. So we call on our communities to walk hand in hand with all the oppressed who are striving for liberation (Peruvian Bishops’ Commission 1970, 114).

In 1967 the Episcopacy issued a collective pastoral letter on social problems, and in 1969 the Uruguayan Bishop’s Conference condemned the use of violence and torture by the police and declared that “it is not possible to hide the death, physical punishment and torture” executed by the government (quoted in Kaufman 1979, 45).

In the late 1960s the successor of the *Unión Cívica*, the Christian Democratic Party, took increasingly progressive positions and became the driving force behind a coalition called the *Frente Amplio*, or Broad Front, founded in 1971. The Broad Front was a coalition of all the legal leftist parties, including the communists and socialists as

well as *Blanco* and *Colorado* dissidents. However, the Tupamaros also supported the Broad Front, which tended to provoke much hostility towards the coalition. Yet the Broad Front was more center-leaning than the Chilean *Unidad Popular*. The Uruguayan Bishops Conference implicitly defended the Broad Front before the elections of 1971. In a declaration on the elections the Episcopal conference warned Christians not to support Marxism but also said “We did not find sufficient reason to recommend nor to exclude any of the current parties as a legitimate choice” (quoted in Klaiber 1998, 114).

Although the bishops did not explicitly approve of the Broad Front, neither did they condemn it; instead allowing Catholics to vote for whichever party they deemed the best. In the 1971 elections the Broad Front won 18 percent of the national vote and 30 percent of the vote in Montevideo; this was the first serious challenge by a third party to the traditional Uruguayan political parties (Gonzalez 1991, 39). Yet due to the impending military regime, the party’s potential future success was cut short.

The Military Regime

The escalation of violence by the Tupamaros and the military eventually led to the institutionalization of the police state by President Pacheco’s successor, Juan María Bordaberry (Klaiber 1998, 111). In 1972 President Bordaberry declared a state of “internal war,” in effect placing Uruguay under martial law, and suspended all constitutionally guaranteed individual rights (Weinstein 1988, 41). In June of 1973 Bordaberry, supported by the military, closed down the parliament, empowered the police and armed forces to take any necessary measures to “ensure normal public services,” and began ruling by decree (Weinstein 1988, 45). Although government repression began before this point, this event marks the official beginning point of the military regime.

Like Chile, the coup in Uruguay interrupted a long tradition of civilian rule. Both countries had “a highly developed political party system, national labor unions, a large urban population, a prestigious education system, and a long electoral tradition with only a few brief interruptions” (Loveman 1998, 499). Unlike Pinochet, there was no single military man in charge; rather, there was a committee that made decisions, which was made up of the heads of the three branches of the armed forces and the ministers of defense, interior, and foreign affairs. By the end of 1972 the Tupamaros were destroyed, yet the military still used the threat of their terrorist violence as justification for its rule. Once in power the military did not focus on the Tupamaros but attempted to detain all people associated with the left. The military’s goal was not just about stopping the Tupamaros, but was to “destroy all forms of subversion in order to preserve the Uruguayan state” (Weinstein 1988, 49).

After parliament was closed the armed forces destroyed the labor unions, intervened in the university and secondary-schools, banned leftist political parties, movements, and publications and “held more political prisoners per capita than any other country in the world” (Weinstein 1988, 56). While fewer people died due to state terrorism than in Chile and Argentina, between 1960 and 1979 approximately 55,000 people were in jail. The OAS reported that 80,000 persons were “detained, abused, or tortured” (quoted in Klaiber 1998, 112). Repression was, in some ways, not as strong in Uruguay as it was in Argentina and Chile. Rather, the repression was characterized by “the high degree of sophistication in the means used to control the population and by the length of the detentions” (Klaiber 1998, 112). According to the Reverend Luis Perez Aguirre, the head of *Servicio Paz y Justicia* in Uruguay, “Uruguay did not have the most

blood-thirsty regime, but it was the most totalitarian through its use of fear and terror to demobilize the population” (quoted in Weinstein 1988, 53). The repression in Uruguay “was carried out with unprecedented sophistication; it was a hushed progressive repression measured out in doses until it gained absolute control over the entire population” (Servicio, Paz y Justicia: Uruguay 1989, ix).

In 1980 the military held an election in order to legitimize their rule and in order to ratify a new constitution which would result in their permanent power. Much to their surprise, the military lost this election with 57 percent of Uruguayan’s voting against the new constitution. In response, the generals claimed that it was the constitution that was voted down, and not military rule (Weinstein 1988, 76). Although the 1980 election did not lead to the immediate return of civilian rule, the military agreed to hold another election in 1984 and to transmit power in 1985. An elected civilian government was installed on March 1, 1985.

The Catholic Church and the Military Regime

The Catholic Episcopal conference took a cautiously critical position regarding the military regime. In 1972 the Uruguayan Bishops Conference issued a declaration critical of the violence caused by the guerillas as well as the government. Although the bishops stressed that “as bishops, our sole motivation is of a pastoral character... the mission is religious and not political,” their statement went on to directly criticize the military regime. They stated:

We have been receiving a great number of coinciding testimonies related to the inhuman treatment given to some prisoners, who have been linked or not with subversive activities.... In connection with our ministerial duties and in the service of all men, we cannot remain silent when death, physical maltreatment, torture, and unjustified imprisonment constitute

forms of a radical rejection of the dignity expected from a human being (quoted in Kaufman 1979, 45).

Unlike the Argentine episcopacy, the Uruguayan bishops did not cast doubt on the testimonies regarding human rights abuses. Moreover, they boldly stated that the military's techniques would prove futile, because, "To give in to the temptation to treat as subversives those who have merely wanted renovation will only serve to multiply the number of people tempted to resort to violence" (quoted in Klaiber 1988, 114). Hence, the Uruguayan bishops condemned, without reservations, the increasing repression and the human rights abuses being committed by the military regime. Yet the government was dismissive of the church's criticisms. In response to the bishops President Bordaberry replied "In this struggle, conventional standards are not applicable...Information is obtained in some instances spontaneously...and in others after rigorous interrogations. I defend the rigor and the severity of interrogations, which avoid bloodshed and deaths in this war, and which make possible bloodless victories" (quoted in Loveman 1998, 500). In June of 1972 Archbishop Parteli and two other prelates took part in a public funeral for eight communist workers that were killed by the armed forces (Barrett 1982, 734). Their participation symbolized an implicit critique of the government's violence. In July of 1973 a peaceful demonstration by several thousand opponents of the military regime was violently confronted by the police. In response to the bloody event, the Uruguayan Episcopate publicly declared that "all order imposed by force, that is not founded on justice, sooner or later engenders violence" (quoted in Weinstein 1975, 133). While the Uruguayan Catholic Church was the only surviving institution that dared to suggest criticism, the church was not successful in influencing the regime and moderating the repression (Lernoux 1977, 1).

When important prelates such as Montevideo Archbishop Carlos Partelli, “showed an unwillingness to grant legitimacy to and cooperate with the military regime,” the military attempted to pressure the church into adopting a “docile attitude” (Kaufman 1979, 45). Between 1972 and 1976 the military regime closed down five Catholic Church publications, such as the Catholic journal *Vispera*, one of the most respected religious journals in Latin America. When the Catholic archdiocesan newspaper *Informaciones* published an article on the beatitudes with a picture of armed soldiers surrounding a house in the slums, it was promptly closed (Lernoux 1977, 4). The military junta also began a smear campaign against Archbishop Partelli (Lernoux 1980, 282), and created an official commission to investigate the activities of the church (Loveman 1998, 501). In 1973 the military government suspended permission for the Corpus Christi procession, the biggest in the country, on the grounds that anti-government leaflets were distributed in the churches. Although Archbishop Partelli protested, noting that the government itself had thrown the leaflets out of passing cars, his efforts were futile (Klaiber 1998, 115).

As in Argentina, many priests in Uruguay were arrested and tortured (Kaufman 1979, 46). Even priests in prominent positions such as Father Arnoldo Spadaccino, head of the pastoral program for the archdiocese of Montevideo, were not exempt from arrest. In 1972 Bishop Marcelo Mendiharat of Salto, a progressive bishop, was interrogated by the military because his niece’s husband was accused of giving diocesan funds to the Tupamaros. Although he stated that he had no knowledge of any such activity, he was under investigation due to his progressive views. When Mendiharat took a trip outside of the country, he was advised by the other bishops to not return or else he would be

arrested. He remained in exile from 1972 to 1985 (Klaiber 1998, 114). Reporting in 1977 Penny Lernoux explained that due to the Uruguayan Church's little religious influence and lack of political clout, that there could be no doubt that "the civil-military junta would jail all of the country's bishops if they spoke in the same forceful terms as their Brazilian and Chilean colleagues" (Lernoux 1977, 1).

