

**POST WAR TRANSITIONS:
ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES
IN
EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA**

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INTRODUCTION and FRAMEWORK

The centrality of political parties in transitions to and consolidation of electoral democracy has often been maintained, even in the face of political forces which have, in some countries, diminished the power of parties. Parties are normally the central organizing mechanism for elections; they select candidates, present voters with symbols which can save information costs, and are channels of representation between citizens and government policy making. They are institutions which, in theory, can be held accountable. While noting many variations in these features, Mainwaring and Scully have argued, based on extensive comparative evidence from their edited volume of articles on 12 Latin American, that higher levels institutionalization of parties and party systems is associated with enhanced levels of governability and more stable policy making. Institutionalization (that is, long term presence of the same parties in elections and government) and low levels of electoral volatility (that is, small changes in electoral shares among parties from one election to the next) is associated (though not always) with less polarization and less fragmentation within party systems. More polarization, more volatility and more fragmentation increase uncertainty and characterize inchoate party systems. These tend to reduce accountability, and make it difficult to establish channels of representation or to sustain policy direction. Institutionalized party systems, in this view, offer better possibilities of consolidation of democracy.¹

The editors' review of the party systems in the twelve countries finds that party systems have been affected by broad external forces including the end of the cold war and the near universal advent of neoliberal economic policies. Implementation of the latter, it could be argued and the editors imply, has not have a salutatory effect on democratization or the institutionalization of parties because policy making has often been secretive and highly centralized, and because the initial economic results have been harsh leading to a public cynicism about government.²

This framework provides a useful tool for examining electoral transitions in Nicaragua and El Salvador both in assessing what has evolved and what its implications for democratization and governability might be. More broadly put, the approach of the paper is institutional and sees party institutions both shaping and being shaped by dramatic historical forces in each country.

These two countries also experienced transitions to neoliberalism and structural adjustment programs, begun reluctantly and with no foreign exchange in recompense by the Sandinistas and enthusiastically by the Cristiani administration. In Nicaragua the program was continued with vigor by the Chamorro administration and the much more thoroughly statist policies of the Sandinistas, compared to El Salvador circa 1980, made this transition very dramatic and conflictive. The two parties on the left, in particular, have been affected by the end of the cold war.

However, unlike other Latin American countries, a third simultaneous transition has been going in El Salvador and Nicaragua.³ Ongoing civil wars, themselves being in part fought over the issue of transition away from authoritarianism, marked the early stages of civilian electoral projects. The wars were followed by peace settlements. Both war, and post war have deeply affected the transitions and the trajectories of the parties. The transition to neoliberal economics has been complicated by war damaged economies attempting to reconstruct, or, perhaps better put, the repair of war damaged economies has been deeply affected by sweeping shifts toward neoliberal policies. Each country has been socially transformed by the wars through extremely high levels of migration, dislocations within the country, and war time mortality rates among civilians and combatants forty to fifty times those the U.S. suffered during the Vietnam war. Mortality and injury rates ripped the social fabric of each nation, and left broken towns and families and lasting injuries and grievances.

PRESENT SIMILARITIES IN PARTY SYSTEMS

Judging from the results of the most recent elections in the two countries there are similarities remarkable in that the pattern in each country is relatively new and would have been hard to predict but a few years ago. In El Salvador the 1990s, including the "elections of the century" in 1994 raised the distinct possibility of a transition veering away from democracy and toward one party hegemony run by ARENA - the strongest, richest electoral organization in either country as of 1994. Nicaragua presented the opposite specter after its 1990 founding election, a party system so fragmented and polarized (not all issues had the same poles) and so beset by deep political crises and ongoing violence that basic governance seemed threatened.

The two recent elections seem to have produced different prospects in each country, with striking similarities between the two: modified two party systems each with a large party to the right and to the left, with an modest sized group of smaller parties holding potential swing votes in the Assembly.

Should these similarities be expected in post war transitions even if there are different routes and sequences taken to arrive at them, or are the similarities mainly coincidence? What significance do the recently emerged pattern of parties have for the continuation and consolidation of their respective transitions?

What are the similarities? In both El Salvador and Nicaragua:

The post war elections have been dominated by two large parties which together receive seventy to eighty percent of the vote.

In these two party systems (they are perhaps too new to be called systems, and in the above model have roots too shallow to be called institutionalized) neither has a majority.

The two largest parties represent the principal antagonists during the civil wars.

They represent the right and left end of the spectrum and thus, given ideological predilections and war time histories, can be said to constitute polarized two party systems, though obviously less polarized than their organizations were during the war (in the sense that shooting is the ultimate polarization.)

In each case the more conservative organization won the most votes in both founding and post founding elections.

In each case the left parties have suffered splits in which a self described social democratic faction left the dominant body of the party, subsequently to be charged with siding with the enemy by their former allies. The divisions were evidently as much over long standing and personal grievances and quotas of power as they were over policy differences. And in each case the wing that split off fared very badly in subsequent elections.

A handful of small to medium small parties which survived the election have, as a group, the swing votes in the national legislature, and will likely side most of the time with the rightist party.

The party systems have arrived at this point from patterns of volatility in results from election to election and party fragmentation, and party fragmentation also marked the run up to the current elections, though fragmentation has been much more dramatic in Nicaagua all along.

In each founding election and post founding election campaigns featured accusations over the war and pre war authoritarianism. and in each there was there was selective violence though scattered away from campaign events.

In each the chance of the military being a factor in the outcome was remote.

In each, despite wartime antagonisms, there was no pre election doubt that the parties would accept the election results (barring fraud).

It is striking that three of the four large parties, or at least significant elements within them, have as organizations histories of: participation in militarized politics, political violence, and rather militarized (and hidden), and centralized internal systems of organization. The fourth, the PLC of Arnaldo Alemán (which dominates the three liberal parties in his Liberal Alliance; AL) is more difficult to characterize in this regard being, in its current form, a new organization but one with figures having played war time roles including with the contras, and one in which one figure has a commanding presence so far.

In addition to the emegent party systems the two countries electoral processes share three other similarities:

1. In each country the electoral authority is in a state of crisis, which undermines the transition. In El Salvador, for the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), this has become a chronic state (if a crisis can be chronic) affecting mainly the voter registration process, but the crisis deepened in late 1996 when there was a successful effort by the dominant political party to change the composition of the TSE in order to assure its legislative domination after the March 1997 election. But contrast, the Supreme Electoral Council in Nicaragua (CSE) worked extremely well in the two previous elections and was recently plunged into crisis by the registration process and by vote processing last year. This fiasco led the Sandinistas and other parties to question the validity of the election.

2. In each country, whatever celebration of the transition to peace and democracy cheered on by political elites, the U.S., the European Union, the OAS and the UN, has not been shared by most of the citizens. The transition to electoral democracy is no longer getting high or even passing marks from citizens. In particular, the subject of this paper, party systems and parties get quite low marks, as do legislatures and presidencies, compared to other institutions (such as the military in El Salvador).

3. In both countries foreign involvement in elections during the transition in the post war period has been extensive, though it was notably reduced for the first time in El Salvador last month.

PAST PARALLELS AND ROOTS OF THE PRESENT PARTIES

Each country held war time elections to establish constitutional frameworks geared to legalize and legitimize the government, distancing and differentiating it from the long pre 1979 past and simultaneously geared toward legalizing and legitimizing the new regime vis a vis armed rebels threatening to overthrow the government and vis a vis actual and potential international sponsors and supporters.

In each the rebel groups refused to accept the legality, legitimacy or results of the elections.

In this they were supported by allied (or in Nicaragua) semi allied civilian groups who also refused participation, though there were evident strains and divisions within civilian groups and between them and the rebels at points over this decision. (This was not so in El Salvador in 1982, 1984, and 1985, but the civilian left participated in the 1989 elections while the FMLN stayed out. The Coordinadora in Nicaragua abstained in 1984, but evidently there were considerable differences within it.)⁴

In each large dominant parties (or in Nicaragua, one party) were joined in war time elections by smaller parties which added legitimacy and a sense of competition to the elections. Even in Nicaragua where these were small, all based their campaigns on attacking the incumbent Sandinistas. Over time many small parties either disappeared or atrophied or divided. New small parties subsequently joined later elections.

War time elections also had extensive international involvement -- almost entirely on the part of the U.S. U.S. intervention in El Salvador and Nicaragua during the war, and in Nicaragua's founding election was extensive, to put it mildly, and partisan.

In each country negotiated pacts brought electoral involvement by groups which had formerly abstained. And in each, subsequent elections were marked, in part, by disagreements over which authoritarianism the transition was moving away from (that of Somoza and somocismo or that of the Sandinistas, that of the pre 79 military governments, or the war time human rights abusing governments of El Salvador). With all organized parties participating, these were, arguably, (to use Terry Karl's term) the founding elections in each country.⁵

And in each, post-war elections have been marked by efforts among the wartime antagonists to blame the violence on the other side, though it must be said that the conservative forces have in each country have been much more prone to wave the bloody shirt during post war or end of the war campaigns.

The combination of these features: small parties coming and going, new end-of-the-war and post-war entrants, along with the rather spectacular declines of the PDC in El Salvador, have meant up to now fairly high volatility in party systems in each country.

DIFFERENT EVOLUTIONARY PATHS

The War Contexts

Essential differences in the evolution of the party systems and the war-time/post-war transitions in the two countries suggest that the similar structural features in their current party systems cover over important differences and may also cover over signs of further fragmentation or volatility. But they also suggest that though different paths may have led to the current state in the two countries, the current state may herald the beginning of the solidification of a modified two party system in which a limited number of smaller parties hold a share of power in the Assembly, and in which either of the two dominant parties in each country has a reasonable chance to win the presidency.

