Naming the Future:

How Salvadoran Community Radio Builds

Civil Society and Popular Culture

By

Diana Elizabeth Agosta

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

Naming the Future:
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Diana Elizabeth Agosta

Adviser: Professor Marc Edelman

This dissertation analyzes the participatory community radios of post-war El Salvador through ethnographic research and analyses of their operations and programming. It explores the concrete local meanings of civil society and the ways this medium helped construct a vibrant popular culture.

Its core is an analysis of the relationships between the community radios and the activities of emerging civil society organizations as part of a post-war movement reflecting a Gramscian discourse of civil society. Examples show how their collaboratively produced programs sought to increase popular participation especially among the formerly marginalized rural and urban poor, as well as to deepen understanding of human rights, promote practices of citizenship, and redefine "news" to fit their particular audiences.

A viable civil society depends on the availability of public spaces. The dissertation

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investigates the issues underlying the battles to legalize the community radios and expand this virtual public space. Analyses of radio broadcasts of school graduation celebrations demonstrate the radios' central role in activating the local public sphere, building on critiques of Habermas' foundational concept (1989).

Community radio is not a smaller version of commercial radio, promoting consumption which listeners arguably use to create a feeling of belonging (García Canclini 2001). Instead, these radios are a form of popular culture: transformative expressive practices which reconnect people to their own agency and through which they construct a sense of collective identity (Rowe and Schelling 1991:7). Case studies go beyond cultural imperialism critiques to show how songs circulating in commercial regional and global music markets were locally contextualized on community radio through dedications and other local programming. Other examples explore how everyday music and programming covering the annual celebration of the return from the refugee camp expressed a hybrid but distinctly local sense of culture. Like other participatory or alternative media practices, this programming was an empowering means of self-representation and the basis for a sense of collective identity (Ginsburg 1991, 1997; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1995; López Vigil 1996). Overall, this dissertation shows how these communication projects contribute in a small way to undo the marginalization of the communities they serve.

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This dissertation would not have been possible without the cooperation and generosity of the staffs of the three radio stations profiled here. They allowed me to tape their programs, attend planning meetings, and fill many notebooks with notes about our conversations. They introduced me to community leaders and to many others as I sought to understand the networks in which these stations were embedded. They helped me feel at home, opened doors and acted as my central contacts during my stay. So first and foremost I wish to thank Rosi, Fito, Miriam, "Ernesto," Juan Lucas, Elena, Lucia, Tomás, Dilbert, Silvia, Margarita, Mario, and all those at Radio Sumpul, Radio Segundo Montes and Radio Cabal for their openness, assistance and friendship.

Before beginning this fieldwork I visited Guarjila and Segundo Montes and formally requested permission to conduct this research, not only from radio staffs but also from community leaders. I wish to thank José Ramon Morales and Francisca Cruz, President and Project Director, respectively, of Guarjila's Managing Board in 1997; Mayor Otilio Serrano of San Antonio de Los Ranchos; and Mayors Francisco Pereira of Meanguera and Jaime Antonio Castillo of Jocoaitique for their generous cooperation. M. Antonieta Albarran, cultural activist, John Guiliani of the Tamarindos group in Guarjila, María Ventura of the Asociación Comunal and the school system of Segundo Montes, Maurício Dimas of the Pastoral Committee and Segundo Montes Foundation, Darío Chicas of the Incorporated Products, the musicians of the Segundo Montes music school, David Quinteros of the Technical School and many, many others in these communities and regions answered my questions and graciously shared their knowledge and perspectives and I wish to acknowledge their contributions as well.

I particularly want to thank the families who shared their homes and food and companionship with me during this period. Beyond putting up with my particular

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personality and my need for privacy, they shared what they had with me. This was a huge gift. Too often we in the relatively prosperous North share when we feel we have enough and we give what is extra or not needed. These families made the little they had stretch to accommodate one more person, and whatever I have been able to contribute in return can't compare. They taught me so much not only about what it is like to live where they live, but also about what generosity and resilience really mean. I was lucky to live in families with women who helped me understand how to be polite and effective. I owe them a great debt; I could never help them enough with their heavy work of maintaining a rural household.

Oscar Pérez, Executive Director of the national community radio association, ARPAS, greatly facilitated my research from the moment I met him at the 1994 *Radioapasionados* conference in Quito. He introduced me to each of the community radio directors in the country and patiently unraveled the complicated threads of the radios' struggle for legalization.

I learned so much from my good friends in El Salvador, Leslie Schuld, Wendy Wallas, Henrietta Shannon, Kelley Ready, and Sister Laeticia. They helped me make sense of post-war culture, introduced me to experts and contacts, helped me navigate intricacies of everyday life like buses and telephones, provided sounding boards for ideas and friendships to sooth my homesickness. I continue to have the greatest respect for these women who have dedicated so many years of their lives to improving Salvadoran lives. I am glad to have shared a portion of my fieldwork period with my friend and colleague Kelley Ready whose perspective and support has helped immeasurably.

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Throughout this process, I have had two advisors who have shown through their examples both high standards for scholarly work as well as its significance for the real lives of its subjects. June Nash helped me conceptualize this project's concern with how civil society emerged out of the social movements of earlier eras, and she encouraged my interest in unraveling what makes participatory media distinct from mass media. In the second phase, Marc Edelman's consistent encouragement and constructive criticism helped me shape a long meandering manuscript into a coherent work. His deep knowledge of Central American societies, his concern with the continuing impact of local histories and the broader interrelationships of civil society organizations has enriched my approach. Incisive comments from Jane Schneider on my first full draft helped me coalesce the theme of popular culture from several related threads of discussion. Outside reader Jeff Himpele's comments on my penultimate draft provided new insights and will guide my research in the future.

Much of my inspiration for this project has come from media activists who have shown me over the years that another kind of media is possible. Dee Dee Halleck, Jon Alpert and Keiko Tsuno, George Stoney, Bob Devine, Mike Eisenmenger, Mario Murillo, Martha Wallner and many others have all made real the potential I first discovered through listening to Pacifica radio WBAI in high school.

Last but certainly not least, writing a book is in many ways a lonely process and I thank my parents and my new family for the time and support to pursue this. My son Leonardo and my husband Kenny have put up with my absences for innumerable nights

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and weekends and weeks away so that I could concentrate on this project. Most important, their belief in me and their love has made it worthwhile.

July, 2004; New York City.

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ADEL	*Agencia de Desarrollo Económico Local,* Local Economic Development Agency
ADESCO	*Asociación de Desarrollo Comunal,* Community Development Association
ADIM	*Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de las Mujeres,* Association for the Integrated Development of Women
ALER	*Asociación Latinoamericana de Educatión Radiofónica,* Latin American Association for Radio Education
AMARC	*Asociación Mundial de Radios Comunitarias,* World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
ANDA	*Administración Nacional de Acueductos y Alcantarillados,* National Acuaducts and Water Administration/Ministry
ANDES	*Asociación Nacional de Educadores Salvadoreños (21 de Junio),* National Association of Salvadoran Educators, 21st of June
ANEP	*Asociación Nacional de la Empresa Privada,* National Association for Private Enterprise
ANTEL	*Administración Nacional de Telecomunicaciones,* National Telecommunications Administration
APES	*Asociación de Periodistas de El Salvador,* Salvadoran Journalists' Association
APSIES	*Asociación para la Salud y el Servicio Social Intercomunal,* Intercommunity Association for Health and Social Service
ARENA	*Alianza Republicana Nacionalista,* Nationalist Republican Alliance
ARPAS	*Asociación de Radios y Programas Participativos de El Salvador,* Association of Participatory Radios and Programs of El Salvador
ASDER	*Asociación Salvadoreña de Radiodifusores,* Salvadoran Association of Radio Broadcasters
ASTAC	*Asociación Salvadoreña de Trabajadores del Arte y la Cultura,* Salvadoran Association of Art and Cultural Workers
ASTTEL	*Asociación Salvadoreña de Trabajadores de Telecomunicaciones,* Salvadoran Association of Telecommunications Workers
ATCEL	*Asociación de Trabajadores de CEL,* Association of CEL Workers

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BPR	*Bloque Popular Revolucionario,* People's Revolutionary Bloc
CAESS	*Compañía de Alumbrado Eléctrico de San Salvador,* Electric Lighting Company of San Salvaodr
CAF	Communication Assistance Foundation/SCO (Holland)
CCR	*Coordinación de Comunidades Repobladas,* Coordination of Repopulated Communities, later changed to Coordination of Rural Communities
CD	*Convergencia Democrática,* Democratic Convergence
CDC	*Centro para los Derechos del Consumidor,* Center for Consumer Rights
CEB	*Comunidades Eclesiales de Bases,* Christian Base Communities
CEL	*Comisión Ejecutiva Hidroeléctrica del Río Lempa,* Executive Hydroelectric Commission of the Rio Lempa
CESTA	*Centro Salvadoreño de Tecnología Apropriada,* Salvadoran Center for Appropriate Technology
CIPHES	*Coordinación de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales de El Salvador (officialmente, Consejo Coordinador de Instituciones Privadas de Promoción Humana de El Salvador),* Coordinating Council of Non-governmental Organizations of El Salvador (officially, Coordinating Council of Private Institutions for Human Development of El Salvador)
CISPES	Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador
CORDES	*Fundación para la Cooperación al Desarrollo Comunitario de El Salvador,* Foundation for Cooperation for Community Development of El Salvador
CSM	*Comunidad Segundo Montes (o Ciudad Segundo Montes),* the Community of Segundo Montes (alternately, the City of Segundo Montes)
ERP	*Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo,* Revolutionary Army of the People
FAL	*Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación,* Armed Forces of Liberation
FAPU	*Frente de Acción Popular Unificada,* Unified People's Action Front
FARN	*Fuerzas Armadas de la Resistencia Nacional,* Armed Forces of National Resistence

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FDR	*Frente Democrático Revolucionario,* Revolutionary Democratic Front
FECCAS	*Federación Cristiana de Campesinos Salvadoreños,* Christian Federation of Salvadoran Campesinos
FENESTRAS	*Federación Nacional de Sindicatos de Trabajadores Salvadoreños,* National Union Federation of Salvadoran Workers
FESPAD	*Fundación para el Estudio y la Aplicación del Derecho,* Foundation for the Study and Implementation of Rights
FMLN	*Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional,* Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation
FPL	*Fuerzas Populares de Liberación*, Peoples' Liberation Forces
FRTS	*Federación Regionales de Trabajadores Salvadoreños,* Regional Workers' Federation
FUNDE	*Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo,* National Foundation for Development
FUSADES	*Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económica y Social,* Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development
FUSS	*Federación Unitaria Sindical Salvadoreña,* United Salvadoran Union Federation
ISTA	*Instituto Salvadoreño de Transformación Agraria,* Salvadoran Institute for Agrarian Transformation
LP-28	*Ligas Popular 28,* People's League "28"
MADRE	*Comité de Familiares y de Madres de Desaparecidos,* Committee of the Families and Mothers of the Disappeared
MLP	*Movimiento de Liberación Popular,* Movement for People's Liberation
MNR	*Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario,* Revolutionary National Movement
MU	*Movimiento de Unidad,* Movement for Unity
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ONUSAL	*Observadores de las Naciones Unidas en El Salvador,* United Nations Observers in El Salvador

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ORDEN	*Organización Democrática Nacionalista,* National Democratic Organization
PCN	*Partido de Conciliación Nacional,* National Conciliation Party
PCS	*Partido Comunista de El Salvador,* Communist Party of El Salvador
PD	*Partido Demócrata,* Democratic Party
PDC	*Partido Demócrata Cristiano,* Christian Democratic Party
PDDH	*Procuraduría para la Defensa de Derechos Humanos,* Ombudspersons Office for the Defense of Human Rights
PNC	*Policía Nacional Civil,* National Civilian Police
PNUD, UNDP	*Programa de las Naciones Unidos para el Desarrollo,* United Nations Development Program
PRS	*Partido de la Revolución Salvadoreña,* Party for the Salvadoran Revolution
PRTC	*Partido Revolucionario de losTrabajadores Centroamericanos,* Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers
RN	*Resistencia Nacional,* National Resistance
RSM	Radio Segundo Montes
SIGET	*Superintendencia General de Electricidad y Telecommunicaciones,* Superintendent General of Electricity and Telecommunications
SRN	*Secretaría de Reconstrucción Nacional,* Secretariat of National Reconstruction
UDN	*Unión Democrática Nacionalista,* Nationalist Democratic Union
UES	*Universidad de El Salvador,* University of El Salvador
UNES	*Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña,* Salvadoran Ecological Unity (united organizations)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNO	*Unión Nacional Opositora,* National Opposition Union

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UNTS	*Unidad Nacional de Trabajadores Salvadoreños,* National Salvadoran Workers United
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTE	*Unidad Técnica*

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Introduction: Why examine Salvadoran community radio?

Community radio under attack

On December 4, 1995, the newly constituted National Civilian Police arrived simultaneously at the studios of all eleven of El Salvador's rural community radio stations to seize their equipment and close them down. The police had been sent by Juan José Domenech, the head of the Telecommunications Administration of El Salvador (ANTEL) and previously the president of the ruling Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) party. In Segundo Montes, Morazán, several people were injured in a vain attempt to stop the seizures. In Guarjila, Chalatenango, a thousand local residents blocked the roads with stone barricades to prevent the police from carting off the equipment. The other stations, however, were forced off the air for over two months.

Domenech, who led the attack against the community radios, charged that the stations were part of a plot by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) to influence the 1997 elections. But in fact, the stations were not affiliated with any political party. The country's eleven community radios were formed in the wake of the January 1992, peace accords that resolved the country's civil war. While the accords legalized the two guerrilla radios, Radio Venceremos and Radio Farabundo Martí (now RV and FF), the community radio stations were not granted legal status. Owned and operated mostly by local, non-profit groups, El Salvador's community radio stations were a crucial means of communication in rural areas that lacked basic infrastructure such as telephones, mail service, newspapers or paved roads. The low-power broadcasters transmit local and national news, community education programs, announcements from government agencies, notices of community meetings, music from *ranchero* to rock, and emergency

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messages. Why were these radios considered such a threat by the Salvadoran government and the ARENA party? Why were they so strenuously defended by their communities?

I begin with this incident to introduce the subject of this dissertation: the community radios of El Salvador, their roles and their predicaments. Like any good story, it is compressed and selective. To make my particular perspective more explicit, I also introduce here the concerns and experience which have shaped my research and analysis.

This dissertation is an exploration and analysis of the participatory community radios which have emerged in El Salvador since the end of the civil war. Based primarily on ethnographic research about these stations, two rural and one urban, it explores the roles of the radios in the expansion of local social, political and cultural life since the end of the war. Through analyzing their operations and programming, I investigate the concrete meaning of civil society and the ways the radios helped construct popular culture in the first post-civil war decade.

I began this research as an attempt to understand community media. What did it mean that a medium was community-based? How did it differ from other kinds of communication media, such as mass media? Salvadoran community radio advocates, whom I first met at an alternative radio and television conference in Quito, Ecuador[1] in 1995, told me that their radio stations helped build civil society. What did this mean?

Civil society. I found that the Salvadoran community radios were part of a civil society movement in the postwar era. In the face of the tremendous challenges growing

[1] *Radioapasionados y Televisionarios*, a festival of Latin American community radio and television sponsored by global and regional media associations such as the *Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación Radiofónica* (ALER), the *Asociación Mundial de Radios Comunitarias* (AMARC) and the *Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores de Comunicación para América Latina* (CIESPAL) was held in Quito, Ecuador, November 20-24, 1995.

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out of the severe inequalities of their history, Salvadorans saw the need to struggle not only for material improvements but also to redefine who were counted as citizens and what citizenship meant: who had rights, which rights, and what political processes should include. Among the cultural activists who created the community radios, I found that "civil society" referred to the sense of building a new society, creating a new network of organizations serving the range of people's needs, a new set of political rules encompassing "transparency" and popular participation, and a flowering of cultural expression. Serving civil society, helping it emerge and flourish, was seen as one of the core purposes of community radio (Ayala Ramírez 1997:43).

The turn to a discourse of civil society occurred across Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s as dictatorships and authoritarian and repressive governments were overthrown and governments turned to more democractic rule. In this transition a varied range of social forces emerged, including social movements, advocacy groups, service organizations, cultural associations and other kinds of initiatives. They began to redefine Latin American political culture: its organizational forms, political subjects, and the role of state (Dagnino 1998:38-41). Latin American leftists, too, turned to democratic processes and a Gramscian discourse about civil society (Biekart 1999:30-31). The approach I heard among community radio activists fit within this continent-wide turn to civil society.

Civil society activists in El Salvador as in other parts of Latin America understood civil society as an internally diverse and conflictive arena of interaction and association, through which the hegemony of the state could be opposed and new hegemonic alliances could be constructed. They sought to combat exploitation and oppression, and to construct democracy not only in relation to the state but also within civil society and the sphere of the family. The rule of law would be strengthened, especially important in the

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light of its arbitrary application in the past. Underlying this and expressed through this approach in the Salvadoran case, was a sense of entitlement, the feeling of having the right to insist that one's rights are respected. This was one of most important victories of the civil war, and it was codified in the Peace Accords itself.[2] Larger economic interests were excluded (Macdonald 1994:272-273; Dagnino 1998:34). In addition to investigating this perspective towards civil society, I wondered how it conflicted with other views, such as the idea that in the context of an increasingly market-oriented society, citizenship and cultural identity were increasingly defined by consumption and the choices and practices of consumers (García Canclini, 2001).

Public space, public sphere. A dynamic civil society requires diverse spaces for broad public interaction, but the nature of these arenas is not central to the concept of civil society. So next I turned to the concepts of public space and the public sphere to see how they might clarify the particular ways community radio might influence postwar Salvadoran society.

The Salvadoran community radios were part of a struggle to open public spaces in the postwar transition. "Public space" is always the product of conflict: at any given historical period, who decides, through what processes, which spaces are public and which are private or domestic, and who is part of the public and who is excluded (Mitchell 1995). Social protest erupts and social movements emerge when particular social groups and their issues have been ignored, marginalized and made invisible. Alternative media address this need; they provide publicly accessible space for those people and those issues to be heard, seen, and acknowledged. Through this process a

[2] The Agreement of San José, signed July 26, 1990, was the first set of agreements of the Peace Accords process. It dealt with the respect for human rights and called for the creation of the United Nations Observer Mission. A later section of the Accords created the *Procuraduría Nacional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos* to assure ongoing respect for human rights (United Nations 1993: ii-iii; 79).

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local or counter-public sphere can emerge; public spaces are crucial for the construction of the arena of discourse and debate which has been labeled the "public sphere" (Habermas 1989).

The public sphere is a metaphor for the expressions, representations, interactions, and communications that are shared by the actors of civil society, creating a shared communicative arena. As initially envisioned by Habermas, the public sphere functioned in a particular historical moment in Western Europe; through it citizens of the bourgeois class were able to check the power of the state. At its most basic level, this created a political communicative culture conducive to representative democracy (Fraser 1992:110,112). Numerous critiques since Habermas's original publication (in 1962 in German and 1989 in English) have both shown its limitations and expanded its relevance. I review several of these (such as Fraser 1992, Landes 1988, Brooke 1998, Eley 1992, Negt and Kluge 1993) to see how the concept of the public sphere might be relevant to the transition from a repressive regime to the emergence of a more open civic culture and a more active civil society in El Salvador.

For example, some critics pointed out that in nineteenth and twentieth century United States, one after another public sectors fought to be heard in this arena of public discourse while also asserting the legitimacy and visibility of their own public spaces and styles of cultural expression (Fraser 1989; Ryan 1992). Other arena of public interaction also existed at that time, referred to as "plebeian public spheres" by many scholars. Alternative media and cultural activists, especially with the development of light, portable recording equipment since the 1960s, have expanded this "plebian" public sphere into an effective stage for civil society. These developments allow for a concept of a more hybrid, conflictive, unstable public sphere with a greater democratic potential than does Habermas's. I conclude that in El Salvador the community radios helped

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create a local, alternative or counter-public sphere which enhanced the production of new definitions of collective identity and helped position these definitions on the national stage.

Not cultural imperialism. This still seemed to leave out important ways these community radios interacted with their listeners and communities. Radio programming clearly resonated with different frames of identity for listeners, but how to usefully approach the complexities of identity? I began to examine the stations' musical programming: as a child of rock and roll era, music always seemed a way to express who one is. I noticed that the variety of imported music the community radios played was selected and contextualized in different ways, which led me to consider how their programming process itself might be a form of cultural production.

These radio organizations seemed to control the impact of the transnational cultural industries through their selection and framing of mostly imported music. The cultural imperialism critique was insufficient to describe this because of its focus on national level impacts and solutions. But the community radios made this imported music locally meaningful by fitting it into their own daily rhythms of work and relaxation, their own social networks and celebrations. To understand this seeming resistance, I turned to concepts such as cultural reconversion, hybridity, and cultural production or transformation proposed by theorists of Latin American popular culture and mass media such as Nestor García Canclini, William Rowe and Vivian Schelling, and anthropologist of indigenous and alternative media practice Faye Ginsburg. These approaches examine the social processes and social organization of production, diffusion and reception rather than simply the origins or content of forms of cultural expression.

Popular culture and "small" media. The community radios' cultural programming went beyond music, and the ways radio staff interacted with local

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community leaders, institutions and events went beyond announcements. While the radios were not counter-cultural in the sense of U.S. connotations about alternative media, they did express a sense of the unique ways of life and perspectives of their regions; they acted as alternative public spheres. I sought a way to describe and analyze the significance of the participatory nature of the community radios programming, going back to one of my original questions: what made this kind of media different?

Community radio is at heart a participatory, two-way process, unlike the one-way flow of most mass media; how could I analyze this? Much cultural studies media research focused on reception or consumption; for example, García Canclini called the consumption of material or symbolic objects a way to create order, a feeling of belonging, and to make meaning out of the world (2001: 20,46). This focus seemed apt for much of modern urban culture because of narrowing access to the political public sphere and the lack of effective public spaces for plebeian or mass public sphere.

But participatory media went against this trend, reconnecting people to their own agency, validating their concerns and pleasures, reminding them of their histories and challenges. The concept of popular culture seemed to best express these qualities, though it was difficult to define. After reviewing several possible approaches and rejecting both nostalgic definitions based on rural contexts or artisan production, and romantic notions based on the liberating potential of cultural expression, I found the most relevant one focused on agency and the significance of "popular" in a Latin American context. "Popular meaning and value are gained in social relations. It is use, not origin, the position and capacity to arouse popular acts and representations..." which is most significant (García Canclini 1993:106-7). "Popular" in popular culture is "located in the lived practices of people" (Rowe and Schelling 1991:7). Popular culture is culture-making, and its result is the transformation of people into subjects. In other words, I

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define popular culture as transformative action: expressive practices or activities of the less powerful groups of a society; sites or places in which experience is reflected on, evaluated, and expressed. Through these processes a sense of collective identity is formed.

Finally, I recognized that the Salvadoran community radios were part of a growing world of participatory, small, alternative, or counter-cultural media practices which include radio, video and television and the internet, among other media. I reviewed how this kind of communication has been used as a tool for disempowered and marginalized peoples to represent themselves, to create their own culture and cultural representations for their own purposes and to project themselves into the world (see, for example, Ginsburg, 1991, 1994a, 1997; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1995; López Vigil 1996, 2000).

These, then, are the issues analyzed in this dissertation.

I hope at the same time that this dissertation conveys a concrete sense of what community radio is like, or more specifically, what these particular radios were like during the year or so of my fieldwork, as well as a sense of the people and day-to-day lives of the communities which created these radio organizations.

How and why I conducted this research

I spent just over a year conducting research in El Salvador, from October to November, 1996, and February, 1997, to March, 1998, plus a few short visits before and after. Most of my research time was spent at three sites, in Guarjila, Chalatenango with Radio Sumpul; in Segundo Montes, Morazán, with Radio Segundo Montes; and in San Salvador, the capital city, with Radio Cabal. The first two are well known villages in the northern mountains, both created virtually from scratch by refugees returning to the

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area who had fled early during the civil war. These regions were among those most scarred by the civil war, both the poverty and repression that preceded and sparked it, and the fighting throughout its twelve-year duration. Towards the end of the war, both radios were created as community projects by organized groups of returned refugees. The third radio was created in the capital city by political and cultural activists to provide alternative radio programming for poor urban families and neighborhoods. All three are part of a movement towards participatory, local or community- based radio, new to El Salvador but a significant phenomenon not only in Latin America but globally, including North America and Europe.

During my stay in Chalatenango and Morazán, I asked the radios to help me find families to live with, so that I could better understand what the struggles and pleasures of daily life were. I could have stayed in my own room in each community's "hotel," as many of the international or national technical assistance workers did. I might have rented my own house. But not having the experience of living in rural Central America I wanted to know first-hand more about the lives of those who produced and listened to these radios.

I was welcomed with open arms into these communities. I was invited to meetings from masses to town councils. Individuals and community leaders alike generously answered my questions, people invited me into their homes. But I had to learn the unstated norms of appropriate behavior in order to progress beyond these public arenas--what could be said directly, what must be implied; what bearing people's wartime histories had on their answers to my questions. I had to learn how and when to ask and when to wait. I had to discover how to be honest and open about the work I needed to do, while being polite and tactful at the same time. Some of this had to do with learning customs of politeness not familiar to an impatient New Yorker: waiting to be

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invited before entering a yard, conversing on general topics before asking questions. Others were specific to my presence as a woman, balancing my need to talk to many people, men and women, and get around by myself, in a place where the code of proper female behavior in the countryside mostly meant not conversing freely with men, not walking by oneself, and certainly not cooling off with a beer. As a North American, I was doubly suspect: as a woman, especially one identified as an "international," a prevailing stereotype was that I was probably looking for a husband or lover; it helped that I was married and that my husband visited each place.

The other preconception I dealt with was that as a U.S. citizen, I was identified as partly responsible for the pain and suffering of the war, since it was well known that the U.S. government funded and trained the Salvadoran army for much of it. It would have been different if I had come as a solidarity activist, part of a church or citizen's group visit to help rebuild the community. The possibility of being neutral seemed unacceptable. I had to be quite clear that, first, I did not support my government's actions during the war and in fact I had done some solidarity support work, mostly in media, in the 1980s. I expressed my hope that my research would be helpful in some way, but admitted that I did not come to the area with significant resources or funds. Most people were satisfied with our discussion about my politics and sensibility, but never completely believed that I couldn't be a significant source of funds. This occasionally provoked tensions in some friendships.

Another area of tension arose over my role as a researcher. I wanted to make sure that the purpose of my research was clear and that my presence was acceptable to each radio community. In a trip to El Salvador in 1996 before beginning my fieldwork, I visited several radios and discussed my research plans with them, explaining that I needed to choose which radios to study. They had to decide whether they wanted me,

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whether my presence would disrupt their operations, and whether they could be comfortable with me writing about my experiences. We also discussed the limited ways I could be helpful to them: in one case I shared a small portion of my research grant, in another I helped raise a small amount of money for new equipment. In addition, I hoped that by attempting to publish articles and radio stories about the radios, and helping to make connections to other radios, I could bring some attention to their work that could be helpful in the long term. And I would remain in contact with them. It was possible that my experience with community-based media in the United States might at times be helpful. These discussions and permissions were to some extent illusory because none of us knew concretely what to expect, while each had our own hopes and expectations. But I hoped they would at least create a climate of openness and the possibility of communication between us while not raising unrealistic hopes. I explained that I planned to present an early version of my findings to them for comment and would leave them a copy of the finished product. I also spoke to community leaders and obtained permission from them to conduct this research.

I found that as an educated person, I had other responsibilities. I was expected to be an articulate translator of the world outside; on my first visit to one radio I was asked to speak live on a radio program about the meaning and impact of neoliberalism--on five minutes notice! Unlike the position of graduate students in the United States, where we are perhaps a dime a dozen, in El Salvador those with graduate degrees are rare; one can teach some college courses with the equivalent of a B.A. So, perhaps because a college education is relatively rare, the responsibility of an educated person is to share his or her knowledge.

In addition to my research, I did some stories for *Nuestras Américas,* a radio magazine program on Latino and Latin American issues produced by Mario Murillo at

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WBAI in New York City, part of the Pacifica network of alternative radio in the United States. This was partially a way to broaden my experience in El Salvador, partially an enjoyable creative project. But it also relates to the roots of my research in the work I did prior to returning to graduate school, after earning my undergraduate degree in 1981.

For a decade, I worked in several projects in alternative media, including research and production of a video series of media criticism, advocating for public access television, working in documentary film and video production, as well as advocacy projects for independent media. I also taught video production in community-based workshops. My motivation for this work was to help expand the increasingly narrow range of information, perspectives and points of view available to the U.S. public about both our own society and those outside it, despite the overwhelming quantity of media here. Thinking critically about the deluge of media we receive and empowering people to speak from their own perspectives were goals as well. I have been producing and supporting public access television, a way for people in local communities to communicate and express themselves using this powerful medium.

I turned to this research because I wanted to know more about the impact and possibilities of the media communities we were creating. Why is participation in creating media so powerful? Do people understand what they see or hear in a different way, or are they more critically and perceptively involved because they already identify as part of a community, group or social movement for whom those particular issues are central?

To explore these questions, I decided to look outside of the United States, and look for an example where a similar kind of media project was clearly having an impact. I chose El Salvador because the community radios were new there and had been organized as community projects. Because they were facing opposition from both government and other political forces they had developed arguments and rationales for their existence

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that intrigued me.

My research included standard ethnographic methods such as participant observation at the radio offices, as well as at many related community sites and activities. I conducted extensive, taped and informal interviews with radio staff, program collaborators and participants as well as with community leaders and members. I made paper and audio logs of radio programs, including one full week of programming for the two rural radios and selected recordings and notes for a month of four key programs at the urban radio. I also organized focus groups in the rural radio communities of radio audiences, and did a small door-to-door survey of audiences in one community in order to get a better sense of what the range of listeners and residents thought of these communities' radios. To understand the social and economic context of life in the city and countryside, I consulted local and national censuses and surveys, periodicals, and other sources.

One of the challenges of this project has been translation. There are concepts in Spanish which do not neatly fit English equivalents. *Popular* is not "popular" but "of the people" (see discussion beginning page 195 for a fuller discussion); *el pueblo* could refer to a particular little town but more likely is meant to convey "the people" in general, especially the poor and working classes; *unión* is not "union" but closer to "united." A greater challenge has been words used in particular social contexts. For example, a radio *locutor* in standard Spanish translates to "announcer," but for community radio practitioners, a *locutor is* the animating spirit of a radio community (see discussion beginning page339 for a fuller discussion). They are sometimes described as *animadores,* animators, a word borrowed from European-Canadian community organizing discourse. Another defining context has been the post-war historical moment, with its legacy of global NGOs and attempts to overcome the polarization and trauma of

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the war. For the returned refugee communities, those who accompanied them (*acompañarselos)* during the war years did not simply stay with them, but took risks to support them in a time of need (see page 341). *Concertación* was not merely a process of coming to agreement for those in the post-war transition, but implied reconciliation and consensus-building as well. Throughout this dissertation, I have attempted to use these words carefully and clarify their contextual meanings.

Chapter Overview

After this introduction, an "evocation" brings the reader into the world of community radio in El Salvador through ethnographic glimpses of the three radio stations included in this study.

The first chapter begins with a brief overview of the historical context of the emergence of community radio in El Salvador, focusing on the dynamics of social movements and civil society over the past 20 years. Participatory community radio emerged in El Salvador at the end of the civil war and in the first stages of the transition to peace and the construction of a more broad-based civil society. The war itself was a product of deep conflicts that in the 1970s were taken up by peasant, union and student movements. The economy, historically dominated by an elite which controlled coffee production, processing and exports, had produced deep inequalities and repression of repeated efforts towards broader political empowerment. Again in the 1970s, growing mass movements were met by severe repression from the entrenched oligarchy, now beginning to be threatened by changes in the global economy.

As the war began in 1980, these movements combined into a broad coalition, the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) and its affiliated guerrilla armies, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). While the first few years were its most brutal

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period, the war of guerrilla and counter-insurgency tactics dragged on until negotiations finally brought it to an end in January 1992. By this time, the founding movements had fragmented, and new issues and identities became more prominent among the population. Women's groups especially began to organize, and as the transition continued, more organized groups, demands, and expressions began to emerge from all sectors of society, often supported by national or international funding. The participatory community radios emerged in this milieu.

At the same time, all communications media in El Salvador were expanding dramatically, testing the limits of government regulation and commercial support. Newspapers and TV improved their reporting, new newspapers and magazines appeared, and commercial radio stations popped up everywhere. Cultural life reappeared as cafés and galleries opened, theater and dance groups began to tour, and concerts were once again held in parks and arenas. Cell phones became a status symbol among the well-off, while computers became ubiquitous for business and non-profits, and internet services bloomed. These changes were based both on the opportunities opened by the postwar sense of possibility and on global changes in economic policies and telecommunications technology.

Radio had long been a key medium in El Salvador. Tightly regulated by the government and closely held by members of the governing elite since the first station began broadcasting in 1926, in the 1950s local radio-drama production briefly florished, fueled by an expanding consumer economy. During the war, two guerrilla-run radios became famous or notorious around the world; a more relevant model for the community radios were the thousands of community-based and educational radios in other countries of Latin America which had been spreading especially since the 1960s.

The second chapter introduces the regions in which these particular radios

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operated. The first section profiles social and economic conditions in rural Chalatenango and Morazán, introduces some of the challenges and conflicts people in these regions faced in the mid-1990s, and gives a sense of how the institutions, organizations and leaders of these unusually organized communities faced them. The second section, "The Seven Plagues of San Salvador" takes its inspiration from an end-of-the-year article in *Primera Plana, a* short-lived newspaper which attempted to broaden news perspectives in San Salvador. Rather than trying to give a comprehensive picture of this complex metropolitan area where over a million people live and work, this section focuses on several aspects of life in the capital city such as housing, crime, poverty, and the environment. It provides a brief glimpse of the city's difficulties and attractions, keeping in mind the issues and conditions most likely faced by Radio Cabal's target audiences.

Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical and conceptual concerns of this dissertation, which I have described above. In brief, I investigate the use of the concept of "civil society" in the Latin American and Salvadoran contexts and compare these to the ways it has been defined and critiqued in academic and policy literature, ending with a working definition that fits the Salvadoran context.

Next I turn to the issues of public space and the public sphere. Whether geographic like a park or virtual like a radio broadcast, I find that these spaces are products of conflict over access and control: who is regarded as the "public" and who is excluded, what activities are allowed and which forbidden, and who makes these decisions (Carr et al. 1992; Mitchell 1995). Related to the idea of public space is the much debated public sphere. I begin with Habermas' concept (1989) and review some critiques and alternate formulations to arrive at a conception of counter-publics which both create or are constituted by overlapping public spheres, *creating* visibility and an arena of discourse and debate for a diverse civil society.

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I define popular culture as transformative action: expressive practices or activities of the less powerful groups of a society; sites or places in which experience is reflected on, evaluated, and expressed (Rowe and Schelling 1991:7). Producing popular culture reconnects people to their own agency and through these processes a sense of collective identity is formed. It works against the more prevalent trend in which consumption of material or symbolic objects has become a way to create a feeling of belonging, and to make meaning out of the world (García Canclini 2001: 20,46).

What makes community radio similar or different from other mass media? I explore how both media producers and theorists have discussed the significance of community or local control, and participatory, small, alternative, or counter-cultural media practices. I review how this kind of communication has been used as a tool of disempowered and marginalized peoples to represent themselves, to create their own culture and cultural representations for their own purposes and to project themselves into the world (for example, see Ginsburg 1991, 1994a, 1997; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1995; López Vigil 1996, 2000).

From these concepts and examples of media practices in disparate regions of the world, I turn back to the Salvadoran community radios to see how these ideas clarify the significance of this media: why was their very existence such a contentious issue and why did their communities fight so hard for them?

In chapter 4, I relate the story of the battles to legalize the community radios and investigate what were the underlying issues in the conflict for this small space on the Salvadoran airwaves. Then through examining the broadcasts of school graduations, I show how the use of this public space of the radio was a way of celebrating the community's survival. The radio broadcasts acted as a central location for a local public sphere, otherwise comprised of streets and restaurants and masses and meetings. By

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broadcasting the graduations the community radio functioned as a response by the emerging civil society groups vis-a-vis the regional authorities who attempted to ignore and suppress them. The broadcast of the graduations insisted on their visibility and allowed the local public sphere to intersect with the national public sphere.