Verbal attacks were made not just against individuals within the church, but against the church itself as an institution. Military commanders began to accuse the church of being subverted by communism; General Forteza for example, declared that international communism "has reached the Church itself, violating in this institution the rights and obligations that the State has granted to the different religions," (Forteza in *La Opinión*, September 29, 1973; quoted in Kaufman 1979, 54). Furthermore, the Catholic Church's "ruinous villainous and treasonous actions must be once and forever expurgated" (Forteza in *La Opinión*, September 29, 1973; quoted in Kaufman, 1979, 46). The military regime also decided to restrict religious education, accusing it of "fomenting Marxist conscientization" (Barrett 1982, 734). The Catholic Episcopacy unanimously opposed this plan but was unable to stop it. Repression of the church was summarized as follows by the former bishop of Montevideo, Andres Rubio: "The Uruguayan police tentatively watches the Catholic Church, controls and watches the content of the sermons in the churches and investigates the text of the material circulated; several parishes and houses of clergymen have been subjected to searches and some priests have been arrested" (in the Mexican newspaper *Excelsio*, June 21, 1975; quoted in Kaufman 1979, 81).

Government harassment might have been manageable, however, if the hierarchy had been united in opposition. Rather, the conservative bishops joined with the government in an attempt to undermine Parteli's leadership. The Uruguay branch of a right-wing Catholic group called Tradition, Family, and Property issued a 384 page tract titled *Leftism in the Church: Communist Fellow Travelers in the Long Adventure of Failures and Changes*, which denounced the Uruguayan clergy for "completely abandoning their duty and aiding the enemy of religion and country." As one might expect, the government enthusiastically advertised the book as "among the best-selling books in Montevideo" (quoted in Lernoux 1980, 283). Perhaps the most harmful effect of the disunity was the chastisement received by Archbishop Parteli from Pope Paul VI during a visit to Rome in 1974. Although the pope later apologized to Parteli, stating he had not taken sufficient account of Parteli's own account of the state of the archdiocese, "the damage was done, and Parteli was deeply hurt by the pope's criticism. From that point on he softened his criticism of the government and did his best to search for consensus among his fellow bishops" (Klaiber 1998, 115).

After receiving threats and criticisms and suffering from internal division, the Catholic Episcopacy decided to lower its political profile (Kaufman 1979, 81). Yet the church prelates still attempted to use their position "as a means of mass communication to stress the public condemnation of the flagrant violations of human rights in Uruguay" (Kaufman 1979, 81). The bishops continued to send private messages to the government. In 1975 the Uruguayan Episcopal Conference issued a pastoral letter, unanimously signed, asking the military for "the widest possibly amnesty" for people and a "withdrawal from the philosophy of hatred and violence." The government responded by

banning the letter's publication and told the Bishops that if they did not delete the word 'amnesty' and "tone down the overall contents of the letter there would be severe retaliations, including the expulsion of all foreign-born priests, or 30 percent of the clergy" (Lernoux 1977, 5). The church acquiesced; withdrawing the letter from circulation to parishes and the media (Kaufman 1979, 81). The church's concession only further weakened its position regarding the military regime, and in 1975 four Dominican nuns were expelled from the country. This event led to the Bishops ordering all priests, nuns, and laymen to tighten security measures and to refrain from any new pastoral or social programs that might cause suspicion (Lernoux 1977, 6). Yet the repression continued, and the following year the government closed the Catholic Action Workers Movement and the bulletin it produced.

In 1980, prior to the plebiscite, the bishops published a declaration which criticized the proposed constitution. They stated "There is no real dialogue, nor legitimate social consensus, without a scrupulous respect for the will of the majority," and also criticized the suppression of civil liberties in the name of national security. Moreover, the Catholic Episcopacy distributed informational pamphlets to all the parishes in Uruguay regarding the impending plebiscite held in 1980. Within the pamphlets the bishops made a specific point of condemning the doctrine of national security, which was the foundation of legitimacy for the military government (Klaiber 1998, 116).

In 1983, after the military regime lost the plebiscite vote but before they had allowed a transition to a democratic government, the Uruguayan Episcopal Conference issued a letter entitled *Solidarity and Hope*. In the letter they gave explicit

recommendations for the government, stating that “It is, in fact, morally obliging for political institutions that they have no other aim than the common good. Such institutions will be weak unless they are rooted in a strong sense of justice and of love for neighbor. This root of justice and love is the point from which to derive an institutional framework that can safeguard the stability of institutions themselves and that can lead these institutions to serve the spiritual and material needs of all citizens” (Cleary 1989, 118-119). Moreover, the bishops also defined the correct relationship between freedom and security and implicitly critiqued the military regime: security, they said, does not “produce freedom, but is at its service...a national security that does not show clearly that it is at the service of national freedom, but rather seeks to steady itself by manacling social freedom, is no longer national security, but slavery.” They further stated that when national security arbitrarily restricts freedom then it loses its legitimacy and credibility with the community of the nation (Cleary 1989, 122).

After the transition to democracy was completed, the Uruguayan bishops issued a 1986 statement expressing their happiness regarding the reestablishment of democracy as well as further actions that needed to be taken: “Though it is true that we Uruguayans are happy at recovering institutional normality, the reality we are living shows us that other steps are still missing if we are to reach the fullness of an authentic democracy.” The bishops then called for “equal possibilities for everyone to satisfy the basic necessities of a life in dignity” and for the “free and effective participation of all in intermediary organisms.” Yet the bishops also applauded the many positive signs in Uruguayan society.

We are living in a state of law with public guarantees....The degree of participation of many organs in social life is satisfactorily augmented, and

social conflict is ordered through civilized channels and mechanisms for just agreements....It pleases us to see that human rights are an aspiration of all social groups and that all determinedly seek ways of making them respected in our country.... The respect for human rights is not optional. It is required of us all (Cleary 1989, 128-129).

A Lack of Human Rights Organizations

Throughout the military regime, but especially towards the beginning and the end, the Catholic Church in Uruguay made public statements opposing the repressive actions of the government and promoting human rights; they also took some symbolic actions, such as attendance at funerals of communists and the distribution of pamphlets that were in subtly critical of the military regime. Yet they were generally unable to form or assist organizations that could help protect human rights or that could serve as a base for opposition movements. Even when the members of the hierarchy attempted to make contact with members of human rights groups, they were thwarted. As Loveman notes, the Catholic Church in Uruguay was moderately “willing, but unable, to provide space and support for HROs” (Loveman 1998, 508). The absence of church support and resources at least in part explains the late arrival of human rights organizations in Uruguay. Although the repression began at the latest in the early 1970s, and by 1973 the transition to a military regime was complete, no human rights organizations existed until after the military lost the plebiscite in 1980.

In 1981 *Servicio, Paz y Justicia* (SERPAJ) was formed in Uruguay, yet it lacked institutional backing, which meant that “it was easily persecuted by the authorities” (De Brito 1997, 85). In 1983 it organized a hunger strike to protest the stalling of negotiations between the parties and the military. Archbishop Parteli attempted to visit the hunger strikers but was stopped by a military cordon (Klaiber 1998, 117). The

military further responded to the potential threat SERPAJ represented by declaring the organization illegal and confiscating its materials (Bickford 2000, 176). Until it was allowed to reform in 1985 it continued to operate clandestinely. No third party legal defense organizations existed until 1983 when the National Commission for Human Rights and the Institute of Legal and Social Studies emerged. Although this organization began to take on cases in coordination with SERPAJ from 1984 onwards, it began to function only a year before the democratic transition (De Brito 1997, 85). In general, the human rights movement in Uruguay arrived late and “suffered from fragmentation and weakness” (De Brito 1997, 87).

One of the main reasons for the human rights organizations’ weakness was a lack of external funding. A key reason the church was unable to help set up human rights organizations was due to a lack of financial resources. The military regime was highly suspicious of any group receiving outside funding, and in 1974 they closed the evangelist publication “*Mensajero Valdense*” because it received funding from the World Council of Churches, which was deemed by the government to be a Marxist organization (Lernoux 1977, 4). As Loveman describes, the Uruguay Catholic Church had “no institutional ‘funnel’ through which funds could be ‘anonymously’ received and diffused.” Hence, very few, if any outside funds could reach the Uruguayan Catholic Church, which was thereby limited as to the institutions it could form or support. Although SERPAJ received offers of support from foreign donors, it usually had to refuse the aid because there was no way to bring the finances into the country except for people to deliver the money personally, which was deemed to be too risky (Loveman 1998, 506).

Explaining the Catholic Church's Institutional Weakness

Regarding opposition to authoritarianism, Uruguay provides an interesting contrast to the cases in Chile and Argentina. While the Uruguay Catholic Church made critical statements regarding the military regime and its human rights abuses, these criticisms do not appear to have been taken seriously by the military regime. Although the church hierarchy also took some concrete actions to oppose the regime, such as the attendance of funerals and the publication before the plebiscite denouncing military security doctrines, they were frequently thwarted in these attempts. Moreover, the church did not have the resources to create or support human rights organizations. The Uruguayan Catholic Church seems to be a case where the hierarchy was willing to oppose the military regime, but was unable to execute effective opposition. The inability of the church to successfully oppose the military regime and to aid Uruguayans who were suffering from the effects of military rule can be understood by looking at three important factors. The first factor, discussed above, was the lack of unity within Uruguayan hierarchy. The discord among members of the hierarchy undermined Archbishop Parteli's willingness to take direct and public measures to censure the government. However, even the times the Episcopacy did offer criticism of the military regime as a united body, they were not taken seriously. Hence, a lack of unity is unlikely to be a sufficient factor to fully explain the Catholic Church's lack of opposition.