1. In Nicaragua the insurgent, leftist Sandinista guerrilla party captured state power and became the governing party before and after the 1984 election, while their counterpart in El Salvador, the FMLN was not able to achieve a similar victory. Rather a center right civilian military junta headed the government in El Salvador. It was flanked by dominant rightist elements in the military, and by an oligarchy outraged at its policies of agrarian reform and nationalization of banks and exports, but also threatened by the war, and by the U.S. which sponsored these increases in state involvement, while it also sponsored the dominant elements in the military and tried to mollify the oligarchy. This led, in El Salvador, to electoral projects in which the center right PDC and rightist parties took part and the FMLN and left civilian groups in exile abstained. These elections had no military candidates.
2. Second, the U.S. took opposite sides, supporting the anti left government in El Salvador and the anti left guerrillas (and some civilian groups) in Nicaragua. In my judgment, the U.S. stance was determinant of much that was to follow in each country including initial electoral outcomes as the wars ended. That is, however controversial U.S. foreign policy was at the time, however much it might have been moderated by its critics in and out of Congress, however anomalous it was to see the Reagan administration seemingly enwrapped and in a sense captured by the domestic political conflicts in these two "banana" republics while simultaneously virtually ignoring larger more powerful Latin American countries (apart from the debt crises), in the end U.S. foreign policy can be seen as successful in avoiding what it set out to avoid and gaining most of what it had initially wanted in each country. Seen through this lens, it is not a coincidence that conservative forces won in each founding election, defeating the left rather soundly.
3. Political conditions for regime opponents were quite different in both countries until the end of the 1980s. In El Salvador, left and center left civilian opponents to the regime were forced by massive human rights violations and assassinations into exile, underground or into the ranks of the guerrillas if they indeed survived the onslaught. The campaign, unrecognized as such in the U.S. was an effort to destroy left and center left civilian organizations and their members. By contrast, in Nicaragua, far more modest limitations on civil liberties, left open the possibility for important, abstentionist anti Sandinista groups were able to remain in the country and launch verbal salvos at the Sandinistas on a continuous basis and maintain organizations either in parties, and in the powerful umbrella business organization COSEP. Had Rubén Zamora remained in El Salvador he would be dead. Violeta Chamorro and Arnoldo Alemán (who was jailed for a time and lost a ranch) remained in Nicaragua and went on to electoral victories while Chamorro's newspaper, though censored, blasted the Sandinistas on a daily basis.

Initial Elections and Incipient Party Systems

El Salvador

It is not unusual and to be expected that countries emerging from long periods of authoritarian rule, as Nicaragua and El Salvador began to do in the 1980s, that party structures would be weak, particularly in countries where more than a generation had elapsed since civilian competitive elections, and the prior period was dominated by elite parties, restricted franchise and/or corrupt elections. In short the transitions which began in Nicaragua and El Salvador in the 1980s were polar opposites in terms of party traditions from that of Chile. Complicating the initial electoral processes and construction of party systems in these two countries were the fact of civil wars and heavy U.S. involvement.

In El Salvador initial elections lacked any presence from organizations at all to the left of center. The major parties that did participate were hard to categorize simply as electoral political parties. Each faced entirely new historical circumstances which challenged and offered opportunities.

The Christian Democratic party had participated in local and national elections during the previous two decades, but, in El Salvador's other (and internationally unnoticed) "election of the century" in 1972 the PDC and its center left allies had been defrauded out of a victory in Presidential elections and its candidate, former mayor of San Salvador Napoleon Duarte, had been arrested, beaten up and run out of the country for an exile that lasted until early 1980. The PDC had also been defrauded again in the 1977 elections. Moreover, the party had split badly over the increasingly human rights violations in the aftermath of the military coup of 1979, with its left wing headed by Ruben Zamora, heading underground and into exile along with other party allies in the 1972 election. The PDC, then hated by its former allies, was also hated by the dominant right forces in the country. Its leader in the 1980s, Napoleon Duarte, on the other hand, was a good sell in Washington particularly to Democratic votes the Reagan administration needed. In short this party fragment was being resurrected under the protection of the U.S. in a climate of war and intense human rights violations from which it was relatively immune.⁶

The PCN had been the old party of the military. But under the new rules of the game insisted upon by the U.S. underwriters of the war, the military had to be out of electoral politics. So the PCN entered the new electoral arena of the 1980s with its organizational iron removed, with some historic organizational presence in some regions, and with the new challenge of participating in elections in which it would not control the counting of the ballots.

ARENA had just begun, and its origins were (and continued to be) in a paramilitary organization led by former Major Roberto D'Aubuisson who fifteen years later, despite (and perhaps because of) findings of numerous human rights organizations and the UN that he organized death squads, remains the only universally celebrated and revered party figure among Areneros. Assembling both young leaders and members of the oligarchy, the Major assembled in a short time a formidable electoral organization. However the parallel an overlapping electoral and paramilitary aspects of the organization and the centrality of D'Aubuisson to both, along with war time conditions gave the party a rightist form of democratic centralism that has seemed more centralist than democratic.

For rich backers of the party, the rules of the game had changed dramatically. No longer could they count on a military, assured victory in each election, to protect its interests by leading the government. ARENA had to compete in elections. And the political field and the electoral

field, was suddenly crowded. First, the military was not withdrawing from politics, only electoral politics. Second the U.S. had entered the game and was working hard to have military officers traditionally loyal to the landed classes have their principal loyalties to the U.S., which was raining money upon the military and rapidly expanding its ranks. The U.S. had also insisted upon changing the rules of the game: competitive elections with no military candidates. The U.S. was, at a minimum, relying upon and actively supporting with under and over the table funds the PDC. Other conservative competitors were entering the electoral field. And last, but far from least, the FMLN was showing by the run up to the 1982 election that it was a formidable military adversary which had quickly transformed itself in the face of high levels of repression from a collection of urban based militant organizers some with ties to or controlled by guerrilla groups, to a reasonably united confederation of five guerrilla groups heading a rural based and principally peasant army. The FMLN had proven itself capable of heavily damaging elite agricultural interests, that is the heart of the oligarchy controlled economy, and by 1982-83 had the Salvadoran military in serious trouble.

In the 1982 and 1984 elections the U.S. presence was immense, and not simply in terms of underwriting the cost of the elections but in terms of the stakes of the game for the Reagan administration, facing a Congress openly worried about another Vietnam war, which was under the Reagan Doctrine drawing a line in the dirt in El Salvador. The outcome of the Constituent Assembly elections of 1982 illustrate the dynamic. The U.S. had to have a good election in terms of turnout and an honest vote count to make its case to Congress that democracy was on the way, and that Salvadorans did not like the "totalitarian" FMLN, a creature of the cold war being supported if not controlled by the USSR, Cuba and Nicaragua. The outcome had a large turnout (with turnout figures questioned by the election's critics), no complaints among the participants about wholesale corruption. However, though the PDC gained a plurality, an array of 4 conservative parties, if they allied, would control the Assembly which was to elect an interim president and create a constitution. The top rightist figure in the Assembly heading the largest rightist bench was non other than Roberto D'Aubuisson, labeled by Robert White, former U.S. ambassador, as a pathological killer. The Major would have emerged as the interim President of El Salvador, the ultimate public relations horror for the Reagan administration, but for a strong U.S. veto and a compromise solution.

The U.S. backing of Duarte in 1984 and substantial support of the PDC before that, and its rather tepid calls for observation of human rights added on to an already strong ARENA tendency toward extreme nationalism. Toward the end of Duarte's term the Central American party with the most frequent anti U.S. rhetoric may well have not been the FSLN or the FMLN but ARENA.

Damned by the FMLN and the FDR as farce electoral exercises, conducted in a context of massive human right abuses, the 1982 election featured an obligatory vote, no registry and a highly questionable ID system which would result in citizens having to carry with them proof about whether they had voted. For the FMLN and the FDR, after Duarte was elected in 1984, the elections were also a farce because it was not Duarte and the PDC controlled legislature elected in 1985 which controlled El Salvador, but rather the Military, the Oligarchy and the U.S. were where the real decisions were made. Nonetheless, the elections had changed the political rules and practices of the game for all organized Salvadoran groups and created new and newly refurbished electoral parties. And the turnouts were in 1982 and 1984 were large.

Though smaller parties had a presence in these elections and some persisted for several elections, in general the early ones died out to be replaced by others in the late 1980s some of which then faded in the 1990s and were replaced by still others (as well as the presence of the left.)

One could argue that a stabilizing or institutionalizing feature of the party system in El Salvador is that the three leading parties in 1982 remained the three leading parties until the 1994 election (that is for the 1982, 1984, 1985, 1988, 1989 and 1991 elections) when the FMLN participated and emerged as the second party. The claim is undermined by the extent to which both the PCN and PDC had declined by the end of the 1990s. It is undermined but not eliminated. A significant break was made with the traditional authoritarian past, was done so by groups and people with roots in that organizational past, including the PDC as opposition, and those organizations transformed themselves to play by new rules of the game and persisted, with varying fortunes in doing so to the present through 8 national elections (two of which had runoffs). The system was open to other entrants.

Nicaragua

In Nicaragua a rather different pattern prevailed because of the revolutionary, rather than evolutionary break with the traditional, long standing authoritarian past. The Sandinistas controlled. The FSLN was the organization which did most to organize the defeat of Somoza (however spontaneous that war was and however small, debilitated and division-ridden the Sandinista were in the mid 1970s), and, received the most credit from the Nicaraguan public for doing so. However improbable victory might have seemed even as late as 1977 (and the U.S. among other observers was completely taken by surprise) the FSLN strategy for taking power won out over the ineffectual efforts of traditional small opposition parties in Nicaragua - those stemming from Conservative Party roots, the Independent Liberal Party (PLI), and the Moscow oriented Socialist Party.