Chapters 5 and 6 are the heart of the dissertation. Here, I analyze the relationship between the emerging organizations and activities of civil society and the community radios. Looking in chapter 5 at the case study radios in the countryside and in chapter 6 at the city, I examine how the radio programs aimed to expand understanding of and support for human rights, especially the rights to information and expression. They promoted practices of citizenship such as elections and other forms of democratization, and they redefined "news" to fit their vision of the needs of their listeners. They sought to actively involve civil society organizations in several kinds of programming and collaborative production. The country's difficult economic context also forced the radios and other civil society organizations to use these productions as a way of raising funds; this both caused conflict and allowed mutual support. International NGOs and solidarity networks aided in several ways. I conclude by comparing the relationships of rural and urban civil society organizations and issues to the community radios. I compare how the radios involved these organizations in participatory programs to support civil society in these different localities.

Chapter 7 explores the contradictions and ambivalences in the radios' music programming, asking if the radios played a role in strengthening cultural identity or were simply caught up in the flows of the global entertainment industries. To untangle these issues, I examine music programming at one station in some depth. I discover a tenuous balancing act in which imported cultural influences were locally contextualized. In the process I examine the implications of transnational economic and cultural networks,

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national regulation and economic processes, and the pleasures of global cultural influences versus the varying kinds of community or national identities.

In chapter 8, I explore how a sense of community identity was conveyed through daily and special event programming. Programs such as the three profiled--the special, all day coverage of the Festival of the Return from the refugee camp, the daily musical program, *Atardecer Ranchero (Ranchero Sundown)* produced by one of the radio's directors, and the short humorous dramas of "Don Chencho Chililllo" of the urban station--conveyed shared values and priorities and expressed a hybrid but distinctly local sense of culture. As a form of popular culture, the programs created a kind of mirror of Salvadoran culture, with the hope of providing a basis for that recognition of a collective identity which is the basis of a sense of entitlement and empowerment.

From civil society to collective identity and empowerment, this dissertation aims to show how these communication projects contribute in a small way to undo the marginalization of the communities they serve.

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A first glimpse of Salvadoran Community Radio

A day at Radio Sumpul[1]

People wake up before the sun, with the raucous cacophony of roosters, pigs, and other animals, around 4:30 am. At my house, the women started their chores right away: sweeping the back and front porches and the yard, feeding the chickens, pigs, and the cow, chopping some wood to begin the cooking fire on the adobe stove, and grinding the corn that had been soaking overnight. After getting the kids ready for school, they would put the roasted corn coffee on to boil, heat up the beans and and start making the tortillas. The cows often went by themselves down the hill to pasture, returning before dark about twelve hours later. In the dry season, people spread out corn husks and stalks, and stalks of tall grasses for the cows and calves to eat. Most everyone sweeps their dirt-packed yard everyday; some houses are more neatly kept, and have well-tended stands of banana or lemons, and even flower gardens; others are a mess by the end of day.

The day at the radio begins at five in the morning, when the sky is not yet light. When I stumbled in on one of my first days, Fito, the radio's director and Rosibel were in the office and Ernesto[2] was on the air in the studio. Ernesto had all the music cassettes for his program neatly lined up on the top of one of the double cassette players. All the *cuñas* (spots, both commercial and educational) were arranged in rows on the table next to him, open so the cassette was easily available. Ernesto faded each cassette in and out, giving a smooth transition between one song or spot and the next, and he cued up a

[1] This is a composite of several days early in my fieldwork.

[2] Not his real name; all names have been changed unless noted. See Appendix H.

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couple of songs and spots in advance, keeping the outgoing broadcast on the studio speakers and switching his headphones to check his cues. Now and then he took one side of his headsets off to explain something to me or answer a question. Fito frequently popped in to direct: you're playing too much rock, the bass is too high, play some more *cuñas* (commercial or educational spots).

The day started with the national anthem.[3] Then followed a short spot from the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC, from its French name) with a man speaking over children's voices and *marimba* music: "Here, everyone can speak." After that, Ernesto played one of Radio Sumpul's identification spots, with a woman saying, "Welcome friends, we wake up for you," and a man saying, "On Radio Sumpul, enjoy, we're yours!" over *música popular*, folk music with a political connotation.

Much of the morning programming consisted of music, organized into blocks featuring one kind or another: *música popular*, *ranchero*, rock or juvenil, *romántico* or *tropical*. *Ranchero* was the most popular music, a combination of mostly Mexican popular music genres such as *norteño*, tex-mex, and *corrido* that initially gained popularity in the 1930s. If they don't play *rancheros*, Ernesto told me, they would lose their audience. *Música juvenil* was growing in popularity and was sometimes accused of carrying negative values from *gringo* culture like sex, drugs, violence, and disrespect. It included Spanish and Latin American rock, especially from Mexico and Argentina; English-language rock, and rap, reggae and metal, mostly in Spanish. Broadly popular were both *tropical*, which included Caribbean salsa and *merengue*, and *romántica*, which included the pop ballads played on Latin commercial radio throughout the

[3] I was surprised that no one was critical of this; it's just the national "hymn" they said. After all, the national anthem is the symbol of the government most of this community had been fighting just a few years ago. But they saw it as the nation's, not the government's symbol, and strenuously claimed it as their own.

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Americas as well as classic *boleros* and ballads. *Música popular* gained popularity with the social movements of the 1970s. It combined wooden Andean flutes or panpipes, rapidly strummed stringed instruments of different timbres used in many Latin American folk musics, Central American *marimbas*, and many kinds of drums with strong and poetic lyrics about social justice. Communities like Guarjila boasted several groups which wrote and performed this music to lift the spirits of the refugees during the war.

This morning Ernesto starts with *a música popular* song from Guarjila that is not recorded very well--too much fiddle and not enough voice, followed by one from the commercially popular group *Guaraguao* with a catchy beat (bap, barida, bap bap ba-ip).

Between every two or three songs he announces the time, and intersperses *saludos* (song dedications) and *avisos* (announcements) like this one,"It's five in the morning with thirty minutes, five-thirty, let's, let's see what we have. So here we have, hmm, all beneficiaries of land distribution of the property of *Nueva Providencia*, to an assembly to find out, to inform you about the process of the mediation about the land, about this important agreement about your property. The meeting will be Tuesday, which is tomorrow the 8th of April at one in the afternoon, here in Guarjila..."

The programming also includes spots ranging from ads, identifications for this radio in particular and community radio nationally and globally, and educational spots from local non-governmental organizations. For example, this morning there was a message from AMARC, an ad from the Shell station near Chalatenango city, and a spot from a local environmental group explaining the dangers of deforestation to the water supply.

At 6 a.m., Rosibel takes over. She initially seems shy, but as we get to know each other, I realize this is more nervousness with an observer. She was actually quite funny

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and outspoken on the air, with a loud clear voice. Like Ernesto, on the air she was in command of all the technical aspects--mixers, cassettes, microphones, transmission equipment--as well as content of their programs. The radio had plenty of equipment, though not all of it functioned at any one time.

Every week Fito made a paper chart of the *pauta,* the overall schedule of the radio, showing when news, programs, spots or music would be played and what kind. But each *locutor*[4] had his or her own plan, written or not, for their time slot on the air. The radio was community based and non-profit but not non-commercial. Its many short, one-minute spots could be commercial, educational, a station identification, promotional, cultural, or informative. *Saludos* were greetings or music dedications for birthdays and other special occasions. *Avisos or* announcements covered all the different kinds of activities in the region, like a community bulletin board. Micro-programs were informational or educational, generally three to five minutes. There were also some programs lasting from 10 minutes to an hour; recorded at the radio or obtained from outside sources, these could contain interviews, magazines, dramas, or other kinds of material.

After the morning broadcast, everyone went home for a short breakfast, and then returned. They swept the office and studio, typed the announcements for better readability, recorded the local agricultural product prices bulletin. When Fito arrived, he talked with Abelino about going to the departmental capital to work out getting electricity to the transmission tower--it still ran on a gas generator, a year after the town had been connected to the national grid. While Ernesto, Rosibel and Abelino went home for lunch, Fito and I ate at one of the *comedores* or home style restaurants in the center of town. When we returned we bought a soda next door at the little household store of

[4] I use this word to indicate that this person is more than an announcer or DJ, but represents the station and the aspirations of the community in some ways.

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Niña[5] Luisa, an older woman with flowing white hair and much life experience. A vitamin salesman stopped by; he rode the bus to the city and back, shouting five-minute pitches over the din of the bus engine, the traffic and sometimes the bus radio.

In the afternoon, Fito and Rosibel went into the studio to continue recording one of a series of micro-programs to note the seventh anniversary of the murder of the Jesuits at the University of Central America during the war in 1989. Their script combined excerpts from an article by several Dutch journalists and a special edition of the Truth Commission report entitled, *"De La Locura a la Esperanza"* (From Madness to Hope) published in *Estudios Centroamericanos* (Central American Studies) a major academic journal published in El Salvador (*Comision de la Verdad para El Salvador* 1992). Recording live, with only the record and pause buttons to make their edits, to my surprise the cuts sounded clean without gaps or distortion. Meanwhile, in the office, Miriam edited her report for the afternoon news slot, an interview with one of the "popular education" teachers--someone from the community who had learned to be a teacher through informal education programs at the refugee camp.

Before her afternoon time slot, Rosibel sat on the stoop to visit with a friend with a three-year old and a new baby, and later they previewed the new environmental program the radio would play in the next week. Then it was time for her afternoon shift, a time slot of varied music, greetings and announcements. Rosi was in a good mood. Lots of kids came to hang out, or to speak their greetings or song dedications live on the radio. Several people stopped by to drop off their greetings or rather elaborate musical dedications during Rosi's turn; there was even one from Los Vueltos, on the other side of eastern Chalatenango. Later in the month there would be poems from the poetry contest the radio co-sponsored with the Cultural Committee.

[5] "Niña" or little girl, is ironically the term of respect for older women, or married women of standing.

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For Ernesto's evening time slot, nine musical dedications came in. This slot of *música juvenil* combined rock, rap, techno, romantic, and tropical styles, trying to keep up with young people's tastes. With essentially no budget for music, friends of the radio made copies of cassettes or music on other stations.

By the time the show was over at 7 p.m., it was dark. Ernesto went home; everyone else had already left for the light dinner called *la cena.* The center of town was full of groups of men sitting on benches or rocks, or squatting down on their boot heels and talking. Others were playing cards, watching the TV at the larger store, a few drinking beer or *guaro* (strong rum or homemade liquor). Around the corner, a bunch of guys were playing guitar, harmonica, and claves in the yard next to the *pupusería,* which in the evenings made the thick tortillas filled with beans or cheese or fried pork. Few women were out at this time of night. When I got home there was still some beans and tortillas left, and some hot, sweet corn coffee. By 8 or 9 o'clock, since there were no visitors, everyone began to get ready for bed.

Life at Radio Segundo Montes

I remember one afternoon when Elena was recording some *cuñas* at the radio with Juan Lucas, the radio's Director, and Dilbert. She had been up half the night because her baby was sick; all of us in the house had been kept up. Her sister's little girl, Alicia, wasn't feeling well either, and insisted on coming with Elena to the radio rather than staying home with her grandmother. And now at the radio she wanted to be held. So Elena stood with Juan Lucas at the microphone, holding two-year old Alicia on her hip. Juan Lucas held the script and Dilbert engineered. First they recorded a spot for the November 17 to 18 Celebration of the Return from the refugee camp in Honduras. I was impressed by her intensity and how she focused on the subtleties of the tone and pace:

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sad and slow as they summarized how the community had to leave amid army bombings and paramilitary attacks in 1980, happy but still apprehensive when they made the decision to come back as a group, even though the war wasn't over, to reclaim their land and country in 1987, and upbeat and excited about the upcoming celebration. Each word, each pause had to be just right, since it was recorded and mixed live. Often they had to start from the beginning for any mistake. Elena and Juan Lucas alternated sentences, while Dilbert faded in music and sound effects, and cued them for their lines. Elena stood with Alicia on her hip, facing the script and Juan Lucas across the microphone, reading her lines with the same energy and enthusiasm take after take, hand in the air to cue Dilbert with a flourish when her part was done.

That energy and dedication was one of the characteristic strengths of Radio Segundo Montes, located in the far northeastern corner of the country, a region like Chalatenango heavily involved and badly damaged by the war.

The community took its name from Padre Segundo Montes, a well known and brilliant Jesuit anthropologist who was assassinated on November 16, 1989, in the infamous attack at the Jesuit university (University of Central America, UCA) in San Salvador. He had been supportive of the community during its long stay in the refugee camp, and was killed only two days before their return began.

While in the camp, the community organized many programs, among which was information and culture. Each of the eight settlements in the camp had a central plaza with a bulletin board for notes and messages. A small staff monitored news reports from varied sources including commercial Salvadoran radio, Voice of America, and Radio Venceremos, and broadcast their own compilations over loudspeakers (Cagen 1991: xx). This may be more of a precursor of the Radio Segundo Montes than the guerrilla radio which operated in this region, Radio Venceremos. Though it was widely listened to, and

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its photos and equipment were still a major draw in the war museum in Perquín, further to the north, Juan Lucas and others rarely referred to its influence. After the war, Radio Venceremos turned its back on community-based programming to seek commercial success in the city. In the contemporary national political context, the community radios sought to emphasize their non-partisan nature while their opponents accused the radios of being subversive, guerrilla radios.

Most of the population had fled to Honduras in October, 1980, when army attacks on the region intensified; they remained there for nearly ten years. Out of the more than 30,000 Salvadoran refugees in Honduras during the war, 8,400 refugees from Morazán stayed in eight settlements in the camp in Colomoncagua. Organized into a cohesive community during that time, people began to return in groups in 1989 with everyone completing the journey by 1991.

In October, after their return, the army unleashed an attack in which thirty-four people were wounded, countless animals were killed, and most of what had been built so far was destroyed (Fundación Segundo Montes 1997c:4-5). But they rebuilt, and by 1997, the five settlements which make up *Comunidad Segundo Montes* (the Community Segundo Montes, as they referred to themselves[6]) were stretched along a high ridge in the department of Morazán near the border with Honduras. They were built on land that was part of two different municipalities, Meanguera and Jocoaitique. Consequently all the buildings were new, and the town center was not arranged around a plaza, the colonial Spanish style that even the smallest old villages replicated. Instead, the major administrative, cultural and economic institutions of the community were arranged on either side of the main, paved road that led from Gotera, the department capital to the south, to Perquín and Honduras, in the north.

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[6] Some called it *Ciudad Segundo Montes*, the city of Segundo Montes.

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There were spectacular views from many places. From the restaurant at the cultural center the sun set over a deep valley, beyond which could be seen several layers of mountains. This valley often filled with fog in the mornings, like a cotton-ball ocean. Walking on the main road up to the radio early in the morning I often heard birds, a wooden flute playing folk melodies, or the community musical group practicing their vocal exercises. Meanwhile cars, buses and pick-up transports crammed with people hanging on to their thin frames slowly climbed the steep slope. Many people walked up this hill on their way to work or school, while families spinning lengths of henequen or plastic twine for hammocks lined the two-lane road.

Radio Segundo Montes was born in 1991, soon after the community had returned from the refugee camp and while the war still raged around them. At first they used loudspeakers, but then a church donated a 20-watt transmitter which reached most of the community and a little bit beyond. Programming included information about community activities and alerts about impending military actions. They broadcast about four hours a day (Juan Lucas Aguilar, interview by author, December 15, 1997).

The programming changed after the signing of the Peace Accords in January, 1992, and has gone through a gradual evolution since then. Juan Lucas's popular early evening program combined popular *ranchero* music with many ads, announcements and dedications. Informational programs included a local news interview, *Temas de Actualidad* (Topics of the Moment) played both at noon and in the evening, and since September 1997, the national community radio association's daily news program, *La Red de ARPAS* (The Network of the Association of Participatory Radios and Programs of El Salvador). Radio Segundo Montes' signature program, *La Hora Verde* (the Green Hour), educated listeners about ecologically-based agricultural methods. A morning program featured songs, stories and environmental education for children. Special series varied,

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but the local women's group had just completed a series of discussions and *sociodramas*[7] when my fieldwork began, a history of *Radio Venceremos* based on former announcer "Santiago's" memoir, "*La Terquedad del Izote,*" was set to begin when I left, and a UNESCO series on women's rights continued.

Internal Democracy at Radio Cabal[8]

At the radio right now:

Three people just came in, young people. Tina is mopping. Carlita the receptionist is photocopying, maybe papers for English class. Rogelia, Dalia and another young woman are working in the administration office. Carlos is talking to Ana from an environmental organization about the new program. Margarita[9] is at a meeting at human rights advocacy organization, perhaps talking about their new program. Toni, Evelina and Celia are on the air. Marvin and Pancho are out with the truck producing something for the youth program. Frederico and María Catarina from the news department are upstairs. Rafael, the music director, is in his office. The radio plays softly out in the front lobby, though traffic occasionally drowns out the sound. Keeping watch here in the lobby is an ancient radio and a statue of St. Jude--patron saint of the impossible--and of this radio.

Radio Cabal was a busy, urban community radio station with over twenty staff and nearly round-the-clock programming. Like a large family, there were always squabbles and disagreements, but underneath there was great warmth and mutual respect. Its offices and studio were located in a large rambling pink house on a busy cross

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[7] Educational programming in the form of dramatic skits and dialogues.

[8] "¡Cabal!" a Salvadoran expression signifying something like, "exactly!" and "incredible!"

[9] Herrera, the co-founder and co-director of this radio.

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street near the big San Miguelito market, where fruits, vegetables, meats, flowers and many kinds of hand-made products were sold from stands piled high with merchandise. I had been intrigued by this station since I arrived in the city. For example, the morning program on Monday January 5, 1998, combined regular news briefs, New Year's greetings from listeners, live and recorded, job listings, traffic reports, and music from *Los Torogoces,* a commercially successful Salvadoran folk group. I choose this station for fieldwork both because it seemed to be the most participatory of the alternative stations in the capital.

The station's explicit purpose was to help "create spaces in civil society," Mario Maida, the co-Director told me in an informal chat my first day. People in El Salvador didn't know about the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which could represent their interests in this new post-war environment, he explained. The station aimed to promote the idea of citizenship and create an attitude of responsibility on the part of both the population and the government. I asked him to explain what he meant by civil society; he began by explaining that it was not the military, the political sectors, or the government; it included institutions and individuals. The debates of civil society concerned the well-being of the country and provided a space to able to consider alternatives, beginning from the perspective of people's own necessities. It was a decentralized vision of power; it also had to do with "strengthening the perception of the potential of local governments."

The station attempted this through different kinds of programs. In the drive-time" morning show, "*¿Cómo está el volado?*"[10] two charismatic hosts brought context and background to the news, particularly targeting issues of human rights, gender, environment, and holistic health. A noontime interview program, "Citizens in Action"

[10] Loosely, "how's everything going?" a typically Salvadoran expression.

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(*Ciudadanos en acción*) featured guests from the growing sector of non-governmental organizations. A full hour of morning and evening news with hourly updates, a morning program targeting women and and afternoon slot produced by youth, a daily sports overview, a Saturday night metalhead music request show, and short "micro-programs" of religious reflection, indigenous culture, and humor filled out the schedule.

Despite the coordination of overall goals, each program had its own production team with considerable autonomy to determine the content and form of their program. A democratic culture permeated all activities and relationships, perhaps best seen in their attempt at self-criticism and collaborative planning of their annual staff meeting.

The nearly all-day meeting started early Saturday morning with coffee and little sweet rolls. We began a bit later than planned, but well within the range of "Salvadoran time"--about 45 minutes, rather than two hours late. Our discussions then started with an overview of the annual Christmas party they had held for their listeners in the street in front of the station.

The goals of the "*Acto Navideño*" or Christmas season activity were to increase the station's visibility and develop a more personal relationship with the audience. A larger than expected number of listeners attended, and most activities went off smoothly--breaking a *piñata* for children, various raffles. Staff complained about logistical snafus which should have been foreseen, and gender stereotypes implicit in the gifts given to the children--why were there jacks for girls and balls for boys, if one of the station's goals was breaking these very stereotypes? Others complained that the whole event had a patronizing tone, or that people came only for the gifts and not because of particular feelings for the station. These criticisms, even questioning the entire purpose of event, indicated that staff members felt entitled to speak and saw the station as a collaborative project.

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Next both Co-Directors, Margarita and Mario, reported about major station-wide issues and plans for the future. They had co-founded the station; previously Margarita had worked in radio and popular education, while Mario had background in theater, advertising and education.

I found Margarita open and approachable, perhaps in part because she had no office. Instead, her desk was out in the orange and brick-colored front lobby with the receptionist, near the copy machine and file cabinets. Margarita was tall and stately but approachable; self-deprecating but intense, holding the staff to the same difficult standards she held for herself. Margarita's baptism in radio was through Monsignor Oscar Romero's radio program, where she wrote up the news and the charges *(denuncios)* of government and death squad abuses. When the war broke out, she had to flee the country. When I confessed my nervousness about this fieldwork, she told me about how she felt nervous when she was working with Monsignor Romero's radio. This was a subtle but effective way of pointing out that her fear came from the fact that one of the announcers of that radio was killed and the radio itself was bombed several times; in the end, all of the staff had to leave because of death threats not only to themselves but to their families. She then worked in Mexico for a number of years with a popular education organization, before returning to San Salvador at the end of the war. She was from a large, well-off Salvadoran family, was married with one adult child.

When she returned to the country, she and Mario took on the radio project proposed by the *Resistencia Nacional* (National Resistance, RN), one of the five groups incorporated into the FMLN during the war. The project originally targeted women and women's issues; she described the current project as a radio-school, training youth and women especially to put their own voices on the radio. It was participatory not just by including the audience through call-ins, but by bringing them in as part of the programs,

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as integral voices of the radio's profile (Radio Cabal 1998).

The first item at the annual meeting was Margarita and Mario's report. Radio Cabal would change its legal form from a commercial station to a foundation;[11] they continued to work on legalizing the rural community radios; program themes would now include science and technology; training for staff in English and computer skills would soon be available. Their report went on for some time. But the seriousness of the presentation was relieved by Mario's playfulness, like putting his leg out to trip someone leaving for a bathroom break, without losing a syllable of his presentation. Mario was short and wiry with curly light-brown hair, a jazz enthusiast in a place where most people had never even heard of jazz. Sharp and opinionated, he had formerly worked in advertising, and was now getting a master's degree in education.

Next Rafael Calderón, the music director, presented the station's plans to add an FM broadcast frequency and expand its musical programming. He seemed an odd mix of philosopher and pragmatist. On one hand, he disparaged attempts to reach "popular" audiences with politically correct music rather than attracting audiences with the music already shaping their lives like *ranchero*, rap or even commercial pop. But at this meeting, he described plans to broaden the station's musical profile through a discourse on the importance of art in everyday life.

For most of the morning, we broke up into groups to talk about the successes and obstacles of each program, then after lunch we met back together to share the main points of each discussion with the entire group. Each program was discussed; here are a few examples.

Margarita, perhaps the person with the most formal and personal authority on

[11] Most of the radio's income was from grants, including one from the U.S. Congress-funded InterAmerican Foundation. About twenty people were on salary; the overall budget was tiny by U.S. standards, but substantial by local ones.

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the staff , was most self-critical in presenting her program, "*¿Cómo está el Volado?*" With her longtime co-anchor gone and the new one apparently not up to the task, she continued to find herself without enough time to prepare. The group agreed that the program was weak. Frederico from the news department said the commentary's quality varied too much, and there was not enough audience participation. Juan noted that overall themes got lost and the anchors needed to respond to each other, at least laugh at each other's jokes. Listeners needed to empathize with the people on the air, not with the program, he continued. Margarita accepted the criticisms and asked for a director so that she could focus more on the content of the program.

Mario presented the achievements of his program, "Citizens in Action": it had legitimacy; non-governmental organizations were listening and giving him feedback. He said that the historical segments were useful when he related them to the present, and the program demonstrated the concept of citizenship, that it was men and women who have done these things. But staff critiques were unsparing. Too much information was presented for just one hour. If the priority was to give spaces to civil society, why spend so much time on news commentary, leaving only twenty minutes for guests? One couldn't understand Mario's humor, "it leaves me on the moon," he complained. Mario responded a bit defensively, but news director Carlos smoothed his feathers by concluding that "the good is often the enemy of the best."

Even the new women's program production group, just completing their first month, presented their strengths and weaknesses. Rogelia and Toni talked about getting over their terror of the microphone, "what is *this* in front of me, good god! I have to talk!" Staff pointed out that too often it seemed as if the conversation was just between them, they improvised too much and weren't interacting with the audience enough. The group was encouraged to draw on the expertise of other staff members, especially a female

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news reporter and an experienced producer from a Catalan radio who was working at the station.

Discussions continued in this outspoken, self-critical manner all day, quite different from the formality of meetings I had attended in the countryside. To conclude, they shared their evaluations of the day itself. We're all here, someone began, we've had a good interchange of ideas and everyone has accepted criticisms with with good humor. But, we didn't get to planning the next six months and didn't even touch on technical issues in the studio or the musical profile of the station. And of course, someone criticized the food. Margarita agreed that she and Mario were in the same boat as everyone else, validating the criticisms of her and Mario's program. She reminded everyone that work groups would meet twice a month to continue these discussions.

The openness, self-criticism, and lack of hierarchy that made this organization distinct was evident at this meeting. The concerns with participation and expanding ideas of citizenship for listeners was a central topic. This meeting reminded me of the non-profit planning meetings and retreats I had been involved with in the United States. It was evidence of the extent to which this organization shared the culture of the global world of not-for-profit non-governmental organizations.

The meeting also provides a glimpse of how this organization attempted to achieve its project of helping to create civil society in El Salvador not only through its programming but also by creating a microcosm of the desired society in the station itself. Individuals and production groups, like civil society organizations, saw their position not as subservient to or silenced by the management but as equivalent entities with rights to creatively envision and produce their programs. Management did hold a degree of power and authority and its criticisms were taken more to heart. But management's goals and projects were also subject to the voices and critiques of of the production groups.

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Together these practices modeled a culture of democracy.

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Chapter One

Social Movements and Salvadoran Radio:

Some History

> "One day while completing the duties of the household about ten in the morning gunfire was heard. It was the National Guard from Cancasque that came towards Portillo looking for people to kill. On this occasion they didn't kill anyone, because ... the people on hearing the shots ran and fled to the forest....That day and night they passed in the forest....When the people returned to their houses there wasn't anything left; some things had been taken, others had been burned and the little corn, sorghum, beans and sesame which the people had harvested also had been taken or burned....About 15 days later the Guard came again, and the death squads. This time they killed five people from this *cantón,* among them three women and two men. Two women were pregnant. ... With long pointed knives whose sharp edges shined they took the babies out of the women..."[1] (Orellana, undated).

It is difficult to understand what led people to commit atrocities such as the ones described above, which took place early in the 1980 -1992 civil war. The brief historical essay which follows is an attempt to highlight the most influential factors which led to this violence, and to consider the changes brought about by the negotiated settlement of the Peace Accords and other factors since the end of the war, which might provide a basis for the hope that this could never happen again.

By the late nineteenth century, conflicts over the control of land and local political power which had earlier been expressed through Indian, *Ladino* or *Criollo*

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ethnicity were slowly transforming into more of a class-based conflict. Larger landowners were able to monopolize expanded agricultural export production especially through coffee cultivation, processing and marketing, and were able to concentrate their landholdings through control of credit and marketing. Indian and Ladino peasants gradually lost land; this communally managed land had been both a subsistence safety net and the basis of local political power. Wealth became increasingly concentrated in a small oligarchy whose investments in coffee production and processing were the most profitable of their holdings. Meanwhile Indian communities lost their bid to influence national state formation, and the emerging agriculturally-based oligarchy, alarmed by urban and rural labor and popular organizing, turned to the military to protect their landholdings and their control over agricultural labor. Salvadoran society became increasingly militarized, and by the 1932 uprising and subsequent massacres, referred to as the *Matanza*, the military controlled the state.

The Salvadoran economy at the eve of the civil war was highly dependent on coffee exports, as well as light industry for more regional markets. A strong oligarchy had maintained control over the production, processing and export of coffee along with a handful of other export crops. But the economic and political power this had given them was now beginning to unravel as emerging political parties, popular organizations, and even junior military officers began to demand reforms to ameliorate the grave inequalities, to seek a share of political power and implement new economic models.

Land concentration and the formation of the oligarchy

Land ownership had remained extremely concentrated since the first decades of the twentieth century. By 1970-71, the 1,941 farms over 100 hectares constituted just 0.7 percent of farms but took up 38.7 percent of the land under cultivation. The 250,539

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smaller farms which made up 92.5 percent of farms covered just 27.1 percent of land under cultivation (Baloyra 1982:25, from Colindres, *La Tenencia de la Tierra).* Still, the widespread notion that only "Fourteen Families" kept a lock on the economy and politics of the country from the emergence of the coffee industry until their divisions and diversification during the civil war is overly schematic. By 1977, of the 63 richest families in El Salvador, only one-third could be traced to the nineteenth century elite; two-thirds were immigrant families--British, Jamaican, Italian, Colombian, Jewish, and Arab--and the remainder had joined the ranks of the elite after the 1950s (Lauria-Santiago 1999:182, 227-9). Coffee appears to have become the most profitable sector by the early twentieth century and made up 99 percent of exports by the 1920s (Lauria-Santiago 1999: 132). But the largest landowners had diversified holdings from these first years. Wealthy agricultural families raised and processed cattle and sugar cane as well as coffee. They were also involved in alcohol production, mining, electrification, and port and railroad building. In the early twentieth century a financial elite emerged who invested in banking and speculated in commodities, bonds and loans (162). Large landowners used the profits of the export trade to control the financial sector; their control of land, production, export and finance allowed this relatively small sector to control both economy and political life, and block efforts towards land reform or agricultural labor organizing (Baloyra 1982:2, 28). Though there was some tension between agrarian and industrial interests, the growth of industry was dependent on the credit available through the agrarian sector (Baloyra 1982:30), and after World War II, more agriculturalists began to invest some of their profits in industrial production. Until the 1980s, the oligarchy blocked democratic reforms and the growth of political parties and labor unions, afraid that these institutions would threaten their dominance (Baloyra 1982:15).

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The Matanza, from oligarchic to military rule

Throughout the nineteenth century, Liberal and Conservative factions, military leaders and Indian municipalities clashed in efforts to control the national state. By the first decade of the twentieth century, the Salvadoran elite was self-conscious, more and more focused on coffee production, processing and exporting, and increasingly dominating the state. In 1929, the shock of the sudden drop in coffee prices with the collapse of the world stock markets had led to mass pay cuts and firings on the coffee plantations. It had also led to intensified organizing efforts among peasants, laborers and students. When Arturo Araujo, a wealthy landowner with a populist platform, was elected president in 1931, he raised expectations of major reform. Popular unrest grew as it increasingly became clear that he could not deliver on these promises. The Araujo government was overthrown by Colonel Maximiliano Hernández Martínez in December 1931, the first of many governments in which the military became the political power-holder for the oligarchic class. In January 1932, two rebellions broke out: an attempt at a popular insurrection led by Communist Party organizers and an Indian rebellion in the new western, coffee-growing region (Pérez Brignoli 1995).

The repression that followed was massive. Subsequently dubbed *La Matanza* (the massacre), government troops killed an estimated 30,000 people in just a few weeks, mostly picking their targets based on indigenous cultural features such as dress or language, building on decades if not centuries of ethnic hatred, combined with fear of communist-inspired workers' revolt (Pérez Brignoli 1995: 253). Unions, peasant organizations, the Communist Party, and Indian *cofradías* were all banned (Montgomery 1982: 57).

The collapse of coffee export markets and the Depression was a crisis for

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oligarchic rule; the resulting personalistic military dictatorship of Martínez Hernández was supported by the elite because his regime protected their overall interests. But the regime lacked broad legitimacy and hegemony and was held in place through a mixture of paternalism and repression (Baloyra 1982:14).

Military power and popular resistance

After the *Matanza*, the military was allowed direct control of the state and latitude to develop its own institutions. The state had been directly governed by members of the agro-export elite since the turn of the century, when members of the Meléndez and Quiñonez families began to alternate in office. But the rising number of landless peasants and labor and other oppositional movements in the cities convinced the elite that they needed a stronger military to protect their interests. Labor demands for minimum wage, tax reforms, even greater industrial development were seen as a threat. The National Guard and the Army became stronger and more professionalized, and the military reserves and rural paramilitary forces extended the dense network of surveillance and ideological direction which the old auxiliaries had begun. This network was already pervasive; by 1930 "...one of ten adult men in Ahuachapán was part of an active paramilitary structure" one in six if the reserves were counted (Williams and Walters 1997: 17).

But popular resistance did not disappear. The dictatorship of Maximiliano Hernández Martínez lasted until 1944 when disenchantment with the regime grew; organizing by university and high school students, office workers, and professionals led

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to a general strike and then a coup by younger military officers.[2] As in 1931, these younger officers were replaced by senior military once the President left office. In 1948, another coup was spurred by junior officers, but this time they were able to redefine the role of the state to some extent. They called for a degree of electoral democracy and a larger role for the state in social welfare and economic development, while maintaining military control of government, its official political party, and the security forces including the rural paramilitary network. Still, these measures did open some opportunities for the opposition by the 1960s (Williams and Walters 1997:38-40, 60-62; Montgomery 1982:55-6, 60-65).

Senior military again halted this progress. Rather than allowing more democratic reforms and development of a more viable economy, the military accepted the coffee sector's claim that its central importance to the economy was such that no reforms were possible. Though the Salvadoran military attempted to model themselves on the Mexican one-party state, they ignored the fact that once in power, the revolutionary Mexican military leaders neutralized both the oligarchy and the military, building a coalition instead with the new industrial bourgeoisie, urban labor, peasants and a network of government officials (Baloyra 1982:19). In El Salvador, from 1948-78, "the military controlled but did not dominate the society. It failed to become the hegemonic actor that would replace the oligarchy; it missed a number of opportunities to form a dominant coalition and prevented others from doing so" (Baloyra 1982:17). The great majority of the population was still excluded from political power and exercising citizenship as it had been for most of the twentieth century.

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[2] Military officers graduated the military academy in cohorts called *tandas*; they tended to have stronger loyalty to their fellow *tanda* than to the military or the country. Coups have been spurred in part by junior officers' impatience with their advancement; human rights investigations in the 1980s were stymied when fellow *tanda* members refused to testify against each other.

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The expansion of industry and commercial agriculture

During the 1950s and 1960s, government investment in infrastructure such as roads, hydroelectric dams, malaria control and programs encouraged the diversification of agriculture. This again led to displacement of rural agriculturalists, who were drawn to cities to find work. Land privatization beginning in the 1880s, and loss of land in later decades as export production expanded, led many households to depend on migration for work especially during coffee harvests (Menjívar 2000:41). Some peasant households left fertile valleys and moved to northern mountain regions; others formed squatter settlements along roads and on marginal land. Still others emigrated to Honduras; by the 1960s there were 350,000 Salvadorans there (Menjívar 2000:41,46). These conditions often split up families, increasing the number of free unions and illegitimate children. By the 1930s, 60 percent of births were "illegitimate," with their mothers heading households, leading to increased participation of women in the labor force (Menjívar 2000:42 from Rodoldo Barón-Castro 1978:565). By 1978, 39.5 percent of urban households were headed by women (Menjívar 2000:47, from FUNDASAL 1979); families often included children from previous unions, siblings, and other adult relatives, which aided child care. Ties of *compadrazgo* weakened, since visits and exchanges were more difficult over distance (Menjívar 2000:42, from Montes 1987:167).

With rising coffee prices, wealthy coffee families began to invest in industry. In a brief economic boom, El Salvador had the largest small manufacturing sector in Central America by 1965, taking advantage of expanding markets through the Central American Common Market (Menjívar 2000:42-3). But industrial investment was concentrated on consumer goods made with imported materials and fuel, and made in capital intensive factories which could not absorb the labor displaced from the countryside. A small

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industrial working class grew, while the beginning of government investment in education, telecommunications and health services led to a middle class, both proportionately larger than other Central American countries at the time. Overall, the wealthy and some of the middle class benefited, but unemployment rose for rural and urban lower classes (Booth 1991: 40,44,39). Urban migrants turned increasingly to the informal economy, and with government cuts in basic social services and the increased military budget, 70 percent of San Salvador's population lived in slums or *mesones* by the 1970s (Menjívar 2000:44, from Montes 1987a: 19).

The crisis of political representation grows

Growing urban middle and working classes sought a share of political power, and rural agriculturalists became increasingly assertive through consciousness-raising of progressive Catholic activists. A competitive party system could have channeled these emerging class interests gradually into regime change, but the military and oligarchy sought to "maintain order" (Baloyra 1982:34).

Politically these emerging classes sought representation in new political parties, particularly the Christian Democratic party (PDC) and the Revolutionary National Movement (MNR, affiliated with the Socialist International). The PDC, most notably led by José Napoleón Duarte, had developed out of conservative Christian study groups in the 1950s, and grew among the urban middle class to be the main contender of the military party in power. The MNR, led by Guillermo Ungo, grew to represent urban labor. The military continued to hold state power, now through the Party for National Conciliation (PCN) formed in 1961 and backed to a large extent by the traditional agricultural elite. The PCN had more concern for economic development and social reform than previous military parties, but still saw any real opposition as subversion and

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a threat of revolution.