A second problem for the Uruguayan Catholic Church was a lack of structural carriers, or institutions that linked the Catholic Church with other areas of society and expanded its influence. As Mecham noted in 1966, Catholic organizations were not extensive in Uruguay (1966, 258). This absence of Catholic organizations meant that,

unlike Chile, the Uruguayan Church did not have the structural carriers necessary to connect the church with other segments of society. In Chile the Christian Democratic Party, Catholic unions, and Catholic student groups helped to link the Chilean Church with access to people and financial resources. These resources provided a base for mobilization once other societal groups were closed down by the Pinochet regime. Moreover the “cross-sectoral personal networks” enabled trust and cooperation in Chile (Loveman 1998, 501). Conversely, in Uruguay there was a “low level of interconnectedness and ideological affinity between the Church, political parties and labor organizations. Institutional linkages between the Church and the most prestigious universities, where the political and professional elites were predominantly educated, were also lacking” (Loveman 1998, 502).

One of the key structural carriers present in Chile, the Christian Democratic Party, was lacking in Uruguay. Although Uruguay had a small Christian Democratic Party, it never became a major party and never obtained the strong influence and loyalty among Catholics that the PDC had in Chile. Furthermore, both the major parties in Uruguay were secular. Although the lack of a strong Christian Democratic Party will be discussed more fully in the next chapter, I will offer a few comments now. Two factors appear to be important in explaining why Christian Democratic Parties did not become as strong in Uruguay as in some countries in Latin America such as Chile. First, Uruguay and Argentina’s Christian Democratic Parties were developed later than Chile’s, thus leaving less time and opportunities for them to acquire influence and make connections throughout society before the military regime. The Christian Democratic Party in Chile was first established as the National Falange in 1938, and officially became the PDC in

1957. Christian Democracy in Argentina formed in 1955, and in Uruguay the PDC did not begin until 1962 (Hawkins 2003, 81). Although the *Unión Cívica* existed before 1962 as a Catholic Party in Uruguay, it was unlike Chile's National Falange party in that it was not a progressive party. Progressivism did not take root in the *Unión Cívica* until the 1950s. Hence, the Christian Democratic Party in Uruguay had less time to build its political and social influence before the onset of the military regime.

A second factor that appears to have inhibited the growth of a Christian Democratic Party in Uruguay is the presence of a two-party system. Some scholars have termed Uruguay as a system of "disguised multipartism" because of a number of factions within the *Colorado* and the *Blanco* parties. Gonzalez, however, argues against this view for several reasons, primary of which is the "sheer endurance of the traditional parties in the face of numerous challengers" (1995, 143). Uruguayan electoral laws significantly strengthened the two-party system (Gonzalez 1995, 146). The electoral system consisted of a double simultaneous vote, in which voters chose among competing lists of candidates within the two parties. Hence, various factions were allowed to exist within one party; and whichever *party* had the most total votes would win the presidential elections, not the *individual* candidate with the most total votes (Lindahl 1965, 453). Hence there was a strong incentive for factions not to split off from their party entirely, but rather to create a different faction within the party (Gillespie 1991, 20-21). A further electoral condition that strengthened the two party system was the ban on ticket-splitting in which voters had to select just one party to vote for regarding both the presidential and the congressional elections. Despite the presence of proportional representation, the ban meant that a vote for a third party was essentially a wasted vote as far as the presidential

elections were concerned (Gillespie and Gonzalez 1989, 213). Both the ban on ticket-splitting and the double simultaneous vote strengthened the Uruguayan two-party system, thus making it exceptionally difficult for a third party to become prominent in the political system.

Another key factor that weakened the Uruguayan Catholic Church was the strong secularity of Uruguayan society. Mecham noted in 1966 that “Uruguay is a Catholic country, nominally, but the Uruguayans are not a religious people. In fact, there is probably more general religious indifference than in any other country in Latin America” (Mecham 1966, 260). Uruguay is the “least Catholic and least Christian of any Latin American Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking country” (Barrett 1982, 733). While Uruguayan society was not necessarily hostile towards the Catholic Church “the principal attitude was one of indifference” (Klaiber 1998, 113). In 1965, for example, only 10.4% of the population went to mass weekly (Barrett 1982, 733). Moreover, less than half of the population even professed to be Catholics in the 1960s (Klaiber 1998, 113).

Uruguay’s secularism is explained by three historical factors. First, Montevideo was not founded until 1726 and the Uruguayan diocese of Montevideo was not founded until 1878. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, unlike most other Latin American countries Uruguay was colonized after “the religious fervor of the earlier generations and centuries had in considerable measure atrophied” (Fitzgibbon 1953, 21). This has resulted in Uruguay having a historically more distinct tradition of irreligion than in any other Latin American nation. Secondly, the fact that the Uruguayan Catholic Church was an “ecclesiastical appendage” of Buenos Aires correspondingly diminished the “intensity of spiritual development and devotion.” Lastly, there was a large influx of English and

French immigrants to Uruguay during the revolutionary period, and these foreigners tended to be non-Catholic. Immigration that occurred after this period came from mainly from Spain and Italy, but represented social and economic classes which were less fervently attached to the church (Fitzgibbon 1953, 21-22). These historical factors have resulted in a Catholic Church that has historically had little influence outside its closely defined religious sphere. Due to a high level of indifference, the church did not wield the same level of moral influence it did in Chile and Argentina.

It is worth noting that the separation of church and state does not seem to have weakened the Catholic Church in Uruguay; rather, the church's weakness is due to the preceding historical factors mentioned above. Even before Batlle enacted his program of *laicización* and separated the Catholic Church from the state, the Uruguayan people were more secular in comparison to their fellow Latin American countries. In the 1908 census 37.2 percent professed to be non-religious (Barrett 1982, 733). Moreover, the number of Catholics and non-Catholics did not drop after the separation of church and state but remained consistent throughout the twentieth century. In the beginning of the twentieth century 61.2 percent of the population claimed to be Roman Catholic, and by 1970 that number was at 61 percent. Hence, Catholicism in Uruguay has remained consistently weak. The limited opposition by the Catholic Church in Uruguay regarding the military regime appears to be not necessarily due to a lack of Protestant competition or even due to separation of church and state, but rather is attributable to earlier historical and political factors that led to the existence of a country less committed to Catholicism and to a strong two-party system.

The secular nature of society combined with the lack of well-developed structural carriers of church influence meant that the Uruguayan Catholic Church played an isolated and limited role in Uruguayan society during the military regime. Loveman explains how these two factors worked together in order to prevent the church from aiding human rights groups:

Due to its relative isolation from the political process and historically marginal position in other spheres of Uruguayan society, the general did not feel obligated even to feign respect for the Church. With members and leaders subject to arrest and imprisonment, the Church as institution could not provide 'protected spaces' to the extent that it could in Chile, nor could it effectively perform the role played by the Chilean Church of collecting and disseminating 'counter-information.' In Chile, the historical, political, and symbolic importance of the Church as institution forced the military junta to adopt a more cautious stance toward the Church, allowing it to become the single most important locus of resistance and moral opposition to the military regime. In Uruguay, the Church was much more easily controlled and repressed by the generals (Loveman 1998, 501).

Although the Catholic Church in Uruguay appeared to be willing to oppose authoritarianism, and did play a limited role in criticizing the military regime, it was generally unable to mount a successful opposition. This suggests that not only does the church need to be separate from the state in order to have the autonomy to oppose authoritarianism, but that the church also needs to be connected and influential within society to be effective at opposition. Hence, separation of church and state is not a sufficient factor to cause effective opposition to authoritarianism.

CHAPTER SIX

Analysis of the Three Case Studies

Despite the laudable propensity of men to begin anew, to change the course of history, we are willy-nilly the heirs of the past.

–Renato Poblete 1970, 45

The preceding case studies show that there were distinct political-ecclesiastical relations in Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina, immediately preceding the onset of the military regimes in the 1970s. In Argentina the Catholic Church was still in the second stage; the church was established and was preoccupied with maintaining the privileges provided by the state. In Uruguay, the church was in the third stage of insulation, and in Chile the Catholic Church had developed to the fifth stage in which it was autonomous from the state but integrated into society through a number of structural carriers. These three national churches reacted to the countries' military regimes in ways that corresponded with their individual stage of church-state relations. This chapter begins with a brief comparison of the development of church-state relations in all three countries and then examines how differentiation motivated opposition while the presence of structural carriers enabled regime opposition. The final section of the chapter analyzes the conditions that facilitated or inhibited differentiation between church and state and the creation of the structural carriers that expanded church influence in society.