The Sandinistas upon achieving power in the early 1980s were hardly a traditional election oriented political power. The FSLN took on a collective leadership, but a centralist mentality stemming from several roots: a history of clandestinity, the exigencies of a hostile Reagan administration pursuing a course of war against the FSLN, Leninist mentalities in some quarters and corporatist mentalities in others, and the general tendency in political organizations for those who have power to attempt to maximize it. Though power was divided among the nine commandantes, they and heads of other ministries had fiefdoms of power. With international pressure, the party had to develop an electoral organizational mode by the mid 1980s. When it did so it turned many party resources into the election, but by that time, the FSLN was far more than a traditional political and electoral party. Rather it resembled (and according to D. Ortega desired to be like) the PRI of Mexico in its organizational corporatist breadth and reach. Unlike the PRI it was also managing a military and a war.

It maintained power through control of the military and government, but, perhaps more important through the explosive growth of party related (and party directed - to an extent which faded as the decade war on) "mass" organizations among peasants, rural workers, government workers and urban workers and professionals. Prior to elections it saw that these new organization were included in the official governing agency - the Council of State a legislative body made up of representatives of organizations, an inclusion in 1980 which gave the FSLN a working majority and prompted the first of several departures from the Council of organizations in opposition to Somoza and to the Sandinistas.⁷

Parallels and Differences to El Salvador

Though there are important organizational difference between the FSLN and FMLN as they entered and continued the 1980s, the essential difference affected the development of each group is that the FSLN took state power. Though both groups faced another decade and more of

war with the U.S. against them, the resources and political presence gained by the FSLN by having control of the state, with considerable international support, compared to the FMLN based relatively isolated, operating clandestinely in other areas, and minuscule outside material support was an immense difference in the history of each party which has affected each in electoral and organizational efforts.

The contrast in organizational resources each left party brought to their first electoral efforts - the FSLN in 1984 and the FMLN in 1994 could hardly be greater. The FSLN dwarfed in resources its opponents in 1984 even to a greater extent than ARENA dwarfed the FMLN's, and other opposition parties', resources in 1994.⁸

Capturing state power in Nicaragua also meant that Somoza's party was off the map. Though precise parallels are impossible, in El Salvador the parallel to Somoza's party would have been the PCN. Though there had been a military coup, the military's traditional electoral vehicle survived and modestly thrived into the 1980s and beyond.

The equivalent of a PDC had never been present in Nicaragua. And there would be neither the organizational wherewithal, nor the political space for an ARENA to arise. The reasons can only be sketched, but they have to do with the character of the traditional authoritarian regimes, and the nature of the ruling class in each of the two countries. Somoza effectively played divide and reward tactics against potential opposition and, with the notable exception of suspected supporters of the FSLN, was selectively and mildly repressive toward his opponents. By contrast, El Salvador allowed a selective opening to the PDC and other social democratic parties, then slammed it closed when they threatened to win power at the national level. Neither Somoza's strategy nor that of the Salvadoran rulers proved effective, in the end, at warding off rebellion amidst increasing landlessness. The strategy in El Salvador contributed toward political party members abandoning the electoral road and shifting toward militant organizing and guerilla organizations. The strategies of the authoritarian rulers did leave behind different legacies of political electoral organizations (parties in that sense of the term) to enter the 1980s - a divided array of small center and conservative parties in Nicaragua permitted by Somoza, and the PCN and bruised PDC in El Salvador.

Given the relatively less cohesive and poor landed oligarchy of Nicaragua in Nicaragua much of which had existed in a kind of symbiotic but increasingly conflictive relationship with the politically and economically dominant Somoza family, compared to their parallel in El Salvador which had enjoyed a governing military group ruling in all of their behalf without economically competing with them, and a long history of division about how to oppose Somoza (a history again the Salvadoran oligarchy had not had to endure), the opposition to the FSLN was divided into numerous small parties and groups.⁹ In El Salvador the beaten down PDC survived organizationally until 1980, then fractured as Duarte returned and the Zamora wing took off, with the Duarte wing becoming a favorite child of the U.S., hardly the first time in the cold war that a Christian Democratic party was supported openly or under the table by the U.S.

In sum, in El Salvador, with the charismatic presence of D'Aubuisson the oligarchy was capable in the face of the "communist" threat to organize a party and the PCN carried on. In El Salvador, there was a PDC for the U.S. to support, however battered and a national level figure. In Nicaragua there was no such organizational vehicle nor was there a charismatic figure outside of the Sandinistas. (Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, had been assassinated, triggering the war against Somoza.)

If anything, the 1984 election in Nicaragua furthered the cause of party fragmentation. Fragmentation was aided and abetted by the Sandinista government which went out of its way, in

the face of ever increasing U.S. military pressure and war related economic destruction as well as pressure from friendly European and Latin American governments, to invite participation in new elections to about has many groups as wanted to join. It created very open rules for registering a party, for campaign finance and media exposure. The apparently mathematically easy possibilities of getting some representation in the Assembly were not only to ward off international and domestic criticism against a restrictive political system but also to make it possible for Nicaragua's already divided opposition to all take part and have a chance of winning something. The U.S. created a counter pressure, forcing some groups to bet on the U.S. and the fortunes of the contras. Thus there were 7 parties ran for election in 1984 and four abstained, claiming conditions were unfair. Despite the large number of organizations there was a fundamental dividing line between them marked by the abstentionist- non abstentionist fissure in 1984 and continued into the future. Ad hoc alliances after 1984 did not solidify party organizations. Rather they continued to divide so that by 1989- 1990 there had been a significant increase in the number of political parties to 21. A dozen of these were able to unite into an electoral coalition with Violeta Chamorro as their candidate.

El Salvador 1988, 1989 and the PDC

Watershed elections do not necessarily imply that the nature or level of institutionalization of party systems will change even in a context of a new transition. And in the late 1980s supporters of the Salvadoran government argued that a party system and electoral democracy were being institutionalized in El Salvador as proven by the continuing existence and significant electoral returns of the three largest parties, and the fact that the incumbent government was turned out in the election by the challenging party. Critics said there had been no founding election. But the 1989 election's impact on the political party system of El Salvador represented much more than that, and it has no real parallel in Nicaragua.

In it, civilian leftist parties returned to El Salvador, after the Esquipulas accords in 1987 and with considerably improved though still awfully flawed human rights conditions. The leftists lived in constant danger. The coalition of three small parties, the Convergencia Democratica (CD), confined almost entirely to San Salvador, garnered 3.5% of the vote in 1989.

The CD presence also marked somewhat of a divide between it and the FMLN, itself still divided into five groups. The CD participated while the FMLN still called the elections illegitimate and the government illegal. However, during the run up to the elections the FMLN also announced a dramatic shift in its negotiating position -- that in exchange for fair electoral conditions for the CD and a six month delay in the elections, it was prepared to accept the results, and in exchange for a dramatic restructuring of the military and a bringing to justice of its human rights offenders, it would be prepared to lay down its arms. This offer was rejected, and no serious negotiations started until after the "Tet" offensive of late 1989. But it was, along with the presence of the CD in the elections, a harbinger of an electoral and party system to come.

The elections marked the beginning of the remarkable decline of the PDC. The reasons for it say a good deal about the current party system of El Salvador, because they reveal the extent to which the PDC was buoyed by the U.S. and its need for a PDC that the FMLN insurgency created in 1980. By 1988 the U.S. needs for the PDC had been reduced considerably. By 1988 the GOP administration had not really needed the PDC for four years to play the role in Congress for El Salvador appropriations that had been crucial in 1984. Such appropriations were no longer controversial. Also, the PDC also managed under the weight of this experience to begin to gobble itself up. A glance at election results shows demonstrates the decline. See Tables 1 and 2.

In 1982 and 1984 the PDC received almost 550,000 votes (over 40%) and boomed to three quarters of a million votes in the 1984 presidential runoff. It declined only slightly in 1985 Assembly elections to 518,000 votes, but with decreased turnout saw its percentage rise (compared to 1982) to 53%.

In 1988 and 1989 it declined over 200,000 votes from the 1982 and 1984 races and its percentage dropped to the mid 30s. By 1991 it declined another 40,000 votes (28%), and in the 1994 Assembly elections its votes went down again another 55,000 votes (18%). In 1994, compared to 1984, its Presidential candidate declined 335,000 votes, and third place, though obviously by 1994 its fortunes were also altered by the presence of the FMLN in the election. The watershed was 1989.

What caused this turnabout? First, by 1989, in a fashion parallel to the FSLN in Nicaragua in 1990, the incumbent party was saddled with a war that was still going on after the promises of peace held by some of the electorate in 1984 and furthered by Duarte's initiative to begin talks with the FMLN, an initiative that the U.S. did not favor. Also like the Sandinistas in 1990, though to a much lesser extent, it was running on a war damaged economy which had not benefitted the poor. Duarte's apparent inclinations in the mid 1980s to provide greater aid for the poor, were squelched by the Reagan administration which was always uncomfortable with the PDC, supported by Carter, nationalizations in 1980. These burdens not only cost the PDC many votes but also cost it the allegiance of popular sector organizations it had, with the help of the U.S., started and maintained to shore up its political presence.

Second, the PDC suffered from a political party's version of Dutch disease. El Salvador had become so awash in dollars and aid from the U.S. that the temptations and opportunities for graft and corruption to the incumbent party, to say nothing of the military, were, at least to some, overwhelming. The ARENA challengers effectively portrayed one after another corruption scandal in the months preceding the elections.

The PDC, in sharp contrast to its ARENA opponents, showed in 1989 and has continued to show, no organizational ability to manage succession crises. The 1989 election, with President Duarte ill with terminal cancer, was marked by heavy infighting among the PDC over the presidential candidacy. A deeper battle ensued in 1993 when the party attempted to democratize itself with party primaries, but was still marked by legal challenges going to the Supreme Court 3 months before the election over control of party apparatus.

By contrast, D'Aubuisson, ARENA's godfather, saw in 1988 that his reputation in Washington would not permit another run at the presidency, and he engineered the candidacy of Freddy Cristiani, a handsome U.S. educated member of the oligarchy who was familiar with Washington and U.S. political culture. As a candidate his PDC opponent Fidel Chávez Mena paled by comparison. And Washington, even Democratis, welcomed Cristiani with open arms.