Rural agriculturalists also formed organizations to advocate for their interests. Peasants organized the Christian Federation of Salvadoran Campesinos (FECCAS) in 1964 with the aid of the Catholic Church. Workers built strong unions, including the teachers' union (ANDES), the telecommunication workers union (ASTEL), and the electrical workers union (ATCEL), and in 1965 created the United Salvadoran Union Federation (FUSS) (Dunkerly 1982: 98-100).

The Catholic Church as catalyst

The progressive Catholic Church played a central role in the 1960s and 1970s in developing leadership and a sense of entitlement among the rural and urban poor. As the crisis grew, it also provided the support of a powerful international institution.

After the Vatican II conference in Medellín in 1968, a branch of the Salvadoran Catholic Church increasingly nurtured and promulgated a version of Liberation Theology, reaching out both to rural communities and the urban poor. Liberation Theology was based on the idea of the inherent dignity and worth of every person, that are all children of God and deserve to be treated as such. While not directly involved in organizing demonstrations, strikes or other actions, this message itself was revolutionary.[3] The Catholic church supported this movement in the hope that "communism" and large scale revolts of the poor could be avoided by moderate reforms and moves towards empowerment (Lernoux 1982:16-17). Prayer groups in these *Comunidades Eclesiales de Bases* (Christian Base Communities, CEBs) incorporated Bible study with discussions that touched the lives of participants, from the meaning of

3 Vatican II documents on which this movement was based, *Mater en Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem en Terris* (1963), stressed the human rights to a decent standard of living, education, political participation; they questioned the absolute right of private property, and defined the Church as a community of equals (Lernoux 1982: 16-17).

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the liturgy to leadership, cooperatives and health care. Members of a community in San Salvador's San Ramon neighborhood recalled,

> "Every day we would meet in different houses. Father Rogelio would teach us to get to know the Bible. We would read the texts and each would say what we understood. I, from the first time, would talk because I wasn't and I'm not now shy. For others, it was harder, but in the end, everybody spoke. (Virginia)"
>
> "We didn't understand politics, really. We would read the Bible, which talks about fighting for a just cause and all of that we would discuss.(Margarita)"
>
> (Consejo de Mujeres Misionarias por La Paz 1996:46,49)

The Jesuit order in particular, led in El Salvador by Ignacio Ellacuría (later the Rector of the Jesuit University of Central America, UCA) was inspired by these changes in the Catholic mission. He deepened and particularized its philosophical basis and his students put these ideas into practice, working in communities like Aguilares in Chalatenango beginning in the early 1970s.

The message was that the poor could liberate themselves from fear and oppression beginning with participation in these groups. This movement broke with the hierarchical and patriarchal traditions of both the church and Salvadoran culture; they encouraged both men and women to be leaders in a "community of equals," and emphasized the importance of serving their communities (Lernoux 1982:38). They were particularly significant in bringing large numbers of women to public leadership roles (Stephen 1994:204-5). Over 15,000 leaders were trained in Christian Base Communities groups in the early 1970s, forming a nucleus of organizers that influenced nearly every branch of the mobilizations of that period.

Many catechists joined the guerrillas, but others remained outside of armed struggle. Belgian priest Rogelio Ponce followed his San Salvador parishioners into the

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guerrilla struggle but he himself remained unarmed (Whitfield 1995:221). Ellacuría spent the years of the war calling for negotiations, and criticized military support from the United States which increased and lengthened the bloodshed. He chastised Radio Venceremos and the Salvadoran military press alike for glorifying rather than lamenting the casualties their armies had caused (Whitfield 1995:222).

If Ellacuría was the philosopher, Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero was the pastor. Monsignor's Romero's influence was more direct, through his masses and homilies, his daily contact with the poor, his meetings with those affected by the violence like the Mothers of the Disappeared, and transmitted through the diocesan radio station YSAX every Sunday. He repeatedly criticized government repression and refused to appear publicly with government officials after Father Rutilio Grande's assassination (Delgado Acevedo 1986:83). He strongly condemned the growing repression and threatened that the Catholic Church would excommunicate those involved. María Teresa Tula remembered his support of the CO-MADRES,

> "What surprised me most was seeing Monsignor Romero at the meetings. He helped us by making announcements on the radio. 'Monsignor Romero announces the meeting of the Committee of Mothers and Family Members of Prisoners, the Disappeared, and the Politically Assassinated.' He said that we were suffering mothers looking for our children and pleaded with government authorities to free them" (Stephen 1994:55).

At a breaking point

By the mid-1970s, Salvadoran society was at a breaking point: with increased landlessness and unemployment, with all attempts at electoral change blocked and a political vehicle lacking not only for popular classes but also for growing middle and

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working classes. Even the military government's attempt at reform was blocked by the oligarchy, and the new government response was to increase repression against any opposition.

By 1971 the economic boom had ended, with the combined impact of the global oil crisis, the end of the Central American Common Market and other factors. Unemployment rose to 20 percent (Menjívar 2000:44 from Montes 1987: 19), and the vast majority of rural households struggled to survive on small and inadequate plots of land (Menjívar 2000:45). The reincorporation of an estimated 300,000 Salvadorans expelled from Honduras during the disastrous Soccer War with Honduras in 1969 led to nicreased pressure for land and employment opportunities (Montgomery 1982:80).

Continued election fraud by the 1970s increasingly blocked openings for political or social change. The key event was the massive election fraud following the probable victory of the Unión Nacional de Oposición (UNO) coalition in 1972. This coalition brought together the Christian Democrats (PDC), the Revolutionary National Movement (MNR), and the Unión Democrática Nacionalista (UDN), the legal organization of the banned Communist Party, with a presidential slate of José Napoleón Duarte (PDC) and Guillermo Manuel Ungo (MNR). When the UNO appeared to be winning the vote count, the military-government controlled election board stopped the counts and took over the media overnight; they reopened both the next morning to announce the victory of Colonel Armando Molina of the PCN. For thousands, this confirmed the futility of the political system (Montgomery 1982:85). The PCN's fraudulent victory destroyed the possibility of political pathways to change, and progressive sectors of the bourgeoisie and popular sectors alike turned to social movements and mass organizations to represent their interests collectively.

The organizations which these new leaders and activists created to pressure the

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state or employers about their grievances began with non-violent collective action such as strikes, marches and demonstrations. Between 1977 and 1979, there were over 40 illegal labor strikes (Baloyra 1982:66). When mass organizations staged civil disobedience and peaceful protest, it was increasingly met with a violent response from ORDEN (see below) and paramilitaries. The repressive response of the state pushed many into the conviction that only armed struggle would produce change because there was no middle ground.

The turn to armed struggle by the left was inspired in part by the model of the Cuban revolution and encouraged by the dramatic and rapid success of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in 1979. El Salvador's guerrilla organizations were formed early in the 1970s.The large Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL), founded by Salvador Cayetano Carpio in 1970, split off from the Communist party and focused on organizing *campesinos* in the central third of the country. The Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP) was formed in 1972 by youth from the PCS, PDC and from the elite, to organize students and peasants in the eastern region. Along with a small guerrilla army, each developed mass organizations of thousands of members, often divided into sectors such as unions, women, or youth. Unions and other popular organizations often supported one or another of these groups (see Table 1-1)(Montgomery 1982:104-8; Dunkerly 1982:102-107).

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Table 1-1: The five constituent groups of the FMLN

Political/ military organization, (year founded)	Popular organization	Approximate members	Core of support	armed force	strategy
•Fuerzas Populares de Liberación (FPL) 1970	Bloque Popular Revolucionario (BPR)	~60,000	Mostly campesinos; central region	FPL 1970	prolonged popular war
•Partido de la Revolución Salvadoreña (PRS) 1977	Ligas Popular 28 de Febrero 1978		Campesinos, students, youth; eastern region	Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP) 1972	popular insurrection
•Resistencia Nacional (RN) 1975	Frente de Acción Popular Unificada (FAPU) 1974	~ 30,000	Middle class, unions	Fuerzas Armadas de Resistencia Nacional (FARN) 1975	unity of political and military struggle
•Partido Comunista de El Salvador (PCS) 1930	Unión Democrática Nacionalista (UND) 1967		Urban, working class	Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación (FAL) 1979	<1979 reformist, electoral, 1980-91 democratic, anti-imperialist
•Partido Revolucionarios de Trabajadores Centroamericanos (PRTC) 1976	Movimiento de Liberación Popular (MLP) 1979		Urban and rural working class	PRTC 1976	

Sources: Adapted from Montgomery 1982:104-8, with additional information from Baloyra 1982:68 figure 4-2, 161-2; Dunkerly 1982:102-107; Lungo 1996:14, 140, 137-156; Menendez 1983:94, 132, 147-9

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The Molina government attempted to stem the crisis with a limited land reform, creating the Instituto Salvadoreño de Transformación Agraria (ISTA) in 1976. But the oligarchy blocked it, in part through the strident anti-communist media campaign of the *Asociación Nacional de Empresa Privada* (ANEP) which particularly targeted Jesuits and their university (Baloyra 1982:59).

Throughout this period, the economic interests of the ruling elite were diversifying from ownership of coffee plantations and other agricultural, land-based wealth to include industrial and financial investment. This caused a growing divergence of interests between those more involved in agriculture and those more invested in modern industry. The modern sector had influence but not power over government, but the agrarian sector had power to stop reforms, as they did in 1976 and later 1979, both times turning to more extreme means (Baloyra 1982:62-3). The oligarchy simply did not want to share its economic power and most sectors of the military saw any organization outside of its control as dangerous. With Colonel Molina's attempt at reform stopped, the oligarchy brought General Carlos Humberto Romero to power, an extreme anti-communist. He increased repression through paramilitary organizations like ORDEN and other right wing terror groups to curb the political awakening of the progressive Christian, peasant, student and other social organizations (Balyora 1982:64). ORDEN had been created in the mid-1960s by ex-military officer Alberto "El Chele"(the light-skinned one) Medrano as a rural militia, the ears and the eyes of the rural police forces. Rural men were pressed to join it, purportedly to uncover evidence of communist influence. It grew to as many as 100,000 members by the late 1970s.

The United States under the Carter administration pressured the Salvadoran government about human rights, but continued its efforts to contain "communism." During the Kennedy administration this had included programs to build schools and

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other local infrastructure, like the Alliance for Progress, but by the 1970s it mostly involved military aid and training.[4] A high-level U.S. government report issued in 1969 had supported the growth of military regimes to counter the anti-imperialist threat represented by the Liberation Theology movement (Lernoux 1982:56-58).

Faced with strikes, demonstrations, growing popular support by the middle class for moderate or leftist political visions, the military and elite-based government responded with increased repression and intransigence. Troops fired on a 1975 student demonstration against the waste of government monies on hosting the Miss Universe pageant (Americas Watch 1982:39).

Attacks on priests and other religious in El Salvador started in the early 1970s, in Chalatenango, where the first CEBs were established. Father Rutillio Grande, S.J was killed in Aguilares in March, 1977; in June a diocesan priest, Father Alfonso Navarro, was murdered. Death threats by paramilitaries threatened all Jesuits. By this time, all public meetings and strikes had been made illegal (Americas Watch 1982:xxxix) and a Public order law passed in November of this year was "practically a license to kill" (Baloyra 1982:66).

By the late 1970s, several death squads were operating, marking their victims with warnings with their names such as *Ojo por Ojo, Falange,* and *Mano Blanca*[5] (Dunkerly 1982:104). These death squads operated with impunity, and hundreds of people in the city and countryside were picked up each week, sometimes held, questioned, and tortured; others were killed, their mangled bodies deposited on

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[4] The United States trained over 70,000 military personnel from all over Latin America in places like the School of the Americas, first located in Panama and then moved to the U.S. after protests; its perspective was based on the National Security doctrine holding that freedom sometimes must be sacrificed for security.

[5] An Eye for an Eye, a term referring at the same time to a military formation and the Spanish Fascist party, and the White Hand.

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roadsides where they could be seen as warnings.[6] International human rights groups working with the Salvadoran Catholic Church's human rights office documented 10,000 deaths from political violence in 1980 alone, of whom more than a third were peasants; priests and other religious, union leaders and members, and students and journalists were also targeted (Americas Watch 1982:xxvi-iii).

A January 1980 demonstration commemorating the 1932 massacre of peasants attracted 200,000 people--along with snipers who fired on the crowds, killing 20 to 52 of them (Americas Watch 1982:42). By this time, the army had invaded the National University, sacking the library and classrooms and leaving it closed. In the countryside, 350,000 refugees had left their homes to seek safety either in other regions of the country or in Honduras or other neighboring countries, including the United States (xxviii).

The failures and successes of the juntas

On October 15, 1979, a military coup by young officers deposed General Carlos Humberto Romero and formed a broad-based civilian junta. It began measures to disband ORDEN, investigate cases of the disappeared, and nationalize coffee exports. But several members of this junta resigned within a few months because of its inability to stop the repression, as its authority was not accepted by the military (Baloyra 1982:99). One member, Salvador Samoyoa, joined the FPL guerrilla army. Subsequent juntas led by Christian Democrats enacted a limited land reform and nationalized banks, but they

[6] Some paramilitary groups were funded by wealthy Salvadorans living in Miami, organized by Roberto D'Aubuisson, later the founder of the ARENA party; others were an integral part of Salvadoran government security forces. The death squads were "...not random. They were highly organized, they formed an integral part of the Armed Forces, and they were controlled by officers reaching all the way up to the highest echelons of the Salvadoran officer corps" (Montgomery 1995:132, 134).

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could not control military or right-wing violence either. The assassinations in March, 1980 of Archbishop Romero as he was saying mass, and of Attorney General Zamora not only led Héctor Dada Hirezi, a prominent intellectual and former foreign minister to resign from the junta and the PDC, but marks for many the beginning of the civil war (Baloyra 1982:99).

Threats, disappearances, and political tactics were attributed to the "disloyal right....[which] engaged in obstructionist tactics seeking to prevent the inauguration and consolidation of a democratic regime" (Baloyra 1982:106). One of the prime movers of this sector was Major Roberto D'Abuisson, who was supported by powerful sectors of the elite. He was responsible for two unsuccessful coups and was linked to the assassinations of Archbishop Romero and Attorney General Zamora (Baloyra 1982:106-112).

In response, on April 1, 1980, the mass organizations of the opposition united in a coalition first called the Revolutionary Coordination of the Masses (CRM) and then the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). It included major mass organizations and political parties and 49 labor unions as well as student and professional associations and was dominated by social and Christian Democrats and Marxist independents. Later that year the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (FMLN) was formed with Marxist-Leninist leadership to coordinate the five guerrilla armies into a single command in civil war. Guillermo Ungo of the MNR led the diplomatic commission which linked the two organizations (see Table 1-1)(Baloyra 1982:154, 161; Montgomery 1982:104-8).

An offensive by the FMLN in 1981 failed to defeat the Salvadoran armed forces, though it came surprisingly close. This prompted a massive increase in U.S. aid; still, the junta's planned land reform remained only partially implemented, and the industrial sector collapsed. By end of 1981, the popular movements and the mass organizations linked to the guerrilla forces were effectively decimated, especially their leadership. Six

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of the top FDR leaders were kidnapped, tortured and killed in late 1980 (Americas Watch 1982: xxv); over 5000 members constituting a generation of labor union leadership had been killed between 1978 and 1982 (Krauss 1986:303). Many others involved in popular or mass organizations fled as refugees, or joined the FMLN guerrilla army or support network. The combined guerrilla forces numbered around 5,000 at the start of the war (Montgomery 1995: 116), but their numbers had to be continually replaced. According to my informants, most of the people who left to join the guerrillas in the early 1980s did not survive.

The tide begins to change

In retrospect, U.S. aid seems responsible for lengthening the war, rather than professionalizing the military, increasing democracy or respect for human rights. "U.S. military assistance made little headway in professionalizing the Salvadoran armed forces, let alone fostering democratic professionalism" (Williams and Walters 1997:149); the power of military officers cohorts was undiminished and no officer was punished for human rights violations during the war (148). Far from increasing respect for human rights, U.S. training for special units within the army and support for military overall appear to have led to some some of the worst abuses of the war.

Instead, several measures began to bear fruit by the late 1980s. The October 1979 coup by junior military officers was almost immediately undermined by senior officers, who fought civilian control of the military and reforms which curtailed the power of oligarchy. But the first junta set in motion processes which led to a degree of land reform, nationalizations of banks and coffee exports, measures which did loosen oligarchic hold of the economy and the state and lead to the opening of some political space.

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The elections held during the civil war were seen by the Left as illegitimate exercises and were boycotted and disrupted by the FMLN. It is clear that the electoral system in the 1980s was "designed to avoid fraud, not to maximize popular participation"(Baloyra 1993). But these elections may have served to convince the elite that political contestation through electoral means could serve their interests; if competitive elections had been possible in the 1960s, armed struggle may have been prevented.

By the mid-1980s, the armed struggle seemed to be stalemated with the guerrillas entrenched in "liberated zones" in the north-central and eastern mountain regions. Influenced by U.S. concern to show the "democratic" achievements of their client, and concerned to demonstrate the progress of winning the war, the Salvadoran government began to allow a little more public, political space in urban areas, where the pace of repression dropped to some extent (Stephen 1995: 205; Montgomery 1995:190-195). In the northern conflict zones, the armed forces turned to more targeted military tactics and civic action campaigns instead of the large-scale scorched-earth destruction they had perpetuated in the first half of the war (Frisk 1991).

Popular organizing again emerged, in the face of a worsening economy and still intense guerrilla war in the countryside. May Day 1985 saw a demonstration of 20,000 union members; later that month 20,000 teachers affiliated with the ANDES union marched, and hospital workers occupied state hospitals for a month (Krauss 1986:303). A new union coalition emerged, the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS) with 350,000 affiliated members (Montgomery 1995:194). These unions began to encourage women's participation, and a second wave of women's organizations began to emerge, so that by the end of the war, there were already 100 local, regional or national women's groups (Stephen 1994 209). "By 1988, it seemed that every sector of Salvadoran society

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was organized: market vendors, those displaced by the war and the 1986 earthquake, shantytown residents, families of the disappeared and political prisoners, students, teachers, public service employees, cooperatives, and for the first time in Salvadoran history, its indigenous peoples" (Montgomery 1995:191-2).

Two characteristics distinguished this wave of popular organizing from the previous wave. First, these groups tended to focus on concrete issues, rather than the often ideological rhetoric of the earlier groups. Though there was often communication and convergence of interests, they were not as tightly integrated into the FMLN as the mass organizations united in the FDR had been(Montgomery 1995: 191-2). Second, while majority of the opposition up until this time could clearly be seen as having their base in the relations of stratification of the region, many new issues were not as exclusively connected to class. For example, activity on women's issues (some of which came from efforts within the FMLN-linked opposition, see Ready 1999) along with organizing on environmental issues and indigenous identity[7] began to emerge. These new popular movements tended to have less hierarchical decision-making styles and were more decentralized than in the past.

Meanwhile, in order to face the increased challenge that U.S.-provided surveillance, air power and low-intensity conflict methods gave the Salvadoran armed forces, the FMLN guerrillas broke up into small units and formed urban cells, creating a highly disciplined and vertically organized military organization despite its often contentious five factions. The cell structure created a sense of distrust--anyone outside your cell could be an informer--and discouraged initiative and creativity. On the other hand the small guerrilla units were also known for their serious attention to educating

[7] Indigenous identity, communities and practices had not disappeared with the 1932 *Matanza* as popularly believed, but defining indigenous identity has been controversial. See Tilley, 2002.

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their members in everything from literacy to leadership, however haphazardly these opportunities arose (Hammond 2000). Both these tendencies had consequences for the nature of post-war collective action and civil society.

The refugees return

Half a million refugees had fled the country, 25,000 to Honduras alone (Frisk 1991). By 1986, refugees were encouraged by the change in military tactics, and the opening in political space begun by the Duarte regime, as well as by the Esquipulas II agreement signed by five Central America countries which recognized them as refugees and their right to return home (Frisk 1991:online). But when they returned, the government saw them more as military targets than as civilians in need of aid and systematically harassed the new settlements. They created bureaucratic obstructions to obtaining safe-conduct passes for humanitarian organizations and identity papers for returning refugees. They detained and arrested community leaders and army operations destroyed crops, bombed fields and conducted military operations in the new communities (Frisk 1991).

The resettled communities in Chalatenango and Morazán featured in this research returned from the Honduran camps to El Salvador between 1988 and 1991. This process involved complicated negotiations among five parties: the Honduran government, the Salvadoran government, the United Nations High Command for Refugees, the refugees themselves, and churches which acted as mediators and funding conduits. At first government agencies and nongovernmental organizations represented the refugees' interests, but they soon created their own organizations. Leaders developed through Christian base communities and peasant organizations were most important in this work, having developed a strong sense of community identity as well as leadership

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skills. The Christian Committee for the Displaced of El Salvador (CRIPDES), the National Coordination of Repopulation (CNR), the Council for the Development of the Communities of Morazán and San Miguel (PADECOMSM), and the Coordination of Communities and Resettlers of Chalatenango (CCR) all formed between 1984 and 1988. By 1989, PADECOMSM represented 61 communities and CCR represented 17 communities; a national meeting that year brought together 298 groups. They coordinated services and advocated for their communities, demonstrating "the transformation of the displaced from victims of circumstance to significant actors" for their interests (Frisk 1991).

The formation of self-governed communities of returned refugees has implications significant for post-war social life. These communities created participatory governing processes that coordinated self-defense, internal problem-solving and decision making, and developed and implemented projects covering the breadth of social life, from education of children and adults, economic development, promotion of women into leadership roles, health care, rebuilding housing and other infrastructure, cultural expression and group solidarity (see chapter 2 for more detailed descriptions of returned refugee communities). These projects were mostly financed by international aid programs for refugee resettlement, or from European or North American solidarity efforts.

Achievements of the Peace Accords

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent fragmentation of the Soviet Union signaled the end of the Cold War. This meant the loss of the major justification for the anti-communist ideology that had fueled the U.S. support for the Salvadoran government's repression of popular movements and prosecution of the civil war. By the

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end of the Salvadoran war the United States had openly spent nearly six billion dollars for economic and military aid to support the Salvadoran government's war effort, and had committed dozens of advisors and troops annually (Murray 1995:215).

The FMLN Offensive in 1989 occurred the same year as the fall of the Berlin Wall. The FMLN Offensive in 1989 demonstrated that the five FMLN guerrilla armies were not nearly defeated, as the government military of the time claimed, but were capable of bringing the war to the capital city and to the neighborhoods of the elite. However, this came at a terrible cost to the the FMLN armies, and the offensive's eventual defeat also proved that the guerrillas could not win militarily. Clearly a negotiated settlement was the only solution, and serious efforts were renewed at this time.

The Peace Accords were signed in Chapultepec Castle in Mexico City on January 16, 1992 after eighteen months of sustained negotiations. It was a far-reaching settlement which not only aimed to end the war and demilitarize Salvadoran society, but also to reconstruct its economy and institute electoral reforms and ongoing human rights monitoring. The chief U.N. mediator, Alvaro de Soto, called the Accords, "a negotiated revolution" (quoted in Spence, et al. 1997: 3). There were many accomplishments, but also setbacks and concerns. Two analyses of progress of the Accords' implementation reported:

- Both the U.N. and a domestic multi-party commission oversaw the implementation of the Peace Accords.
- The armed conflict ended, and troops were demobilized without major incident.
- The military was reduced in size, and civilian input into military training was established. But the transfer or discharge of 100 officers recommended by a civilian-directed human rights review of the officer corps was delayed until great pressure was brought by the U.N. observers mission, ONUSAL. In addition, large

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FMLN arms caches were discovered and destroyed by ONUSAL.

- Three former police forces were demobilized and a new national police force established with 7,000 agents and 220 officers trained by the end of 1994. However a crime wave led to a decision to use military patrols in the countryside, which violated procedures established by the Peace Accords.

- The FMLN was legalized as a political party, other left parties returned from exile, and the military continued to refrain from presenting candidates. However the assassinations of several FMLN leaders were unresolved.

- The national electoral commission broadened its party representation and the March 1994 elections for president, national legislators and municipal governments were judged fair overall. But the electoral system still needed substantial reform: introduction of a single identity document, a residential voting system, a standard formula for Assembly and municipal representation and depolitization of the Supreme Electoral Council.

- A more effective process for choosing Supreme Court judges was put in place and eleven judges were dismissed for misconduct. The number of pretrial detainees, who made up 80 percent of the prison population, was reduced.

- Human rights violations substantially declined. A government-funded but independent office or Human Rights was created with offices in each department (similar to a province) and was actively processing complaints and challenging official abuses. But remedies were often ignored.

- International aid allowed substantial reconstruction to take place.

- The Forum of Economic and Social Consultation created through the Peace Accords succeeded in gaining the approval of 14 International Labor Organization Conventions and the reform of the labor code, but business

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representatives walked out during the 1994 electoral campaign.

- Government land sales transferred property, much in former war zones, to 35,000 former soldiers and civilian occupiers, though the process took much longer than originally planned and availability of credit was also delayed. (United Nations Security Council 1995; Spence et al. 1997: 4).

The fundamental power relationships between the country's social sectors remained extremely unequal. While the elite diversified its economic base, it still dominated economic and political life. The middle class did not grow to the extent that it could support a political party to represent its interests. Unionized government and service workers were devastated by major waves of privatizations as structural adjustment policies continued to be applied and the burgeoning *maquila* sector resisted labor organization. Meanwhile the rural economy continued to fall to desperate levels (Spence et al. 1997:4-5).

The post-war period

Land and economy. After the war, the debate over the extent and significance of land concentration continued. Paige calculated that in 1971, 57 percent of rural families were landless and that number barely changed for 1991-92, despite the land reform and other factors.[8] The critical change was that the number of renters had increased, made more serious by the fact that these plots were so small, "these individuals are not commercial renters but starvation renters" (Paige 1996:130). He warned that "agrarian problems persist and are likely to be exacerbated" by the broad impacts of neoliberal structural reforms, which had increased inequality in most underdeveloped countries (138).

[8] Using Prosterman's methodology and the data provided by Seligson (see Seligson 1995).

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Roland Paris (2002) argued that the United Nation's role in El Salvador was broader than ending the war; its peacebuilding mission meant eliminating the underlying sources of conflict. Economic liberalization policies such as privatizations and increased fees for water, electricity and transportation services and cutbacks in government services, resulted in high levels of growth ranging from 1.7 to 7.5 percent annually, and positive macroeconomic indicators such as low inflation, a construction boom and a more diversified economy (Paris 2002:52, 54). But pervasive poverty and adverse life conditions persisted, particularly for the urban working class and rural poor. Per capita income, life expectancy, real wages and and other measures of human development fell during the first half of the 1990s; working class wages fell in value, and life conditions remained dire for regions like Morazán with indicators comparable to sub-Saharan Africa (Paris 2002:52, 54). This growing inequality and failure to address the great disparities of wealth and living conditions increased the risk of further conflict.

The oligarchy. Land reform weakened the export-dependent agricultural elite and a new sector more involved in commerce, export processing and finance emerged. This process was set in motion through the reforms enacted under the first and third juntas at the beginning of the war. The ARENA party, which began closely associated with death squads under Roberto D'Abuisson, became the representative of this new business elite (Mason 1999: 194), and has retained control of the Presidency. Meanwhile, the military finally stepped back from governance.

The military. The implementation of the Peace Accords has had mixed success in its efforts to reshape military and submit its institution to civilian control. There was resistance and stonewalling at each step, until combined domestic and international pressures compelled some level of compliance (Williams and Walter 1999: 186). In the end, the role and doctrine of the military was redefined and it was restructured. These

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measures brought military's political domination to an end but not its institutional autonomy (152-3).

Political space. The space open for civil society was already contracting. There were claims that death squads and vigilante groups were operating, with support from sectors within government or elite. Labor unions suffered under legal constraints, privatizations which decimated their memberships, and labor protections which were not implemented. There were scattered break-ins and attacks against political activists and organizations. When demobilized soldiers turned from demonstrations to taking over the legislative assembly in 1994, many wondered if the country still lacked a political system which could effectively deal with its concerns (Blair, Booth et al. 1995:59, Spence et al. 1997:15).

Government attempts to control NGOs were partially successful. In December 1995, the Minister of Interior Mario Acosta proposed a law to regulate NGOs, including the power to intervene in spending and appointing officers. National agencies including FUSADES, a major center-right think tank, and 40 international aid agencies protested. Florentín Meléndez, a human rights lawyer working with the U.N., responded that "the law should open and not close off the doors to every type of association, or organization" because the future of the country's democracy was at stake (Spence et al. 1997: 15 n27). Nearly a year later, the law was passed without incorporating the proposals of the NGOs. It mandated a set of procedures for registration, minimal appeal processes, and lack of visa status for foreign NGO workers (13).

Mass media. Efforts to open public space through the mass media met with government resistance and unofficial commercial boycotts. Policy analysts warned that, "The role of the media is critical in all these areas. Without it, government will not be accountable, people will not know whether the peace accords are being observed,

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impunity will go unnoted, and the environment can be pillaged unbeknownst to the citizenry" (Blair, Booth, et al. 1995: xi). But in the first post-war years the government moved to limit organization and expression. In 1995 the government telecommunications agency, led by Juan José Domenech, (also the head of the ARENA party's executive committee) attempted to close the new post-war community radios at the same time that the Ministry of the Interior was boasting about the dozens of new radio licenses it had granted since the end of the war (Velásquez, Ingeniero Gonzalo, interview with author, January 1995).

Other alternative media also faced difficulties: *Primera Plana*, "a creative, insouciant paper [which]....did not shrink from criticizing, even burlesquing, political leaders, including leftists" could not get enough advertising to survive, amid rumors of a commercial boycott. It ended up depending on international funds and folded after only a year. Another newspaper, *La Noticia*, and *Flor de Izote*, a news service, also closed due to financial difficulties (Spence et al. 1997: 13).

Still, the media in El Salvador were flourishing compared to most earlier periods of their history.

The social construction of Salvadoran radio

The emergence of Salvadoran participatory community radio is another stage in the conflict over the use of the public space created by the technology of radio, over what is this space for, and who can use it. This debate has its roots in the earliest days of radio. Salvadoran radio initially followed the European model of government control, but slowly came to closely resemble the U.S. corporate model. By the second half of the century, those excluded from the major media in El Salvador joined in a "small media" movement that was shared throughout Latin America and the world.

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At the very beginnings of radio in the United States, it was not at all clear and in fact it seemed highly unlikely that the prevailing model would be the mass diffusion of entertainment and information financed by advertising and controlled by major national or transnational corporations. The "social construction" of the public space of radio broadcasting occurred through conflict; there were, "Sharply competing ideas about how the invention should be used, and by whom[;]....battles over technological control and corporate hegemony...[and]who should have access to America's newly discovered frontier environment" (Douglas, 1987:318).

At least since the introduction of radio broadcasting to El Salvador in 1926, poor and rural Salvadoran communities had been marginalized from the mass media and the public sphere of their country, with little access to information or spaces for expression of their interests and perspectives. They discovered the possibility of a solution in the guerrilla radios of the war years. When those radios moved to the city and no longer served the remote, isolated mountain regions where they had been located, these communities decided to seize the opportunity to create their own means of communication. Their grasp for this public space resembled the North American amateurs' experiments with fledgling radio technology in the early years of the twentieth century. The Salvadoran radios were part of a second wave of community and participatory radios all over Latin America, whose concerns for democratic processes of communication built on earlier radios dedicated more to education and facilitated social action.

The influence of American amateur radio enthusiasts

Before the 1920s, radio was primarily seen as a wireless extension to the telegraph, with messages sent from one person to another, one station to another, using

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Morse code (a system of short and long signals). Corporate interest and development was based on these uses; in fact, when AT&T negotiated with radio pioneer and inventor Lee Deforest,[9] they insisted on control of point-to-point voice transmission rights but considered his interests in apparatus for distributing news and music a frivolous hobby (Douglas, 1987:293). But amateurs experimented with voice and music transmissions, and even advertising. There were many more amateurs than professionals. Licensed individuals, including those involved with high school and college radio clubs which could broadcast up to 25 miles, rose to 10,279 in 1916, and unlicensed receivers were estimated at 150,000. At this time there were only 5,202 commercial operators and 200 shore stations (293).

After World War I, amateurs began to hook up continuous wave tubes so they could broadcast voices and music. Live and phonograph concerts, sports events, even election results were shared through these transmissions. One particularly well-known amateur, Frank Conrad, broadcast live and phonograph music in regularly scheduled concerts in the Pittsburgh area. The local newspaper reported on the concerts and a local department store advertised receiving sets. Westinghouse Vice-President Harry P. Davis saw the ad, and suddenly realized the potential of radio as "a field of wide publicity" rather than individual communication. Davis arranged for Westinghouse to pay for a larger station for Conrad and, still ignored by the press, a broadcasting boom began to sweep the U.S through word of mouth. Local businesses like department stores and large corporations like Westinghouse, General Electric and AT&T joined individuals in setting up stations (Douglas, 1987:299-300).

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[9] Guglielmo Marconi, (1874-1937) Italian electrical engineer whose experiments with "Hertizian waves" in 1894 led to his invention of practical wireless radio communications. In 1901, he successfully sent signals across the Atlantic Ocean, receiving the 1909 Nobel Prize in physics for this work. Some claim this honor belonged to Yugoslav scientist Nicola Tesla whose patents contributed to Marconi's experiments (Cheney 1983; Cossons 2004)

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In 1922 the press picked up the story. News features described the radio broadcasts ahistorically, as a sudden development, not one with 20 years of experimentation behind it. Amateur radio broadcasts were written about as, "an autonomous force, so grand, so complex, and potentially unwieldy that only large corporations with their vast resources and experience in efficiency and management could tame it" (Douglas, 1987:304). Corporate and government efforts to control the new use of the medium began immediately. All broadcasters had to be licensed by the federal government, but amateurs were restricted to lower frequency, lower power transmissions. In 1912, the government had assigned the preferred part of the spectrum to military and commercial wireless companies. In 1923 it allowed high power stations, which could reach a broader geographic area, to be owned by major corporations while low-power stations were relegated to universities, churches and labor unions, who had to time-share a single frequency, effectively marginalizing them (316).

The values and priorities for the new medium--what was it for--were debated both through the use of the medium and through the press. "Amateurs revealed that many middle-class Americans were hungering for a sense of what people in different cities or states were like, what they thought and how they lived," and they wanted this information directly, to hear the voices and ideas of people from different places (Douglas, 1987:301). But the press emphasized the medium's ability to bring American culture to everyone, to promote cultural unity. Radio had the potential, the press proposed, to advance ideals of democracy and equality--bringing politicians' voices and promises directly to the people, reaching isolated farmers, the sick and homebound with information and culture, providing "first-row seats" at cultural events to the poor and the rich. These ideas soon elided for many reformers into the more class-bound goals of counter-acting the "debasing effects" of mass culture, that radio must be in the hands of

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responsible people who could provide edifying programs that appealed to the intellect, not to the emotions, and not manipulate or overly stimulate the listeners (304-313).

Even though a consensus had been reached among decision makers by this point that the airwaves--still referred to as the "ether"--was a public resource, the issue was who should be the custodians of that resource. The public itself, the amateurs, were considered too anarchic; the military inappropriate for such a civilian responsibility in peacetime; the government itself--perhaps that could be seen as communist? In the U.S. model of radio broadcasting, rather than opt for state caretaking of this public resource as much of Europe did, the corporations won this round of the debate, "presenting themselves as acting out of benevolent, farsighted paternalism" (Douglas, 1987:317). Corporate power, promoted and protected by the state, was allowed to co-opt the amateur vision about how radio could be used, and instead "to promote cultural homogeneity, to mute or screen out cultural diversity and idiosyncrasy, and to advance values consonant with consumer capitalism" (320).

The earliest years of radio in El Salvador resembled those of Europe more than the United States. Radio broadcasting remained tightly under government control. Aside from the sons of a few wealthy families, there was little of the wave of amateur radio that so shaped early U.S. radio, and commercial stations were only slowly permitted to appear. The first phone was installed by industrialist Mauricio Duke in 1882, and the President inaugurated the lines. By 1906 there were a number of phone and telegraph lines; by 1926, there were telegraph offices in most cities and towns and in mayor's offices in those smaller municipalities without them. With 254 telegraph offices and over 3,400 phone lines, El Salvador had a higher density of telephone service than Mexico and fell in the mid-range of Latin America measured as a percent of the population (Contreras 1984:1-2).