Comparison of Church-State Development

In all three of the countries the Catholic Church was initially structurally fused with the state. The Catholic Church was established as the national church and was dependent on the state for financial resources. In return, the state exercised the power of

patronage. In Uruguay, however, this privilege was unused for the first fifty years in the country's national independence due to the status of the episcopacy in Montevideo as a part of the Argentine Catholic Church. Hence, establishment was weaker in Uruguay than in Chile or Argentina. On the other hand, in Argentina the Catholic Church was given additional privileges such as a right to permanent representation in the form of a bishop and three lesser clergy in the Senate. In return, however, the state exercised a heavy amount of control over the church's internal affairs. The power of patronage was vociferously guarded by the Argentine government, and was so controversial an issue that the state declared independence from Rome and gave the Supreme Court the power to decide whether to allow or ban the admission of papal documents in the country. Relations with Rome were not established until 1855, and clergy were not allowed to communicate freely with Rome until 1927. Hence, ties between church and state in Argentina were the strongest of the three countries in this time period.

As the established church, the Catholic Churches of all three countries reacted to anti-clericalism and threats to its privileges by attempting to defend the status quo. In response to the attempted removal of privileges in the latter half of the nineteenth century, all three of the Catholic Churches endeavored to enter the political arena. The Argentine Church created the *Unión Católica*; the Uruguayan Church created the *Unión Cívica*, and the Chilean Church formed a strong alliance with the Conservative Party. All three of the churches also created Catholic organizations such as newspapers, unions, and clubs in order to strengthen their societal influence.

The churches' defense of their privileges through political alliances and the creation of structural carriers had varying degrees of success. When the *Ley*

Interpretativa was passed in 1865 by the Chilean Congress, which said that the prohibition of public exercise of non-Catholic faiths did not refer to religious services indoors, the Chilean Church strongly opposed this law. Although it passed, the failure of the church to stop the law led to an alignment between Catholics and the Conservative Party. The Chilean Church was not able to protect certain privileges; it was, however, with the help of the Conservative Party, able to thwart disestablishment by the Radical Party at the turn of the twentieth century. In the early 1880s the Argentine Catholic Church vigorously opposed the creation of public education but their protest was quickly suppressed by President Roca. This led to the establishment of the short-lived *Unión Católica*; the party was not powerful enough to exert much influence into the political arena, and was unable to stop the 1888 legislation that mandated secular cemeteries and civil marriages. In a manner similar to Argentina, the Uruguayan Catholic Church responded to anti-clerical measures by establishing a Catholic Party, the *Unión Cívica*, in 1872. Although the party protested the reduction of the church's privileges, they were generally unable to preserve the church's status. Like the Argentine party, they were unable to garner electoral strength and hence, their party's political influence was limited.

In the early twentieth century all three countries elected progressive presidents: President Alessandri of the Radical Party in Chile, President Yrigoyen of the Radical Party in Argentina, and President Batlle y Ordóñez of the *Colorado* Party in Uruguay. Disestablishment occurred in two of the cases: Chile and Uruguay. Although the separation of church and state was a controversial issue in Chile, a majority of the church leadership and the politicians perceived separation to be in their interests. Indeed, President Arturo Alessandri was eager to deprive his primary political competitor, the

Conservative Party, of the powerful ally they had in the Catholic Church. Chilean Archbishop Crescente Errázuriz, meanwhile, was increasingly concerned that the Chilean Catholic Church was being used by the Conservative Party to buttress its power. He also saw that the church's alliance with the party caused friction and division among Catholic laymen and clergy. Moreover, the Chilean Church would be able to take control of its national expansion and the appointment of clergy if church and state were separated. Although separation was controversial in Chile powerful entities within both institutions foresaw that separation would give them certain advantages. A key factor in the separation of church and state in Chile was the fact that the church had previously aligned itself with the Conservative Party in the mid-nineteenth century. Instead of creating their own party, such as occurred in Argentina and Uruguay, the Chilean Catholic Church threw its moral and institutional weight behind an already existing and powerful political party. The support of the Catholic Church for the Conservative Party was an undeniable political advantage that the Radical Party wanted to remove from their primary competitor. Hence, political competition between parties was a major impetus for the separation of church and state in Chile.

Another factor that enabled and maintained separation of church and state in Chile was the influence of the Vatican. When Chilean President Alessandri embarked on the process of disestablishment, he first sought out the Vatican's opinion and traveled to Rome to discuss the issue with the pope as well as the Vatican secretary of state. They decided that disestablishment was acceptable as long as the church was not unduly restricted. Although the Chilean hierarchy acquiesced to this decision, post-separation they began to re-insert the church hierarchy into the political process in support of the

Conservative Party. The papal nuncio in Chile, however, requested that the Vatican Secretary of State inform him of his opinion over the matter, and Secretary of State Pacelli strongly called on the church to remain nonpartisan and encouraged the church hierarchy to start programs that would train the laity regarding Catholic doctrine. In turn, the Chilean hierarchy deferred to the Vatican. As Smith notes, the international linkage between the Chilean Church and the Vatican was “perhaps the most decisive factor both in facilitating a compromise with the state over the conditions of separation and in neutralizing opposition within the Chilean Church to extrication from its traditional alliance with the Conservative Party” (Smith 1982, 84).

Separation in Uruguay was a much less controversial topic than in Chile. The connections between the church and state were weak, and many of the church’s privileges had been removed by the time that José Batlle y Ordóñez became president; hence his goal of disestablishment was not difficult to achieve. Essentially neither church nor the state had much to lose from separation. Although President Batlle was a member of the Colorado Party, the Blanco Party did not put up much resistance to disestablishment. In Uruguay, separation was not due to political competition as much as it was due to the apathy of the dominant political parties and the failure of the *Unión Cívica* to influence the political sphere.

Unlike the cases of Chile and Uruguay, in Argentina there was not a major party that wanted disestablishment. Because the Catholic Church did not side with one party in the late 1800s, (like the Chilean Church did with the Conservative Party) and because the church was a powerful source of legitimacy and influence (unlike Uruguay) there was not the impetus for one party to disestablish the church. Rather, both major parties saw the

Catholic Church as a potential ally that they could use to bolster popular support their own particular political goals. This political development was likely reinforced by the tendency of Argentine parties to be 'movements' that claimed to represent all Argentines and rarely shared power with oppositional forces.

Unlike the Chilean Church, the Argentine Catholic Church did not blame a particular party for the loss of certain privileges in the late 1800s; rather, they blamed an ideology, that of liberalism, for the removal of their traditional powers. The church responded to this perceived threat by attempting to increase its influence throughout society. It was successful in this effort, and it was also successful in its promulgation of a new ideology, that of Catholic Nationalism, which attempted to counter the spread of liberalism. Catholic Nationalism did not just oppose liberalism but posited that the Catholic Church was an integral part of Argentine society, including the political realm. Since the church wanted to maintain its established position within the Argentine government, it naturally promulgated the view that the church and state were necessary partners in the quest for security and stability. The Argentine bishops used their expanding prestige in conjunction with the privileges of establishment to ideologically merge Catholicism with Argentine national identity. They also used Catholic Nationalism to defend their own political interests, encouraging people to not vote for candidates that would separate church and state or remove the church's privileges.

Separation in both Uruguay and Chile was complete by 1925. The only difference was that the Chilean state continued to provide funding for Catholic schools, whereas in Uruguay no funding was supplied. After the separation of church and state in Uruguay and Chile the Catholic Churches reached the third stage of insulation. In Chile,

the period of insulation resulted in a flurry of activity as the church attempted to strengthen its internal authority and to educate and mobilize the laity. Catholic Action was created in 1931, which led to a number of new organizations such as the *Falange Nacional* in 1938 and the Institute of Rural Education in 1955. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s the *Falange* grew, drawing younger lay Catholics away from the Conservative Party and towards their political message of social Christianity. Due to the political power vacuum created by the breakdown of the centrist Radical Party in the early 1950s, when the social Christian faction of the Conservative Party broke away and joined the *Falange*, it was able to form into the Christian Democratic Party in 1957. Although the party's first presidential candidate, Eduardo Frei, did not win the 1958 election he was able to garner a significant percent of the vote.

In a manner similar to Chile, the Uruguayan Church post-separation attempted to educate the laity and to increase its influence throughout society by establishing a number of institutions linked to the church such as a worker's club and a Catholic newspaper. Yet these institutions were not able to expand their appeal to non-Catholics, and were not able to garner the loyalty of a majority of Catholics. Hence, most of these organizations, such as the *Unión Cívica*, exerted only a limited influence in society. Even after the *Unión Cívica* became the Christian Democratic Party in 1962 it still received less than five percent of the national vote.

Vallier predicts that in the third stage of insulation the church will attempt to make connections with society other than through the state in order to maintain an influential public role. If it is successful in establishing these modes of influence, it moves on to the fourth stage, where it uses its social power to establish programs to

relieve social problems. Because the Uruguayan Catholic Church was not able to increase the size and popularity of its Catholic programs, it had less influence on society and did not move to the fourth stage prior to the onset of authoritarianism. In other words, the weak condition of the church in Uruguay was perpetuated by its inability to create institutions, such as a Catholic party, that had broad appeal.

The success of the Chilean Church's efforts to consolidate institutionally and to educate its parishioners as well as the electoral strength of the Chilean Christian Democratic Party appears to have pushed the Catholic Church into the fourth stage of church-state relations. In the social development stage the Chilean Church became more focused on using its many programs to influence spheres of society outside of the church; accordingly, the church created many programs, not just for the laity, but with the goal of relieving general social problems. As a part of this effort the Chilean bishops endorsed agrarian reform and offered to sale 13,200 acres of church land. They also created an agrarian reform institution that was directed by the church. The church created housing cooperatives, peasant training programs, slum-dweller organizations, and trade union federations. The apex of this period was reached in 1964 when the Christian Democratic Party candidate, Eduardo Frei, won the presidential election. The Catholic Church provided support and legitimacy for Frei's agenda of reform throughout the campaign and during the beginning of Frei's presidency.