"POST WAR" "FOUNDING" ELECTIONS: NICARAGUA 1990 AND EL SALVADOR 1994

In 1990, incumbent President Daniel Ortega led a muscular Sandinista party into elections in Nicaragua. Supported by thousands of militants, the Sandinistas lost to the highly disorganized, fractious UNO coalition of 13 "sofa parties" (the members of each could fit on a sofa) and their malapropism-prone candidate Violeta Chamorro.¹⁰

In the March 1994 Salvadoran elections, a well-organized, FMLN-led opposition ran with Rubén Zamora as presidential candidate. Despite Zamora's skill and exuberance, a war-damaged

economy, and extensive poverty the FMLN did not even come close to defeating the incumbent, right wing, nationalist ARENA party. ARENA candidate Armando Calderón Sol nearly won the Presidential election outright (with 49 percent of the vote, just under the majority required for victory). Zamora ran second with 26 percent. The April runoff was not close; Calderón Sol defeated Zamora by a 2 to 1 margin. In legislative elections ARENA fell just shy of a majority, but had little trouble controlling the Assembly except on vote requiring a super majority.¹¹

In short, the left lost both elections and to conservative opponents.

Issues of peace and prosperity dominated both elections. In Nicaragua the Bush administration and the contra army had refused international entreaties to cease the illegal arms supply of the contras, and to have the contras lay down their arms in exchange for political guarantees. For the Bush administration, the continued armed presence of the contras — not several hundred UN election observers — guaranteed a "free and fair" election. For their part, the contras — with US support - proclaimed that a Sandinista victory would prove that the elections had not been free and fair.

Though almost all polls predicted a Sandinista victory, some made it clear that Nicaraguan voters worried that such a victory would prolong the war. Those polled placed much more blame for the war on the United States and the contras than on the Sandinistas. But they also knew that UNO would have better relations with the US government than the Sandinistas. Many suspected that a vote for the Sandinistas would mean prolonging the war, while a vote for UNO promised better relations with the United States and an end to the war. And a large minority continued to fear a US invasion — not an unnatural fear, considering the US invasion of Panama, just two months before the election.

In El Salvador, by contrast, the United States supported the government side in the war and, for years, opposed negotiations that might lead to anything more than a guerrilla surrender. After the 1989 killing of the Jesuit priests during the FMLN offensive, and subsequent decline in Congressional support for the war, US policy shifted, gingerly backing a UN-brokered peace process. The Salvadoran peace accords were finally signed two years in January 1992. Although the accords had not been fully implemented by the time of the election, the incumbent ARENA was not burdened with the prospect of ongoing war and reaped credit for the peace — in sharp contrast with the situation faced by the Sandinistas in 1990.

Voters blame the incumbent when the economy is bad, and in the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran economies were severely damaged by war. But the political costs of economic decline were far greater for the Sandinistas than for ARENA. The economic damage of the 1980s was simply more devastating in Nicaragua than in El Salvador. While GDP per capita in El Salvador was virtually stagnant from 1984 through 1988, in Nicaragua it declined almost 29%. In 1989 stagnation and ongoing war led to the electoral victory of ARENA over the Christian Democrat incumbents, and, early in 1990, economic collapse without peace cost the Sandinistas the election. But in the two years prior to the 1994 founding election, El Salvador's GDP increased by three and five percent.

What explains the differences in the wartime performance of the economies? A key factor is the type of foreign assistance they received. Considerable foreign aid flowed into Nicaragua, from a wide variety of sources. But very little was in foreign exchange, and much was tied to development projects that would only pay off in the long term.

Foreign aid to El Salvador came almost exclusively from the United States, and it was far more effective in keeping the economy afloat than the crazy quilt pattern of Nicaraguan assistance. Putting military assistance to the side, U.S. aid was geared to maintaining a stable currency, holding inflation in check, and keeping the infrastructure in repair. The Salvadoran economy was severely damaged, but it never went over the edge. By 1988, however, the Nicaraguan economy was in free fall.

In short, US policy was a success: it kept the Salvadoran economy afloat, and wreaked havoc on the Nicaraguan economy. In 1990, the US backed war was still doing damage; in 1994, the ARENA government had less damage to repair, and the economy was recovering.

The United States also had an important hand in the formation of the UNO coalition. The Bush administration made it plain that substantial U.S. financial support would be forthcoming only if the opposition unified behind a viable candidate. Virtually none of the 13 UNO parties had any recognition among voters. Their very weakness, the promise of U.S. election aid, and, for some, the fact that by 1989 they could no longer have high hopes that the US-backed contras could defeat the Sandinistas, forced the parties together.

By contrast, it is unthinkable to even imagine anyone in the Clinton administration making a proposal to bankroll a leftist coalition against ARENA to level the playing field. The power of the U.S. to shape the electoral playing fields is seen by contemplating a reversal of history. Would US neutrality in Nicaragua have produced a different outcome? What would have happened in El Salvador had the United States encouraged the FMLN to stay armed, and simultaneously backed Rubén Zamora against Calderón Sol?¹²

The US role was considerable, then, but neither electoral outcome was simply a product of US power. Policy-makers here were surprised at the outcome in Nicaragua and had little control over the peace negotiations in El Salvador. National ingredients contributed to the defeat of the left in each country, and some of these ingredients were of the left's own making.

In Nicaragua, the UNO opposition was fortunate to select the one candidate who could have defeated Ortega. To be sure, Violeta Chamorro was no campaign manager's dream: she was unable to answer questions and stumbled through her speeches. No matter. The widow of a national martyr with impeccable anti-Somoza credentials, she was a mother figure promising to heal the nation. Dressed in white and sitting on a white bedecked sedan chair, she floated through campaign rallies waving in gestures reminiscent of the Pope. She was the Madonna. By contrast the Sandinistas cast Ortega as a fighting bantam rooster — this is a country that wanted peace, not a cock fight.

Sandinista critics charged that the party had become arrogant and had lost touch with its base. The Sandinistas had the size and organization to have its cadre sound out a dozen neighbors every few days. But some cadre evidently reported to their superiors what they wanted to hear; some failed to see that their neighbors were not being frank with proselytizing visitors. They also had the resources to run a lavish campaign. But the very lavishness contributed to self deception. According to the Sandinistas, 400,000 people attended their final campaign rally in Managua. Though 250,000 may be more accurate, the rally was a massive, musical extravaganza six times the size of the final UNO rally. Yet UNO won 210,000 votes in Managua, 40,000 more than the Sandinistas. Many wearing a Sandinista T shirt at the rally needed a T shirt, and wanted to go to a happening, more than a political event.

Did the expensive campaign in a poor country cost the Sandinistas votes? Perhaps, but the formula apparently worked for ARENA in El Salvador. ARENA built a highly organized, skillful, and well-financed electoral machine. The small wealthy class supported ARENA unanimously, which helped ARENA to out spend the left coalition on television advertising by roughly 6 to 1 (not counting lavish production costs).

In El Salvador, the FMLN was hurt when, in the weeks preceding the campaign, several of its cadre and three of its top leaders were assassinated (one apparently in a common crime). These killings sent a chilling message to those who might publicly have associated themselves with the left. In 1993 and for years before it was very common to see ARENA T-shirts and bumper stickers. But in 1993-1994 it was quite uncommon to see the same for the left. An FMLN T-shirt hardly would have brought a death threat in 1993, but one would have had to think more than twice before wearing one in many neighborhoods in El Salvador.

The Salvadoran opposition was also hurt by more fundamental, organizational factors. An all-party, UNO-style alliance to defeat the ARENA machine was not in the cards. Nicaragua parties were so tiny each could barely win an Assembly seat. In El Salvador centrist and left parties opposition parties knew they could get a block of seats running alone. Moreover the Salvadoran left was divided. The Zamora coalition had a messy marriage. The factions of the FMLN decided to back Zamora only after a 3-2 vote. The social democratic MNR launched its own candidate, and only reluctantly backed Zamora after pressure from the Socialist International. The left never coalesced in Assembly races, and while some municipal council races had left coalitions, causing a confusion for voters in the various election ballots, most did not.

The FMLN was new at electoral politics. It is not easy to transfer skills from organizing a war to organizing a political campaign. The FMLN had spread its leaders thin over efforts to monitor and negotiate the constant crises in the two year process of implementation of the peace treaty, and to find financial bases of support for the party and its full time cadre. And because the FMLN was itself a coalition of five factions, much time was spent in internal negotiations.

Rubén Zamora was an energetic, articulate candidate, but the Democratic Convergence was not much of an organization behind him. It won only a single Assembly seat, in part because, in a singularly embarrassing gaffe, it failed to register some of its Assembly candidates on time.

Finally, the Salvadoran left was hurt by an absurdly complex voter registration process which left 200,000 and 400,000 people who tried to get voting cards without them. Then, on election day, an estimated 25,000 to 75,000 people who *had* cards could not vote because their name was not on the voting list (or was spelled differently) or because confusion at badly organized polling centers made it hard to figure out where to vote.

This badly administered system discriminated against the poor, particularly those in ex-FMLN war zones. Registration requires, at a minimum, two trips to what were often distantly located centers (300 nationwide) — time-consuming and expensive bus trips for the poor. Extensive documentation is required with duplicate copies in a computer data base. The poor tend to not have birth certificates. Voting requires a return trip. In cities, voting tables are centralized (not neighborhood based) with each center having sections of the alphabet, again requiring travel.

In Nicaragua, by contrast, there were over 4300 neighborhood based registration and voting centers, with one-stop shopping registration. Most could walk to a familiar polling place and did not have to know the alphabet to vote. As a result, voting centers were very orderly. Had the Sandinistas won and administered an election in 1990 with the biases and irregularities of the Salvadoran election the U.S. would have been scornful in its condemnation, and would likely not have accepted the results or ended the war.¹³

GOVERNANCE AND PARTY ORGANIZATION AFTER FOUNDING ELECTIONS

In El Salvador, in contrast to Nicaragua's specter of stalemate and chaos and multiparty fragmentation and polarization, ARENA reigned supreme and raised the opposite specter of one-party hegemony.