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Mexican, not U.S., technicians brought wireless radio equipment to the San Jacinto neighborhood of San Salvador in 1917; the station was inaugurated by the Salvadoran President Carlos Meléndez and named after Mexican President Venustiano Carranza (Contreras 1984:3). The Salvadoran government resisted U.S. plans to control Central American broadcasting towards the end of World War I, ostensibly because the U.S. was concerned about possible German influence, recommending concessions to U.S. corporations as a solution (4-9). The Carranza station remained under the control of the Interior Ministry's *Dirección General de Telégrafos y Teléfonos*. After hearing music broadcasts in the U.S. (most likely from amateurs) Salvadoran technicians built a radio capable of voice and music transmission from equipment they bought from Western Electric Company. Mounting the antenna on the roof of the National Theater, their first broadcasts took place on March 1, 1926, inaugurated by the President and other dignitaries, with the national anthem interpreted by the "Supreme Powers" band as well as a *marimba* band (14). Much of the programming time was filled with concerts of classical music, with segments presenting aspects of Salvadoran culture and the accomplishments of the government (16). Some news, scientific conferences, and children's programming were also broadcast. Live concerts were carried by stretching a wire to the nearby Bolivar park until some government officials' jokes were caught on the open mike and the President suspended the transmissions (19). (The first call letters--AQM, the President's initials, were changed to YSS and its title to Cuscatlecan Soul in 1936). At this point there were only 89 radio receivers in the country, but the number gradually increased.

The first commercial station license wasn't granted until 1935; the owner of YSP, "The Voice of Cuscatlán," was a loyal supporter and associate of General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez (who came to power in a coup in 1931). The studio was located in

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the National Police Headquarters. The station featured news programming from the newspaper *Diario Latino*; literary programs including one featuring poetry; classical music, sports, and the "*Reporter Esso*" with scripts sent by the U.S.-based oil giant. Sponsors included Pilsner Beer, produced by the large *La Constancia* factory in San Salvador (Contreras 1984:20-23). When the dictatorship of General Martínez fell in 1944, YSP lost much of its audience in the increasingly competitive market since it was associated so closely with the former regime (29). By the 1940s, there were a handful of other stations; they collaborated to form a network for wartime news including slogans supporting the Allied forces and interviews with U.S. Marines (23).

Regulation governing radio broadcasting was completed in 1942. It continued the tight government control of radio broadcasting. The regulations required that licenses would only be granted to Salvadorans by birth, for five year periods, and it divided license holders into commercial, government and cultural stations.[10] Commercial stations could use advertising to support broadcasts of "conferences, concerts, or various services of the general interest" suggesting the limited view of radio programming to that point, while cultural broadcasters must be established for non-profit cultural ends without any kind of commercials, suggesting sponsorship by larger cultural institutions like churches. The regulatory agency, later called ANTEL (Administración Nacional de Telecomunicaciones), under the Ministry of the Interior, was given the power to assign frequencies, call letters, locations and broadcast power of stations. Any stations deviating from these decisions would be considered "clandestine." On-air personnel had to speak in Spanish without errors threatening the "purity" of the language, had to be Salvadoran by birth and approved by the Ministry of Interior through a battery of examinations. This regulation was in force with some amendments until 1984 (Contreras 1984:28-9) (and

[10] The new regulations were extensive; the *Reglamento para el Establecimiento y Operación de Estaciones Radiodifusoras* had seven chapters and 75 articles.

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amended again in 1997; see chapter 4).

The end of the Martinez dictatorship in 1944, and the coup overturning General Castañeda Castro in 1948 was followed by a series of reformist governments. The state loosened its grip on the population and began to invest in major infrastructure projects to benefit a more diversified commercial agriculture and industrial economy. Higher prices for coffee, increased exports of cotton and sugar, more government revenue from import and export taxes, and the state's move to a import-substitution economic policy allowed Salvadoran industries to began to produce a wide range of consumer goods--food, drinks, clothing, shoes, medicines--and import cars and other capital and luxury items. All this led to an economic boom for many sectors of society, though not for *campesinos* pushed off their land by growing agribusinesses. They flooded the cities looking for work and housing. To increase urban demand and support the development of an urban commercial sector required advertising to create consumers out of the growing Salvadoran working class, and increase middle class consumption as well (Contreras 1984:37-39).

Radio was the perfect medium for this; thus began the Golden Era of Salvadoran radio. This was the era of the Salvadoran radio-serials when more programs were produced by Salvadorans or foreigners based in El Salvador than any other time. Top writers and other artists, on-air personnel, dramatic ensembles, musical groups and technicians worked in radio for high salaries. Owners made good profits and invested in new equipment to improve production quality and to reach the entire country (Contreras 1984:37). Some serials had been produced earlier in the 1940s, and after 1960, but the period between 1948 to 1960 was the zenith.

One influential station was YSU, *Radio Mil Cincuenta*, whose owner Raúl Trabinino convinced major industries ("big capital") to invest to allow him to build new

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studios with up-to-date equipment. He created an in-house radio theater ensemble who scripted and produced a wide range of serials over the next decade. Trabinino also brought in scripts, producers and artists from Cuba's high quality radio industry. Radio 1050 produced serials like "The Ghost of Canterville" based on Oscar Wilde's stories, "The Women's Jail" and "The Secret of Solterona" by visiting Cuban producers, "Completely a Man" (*Todo Un Hombre*) adapted from the Spanish classic by Miguel de Unamuno, and "The Secrets of *Partideño*"[11] billed as the "first all Salvadoran production." This drama told the tale of a Robin Hood-like character in late colonial era who stole the Spanish officials' gold to give to a widow threatened by eviction, and to a *campesino* whose land is envied by greedy *hacienda*-owner. Several directors were women, notably Margarita de Nieva, credited on several productions. Live and recorded music, children's stories and contests, sports including the Central American Football Championships and competitions at local patron-saint festivals were also produced for the station (Contreras 1984:40-52). A variety program host, Don Tito, later moved successfully to television (55).

Two enduring comic characters of Salvadoran radio made their first appearance at this station. "Chico Tren" (played by Eugenio Acosta Rodríguez) and Nana Yaca (played by Roberto Arturo Menéndez) became favorites for Salvadoran audiences in a program called "My Uncle, the Mayor" where Nana Yaca was the "secretary of the secretary who made secrets with the personal secretary of the mayor of San Blas" [12] a role full of the double meanings that animate Salvadoran humor. After the Minister of the Interior shut the program down for immorality, the characters reappeared, one as the fiancé of the Presidential Candidate for the "Independent Party of Revolutionary

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[11] Translates to something like the partisan

[12] *el secretario del secretario que se secretiaba con el secretario particular del alcalde de San Blas*

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Oxidation"--at a time when the Salvadoran's President's party was called the Party of Revolutionary Unification (Contreras 1984:53).

Sponsors of YSU programs came from the range of Salvadoran and imported consumer products: Seagrams' liquors, Victoria bread, Mejoral aspirin, TACA airlines, "Snow" margerine, Chevrolet and Buick car dealers, "The Favorite" soaps, and the Ilopania distillery (Contreras 1984:40-44).

Another influential station of the Golden Era was YSEB, the *Voice of Latin America*, created in 1951 by a corporation formed by the investments of several elite Salvadoran families. Its head, Boris Eserski had a close association with Mexican media empire-builder Emilio Azcárrago. In addition to radio dramas, the station produced Easter Week and Christmas specials, a program about the legends and myths of El Salvador, quiz shows and music programs, comic programs and sports shows, but its main distinction was that it imported a number of serials from Mexico (Contreras 1984:56-58). The *Voice of the Tropics*, YSDF, built an auditorium for three hundred people to hold audiences for its productions. It boasted its own orchestra and live shows broadcast every night--dramas, comic shows, quiz shows. The theater was so full that several times audiences broke windows trying to get in (59-60)!

The Golden Era ended in the early 1960s, as the economic boom ended, and radio owners sought to economize. YSEB's Boris Eserski provided the model with his use of imported material from Mexico. Television entered El Salvador during these years, draining audiences (at least those who were potential consumers) looking for entertainment away from radio. As YSEB moved toward bankruptcy, Eserski and Trabinino, owner of YSU, formed *Circuito YSR*. This new station used a high proportion of imported, recorded programming, especially music, and intensive promotional techniques. With production staffs and costs slashed and on-air talent needed only a few

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hours a day, radio became a highly profitable business (Contreras 1984:61,67). Trabanino died in 1962; Eserski became El Salvador's media giant, owning or controlling radio stations and the three major television stations by the 1980s.

Cultural programming up to this point had been limited to classical concert and bands, including distinctive *marimba* bands typically to Central American celebrations. One wonders who the audiences for the dramatic and comic serials of the 1940s and 1950s were: who had radios then? when and where and how did they listen to them? Were they mostly urban, middle-class families or the urban working class, living in *mesones*, perhaps all crowded around a single radio? What about the countryside, in the villages and *ranchos*? Were the scripts written to reflect the new experiences in the city of recent immigrants, or their nostalgia for the countryside? The move to imported music brought several genres of pop culture to Salvadoran audiences; how did that change listening habits and cultural identifications?

News and educational programs

Salvadoran radio stations produced some news and educational programming prior to the 1960s, mostly with Salvadoran daily newspapers or foreign services like the British Broadcasting service or the *Voice of America* as sources. But even as Salvadoran radio journalism grew in the 1970s, news became an increasingly risky business with a government decidedly uncomfortable with exchanges of information and debate which are the base of a democracy. Time after time, news programming was censored or suspended.

In the 1960s and 1970s, news stations like *Radio KL, Sonora* and YSU began to use telephoned reports to keep on top of breaking events like earthquakes or for reports by networks of correspondents stationed in cities spread across the country. Wire

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services including the *Voice of America* and the new *Central American News Service* (SERCANO) enriched international coverage. Repeater towers allowed the stations to reach the whole country and beyond. *Radio KL* (YSKL), founded in 1956, arguably became the most prominent news station. " La ka el-le" had three daily news programs and updates every half hour. In one reporting coup, they broadcast the mutiny of Coronel Sigfrido Ochoa in 1983 live by telephone from Sensuntepeque. They also broadcast sports from all over El Salvador as well as comic programs (Contreras 1984:109).

Government censorship and suspensions affected many stations over the years, and advertisers and others followed their lead. Charges in 1961 that *Radio Reloj* was "communist" or "subversive" led to an advertising boycott and forced the station to be sold (Contreras 1984:64). In 1968, when *Radio Popular* covered the huge teachers strike with in-depth interviews of the striking teachers, its telephone lines were cut and its signal made undecipherable with interference. Later its technicians and anchors were kidnapped and the studio set on fire (71-2). Even KL's radio's coverage of the teachers' strike offended the Salvadoran president, but public pressure forced the government to relent and KL news went back on the air after five months (76).

Probably the station which most influenced the country in the years leading to the war was YSAX, the station operated by the San Salvador archdiocese. "The Panamerican Voice" *(La Voz Panamericana)* was bought by the diocese in 1960. Initially broadcasting literacy programs modeled on Colombia's *Radio Sutatenza* (see below) it soon added a regular news program with national and international news, as well as reports about church issues. By the 1970s, the National Workers Federation's program (*Federación Nacional de Sindicatos de Trabajadores Salvadoreños,* or FENESTRAS) was denouncing the effects of government repression on workers: arrests,

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disappearances, firings, assassinations, while the Mothers and Families of the Disappeared (*Comité de Familiares y de Madres de Desaparecidos*, MADRE) spoke out on their program, Walk towards Peace (*Camino hacia la paz*) (Contreras 1984:107).

As the rift in Salvadoran society increased and repression began to take the lives of lay and religious Salvadorans in the late 1970s, threats suspended YSAX's programming several times. But its live broadcasts of weekly homilies by Archbishop Oscar Romero from the mass at the National Cathedral in San Salvador heartened and inspired its listeners, while increasingly angering and unnerving the Salvadoran government and right wing death squads. Its staff was threatened and its transmitter bombed; Monsignor Romero was assassinated in 1980 (Contreras 1984:79-82).

The war years disrupted the radios and saw the rise of the guerrilla radios. There were many brief takeovers of commercial stations where spokespersons of the mass organizations of the Left attempted to get their points of view to the public (Contreras 1984:141). There were several guerrilla radio experiments before their stations endured, such as the broadcast in January 21, 1980 during a large demonstration of the mass organizations of the FDR (*Frente Democrático Revolucionario*) in the Parque Cuscatlán in the center of San Salvador, or the FMLN broadcast on December 15, 1980, mostly picked up by foreign news agencies. On January 7, 1981, *Radio Liberación* was heard for the first time, coordinated with the guerrilla offensive and general strike which began on the tenth of the month. Carrying messages from Salvador Cayetano Carpio, Guillermo Manuel Ungo and other members of the FMLN and FDR and information on the progress of battles, its short broadcasts continued for a little less than a month. Meanwhile, the government led by junta president José Napoleón Duarte ordered all the commercial broadcasters to join an emergency government network to give its side of the story. Both sides stayed on the air all night on January thirteenth in a kind of

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psychological warfare, one calling for a general strike and congratulating the officers and officials who had moved to support the guerrillas; the other calling for a regular work day (118-119). After the government network was suspended several months later, the commercial radios were not permitted to return to their regular news broadcasts. Instead, foreign news sources and the government stations which still operated during this period had to fill the gap until the Peace Accords were signed.

Radio Venceremos began broadcasting on January 10, 1981 from Morazán; *Radio Farabundo Martí* emerged Jan 22, 1982 (the fiftieth anniversary of the peasant uprising) from Chalatenango; and *Radio Guazapa* could be heard in 1983 from the Guazapa volcano. All broadcast on both FM and shortwave, at somewhat varying frequencies and reach. *Radio Venceremos* announcers, Santiago and Mariposa featured news, commentary, and propaganda from the organizations of the left joined together as the FMLN. Radio Farabundo Martí's network of correspondents reported from the various "fronts" of the war using radio transmitters with details of the combat and activities of the FMLN. *Radio Guazapa* transmitted occasionally from the mountain the the same name, 30 miles northeast of San Salvador, and *Radio Unity* transmit a few times from Usulután.

Foreign correspondents relied on the guerrilla radios to provide the perspectives and positions of the guerrillas. The army replied by attempting to capture the stations; they succeeded in the case of *Radio Guazapa* in October 1982 when they arrested Antonio Vásquez Rodríguez and seized radio equipment; they had also captured the equipment but not the personnel of *Radio Venceremos* that September (Contreras 1984:120-135). But *Radio Venceremos* and *Farabundo Martí* survived the war and continued to struggle in peacetime (see next section of this chapter).

The right also turned to clandestine broadcasting during the war. Using the same

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frequencies as the guerrilla radios, Radio National Sovereignty *(Radio Soberanía Nacional)* attempted to counter their messages. On September 21, 1983 a speaker exhorted listeners to recognize "the love of generations past for their independent country, their dignified leaders, human liberty and the rights of man..." He asked God to "illuminate" the minds of prominent leftist intellectuals Ignacio Ellacuría, Martín-Baró, Segundo Montes and Nicolas Mariscal and accused them of being international agents aiding Russian imperialism; they were later assassinated in a 1989 military operation (Contreras 1984:136-9).

During the 1980s locally based stations tended to have more varied programming. *Radio Minuto* YSGH broadcast music and social service messages, calls from people who needed to send some type of message to places where there is no access to communication (Contreras 1984:113). Another station in Santa Ana ran a discussion format program called Round Table featuring debates and discussions with major political and intellectuals (112).

By the mid 1990s, Salvadoran radio followed an overwhelmingly commercial model; even government stations competed for advertising. The outright censorship which had intensified during the war but had always remained a threat had all but disappeared. But the great creativity of the Golden Era was long past; the Salvadorans targeted by advertisers had other sources of entertainment like TV, and listeners could be attracted to radio with cheaper, imported music programming. The model introduced by radio entrepreneur Eserski endured. While direct censorship ended with the Peace Accords, the range of musical genres, information and educational or cultural programming remained limited for a number of reasons.

During 1997-98 there were 164 AM and FM radio stations in El Salvador (Ministry of Interior 1994); the number had ballooned from 51 stations in 1980 and 52 in

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1992 (Baron Romero et al. 1981:30; Suarez S. 1992:20). At the end of the war, both established media empires and entrepreneurs sought to take advantage of what was expected to be a lucrative source of profits as the commercial economy took off and official censorship was eased. Just under half of these stations were based in or near the capital, San Salvador, the biggest market, though significant numbers were also located in the next largest urban areas, around Santa Ana and San Miguel. Of 94 FM stations in 1997, 32 had national scope compared to only six in 1980, as more powerful antennas and repeater towers allowed them to reach listeners across the northern mountain range that stretched across El Salvador from east to west. The vast majority of the stations--87 percent in 1993--were privately owned, with about ten percent owned by institutions like churches and two controlled by the state and armed forces (Súarez S. 1992:20; Alfaro Ramos et al. 1993:10).

A snapshot of the top twenty FM radio stations for the capital, San Salvador, in 1997 gives a good sense of the radio universe (see Table 1-2). All except one of these stations were based in the capital and all except two broadcast nationally with the help of repeater towers. Twelve out of the twenty were part of broadcasting networks or ownership groups. Seven played youth-oriented music; three highlighted tropical genres like *salsa* and *merengue*; three provided varied music including "adult contemporary" and only two played mostly country music, either the traditional *ranchera* and trios or the more commercial pop "*grupera*" bands. Five noted specifically that they played music in English. Three of the top twenty stations were religious broadcasters--two conservative Catholic broadcasters and one an evangelical Baptist station. One was the ubiquitous *Radio KL,* with news, sports and humor, owned by one of the more powerful media empires. The smaller local stations tended to follow the lead of the major metropolitan ones, often providing a mix of the different genres offered.

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Table 1-2: Top 20 Radio Stations in San Salvador, 1997

Station name *Owner/founder*	*Freq.*	*Call letters*	*KW*	*City*	*Programming*
Que Buena *Circuito YSR S.A. de C.V. (Eserski)*	88.9	YSRA	3.0	San Salvador	*Grupera*
Mi Preferida/Radio Vox *Circuito YSR S.A. de C.V. (Eserski)*	94.5	YSEC	5.0	San Salvador	Youth-oriented
Estereo Astral *Grupo Samix*	94.9	YSAS	.5	San Salvador	Youth-oriented, adult contemporary; English 30%, Spanish 70%
Doble "L"	95.3	YSEL	3.0	San Salvador	Current hits (*Música del momento*), youth-oriented
Radio Stereo Scan *Radio Corporación FM*	96.1	YSEF	5.0	San Salvador	*Salsa* and *merengue*
Stereo Luz *Sociedad Agape*	97.7	YSRL	1.0	San Salvador	Religious, motivational messages
Radio Restauración	98.1	YSQB		Santa Ana, Ahuachapan.	Religious
La Musiquera *Montes Mazariego*	99.3	YSEW	5.0	San Salvador	Current hits, sports
Radio Guapachosa *Grupo Samix*	99.7	YSFR	1.0	San Salvador	Tropical, *cumbia, salsa, merengue*
Radio Stereo Juvenil/ ABC *Rovira Canales*	100.1	YSAB	5.0	San Salvador	Youth-oriented, English and Spanish
Radio La Chevere/ Stereo *Grupo Samix/Durán de Parada*	100.9	YSKW	5.0	San Salvador	Current hits of all types
Radio La Monumental *Flores Barrera/ YSKL*	101.3	YSLN	1.0	San Salvador	Adult Contemporary in Spanish
Radio Cadena Mil Ochenta *Radio Visión*	101.7	YSED	5.0	San Salvador	Youth-oriented, English and Spanish
Radio Feminina *Monterrosa*	102.5	YSRF	5.0	San Salvador	Youth-oriented, English and Spanish
Radio Cadena YSKL/ *Flores Barrera*	104.1	YSKL	5.0	San Salvador	Sports, news, humor 96.5?
Stereo 105 Salsa Gigante	105.3	YSOA	1.0	Antiguo Cuscatlan	Salsa, merengue, varied music, sports
Stereo YXY *Radio Corporación FM*	105.7	YSEX	5.0	San Salvador	Youth-oriented, English and Spanish
Radio Bautista *Worldvision*	106.1	YSMB	1.0	San Salvador	Religious
Radio Ranchera/ Cadena de *Monterrosa*	106.5	YSAR	5.0	San Salvador	*Ranchera,* trios

Sources: Multivex, S.A. 1997; Ministry of Interior 1994; unknown 1996 ("Tarifario de Radio") C. Avilés/ ASDER, 1997; World Radio TV Handbook 2004.

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A 1980 content analysis of three major stations found an overall balance of 35-45 percent music, 20-30 percent information and 20-40 percent ads in radio programming (Baron Romero et al. 1981: appendix 10). The authors estimated that 30 percent of the music on the youth-oriented station they studied was in English, and only 8 percent came from Central America, including El Salvador (39). This was echoed in television programming, where of the three major stations, nearly 90 percent was imported (appendix 10).

Critics often refer to great concentration of ownership of the media in El Salvador: the three largest TV stations, on channels 2,4 and 6 are held directly or indirectly by corporations controlled by businessman Boris Eserski; the major newspapers have been controlled by the same families for decades. Radio ownership appears more broadly distributed. In 1993, just before the large expansion in numbers, 16 concerns owned 49 radios stations. By 1997, based on the materials I could assemble from public records about joint ownership and advertising package deals, it appeared that 48 of 94 FM stations were operating as related business ventures controlled by 18 persons, institutions or corporations. This, however, does not consider cross ownership of other media, especially advertising, or the cumulative reach of entrenched business families (see Table 1-2).

What about censorship? A 1992 report by the International Federation of Journalists on the challenges to Salvadoran journalists in the transition to peace noted that during the war, the government and armed forces maintained many obstacles to journalism, but in post-war period, "perhaps economic power is the new censor" (Suárez S. 1992:28). The report warned that two threats, a highly competitive and weak ad market and autocensorship by journalists too often combined. If journalists attacked the powerful family monopolies controlling the Salvadoran economy, they wouldn't have to

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wait for the ads to be pulled, the report warned (29). This is reportedly what happened to *Primera Plana*, a post-war news daily which closed in 1998.

The inspiration for community-based media

Salvadoran community radios were inspired not only by the guerrilla radios during the war and the lack of communication options for the populations and positions they served. They were also encouraged by the broad experience of community radios across Latin America which emerged in similar media environments.

In most countries of Latin America, radio developed as a primarily commercial medium during the 1930s and 1940s. As in El Salvador after World War II, it provided advertising space for growing industries and information and entertainment for burgeoning urban populations (Fox 1988:13). Governments retained strong influence over broadcasting either through censorship, as in Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela, or because "commercial broadcasting and the government were by and large in the same hands or shared the same economic and political interests" as in Mexico or El Salvador (14). El Salvador's 1942 broadcasting law was more nationalistic than most; generally there were no protections against foreign ownership so U.S. networks ABC, CBS and NBC set up chains of affiliates or bought their own stations (13,17). By the 1960s, U.S. influence moved to content rather than infrastructure: ads for U.S. products and companies, placed by U.S. ad agencies were the top advertisers in radio and TV; U.S.-based wire services the Associated Press and United Press International provided 60-83 percent of international news (Fox 1988:19, based on research by CIESPAL 1967; Kaplún 1973; Varis 1973).

Media reform movements culminating in the New World Information Order projects of the 1970s and 1980s critiqued this state of affairs. "Tendencies toward

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oligopolistic and interlocking media ownership, biased distribution of access to messages for privileged urban minorities and the predominance of trivial, alienating and violent content; ... foster[ed] of consumerism, racism and conservatism....[and] indifference to development goals and tasks" (Beltrán and Fox 1988:2). They sought to redress these imbalances through increasing the state's role in regulation, publishing and broadcasting, and establishing national councils to stimulate and subsidize cultural activities. But at the same time, some of those excluded from representation or expression in the mass media turned to creating their own media, whether community radio or newspapers, local video or popular theater, neighborhood murals and graffiti, revitalized folk song and music traditions, and more graphically symbolic forms like the white head scarves of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina (Fox 1988:26-7). Blossoming during the dictatorships which so many countries suffered in the 1970s and 1980s, and continuing in different forms afterward, these efforts went beyond the sometimes oversimplified mass media critiques to attempt to bring more democratic forms of communication directly to those lacking them.

Community radio in Latin America had its roots in popular education and democratizing movements. The earliest experiments in the 1940s and 1950s were in Colombia and Bolivia. In Sutatenza, Colombia, lay educator Joaquin Salcedo's experiments in using low-power transmitters to reach isolated peasants with religious messages and literacy programs bloomed into an internationally financed program in informal education, called Cultural Popular Action (*Acción Cultural Popular*) running eight radio stations and two leadership institutes. The heart of the effort were radio programs on literacy, health and agricultural techniques which people listened to in groups, and then discussed with a trained facilitator equipped with complementary materials and exercises.

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In Bolivia, after the 1952 nationalist revolution the Miners' Union established more than 20 small radio stations in remote mountain regions. Financed with voluntary contributions, they provided a space to convoke meetings and to speak out on issues that affected them. The radios commonly brought "open microphones" to schools, markets, churches, bars and sports fields to give people a chance to speak out. When the Bolivian government shut down most of the mines as part of a move towards privatization in the 1980s, the radios, too, were shuttered, but the model had been influential throughout Latin America and beyond.[13]

By the 1960s, the Catholic church was inspired by the teachings of Pope John XXIII through the Vatican II and Medillín reforms; they built on the model of the Sutatenza to create hundreds of radio schools throughout Latin America, including many in Guatemala. In Brazil, Paulo Freire integrated the approach into a more comprehensive model for popular education; in many countries, indigenous languages like Aymara and Quechua were for the first time the primary languages of mass media (Beltrán 1995).

By the early 1990s, many of the community radios created as educational projects were being criticized by a new wave of communication activists. They claimed that these models were not democratic enough and didn't envison their audiences as full human beings. They were mediocre, tended toward popular action, not dialog, with too much improvisation and not enough skill; they treated people as if they had " ... only reason and not dreams and feelings. The likes and interests of their audiences were not attended to" (Galarza 1993:20). Urban as well as rural communities needed radios, and they needed to learn from their commercial competition and combine entertainment with information and education, many radio activists charged.

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[13] Recognizing the effectiveness of the medium, the Catholic radio Emisoras Pio XII was initially set up to compete with the Bolivian miners' own stations in order to fight what was seen as communism (Nash 1979:108-110).

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The 1990s saw an explosion in community radios not only in Latin America but around the world, especially in Africa and Asia (Roncagliolo 1999). By the late 1990s there were an estimated 2000 community radio stations in Latin America, perhaps more than ten percent of the total number of stations (Roncagliolo 1999; Beltrán 1995). These stations were more diverse; they included many more youth-oriented stations and programs that reached out to urban, disaffected youth, like *La Tribú* in Argentina. Women increasingly played a central role in many stations, the radio movement finally recognizing their needs for expression.

But the increasing concentration of commercial media and their continued influence on government policies has led to sharp legal challenges all over the continent. There have been some successes, for example, in Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina and Paraguay. But in Chile, 1994 legislation limited community transmitters to one watt (about a kilometer's range). In Peru, a law prohibited stations from accepting any kind of advertising, which is the main form of income for radio operating for economically devastated communities. In Brazil, efforts to legalize the 500 -plus "free radios" were stymied time after time by the commercial radio association (Rondón de Castro 1993). In Uruguay, the Defense Ministry still insists on reviewing all licenses (Rocagliolo 1999). El Salvador is not alone in its battle to open space on the airwaves for democratic expression.

The Guerrilla Radios: Radio Venceremos and Radio Farabundo Martí

During the war, *Radio Venceremos,* based in Morazán, and *Radio Farabundo Martí,* based in Chalatenango, reached thousands of listeners who listened for news of the war, dramas barbed with social commentary, music, and arguments for the support of the opposition's war effort. The appearance of the broadcasts every evening at 6

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o'clock was proof that the *compas* (short for *compañeros,* the guerrillas) were still fighting, that the movement had not been defeated. These radios broadcast under incredible conditions, from trenches and tunnels and caves, hanging their transmitters high up in the trees and during one period hooking it to a whole network of barbed wire fences so U.S.-supplied radio detection equipment could not pinpoint their location (López Vigil 1994:174).

People depended on their broadcasts for a broader range of information about the progress of the war, and especially for people in zones of conflict, to find out about army operations nearby. From the beginning of the war, news about the war on the handful of commercial and government-owned stations was heavily censored, limiting its scope to the political perspective of the government; news was even barred for a time from the commercial stations. Even before the war broke out, it was clear that broadcasting more balanced information would be nearly impossible. From the 1970s, journalists were targeted for harassment or death; left-wing papers were bombed; even the small station that Catholic Archbishop Romero set up for literacy programs, masses and sermons, was blown up twice after it began to list those missing or killed in demonstrations, arrests or disappearances. Foreign journalists, aid workers, embassy officials, even mainstream Salvadoran press came to rely on the two guerrilla radios as a source (López Vigil 1994:3, 177, 225; *Radio Farabundo Martí*, staff interview with author 1995)

In some ways, Archbishop Romero's radio was the precursor of the guerrilla stations, as well the post-war community stations. The broadcasts of Romero's sermons were extremely influential. People of all classes listened to them, "What affection and admiration that man evoked; you could listen to his sermon as you walked down the street, hearing it through the windows of every house, as if it were the only station in San

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Salvador!" (López Vigil:8, quoting a *Radio Venceremos* staff member). When the station began listing the names of the disappeared and whatever information could be found about them, military leaders were incensed.[14]

The purpose of both guerrilla stations was the same: to provide information about the war effort and to motivate support for the FMLN, that "the struggle *vale the pena*" (is worth the effort) according to a former *Radio Farabundo Martí* staffer (staff *Radio Farabundo Martí*, interview with author, January 1995). Escalona, a former *locutor* or voice of the radio beginning in 1985, told me that the broadcasts had several functions, combining propaganda, information or news, and agitation. It was a guerrilla radio, alternative in the sense that it provided the "other side of the coin" or the other perspective, compared to the government-controlled commercial media. But since each radio was controlled by a different wing of the FMLN's five-member coalition, there wasn't a complete lack of debate; there wasn't always "unity in thought" even if there was "unity in action," she explained (María Teresa Escalona de Zepada, interview with author,, February 2, 1998). An avid listener, now a school teacher, described their purpose this way: 1) to denounce the human rights abuses of the government and army; 2) to inform people what the commercial, government supported press wouldn't, for example about the battles and casualties of the war; 3) to provide "orientation," a combination of analysis, consciousness-raising, and political propaganda.

For *Radio Venceremos*, the main audience was the guerrilla army itself, especially after 1985 when FMLN tactics changed to a dispersed cell structure. In this period, the guerrilla armies were broken up into units of five to six people, and the idea was that each would be not only a fighter but an organizer, able to discuss and debate the

[14] After the war, the Archdiocese reopened the station and turned its efforts to literacy education, but by the mid-1990s, the Diocese apparently believed that this effort was no longer needed and closed the station.

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issues with each person they came in contact with. The radios were seen as essential tools for this process, providing information and analysis, " 'The first priority is radios!' the commanders declared. 'Every guerrilla unit needs a radio receiver right away, no matter what the cost' " (López Vigil 1994:141). At the same time the station boasted that it sought the whole gamut of potential listeners: guerrillas, civilians, soldiers, the bishop and the U.S. ambassador, and invited them all to speak on the radio" (177). By the 1989 offensive, the radios were reaching into San Salvador itself, where you could hear the station even in the huge "Metrocentro" mall. When the main *locutor* (on-air voice), "Santiago would report that we took over such and such a place, ... a couple of minutes later the [government radio] Cuscatlán commentator would furiously deny it" (225).

Origins

For a short period of time beginning in 1979, the two largest FMLN factions collaborated on *Radio Liberación*, a short-wave transmission out of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, but they soon separated. The Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP) contacted Carlos Enrique Consalvi, a Venezuelan journalist working in Nicaragua, and he smuggled a small "Viking" ship's transmitter into the mountains of Morazán on Christmas Eve of 1980. Their station, *Radio Venceremos*, began transmitting on January 10th, 1980. The Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL) dismantled a donated generator and transmitter and brought it in pieces through airport security, first through San Salvador and then up into the mountains of Chalatenango. *Radio Farabundo Martí* (also initially on short-wave) began on January 21st 1981 (Escalona, interview 1998).

There were long periods, especially in the early years of the war, when the radios were able to stay in one place for several months at a time. López Vigil described a cave that housed *Radio Venceremos* in 1982:

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> "As soon as you got inside a disgusting mess of bats would start to fly about, so many of them and so annoying that one of them baptised the hideout, "The Bat Cave." ...We leveled the floor and even put down bricks. ... Inside, everything was in its place. We set up one little table with the mixer, the recorders and a pile of cassettes, another table held the two microphones for the announcers, and at the back was a third where we set up the transmitter, our Viking II" (López Vigil 1994:93).
>
> Later they had to be more mobile, especially when they were directly pursued: "Quick, take everything apart. Quick, they're coming. [Salvadoran Army Coronel] Monterrosa faked a retreat, only to turn around and march on us. We packed everything in seconds. We were trained to pack the equipment in plastic bags--this was winter, the rainy season--stick them in backpacks, take down the aerial, burn papers, don't leave a trace, and start marching" (121).

Neither radio relied on dispatches, after the fact, to cover the war's events; they often covered it right from the front lines. López Vigil describes this in vivid detail: how Santiago or other staff would take a cassette recorder into battle and record reports with the bombs and bullets crashing in around them. " 'At this very moment our guerrilla forces are advancing on the enemy's left flank. We can see several soldiers jumping from their trench. They're firing wildly' " (88). The tapes were carried to the station by couriers, often children, who raced through the battles to get the tape to the station by the 6 pm broadcasts. "At six o'clock, rain, thunder or mortar-fire, the show had to go on. At six o'clock, Santiago had his mouth ready, Marvel had his report written, Apolonio had the equipment working, Walker had the whole security squad on alert" (38).

Radio Farabundo Martí developed a network of correspondents around the country who reported on conditions and battles in their region - except for San Salvador

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which was too dangerous most of the time. They spoke with communication radios, basically souped-up walkie talkies (Escalona, interview 1998). Commercial media were also sources of news for both *Radio Venceremos* and *Radio Farabundo Martí. Radio Farabundo Martí*'s four staff members monitored the KL, the YSU, the *Cadena de Oro*, the main national TV (some channels transmit their audio on radio frequencies) and the two newspapers of San Salvador when they could get it. Escalona recalled, "we monitored at night and in the morning and at nine in the morning, almost always we had a meeting of "*pauta*" (to plan the program)....Here we shared "*como mandaban las cosas,*" (what was the situation), we did a political analysis, and then we structured the program... one part of which carried the position of the Frente." (Escalona, interview , 1998)

While the broadcasts generally lasted 30 minutes, they depended on the "stability" of the situation--whether there was fighting nearby--and the availability of gasoline or batteries. Supporters had to smuggle these into the area. "Little by little, we built up a network of young men who buy a bucketful in Osicala, peasants who carry a litre in their shoulder bag, drivers who store a few gallons in a house in the town of Sociedad" (López Vigil 1994:209). This was of course, immensely dangerous.

Many of the guerrilla army's communications radio operators were young women (several post-war radio staff got their first training here), and some of the broadcast radio staff were women, too, though few have been acknowledged or celebrated in the post-war period.[15] María Teresa recalled that since the place where the radio staff lived and worked was always separate from the transmission, someone had go through the forest or scrub to turn the transmission equipment on--and despite the otherwise macho attitude of Salvadoran men, this chore always seemed to fall on her (Escalona, interview

[15] During this fieldwork, Escalona mentioned that she was seeking a publisher for her memoir of this period.

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, 1998).

Radio Farabundo Martí's mule was famous. When they had to escape the army's bombings, they'd load the equipment onto him. The mule would know when to hide under a tree or in a *quebrada* (ravine) and when to run--without someone directing him. He saved the radio many times. In San José de las Flores there's a monument to the "educated" mule of *Radio Farabundo Martí* (Escalona, interview 1998).

Much of both radios' programming was directly related to the war, though this changed during its ten years of operation. They would denounce bombings of civilian populations and the disappearances that the army and paramilitary groups committed, especially in the conflict zones. When FMLN tactics changed from larger military confrontations in the beginning of the war to small acts of sabotage and harassment, the radio changed its reporting as well. One staff member recalls, "Before we used to brag about huge victories: sixty casualties, so many mortars recovered, so many rifles, so many rifle cartridges! Now it was just one little electrical pole. An electrical pole dynamited, and a greeting to the unit there at kilometre 44 who carried out that great little attack. Whatever the combatants did, no matter how small, *Venceremos* announced it and congratulated them. That did a lot to strengthen morale" (López Vigil 1994:147). Often these reports were called into the stations through the guerrilla's communication network by the units themselves. Some said, it didn't happen if they didn't hear it on the radio (Escalona,interview 1998). In addition to reporting on battles and actions, the radios often helped in small negotiations, for example, for the release of guerrillas captured in battle, for the body of a member of the FMLN's political commission and negotiating team. They used "psychological" methods to try to demoralize the youth in the Salvadoran army, "you're young, you could be working or studying, you're fighting your own people, your cause is unjust"(Escalona,interview 1998). They also built their

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own morale through anecdotes that satirized the military. For example, one story told of a peasant who recognized an army member posing as a guerrilla because he didn't share the one *tortilla* she gave him with his "comrades" (López Vigil 1994:162).