Frei's election, however, led to increasing polarization and conflict in society. In the last half of Frei's presidency the Chilean Church hierarchy began to realize that its' close association with the PDC (much like its former relationship with the Conservative Party), caused friction among members of the laity and within the clergy. Hence, the

church hierarchy began to distance itself from its affiliation with the PDC and to take on an overtly nonpartisan role. Instead of advocating for specific political reforms the church began to espouse general moral principles of social justice. The church attempted to identify itself not with a particular party but with moral values such as human dignity and democracy.

Institutional Arrangements and Authoritarianism

The central claim of this research is that the institutional arrangements between the church, the state, and society, understood through five general stages of church-state development, determined the manner in which the church would respond to the authoritarian military regimes. The institutional arrangements mattered because they shaped the interests, norms, and abilities of the churches in distinct ways and, in turn, these distinctive interests and abilities affected the will and capacity of the hierarchy to oppose authoritarianism. The following section will analyze the way that separation of church and state influenced the interests and norms of the church, as well as look at how the creation of structural carriers affected the resources of the church. Interests, norms, and resources all affected the will and the ability of the church to oppose authoritarianism.

In the case of Argentina the church continued to be the established state church. This institutional arrangement meant that the church's interests continued to be closely joined with the interests of the state. Just as the state sought security and stability, the church portrayed itself as a partner of the state and "presented itself as an anchor of security and a bulwark of traditional values" (Klaiber 1998, 69). The church essentially used its influence in order to position itself as a tool of the state. Since the church was

completely funded by the state, it was indubitably in its interests to appear useful and compliant with the state.

As essentially an arm of the government, the church was endlessly manipulated by the state. Many administrations courted the church and its parishioners to gain favor and votes, and the church generally supported any candidate that promised to not remove the church's state-protected privileges. If political leaders turned against the church, the church's recourse was to appeal to other elements of the government. Instead of aligning with political parties, which tended to be rather weak in Argentina, the Catholic Church aligned itself with the military. The case of Perón is indicative of a general trend in church-state relations in Argentina. The church initially backed Perón due to his support of a 1943 decree that religious education be provided in public schools. In return, in the 1946 election the hierarchy discouraged people from voting for Perón's opposition, but when Perón turned against the church, the church was reluctant to confront the government, fearing a further reduction of their privileges. Perón relentlessly attacked the church's subsidiary institutions such as newspapers, religious processions, and festivals but the church did little to respond. However, when Perón threatened church interests in the form of religious education and establishment, Catholics and the hierarchy turned to the military in order to protect them. It is important to note that the church did not speak out against Perón for subverting democracy or for principles of human rights; rather the hierarchy defended its particular traditional interests linked to the state rather than general values or principles.

As long as the church was established and hence dependent on the state for its livelihood its primary interest was to preserve its traditional privileges. The Argentine

episcopacy usually found that its interests were best preserved when it acquiesced and was compliant with the government. Hence, even before the onset of the military regime in 1986, the church showed itself to be compliant and subservient to the state as long as its privileges were untouched. Church-state cooperation and support for the government were only undermined for short periods of times when the state attacked the church's privileges. As soon as a new government appeared, however, the church promised its support as long as the state did not take away its privileges. Even after Peron's attack on the church, when Perón returned to power in 1973 the church acquiesced and promised its cooperation as long as Perón respected the church's prerogatives. Since continuing establishment and the accompanying traditional privileges were the foremost interest of the Argentine hierarchy, the church traditionally supported any government that promised to preserve this status quo.

Not only did the establishment of the Argentine Catholic Church shape its interests, it also shaped the ideas prevalent within the church. The symbiotic relationship between church and state in which both institutions sought legitimacy and power from the other created fertile ground for the ideological growth of integralism. The state (and agents of the state such as the military) and many clergy in the church shared similar ideological viewpoints that rejected communism, liberalism, and democracy, and supported order, hierarchy, and social harmony. According to the historian Fortunato Mallimaci, the Argentine Church's "lack of confidence in popular participation and their antidemocratic doctrines led them to share the same authoritarian and messianic visions as certain other social actors: businessmen, union leaders, bishops, military officials. They mutually reinforced each other" (quoted in Klaiber 1998, 70). This conservative

ideology was prevalent in Argentina among the bishops, and especially bishops in powerful positions such as Adolfo Tortolo, president of the Episcopal conference at the time of the military takeover, and Victorio Manuel Bonamín, the military chaplain. These bishops were “ultraconservatives” who “openly supported the military coup and justified the suppression of the guerillas, even with the use of torture” (Klaiber 1998, 77). Underlying integralist ideas, “conditioned the reaction of the bishops to the military dictatorship” (Mignone 1988, 95). Although it is difficult to determine whether interests or norms are more influential on behavior, it is definite that in the case of Argentina the norms of the hierarchy re-enforced and supported the interests formed by institutional arrangements.

Although the Argentine Catholic Church did have a number of structural carriers linking it to society, it used these sources of influence to buttress its interests, which were shaped by its close relationship to the state. Hence, while the Argentine church may have been able to have a powerful influence if it had critiqued the military regime, it was not in its interests to bite the hand that fed it. The traditional privileges bestowed to the church by the state were so closely cherished that privilege usurped principle. The Argentine Church’s interests and conservative norms created conditions in which the church was extremely hesitant to criticize or oppose the military regime and even occasionally helped and defended the military regime. By refusing to investigate human rights abuses, even in the cases regarding church clergy, and by making statements that defended the military regime, the church helped to legitimate authoritarianism.

In Chile separation of church and state allowed the church to distinguish its interests and norms from the government in general and from the Conservative Party in

particular. After separation the Chilean Catholic Church eventually lost its preoccupation with protecting its traditional privileges, in part thanks to Vatican encouragement to stay non-partisan. Post-separation the church hierarchy turned inward and began to focus on strengthening the unity and authority of the clergy and the faith of the laity. A key part of this effort was the creation of organizations to teach Catholic doctrine.

In response to low levels of practice and religious education among Catholics in Chile, the Catholic Church began to heavily emphasize programs designed to educate the laity about Catholic social doctrine such as Catholic Action and the National Association of Catholic Students. These church-sponsored groups disseminated ideas about social justice, equality, human dignity, and democracy. Those priests and lay Catholics involved in Catholic Action “either held or soon embraced social Christian values and attitudes. Its activists were the critical mass on which Chile’s social Christian movement would be based” (Fleet and Smith 1997, 41). Eventually, social progressivism became the dominant ideology within Chilean Catholicism. Thanks to the educational efforts of Catholic Action as well as due to the appointments of new bishops, by 1959 there were more Chilean bishops associated with the social Christian school of thought than there were conservatives (Fleet and Smith 1997, 47). The church’s post-separation efforts to educate laity successfully resulted in the dissemination of progressive norms among Catholic clergy and laity.

As in Argentina, the Chilean Catholic Church was acutely concerned by the spread of communism; they responded to this threat, however, in a distinct manner from the Argentine hierarchy. In Chile, the mounting swell of communist activity in the 1950s inspired increased levels of support among the hierarchy for the *Falange Nacional* as an

alternative to communism. The church essentially saw social reform as the best way to prevent the spread of communism. In order to encourage reform the hierarchy not only began its own programs and supported the Christian Democratic Party, it also critiqued the conservative Alessandri government and strongly condemned the lack of agrarian reform. Hence, the church's interests in preventing the spread of communism led it to further adopt progressivism and advocate for social reforms.

The spread of progressivism among the clergy would prove to be an important motivation for opposing the Pinochet regime. The values of nonviolence, justice, and human rights had flourished within the Catholic Church and its institutions, and it was these values that largely motivated the church's resistance to the Pinochet regime. In a pastoral letter entitled *The Pastoral of Solidarity*, Cardinal Silva defended the creation of a vicariate charged with protecting human rights by stating that the social dimension of the church's work in which it sought to protect economic and political rights was important in order to protect human dignity, a key part of the church's teachings. In 1976 the Chilean hierarchy justified their opposition of the military regime by releasing a statement that declared: "The Church cannot remain passive or neutral in the face of such a situation. The legacy which she has received from Christ demands that she speak out in favor of human dignity and for the effective protection of the liberty and rights of the person" (Bouvier 1983, 65-66). Hence, the Chilean Church's commitment to human rights and social justices as core components of Christianity was a strong motivating force for opposition to authoritarianism.

The organizations which taught social Catholic doctrine to the Chilean laity in the twentieth century also led to the formation of a multitude of social organizations that

were related to the church. For example, it was young lay leaders educated in the National Association of Catholic Students which formed the *Falange Nacional* in 1938 (Hawkins 2003, 78). These Catholic organizations also led to many new social and pastoral projects throughout Chile which enhanced the church's prestige and visibility in society. Moreover, when Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba made the threat of communism appear imminent, Pope John XXIII called for a new missionary effort in Latin America, which resulted in large financial donations from West European and North American churches. The Chilean Catholic Church and its sister organizations were able to serve as a funnel for the money, which was put into their existing programs and used to fund and create even more projects.