The post 1990 election period in Nicaragua, as indicated, was marked by a party system, including only those 14 parties with representation in the Assembly, with extreme fragmentation and polarization. The UNO coalition fell apart with shifting groups of parties allying with and opposing the Chamorro administration on various legislative matters. At most points Chamorro could count on only a handful (6-10) votes from the former UNO coalition from the so called "Center Group" itself containing three parties. This tendency increased as her term lurched along from crisis to crisis and found her son-in-law Antonio Lacayo (de facto head of state) making numerous tactical alliances with the Sandinistas who controlled 39 seats in the 92 seat Assembly. However, toward the end of her term, the FSLN had split, with the MRS being formed by Sergio Ramírez and followers and the majority of the Sandinista bench supported Ramírez. That portion of the bench then joined with other groups from the center of UNO. The hard right of UNO by 1991 was equally opposed to the hated Sandinistas and Antonio Lacayo for making pacts with them. It consisted of various party fractions of Liberals and Conservatives in the Assembly. By 1995 portions of this group were willing to join the Ramírez Sandinistas and centrist parties in passing Constitutional Amendments which would expand the power of the Assembly vis a vis the executive and judicial branches, and would make it impossible for Lacayo, as son-in-law to succeed Chamorro as President.¹⁴

Despite the many crises of the most fundamental nature and continued armed violence, it would not be accurate to say that party fragmentation and polarization destroyed governability, though it certainly contributed to lowered evaluations on the part of the public. In fact, if capacity to govern can be measured by the ability to pass and implement important new policies, one could argue that the Chamorro period not only essentially, if not entirely, brought an end to the war, but resulted in extensive and dramatic new policy directions and implementation: Amidst massive street demonstrations brought under control by pact making, inflation was brought under control by March 1991 and the exchange rate was more or less contained, despite the fact that export earnings were flat. The state was shrunk, with some 25,000 thousand employees being laid off. Massive amounts of foreign aid were solicited and delivered. Sandinista top commanders of the police and military, including Humberto Ortega, chief of the military, were sent into retirement and these bodies were regulated and institutionalized by new laws. The state productive sector was almost entirely privatized with some 330 state enterprises and all state farms going into private hands (in some cases portions went to employees and in some cases armed contras got farm land which had been state owned). Massive disputes over the ownership and control of residential and farm properties transferred during the Sandinistas were brought within a legal framework and many were resolved, though this remains an ongoing, and serious political issue.¹⁵

Lacayo in the end achieved much of his initial program, but did so at the expense and exhaustion of his, and to a somewhat lesser extent, his mother-in-law's political capital both within the legislature and among the public. Moreover, he had no political party base to back him up. Much was done by decree and there was some legislation which a large majority of the former UNO opposed.

The Sandinistas remained the only strong, well organized party, but they had been defeated, were on the defense for almost the entire three year period and were divided and atrophied by several issues:

disaffection at mid levels and the grassroots about the piñata during which well placed Sandinistas, after the election but before Chamorro took office took ample resources for themselves from the state some of them within the framework of their hastily passed laws to protect the properties taken during the Sandinista agrarian reform as well as occupied urban residences and lands, laws which were principally to benefit poor;

disaffection at the grass roots and division over how to relate to the Chamorro government and the international financial context demanding severe structural adjustment;

division over whether militant street demonstrations to protect gains or efforts to gain new, non Sandinista voters should predominate (Ortega swung back and forth on these issue, but this was the dividing line between him and Ramírez); and divisions over control of quotas of power within the party.

Two developments, one in each country, reduced and perhaps eliminated the contrast between the two countries of extreme fragmentation and polarization in Nicaragua and impending one party hegemony in El Salvador. The first major development was the weakening of ARENA. The governing party has been weakened by several factors, principle among them being more severe internal division since 1994 than ever before. Some of this has apparently taken the form of political violence - a legacy of its paramilitary past. Despite its efforts to keep these under party wraps some of the divisions burst into public view with a series of revelations aired by a far right conservative, Kirio Waldo Salgado about past and present corruption within the party ranks. This was sufficient to force the resignation of two Calderón Sol ministers. Salgado went so far as to level charges against former President Cristiani, then left ARENA, formed his own parties and showed well in late 1995 polls. Added to this has been ongoing contests for power between various "wings" of the party with somewhat shadowy outlines: Cristiani wing, Calderon Sol, Juan Dominech and traditional landowners from east and west who were among the founders of the party.

This latter group became increasingly public last year saying the party had veered from D'Aubuisson's path and was abandoning its roots in favor of a country club financial elite, that is Cristiani. Analysts have long charged that there were divisions between traditional landowners and new financial and service business groups with the latter winning most policy battles to the disadvantage of the former. This group, headed y Cornejo Arango then launched a public campaign to dump party leader Dominech and succeeded in doing so after turning up a corruption scandal against him. Also not long before that Dominich's cousin and business associate was found slain gangland style. Dominech did a swift reversal from prior statements and resigned, just a few weeks before his term as party head was up.¹⁶

Added to these maladies was a generally perceived ineffective presidential leadership form Calderón Sol. His administration fluctuated badly in establishing its economic policy and managed to annoy other important bases of wealth in the party from industrial circles when radical free market policy initiatives seemed to threaten their interests.

Finally, if the post war economic boom, which had resulted in almost no reduction in poverty, did not come to an end in the year before the 1996 election, it certainly took a pause which had disastrous election consequences for ARENA.

The rhythm and sequence of events makes a difference. Like the FSLN and ARENA, the FMLN suffered severe internal party divisions. Unlike the other two organizations the FMLN split open mere weeks after the 1994 election and resulted in a formal party split within months, with much of Joaquín Villalobos ERP and Eduardo Sanchos RN splitting off eventually to form the PD. At the time, the FMLN (and Villalobos) argued rather unconvincingly that the split would strengthen rather than weaken because divisions had been so bad as to bog down everybody and make it impossible to conduct party business. The split was prefigured by division over whether Zamora should be the candidate of the FMLN and many, many divisions during the war between Villalobos and the largest component of the FMLN the FPL. The FMLN spent much energy over this split and then attempted to make the remaining three groups in the FMLN into one party, not a confederation of three. While it was doing this ARENA still appeared highly unified. For ARENA and the FSLN, their internal arguments came not long before elections; the FMLN had its divorce just after the 1994 election with time to recover before 1997.

ARENA's party organizational style, not unlike those of the FMLN and the FSLN has been highly centralized and secretive. The two left groups, confronting electoral defeat and the difficult conditions facing all left parties in this neoliberal age and, for them, also in the aftermath of war. opened their internal disputes to the public willingly and/or because of breakdowns in party discipline. ARENA stalwarts were amazed and delighted when FMLN militants began hurling public epithets at each other in the wake of the 1994 election. The same was true for Nicaraguan conservatives when criticisms began to fly in the early 1990s, first over efforts by Humberto Ortega to ingratiate himself to Chamorro and the U.S. By contrast, and to put the point perhaps more strongly than it deserves, ARENA remained until last year, perhaps the Latin American party with the best Leninist discipline of any in Latin America (though unlike the comparison also managed to handle succession issues until now). It has been centralized with its executive committee COENA making all key decisions including over candidate selection (apparently down to the local level), and legislative policy. And it has been a extremely private party concerning its internal discussions and fights. Until last year.

The second major development was in Nicaragua where a major new political organization opposed to the Sandinistas entered into the political fray - the PLC of Arnaldo Alemán. Alemán, a relatively unknown anti Sandinista figure of the 1980s was from the among the militant anti Sandinista factions that stayed in the country. He was swept into power by the Chamorro victory as Mayor of Managua. From that post, which unlike most municipalities in Nicaragua has a considerable financial resources and jobs at its discretion, Alemán launched his run for the presidency. While making known his criticisms of Chamorro, taking extreme measures against the Sandinistas (eliminating wall murals for example; trying to form his own police force), and celebrating his significant support from Miami based anti Castro Cubans, Alemán, stayed out of or above the many political crises. Rather, in classic Mayor Daily style, he did visible public works in Managua culminating in a garish but spectacular colored fountain located in one of his new traffic rotaries, and paved streets in dusty neighborhoods. More important, he politicked, in the campaign sense of the term, continuously in rural areas as well as

urban all over the country all the time for six years. By contrast, Ortega spent much of the first two years after the 1994 defeat out of the country. In so doing Alemán made himself the most credible electoral figure to other Liberals, outflanked and out money raised obvious liberal rivals such as Vice President Virgilio Godoy, and presented something new to the voters weary of war, and wearier still of the continual crises and astronomical unemployment rates pervading the Chamorro administration. His strength was advertised in the stunning electoral victories he gained during Atlantic Coast elections in 1994, an isolated area of the country in which he as a complete unknown before 1990. These elections signaled that not only did he have personal popularity, but that he had built an organization.

The Left

The period after the founding elections also brought significant changes in the two left parties, the FSLN and the FMLN, apart from their party splits. In both cases, the parties became, held conventions with some form of election of delegates, became more open, and fostered or allowed the emergence of some new leaders. Both increased the number of women candidates for Assembly elections in position on party slates that would permit their election.

The FMLN used one convention to lay the groundwork for dissolving its three constituent groups into one party, and another, last year, to select candidates. Unlike the election in 1994 local and Assembly candidates were not selected on the basis of historic command positions in the guerrillas and from the top down in formulas assuring that each of the five groups would get their appointed quotas of candidates. The national slate of 20 candidates was selected by internal balloting in the party's 56 [check] member Political Committee [check], which itself had been elected by the convention. Departmental candidates were selected by departmental committees of the party where historic roles were debates against current performance in new kinds of tasks. Thus being a good guerrilla leader or underground operative did not guarantee selection as before. Similarly there was a context for party leadership between Facundo Guardado and Chico Martínez (who had been a member of the RN but stuck with the FMLN after the schism). Party leaders prevailed upon Leonel Gonzalez to accept another term as party head as a compromise between the two candidates.