The radios also created more extensive dramas. López Vigil describes a soap-opera series about a hated Army coronel, who they nicknamed "pig-face." When he is blown up in his helicopter by the guerrillas, he knocks on the doors of heaven and then those of hell, but neither Saint Peter nor the Devil would let him in" (181). When the *campesinos* laughed at these satires, they're also laughing at their enemy, which made them seem less powerful, helping fighters and campesinos alike lose some of their fear (162).

It seems that *Radio Farabundo Martí* may have been more involved with creating programming for and with local populations. Escalona described the radio's coverage of the return of refugees to the area, the visit of Monsignor Rivera y Damas (Romero's successor) to the site of the Sumpul massacre, as well as weekly cultural programs, including patron-saint festivals and concerts by visiting musicians. Graciela García, working with a development NGO, told me that *Radio Farabundo Martí* had local correspondents so that the radio was "our radio," more than *Radio Venceremos.* There were boxes in many communities where people could deposit their messages and announcements and news; this radio broadcast live music of regional bands, even reported on local sports. Like *Radio Venceremos, Radio Farabundo Martí* also produced dramatizations. One was a history of the Americas; another concerned Salvadoran folk "myths." For example, in the *Retumbo de la Cañada* (Echo of the Canyon) set in a mountain in the guerrilla's zone of control, all the folk spirits and characters of local legends held a convention. They talked about how people weren't paying attention to them anymore because they were so affected by the war; how difficult it was to get

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around with the army and battles; how there were so many dead people, and how sad it was. But as mythological characters, they were going to change things so people could pay attention to them again (Graciela García, interview with author, June 11, 1997).

Radio Venceremos is probably responsible for one song, the Eagles' "Hotel California," that improbably became a sort of anthem for the guerrillas who spent so many years camping in the mountains, away from their homes and families. *Radio Farabundo Martí* used a lot of music in its transmissions, "to make them more attractive" ("María," interview with author, 1998). War news was introduced by military marches and revolutionary music, especially music with a message.[16] They held national poetry contests for the guerrillas, awarding radios as prizes and reading the top poems on the air. They dramatized short stories by the nation's authors, particularly the beloved Salarrué.[17] And they didn't miss the World Cup, but assigned a staff person to follow these games and report on them (Escalona, interview, 1998).

For the people of the war zones especially, Escalona said; the radios "gave them hope, spirit, confidence, because the people knew that if the radios were there, the guerrillas were there. And this was a voice that strengthened the guerrilla movement, because it was its primary organ of diffusion [way of distributing information], its strongest organ of the press, and also the way the movement informed itself about the situation" (Escalona, interview, 1998).

Towards the end of the war, both radios began to reorient themselves for the postwar period. Santiago (Carlos Enrique Consalvi) of *Radio Venceremos* told me that there were many debates in this period; they wanted independence, to not be the official

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[16] María listed "protest music, Cuban " nueva trova" folk music, Manuel Serrat, Victor Jara, Violeta Parra, Mercedes Sosa, the Nicarguans, Mejia Godoy, the Mexicans, also folk music..."

[17] Salvadoran novelist, short story writer, painter and folklorist known for his renditions of folk tales, rural life and speech and fanciful artwork.

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voice of any party, not the ERP, not RN. Not everyone was happy about this, though the four directors stayed, initially (Consalvi, interview with author, 1995). After the Offensive in 1989 but before the Peace Accords, *Radio Farabundo Martí* turned to mobilizing not for the war effort, but for discussion; they began to think of themselves as "a station for a nation in change: objective, seeking to contribute to the democratization of the country, open to all political parties; we wanted to begin a dialogue with the other media" (Staff, *Radio Farabundo Martí*, interview with author, 1995).

Both stations set up commercially-supported operations in San Salvador as part of the settlement negotiated in the January, 1992 Peace Accords. When *Radio Farabundo Martí* came down from the mountains to San José de Las Flores, a small town in Chalatenango, in late November, 1991, thousands of people filled the streets for the celebration. People came not only from all over the region but from Latin America, Europe and the United States as well. Escalona told me that people felt bad; but at the same time they felt that it was a triumph, a symbol that a radio that had been so persecuted could have an official presence in the city (Interview, 1998). But while the legalization of the guerrilla radios was seen by supporters as a victory for the FMLN, it was a loss for the communities where these radios had been based. In our first interview in 1995, Radio Sumpul staff member explained,

> "The *Farabundo Martí* was here, the Double F. Seeing that now the Peace Accords were signed, the Double F went to San Salvador, so we felt the need for a radio. We wrote a proposal because, since here we didn't have telephones, we didn't have a medium to communicate among ourselves, we didn't have anything, so we decided it would be good to have a radio where we could have this, and where the people could participate as well. So, this is how we began this project. And it went from there" (Rosibel, interview with author, Janurary 17, 1995).

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Chapter Two:
The Returned Refugee Communities and the Seven Plagues of San Salvador

The Returned Refugee Communities

The fire and its aftermath

On Friday May 16, 1997, Radio Sumpul burned down. How could this have happened! I was in San Salvador, where I tried to reach, Fito (Adolfo Ramírez), the Director of Radio Sumpul, who had been at a meeting that morning at the Association of Participatory Radios and Programs of El Salvador (ARPAS). I thought he would have some news about the progress of the radio's legalization--the national organization had taken the lead in advocating for all eleven of the rural community radios in their long struggle for legal recognition from the government. Fito and I had driven in together, after an intense but good staff meeting on Friday afternoon. But Fito wasn't home when I called. He was already back in Guarjila, his mother told me, because the radio had burned down. Burned down!

The incident and its aftermath brought into relief the strengths and weaknesses of Radio Sumpul as a community institution, highlighting the forces that shaped its public space and its contributions to constructing its community.

Later that evening I finally talked to Fito. He had returned to the city with several people from ARPAS, and from the national human rights ombudsperson's office (*Procuraduría para la Defensa de Derechos Humanos,* PDDH). The presence of these visitors underlined the significance the community radios had for these rural

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populations. Their repressed social movements for the rights of agricultural laborers and other human rights had been a key precursor to the civil war of the 1980s. When I saw him late Sunday, Fito confirmed that Radio Sumpul had burnt down two days before on May 16, 1997. According to all accounts, the fire started about noon, less than half an hour after the staff meeting was over and Fito and I left for San Salvador. A thin stream of smoke grew rapidly into a blazing fire; it had started in a storage room and spread through the wooden roof beams to envelop the office and the studios.

I couldn't return to Guarjila until the next day, since it was already mid-afternoon, the last bus from the provincial capital to the town left at four, and the bus from the city took over two hours. When I arrived back in town Sunday afternoon, I was devastated to see the destruction. The concrete block walls were standing, oddly not even smudged in the front where "Radio Sumpul" was painted in energetic letters. But in the room where the fire started, most of the roof was gone; everywhere the roof beams looked like charcoal, it was hard to believe that they still held up so many clay roof tiles. All the equipment and the archives of past programs were gone; the remaining furniture was strewn in pieces in front of the building. The floor was inches deep in half-burned papers, charred remains of furniture and melted equipment.

When I arrived at the house where I lived, Niña Catalina, the mother of the family, immediately filled me in on what happened. She exclaimed, everyone ran down to the fire bringing *cántaros* and *guacales (*big jugs and basins) of water to put the fire out. She told me how people, led by Rosa and Chango, from the youth group, went in through the windows, forcing open the metal security bars. Then lots of people including eleven-year-old Milagros and other children went into the studio with the fire blazing in the next room, burning their feet and their fingers. Most of the essential equipment was

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saved, including the mixer, cassette player, monitor, and the radio '*enlace*' or link that sent the signal to the transmitter up on the mountain.

Doubling the shock of the fire itself, nearly everyone I talked to was sure that Ernesto, one of the *locutores* or voices of the radio, had started the fire. He had been the last one to leave the building after the meeting, and when he ran back down to the fire, he just stood and watched, people said, and even though he had the keys to open the doors, he refused. When the police came, people told them to arrest him, but they only talked with him.

Ernesto denied the accusations. When I spoke to him the next week, he was wary and extremely agitated. I felt we had developed a certain amount of trust in the past weeks, as he had explained the workings of the radio to me and shared his frustrations. He said that he left the station after bathing, which was normal since the radio always had running water, while most houses had it for only an hour or so. Then he locked up and went home. He had just started lunch when someone ran to tell him the radio was on fire. He rushed back down, and tried to open the lock with his key but it was too hot. Someone forced open the window bars and he told them, save the studio, the equipment! This was why the equipment was saved, he told me.

When the police came, he was calm and said to them, as god is my witness (or something to that effect) he didn't have anything to do with the fire, his conscience was clear. Ernesto thought the fire was started by a short circuit: three different people had added wiring to the building. I told him I didn't want to believe that he could do such a terrible thing, but the evidence looked bad. He said, why would I want to destroy what I spent five years creating, even leaving his mother's house in another village. "If I had a bad conscience, I would be gone, I would flee, but I'm right here," he told me. Ernesto

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later spent some time in jail, but he was never formally charged.

How the fire actually started remains a mystery. But the process of confronting this tragedy--who rallied to support this radio and what emerged as the most intractable obstacles--highlights both its strengths and weaknesses as a community institution and the forces that shaped the public space it provided.

Many people and institutions in the region and beyond helped Radio Sumpul rebuild. They ranged from individuals in the town of Guarjila, to the leadership structures throughout the region, to the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in rebuilding the former war zone, to the national and international networks of community radio support. At the same time, the radio's staff faced many obstacles, both internal and external, with financial, political and emotional implications. Like many tragedies, the fire helped clarify or define the community of the radio: what does "community" radio mean in this case, to whom is this means of communication important?

The specific social contexts of Radio Sumpul and Radio Segundo Montes were in some ways quite different, but they both faced similar obstacles as they worked towards their goals of local rural development, building civil society, and maintaining a sense of community. The following discussion first traces the specific situation of Radio Sumpul after the fire, then turns to an overview of postwar conditions and challenges shared by both regions.

Ongoing stresses

The fire at Radio Sumpul was a huge tragedy, not only because of the physical and emotional damage it caused the radio and its community, but also because the

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exacerbated the deep stresses with which the radio was operating, and broke the small momentum it was beginning to achieve. These underlying tensions and strengths were forced into the open by the immediate crisis of the fire; they also shed light on the roles the radio played in the community, its meanings, its shortcomings and potential.

A look at the meeting that occurred in the week before the fire provides a good introduction to the radio and its situation. The morning of the fire, the committed core staff of the radio gathered for what was supposed to be a weekly meeting. Rosibel was there, a competent and responsible twenty-four year-old with an infectious laugh, one of the original members of the radio's staff. Tall, with long light-brown hair and a talent for looking dressed up, she had two small children. Like the other core staff, she could handle any aspect of the work involved: speaking on the air, choosing and introducing music, news recording, writing and editing news, scripts, or letters, recording and directing spots or mini-programs, the main genres beyond live formats. On-air, Rosi's introductions to music or other programming always tied the programming to everyday life, commenting about meals or housework, or being on the bus, or relaxing. She was well respected in the community, having been a singer and guitarist in a beloved musical group during the war. Now her specialty was as one of the two "*locutores*" or voices of the radio, and as voice and occasionally recording engineer and director of spots and mini-programs. Perhaps because she had two children, she also was responsible for the children's program on Saturday mornings. Women played important roles at most community radios, not only on the air but in some cases as the organizations' directors. It seemed generally accepted that women's voices were underheard and efforts were made to promote their involvement both as individuals and in women's organizations.

Ernesto, the other *locutor*, was also there. A handsome, sensitive twenty-two

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year-old, his specialty was music. While his tastes leaned towards the rock, techno, and rap that the more "disreputable" (in the eyes of many in the community) young people liked, Ernesto was also somewhat knowledgeable about the whole range of music the radio played. He was the DJ for the party sound system that the radio rented out to raise money, and also had some skill in repairing the equipment. When he began working with the radio, he had been nearly illiterate, and worked on his speaking style by playing tapes under his pillow as he slept. Ernesto could be moody, alternating between high, playful energy and depressed and recalcitrant. Originally from a small village further to the north, Ernesto had moved to Guarjila to live with his new wife and her family. His reputation had lately worsened with accusations of drinking.

Miriam was one of the most respected people in Guarjila. An ex-combatant in the FMLN, a little over 30 years old, she had worked in communications throughout the war and had her own small house in the center of town. She was the staff representative to the radio's board of directors, and a correspondent for *Buenos Tiempos Mujer,* a UNESCO-sponsored program targeted at Salvadoran women and produced in collaboration with several community radios and Salvadoran women's groups. She was fairly short, dark-haired and tending towards heavy; smart, and intense, with a great sense of humor and also an inclination towards secrecy. Miriam did the daily news program for the radio, traveling to different parts of the region to interview leaders or cover events.

In addition, there were two young men, Abelino and Oscar, responsible for climbing the *cerro* (small mountain) before and after each broadcast to turn on the gasoline-powered generator which provided electricity for the transmission equipment and antenna. Abelino at twenty-two was an ex-combatant, like many young men having

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joined nearly ten years before when the refugees returned to the area. Intense and shy, he had a sense of humor that appeared when you least expected it. Oscar was not at the meeting; he rarely came since it was a half-hour walk away, and reportedly dangerous at night.[1] Isidro was the only remaining volunteer of a group of young people trained the year before in an attempt to build a stable volunteer core. Intelligent and ambitious, he had lived in San Salvador for part of the war, and had worked enough construction to design his own house and occasionally get jobs in the area. His sister, Francesca, was a dynamic member of the Managing Board (*Junta Directiva)* of the community.

Fito was the director of the radio, a Salvadoran in his late thirties who had gone to Mexico during the war to study agronomy. There he became involved with a community radio station well known for its "*sociodramas*" or radio-theater about social or cultural issues. He spent two or three days a week in Guarjila, staying at the radio station and eating in the small *comedores* or restaurants. With light curly hair, Fito is a gregarious, outgoing man, a favorite of the small children who loved to follow him around. He was often referred to as "the Mexican." He had a rich vision of what the radio could be, but daily complexities and daunting obstacles seemed to impede the implementation of these ideas.

Fito began the staff meeting just before the fire by praising Rosibel for "being here in emergencies" --I think she had covered for Ernesto a few times--and by complimenting Isidro, saying he was becoming more fluid on the air. This seemed positive, but it touched underlying tensions. The staff had been working for no pay for at least two months, as the money earned from ads and other spots was mostly used for gasoline and electricity. They normally received a "stimulus" of 500 -600 *colones* a

[1] There were persistent reports of people being robbed on the roads at night by bands of men, often excombatants from both sides.

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month, about half the minimum wage. This was not only extremely difficult for them and their families--Rosi had two small children and Ernesto and Abelino had new babies--it also made them frustrated and resentful.

Last year's attempt to expand the staff had fizzled out. Fito had trained a group of young people to volunteer at the radio, but even though some were still interested, most needed jobs that paid some sort of salary. Isidro had started working only in the past few weeks to concretize his skills. Only in the last month had Fito begun to train a new group of volunteers .

Fito announced a new ecological series for children he had obtained from one of the international radio organizations; he was trying to find an NGO to sponsor it. (For an overall view of programming, see Appendix A.) In the last week he had negotiated with the Shell station near the department capital for gas for the generator in exchange for extending its ad for a month or more. But ads and sponsorships still did not bring in enough income.

The lack of legal status for the radio was a constant strain. The ongoing legal campaign to keep the community radios open kept both radio directors like Fito and the national organization constantly involved in political defense rather than developing the radios' capacities. The lack of legal status scared off some national support and international funding. A march on the National Assembly was being planned to push legislation that would recognize the community radios; this meant that Fito would need to spend even more time away from the radio because he was on ARPAS's legal and executive committees.

Several more immediate difficulties also came up at this meeting. First, the electricity tended to go out unexpectedly, leaving the radio studio with no way to go on

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the air. Power cut off when the rains started at night, often not returning until the next morning. Most people kept candles or tin gas lanterns in their houses ready. Sometimes there was a loud hum drowning out the the transmission; how could they diagnose and solve this problem?

The lack of electricity for the transmitter was debilitating, both for the waste of labor to climb the small mountain to turn the generator on and off, as well as for the cost of gasoline which consumed the radio's scant income. Guarjila itself had finally been connected to the national electric grid in 1996; long negotiations about connecting the transmitter of this "illegal" radio continued. I reminded Fito that the radios are, in ARPAS' terms "a-legal" not "illegal"; and we all laughed a little at this.

Lack of technical support was a constant weakness. Wilfredo, a skilled technician from Radio Farabundo Martí, initially helped train the staff and later a Dutch technician and educator worked with them for about six months, but both were now in the city and could help only occasionally. The staff's basic technical skills were not enough to problem solve, and Abelino and Ernesto's limited literacy hampered their further learning. So no one had the expertise to diagnose or fix the loud hum in the signal, and there was no one to call to help out swiftly. Perhaps because of these technical, legal and resource problems the staff seemed burnt out and disillusioned at this meeting. Everybody seemed to be trying to distance themselves from the uncertainty. Rosi had asked permission to miss her morning broadcasts so she could earn some money in the reforestation project; Abelino found work as a fare-collector on a local bus to support his family; Miriam needed to take care of her sick mother in a town several hours away.

There was some good news. The radio's Board, which represented both local government and many local NGOs, was re-activating itself. There was some progress on

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the radio's legalization and one new staff member. But the unreliability of electricity, technical problems, and lack of money for basic expenses like salaries, gasoline, electricity, and cassettes were an ongoing strain. The attempts to obtain legal status had monopolized the time of the director with few results. This in turn caused more subtle weaknesses: a lack of organizational leadership and follow through on basic issues such as earned income, staff development and follow-up with political leaders and social institutions.

After the fire, radio director Fito stayed for a few days and then left for the city, not to return for more than a month. It fell on the demoralized staff to figure out how to reorganize: how to set up the remaining equipment to broadcast, clean the tapes, and work out a transmission schedule. (Both Wilfredo and the Dutch technician, now at ARPAS, helped renovate some equipment in the city.) Fito was absent after the fire in part because he was responsible for national lobbying at a critical moment in the community radios' struggle for legalization. In addition, he needed to contact the international organizations which had supported the radio in the past for more support. This work would have been difficult in Guarjila, given its uncertain electricity, lack of phones and computers. As it turned out, two of these grants were successful and the radio received money to rebuild in 1998. Also, he had received threats which were attributed to his accusations against Ernesto. People took threats very seriously, even vague intimations, like someone walking too close to a house at night. Despite the de-arming of the guerrillas in the first months of the peace process and the reorganization of the military, obtaining a gun would be little obstacle. Anyone over 12, male or female, could wield a *cumbo* (a curved *machete*) with deadly accuracy. It seemed reasonable to

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let the situation cool down a bit.[2] But it meant that Radio Sumpul lacked day to day leadership to move it forward after the fire.

This crisis came on top of everyday strains to keep the radio on the air, as well as deep uncertainty people increasingly felt about the post-war situation. The high expectations of the Peace Accords were being drastically dashed by increasing poverty, lack of land or work, frightening levels of street violence, and ineffectiveness of elected officials. Another factor was the overall emotional toll of the war. Tita, a social scientist who had worked with this refugee community for over a decade, told me that depression was rampant, that the great sadness and anger most people felt as a result of the war was most often turned inward. Most of the women I knew complained of difficulty sleeping or headaches.

The fire compounded the ongoing stresses and difficulties that Radio Sumpul experienced, including their lack of resources and organizational weakness, but other factors such as continuing emotional stress from the war, the weak economy, and the lack of concrete improvement in their lives led many people to feel disillusioned and frustrated. Some of Rado Sumpul's challenges, as well as its strengths, were shared with Radio Segundo Montes as a result of the post-war moment and the underdeveloped economy of the region.

The meaning of poverty in the region

The northern and eastern mountain regions of the country where these two radio organizations were located had thin soils and steep slopes and had always been poor. As

[2] Rumor was taken very seriously; possibly it was the most powerful form of communication. For example after the fire one of the radio board's first priorities was to quell the rumors about the fire because rumors of all sorts abounded which could affect people's reputations.

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battlegrounds during the war, the challenges for rebuilding the two resettled refugee communities were immense: to overcome deep poverty, to make efforts towards democratization, to build civil society and integrate into the nation as citizens for the first time in their history.

When I first arrived in *Comunidad Segundo Montes* (CSM),[3] I was impressed by the solid new buildings at San Luis, the administrative and production center of the five settlements that make up the community. Guarjila's resettlement had been spread out over several towns so its institutional core was not as apparent. Buildings in *Comunidad Segundo Montes* housed a range of social and economic functions such as school administration, credit union and library, and there were factories for animal feed, food processing, and clothing production. Several schools including one just for music provided primary, middle and secondary education. There was a health clinic and rehabilitation center, a cultural center, a little movie theater, and several little restaurants. At the same time, it seemed that there were many more corrugated tin and wood houses than I saw in Chalatenango, little shacks with dirt floors. The houses were gathered together on small house plots, not connected as in older villages or scattered like the previous rural settlement patterns of the countryside. The newer settlements had their own beauty, with one-room concrete block houses with large outdoor covered porches (*corredores)*, painted white with grey roof tiles and brightened by patches of garden flowers. But this beauty didn't hide signs of poverty. On my first visit in November 1996, I was disturbed when a little girl, who couldn't have been more than five or six years old, came over to hug me when I was eating at one of the outdoor restaurants, and to ask me for my food. There were several children about that age who

[3] Initially referred to Ciudad Segundo Montes, the change reflected a shift in development efforts.

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begged for food or *colones.*[4] The women at the restaurant explained that there were several mothers with four or more children who had no jobs or husbands: the kids were hungry. This was true in Chalatenango as well, but I hadn't seen children begging before.

The families I lived with in both communities did better than average. In Guarjila, *Niña* Catalina rented a small plot of land nearby for their *milpa*, the staple crop of corn and beans. They also received a substantial amount of corn and beans from the *Señora's* husband, who had a house and land in a neighboring town, in return for her son's and sometimes the whole family's help in working that land.[5] This corn and beans made up the bulk of our diet--thick corn tortillas, boiled beans, and roasted, ground corn for "coffee." This was supplemented by onions, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes and occasionally eggs, cheese or a chicken that we bought; avocados and mangoes from our trees when in season, and sometimes oranges and pineapples. *Niña* Catalina ran a small store in the house like the many that had sprung up in the last two years. She mostly sold small food and household items: sodas, beers, juice and frozen bags of juice, bread from the bakery, crackers, matches and other necessities, and vegetables that her eleven year-old daughter bought in the market in Chalatenango City. Another daughter often made up a large flat basket of these vegetables and sold them door to door in the village. Abelino worked at the radio; he was supposed get about ¢ 600 (*colones)* every month. Lilian was a school teacher; she also received what was called a stimulus, rather than a salary, of about the same amount each month. One of her two married daughters had a

[4] Salvadoran currency, valued at 8.72 *colones* to the dollar during 1997.

[5] Many families had little or no land. Most former combatants received land through the program set up through the Peace Accords, but much of this was far away by means of local transportation, four to seven hours by bus. According to the Banco de Tierra representative, the institution responsible for implementing the program, this wasn't as bad as it seemed, because this was flat, rich, sugar land--worth ¢ 25,000per hectare compared to the poor, hilly, rocky soil here worth only ¢ 3000. There is virtually no land left here, he said; either it was being used already or the owners refused to sell it (Interview, Banco de Tierra representative June 17, 1997).

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small commercial chicken farm and occasionally brought over food or other items. *Niña* Catalina or her daughters made many of the family's clothes; others were bought in the department capital or from one of the traveling venders who carried huge bags of new and used clothes on their backs.

Niña Catalina told me that her family was poor. What did poverty mean here? Was everyone in the region poor? Some people had new clothes, working radios and a TV or bicycle; these were mostly families with jobs in the city. I once asked *Niña* Catalina if she could estimate how much she spent over the course of a month, or how much she needed. She said it would be hard to say, since when they had money they spent it, but when they didn't, they didn't. That's what it seemed like, just from food we ate: sometimes we had just tortillas and beans for days; other times we had chicken, cheese, vegetables, pineapples.

Still, I felt a sense of organization in these communities, particularly in Segundo Montes. There were three small restaurants in San Luis, catering mostly to the *técnicos* or technical assistance workers who worked there during the week, and to the administrative staffs of the various local institutions. The two in Guarjila were similar, though with more local clientele. And in Segundo Montes Community the municipal government sent a pick-up every few days to collect garbage from receptacles they placed near all the public gathering areas. The half-barrels, black with the town's name painted on the side, were mounted on two poles to swivel for easy emptying.

Overcoming the war's devastation: water, electricity, road, housing

To get a better sense of conditions I interviewed the Mayor of Meanguera, whose jurisdiction extended over most of the Segundo Montes Community. Early one morning,

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I caught a ride with Elena from the radio, going south on the main road through the valley below the settlements. The turnoff was a road made with octagonal paving stones; after a short rise we arrive on Meanguera's main street, passed the police station, a pharmacy-store, the post office, the phone company office, and the health clinic. All these were recently built, since the town was largely destroyed during the war; only the old adobe church had survived. In the center a wide plaza with a basketball court was surrounded by the Town Hall, a nearly empty market with a small restaurant, a couple of small stores, the old church and the crumbling community center, the *Casa Comunal.*

The Town Hall was a new, one-story cement block building, with a metal fence and gate. The first room was empty, but Elena and I stood for a moment in the doorway of the second, then she entered and talked to the woman at the far desk and I was invited to sit down. In this room, a short woman with long straight hair tied back in a ponytail, and neatly pressed, mismatched skirt and blouse, sat looking through a green paged register on her lap. Her young daughter, maybe about eight years old, held her colorful Guatemalan bag. Across the room, Elena was asked to check a document for an older woman in a dark blue silky dress, edged with lace, and a white lace mantilla tied like a headband (a sign of a member of an "evangelical" church[6]). Because of their higher literacy rates, younger people were often asked to help out. On my left, two men and three women sat on metal folding chairs looking through stacks of big manila identity cards (*Cédulas de Identidad Personal*), each with a photo and two fingerprints. The stacks came from a beige metal filing cabinet labeled with dates but not really in any order. When an older man wearing a plaid shirt and straw hat found his 20 year-old identity card, he came to show me the delicately faded black and white photo of his face,

[6] These charismatic Protestant congregations were growing rapidly in both urban and rural areas.

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perhaps excited to have found it and his reflection as he would rather remember himself. Then he went to the next table, where a woman was expertly typing.

Finally a young man in black jeans and a neat white shirt, open at the collar, came out of the mayor's office, greeted Elena, and she called me over, though I couldn't hear what she said over the low hum of the room. I followed him, and his invitation to sit down across a desk, when I suddenly realized that this, maybe 25 year-old man was the Mayor! I apologized and explained that I was surprised by such a young mayor; he didn't take offense.

I asked Pereira what were the major needs and resources of the town, and how they were determined. Pereira spoke quickly and earnestly, not in the slick professional manner of a professional politician. The major needs stemmed from the destruction of the war, he said: water, electricity, roads, housing. In their local census, mostly estimates by local "*Directivas*" or neighborhood committees,[7] about 75 percent of the 16,000 people[8] in the municipality had access to potable water; only about 30 percent had electricity, and while there were 1,300 houses of solid adobe or cement block, nearly 500 houses were "*champas*" made of corrugated iron, waste wood or other inadequate materials.

The areas most affected by the war were severely depopulated, some losing as much as two-thirds of their residents. Much of the population had fled to the department capitals, which doubled in size. Meanguera, the site of refugee resettlement in the community of Segundo Montes, regained its lost population when the 8,400 refugees returned from the camps at Colomoncagua, Honduras (Cagen 1991; República de El

[7] Organized through the *Asociación de Desarrollo Comunal* (ADESCO) program created through the Salvadoran government, see below.

[8] The official figure from the 1992 census is 7781; I don't know what the discrepancy is due to.

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Salvador 1995b:7). Jocoaitique, which also overlapped CSM settlements, had not nearly reached its former population (Secretario de Reconstrucción Nacional 1996b).[9] In Chalatenango the population also remained lower after the refugees returned. Arcatao (north of Guarjila) lost 67 percent of its population; San Antonio de los Ranchos (next to Guarjila) lost 53 percent (República de El Salvador 1995a:7).[10] Many families left CSM to return to their original lands or to find work in the city or in other regions, but the remaining population was growing: in Quebrachos, one of CSM's five settlements, young people 10-24 made up 37 percent of the population (Fundación Segundo Montes 1997a:15).

As the Mayor of Meanguera pointed out, basic living conditions, infrastructure, and services remained at a very low level in both regions because of the destruction of the war as well as the long-term lack of investment by the national government. Some of the gap had been made up by their success in attracting NGO aid to build houses, outhouses, water pipelines, health clinics, schools and other projects. Nearly all of the rebuilding effort in Guarjila and Segundo Montes had been funded through aid from these sources such as refugee support and resettlement projects, sister city and church groups, European Community development and peace-transition aid (see Table 2-1, Living Conditions).

The new housing was concrete and adobe rather than *bahareque* (bamboo and mud), palm leaves, or wood. At first, the returned refugees made houses with wood

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[9] Meanwhile, the community of Segundo Montes itself lost nearly a third of its population since the return in 1991, with only 4767 remaining by 1997. Some people returned to their villages of origin, and others left because they lost faith in the community (Fundación Segundo Montes 1997b:2-3)

[10] Guarjila was administratively part of the Chalatenango municipality so its statistics were not available separately. Local officials estimated its current population at more than 2,000.

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brought from the refugee camps, but by 1996, in Segundo Montes about 50 percent of the housing was concrete block or adobe (República de El Salvador 1995b:372; Fundación Segundo Montes 1997b).

Table 2-1: Rural Living Conditions, eastern Chalatenango

	# houses	Running water**	latrines*	electricity	Fuel for cooking wood	propane
Chalatenango, dept.	34,381	23%	44%	58%	84%	9%
San Antonio de los Ranchos	179	35%	78%	3%	97%	1%
Arcatao	461	13%	18%	7%	94%	3%

* There were also some indoor bathrooms: Chalatenango dept, 15%; Los Ranchos, 0.5%; Arcatao, 3%

** "agua por cañería" water from piped water system, generally runs during a short period each day to fill the household's outdoor *pila* or water tank.

Source: Based on tables in the Censo Nacionales V de Población y IV de Vivienda 1992 (República de El Salvador 1995a: 415-619).

While potable water availability in Morazán overall had increased so that 46 percent received water from wells and another 15 percent from water distribution systems, in Segundo Montes, over half had access to potable water through the community's water system by 1992 (República de El Salvador 1995b:322; Fundación Segundo Montes 1997a:26). The vast majority used some sort of outhouse but many had sturdy brick outhouses instead of improvised wood or plastic-sheet structures (Fundación Segundo Montes 1997a:28). A tiny handful had indoor toilets and hardly any

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had sewage systems or provision for waste water (República de El Salvador 1995b:453).

While 29 percent of houses in Morazán had electricity by 1992, in Meanguera and Segundo Montes most used kerosene for light (República de El Salvador 1995b:327, 534). By 1997 it seemed that at least a quarter of the houses in Guarjila had electricity, newly connected to the national electric grid in 1996; in 1992 only 3 percent of neighboring San Antonio de los Ranchos had electricity (República de El Salvador 1995a:619). Homes and offices in CSM's central settlement were hooked up by their own electrical cooperative (Fundación Segundo Montes 1997a:28). In Chalatenango, over 84 percent still cooked with wood; propane accounted for only 9 percent in the 1992 census (República de El Salvador 1995a:551). This appeared to have changed in Segundo Montes, where by 1997 more families had propane stoves.

Both Guarjila and Segundo Montes had health clinics; the latter was created with help from European aid and then transferred to the government. In Guarjila the community established its own clinic during the war, and it was still supported by donations, NGOs and some fees for services. People suffered from a host of ailments. While nationally nearly 50 percent of children were considered malnourished, the CSM doctor estimated that 85 percent of the people he saw had some level of malnutrition. Skin problems were widespread; respiratory illnesses, and gastrointestinal problems, including parasites, viruses and bacteria were the most common illnesses. Pregnancies caused the most complications (Dr. Edwin Alberto Granados, interview with author November 14, 1997; Health promotor Marlene Cruz, interview with author, May 19, 1997). People were reluctant to go to the clinics until their illnesses were severe, preferring to rely on folk remedies like herbs, syrups, teas, or rituals to cure the "evil eye." From Chalatenango census data it appeared that by the time a woman reached fifty

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years old, she might have had an average of six births, of whom five would survive to adulthood (República de El Salvador 1995a:90). Nationally, the infant mortality rate had fallen to 33 per 1,000 live births by 2001 and the maternal mortality ratio to 180 per 100,000 live births by 1995, but figures for rural regions were likely higher (United Nations Development Programme, 2003, online version).

Rural primary schools (*primer ciclo;* referred to as *escuela rural mixto*) dotted the countryside, while second-level schools (*segundo ciclo,* 7-9 grade) were generally located in larger towns. High schools (*tercer ciclo,* for the *bachillerato*) were only in the department capitals. For a student in northeastern Chalatentango, this meant staying with relatives or boarding with a family. While school itself was free, costs for books, paper, supplies, and uniforms made it out of the reach of most families. Literacy rates remained low in both regions: 52.8 percent in Morazán, 63 percent overall but only 49 percent for women in the Chalatenango department (República de El Salvador 1995a:108; 1995b:96) . While nearly 90 percent of men and women completed primary school in Chalatenango, less than six percent reached ninth grade and barely two percent finished high school (República de El Salvador 1995a:111). Efforts to increase adult literacy in the refugee camps through their own "popular" schools turned to children's education once they returned. The school in Guarjila had grown to 18 classrooms; teachers for popular schools in both regions attended classes to receive their own teaching certification. After years of negotiation, the national government was incorporating them to some extent in the national system.

The post-war transition: integration and autonomy

"The signing of the Peace Accords has given us the autonomy to organize, to

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participate in all fields, all political roles...," Mayor Pereira of Meanguera told me, "We have gained this in order to make available for the population all of their rights, and the importance of this participation for the people is that [government] projects aren't irrelevant, they are those that they want, that they need, the democracy of participation is most important" (Interview with author, November 13, 1997).

The post-war transition meant more participatory government, creating the organizational instrastructure of civil society, in effect, allowing the people of this region to act as citizens for the first time, as Mayor Pereira explained. The community radios saw that they would be very important in this process. There are three aspects of this transition relevant here. First, creating a new relationship between population and local government. Second, finding ways to integrate the self-governing and social service institutions of the returned refugee groups into local government and society, while maintaining some autonomy and local decisionmaking. And third, finding effective models for rural economic development. These were huge challenges, and over the course of the decade their pursuit brought much frustration, in part because of small or inconsistent government aid,[11] declining NGO support, and internal conflicts over the priorities and directions of these efforts.

The returning refugees were determined to create a new kind of society in their formerly impoverished communities; this was the vision of the social movements which dispersed in the stalemate of the civil war. They turned these efforts into the arena of civil society, retaining and transforming their vision. But it has been an arduous process,

[11] Much of the $52 million available for reconstruction through the National Reconstruction Secretariat (SRN) established through the peace process was funneled through government-affiliated or oriented groups, ostensibly because they were more familiar with the USAID bureaucratic conventions required; however this meant that some of the most war-torn regions saw little of this relief (Blair, Booth et al. 1995: 38-9).

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full of disappointments.

New relationship with local government. The negotiated end to the war with its integration of the guerrilla opposition as a political force, pressure to respect electoral democracy and human rights created the opportunity for the returned refugee communities to construct new relationships with government.

One change in post-war political culture has been an effort towards decentralization of government and more democratic practices on both local and national levels. There have been internationally observed elections for both national level posts, the President and the National Assembly, and the municipal slates of Mayors and their cabinets. A major political battle in 1997-98 pitted the mayors of both parties through the mayoral association (COMURES, Corporación de las Municipalidades de la República de El Salvador) against the national government to win a greater share of the national budget for municipalities. In addition, there were efforts to democratize local government through the reinstitution of the *Cabildo Abierto,*[12] an annual public meeting to advise the mayor on his or her priorities for the year, and the creation of *Directivas,*[13] neighborhood councils with formal status to petition for municipal attention to local needs and seek funding and support directly from international aid sources. Since mayors were elected with an entire slate from their party, without any type of consultative body representing diverse or opposing interests, the establishment of the *Cabildos* and *Directivas* provided the most important formal opportunities for local

[12] The *Cabildos Abiertos* or open town meetings were re-introduced during the war to bring legitimacy to local governments under attack from the FMLN; they are now required to show that municipal governments have support for their programs (Blair, Booth et al. 1995:34).