The structural carriers that existed between the church and the larger society were able to expand the church's societal influence and networks, as well as to acquire financial resources for church-sponsored or church-approved programs. These resources allowed the church to mobilize quickly after the coup and to create organizations to monitor human rights abuses that helped alleviate the effects of repression. The Catholic Church was almost immediately able to mobilize the ecumenical organization CONAR, which assisted in the safe exit of non-Chileans from the country. This organization was quickly followed by the establishment of the Committee for Peace in October of 1973. Thanks to donations from abroad and from *Caritas Chile*, the Committee for Peace was able to expand rapidly in order to meet the increasing demands for help from Chileans. Not only were financial resources necessary for expansion, resources in people were also necessary; the Catholic Church's pre-existing ties with religious leaders, academics, politicians, lawyers, and social workers enabled the church to expand the Committee for

Peace into an organization that documented human rights abuses, presented the Chilean courts with writs of habeas corpus, and provided medical and food centers as well as an employment cooperative for Chileans. Moreover, when the Pinochet regime closed down the Committee for Peace, the Catholic Church had the autonomy and the necessary resources to create a new institution, the Vicariate of Solidarity, charged with protecting human rights. Hence, the Chilean Catholic Church's institutional separation from the state led the church to focus on adapting to modern challenges, such as communism, through the acceptance of progressive norms and education programs for the laity. The expanding acceptance of progressive norms that emphasized human dignity and social justice motivated the church to oppose the authoritarian military regime. Moreover, the programs begun by the church in the mid-twentieth century to consolidate the influence of the clergy and the faith of the laity proved to be structural carriers that connected the church to multiple facets of society that enabled the church to oppose the Pinochet regime.

Unlike the Catholic Church in Argentina and in Chile, the Catholic Church in Uruguay was historically weak even before President Batlle implemented his program of *laicización* and disestablished the church. Table 1 shows that in 1900 only 60 percent of Uruguayans claimed to be Catholic, which was significantly lower than in both Chile and Argentina. These comparatively low numbers continued into the twentieth century. In contrast to Argentina, where Perón was promptly overthrown after he threatened the church with separation in 1955, separation was accomplished peacefully and generally without controversy in Uruguay in 1919 (Whittaker 1964, 76).

Once the church in Uruguay was separated from the state it was free to create its own institutions and develop interests unrelated to the interests of the state. Post disestablishment, both the Uruguayan and Chilean Churches responded to threats and waning societal influence in very similar ways. They both attempted to extend their influence throughout society by creating church affiliated institutions. They also responded to the threat of communism through the formation of a Christian Democratic Party with the professed goal of countering communism. Uruguay is also similar to Chile in that both hierarchies generally accepted the progressive positions of Vatican II and Medellín and did not hesitate to critique the government nor capitalist policies, or to call attention to social problems in the 1960s and 1970s. These similarities cannot be explained by Protestant competition, because protestant competition was practically non-existent in Uruguay. Rather, the similarities appear to be due to the similar institutional separation of church and state in Uruguay and Chile.

Table 1. Twentieth Century Percentages of Population claiming to be Roman Catholic

Country	1900	1970	1975
Argentina	97.4	92.5	92.1
Chile	96.0	84.3	83.2
Uruguay	61.2	61.0	60.2

Source: Barrett 1982.

Unlike Chile, however, the influence of the Uruguayan church on the general society was minimal. An explanation for the lack of structural carriers in Uruguay is the general secularism of the society. In Uruguay in 1975, 31.2% of the population claimed to be non-religious (Barrett 1982, 733). This made it comparatively less likely that the Catholic created organizations would have broad societal appeal. Moreover, an

especially important structural carrier, the Uruguayan Christian Democratic Party, was not able to break into Uruguayan politics and play a major role until the elections of 1971, only a brief time before the onset of the military regime.

During increasing government repression in the 1960s and the official military takeover in 1973, the Uruguayan hierarchy criticized the human rights abuses and took some action to support the transition to democracy, but their actions were limited. Due to their lack of financial resources and limited public organizations, they were unable to support or create the human rights organizations necessary to protect Uruguayans from the regime. Even when the hierarchy attempted to take symbolic action legitimizing opposition to the regime, such as the bishop's visit to a hunger strike organized by a human rights group, they were often thwarted. Although the separation of church and state in Uruguay allowed the church to develop interests distinctive from the state and facilitated the acceptance of progressive norms, the lack of connections to society limited the church's financial resources and social influence, which in turn vastly restricted the church's ability to oppose the military regime.

Two Critical Junctures

Within the narrative of church-state development in Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay two key events stand out as crucial for shaping the institutional relations of the church with the state and society. The first factor, which separates the first two stages from the latter stages of church-state development, is the separation of church and state. The second factor is the creation of structural carriers and in particular the electoral success of Christian Democratic Parties, which separates the third stage from the fourth and fifth stages. The noted importance of differentiation and structural carriers for

opposition to authoritarianism leads us to another important question: what leads to differentiation and the creation of structural carriers? The case studies analyzed provide us with at least a tentative answer regarding the conditions that facilitated or inhibited separation and the growth of the church's structural carriers, and specifically Christian Democratic Parties, in these three countries.

The first institutional change that triggered changes in the interests and norms of the church was disestablishment. Separation was achieved in two very distinct ways in Chile and Uruguay. In Uruguay, the church and state were separated because the church was weak. In Chile it was separated because it was powerful and associated with the Conservative Party, and was therefore a threat to the Radical Party. In Argentina, the Catholic Church was not separated because, although powerful like the church in Chile, it was not affiliated with a specific party. Hence, it was to the advantage of the Argentine political parties to use the church as a source of legitimacy. On the other hand, when the Chilean Church allied itself and supported one specific party, it gave a strong incentive to the opposing party to attempt to distance the church from the party it supported. In the case of Chile, political competition between the Radical Party and the Conservative Party was clearly a factor that led to separation.

In order to understand why the Chilean Catholic Church aligned itself with an established party in the 1800s, as opposed to attempting to create their own party as occurred in Uruguay and Argentina, one must look at the social cleavages that helped generate the early parties. Unlike Chile, where the church-state social cleavage produced the early political parties, the church-state cleavage in Argentina was relatively mild (McGuire 1995, 227). The defining cleavage in Argentina was an owner-worker divide.

In Uruguay the primary cleavage was a center-periphery divide. Hence, neither of the early Uruguayan or Argentine parties defined their positions along religious lines. Since none of the powerful parties were specifically anti-clerical or pro-clerical in Argentina, there was no motivation for the Catholic Church to align themselves with one of the existing parties. On the other hand, in Uruguay, although the Colorado Party was generally anti-clerical, the opposing party, the *Blancos*, was not an ardent defender of the church. Because there was no existing party willing to defend the church's interests, the Uruguayan Catholic Church created their own party. In summary, party politics played an influential role in shaping institutional arrangements between the church and state. In Chile, one party supported the Catholic Church, in Argentina both parties supported the church, and in Uruguay neither party was significantly supportive. The stances of the political parties regarding the church led to separation in the cases of Chile and Uruguay but not in the case of Argentina.

Separation of church and state in Chile and Uruguay led to distinct interests and norms from those in Argentina. Whereas the churches in Chile and Uruguay were able to respond and adapt to new challenges, such as communism and Protestantism, with the adoption of progressive ideas promulgated by Vatican II without reference to the state, the Argentine church remained dependent on the government, and therefore institutionally and ideologically captive to the state. Church interests and norms in Chile and Uruguay motivated the church hierarchies to oppose authoritarianism, but as the case of Uruguay shows, although the church was generally willing to oppose authoritarianism, it was unable to take many significant actions that could weaken the military regime.

While these cases suggest that separation of church and state is a necessary factor for opposition to occur, the case of Uruguay shows that disestablishment is not a sufficient condition to cause opposition to authoritarianism. In order to understand why the Chilean Catholic Church was able to effectively oppose authoritarianism one must look at the structural carriers that connected it to society and resources. While disestablishment was a strong incentive for the church to create structural carriers in order to expand its influence in society, this was not the only time the Catholic Churches did so. Indeed, it appears that any time the Catholic Churches in Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay felt that their influence in society might be waning they created newspapers, unions, schools, and other institutions that would expand their role in society. The creation of structural carriers, however, did not ensure their success.

A particularly important structural carrier in Chile was the presence of a strong Christian Democratic Party. First of all, the PDC served as a “carrier for social Christian values and perspectives,” which strengthened the Catholic Church’s influence and societal prestige (Fleet and Smith 1997, 46). Secondly, the PDC in Chile provided a source of members who were involved (directly or indirectly) in the Catholic Church and simultaneously committed to social justice. The church organizations created after the military regime were able to mobilize many of these professional and staff personnel (lawyers, social workers, physicians, clerical help) to help those in need (Smith 1982, 334). Although Christian Democratic Parties existed also in Uruguay and Argentina, these parties were small and generally lacked influence in the political sphere. There are essentially three factors that help to explain why the PDC was successful in Chile but not in Uruguay or Argentina.