The Sandinistas expanded the number of their National Directorate from 9 to 15 check, but did so in the midst of the fight over Sergio Ramírez who was dropped from the DN. Other dissidents who were elected to the National Directorate such as Dora María Tellez and Luís Carrion, one of the original nine commandantes, soon resigned from the new DN when they perceived that decisions were being made by the "Danielistas" outside of meetings. The party also guaranteed women and youth quotas of leadership positions, and in a later reform, required that women candidates alternate in party slates for the Assembly with men, guaranteeing some electoral positions.

POST FOUNDING ELECTIONS: NICARAGUA OCTOBER 1996; EL SALVADOR MARCH 1997

Turnout and Alienation

Ample poll data from both countries in recent years indicates high levels of dissatisfaction with central political institutions: political parties, the legislatures, the presidencies. By contrast in El Salvador, the military fares quite well. Prior to the recent electoral debacle in Nicaragua the CSE fared quite well.

These polling data would predict low turnouts, particularly in the case of Nicaragua where the economy has been a disaster for most people after 1990, relative to El Salvador, and where every few months brought national or local level earth shaking political crises, and where corruption was perhaps more palpable than in El Salvador.

It is not surprising that turnout was low in El Salvador (by comparison with Nicaragua and its own history). It is, in both countries difficult to make precise estimates because recent censuses have not been accurate, and because the voting rolls contained large numbers of people who had not yet received (or taken the trouble to pick up - the proportion is unknown) their voting cards and thus could not vote. Moreover, in El Salvador, the chronic inefficiencies (intended or not) of the TSE have left large numbers of dead people and those who have emigrated to the U.S., on the rolls. This latter problem is not the case in El Salvador, as the registration process was new.

Having said that, it is still apparent, and mysterious, that turnout in Nicaragua was, and has been, considerably higher than in El Salvador. Whereas Salvador turnouts have hovered around 50% of some estimated numbers of those "effectively" on the voting roles, Nicaragua's turnouts have been on the order of 20 to 30 points higher. The turnout in 1996 seems to have approximated the turnout in 1990. In El Salvador, following the turnouts in 1982 and 1984 declined precipitously from 1.5 million to slightly over one million for the several elections up to the "elections of the century" in 1994. Though turnout was up sharply that year, it did not match the early 1980s (despite some, though not much, population growth) and then descended drastically again this year (and disastrously for ARENA. to a 1.1 million from 1.4 million in 1994).

By most estimates Nicaragua has over a million fewer people than El Salvador. Its vote totals have gone steadily up from 1.2 million in 1984 (when there was likely significant abstention) to 1.5 million in 1990 to 1.86 million this past year. Nicaraguans may be disaffected, but they vote, and this year did so under extremely trying circumstances on election day.

Nicaragua 1996

In Nicaragua, the election results bear striking similarities to those of 1990, with the highly unstable, fractious UNO coalition, lifted by Chamorro's candidacy if not by her campaign skills, being replaced by the cohesive organization of Alemán's PLC (and its two smaller liberal cohorts), and his own considerable political skills. In 1990 Chamorro won 54.7% of the vote to Ortega's 40.8; in 1996 Alemán won 51% to Ortega's 37.8%. Though "Other" candidates got more of the votes than in 1996, they didn't get many, though there were two who did far better than any had in 1990.

The Assembly results separate somewhat the election from 1990, when UNO receive 54% (and 51 seats) and the Liberal Alliance but 46% and 42 seats. The FSLN ran 4 points (and 3 seats) behind its 1990 totals. Nine small parties picked up 15 seats (with six of them winning one each) whereas those outside the UNO coalition won but two seats in 1990.

A tendency to write off the Sandinistas as a perpetually losing party overlooks the considerable strength the party has maintained. Part of the trend analysis sees the FSLN losing two consecutive elections in campaigns revolving around antisandinismo, while the opposite trend in El Salvador, a rapid increase in FMLN votes from 1994 to 1997 bodes a successful up and coming party. But Ortega gained 90,000 more votes in 1996 than he did in 1990 indicating that FSLN voters are not simply diehard Sandinistas. The FSLN received 37% of the Assembly votes compared to 33% for the FMLN. It could be argued that the FSLN bench will be in no worse

shape than the new FMLN bench. In El Salvador, one could argue that despite ARENA losses, the balance of conservative forces is worse for the left in 1997 than in 1994. The 11 PCN votes, though somewhat malleable (about half of them) also contain some of the hardest elements in Salvador's right, and Umaña, if he can control the PDC bench of 10 is beholden to ARENA and quite conservative to boot. Comparatively speaking both left parties achieved results in the past months that would be the envy of many dozens of left parties in the world.

Aleman's rise and evident front runner status in polls two years before the election did not prevent still more party fragmentation in Nicaragua. New parties formed launching the candidacies of well known figures from recent years and not so well known figures.

The electoral law continued to encourage the formation of small parties, with low entrance requirements. About 500 geographically distributed party members would be sufficient to form a party. The constituencies of Managua and the National Slate offered the possibility of gaining one delegate to the Assembly with less than 5% of the vote, and the provision that losing Presidential candidates can bet on a place in the Assembly with approximately 1.5% of the vote, all contributed to a proliferation of parties, many launched as vehicles for a particular leader to get into the Assembly as well as get substantial campaign finance loans. In addition the PR system of Nicaragua gives additional chances to small parties by awarding Departmental seats in the first round of counting only to parties which make the full Departmental quotient, and then throwing all remainder votes into a national basket.

However, despite these legal characteristics, the strategy of the small parties and, in particular of those aspiring to lose the Presidency while gaining a seat in the national legislature, was for the majority a failure. This is perhaps another indication of movement toward a two party system, and a small number of additional parties. Only of 23 presidential candidates only 3 losing candidates made it into the assembly and all others won not more than half a percentage point of the vote including some of the very well known names in Nicaragua's post 1980 political class. The list of losers includes Antonio Lacayo, de facto head of state under Chamorro (whose presidential candidacy was barred by the CSE); former Vice President and Assembly Deputy Sergio Ramírez; former Vice President Virgilio Godoy; former Minister of Finance Francisco Mayorga, and former Assembly Presidents Alfredo César and Miriam Arguello; former Deputy, head of the Communist Party and UNO candidate in 1990 Eli Altimirano; former Presidential Candidate, Mayor of Managua and Deputy Moises Hassan; and former Deputy Gustavo Tablada of the Socialist Party. Apart from Daniel Ortega, the only "losing presidential winners" were a new evangelical party headed by minister Guillermo Osorno that won 4% of the Presidential vote, and the main branch of the old Conservative party (with Noel Vidaurrre) that won 2.3%.

The strategy had somewhat more success in the Assembly in part because the AL of Aleman did considerably less well in Assembly voting than in the presidential contest (51% to 46%) and in part because of the above mentioned feature of the PR system in Nicaragua. The two main parties with 83% of the national Assembly vote won 78 of the 93 Assembly seats, the remaining 15 seats are divided among 9 parties which together can have the swing vote, assuming Alemán can keep his three party liberal coalition, dominated by the PLC, together. However, had Nicaragua used the same system El Salvador has without the national basket for remainder votes this very small party quotient of votes would have sunk to 9, and without the provision about losing presidential candidates, would have sunk to 7. This would have given Alemán's alliance 45 out of 90 seats.¹⁷

The vast bulk of Nicaragua's parties did not legally survive the election, failing to make the cutoff, and if pressed will have a hard time paying off their campaign loans to the

government. Changes in the law affecting political parties or in the PR system could make life more difficult for remaining small parties most of which still face an uncertain future. However, with 15 votes to trade in the Assembly the small parties may be easily able to fend off any inclination to make the electoral law less permissive. (The argument in favor of the national basket system is that, though confusing, it comes closer to true proportionality measured nationally.)

El Salvador

In El Salvador five stories marked the election each with impact on the party system. ARENA's Assembly votes declined 210,000 votes from 1994 (35%), and its percentage share dropped ten points to 25%. The magnitude of the decline was nationwide, with one small, highly conservative department declines some what less (La Unión). Though party head, Assembly President, and possible presidential candidate Gloria Salguera Gross claimed that ARENA voters had been too overconfident and had stayed home, this analysis itself seemed highly over confident. ARENA had waged a hard hitting campaign which increased in demagoguery and waving the bloody shirt when poll after poll showed the two parties close together. It is mathematically clear many former ARENA voters stayed home (the PCN vote went up by only 15,000 votes), but to view an epidemic of stay home disease as overconfident seems ludicrous in the face of the polls, FMLN advances, the declined economy and ARENA's unprecedented public bickering and charges of corruption.

Second, after winning but 15 municipal elections in mostly tiny small rural areas in 1994, the FMLN won municipal elections in the biggest municipalities in the country, capturing not only San Salvador, but virtually every large municipality adjoining the capital city and, more incredibly, the western coffee center of Santa Ana, a region of the country in which it had very slight presence during the war after early 1980s military defeats in the area. In fact, most striking about these results is that the FMLN, a rural based army of peasant fighters, had its biggest vote advances and totals in urban areas, places where its (and its organizational antecedents) had not had organizational strength since the late 1970s, prior to the human rights onslaught against it. However, municipal governments in El Salvador (and Nicaragua) have little power or tax base. Municipalities rely upon the national government for the bulk of their budgets.

Third, the FMLN increased its overall vote total by 82,000 votes, or 28% in a year when there was a decline in voter turnout of 220,000. Its share of the vote leapt from 21.4% to 33%.

The other two Salvadoran parties which had brought continuity to the post 1980 party system also went through significant transformations after the 1994 founding elections. The PDC continued its past practice with more internal battles which threatened to move the party into secular irrelevance. The bench elected to the Assembly in 1994 soon divided. Abraham Rodríguez, who lost his bid to the PDC candidate in 1994 to Chávez Mena, moved to form a new party along with dissidents in the Assembly bench and other elites from business and professional circles - a possibly significant development breaking ARENA's hold over these classes. He formed the PRSC and became its leading candidate. However, the party did not fare well in its first year and was barely registering in the polls.