[13] These neighborhood organizations are officially called *Asociaciones de Desarrollo Comunal* (ADESCOs) and have been organized by the Ministry of Interior's *Dirección de Desarrollo Comunal* (DIDECO). Government agencies provided funding and support for these efforts, with aid from USAID and other sources (Blair, Booth et al. 1995:34-35, 40-41).

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public participation. At the *Cabildo Abierto* I attended in Jocoaitique, the Mayor spent much of the time explaining how the *Directivas* would work and fielding vigorous discussion about local issues. I spoke to several Mayors from both political parties and all seemed to support these initiatives.

Rebuilding political life after returning from the refugee camps entailed major changes in decision making processes within these organized communities as well. The refugee camps had been quite centralized, partly because of the constant threat from the Honduran army which surrounded them. These organizations remained vertically structured at first. For example, in its early years Comunidad Segundo Montes was managed by a leadership council (*Junta Directiva*) composed of mainly of representatives of its service organizations, while the Assembly (*Asamblea* or Town Council) of the entire community was considered the highest authority. There were soon conflicts over the direction of development efforts and the organizations decided to became autonomous and horizontally related, each with their own membership councils, decision making processes, legal status and capacity for fund raising. The Foundation resisted this last change, either to assure accountability and continuity with outside funders, or in order to oversee grants and projects to receive a percentage of the funds, depending on my source. Practically it seemed that each of the now autonomous projects and organizations coordinated more with the local Mayors especially for planning and fund raising.

A similar process occurred in eastern Chalatenango, apparently with less conflict; the local *Asambleas* or town councils, like Guarjila's, acted more as local development agencies, with their managers elected at the town meetings. They coordinated their efforts both with new local Mayors and with the former region-wide political structure,

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the *Coordinación de Comunidades Repobladas* (CCR),[14] which took on the role of a regional development efforts among other functions.

For the returned refugee communities, national efforts to increase democratic participation at the local level continued the processes begun by their own democratic self-governments, as these changed and integrated into the Salvadoran municipal authorities. Decentralizing money and authority from the national to local governments met with strong opposition at the national level perhaps because it confronted the historical tendency in Salvadoran culture towards hierarchy and centralized, elite decision making. The debate was not polarized as much along party lines as along a urban/rural divide; many rural mayors of the government party also supported decentralization. But conflicts broke out locally as well over how power and decisionmaking should be structured. In both cases the community's formal political processes were decentralized and made arguably more participatory as they were integrated into the renovated municipal and national political system.

Integrating their institutions but maintaining some autonomy. The returned refugees worked hard to reintegrate into national life, but they insisted on their own terms. Gaining formal recognition from the state, or legal status for their land and institutions was one crucial step. The homes and fields of the community needed land titles and their organizations needed legal recognition (*personería jurídica).*Without it they couldn't get bank credit or accounts; banks demanded land titles as collateral and NGO grants usually were handled through banks. Also, lack of land titles led to a sense of instability, as people did not put effort into their homes or land if they thought they would have to move again (Darío Chicas, interview with author, November 11, 1997; José

[14] Later called *Coordinación de Comunidades Rurales,* Coordinator of Rural Communities.

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Mauricio Dimas Sánchez, interview with author, November 12, 1997).[15] Some refugee community institutions and organizations were integrated with state institutions, while others remained autonomous. For example, Comunidad Segundo Montes' health clinic was turned over to the state's health care system, while the local group of health educators remained active and Guarjila's clinic-hospital remained independent. Both community school systems were being integrated into the state system, but negotiations assured that teachers and a degree of local decision making would be maintained. Many local organizations--women's and youth groups, cultural organizations, environmental groups, in addition to the semi-governmental *Directivas*--began to apply for their legal status as well. All these began to take the shape of a local civil society, an infrastructure of citizen activity and organization which had not existed before without repression and violence.

Another important aspect of this growth were the festivals and cultural events which created a self-portrait of local communities. Municipalities generally organized and financed village patron-saint festivals. These were the biggest events of the year, showing off the character and development of each community. For the returned refugees, the return from the camps rivaled or surpassed the importance of the patron-saint festivals, and so the celebration of this date served to strengthen and maintain their particular sense of local identity. Each festival was celebrated over several days with masses, processions, contests, and a big fair with rides, food stands, and dances (see

[15] The titles for the land of the Segundo Monte settlement itself were still unresolved and some landowners were refusing to formally transfer the titles in 1997. The land was formerly owned by about 400 *minifundias* , small farms of about 30 manzanas each; titles were often unclear since most sales were oral, and much of the area was an FMLN "zone of control" during the war, where the guerrillas assigned land (Fundación Segundo Montes 1997c). This led to problems for the industrial enterprises in the community--without legal titles, they were ineligible for credit, even for special post-war reconstruction programs (Celia Concepción Sáenz, inerview with author, November 11, 1997).

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chapter 7).

Developing an effective rural economy. Probably the major concern of the returned refugee communities leadership and the web of organizations which supported them was how to develop a viable, healthful local economy that could be integrated with the national and international markets, but on their own terms. This went to the heart of the issues underlying the civil war, and remained conflictual. What was possible in this region of minimal resources? What role should agriculture play? How should benefits be distributed?

Agriculture was crucial to most of the population's survival, but was not indisputably the core of the local economy. According to the 1992 Census, 63 percent of the economically active population in Chalatenango (from age 10) was involved in agricultural production (República de El Salvador 1995a:194). But only about one-third of the *formal* market or money-based economy was agricultural, according to Marcelo Campos, an economist at the *Agencia de Desarrollo Económico Local* (Agency for Local Economic Development, ADEL), an international development organization (interview with author, May 13, 1997). Almost 70 percent of economic activity was service, he told me, mostly trade in markets and stores, and only 2 percent was production, factories and *artesanía* (handicrafts). Certainly at least some street market and itinerant peddler transactions made up the informal economy. Most basic grains--corn and beans and sorghum (*maicillo)*--were not really part of the economy, since most of these were not bought and sold but consumed by their producers. The domestic economy and the formal economy were intertwined. Much labor and many products were exchanged within or among families or neighbors, and of course the domestic work of women in both food production and household reproduction was not recorded ("housewives" were

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the main category of not economically active (República de El Salvador 1995a:200).[16]

How did people survive? Census data showed that over 36 percent of the formal work force were "independent workers" or free laborers. Another 31.6 percent were employed in the private sector while 11 percent worked for some organ of the state, and the same portion worked unsalaried for their families. Domestic service employees totaled nearly four percent, and just over one percent worked with cooperatives. (República de El Salvador 1995a: 199) This means that less than half of those counted as economically active had a steady income from a job, combining the private sector, the state, domestic service and cooperatives. The remainder worked when they could, or for their families. Remittances were a major factor, as perhaps 25 to 35 percent of the families had one or more family members sending money from the United States (Marcelo Campos, interview, May 13, 1997). This correlated with what I observed: men and women worked primarily on their *milpa* (cornfields) or in their households; when the opportunity for paid work came up, they took it. These opportunities tended to be short-lived: clearing land or harvesting, construction on a housing project, working in a store or market or *comedor* (small restaurant) in a peak season, selling some artisan production in a marketplace, some NGO-generated project. Successful households had several potential wage-earners, like the households which hosted me.

Most people depended on access to land for basic subsistence. But despite the reduced post-war population, there was a shortage. In Chalatenango, each year people cleared trees higher and higher on the steep mountainsides. This deforestation caused

[16] The numbers for Morazán were similar: 72.5 percent of the economically active population (over 10 years old) involved in agriculture. These were primarily men (85 percent) but women and entire families helped at each stage. In contrast, women made up 62 percent of the industrial work force, mostly artisanry like henequen for bags and hammocks; 52 percent of commerce in markets and stores and domestic work. Housewives were not considered economically active (República de El Salvador 1995b: 168, 171, 313).

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great concern; already many towns were facing shortages of water as the forested areas protecting the aquifers were cleared. In addition chemicals used to clear the land[17] were poisoning the water and high cancer rates were already widespread; this caused a heated discussion at an Guarjila *Asamblea* meeting (May 12, 1997). Some agricultural NGOs were promoting organic or sustainable agriculture, but with little success; clearing the trees and brush from fields is too backbreaking, and fighting the many insect pests too daunting without chemicals, people told me. I can confirm how hard it is from the blisters I got from just one day of clearing a field.

Before the war, many men worked as agricultural day laborers, and a part of the population went to harvest coffee, cane, and cotton, the main cash crops of the country, living semi-nomadic lives, traveling to San Salvador, Santa Ana, or Ahuachapan for the harvests. In CSM, after the post-war land distribution programs, many families had obtained three to four *manzanas* (five to six acres) for subsistence farming[18] (Darío Chicas, interview with author, November 11, 1997). But the Segundo Montes Foundation survey found that only a third of households owned their own land; nearly half rented (Fundación Segundo Montes 1997b), supporting scholarly views that access to land became primarily through rents (see chapter 1).

What did people produce on these small plots? Primarily corn, beans, and in some cases, maguey for henequen string, and sorghum as a corn substitute or for animal feed. Most households grew stands of bananas and a few vegetables such as squash;

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17 Bought by individuals and sprayed from messy plastic backpack containers.

18 About 700 men in CSM were receiving land from the post-war land transfer program for ex-combatants (Mauricio Dimas, interview, November 12, 1997). By 1997, titles had been granted to nearly 80 percent nationally. But much of the land that Segundo Montes ex-combatants received was in Usulután, San Miguel, La Unión, or other parts of Morazán; it tended to be better land but meant that families must split up part of the the year to work it (Juan Vigil, interview with author, October, 1997).

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almost all raised chickens, about 70 percent raised pigs and some raised cattle or goats (Alcaldía de Meanguera 1996). Few families produced enough for basic subsistence year round.

Even if all households had sufficient land for their own subsistence, life would be difficult. The land in northern Morazan is dry; a government survey rated 71.3 percent not appropriate for permanent cultivation and only considered 17 percent arable (Secretario de Reconstrucción Nacional 1996a). A diagnostic of neighboring Jocoaitique stressed the need to diversify, noting projects to reintroduce coffee the source of nearby Perquín's relative wealth, despite the global market glut, and to introduce pineapple (Secretario de Reconstrucción Nacional 1996b).

The outcome of this situation in Segundo Montes was a long debate over the direction of development efforts, intertwined with local fallout from deep national political splits in the FMLN party. The central questions were, should efforts support subsistence farming, encourage more commercial crops, or develop industry and services? The overall self-sufficiency in basic goods attempted at the refugee camp failed soon after their return. The search for industrial niches in which they could compete in regional and national markets had some success: surviving factories produced animal feed, bags, uniforms and clothing, pork products, dairy products, and poultry (Chicas, Sáenz interviews, 1997). But by 1997, only 13 percent of the community's work force was employed in these factories, together with jobs in various restaurants, schools and other community-operated services. Meanwhile 30 percent of the community households were surviving solely through subsistence farming (Fundación Segundo Montes 1997b). People were voting with their feet: of the more than 8,000 who returned from Colomoncagua, only 4,500 remained by 1997 (Fundación Segundo Montes 1997b).

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As a response, the Foundation's new leadership focused its energies on improving the "family economy" through workshops on sustainable agriculture, apparently for men only, a program to train and support small businesses targeted at women who ran many of the stores, and efforts to support other family-based micro-enterprises, like the henequen artisan production traditional to the area. Underlying these differences were practical and ideological debates about how to best bring forward the vision of a better society for which these communities had suffered so much.

Both returned refugee communities had faced and survived immense post-war challenges, characterized by one young leader as "the three transitions": from illegality to legalization, from dependency to self-reliance (*asistencialismo a auto-sostenibilidad*), and from centralization to decentralization (Chicas, interview 1997). Both local and national efforts to decentralize political institutions and increase democratic participation began to take root in the mid-1990s; efforts to integrate into national life yet still retain some autonomy in decision making and vision were in process.

What remained of the vision of the social movements of the 1980s? With so many disillusioned from the lack of concrete improvement in their lives, much of the activity and organization characterizing a movement had dissipated. But a new generation of political and social leaders has emerged and a new range of organizations have become active on a wide variety of issues. In the next chapters, I will show how the community radios have supported the development of this emerging civil society.

Radio and community: integration and autonomy

The growth of the community radios parallels these processes processes of integration and autonomy, decentralization and democracy. Their creation was one way

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of claiming local control, and transforming the goals of the former social movements to the organizations and arenas of civil society.

Radio Segundo Montes was one of the community's leading institutions. The studios felt like a professional office. Housed in a concrete block building made for it--the old wood plank, dirt floored structure still stood about fifty feet beyond it on the steep hillside--the building had a central space used as a lobby and reception area, where visitors waited and staff gathered informally. The doors for the tiny studio, recording studio, Juan Lucas's office, the storage room and bathroom (with flush toilet!) were usually kept closed, giving the impression that everything was very private and important. This feeling of importance was compounded by the Salvadoran rural custom towards formality and politeness. Before visitors entered, they would first stand in the doorway quietly, waiting to be invited in; often they were hesitant and would need several invitations, or would stay in the doorway to conduct their business.

On the other hand, the radio staff were generally high spirited and warm. Juan Lucas's afternoon program was well known for its wit and humor; he was fond of teasing me, pointing out my "*gringadas*" or expressions in Spanish that were too closely translated from English to make any sense. Dilbert, a high school-age staffer learning the ropes of technician and reporter, more than once found ways to scare me, once by throwing the tiny paper wrapped gunpowder caps that explode on contact, at my feet!

Juan Lucas set the businesslike tone. Always dressed in slacks and a button-down dress shirt rather than the jeans and tee-shirts common for men, Juan Lucas spent most of the day at the radio writing program scripts or grant proposals, going over finances with Silvia, the bookkeeper/ receptionist, working with staff, trying to coax more use out of recalcitrant equipment, and taking care of the building itself. Everyone took turns

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sweeping and mopping the building each morning. Juan Lucas was also finishing his *bachillerato*, equivalent to the last year of high school or first year of college, in the institute created by the community (now part of the national school system). He was also taking a special college journalism course on Saturdays in San Miguel, along with several other staff members. On top of this he was active in the community's leadership; in a survey conducted by the Community's Foundation, Juan Lucas was the most recognized leader. Personally, Juan Lucas was intense, funny, intelligent; he had some experience outside the country as well, selected for a leadership training program at a Mississippi university in the late 1980s and a U.S. tour in 1995 to gain support for the Salvadoran community radios' legalization campaign.

Lucía anchored the mornings, which included three different musical programs and a children's program combining stories, jokes, and music with environmental education. Like all core staff, she was skilled in radio's operations: on-air voice, operating the broadcast and recording equipment, writing, taping and editing news or other programs. She had been with the radio since its inception. In her early twenties, Lucía was quiet and unassuming, intelligent and articulate. She also attended the weekend journalism program with Juan Lucas. Like most women here, she always wore knee-length, straight skirts and a blouse or a tee shirt and favored bright, rich colors.

María Elena was tall, with a surplus of energy, and with clear opinions. Currently responsible for getting ads, she used to produce the daily local news and interview program. With Lucía, she provided the female voices for the *cuñas* or spots, both commercial and social or cultural. She, too, had been part of the radio since its inception, and could play all the different roles there. While she had not finished her high school education due to the war, during which she worked in communications, she too was

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studying in the weekend radio journalism course.[19]

Tomás was serious, thoughtful. Unlike Juan Lucas, Lucía and María Elena, he joined the radio just two years ago after several years as popular education teacher. His current role was to produce the local interview-news program each day; this meant traveling by foot, bus or bicycle to talk to local leaders or those involved in events in the radio's entire listening region, which comprised most of northern Morazán. When he returned to the studio, he edited the program, usually sharing Silvia's's desk in the main room. Tomás was also studying guitar and voice at the community's music school. Tall, with dark curly hair, he split his time between his home in the community and his family, including his wife and child, in a nearby village.

Dilbert was a teenager who also had been working with the radio for about two years. Smart, ambitious, playful, Dilbert was responsible for climbing the steep hill behind the radio to turn the antenna transmitter on and off each day, and he was learning general maintenance of the equipment. He helped to produce the "Green Hour" program, and used to write the news summary before the national Network program was available. Silvia was in charge of keeping the financial records up to date, and acted as a general receptionist and office manager as well. She was quiet and pleasant, clearheaded with well thought-out opinions. Together the staff produced eight hours of programming a day, seven days a week. Broadcasting time devoted to music was balanced by announcements, local and national news, programs targeted for children, agriculturalists, and women, and a religious discussion run by a leader of the Christian Base Community group. (See Appendix A, Radio Programming) The radio was sometimes criticized for starting broadcasting so late in the day when most rural families

[19] This course covered the basics of Salvadoran history and society, techniques and genres of journalism, and media theory, among other topics.

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started their day before dawn.

The creation of a community radio was one way for this population to preserve their shared identity and autonomy while integrating into the social life of the region and nation. Because Radio Segundo Montes began as a project of the community's self-government, radio staff were seen as community leaders, and were treated with deference. Tomás had access to every person and place in the community to produce the radio's news program. When recording events, staff set up their equipment whereever necessary. Juan Lucas was often invited as a special guest to the graduations, dinners and other community celebrations. Announcements, interviews, and information coming from leadership or from community organizations had first priority on the air, and often were given preferential rates for ads.

While it operated in a region where the FMLN support remained strong, Radio Segundo Montes strove to remain non-partisan during the elections. In 1997 candidates of all three major parties (FMLN, ARENA and MU) were invited to participate in debates and to send announcements on equal terms. In fact the radio was credited with playing a substantial role in the election of the MU party candidate to the National Assembly (Juan Lucas Alguilar, interview with author, December 15, 1997).

Unlike many U.S. community-based radios, there was nothing particularly "counter-cultural" about Radio Segundo Montes. Since its inception it had attempted to win legal recognition from the state; initially it incorporated as a for-profit organization hoping that this would give it a better chance given the commercial orientation of broadcasting regulation. Like the other rural community radios, its filing for a legal frequency was ignored, and also like the other radios, Radio Segundo Montes was closed and its equipment seized in December 1995 by the National Civilian Police, acting for the

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national broadcasting regulatory agency (ANTEL). In March, 1999 after years of work, its legal frequency was finally granted (see chapter 4).

Another sign of its desire for integration in national life and autonomy is the staff's participation in a course in radio journalism. This was sponsored by the UN's development office (*Programa de las Naciones Unidos para el Desarrollo,* PNUD), and focused on environmental reporting. Organized by the commercial radio association, ASDER (*Asociación Salvadoreña de Radiodifusores*), the community radio staff were delighted to be included, to be seen as equally professional as any other part of the radio broadcasting spectrum. At the same time, Radio Segundo Montes was quite clear that it did not wish to become like the commercial radios: it continued to design its programming and operations to fit its own interpretation of its community's needs. In other words, like the community itself, it sought national integration but on its own terms.

Radio Sumpul

After the fire, Rosi felt demoralized; she felt it would be impossible to start all over again. Slowly, the support built, beginning with Wilfredo, who came to check out the equipment and help reactivate its Board of Directors, then the mayor of the next town, the head of the regional development organization, the storekeeper who collected *colones* for the radio's rebuilding; in fact there were many people and institutions who lent a hand. This radio, too, had deep roots and strong support in its community, stemming both from its origins and its continued role as a catalyst of social interaction.

Origins of the radio. Both individuals and institutions in the area felt a sense of ownership in Radio Sumpul, even when they were critical of its operations. It had been

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created by community members. When Radio Farabundo Martí moved to the city from its location north of Guarjila after the Peace Accords were signed, people in the region brought up the idea of starting a new radio. A meeting was called in the town next to Guarjila, San Antonio de los Ranchos, which shared the experience of refuge and repopulation.

The meeting was called by the *Asamblea* of this community, under the jurisdiction of the Coordination of Repopulated Communities (CCR), which later coordinated the reconstruction and development effort of the region. "Communication for development" was the radio's slogan; it was meant to serve the region, focusing mostly on eastern Chalatenango. The governing structures of the region were initially represented on the radio's governing board: the regional coordinating council of *Asambleas*, the town of Guarjila's governing Board, women's, education, and cultural committees from the region, the radio's staff, and the non-profit communication foundation (*Comunica)* set up to raise money for the radio.

Participants at this first meeting outlined the programming they wanted: a news show was the first priority, followed by entertainment, information and education. Because they were limited by lack of resources, including electricity, they opted for short informational programs spread out throughout the day: educational or commercial spots, microprograms, interviews, and announcements.With the support of several international organizations, the new radio was created.[20]

People saw the radio as their own, Wilfredo explained, not only because it provided a space for people's expression, but also because the radio itself was the

[20] AMARC provided the equipment and training, and Communication Assistance Foundation (CAF), a Dutch foundation provided more equipment, and a technical specialist, and production/training specialist.

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expression of the community. People had power over the medium not only through participation on the air but also because they were part of the structure of power that controlled it, through the *Asamblea* or Town Council meetings (Wilfredo Zepada, interview with author March 28, 1997).

It was also, in a way, a symbol of the community. Rosibel explained emotionally, "it's something people have won, have achieved," referring all the suffering and struggle of the war years. So if something happens to the radio, it's like something happens to the community, to the people itself (Rosibel, informal interview, June 3, 1997). Even people who rarely listened to the radio felt it was important that it existed, I discovered in the course of my audience survey. It was a symbol of development, to have such modern technology in the community.

A manifestation of this sense of ownership was the concern people expressed about who should speak on the radio, the idea that the *locutores* or on-air staff represented the community. For example, at the community's meeting called after the fire to inform the community and dispel rumors, a man stood up to say what I had heard many people express privately:

> "It would be good also, and thanks that you have achieved something, recovering the materials of the radio...One of the suggestions that I personally have is, that the persons there, men, that they be persons that fill some requirements, right? One of the qualifications for me would be, someone who doesn't like to drink, right? ... Because it could be, maybe, there wouldn't be these things that produced this misfortune there, because it could be that another time, well, some other misfortune, right, could happen. That's all I have to say" (*Asamblea de Guarjila* May 21, 1997).

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Drinking was an extremely common problem for men of the community, but the general feeling was that the people who worked at the radio should be exemplary and not share common weaknesses and vices.

People relied on radio services. It's there when you need it, respondents from house to house interviews and focus groups told me, if someone is in the hospital and needs someone to pick them up, if someone has lost a cow, if you need to meet someone. A month after the fire, with broadcasts still not on a regular schedule, one day there were 10 dedications and announcements.

When the radio burnt down, many sectors of the community came to its aid. The people living nearby came as soon as the fire was announced, to help put the fire out. The local youth group, the *Tamarindos*, run by a remarkable man from the Bronx who has made El Salvador his home for over 15 years, spent two sweltering mornings salvaging wood, clay roof tiles or other materials, carrying away debris, and doing other dirty, dangerous tasks to clean out the building and seal it so that no one would be injured by falling roof beams or other hazards. Wilfredo, a founder of the radio, and Suyapa, a former Board member, devised a plan to help the radio restart, including a "*colón* for the radio" campaign to raise money locally with collection boxes in the region's offices and stores. The members of the radio's Board met both to help in the crisis and to address some of the organizational weaknesses. The CCR's director began to work with the region's mayors to support the radio financially in return for regular programming.

These efforts from individuals, organizations which had evolved out of the autonomous governing structure which created the radio, and the current mayors and local institutions, illustrated what a different kind of communication media it was. Individuals, local government, local and regional organizations relied on it for basic

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communication needs in a region with negligible phone service, no newspapers and low literacy, and slow, unreliable transportation. But the radio also represented an accomplishment over these difficult conditions and the war itself, part of their quest for modernity, participatory democracy, and cultural autonomy. The aid it received from the national and international organizations allowed the radio to rebuild, but the energy for its rebirth came from the community itself.

The Seven Plagues of San Salvador

Rather than try to give a comprehensive picture of this complex metropolitan area, where over a million people live and work, this section focuses on seven aspects of life in San Salvador. My inspiration comes from an end-of-the-year article in 1995 published in *Primera Plana*, a short-lived attempt to broaden news perspectives in San Salvador (Huezo Mixto 1995:4-5). It provides a brief glimpse of the city's difficulties and its attractions, keeping in mind the issues and conditions faced by Radio Cabal's target audiences.

Housing

Like most Third World cities, San Salvador in 1997-98 was a place of painful contrasts. Parts of its most exclusive neighborhood, Escalón, could be confused with Los Angeles, with broad lawns, paved sidewalks, landscaped gardens, and palatial homes--except for the armed guards and 10-foot iron fences that surrounded most properties. The elite of the country had their homes there: owners of industrial, financial and agricultural businesses, political leaders, foreign consultants and embassy staff. At the same time, scrap wood shacks built on steep ravines washed into the river every year

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during the rainy season. These squatter communities are a familiar feature of most Latin American cities, resulting from rapid urbanization especially in the past 50 years (Portes 1989:8). Even in Escalón there were squatter communities wedged into the banks of dry ravines. With names like *San Pedro, Istmo,* and *Cecil del Valle*, some of these *zonas marginales* (shantytowns) housed former *colonos* (sharecroppers) of the estates which existed before the city was built, others provided shelter for rural families displaced by the war. Many squatters worked as gardeners or maids or sold their *tortillas* door to door to their wealthier neighbors. The city provided collective electricity and water access, and as long as they kept their outhouses out sight and their children from playing on their neighbors' lawns, it was a good place to live, one resident told a reporter. After all, the water never was cut off here, he said (Ayala, Edgardo 1995:12-13).

San Salvador itself was made up of many neighborhoods, each with its own character. There were well-kept, small houses near the National University, pink and orange bougainvillea and other flowering trees spilling over their walls. Near old downtown, the ornate and crumbling adobe rooming houses (*mesones*) with stores and repair shops spilled out into the street in San Jacinto. New two-story concrete block apartments and row houses with little lawns and gardens were popping up all over the city, especially on the steep surrounding hills. Bleak prewar apartments crowded near Zacamil, where no one yet bothered to pave the roads or paths between buildings.

I lived in several middle-class neighborhoods during my time in San Salvador. The first was an older, sprawling three bedroom house near the main post office and government center, in which gracious living intermingled with security precautions. I wrote in my diary in January, 1996,

"The radio is playing "*Mucho Más*" next door and I'm sitting in the garden; a

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> light coral rose is in full bloom and behind it stands a little, dry fountain and a palm like the ones you see in bars or lobbies. This garden, about the size of a bedroom, is inside the house and a brick archway leads out to it from the living room. Above, a metal grill prevents anyone from entering through the roof. The front door to the house is reached only through the metal-gated parking space; no one can even see in to find that we don't have a car."

Across the street, a wall surrounded a large, former squatter settlement, built on empty land during the war. Many of these settlements were legalized after the war, providing access to electric and water service from the city (Lungo and Oporto 1994:163). Walled, and extending down a hill from our street, the squatter community was nearly invisible to us, except that on the side facing the main road, someone would plant a corn field every year. Often we would hear the evangelicals' spirited but decidedly unmelodic singing, something about the pace of "when the saints go marching in." A few steps down, were rows of little cement block, zinc-roofed houses reportedly built with the aid of European NGOs. Inside they were probably like the home of a family I visited in another such settlement. This was one large room, sharing both side walls with the next houses. Sheets hanging on a wire stretched all the way from the front to the back to divide the sleeping area, several beds pushed together against the wall, from the rest of the living space. Photos in wood frames, hand-carved by their grandfather with the names and birthdays of family members, hung on the walls near the front chairs and benches for a living room. In the back, a kitchen table, a sink, and some cabinets topped by a portable two-burner stove made up the kitchen-dining area. The only interior wall shielded a flush toilet from the family's public space. One or two bare bulbs hung from the ceiling--really the underside of the unfinished roof--to provide light. Chairs and

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benches were decorated with bright fabrics and the colorful woven acrylic blankets that itinerant vendors brought in from Guatemala. A family of six to eight lived here: mother, four children, grandfather, and sometimes older brothers or sisters or cousins.

It's arguable whether the shortage of housing or the lack and unreliability of basic services were more of a problem San Salvador in the mid-1990s. We often had running water only in the morning, or only at night, or found it cut off for several days at a time, so we always kept our *pila* (outdoor washing sink) full to make sure we had enough for washing and flushing. Like most middle-class families and businesses, we kept bottled water on hand for drinking and cooking. Nationally, about 79 percent of urban residents had running water in their houses by the end of the 1980s (Lungo and Oporto 1994:115) but water service remained unreliable even late in the next decade. Virtually all households in the metropolitan area were recorded as having electric service (156). About half used propane for cooking, generally one to three burner stove top units; the other half used electricity, firewood, kerosene or charcoal; ovens were rare (157). Most households had irons, radios and TVs; about half are recorded as having a refrigerator or a blender. Only 49,266 or 19 percent had a telephone, and just under 9 percent had a maid (158, 159). While garbage was collected, it certainly didn't seem to be collected in all neighborhoods on a regular schedule. In poor neighborhoods, paper garbage (including toilet paper, which could not be flushed into the sewage system) was often burned in small piles on the street. Adding to the abundant dry season dust, health workers informed me that this partially burned ash actually could spread parasites as well as aggravate the rampart respiratory infections.

At the end of the war, the housing shortage at a national level was estimated to be 400,000 to 750,000 units (Lazo and Ruíz Moiza 1994:105); again it was hard to say

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whether the problem of inadequate, substandard living conditions was more significant. But the shortage in the city was perhaps more acute: the population of the metropolitan area had tripled in the past 40 years (Vásquez G. 1995:315-16) due to displacement by commercial agriculture and from the war, as well as by the pull of better jobs and opportunities in the city. The city had grown spatially rather than in density; San Salvador itself averaged 6,127 people per square kilometer and 2,867 people per square kilometer over the metropolitan area (Longo and Oporto 1994:77). This paralleled other Latin American cities, resulting in greater class polarization, as the elite fled the center city for more sheltered and less polluted suburban areas, and the rural poor built their own housing on the outskirts, often near industrial developments or markets where they sought jobs (Portes 1998:8).

Few buildings were higher than two or three stories, partially because the city was built over an earthquake fault on rich but unstable land. It had been damaged or destroyed several times a century since the Spanish conquest, with significant damage most recently in 1986 and 2001. One solution after the 1986 earthquake was rebuilding the *mesones*, rooming houses near the markets and central business districts. Since the 1920s these provided a form of low-cost housing for families and individuals alike, as well as a distinctive urban culture celebrated in Radio Cabal's radio drama about *Don Chencho Chilillo* and other literary forms. *Mesones* were a kind of apartment, rented by the room,"hidden behind the facades of faded inner-city buildings....Modest doorways open onto communities of from five to over one hundred families sharing a central patio, laundries, bathrooms, kitchens, and a common knowledge of one another's comings and goings" (Solo, 1991, online version). Families headed by single women and elderly people made up a large proportion of these rooming house residents.

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At their peak in the 1940s, *mesones* housed 40 percent of the metropolitan area's families; by the 1986 earthquake, about 200,000 people or a fifth of the population were housed in 5,000 of these rooming houses (Solo, 1991, online version). But that earthquake, which damaged nearly the entire downtown city center, destroyed much of this older, poorly maintained housing. Aside from a few very successful pilot projects to rebuild the mesones, most former residents joined others in makeshift settlements along the city's peripheries (Solo, 1991).

Crime

Diary, November 17, 1997. "Fear is such an elusive thing. Is it dangerous to walk home at night? Then why don't I see anyone on the street, why do the buses stop running at eight; and are the taxis OK? People say that before '91, they talked about political crime rather than common crime, because you couldn't separate the two. But today, what and when is safe, and how do you know?"

Criminal violence was on everyone's mind in 1997, especially in San Salvador. A million arms of all types were circulating throughout the region, and kidnappings, robberies, cattle thefts and carjackings were becoming common especially along several major highways. In Usulután, a rich agricultural southeastern region, trucks of sugar and other products traveled under tight security. Sensationalist news stories graphically presented whole families who had been exterminated in their homes, presumably in some sort of personal or political vengeance. Everyone seemed to be whispering that the former paramilitaries who earlier targeted the guerrillas "now dedicated themselves to persecuting common criminals, street children and youth gangs" (Ross 1997). The "Black Shadow" had reemerged in 1995, led by an ex-policeman who justified its vengeful

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violence on the incapacity of public security forces; the break-in of the national community radio office, ARPAS, was attributed by some to this group. While I thankfully had no personal encounters with crime, it did brush close. A woman I knew, a nun and long-time aid worker who traveled frequently between the city and the countryside in her jeep, was attacked and her jeep stolen out from under her, right in front of her house in the city. Several small tours of Americans and Europeans visiting the countryside to learn more about the small development projects they supported were robbed while traveling in mini-buses on the highway.

More Salvadorans were victims of criminal violence than suffered during most of the war; the homicide rate was higher than any place in Latin America except for Medellín, Colombia (Ross, 1997). Sexual violence against women had also risen precipitously (Lazo and Ruíz Moiza 1996:118). Data was contradictory about where more violence was suffered: in the city, with 35 percent of violence against persons (115) or in the former conflict zones (Ross 1997). The new National Civilian Police, trained in part by the United States, was slowly coming into action, replacing the notorious former security forces which had combined military and police units. But it hadn't made a dent in the crime wave as yet.

In response, the government turned to the military, even though one of the main goals of the Peace Accords was the restructuring of the country's security forces to avoid involving the military in the internal policing (United Nations Security Council 1995:16). On the bus on the way to the Chalatenango department capital I would see soldiers patrolling long stretches of the main roads and intersections, sometimes stopping cars, trucks or busses. In desperation, public support grew for the government to extend this Guardian Plan to the cities. People got used to entering banks, larger stores, or

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government offices between men carrying machine guns as casually as sunglasses; even middle-class houses were gated front, back and top.

Analysts blamed the easy availability of weapons, the lack of jobs for ex-combatants, the ineffectiveness of the new police force just graduating its first officers and the criminal justice system, still awaiting reorganization in the mid-1990s. Ross blamed, "serious deficiencies in the recuperation and control of arms, the prosperous market for private security, the climate of panic fanned by the sensationalist press, and the poverty in which two-thirds of the population lived" (Ross 1997). The culture of impunity played a role as well, charged human rights advocate Roberto Cuéllar[21] : when two laborers were shot for raping a young girl, but no one was punished for massacres of tens of thousands over the course of the wars in El Salvador and Guatemala, it sent a contradictory message to civil society about just what the values of society are. One of the major dailies editorialized that it was not just the war that was to blame, but the "thirst for vengeance was fed by the 52 years of tolerance and complacency of criminality" where the police didn't act and the criminals were allowed to escape (paraphrased in Ross, 1997).

Poverty

Diary October 29, 1996: Two men sleeping on a clean blue cloth underneath their truck, parked on the sidewalk of the Bulevard de los Heroes.

San Salvador reminded me a little of New York City in its energy and constant motion. People set up businesses every where they could. Vendors squeezed through crowded busses to sell vitamins, candy, and educational magazines. Women set up grills

[21] Director of Research at the Interamerican Institute of Human Rights (IIDH)

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to fry *pupusas* (filled corn tortillas) for early morning commuters. Bus *cobradores* (ticket-takers) took your arm to help you in and out of mini-vans and busses overflowing with people--a gesture I initially misunderstood as gentlemanliness, until I realized that these rough, quick young men were just moving the product along. Then at the very last minute they jumped on to the moving vehicle to hang on coolly around breathtaking curves and bumps. *¡Pícaro!* Living by your wits, the essence of Salvadoran-ness, I was often told.

Energy, hope, and optimism were released by the Peace Accords and the end of the long, brutal war. Macro-economic indicators improved, average growth for 1989 was 3.6 percent, and 5.5 percent for 1994. Inflation fell from 17 percent in the immediate post-war years to less than 10 percent by 1995 (Sánchez, 1995:39). At the annual International Fair, a sort of mini-World's Fair for consumer and industrial products, the middleclass emerged to visit pavilions with electronics from Taiwan, processed foods from Brazil, more electronics from the U.S. They watched their favorite pop stars perform, and ate overpriced snacks at the outside stalls. The day's Panama-Salvador soccer game seemed the most popular attraction, but many visited the "Museum of the Word," a graphic and aural presentation of books, newspapers, posters, radio and the arts of communication in El Salvador created by former Radio Venceremos news anchor Carlos Consalvi. The three story, three-winged Central American Mall filled with window-shoppers on Sundays, families and lovers strolling through corridors of clothing, electronics, shoes, toys, jewelry and other goods, and sampling the fast food and ice cream in the food court and adjoining restaurants.