The first factor is the external constraint of authoritarianism, which helps to explain the lack of a Christian Democratic Party in Argentina. In historically “more open and less repressive political systems, Christian Democratic parties were more able to establish themselves and more likely to flourish” (Mainwaring and Scully 2003, 372). Early in Argentina’s history the main electoral party, the *Partido Autonomista Nacional* (PAN), doctored voting lists, bought votes, and used intimidation to undermine opposition candidates. In this period, between 1880 and 1909, voter turnout was only 10 to 25 percent of eligible voters. This tradition of hegemony affected Argentina’s party culture:

In the absence of effective opposition, the PAN began to see itself as a movement embodying all that was good about Argentina rather than as a part of a polity in which opposition forces had a rightful (or at least enduring) place. In Chile and Uruguay, by contrast, the ‘in’ political force could neither destroy nor absorb its adversaries. In these countries, the outs’ tenacity facilitated the rise of a political culture in which more value was placed on the right to political opposition—a crucial precondition for the institutionalization of a party system (McGuire 1995, 204-205).

The weakness of the Argentine party system continued throughout the twentieth century. The PAN’s electoral fraud fostered doubt that party activity and fair elections could lead to control of state resources; hence, when the Radical Civic Union, Argentina’s first mass political party, emerged in 1889, it chose to struggle for power through armed revolt rather than through electoral competition (McGuire 1995, 203). In 1909 the PAN split into a plethora of conservative provincial parties. Because some of the more powerful factions of Argentine society, such as big landowners, were numerically small, and therefore not likely to be electorally viable, they were isolated from party politics. Due to the fact that the country’s main agricultural activities were land-intensive rather than labor intensive, Argentina lacked a sedentary peasantry that could provide “captive”

votes to a conservative party and hence, the conservative provincial parties were unable to form a viable, competitive party (McGuire 1995, 206). Without such votes, and without the former option of electoral fraud after the 1912 electoral reform, “conservative parties in Argentina had little hope of winning the presidency.” Hence, conservative elites chose to exercise political influence outside of the party and electoral system. The weakness of the party system also helps to explain why the Catholic Church did not align themselves with a pre-existing party in the nineteenth century.

These political norms continued into the twentieth century in Argentina and as, “the national state became stronger and party competition weaker, politics became oligarchic and elitist” (Rock and Lopez-Alves 2000, 180). The party system that existed in Argentina was weakened by reoccurring authoritarian periods and the presence of ‘movements’ that often usurped the abilities of third parties to form. The primary political forces during this time period in Argentina, Radicalism and Peronism, are better understood as ‘movements’ rather than as ‘parties’ for three reasons. First, the political forces in Argentina sought a “form of national unity in which political opposition withers away” (McGuire 1995, 200). Secondly, they tended to try to achieve power in any way possible. Lastly, they portrayed their leaders as more important than their philosophies and policies. Essentially, “Instead of a system of party competition, Argentina developed a series of incumbent-party hegemonies” (McGuire 1995, 204). Whoever controlled the executive branch controlled military and political power throughout Argentina.

The absence of a strong party system made the country susceptible to military intervention. As Samuel Huntington observed, “the susceptibility of a political system to military intervention varies inversely with the strength of its political parties”

(Huntington 1968, 409). It is no surprise then, that military officers or unfairly elected politicians were in power for most of the twentieth century; “Fairly elected civilian governments held office from 1916 to 1930, from 1946 to 1955, and from 1973 to 1976, but a party system, properly so-called, did not exist during these periods” (McGuire 1995, 200). In Argentina a weak party system and authoritarianism mutually reinforced each other, and this resulted in a context in which it was very difficult for third parties to break into the political game.

The electoral rules in Argentina and Uruguay are another factor that undermined the ability of the Christian Democratic Parties to succeed. As a third party in Argentina, the Christian Democratic Party was undermined by the presidential system because the dominance of that branch of government created a strong incentive to create a broad coalition capable of winning. Moreover, “The tendency of Argentine presidents to rule by decree, bypassing the legislature, and to intervene in the provinces, replacing elected local leaders with appointed trustees, has reduced the political weight of Congress and provincial government—precisely the forums in which, in a presidential system, third parties have the most potential power” (McGuire 1995, 228). Another electoral factor that inhibited third parties was the arrangement where presidential and lower-house legislative elections occurred at the same time every six years. This created a coat-tail effect in which voters frequently chose legislators from the parties of the major presidential candidates. Since the 1912 electoral reforms, all elected presidents have been from the Radical Party or the Peronist Party. In many ways, the party system that did exist (albeit weakly) in Argentina was a two-party system; thus making it additionally difficult for a third party to gain electoral strength.

Unlike Argentina but like Chile, Uruguay was a real democracy from 1918 to 1933 and from 1942-1973 (Gonzalez 1995, 138). Moreover, the authoritarian interlude in Uruguay in the 1930s was “mild by regional standards” (Gillespie and Gonzalez 1989, 227). Both Chile and Uruguay “developed effective systems of party competition and managed during the twentieth century to sustain periods of democratic rule that were unusually long by European as well as Latin American standards” (McGuire 1995, 204). This success in Uruguay is in large part due to the power-sharing mechanisms the Colorado Party developed in order to contain *Blanco* rebellion. Hence, authoritarianism cannot explain why the PDC in Uruguay was politically weak. Rather, the electoral conditions in Uruguay help to explain the limited growth of the PDC.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Uruguay was a two-party system and, since the nation’s independence, the political scene was dominated by the *Colorados* and the *Blancos*. The electoral rules favored the two-party system in multiple ways. The double simultaneous vote allowed for factions to exist within parties. Voters would vote for individual factions but whichever party, not faction, received the most votes won the presidential election. Moreover, the presidential election was essentially a winner-take-all system. Although congressional seats were allotted proportionally, there was a ban on ticket-splitting, which meant that voters could only pick the president and congressional representatives from one party. Within these electoral rules, a vote for a third party would mean, at the least, that an individual’s vote for president was being thrown away. Hence, although the Uruguayan electoral system allowed for factions to exist within the two parties, it was extremely difficult for a third party to gain enough electoral strength to become competitive. Hence, the weak party system in Argentina and the strong two

party system in Uruguay inhibited the Christian Democratic Parties in those two countries from becoming stronger.

The multiparty system began in Chile in the mid-twentieth century due in part to the strong church-state cleavage. When the electoral process was reformed in 1874, the creation of joint party lists encouraged complex alliances between different parties (Scully 1995, 116). This allowed for multiple parties to come together in order to win elections and have governments composed of coalitions, but allowed the parties to keep their separate identities. Unlike Argentina's centralized system, from 1891 to 1925 Chile had a semi-parliamentary form of government. This arrangement buttressed the power of the legislative branch and helped strengthen the multiparty system. These two institutional factors facilitated the growth of a multitude of parties, thus making the Chilean political system highly competitive.

A third factor that inhibited the growth of the Christian Democratic Parties in Argentina and Uruguay is that they formed much later than the PDC in Chile. Christian Democratic Parties that were well established before the authoritarian regimes were able to survive the dictatorships, but those that were established closer to the authoritarian period "rarely established deep roots in society and strong organizations" (Mainwaring and Scully 2003, 372). As Table 2 shows, Christian Democracy in Chile took the form of a political party significantly earlier than in Argentina or Uruguay. The *Falange Nacional* formed in 1938 and presented candidates in the 1941 elections. In contrast, the Argentine Christian Democracy Party did not form until 1955, and the Uruguayan Christian Democratic Party formed even later, in 1962. Although the Christian Democratic Party in Chile began as the National Falange, the two parties "can be

considered identical;” the leaders and the party’s platform remained the same despite the name change (Hawkins 2003, 103).

Table 2. Timing of the Formation of Christian Democratic Parties

Country	Name of party at first presentation in elections	Date of formation	Date of first presentation
Argentina	Christian Democracy	1955	1958
Chile	National Falange	1938	1941
	Christian Democrat Party	1957	1958
Uruguay	Christian Democrat Party	1962	1962

Source:Hawkins 2003, 81.

While previous Catholic parties existed in Argentina and Uruguay prior to the formation of Christian Democratic Parties, these were not similar in nature. The *Unión Cívica* in Uruguay was founded in 1911 with the primary purpose of protecting the church from the secularization occurring at the hands of the Colorado Party. The members of the *Unión Cívica* “supported a conservative socioeconomic program, they initially had close ties to the clergy, and they purposefully excluded people with progressive views” (Hawkins 2003, 106). The reorganization of the party that led to the formation of the Christian Democrat Party in 1962 was a significant change in the party’s organization and program that “allowed the growing center-left element of the party to win control” (Hawkins 2003, 107). Although the Catholic Church in Argentina established a party in 1884, the *Unión Católica*, the purpose of the party was to protect the church’s privileges; these attempts were generally unsuccessful and the party dispersed in the 1890s. Hence, neither the prior Uruguayan nor Argentine parties can be

considered to be early versions of these countries' later established Christian Democratic Parties.