Meanwhile a struggle for power among those left in the PDC played itself out over a year, complete with physical attacks on party headquarters. Though the struggle between the conservative Umaña and liberal Claramont wings of the party had comic overtones the end results, with an rather soiled Umaña victory giving him control over candidate selection, was crucial to the issue of institutionalization of parties and the transition to democracy in three important aspects:

it contributed to further decline in PDC voting power and election of deputies; counting an alliance with the PD (Villalobos' group) in several areas, the PDC declined from 240,000 votes Assembly votes in 1994 to 93,500, from 18% to 8%, and from 18 Deputies to 10 (and the ten counts three won in alliance with the PD; one of the three is a PD member).¹⁸

Umaña achieved his victory with the help of ARENA in the Assembly who joined in ousting illegally a Christian Democrat from the Supreme Electoral Tribunal just 3 months before the election. His replacement, an Umaña supporter, tipped the balance on the TSE in favor of Umaña in the third PDC dispute which had been brought to the TSE in 1996, despite the fact that Claramont had apparently won a fair victory within the PDC causing Umaña to split and claim his was the real PDC (controlling the party's distinctive green flag with a fish still has important electoral consequences particularly in some rural areas). Thus the transition was flawed by gross manipulation of the TSE, an institution mired in difficulties impeding the transition.

As ARENA had intended, this result left new PDC deputies who could likely be counted upon to vote with ARENA in close votes, something ARENA will need. Had the Claramont faction won ARENA would have no such assurances. Thus the maneuver made a fundamental difference in the balance of the Assembly despite the PDC's ongoing decline.

The PCN, which had in the early 1980s had garnered 19% of the vote (in 1982 and 1984) then by 1985 to 9% and then to 6% in 1994, good for only 4 deputies in the Assembly. However, this year its bench balloons to 11 deputies, leaving it very much on the map and in a position to bargain with all parties. Its fortunes were buoyed by the defection of Cornejo Arango and other ARENA hardliners, including former Vice President Francisco (check) Merino and notorious former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Gutierrez Castro. In the election its votes went up only modestly, from 83,000 to 97,000 (which surpassed the PDC for the first time) and from 6.2% to 8.7%. Its Deputy total went up much more thanks to sufficient the large number of 3 Deputy circumscriptions in El Salvador and modest vote local vote increases combined with declines in ARENA and/or the PDC which were sufficient to gain it third place in a number of areas which considerably less than one third of the vote.¹⁹

PARTY SYSTEM DIFFERENCES AND THE FUTURE

The two Nicaraguan major parties differ from their Salvadoran counter parts in that each has a central leader with caudillo characteristics. ARENA has not had one since the early death from cancer of D'Aubuisson, whose caudillo status would have dwarfed that of Ortega or Alemán. His ongoing presence within the party is used to rally and as a benchmark of internal loyalty. No ARENA member would dare make a public negative statement against him. It is no accident that the party revolt in 1996 coming from the east by Cornejo Arango was waged in his name.

The FSLN and Ortega differ very considerably from Alemán and the PLC in important institutional characteristics. Ortega may be the top dog, but the party, unlike the PLC, has a history of collective leadership, and has had recent moments in which Ortega's power was very much in question (particularly in the aftermath of his coronary problems when he was gone for a number of weeks in Cuba). Ortega will face future challenges in that he has now lost two presidential elections in a row, and this time, unlike 1990, it is much harder (though not impossible) to blame the U.S. and the war. A portion of the loud claims of fraud by the

Sandinistas after this election, based on very substantial irregularities which contrasted sharply with the two elections conducted under their watch, may have been to deflect attention about the defeat from Ortega to external forces. Finally, however popular Alemán may have been in this election, the Sandinistas now have as an organization and among loyal followers a collective experience of historic proportions. Whatever the pettiness of the piñata, the indecorous shoving for quotas of power, and the ambivalence and dual messages of the Chamorro years, the FSLN is seen as the historic agent of Somoza's overthrow, it instituted mass organizations which still have thousands of members bringing about unprecedented political participation in Nicaragua, it brought about elections and then conceded defeat in 1990, it fought (as did Sandino) the U.S. to standstill, and it was a political force which shaped the lives of tens of thousands of Sandinistas. There have been erosions, disaffections and defections aplenty in the last seven years, but that legacy still has force.

Alemán and the PLC, despite a long Liberal, not very pretty, history in Nicaragua, unlike the FSLN and even more unlike ARENA, is a brand new organization untested, unshaped, and in many ways unknown. If Daniel Ortega were to drop dead tomorrow the FSLN would lose little of its institutional presence, with other historic and well known figures to call upon (though it would surely face a massive internal succession crisis). If Alemán were to drop dead tomorrow (and he also has health problems, is vastly overweight) it is not clear he would leave behind him a coherent political party (and his vice president is not from the PLC).

By contrast, ARENA survived the death of its caudillo and went on to score a string of electoral victories. Even with this recent electoral setback and internal struggle which has no doubt intensified since the election, it remains the biggest party. (It lost the mayorship of San Salvador, but still polled more votes than any other party.) It has the richest organization, and the most ample electoral apparatus in terms of media skills and resources and party workers. It has proven in the past that it can select new candidates and new party leaders and do so, until 1996, with what appears to the public to be smooth transitions. (And indeed the selection of Calderón Sol was indeed a smooth transition; he earned the mantle by being a highly visible and quite successful mayor of San Salvador. As Alemán did in Nicaragua, he spent much time working the hustings in his years before being a presidential candidate building up support among areneros at the base of the party.)

The FMLN has both the strength and the weakness of not having a caudillo figure. It shows signs of great progress in making the extremely difficult and underestimated organizations problem of changing from a guerrilla army with a branch of highly skilled negotiators to an electoral political party. The way to that transition was hampered by internal division, by the necessity to oversee the implementation of the peace accords while also preparing for the 1994 elections, by an apparently tiny financial base, by the need of thousands of combatants to change to civilian life in which they could only devote part time efforts to the party, and by an vastly overburdened party leadership. Historically put, the disadvantages of not having won in 1980 or 1983, have placed enormous burdens on the FMLN. The advances in the recent election, which have been termed a victory by the FMLN despite the fact that ARENA won well over half of the municipalities and one more Assembly seat than the FMLN, will give the organization a tremendous boost.

Its collective leadership is an organizational strength as is the apparent smooth transition to make the FMLN one party and not a confederation of three. Competition for posts within the party and for candidacies do not seem to have taken place along the party lines of the three groups, but between individuals and about issues. There is a substantial turnover in the FMLN bench. However, lack of a central leader may be a disadvantage when it comes to the

presidential election in 1999. There is no obvious candidate, though it is quite possible that the FMLN will again seek to ally with a candidate outside the party - Ruben Zamora again (who seems quite inclined to give it another run) or perhaps the new San Salvador mayor Hector Silva.

The electoral and political success of the FMLN in building a non military civilian political party is cast in sharp relief by the contrast with the former rebels in Nicaragua. Though the FMLN was a confederation of five parties during the war, often with intense and even violent differences, it was able to maintain a general, if not always consistent, level of unity during the war so as to make it a self reliant and formidable fighting force. The contras had their moments on the battlefield but as a fighting force were considerable less effective despite having much greater material resources from the U.S. (it was a guerrilla force which after 1986 had shoulder held missiles, computer based communications and air support, all underwritten and supplied by the U.S., and having safe shelters across the border in Honduras. However the various contra groups in the North, South and Atlantic coasts were never able to unify, never had a coherent or publicized political program, and were wholly unprepared to negotiate peace in the event of either a Chamorro or a Sandinista victory in 1990.

These characteristics carried over into the post war era. The contras remained largely divided, though connected by some networks. Their own party was able to win but one seat in the Assembly and got 1% of the vote [check]. Some former contras cast their lot with Alemán, but his organization was hardly an entity of the contras. Even the civilians who had supported (mostly from Miami) the contras in the 1980s went in various political directions after the war.

CONCLUSION

It is difficult to predict based on such recent developments. In each country the recent election results indicate that both countries will have modified two party systems with the principle parties in each being from the left and the right. ARENA and the FSLN have now been around for a long time as electoral parties with extensive electoral bases (though not as solid as either thought a few years ago). The FMLN has apparently succeeded in making a difficult transition and has a long track record of survival and achievement under the most trying circumstances. With varying success, but no disastrous failures (save for the FPL in 1983), each of these three have dealt with internal differences, struggles for power, schisms and leadership struggles and emerged somewhat bruised but as strong political organizations. However the FSLN faces the test of succeeding Ortega.

While the PLC may be seen as a one man Alemán show, and has not proven its institutional mettle in the fashion of the other three parties, it is significant that Alemán's strategy was not only based on personal charisma and visible public works, but also on a long campaign to build an organized base. How successful this has been remains to be seen.

There are also signs in Nicaragua (though weak ones) that some of the polarized elements may diminish. The FSLN, like the FMLN, for better or for worse, has moved toward the center to survive in this neoliberal age. Alemán has had meeting with both Ortega and his brother. This led to discussions between his vice President, the irascible Enrique Bolaños, and the FSLN's flamboyant and much disliked but seasoned negotiator Bayardo Arce over the extremely difficult and explosive property issue. The FSLN replaced its party song with its anti U.S. content with the Ode to Joy. (On the other hand the ARENA song in El Salvador still polarizes calling for death to communists.)

In El Salvador, the FMLN's economic platform is much closer to ARENA, than it is to its former positions of ten years ago. ARENA has ample room to maneuver, but it faces a series of policy issues in which it is not inconceivable that its apparent allies in the Assembly would vote with the FMLN, despite the fact that some in the PCN come from the hardest of hard line FMLN enemies.²⁰

Though there may well be more parliamentary bargaining in each country, and more cohesive policy making, both countries have left behind the equity question. And this in turn has left a public that is disaffected.