By 1995, traditional exports like coffee, sugar and shrimp which had dominated the economy only a few decades earlier amounted to only 27 percent of exports; non-

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traditional manufactured goods or crafts like shoes or cloth amounted to just over a third. Exports from the *maquila* or free trade zone of assembly factories made up nearly 40 percent and had been growing steadily. Meanwhile *remesas,* money sent home by Salvadorans working abroad, amounted to over $1 billion dollars in 1995, more than was earned through all exports combined (Lazo and Ruíz Moiza 1996:30). Nearly 90 percent of manufacturing was located in the San Salvador metropolitan area in 1993, and in the city, industrial manufacturing occupied more than one-quarter of the economically active population, followed by retail commerce--anything from computer sales to itinerant street vendors--and then consumer services, public services, and public administration (Lungo and Aporto 1994:37). Nationally, those employed in agriculture and mining made up over one-third of the economically active work force, and industrial manufacturing only about one-sixth. This was before the major layoffs and privatizations of the mid-1990s decimated public sector services such as hospitals, electricity, and communications, and government administration (Percentages calculated from Lungo and Aporto 1994:42)

The most dynamic sector of the national economy was the *maquilas,* assembly plants mostly located in special "free trade" zones, where exemptions from import and export taxes and other terms favorable to corporate owners prevailed. First opened in El Salvador in the 1970s, and with construction and development costs mostly funded by U.S. AID, this sector took off in the 1990s, with six free-trade zones in the San Salvador metropolitan area opened by the end of the decade. Each site housed several factories, and each factory employed an average of over 300 workers, so their impact has been quite substantial. Overwhelmingly clothing for import is assembled there for major U.S. retail labels like the Gap or Sears, with a work force primarily made up of women. While

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they tended to pay minimum or slightly more, work conditions were notorious and the subject of international activism. For example, a common practice was to fire most workers just before the Christmas holidays, thus avoiding paying the traditional vacation wages. Since neither the Salvadoran constitution nor its labor code protected workers' free speech or organizing rights, labor organizing was proving difficult (Hernández, 1995, online).

But perhaps more significant was that over 47 percent nationally and 35 percent in the San Salvador metropolitan area of those economically active were employed in the informal sector (Sánchez 1995:41; Lungo and Aporto 1994:53) (The metropolitan area figure excludes domestic service and unpaid family labor.) This means that they were not covered by any social security or labor protection programs, neither regulation of the work day, unemployment, disability, minimum wage, or retirement funds (Lungo and Aporto 1994:53).

What was the informal sector, concretely? It included manufacturing spun off to chains of subcontractors working out of decentralized workshops and workers' homes. The more visible face of it in San Salvador was the masses of semi-permanent stands spilling out of the center city market and clogging blocks and blocks of downtown, and the street vendors calling out tortillas, fruits, ice cream, kitchen products, tamales and other goods as they walked through residential neighborhoods of all classes: *zaPOte COco vaiNIlla chocoLAte paLEtas.*The downtown stands, surrounded the old government buildings, the cathedral, department stores and other retail businesses, the national theater, and both central plazas. They sold everything: fruit and vegetables, clothing, Christmas ornaments and other seasonal goods, cassette tapes, hardware. The informal sector also included the publicly-owned market buildings, like the San

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Miguelito market near Radio Cabal. With over 1220 sites for vendors, it was one of the largest markets in the city (Lungo and Aporto 1994:102). I loved to visit it and shop there; I described it in my fieldnotes as,

> "a real *mercado*, a covered building, with everything from fresh flowers to Pinesol. The fresh flowers were outnumbered by silk and cloth ones, in outrageous colors. They also had those pearl-like bead strings and couples to put on wedding cakes. There were great *piñatas*: animals along with all the cartoon characters and also big scary ones, like Halloween witches. There were piles of fruits and vegetables: *plátanos*, *guineos*, tomatos, tiny red hot peppers, medium dark green peppers, big and small potatos, *pipián* squash, light green-striped and pear-shaped; small yellowish oval fruit, onions, scallions, lettuce, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, *cilantro*, and other herbs I didn't recognize. There were stalls with wicker furniture (*mimbre*) and clay bowls, fruits and human figures."

What did this mean to the average family living in the San Salvador in the mid-1990s? The average monthly salary was 1,361 *colones* (at 8.37 *colones*/$1 = $163), and the cost of basic family needs basket in 1992 was 3,160 *colones*, rising 12 percent to 4,296 colones by 1995 (*Canasta Básica Familiar*). This meant that between two and three salaries were needed for just basic needs for an average family of five (considered the average Salvadoran family size). A little over half of this would be for food, and about a quarter for housing. Families with income less than this would be considered poor; families with less than half of this (what is needed only for food) were considered to be living in extreme poverty (Lungo and Aporto 1994:61, 62, 70; Lazo and Ruíz Moiza 1996:64). But if these working family members were employed in the informal sector, their salaries were more likely to be less than this average. With women heading 30

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percent of households (Lazo and Ruíz Moiza 1996:76), clearly finding those two or three wage earners just to cover basic needs was beyond the capacities of many families in the city. Though inflation slowed, costs continued to rise including water, electricity, and telephone as those services were privatized. Even the most basic goods grew more dear: a *colón* paid for 10 *tortillas* at the beginning of the decade and just three before the decade was up.

So while the post-war release and the structural adjustment policies carried out by the government produced some macro-economic success, there were also grave social costs. Economist Sonia Ivett Sánchez warned of "the grave deterioration of the life conditions of close to two-thirds of the Salvadoran population" (1995:38). In 1993, over 57 percent of urban homes were living in poverty and 27 percent in extreme poverty; 50 percent of children under five years old suffered from malnutrition, (Sánchez, 1995:41) and infant mortality rates were several times those of developed countries at 71 per 1000 (Lazo and Ruíz Moiza 1996:94).[22] Both special government programs to relieve these conditions and post-war reconstruction efforts seemed by mid-decade to be too narrowly focused or inadequate to the task (Sánchez 1995:45, 50). The entire economy was being restructured with great consequences for San Salvador, the main center of population, industry and commerce for the country.

Environment

Ecological degradation was one of the seven "plagues" listed in the *Primera Plana* article summing up 1995 in El Salvador. The article warned that "the country

[22] By 1999, El Salvador's infant mortality rate had fallen to 35 per 1,000 live births, from 111 per 1000 in 1970. Still it ranked #95 of the top 100 countries, compared to Mexico at #51, with a rate of 27/1000 and the United States at #6, with a rate of 7/1000 (United Nations Development Program 2001:166-7).

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could become a desert" and quoted noted environmentalist Ricardo Navarro of the *Centro Salvadoreño de Tecnología Apropiada* (Salvadoran Center for Appropriate Technology, CESTA) that the lack of environmental regulation, legislation and consciousness, especially in major industries, threatened a disastrous future for the country. Many of the year's biggest environmental conflicts took place in the San Salvador metropolitan area. The garbage incinerator or gasification plant, strenuously opposed by environmental activists, was finally defeated when the President agreed that he would not approve it if its safety could not be guaranteed. Following this began a long debate over the location, technology and bidding process for a new, sanitary landfill on the outskirts of the metropolitan area near Apopa. The conflict over the development of the Finca of El Espino (the estate of the thorn) pitted the land claims and possible displacement of *campesinos*, the development plans of elite owners, and environmentalists fears of damage to the city's aquifers (*Prensa Gráfica*: January 1, 1998).

There were ongoing environmental concerns as well. The white dust that got into everything during the dry season, along with high levels of diesel particles and other airborne pollution helped make respiratory illness one of the highest causes of sickness and death, for both infants and adults (Lazo and Ruíz Moiza 1994:94). One day I wrote, "For the past few days, a terrible wind has been blowing, slamming the big iron doors to the patios, getting dust into everything, rising in big clouds that hide even the traffic... my eyelids are sore from the assault."

The city could be beautiful. I also saw bats, butterflies, green *pericos* parrots on the mountain, bird songs in the mornings, and views of the volcano like greeting card images. Some afternoons the northwest volcano would be wrapped with a cloud like a bit

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of ribbon or a plastic bag thrown by the wind and the more distant southeastern volcano would reflect the orange glow of the setting sun. It could also be treacherous: built on an earthquake fault, on soft slippery soil, the valley shook violently during frequent earthquakes. Just a few days before Christmas, a minor earthquake woke me up at 4 a.m. Shaking, I walked through the apartment, trying to remember, what am I supposed to do? Luckily, nothing fell or broke. It turned to be a 5.2 but it felt strong, and it lasted a long time. In fact, major earthquakes and eruptions had frequently destroyed parts of the city: in 1575, in 1656 when a volcanic eruption destroyed Nejapa and again in 1659 when the rest of the city was destroyed, in 1707, 1719, 1756 and 1798; in 1839 and in 1854 when an earthquake destroyed most of the city's buildings, again in 1873 when only 15 houses were left standing; in 1919, 1965, 1982, 1986, and 2001.

The city was built on a fault stretching across the "Valley of the Hammocks," so named by indigenous inhabitants because of the way it shifted during earthquakes. The fault is part of a system extending from Guatemala to Nicaragua. Surrounded by mountains: Mariona hills to the north, San Jacinto the south, the San Salvador volcano to the west, and Guazapa to the south east, the valley was forested with rich soil and housed great bio-diversity; the characteristic white soil results from volcanic ash from the still active volcanos which surround the city (Vázquez G. 1995:271, 277,280, 278).

Settled by Spanish invaders beginning in 1525, by 1770 San Salvador was the second largest city in Central America with over 7000 people (Vázquez G. 1995: 286, 292). In 1860 as the coffee boom began to take off, much of the city's infrastructure of roads, its university, hospital, orphanages, drinking water system and cemetery began to be expanded and rebuilt (297). The city continued to grow throughout the twentieth century, but the period of most rapid urban expansion began in the 1950s with the

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diversification of the economy through industrialization, expansion of cotton agribusiness, and the increased role of the state in the economy. Industry developed in several regions of the country, but San Salvador had the largest portion, concentrating resources of different economic sectors and pulling large numbers of people pushed off their land by increasingly commercialized agriculture (309).

In 1950 the population of San Salvador itself was 164,500 and surrounding municipalities totaled 48,700. By 1980, San Salvador alone housed more than 250,000 people (313) and by 1990 .... This rapid growth with no planning led to ecological problems, and the periphery of the city grew without basic infrastructure (311). Industrial development around the main northbound transportation route spurred dense, unplanned settlements for workers called "*cordones de miseria* [corridors of misery]." In the south, expansion higher up on the sides of the volcanos threatened both coffee land and city aquifers.

By the 1990s, the huge concentration of persons in the metropolitan area's thirteen municipalities covered less than 3 percent of national territory but housed 30 percent of the population. Its more recent northward expansion was converting good agricultural land into urban factories and settlements, and threatening the Lempa River watershed potentially causing severe water shortages for human consumption and agricultural and industrial use (Vázquez G. 1995:318). Loss of agricultural land for settlements threatened to aggravate the food crisis. High rates of pollution resulting from poor treatment of human wastes, garbage, abuse of pesticides, industrial and agricultural chemical already were impacting residents' health. The centrist think tank, the *Fundación Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo Económica y Social* (Salvadoran Foundation for Social and Economic Development, FUSADES) in 1997 declared San Salvador the

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most polluted city in Central America (*Prensa Gráfica*: January 1, 1998).

Democracy

The year 1997-98 was a tumultuous year for democracy in El Salvador. The second major elections since the war resulted in a virtual tie in the National Assembly between the two largest parties, the Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (Nationalist Republican Alliance, ARENA), founded by death squad creator Roberto D'Aubuisson as a coalition of new financial and industrial wealth and older landed oligarchy, and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, FMLN), formed from several "tendencies" or factions of the former guerrilla forces and civilian opposition coalitions. The election process itself, monitored by international elections observers, was judged mostly fair, plagued by some violence and the same structural problems as the last election such as the need to revise the election rolls to at least take off the dead and to allow neighborhood voting. Observers noted that a smaller percentage of the electorate voted in each succeeding contest.

The two major parties each received 27 seats in the National Assembly with one Deputy changing parties at the last minute to give ARENA the edge with 28 seats. The remaining 26 seats[23] were held by smaller parties whose support the two major parties would need for their programs and policies.

The FMLN coalition was successful in several initiatives. In May it overturned the privatization of the telephone system and created a bipartisan committee to suggest reforms, a process hijacked later by stealth passage of a new telecommunications law. In

[23] Eleven seats were held by the *Partido de Conciliación Nacional* (PCN), 7 by the *Partido Demócrata Cristiano* (PDC), 3 by *Partido Demócrato* allied with the PDC (PD-PDC), 2 by *Convergencia Democrática* (CD), 2 by *PLD*, and 1 by *Movimiento de Unidad* (MU).

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October it approved a substantial increase in funding to municipalities, from 1 to 6 percent of the national budget.[24] Also in October it succeeding in canceling much of the agrarian debt load for most recipients of land from the 1980s land reform or post-war land distributions, though this was vetoed in November. Regardless of its overall success in achieving its goals, there was finally an effective political opposition contesting power through democratic means.

Another positive sign nationally was the passage of a new Penal Code updating Salvadoran criminal law (*Prensa Gráfica*, January 1, 1998:6) and the full deployment of the new National Civilian Police force.

But the news was full of scandals, corruption, and shady political deal making. The largest fraud in the history of the country was uncovered as the FINSEPRO bank failed, and thousands of depositors lost more than $160 million worth of deposits amid intimations of drug money laundering (Long 1997:32). Bank president and ARENA executive Roberto Mattheis Hill was arrested; the government's superintendent of the financial system, Rafael Rodríguez Loucel, and the President of the Central Bank Robert Orellana Milla were pushed to resign (though only Loucel did). Much of the missing money was never accounted for. Mattheis Hill and Rodríguez Loucel were arrested, but released by the end of the year. Later, in July, the Crediclub bank also failed, with bank president Mario Goldámez and Alberto Guirola Meardi accused of pocketing nearly 100 million *colones*. This time, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and middle-class depositors lost their savings, and middle-class families took to the streets to protest. Again the major figures were arrested but released by the end of the year. A small but equivocal step forward for the rule of law against impunity, but in the end the

[24] Municipalities' budgets came largely from national funds since few had sufficient local tax bases or other sources of income.

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message was not that clear (*Prensa Gráfica*, January 1, 1998; Diario de Hoy, October 22, 1997:10).

In San Salvador, Héctor Silva, the FMLN's coalition candidate, won by a wide margin. More centrist than leftist, the former gynecologist conveyed a message of transparency, competency, and renewal. His staff included a range of technical experts and he activated a kind of city council to review and advise his administration. He also initiated a series of neighborhood consultation meetings to advise the priorities of his administration, inspired by the citizens budget process of Porto Alegre, Brazil. But amid growing poverty, some journalists asked, who had the time or energy for meetings or other activism?

Cultural Expression

The city experienced a resurgence of cultural expression, even though the spaces for culture remained scarce. Traditional forms and festivities continued: people spruced up family grave sites and picnicked with the spirits on the Day of the Dead; they marched in processions to celebrate the city's patron saint in August and reenacted Christ's death and resurrection in April. Clowns entertained tired workers crowded in city busses and the downtown plazas, and directed traffic when street lights failed. Mariachi musicians waited at gas stations along the Boulevard of Heros for a night's work at a party or club. Fireworks on every street welcomed Christmas and New Year's in deafening rolls of sound and light.

New cultural spaces opened, too. The National Theater presented concerts of Salvadoran classical compositions, staged classic and innovative theater from Latin America and beyond. The expanded government cultural agency, Concultura, published

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a series of Salvadoran novels, essays, poems, and short stories in attractive and relatively affordable editions available in every bookstore. Rock concerts attracted teenagers to the central city park; the park was also the site for a commemoration of the Peace Accords and a labor organizing meeting for clowns. On the anniversary of Monsignor Romero's death, the Jesuit University of Central America held a day-long memorial which included a sidewalk "painted" with colored sawdust in folkloric designs and symbols, a candlelight procession and a memorial of remembrances and music. *La Luna* cafe presented a kaleidoscope of music, theatre, and spoken word performances in a painted space that was an artwork in itself. A popular culture center, the *Asociación Salvadoreña de Trabajadores del Arte y la Cultura* (Salvadoran Association of Art and Culture Workers, ASTAC), offered classes in folk dancing, poetry, music and theater and offered a small store for artisans and authors to sell their work. Clubs, bars, galleries were beginning to spring up, especially near the universities; people were beginning to venture out at night. The busses ran later and later.

But the new spaces were not without limits. The new community radio stations, unique spaces for rural information and expression, were shut down by the government until ordered reopened by the Supreme Court. New media from newspapers like *Primera Plana* to radios like Radio Cabal and TV stations like Mexican-owned *TV 12 Azteca* had trouble getting advertising to support them; rumors abounded of a commercial boycott. Reporters whispered about unspoken political lines that could not be crossed; a popular radio reporter was found dead in a field outside of town in a case that turned out to be personal, not political, but spooked people all the same. An abundance of new radio stations played remarkably similar music formats; few Salvadoran musicians received any air time at all.

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This fragmented portrait gives a sense of the challenges and attractions of San Salvador in the mid-1990s, and the world from which Radio Cabal drew its inspiration and hoped to involve in participatory radio experiment.

Radio Cabal

Radio Cabal[25] was a busy, urban station with over twenty staff and nearly round the clock programming. Like a large family, there were always squabbles and disagreements, but underneath there was great warmth and mutual respect. My first morning at Radio Cabal, I arrived at the large rambling pink house a bit after 6 a.m., with the sun just coming up. The house was on a busy cross street near the big San Miguelito market, where fruits, vegetables, meats, flowers and many kinds of handmade products were sold from stands piled high with merchandise. The guard was already on duty in front of Radio Cabal's building, and Adolfo the technician was on the air in the studio, and invited me in.

Radio Cabal's studio was large; it had one corner filled with equipment for the technician, but it comfortably fit a large table for people on the air, set up with two red wind-screened microphones on small stands. Like most mornings, Margarita Herrera, the Co-Director had already spread the table with newspapers, a notebook and a cup of coffee. Next to the table was a clock and little flags from the Association of Latin American Educational Radios (ALER), and the World Community Radio Association (AMARC). Margarita and Adolfo's program, "*¿Cómo está el volado*?"[26] began at 6:30 am. Their voices were relaxed and warm, not slow but not hurried, either. Their exchanges sometimes overlapped, other times they cued each other with words or

[25] "Cabal!" as an expression signifies something like, honest! or exactly!
[26] Loosely, "how's everything going?" a typically Salvadoran expression.

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glances.

I had been listening to this station since Christmas, when I arrived in the city. On Monday January 5, 1998, this morning program included, in addition to regular news briefs, New Year's greetings from listeners, both called-in live and recorded, job listings, traffic reports, and music from Los Torogoces, a commercially successful Salvadoran folk group. Margarita's personality came through with helpful suggestions for New Year's resolutions such as "drive carefully, don't break the law, don't get angry," and other advice and positive thinking. I choose this station for fieldwork both because it seemed to be the most participatory of the alternative stations in the capital, and because of its goals of helping to build grassroots democracy and citizenship in post-war El Salvador.

The station's explicit purpose was to help "create spaces in civil society," Mario Maida, the co-Director, and news producer Manuel told me in an informal chat that first day. People in El Salvador didn't know about the organizations (non-governmental organizations, NGOs) which can represent their interests in this new post-war environment, they explained. The station aimed to promote the idea of citizenship and create an attitude of responsibility on the part of both the population and the government. I asked them to explain what they meant by civil society. They began by explaining that it was not the military, the political sectors, or the government; it included institutions and individuals. The debates of civil society concerned the well-being of the country and provided a space to able to consider alternatives, beginning from the perspective of people's own necessities. It was a decentralized vision of power; it also had to do with "strengthening the perception of the potential of local governments."

The station attempted this through different kinds of programs. (See Appendix A,

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Programming.) Despite the coordination of overall goals, each program had its own production team with considerable autonomy to determine the content and form of their program. The daily schedule during my fieldwork stay began at five in the morning with a short religious reflection, "God Wishes you Good Morning" led by Federico Calles, a well-respected Salvadoran theologian, followed by a short segment on El Salvador's indigenous culture co-produced by Indigenous Ancestors Recovery (*Rescate Ancestral Indígena*, RAIS), an organization devoted to indigenous rights and cultural rediscovery. At 5:15, a segment of "Don Chencho Chililo" played. This was a short comedic drama revolving around the lives of several characters living in an urban "*mesón*" or rooming house, played by the staff. This segment ran four times a day.

The news came next, running a full hour from 5:30 to 6:30 AM. It was followed by Radio Cabal's version of a "drive-time" morning show, "*¿Cómo está el volado?*" Complete with two charismatic hosts and a distinctive approach to bringing context and background to the news, the producers focused on the station's target issues of human rights, gender, environment, and holistic health (Radio Cabal 1998:9).

The bulk of the morning was taken up by a program targeting women audiences, both stay-at-home mothers and paid domestic workers. Because the previous production group left after a dispute with the station, a new group was re-working the program during my fieldwork and the program was in transition. Previously called, "*Pase adelante,*" or "come right in," the new program was eventually named, "*Aquí entre nos*" or "just between us."

At noon, "Citizens in Action" attempted to make the idea of citizenship more concrete through discussions on a wide range of topics, from politics to social issues to culture. Guests were mostly from the growing range of non-profit organizations

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emerging in the post war period. After this lunch-hour program, a sponsored sports show helped pay for station expenses.

The afternoon was given over to youth, probably the most interesting and varied programming at the station. The youth slot's title, "*Haciendo y Deshaciendo*" translated to "making and unmaking" or perhaps, creating and destroying, apt for the challenges of the age. This program combined music, productions made with youth in various communities, and creatively produced news reports on a variety of issues. The news ran again from six to seven in the evening, followed by an expanding array of co-productions with some of the larger and more active non-profits. The first agreement signed was with the Salvadoran Institute of Human Rights of the Ombudsman Office of Human Rights(PDDH). Discussions were progressing with the Salvadoran Center for Appropriate Technology(CESTA), the Foundation for the Study and Application of Rights (FESPAD) and the Center for the Defense of the Consumer (CDC) (Radio Cabal 1998:11).

The community radio association's daily national news program closed the broadcast day, ending at 10 pm. Weekend programming was slightly different, with some repeated programs and most notably a very active Saturday night call-in program involving a local heavy metal music subculture.

Throughout the day, commercial breaks averaged five per hour and public service messages were programmed to play every fifteen minutes. "Music with a message, "what they have labeled "*propósitos*" or something like, "things to think about," run about every two hours, while varied music programming was an integral part of most of program formats. Another short program which was slotted in several times a day was a spot about indigenous culture, both Mayan and Nahua-based, called "Ina Galu" was

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produced by a national indigenous cultural association.

Clearly, life continued to be a daily struggle for survival for most people in both the San Salvador metropolitan area and the northern moutains where the war refugees resettled. The end of the war brought some relief, for example, from the focus if not the extent of violence, through rebuilt housing or the extension of clean water systems. But much of the change was still in the form of promises, hopes or opportunities. Expanded school systems meant their children might have a chance at better jobs. Fairer elections and real political contests meant that at least some of the population's needs might be addressed by government. The opening of cultural spaces meant that a a new sense of identity might be expressed.

The next chapters examine the role that the community radios played as they accompanied their listening communities through this transition, beginning with an overview of the key concepts of civil society, public space and the public sphere, and the meaning of popular culture in the context of transnational capitalism and the rise of consumer culture.

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Chapter Three

Constructing Civil Society and Collective Identity with "Small" Media

The central role of the participatory community radios is to help create a viable civil society both locally and nationally in El Salvador. But this process and this civil society emerges from their particular historical and contemporary conditions. This civil society is integrally part of constructing and asserting the political agency and cultural identities of the communities which created these radios, and of transforming post-war political and social culture.

An anecdote

When I first began to study the rural radios' programming. I was disappointed. While they broadcast a mix of music, news, children's, agricultural, religious and event-based programming, the most important programming on the rural radios, most people told me, were the announcements, or *avisos*, basically notes dropped off by different members of the community and read on air. This seemed rather underwhelming. I was looking for programs that were creative, that engaged their listeners in multiple ways, that encouraged different types of interaction among disparate parts of the listening community; or at least some *sociodramas*.[1]

But I was repeatedly told that the announcements were what everyone listened for. Here's an example of one day's announcements which I recorded in my fieldnotes in December 1997:

[1] A form of programming in which social issues or educational topics are presented in dramatic skits, in situations drawn from the everyday lives of listeners.

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- a meeting in the departmental capital for people with family members in the United States,

- announcements of two different *fiestas patronales*, or town patron-saint festivals,

- someone looking for lost license plates,

- someone calling on someone else to pay a debt,

- the opening of a new cattle market in the community,

- the vigil commemorating the El Mozote massacre, one of the major tragedies of the war, which involved family members of many in the community,

- eye examinations available at the Rehabilitation center,

- a concert at the Cultural Center,

- a trip to a religious shrine sponsored by the local pastoral group, to raise funds for the community's new church,

- a second announcement about the vigil commemorating the massacre.

It took me a while to realize that these announcements were, in fact, central to the radios' work. Why? The announcements expressed everyday, domestic concerns: lost belongings, planned meetings with family members, births and deaths. They provided information about local, national and sometimes international organizations' programs and services, and announced opportunities to participate in local or national government processes, whether to attend meetings, to vote, to receive information, or to participate in crucial programs like land distribution, health care, schooling, or social security. They publicized events and activities where people could share in the cultural life of the community and commemorate their particular histories.

What this meant was that cumulatively, through these announcements, the radios were helping to build "civil society." This was the term people used to describe this wide

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range of organizational and associational life, and the community radios functioned as this sector's key communications media. I will discuss below how this use of the concept of "civil society" relates to recent debates in academic and policy circles. This term was also meant to distinguish them from the guerrilla radios, which supported the great social movements which defended people's interests throughout the civil war. Still, as I became familiar with these radios, to say that the community radios supported civil society didn't seem sufficient to me.

At a more basic level, the community radios provided a space for both individuals and the organized groups of the community to be visible to each other, to communicate who they were and what they were doing, beyond what was possible in face-to-face meetings such as the "Town Meetings" (*Asambleas)* which had begun in the refugee centers. The communities involved were larger than single towns where people could in fact see each other frequently, the radios helped maintain that sense of "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) that is so crucial to collective identity. Here, the concepts of public space and the public sphere seem relevant. Through these activities, people forged post-war collective identities.

Four instances of this development are explored below:

The radios provided a public space to speak for anyone in the community, or anyone who wished to reach the community. You didn't need to know someone, have a powerful friend or ally, or fear repression, and depending on the radio, the announcement was either free or very affordable, both in actual cost and in transportation, or social-cultural discomfort.[2] The radios provided a public space where there hadn't been one before. Public space on a common sense level is space that is

[2] What Harvey refers to as "transaction costs," the ways access to a public space may be obstructed by the processes one needs to go through rather than barriers per se (Harvey 1989:219).

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accessible to a group of people defined as widely as possible. Below, I discuss how public space is a product of conflict, and how the community radios had been shaped by the conflicts over their emergence and survival.

The public space of the community radios was open to both individuals and the range of organizations and institutions operating in the region. In this way they supported the efforts of loosely organized groups and non-governmental organizations with local, national or international bases. They were also a means of providing information about and access to government agencies and services, locally or nationally. In these ways, this space supported the development of civil society, the organizations, associations, networks, initiatives and communicative activities that people create to pursue or advocate for their interests. There have been many debates about the meanings, relevance and limitations of this concept. In this chapter I sketch the roots and particular ways this term was used in the world of the Salvadoran community radios.

Many people I spoke to felt that these radios alone expressed their points of view, compared to the commercial media. This not only provided an implicit debate in what might be called the national "public sphere," it also suggests that the radios helped create a local, alternative or counter-public sphere in which local identities could be expressed and differing local perspectives could be exchanged. The public sphere is a metaphor for the expressions, representations, interactions, and communications that are shared by the actors of civil society, the sense of a shared communicative arena. As initially envisioned by Habermas, the public sphere functioned in a particular historical moment in Western Europe; through it citizens of the bourgeois class were able to check the power of the state. Below I build on critical scholarship refining this metaphor to suggest its relevance to the functions of the community radios.

Cumulatively, the announcements and other programming on the community

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radios created a profile of the community itself, a mirror of its structure and members, its concerns and celebrations; it is a place to transform and recreate community identity. These processes "confer value and meaning" on people and their daily life practices for themselves and the outside world (Turner 1991:35). For these Salvadorans, the "collective self-production" of participating in the radio's programming may be a way to heal the damage which displacement, war and transnational media influences have caused to their collective sense of self. It may be a way for these communities to become visible to themselves and the "outside" world and to assert their current concerns (Ginsburg 1997:120). In this sense, the radio's role is to "mediate"--transform, interpret, make sense of one's life and environment; it is a tool for constructing an ongoing sense of collective identity (Rowe and Schelling 1991:124, based on Martín Barbero 1987).

These are the concepts that underlie my analysis of the postwar community radios in El Salvador. In this chapter, I review these concepts; in the balance of this dissertation, I explore their relation to the particular radios which I studied.

Civil Society

People working with the post-war radios I studied used the concept of civil society to describe their role for their community and for Salvadoran society as a whole. But what they meant by civil society was in some ways particular to the Salvadoran context. It is not surprising that a particular meaning would develop for a concept that has been so widely criticized for its vagueness.[3]

[3] "Civil society" has been criticized for its use as "a political slogan for a wide variety of purposes...a way for "neo-populist development theorists and practitioners" to praise the participatory development methods of grassroots NGOs; for "economic liberals" to promote privatization and deregulation said to be controlled through the disciplinary function of new business classes; for those promoting government cutbacks to praise the semi-governmental functions of service NGOs; for former socialists to point to the role of social organizations in peaceful transformation of society" (Biekart 1999:31).

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"Civil society" in El Salvador, as in much of Latin America, has a somewhat different meaning and history than in policy or academic literature about the rest of the world. The turn to a discourse of civil society in Latin America came about in part because it began to be seen, particularly by leftists, as a way to continue to work towards social and political transformation begun as struggles against dictatorships and great inequalities, but through democratic processes, rather than through unified social movements or a people's revolution. It has been combined with efforts towards deeper democratization and attention to human rights. All over Latin America a wide range of social movements often coalescing around issues of identity--women, gays, blacks, indigenous peoples and urban popular groups--emerged from the closed worlds of the dictatorships of 1970s and 1980s. They not only sought action from the state on their particular concerns, but they sought to transform the state and society as well. These social movements began to rethink and prioritize what it means to be a democratic society. They saw the need to struggle not only for material improvements but also to redefine who is a citizen and what citizenship means: who has rights, what rights, what political processes should include. As in so many places, activists struggled to overcome conditions in which they faced, "... a complete lack of recognition as poor people, as subjects, as bearers of rights" (Dagnino 1998:48). The idea of civil society began to imply a place where citizenship is redefined not just in relation to the state but also in terms of the rights and responsibilities of citizens to each other, a culture of rights not just in the political realm but throughout society (Dagnino 1998:38-41, 47-48).

This conception of civil society has been labeled critical or neo-Marxist.[4] It is a

[4] In contrast to the neo-conservative perspective, which promotes the idea of an entrepreneurial culture allowing creative initiatives and an unconstricted economy to meet the wide range of public goals and needs, while ignoring inqualities and injustices; and liberal pluralist perspectives, where NGOs and grassroots organizations are seen as broadening public representation in the political sphere, but where the impacts of class, gender and international forces are not examined (Macdonald 1994:270-272).

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Gramcsian view of civil society as an internally diverse and conflictive arena of interaction and association, through which the hegemony of the state can be opposed and new hegemonic alliances constructed. It is concerned with combatting exploitation and oppression, and constructing democracy not only in relation to the state but also within civil society itself, and within the sphere of the family. Economic interests are generally excluded (Macdonald 1994:272-273, Dagnino 1998:34). Like others which have emerged from the left, this perspective sees the role of civil society in part as providing the links or channels for society to influence the state. In El Salvador, the concerns of civil society activists are also related to strengthening the rule of law, the idea that laws apply equally to all social groups, against the backdrop of their arbitrary application in the past (Hearn 2001:340, 345)

Civil society and human rights

This sense of entitlement based on the right to have rights was one of the hard-won victories of the civil war. The basic needs of these communities persisted, but society could no longer ignore them. This was in part because the Peace Accords promised that the splintering opposition coalition would be recognized as legitimate political actors in formal political parties. At the same time, the agreement promised that other representatives of people's interests and concerns would be also recognized as "civil society" organizations and would be represented in a Forum for Economic and Social Agreement (*Concertación*[5]) and would help draft a Plan for National Reconstruction (Naciones Unidas 1992:87-9).

While these specific measures have not played major roles in the post-war era,

[5] A rough translation; "*concertación*" implies "reconciliation" and "consensus" as much as "agreement."

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the broader promise of the Peace Accords was that the marginalized communities like those of the refugee areas or the poor and working class of the cities could be integrated politically, socially, culturally. But not into the old system and not as members of oppositional movements; for these groups, the shift to the rhetoric of civil society meant transforming political culture to maintain their own agency as political subjects. They would be participants in civil society. How did this differ?

Contesting hegemony in social movements and civil society

Social movements are mobilized groups which feel some sense of shared identities and solidarity, practicing contentious collective action and challenging dominant discourses or hegemonic power. They can be seen as part of the "normal" dynamics of social change in civil society within a democratic context. However, they go beyond "interest group politics" in that they challenge basic values or accepted means of social change of that society (Eckstein 1989; Piven and Cloward 1979, 1992). Social movements often rely on an element of defiance or disruption as a way of commanding attention, turning up the volume so that the movement's needs and perspectives are dealt with. They break the rules or push the limits of normal political or social-cultural action because participants lack access to that system or their issues are considered outside the realm of normal debate or consideration (Piven and Cloward 1971:4,21; 1992:303,319; Tarrow 1995:3-4). Communications media are key tools for amplifying defiance and disruption. In technologically advanced societies, social movements attempt to draw the attention of commercial mass media which depend on spectacle to attract viewers.

Social movements continued in post-war El Salvador but not as a broad unified opposition, and in general with the aim of working through democratic means. The

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broad coalition of the opposition fragmented; new issues, organizations and movements emerged. Concerns, both persistent and new, were taken up in the political sphere by formal political actors. These included agrarian debt and land distribution to demobilized combatants, to environmental regulations and a new law on the family. Some of the tactics that social movements had introduced, such as mass marches and civil disobedience, became institutionalized as part of the arguably normal workings of democratic politics. In this sense the power struggle underlying the civil war and decades of resistance leading up to it continued, not a battle to control the state, but as a struggle over hegemony[6] to change the perspectives and alliances of society (Dagnino 1998:37).

The concept of hegemony provides a way to understand the continuities and differences that otherwise seem so contradictory in El Salvador, especially how in the past quarter century there have been similar constellations of actors in waves of activism, but with major differences both in kinds of collective action and goals. Hegemonic contestation has continued in the postwar era through diverse and multifaceted efforts to build civil society. This was not a partisan effort, but a broader transformation of society. Building civil society in El Salvador, as it was discussed in the communities of the community radios, meant that the formerly disempowered would insist on their

[6] Hegemony is an ongoing process of contestation. Gramsci described it as a process through which "the dominant group is co-ordinated concretely with the general interests of the subordinate groups, and the life of the state is conceived of as a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria ... between the interests of the fundamental group and those of the subordinate groups - equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only up to a certain point, i.e. stopping short of narrowly economic-corporate interest" (Gramsci 1988:206). The concept has been further elaborated as a process through which ideas about the way the world is, how the world works, what is and is not possible, what is right and wrong, are transmitted to subordinate classes through the institutions of the state and the ruling classes such as schools, the operations of state agencies and bureaucracies, religious institutions, rituals of collective memory and history. The dominant hegemonic alliance controls the power of the state, but its attempts to promulgate its world view are always contested and unevenly accepted. Hegemonic alliances are held together not through force or imposition but because each faction gets something it needs (Hall 1986:14-18; Wolf 1997; Roseberry 1997:360-61).

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inclusion as citizens: that their issues and concerns were valid and should be part of the political sphere; that their culture and forms of sociality were part of the national culture; that they would choose their own leaders as representatives and spokespersons. As returned refugees and working-class urban dwellers, building civil society meant the integration of their communities into post-war life. This would transform political culture nationally as they asserted their cultural, social and political subjectivity as citizens and social actors.

Another aspect to this view of civil sociey is the idea that civil society refers to not only constructing a political society which functions constitutionally, democratically and with an active citizenry, but also to regenerating other spheres of public life: artistic expression, cultural awareness, diversity of identity, and the economic vitality of the sectors of the population which have been historically repressed. Here, citizenship could be experienced not just in relation to rights respected (or not) by states, but also through social and cultural practices which "confer a sense of belonging, provide a sense of difference, and enable the satisfaction of the needs of those who possess given language and organize themselves in certain ways" (García Canclini 2001:20). These practices, in urban contemporary societies, tend to be consumption oriented: listening to the radio, watching television, or buying clothing. García Canclini argues further that if consuming is a way that we "define what we consider publically valuable, ... [and through which] we integrate and distinguish ourselves in society" (García Canclini 2001:20) then in some ways, cultural identity defined through consumption might be a form of citizenship.