The early formation of the Chilean party allowed it to build its electoral support as well as to establish programs and connections throughout society. As Table 3 shows, many elections and a merger occurred before the Chilean Christian Democratic party began to strengthen its electoral percentage of the vote. It was not until 1957 when the *Falange Nacional* was joined by other small parties and became the Christian Democratic Party that they began to obtain over five percent of the vote. Similarly, once the Uruguayan Christian Democratic Party merged with several other factions and formed the Broad Front in 1971, it received 18 percent of votes in the presidential elections and 7 percent of votes in the congressional elections. Although the Broad Front showed the potential to possibly break into Uruguay's two-party system, the coalition was still young and politically weak when the military regime commenced in 1973. Unlike the Christian Democratic Parties in Chile and Uruguay, the Christian Democratic Party in Argentina remained perpetually small and politically insignificant.

Two critical junctures help to explain the distinctive institutional arrangements found between church and society in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay. The first critical juncture, separation of church and state, resulted in independent interests and progressive norms in Chile and Uruguay; these interests and norms motivated the hierarchies in each country to oppose authoritarianism. The second critical juncture, the formation of strong social carriers and particularly a successful Christian Democratic Party, helped to project

Table 3. Electoral Results of Christian Democratic Parties in Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay Prior to the Military Regimes

Chilean Election Results for the <i>Falange Nacional</i> /PDC												
Election Type	1941	1945	1949	1953	1957	1958	1961	1964	1965	1969	1970	1973
Presidential	--	--	--	--	--	20.5	--	55.6	--	--	27.8	--
Senate	3.3	3.8	0.8	1.0	11.8	--	14.7	--	46.4	32.9	--	46.0
Lower Chamber	3.4	2.6	3.9	2.9	9.4	--	15.9	--	43.6	31.1	--	29.1

Argentine Election Results for the PDC							
Election Type	1957	1958	1960	1962	1963	1965	1973
Presidential	--	3.2	--	--	4.7	--	NC
Senate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	0.0
Lower Chamber	4.8	3.8	3.8	1.9	4.5	2.5	0.0

Uruguayan Election Results for the PDC			
Election Type	1962	1966	1971
Presidential	3.1	3.0	18.3 ^a
Senate	3.0	3.0	7.1
Lower Chamber	3.0	3.0	7.1

NC : No Candidate

-- : No Election that year

^a : PDC was part of the *Frente Amplio* Coalition

Source: Information taken from Mainwaring and Scully 2003, 56-58.

the Chilean Church's influence, and provided the church with resources and prestige that it used to oppose the Pinochet regime. Although the separation of church and state motivated the churches in Chile and Uruguay to oppose authoritarianism, the structural carriers enabled the Chilean Church to successfully oppose the Pinochet regime. Hence, although disestablishment is an important precondition for opposition to authoritarianism to occur, if the opposition is to be robust, the church must have the resources and societal influence that come through the presence of structural carriers connecting the Catholic Church to society. The last section of this chapter examined what influenced these two critical junctures in the church history. In all cases, party politics was influential. Party competition regarding the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century led to separation in the case of Chile. Party politics was also influential regarding the second factor examined, the formation of structural carriers. In countries with multi-party systems and a stable democracy the Christian Democratic Party was able to gain electoral strength and societal influence. In countries with a weak party system and an unstable democracy (Argentina), or with a strong two-party system (Uruguay), third parties were unable to successfully enter the political game.

Conclusions

The research presented here confirms the influence of historical institutional arrangements between the church and society on the church's response to authoritarian regimes. Institutional arrangements influenced the range of choices available to the church, especially regarding how it responded to challenges and competition. Post-separation of church and state, the Catholic Churches in Chile and Uruguay put an end to competition for state resources and direct support for particular parties, and began to

focus their resources on strengthening lay education and forming structural carriers that would expand its influence in society. Their interests were no longer primarily about maintaining their state privileges, but about educating and maintaining parishioners and asserting a moral influence on society in general. Conducive to maintaining and expanding these new interests were the progressive ideas that were disseminating throughout the church and, after Vatican II, were coming from Rome itself. In Catholic Churches where the interests were primarily about improving lay education and maintaining and increasing the church's general moral influence on society, these progressive ideas were better received than in countries, such as Argentina, where the church's interests were still primarily centered on maintaining its state privileges. In the cases where the church and state had gone through disestablishment, the church's independence from the state meant that the church was better able to adopt new ideas such as progressivism and respond to problems such as communism and authoritarianism. In essence, autonomy from the state made the church more able to adapt to changing circumstances which in turn led the church to support the values of human rights and social justice. Willingness to critique human rights abuses, however, was not enough to ensure the institutional strength needed to protect human rights and to withstand the governmental backlash that followed the Chilean and Uruguayan Church's criticisms of the military regimes. Due to its many connections within Chilean society as well as its external connections to suppliers of financial resources, the Chilean Catholic Church was able to form organizations that helped people suffering from repression, and was also able to resist the military regime's efforts to discredit the church and close the Vicariate of Solidarity.

To summarize, the cases of Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay provide us with two significant findings. First, disestablishment is necessary if the church is to oppose authoritarianism. Without disestablishment, the church hierarchy's interests and norms remain tied to the state, and make it unwilling to act in ways that may hurt those interests. Although disestablishment is necessary for opposition to authoritarianism to occur, the case of Uruguay shows that disestablishment is not sufficient to cause opposition. Rather, the church must also have institutional connections within society that provide it with influence and resources. Although the church may be willing to oppose authoritarianism, it will be unable to mount a significant opposition without resources in finances and personnel and without a strong moral influence in society.

This research also sheds light on the circumstances that fostered the growth of particular institutional arrangements. Political competition was a key factor that fostered separation of church and state in Chile. Because the Chilean Catholic Church had aligned itself with one of the dominant parties in the eighteenth century, it was in the interest of the opposing party, the Radicals, to disestablish the church and remove church influence from the elections, thus weakening the Conservative Party. On the other hand, in Argentina the church never became allies with a particular party, and hence there was no motivation for either party to disestablish the church. A key distinction here is that the religious cleavage was of primary importance in Chile, and hence political parties were formed around this issue, whereas no political parties in Uruguay or Argentina formed specifically around the issue of religion, thus reducing the interests of the church in aligning themselves with one of these parties.

On the other hand, disestablishment, and more generally the threat of waning influence, led to the Catholic Church's creation of structural carriers. A noteworthy observation is that the success of those structural carriers was contingent on forces in many ways outside of the church's control, such as party politics and whether or not those programs would appeal to a broad Catholic and non-Catholic audience. In Chile, electoral rules, the multi-party system, and the gradual weakening of the Radical Party in the mid-twentieth century opened up the political space necessary for the Christian Democratic Party of Chile to grow into a major party that occupied the center of the political spectrum and helped to strengthen the connections between the Chilean Church and the larger society. On the other hand, the strong two-party system in Uruguay made it extremely difficult for the Uruguayan Christian Democratic Party to become electorally viable. Moreover, the strong agnostic tradition in Uruguay helps to explain why the Catholic Church's programs lacked mass appeal. Both of these factors weakened the social influence of the Catholic Church in Uruguay even before the country began to drift towards authoritarianism in the early 1970s. Due to this weak position, the Catholic Church was unable to create human rights organizations or to offer strong vocal opposition, and when it attempted to do so it was quickly silenced by the military regime.

It is also worth noting a few things about Vallier's model of church-state development. First, regardless of what it tells us about the particular question at hand, this model of church-state development is useful for obtaining a general understanding of how the Catholic Church in Latin America and its relations with society change over time. It would be interesting to see whether this model of development is applicable outside of Latin America or even outside of the Catholic Church. Secondly, despite the

fact that Vallier developed this model years before the military regimes came to power in Latin America, the model is highly relevant for understanding opposition to authoritarianism and hence could possibly be used to illuminate other cases of religious opposition to repressive regimes.

Although this research develops an institutional framework for understanding religious opposition to authoritarianism, it is untested outside of the Latin American framework. Future research in this area should examine whether or not church autonomy from the state and the presence of structural carriers were important in other cases of opposition. A fruitful place to begin may be other countries where the Catholic Church has a strong presence and was influential in the democratization process. The cases of the Catholic Church and the Solidarity movement in Soviet controlled Poland as well as the Catholic Church in opposition to the Marcos regime in the Philippines should be examined in order to test whether the posited institutional framework has carrying power outside of Latin America.

This research could also be expanded to include not only cases regarding religious opposition to authoritarianism but also to examine more generally why religious actors behave in distinct manners. A particularly timely issue is why some religious identities promote extremism and violence while others promote reconciliation, democratizations, and the protection of human dignity. In Taiwan and South Korea, for example, Buddhism has promoted human rights and religious tolerance, whereas in Sri Lanka it has fueled a war (Philpott 2007, 505). Institutional autonomy from the state and the presence of structural carriers may help to explain such issues. This research suggests that in order to understand variance in religious behavior in general, a fruitful place to begin is with an

examination of historical institutional arrangements between religious actors and the state as well as with society. Overall, the factors of religious differentiation and structural carriers have great potential for scholars interested in explaining the relationship between religion and politics.

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