TABLES

TABLE 1
El Salvador 1982-1989
Votes in Thousands

Party	82 ConstAsm	84 #1 Pres	84 #2 Pres	85 Asmbly	88 Asmbly	89 Pres
ARENA	402.3 29.3%	376.9 29.9%	651.7 46.4%	284.0 28.9%	452.8 48.0%	505.4 53.8%
PCN	261.2 19.2%	244.6 19.4%	752.6 53.6%	86.8 8.8%	85.1 9.0%	38.2 4.1%
PDC	546.2 40.1%	549.7 43.6%		517.6 52.7%	336.8 35.7%	338.4 36.5%
Others	152.7 11.1%	95.0 7.5%		94.3 9.6%	67.8 7.2%	21.5 2.3%
CD	exile	exile		exile	exile	35.6 3.6%
Valid	1362	1262	1404	982.8	942.6	939.1
Total	1552	1415	1524	1102	1084	1003

TABLE 2
El Salvador Assembly 1988 - 1997
Votes in Thousands

Party	1985	1988	1991	1994	1997
ARENA	284.0 28.9%	452.8 48.0%	466.1 44.3%	605.8 45.0%	396.3 35.4%
PCN	86.8 8.8%	85.1 9.0%	94.5 9.0%	83.5 6.2%	97.4 8.7%
PDC	517.6 52.7%	336.8 35.7%	294.0 28.0%	240.5 17.9%	95.6 8.4%
CD	exile	exile	127.9 12.0%	59.8 4.5%	39.1 3.5%
FMLN	combat	combat	no combat election day	287.8 21.4%	369.7 33.0%
Others	94.3 9.6%	66.8 7.2%	69.0 6.6%	58.3 4.3%	123.7 11.0%
Valid vote	982.8		1051	1345	1120
Total vote	1102		1153	1453	1172

The Others category. The principal contender in the early 1980s, the AD, received 100,000 votes in 1982, but that was cut by well over half in the next two elections, then halved again and its last appearance was 1991. The MAC, a split from the PDC ran in 1989 and peaked in 1991 with 3.2% of the vote. Two evangelical parties ran in 1994, but only one survived the election winning one legislative seat. In 1997 the MU again won a seat but saw its vote total decline by 8000 votes. The FMLN schism resulted in the PD. It received 1% of the vote, but in alliance with the PDC won one 4 deputies one of whom comes from the PD. In that coalition, however the PDC contributed the lion's share of the votes; in six departments the coalition gained 39,838 votes with the PD contributing but 1987 or 5%. Also in 1997, the split from the PDC called the PRSC or Renovación gained 3 seats and 3.6% of the vote and substantially hurt the PDC in at least 3 Departments costing it seats. Finally the PLD of Kirio Waldo Salgado, the defector from ARENA won two seats and 3.2% of the vote. Put another way, in 1997 two of the parties in the Others category gained about the same number of votes as the CD.

Effects of the two systems of PR 96 and 97

TABLES 3 and 4

Nicaraguan election 1996

Note: In 1990 UNO won 51 seats, the FSLN 39 and 2 other parties one a seat each, one by way of being the losing presidential candidate.

Systems	AL	FSLN	Xtian	PCN	Pronal	Other	total
Nica /	42	36	4	3	2	6	93
Sal / losing Pres	45	39	5	2	2	0	93
Sal /o losing pres	45	38	4	1	2	0	90

Other = 6 parties getting one each from the national basket which totaled 23 seats.

The six with the MRS (Sandinista Renovation); Independent Liberal Party; Resistance Party 9 (of the contras who didn't go with AL or FSLN); UNO 96 (Alfredo César's party, though he did not get the seat), ANC, and Unidad. Of the other 23 seats in the national basket, the AL got 6, FSLN 7, Xtian 2, PCN 1 and Pronal 1.

Note that with the Salvadoran system AL gets 50% of the Assembly seats.

Salvadoran election 1997 (no presidential election) using Salvadoran and Nicaraguan PR systems

Note in 1994 ARENA won 39 seats; the FMLN, 21; PDC, 18; PCN, 4; CD, 1; MU, 1. S

Systems	ARNA	FSLN	CD	MU	PCN	PDC	PLD	PRSC	PD/pdc	Tot
Sal	28	27	2	1	11	7	2	3	3	84
Nica /o pdc/pd	29	26	3	2	8	9	2	4	0	84
Nica / pdc/pd	29	26	3	2	8	6	2	4	3	84

TABLE 5

Voter Districts by Number of Deputies including national slate

El Salvador 20 16 6 5 5 4 4 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Nicaragua 1996 20 19 9 6 6 6 4 3 3 3 3 3 2 2 2 2 1 = 90 (plus losing presidential candidates)

Nicaragua 1990 25 15 14 11 10 9 3 2 1 = 90 (losing presidential candidate)

Nicaragua changed from regions to smaller departments and added a national slate.

In Nicaragua's party system the existence of its PR system led to somewhat greater proportionality, but rewarded six very tiny parties with no particular voter appeal and ran into difficulties assigning the won seats to particular candidates in particular districts, an inherent problem in this system. On the other hand, Nicaragua's system in El Salvador at least moderates the PCN gains which are quite unproportional; its vote went from 6 to 8% and from 1994 to 1997 and the seats it won went from 4 to 11!

TABLE 6
Nicaraguan elections
Votes in thousands

Party	1984 Pres	1984 Asmbly	1990 Pres	1990 Asmbly	1996 Pres	1996 Asmby
FSLN	736 / 67%	729	580 /40.8%	580 /40.8	669 / 38%	636 / 37%
PCDN	154 / 14%	153				
Others (5)	209 / 19%	209				
UNO			778 / 54.7%	765 /53.9%		
Others			63 / 4.4%	75 /5.3%		
AI Liberal					905 / 51%	802 / 46%
Others					199 / 11%	303 / 17%
valid vote	1099		1424		1773	1742
total vote	1170		1511		1866	1857

Note: Returns for 1996 based on the provisional returns issued by the CSE November 8, 1996.

ENDNOTES

1. See "Introduction," and "Conclusion: Parties and Democracy in Latin America -- Different Patterns, Common Challenges," Pn Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully, eds., Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995, 1-34, 459-476.
2. Ibid.
3. Costa Rica may be somewhat of an exception here.
4. See, Montgomery, Tommie Sue, Revolution in El Salvador: From Civil Strife to Civil Peace, Boulder: Westview, 1995, chapter 7 "Electoral Authoritarianism and the Rev. Challenge, 1984-1989", 185-213; Herman, Edward S. and Frank Brodhead, Demonstration Elections: U.S. Staged Elections in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and El Salvador, South End Press, 1984, 93-153; Latin American Studies Association, The Electoral Process in Nicaragua: Domestic and International Influences: The Report of the Latin American Studies Association Delegation to Observe the Nicaraguan General Election of November 4,1984, Novmeber 19, 1984.
5. The appellation is somewhat difficult to use in Nicaragua because all groups, one could argue, were not participating with the contras, backed by the U.S. still at war. Still the U.S. (and contra) line on the issue was that they were staying mobilized to guarentee the election and they all backed Chamorro.)
6. See Montgomer, op. cit. and Stanley, William, The Protection Racket State: Elite Politics, Military Extortion, and Civil War in El Salvador, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.
7. See Booth John, The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution, Westview, Boulder, 2nd edition 1985, and essays in Walker, Tom ed., Nicaragua: The First Five Years, Boulder: Westview 1985.
8. Gilbert, Dennis Sandinistas , Basil Blackwell, Cambridge, MA, 1988.

9. Spalding, Rose, Capitalists and Revolution in Nicaragua: Opposition and Accommodation 1979-1993, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina 1994; Cite Paige on El Salvador; cite Wickham-Crowley, who downplays the U.S. role, on relative regime strength.
10. Parts of this section draw upon my "What's Left in Central America?," Boston Review, V. XIX, #'s 3 and 4, June 1994, 19ff.
11. See, Spence, Jack, David R. Dye and George Vickers, El Salvador: Elections of the Century: Results, Recommendations, Analysis, Cambridge, Hemisphere Initiatives, July 1994.
12. Robinson, William, A Faustian Bargain: U.S. Intervention in the Nicaraguan Elections and American Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era, Boulder, Westview, 1992; FLACSO Programa El Salvador, El Proceso Electoral 1994, San Salvador 1995.
13. Latin American Studies Association, Electoral Democracy Under International Pressure: The Report of the Latin American Studies Association to Observe the 1990 Nicaraguan Election, March 15, 1990.
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14. David R. Dye, Judy Butler, Deena Abu-Lughod, Jack Spence with George Vickers, Contesting Everything, Winning Nothing: The Search for Consensus in Nicaragua, 1990-1995, Cambridge, Hemisphere Initiatives, November 1995.
15. Ibid.
16. Jack Spence, David R. Dye, Mike Lanchin, Geoff Thale with George Vickers, Chapultepec Five Years Later: El Salvador's Political Reality and Uncertain Future, Cambridge, Hemisphere Initiatives, January 16, 1997, 20-24.
17. On PR systems in Europe, see Lijphart, Arend, Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies 1945-1990, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994.
18. The PDC lost seats in La Libertad, us, son, pz, ch mz and SV.
19. The PCN held on to its seats in San Salvador, Santa Ana and San Miguel, increased from one to two deputies on the National Slate, and added seats in Usulután, La Libertad, Sonsonate, La Unión and La Paz. In areas where the Arena dissidents had strength, such as La Unión and Usulután it doubled its votes and gained a seat; in other areas such as La Libertad and Sonsonate its received about the same number of votes as 1994 but gained as seat as ARENA (La Union) and PDC loses (La Libertad) made it possible to gain third or fourth place.
20. Briones, Carlos and Carlos G. Ramos, Gobernabilidad en Centroamérica: Gobernabilidad, Economía y Democracia en El Salvador San Salvador: FLACSO 1995.