Here, I think that García Canclini is confusing citizenship and cultural identity. Citizenship at its core is a relationship to the state through which a sense of shared national identity and of entitlement may be generated. In urban, capitalist, consumption-oriented societies consumption practices may strongly shape our sense of

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belonging and of uniqueness. But there are certainly other sources and influences on our sense of belonging and identity, even in most virulently consumption-oriented society. In the regions where the Salvadoran community radios emerged, peoples' sense of belonging and uniqueness are influenced by so much more than their consumption practices; their shared history of war and refuge is just one set of influences. In addition, community radio as a tool of social interaction and as a form of popular culture works against this re-organization of social life by consumerist principles, first, because people relate to community radio not simply as consumers but also as producers. Second, there are different kinds of values, histories and relationships which shape community radio interactions. These issues are discussed below and throughout this dissertation.

Transforming society itself

In El Salvador, it seemed that everyone I met who was involved with the radios or with these newly emergent organizations used the term "civil society" to refer to the sense of building a new society, creating a new network of organizations serving the range of people's needs, a new set of political rules encompassing "transparency" and popular participation, and a flowering of cultural expression. Serving civil society, helping it emerge and flourish, was seen as one of the core purposes of community radio. What is interesting is that in the Salvadoran context, the most significant distinctions between civil society and political or economic life had to do with scale and power: the relation of the actors to dominant power holders. Echoing the " critical" perspective described by Macdonald (1994:270-272), Salvadoran radio director Carlos Ayala wrote that civil society included "women and men who do not form part of established power, that is, neither of economic power, political power, military power, religious power, nor of the power of the large media of social communication" (Ayala Ramírez 1997:43).

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Excluding the market and the state

Whether any market forces should be included within the bounds of civil society has been a topic of some debate. Keane argues that market forces generally are excluded based on normative and strategic judgments: global corporations are seen as evil and strategically on the opposite side of conflicts that engage civil society actors. This is a mistake, he claims, because empirically, civil society has been interdependent on market forces, from its earliest roots in eleventh-century European cities to today's global cyberactivists (Keane 2001). Still, interdependence does not mean the two phenomena are the same.[7] Markets are not the same as forces which try to regulate them; corporations and civil society organizations have different goals and motivations. At least in the Salvadoran context, civil society organizations and initiatives must survive and actively push against the limits and resources of both market and state. The radios must raise money both locally and internationally to pay their staffs and electric bills. They must fight for legal recognition from state authorities and against attempts to close them or regulate them or define them as outside of what a "radio" is allowed to be. But this merely shows the constraints they face. Market forces and civil society forces do have different logics and it doesn't seem useful to include them together in the concept of civil society.

So, the community radios in El Salvador include as part of their constituency small, locally owned businesses, but not large national conglomerates, subsidiaries of transnationals, or businesses which are considered part of the power structure. This Salvadoran usage suggests that civil society represents the formerly marginalized

[7] At the same time it is true, as C handhoke notes, that these domains influence, affect and shape each other. In fact, "a single logic, that of power, underpin[s] these categories and bind[s] them together" (Chandhoke 2002:35).

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majorities, precisely those in whose name and to some extent, with whose support the FMLN fought the civil war; it demonstrates the continuity of this social movement, now broadened and more inclusive. In contrast, in the Gramscian view of civil society as the site of hegemonic conflict, the current hegemonic bloc would not be excluded; instead civil society is seen as an arena, "where economic, social, ideological and religious conflicts originate and occur" (Bobbio 1989:25). This focus is not surprising. The current period is effectively the first time in modern Salvadoran history that a broad based civil society has been allowed to develop by the established power elite, so the emphasis of current organizers and theorists, at least in the network of individuals and organizations connected to the community radios, is on what needs to be built, the arenas and associations of civil society.

This perspective can also be seen in the priorities of European- and Canadian-supported NGOs working in El Salvador in the 1980s and early 1990s compared to the U.S. supported NGOs. U.S. supported NGOs generally attempted to strengthen existing political and economic structures while European- and Canadian- supported ones more often sought to transform these structures (Macdonald 1994:281-283). But the NGO sphere itself has been criticized for not taking its own medicine. While NGOs frequently play a major role in democratization, they are not required to operate democratically or with the participation of their clients or members, and no authority controls their agendas. The state remains the body with the "obligation to promote citizenship rights and participation" (Jelin 1998:412). NGOs are neither representative of society nor accountable in the ways that elected governments are (Alvarez 1998:18; Chandhoke 2002; Gill 1997).

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Citizens and the rule of law

Civil society is about the power of citizens. One part of civil society is the emergence and dynamism of all the activities and organizations that people create to fill their needs and desires, to some extent autonomous of and unobstructed by the state. The other aspect of the concept centers on the meaning of "civil," what is a citizen's relationship to the state, or more broadly, the roles that citizens, as legitimate members of the constituency of the state, are allowed to play in structuring and constraining the state through voting, public meetings and demonstrations, and other expressions of opinion (Hearn 2001:345; Schneider and Schneider 2001:). In El Salvador, neither aspect of civil society could emerge until the power of the state was constrained through the 1992 Peace Accords and their implementation under United Nations supervision and other internal and international pressures. The rule of law rather than privilege is still weak in El Salvador and consequently, "civil society" is not an abstract concept: a real civil society means having an effective voting block of elected officials who will listen to you and be responsive, not having your organization's office vandalized, or receiving death threats when advocating controversial positions. Pressuring the state to maintain the rule of law is a crucial role for civil society and is still a struggle in El Salvador as paramilitary groups and vigilantes, criminal gangs, drug money laundering, corruption, and lack of implementation of labor laws and other human rights standards have bedeviled post-war society.

While the presence of the web of associations and activity which constitute civil society can be seen as a sign of a democratization of culture, it is also a demonstration of the power of society in relation to the state; it may be counter-hegemonic. And as an arena of contestation, a space which represents the divisions of society as a whole, a dynamic civil society may represent a threat to elite stability and a ground for social

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change (Pearce 1997:--). The mere existence of strong, autonomous organizations can be seen as threatening to those in power.

In El Salvador, the growth in numbers and dynamism of NGOs has been obstructed in two ways (Morán 1997:16). For example, in the mid 1990s, many organizations sought to attain their *personería jurídica*, or legal registration, from local or national governments (Blair, Booth et al. 1995:35). This effort to attain legal status by organizations was, on the one hand, simply an attempt to become eligible for international funding, but on the other hand, it was an attempt to be recognized as a legitimate part of society and not clandestine, subversive, or illegal. It was another way of putting the polarization of the war behind, so that, for example, police or armed forces could not claim their meetings were illegal. Perhaps concerned at this burgeoning of citizen action and demands for recognition, the national legislature passed a law in 1996 which rather than simply expand legal recognition for these organizations (all referred to as NGOs), instead extended the state's control by requiring not only board but membership lists and annual budget reports. And while the death squads and repression of the war years had mostly disappeared, attacks on civil society organizations were been increasing. A report from a solidarity organization warned that:

> "Since the beginning of 1999, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and labor unions have faced continuous violence and threats. In the past 10 months roughly 20 organizations have suffered one or more of the following:kidnappings of activists in which no ransom was demanded, break-ins stealing valuable equipment (in one case a data base was erased and the computers left in the office), death threats and shootings" (Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad:November 19 1999).

These attacks were not on political organizations, but on an organization that

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trains mental health workers, a national doctor's association, a government workers' union, a women's organization, a gay/lesbian/transsexual organization, and a consumer advocacy group. In addition labor unions have struggled in the face of mass firings due to government cutbacks and privatizations and weakly implemented labor laws, especially in the *maquila* sector (Spence et al. 1997:13-14). These attacks show that dominant powers continued to see any citizen organizing as threatening.

Like the targets of these attacks, the organizations and associations which make up civil society in El Salvador are diverse (see chapter 5). As the 1990s progressed, more locally based organizations emerged, often with some funding from international agencies but not completely dependent on it.

Community radio and civil society

The community radios seemed part of this larger phenomenon of many efforts to create the organizations, associations, and social, cultural and political processes that are associated with building civil society. This is clear in the rural areas; any association or group which wanted to publicize its work, events, opinions, or gather new members had few choices. There were no local newspapers or bulletin boards--the only other way of reaching the population was going door to door or driving around with a truck and a loudspeaker. Some local commercial radio stations did take announcements, but usually these were paid, and were inconsistently aired. But the relation between the radios and civil society organizations is more complex than this.

Both urban and rural community radios in this study cultivated relationships with a variety of groups and organizations. They regularly noted the activities of these organizations on their news programs and provided a forum for their activities, views and perspectives through longer-form interview programs. These programs allowed the

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organizations to inform the public about their activities and perspectives; while none were call-ins or provided a direct feedback mechanism, to some extent the questions and concerns of the radio staff stood-in for the concerns of the public. Several groups developed their own programs on these stations, made collaboratively with radio staff.

The community radio organizations themselves were mostly non-profit, non-governmental organizations. Just as the definition of civil society articulated through this network is in some ways distinctive in Latin America and peculiar to El Salvador, the reality of the radios overlaps with the categorical distinctions from government and market. Some of the rural radios were created through the autonomous self-governments of returned refugee communities close to the war's end, and local officials still sat on their governing boards. Most of the radios sold advertising time to non-profit organizations and for-profit businesses; some were even incorporated as for-profit businesses in an attempt to avoid being labeled "clandestine" by national regulatory bodies. But they were operated as non-profits and as autonomous from local governments. Their main role was to provide a public space for the activities of civil society.

The participatory community radios are the "communication channel of choice" of civil society; they saw civil society as their constituency and their core role to "make public the feelings and thoughts of the citizens through participatory forms of programming" (Ayala Ramirez 1997:46-8). They helped make these organizations more accountable through interviews and reports on their actions and providing space for their activities, letting people know what they are doing, and sometimes a place to question or interact with them. The radios provided a space for visibility, interaction, expression of identity and collective memory for the members of their communities. Mario Maida, the co-director of Radio Cabal, explained that, "We are creating a reality,

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in which the radio can be a space for civil society, in which the radio can be a foundation in civil society" (Maida, interview with author, January 30 1998).

While the radios as organizations may be part of civil society they are not simply channels to the state or to society. By providing public space for communicative interactions of civil society, they create a community of listeners, a new culture of what can be said, how it can be said, and who can say it. These public spaces are unlike those on commercial media. While media increasingly provide the principle spaces for representation and social interaction in Salvadoran society, commercial media are relatively closed to civil society's participation, because of their concentration of ownership and close links to government power.

The public spaces of the community radios are one victory won as a result of the long struggles of the 1970s and 1980s. They are a place where diverse voices can be heard, where the needs of formerly disempowered communities can be articulated and where their new identities can be formed. They are visible and participatory, "zones of action that present possibilities of participation to the subordinated groups who use and move through these spaces"-- a place where identities, demands and needs are shaped (Alvarez et al. 1998:19). These aspects will be explored in the following segments of this chapter through the concepts of public space, the public sphere and the roles of "small media" in shaping collective identity.

Public Space

What kind of space? Which public?

Public space on a common sense level is space that is accessible to a group of people defined as widely as possible. But each case requires a closer look at what "public" means, how it is socially and politically defined in each context, what kind of space is

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meant, at what scale. Space can be material and specific--a place or places like a plaza or town square--or "virtual" and categoric--the space of the press, the bars and street corners.

From a material perspective--architecture, for example--public spaces are arenas or stages to be filled by human activity and interactions. They may be shaped by factors such as technology, natural or constructed physical structures, or by the cultural factors such as shared meanings for the events held in these spaces. They fill human needs for a place to share experiences, whether everyday or special events or ceremonies (Carr et al. 1992:92). Political expression, debate, and the exchange of information, crucial for the development of civil society and democratic processes, depend on the availability of these spaces.

While radio is a virtual and not a material space, many of these functions are also relevant. Certainly radio air time is a space for interaction shaped by technology and the cultural history of broadcasting as well of the particular people and institutions using that space. Additionally it is a publicly available place to tune in: to passively "go" or actively engage with. And it is certainly a space for debate, political expression and exchange of information.

A particular public space is a product of negotiations over how it is defined, bounded and produced. The issues of access, control and meaning are key. Are the spaces physically available to all or just to some? for what kinds of activities? Are barriers equal or higher for some than for others? Who formulates these rules and who can change them; whose appropriations of use are challenged and whose are let stand? Are there symbolic cues that indicate whether people are welcome or not (Carr, et al. 1992:137-8, 158, 187; Harvey 1989:219)? For radio these might include whether a radio broadcast invites participation; if hours, locations, costs or interaction styles of radio

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staff make this more possible or difficult for potential participants; if broadcasts of public participation occur at times designed to reach targeted audiences; if the form of programming matches audience cultural expectations, as well as cues to who is included and who is excluded.

Meaning involves the ways public spaces are linked to individuals, groups, communities, through both formal design and the accretion of use. Do associations with a space resonate or have relevance, are these personal, group or societal connections (such as childhood memories, gay beaches, or national monuments such as the Vietnam memorial). "The development of meaning is an interactive process between space and person that evolves over time..." (Carr, et al. 1992:233). These categories provide a way to analyze conflicts over kinds of access, purposes and the meanings of public space.

Conflicts over public space

The concept of public space, like that of civil society, helps shed light on what makes community radios or participatory media different from other types of media. It provides a more basic level of analysis: what kind of space is this; what makes it "public"; what is a public? The concepts used to analyze public space, both in a more practical sense by architects and public planners (such as Carr et al. 1992) or by geographers and social theorists (such as Mitchell 1995; Low 2000; Smith 1994; Harvey 1989) and their focus on issues of access, control and meaning, provide a language to unpack what is too often assumed in discussions about "community media" and too often elided in discussions about "mass media." It also lays a more concrete groundwork for discussions about the public sphere. But perhaps the most important element is power: who decides whether a space is public and who defines that public.

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"Public space is the product of competing ideas about what constitutes that space ...and who constitutes the public" (Mitchell 1995:115)

"Public space" is the product of conflict: at any given historical period, who decides, through what processes, which spaces are public and which are private or domestic, and who is part of the public and who is excluded. The politics of public space define what kind of space is accessible to what kind of public: which individuals or social groups are permitted to use a particular location; which activities are considered appropriate and which not, even illegal; how are these customs or rules enforced, and how are they connected to the political histories, social and cultural identities of the groups involved. In addition, the symbolic meaning of a space is inseparable from the conditions of its use.

For example, in the well-known struggles over "People's Park" in Berkeley, California, activists and homeless users of the park saw it as an unconstrained space for political speech while university authorities and planners saw it as a recreational space for a particular segment of the public which they felt empowered to select and approve. Even though for 20 years activists were able to "appropriate," or claim, this space to enact their vision of public space, ultimately the power of the university allied with the local government prevailed and the former political soapbox became home to volleyball courts. "Public" space would not include political activities because the "public" did not include everyone in the prevailing solution (Mitchell 1995).

This conflict highlights how collective meanings can be constructed through the use of a public space: "...public spaces are also, and very importantly, *spaces for representation*...within which a political movement can stake out the space that allows it to be *seen*. By claiming space in public, by creating public spaces, social groups themselves become public" (Mitchell 1995:115, emphases in original). This is why

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revolutionaries and coup plotters alike try to take over the space of the mass media. Normally who speaks and who consumes this media is determined by major social forces, a combination of government regulation, market forces, and hegemonic alliances. Denied access, opposition forces either try to open this crucial arena, or they create their own arena.

For example, as industrial capitalism grew in nineteenth-century Philadelphia, the abundant, unregulated commons, squares and open land within and around the city either were developed as factories or housing, or regulated as parks or other spaces whose access and purposes were increasingly limited (Davis 1985). The city's five public squares had been used for many public uses including sports and recreation, festive dances including those held by African-Americans, political meetings, parades and holiday celebrations. As housing in these neighborhoods was rebuilt for the middle class, these squares were rebuilt as "elegant" parks for more narrowly defined purposes. Fairs were abolished because they drew together people and activities who made the powerful classes uncomfortable. Even informal street gatherings were suppressed, especially those of "Negros, Mulattos, and Indians, Servants and Slaves" who gathered at night to talk and play music (Davis, Susan 1985:9-10). As a result, people began to use the streets. Rather than renting halls for meetings and assemblies, the burgeoning labor movement communicated to its members and the public through large parades that wound through the streets with music, chanting, and speeches.

People denied spaces of public expression and visibility for their own cultural needs and for the expression of political views often redefine other spaces "public" and insist on their own inclusion in that "public." This dissertation explores the kinds of public space the community radios provided and how their space has been contested by different groups in Salvadoran society.

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The community radios, too, were spaces for the interactions of everyday life. There were social messages like birthday greetings, and calls for lost items; there were ads from local businesses and announcements about group activities. The banter of the on-air staff used local vocabulary and figures of speech, expressions that noted the pace of daily life and the time of year, and comments about people and events. These informally reflected the different aspects of cultural identity which people in the area navigate. More conscious efforts of cultural expression project a view of local cultural identity from the perspective of radio staff and town leaders through their production, selection, and broadcasting of music, poetry, *sociodramas*, historical reflections and other programming.

The community radios are crucial to civil society as central institutions for the exchange of information. The community radios are centers for the exchange of information within the community from both individuals and organizations. This space is critical to the definition and survival of civil society because it is an institution which provides space for civil society organizations to interact, to be heard more broadly, and to recognize themselves and each other. It broadens the potential participation in civil society by making it possible to share the debates and representations of civil society over a larger scale than possible in face to face interactions, such as meetings.

Trusted conduits for information from the outside world, through the news program of the national community radio association, the radios also program spots and full length programs distributed by international NGOs involved with radio production for popular education, human rights and other issues. While commercial radio is valued by dominant class as a conduit to potential markets, the community radios played a smaller economic role, though the development of the local economy was considered a long-term goal of the radios.

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Like the plazas and People's Park, the radios were symbols of their communities. Different meanings were fought out through their use by different constituencies. Government opposition saw the radios as a propaganda ploy by FMLN party, while others, like the telecommunication workers union, saw them as allies in a struggle. One radio staff person told me that the existence and survival of these radios were symbols of technological development and modernization, of a victory over attempts to marginalize and erase these populations. They showed how a community with so few resources could have access to modern technology which they not only use but own and control.

Public space and Salvadoran community radio

The struggle for popular control of public spaces is central to the situation of the Salvadoran community radios. Access to mass media, "systems of information and communication" have been formally guaranteed by the Salvadoran Constitution and through the government's acceptance of regional and international human rights documents, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, since at least 1948 (International Foundation for Human Rights and Tolerance 2004). According to many observers, recent regulation has not implemented these rights (see chapter 4 on legal conflicts). Unlike People's Park or many of the low-power radios in the U.S., the Salvadoran community radios are not seen primarily as a space for political acts; they are interested instead in providing a wide range of information, entertainment, cultural expression and communication services for their communities. But their existence as a public space is a political act even if their intent and content is not, because they are concerned with the power to represent and express the life of a community which has historically been denied access to public space.

Arguments for a free, democratic, mass media in the political realm usually target

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the need for public political debate. But these participatory radios meet several crucial needs which are too easily assumed but which must exist for this debate to exist. They also allow a broader and stronger cultural and social life.

The most basic reason for social protest to erupt and for social movements to emerge, is when particular social groups and their issues have been ignored, marginalized and made invisible. What community-based media do is first, provide publicly accessible space for those people and those issues to be heard, seen, and acknowledged. This is a precondition for the development of civil society's organizations and activities and for a public sphere to emerge through the interaction of organizations and individuals. There must be accessible locations. The criteria noted for physical public spaces like parks and streets and plazas can fit more "virtual" space like radio as well.

Public Sphere

The concept of the public sphere, while flawed, is useful here because it points to aspects of the role of communication media that the concept of civil society obscures and which that of public space misses. To oversimplify for the sake of clarity, civil society refers to the concrete organizations and associations that people create to represent themselves. Public space refers to the locations and arenas of their interactions and representations. The public sphere is a metaphor, like the "music of the spheres," or the "airwaves," for the expressions, representations, interactions, and communications that are shared by the actors of civil society. It is ephemeral, not a thing; made manifest through interactions, discourses, sets of activities. Some aspects of the metaphor are problematic: a sphere implies equality, that all points or participants are equidistant from the center. Combining the concept of the public sphere with civil society and public space grounds this discourse in the structural elements which shape, limit and bound it:

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economics, organizations, geography.

What is the public sphere? The seminal conceptualization is Habermas's, but because he wrote in German it is useful to first look a the meanings of the term itself in that language. "*Öffentlichkeit*" implies spatial sites or arenas "where meanings are articulated, distributed and negotiated" as well as the "collective body constituted by and in this process" (Hansen, Miriam 1993:179 n.). The term in German also expresses the idea of openness, accessibility. This implies both an arena of discourse and the body--the public--constituted by this discourse. Here, both the public sphere and its actors are constituted through interaction, rather than existing beforehand.

Based on his analysis of eighteenth- to ninteenth-century Europe, Habermas saw the public sphere as "a sphere which mediates between society and the state, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion, [and which] accords with the principle...of public information which once had to be fought for against the arcane policies of monarchies and which since that time has made possible the democratic control of state activities" (Habermas 1974:50). The locations of this discourse were meetings in cafes and salons, and political journals which were primarily carriers of opinion and not commercially supported. Its significance is that it points to the emergence of a forum in which certain citizens, through speech, assembly, media and institutions of representative government, mediate between society and the state, making the state accountable to society. At its most basic level, this creates a political communicative culture conducive to representative democracy (Fraser 1992:110,112). Habermas limited his view to the bourgeois public sphere because he thought it was the most significant to the development of the power of citizens as a counterweight to the state. Habermas distinguishes between two forms of public opinion. One was formed through the bourgeois public sphere, which had a certain "coherence created by

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bourgeois social institutions and a relatively high standard of education" (Habermas 1974:54). The second, formed through the realm of mass politics, was influenced by the greater diffusion of the press and other forms of "propaganda" beginning in the nineteenth century, so that the public sphere "becomes a field for the competition of interests, competitions which assume the form of violent conflict"(54). In other words, the expansion of the political public sphere beyond the relatively educated and wealthy merchants, industrialists, landowners and intellectuals who made up the bourgeoisie was not a step towards a more inclusive democracy but a turn towards mass manipulation and conflict.

This conceptualization is inadequate to our contemporary world for several reasons. With a tone nostalgic for a lost democratic ideal, Habermas sought to describe and analyze a phenomenon in a particular historical, cultural, geographic context. This formulation not only missed significant aspects of the public sphere of the time, but does not fit contemporary society, particularly because Habermas's perspective on media and publicity misses the possibilities and potential of the many forms of publicity which exist today. What did his conceptualization of the eighteenth and ninteenth century public sphere miss?

First, while it opened a space for discourse for men of property, the bourgeois public sphere increased the exclusion of others, particularly on the basis of gender

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(Landes 1988).[8] Second, according to many U.S. and European social and cultural historians, public life of that period was in fact much broader. It included not only talk, in face-to-face discussions or mediated through the rhetoric of mass meetings or printed forms of discourse, but also songs, visual symbols like banners, collective rituals of celebration or protest like parades or demonstrations (Brooke 1998: 50). A parallel "plebian" public sphere which was more oral and visual challenged the bourgeois public sphere (García Canclini 2001:220). The emergence of a radical intellectual sector in the 1770s challenged the state first through popular education and popular reform, and then through pamphlets, meetings and demonstrations, led in turn to the emergence of the nineteenth century labor movement (Eley 1992:327-8). These all constituted media of political communication and interaction; they were all part of the public sphere. "There were a variety of ways of accessing public life and a multiplicity of public arenas" which began to shape the power of the state (Fraser 1992:115-116; also see Ryan 1992:264 and Eley 1992:303-304).

Habermas's focus on bourgeois networks caused him to miss what arguably is most significant about the relationship of the public sphere to building democracy.

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[8] Feminists criticized the concept of the public sphere because it placed women outside of public life. It was based on a liberal pluralist paradigm which marginalized women by defining "their" sphere as domestic and it cut off rather than opened avenues of public and political participation for them (Davis, Belinda 1996:400-401). For example, in France radical bourgeois men and intellectuals belittled women's speech and the influential aristocratic women's salons as artificial and emotional. Locations of emerging bourgeois speech like cafes were less accessible to women since they were associated with the questionable morality of street life, while women were pressured to uphold a stricter domestic morality. The increasingly print-oriented public sphere left women, who were generally excluded from formal education, less likely to be producers as authors of books, editors of letters or journals or other collections (Landes 1988).

In short, "the gendering of the bourgeois public sphere was central to its foundation. Not only was one of its founding acts the supression of an active female and feminist public sphere, that of the prerevolutionary *salonniéres*, but the masculinization of public life also involved a restriction of women's activities to the domestic space and a concomitant alignment of the familial sphere with a new discourse of an idealized femininity" (Hansen 1993:198).

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Nineteenth-century U.S. public life marked a "trail of contestation" as women, immigrants, African Americans, and working people, "each fought their way into the public from a distinctive position in civil society, usually from a place of political marginality and social injustice ...Like the bourgeoisie before them, these social groups gave definition to their own particular stakes in the public interest as they expanded the domain of the public..." (Ryan 1992:284). Similarly elite women, peasants and working classes generated their own counterpublics in European contexts (Hansen 1993:199; Fraser 1992:61).

Habermas's bourgeois public sphere was characterized by rational debate and discussion in formal law-making processes. But in the eighteenth-century U.S. bourgeois public sphere, discourse was not characterized by enlightenment rationality but rather was "defined by wit, humor, theatricality, satire" (Shields 1997). These features can still be seen in British Parliamentary debates. Even the nineteenth-century turn to "republican virtue and morality" was still "moral" and "passionate" (Brooke 1998:54-5). Newman notes the role of play and performance, for example, in the manipulations of rhetoric and procedure which John Quincy Adams deployed in a congressional fight over the abolition of slavery. Political discourse required not just the framing of law but the mobilization of emotions (Brooke 1998:56).

Finally, Habermas's concept of the public sphere is limited in its conception of the mass media, which he saw as largely responsible for the disintegration of a rational public sphere oriented to the public good. Following the view of the "Frankfurt school" communication theorists like Adorno and Benjamin, Habermas found that the bourgeois public sphere disintegrated in nineteenth century with the shift in its practice from reason--the face-to-face discussion, debate and dialog of the cafes, salons, press and legislatures--to consumption--highly mediated one-way flow of information, opinion,

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and spectacle in mass forms of communication like mass rallies, the growing "penny" and "yellow" press, and later in radio and television broadcasts. Certainly it is true that a major role of the mass media in the twentieth century has been as part of the engine of consumption of an expanding global capitalist economy, which continues today. Fraser is correct when she notes that "the media that constitute the material support for the circulation of views are privately owned" and increasingly centralized (Fraser 1992:120; Bagdikian 1990). Through the mass media, we participate in public life less as citizens and more in as consumers in spectacles, leading García Canclini to muse that we are back to eighteenth century with the concentration of decisionmaking among economic and technical elites (2001:25)

But in light of more careful study in recent years of the complex ways people receive these messages, it is clear that different kinds of interaction are possible in new media like the internet, low-power radio, cheap video production, or the local-global intersections of popular musics, all of which create a new set of opportunities and constraints on the public spheres and the way they can be conceptualized and utilized.

Alternative perspectives

Alternative media and cultural activists especially since the 1960s with the development of light, portable recording equipment, have again expanded this "plebian" public sphere into an effective stage for civil society. Through these efforts "new modes of expression, self-reflection and inter-subjectivity might emerge from same cultural technologies that were destroying the old" (Hansen 1993:189). Influenced by Hans Mangus Enzenberger's proposition that the success of the culture industry comes from the appropriation of deep social needs which can also be appropriated by alternate means; this perspective holds that the the turn to consumption is not inherent in the

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technology itself (Enzenberger 1986). This alternative view of mass media potential has also been inspired by Brecht's 1932 polemic on radio in which he proposed that by transforming the use of the media from broadcasting to dialog, from one-way distribution of messages to two-way communication--which in fact was how radio was originally used and conceived--one could produce a more authentic expression of experience (Brecht 1986). All this leads to Negt and Kluge's useful reformulation of the concept of the public sphere which recognizes the possibilities inherent in alternative political economies and social organizations of media.

This concept of a more hybrid, conflictive, unstable public sphere allows for a greater democratic potential than does Habermas's. First, there are different types of media and spaces rather than the limited cafes and publications of the eighteenth- to nineteenth- century bourgeois public sphere. Second, this public sphere is the site of interaction among diverse and unequal participants rather than a sphere which assumes speakers' equality through excluding or obscuring conflicting private interests. This leads to a more democratic dialog and negotiation of interests (Fraser 1992:128). Finally, this is not a single public sphere but many conflicting, parallel or overlapping spheres, each corresponding to or constituting particular publics. Subordinate groups create their own spheres for debate, and their own range of arenas, in response to exclusions from the public spheres of more powerful groups (Fraser 1992:123-124). An individual might participate in more than one sphere, so that there is a possibility of communication across difference (Hansen 1993:126-8). Negt and Kluge heuristically describe three general types of public sphere:a classical, liberal bourgeois public sphere much like the elite sphere of Habermas's conception; an industrial sphere of commercial media, including broadcast and print media and advertising, and "proletarian" or counter-public spheres.

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Radio and the public sphere

Community radio is a particularly rich medium location for the interaction of the public sphere, though it seems clear from both Habermas's and Negt and Kluge's conception that no single location constitutes a public sphere; the term refers to that sense of communicative interaction among a public in a variety of media. Community radio is significant as a medium and location for the public sphere because through its broadcast range it creates a kind of boundary and definition of a public; because it invites interaction through its participatory nature; because it is often the main conduit of information for the public it serves; and because it includes a broad range of modes of communication: informative, emotional, dramatic, satirical, expressive, and so on.

Basque youth radio provides an example of how radio can help constitute an alternative, counter-public sphere. These frequently unlicensed youth radios are run by loose collectives independent of the organized Basque nationalist movement and political party. Through their varied programming and participatory processes, they help create an alternative sense of Basque identity. These radios are kind of a gathering place, like bars, bulletin boards or coffeehouses; rather than just providing access to the public sphere, they get "members of the community, particularly teenagers, to become producers rather than consumers of public knowledge" (Urla 1997:288). They help construct a social movement of counter-information which otherwise uses demonstrations, graffiti or street posters. The radio programs have their own aesthetic, expressed through using colloquial language, parody and low technology methods which make the sound-flow distinct and recognizable.

How does this relate to the experience of the Salvadoran radios? These radios also create a counter-public sphere. Through their collaborations with civil society

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organizations and with particular populations, they create a communicative arena--a public sphere--in which civil society can act. They provide visibility for civil society organizations and the issues which concern them. Like Basque youth radios, listeners are included through the use of identifiable language forms and music. Another aspect of this counter-public sphere are the efforts to maintain their community history and experience. The events of the war and its aftermath which these populations suffered are in effect the founding "myths" of the radio's communities. The radio station's commemoration of these events, such as the celebration of the return from the refugee camp, are acts of community memory which provide a point of self-identity for listeners, in turn, constituting them as a community or public with this shared history.

The public sphere and the creation of a public

The list of announcements which began this chapter illustrates what this particular public sphere that the community radios help create is like, the organizations and institutions involved, the everyday concerns, the two-way flow of information. Creating a sphere of debate and expression involves not only a web of organizations--civil society-- and arenas in which their expression can take place--public spaces such as cafes, newspapers, radio stations, plazas, and streets--but also the development of a communicative culture. In this way the public sphere is not just a shared space, but the sense of shared experience: political and economic conditions, social ties, and cultural traditions which make possible and at the same time limit these interactions.

But unlike the public sphere of the Basque radios, the alternative public sphere of which the Salvadoran community radios are a part does not seek to remain a small, marginal, autonomous part of the nation. It seeks to integrate into the dominant public sphere. It seeks to expand civil society to the majorities, so that their issues and

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perspectives are included as part of the normal spectrum of debate. Community radio and community media help create an alternative or counter-public sphere; but in relation to other networks and public worlds or spheres of discourse, including those at national and international levels.

Community radio as popular culture: a place to transform and recreate community identity

Community radio is in many ways better described as a form of popular culture than as a form of mass media. This may seem an odd choice. Popular culture is a problematic concept in some ways. Still linked to nostalgic ideas about folklore and collective essences, popular culture may seem hard to identify in the wake of the incorporation of most crafts, festivals, music, quilts and other kinds of art and expression into capitalist markets, the movements of people between city and countryside and across national borders, and especially in light of the growing transnational flows of communication, information and entertainment culture of the past half-century.

Rowe and Schelling (1991) and García Canclini (1993) take account of these factors in their careful analyses of popular culture in Latin American contexts. Situating community radio as a kind of popular culture brings emphasis to what is unique about it, aspects which tend to be obscured when it is considered a form of mass media.

Community radio is best described as a form of popular culture because it is made and used by people to serve their needs and desires, and is part of their daily life. This can only be seen by examining radio in its full context, as these approaches do. They examine popular cultures through the social relations in which they are embedded and through the entire process of production, diffusion and reception.

Community radio is virtually the only communication media that serves the need

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for expression in the rural areas (commercial radio and some television is received but not produced), and it serves a range of communication roles such as providing information and entertainment and maintaining memory and history. Because of these factors, community radio has become an assertion of local identity, an assertion of existence and legitimacy for populations which have historically been marginalized and non-hegemonic. Understanding community radio as a form of popular culture allows us to see the implications of these issues. After a brief discussion of the concept of popular culture, several issues specifically related to viewing media as popular culture will be considered.

First, what are the political implications of popular culture? One tension in analyses of popular culture is its definition as the culture of subaltern groups--poor, working class, rural, non-hegemonic--and the assumption that this culture must be resistant or oppositional. Media can be a powerful tool to strengthen collective identity, used to construct national identity or hegemony as well as to contest it. As a kind of popular, subaltern culture, is community radio necessarily oppositional, counterhegemonic, a kind of "small media"?

Second, the "cultural imperialism" critique was an attempt to point to the impact of transnational media flows, focusing on media contents, genres, and infrastructure. It focused on the dangers to national culture and proposed state-level solutions. But both cultural imperialism and the New World Information Order proposed as a solution have now been superseded by changes in global media contexts. Are transnational media still a threat to popular cultures and how have community media projects responded to these conditions?

Finally I examine several ways that community radio is a particular kind of popular culture: the question of its "virtual community," or the relationship of this

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broadcast communication form to geographic locality; how this practice responds to the spread of commodity culture; and the significance of this form's power of representation.

Popular culture defined

While "popular" in a Latin American context means "of the people," analogous to what community or grassroots connotes in English, the concept of "popular" has a distinct history which can be organized according to three perspectives. One is a romantic, nostalgic one, in which an "authentic" rural culture is threatened by the spread of a modern, industrial culture. On the other hand, popular culture can also connote a the dream of a modern, mass culture, as people aspire to participate in the cultures of advanced capitalist countries. Finally, popular culture has had an "emancipatory" ring, seen from a Marxian perspective as part of the resources of oppressed peoples (Rowe and Schelling 1991:2).

These contradictory frameworks of folklore, mass culture and empowerment pertain to community radio as well. It can be seen as a technology which can safeguard local tradition, community memory and culture; as a foothold in modern, technologically-connected society; or as a way for oppressed and marginalized peoples to gain control of their own cultural production against the onslaught of hegemonic and homogenizing national or global capitalist culture.

But these issues have different resonances in Latin American contexts. Folklore studies emerged as a romantic response to eighteenth- to nineteenth-century European industrialization. As elaborated by Herder, "folk" conveyed the idea that each community, people or nation was assumed to have a unique essence or spirit; communities were depicted as isolated without larger-scale structural relationships. Applied to radio, this notion conveys the idea of a technology with the potential to

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unleash the true face of "the people"; only provide access and people will create an authentic mirror, window, or song of their lives. In contrast, the "Frankfurt school" perspective on mass culture saw modern communications media like film or popular music as standardized forms of stimulation and distraction, not languages to communicate experience. Adorno emphasized that the potential for resistance within popular art is destroyed by its subordination to industrial production (Adorno 1998, 1963). Other perspectives are mainly concerned with the creativity of audiences as they respond to mass culture, interpreting and resignifying what they hear and see. These "readings" may not be oppositional; in this view, popular culture is a process of "everyday resistances" or "making do" with the materials at hand (Fiske 1989a:21, 25). For example John Fiske has analyzed everything from jeans, Rambo, wrestling programs and Madonna as popular culture; more recently, Kathy Newman studied audience resistence to radio ads in the 1930s in the U.S. (Fiske 1989a, 1989b; Newman 2004)

In the Latin American context, these views are incomplete. On a national scale, the political and territorial units which have become modern Latin American nation-states have never had a unitary "folk" or people; they have been pluri-cultural since before their colonial beginnings. Attempts to proclaim a single "mestizo" or favored "indigenous" identity continue to be conflictual. Large scale urbanization has occurred with ongoing relationships with rural regions, emigrants have maintained transnational contacts, and immigration, refugees and other population movements have all made the idea of a single authentic "essence" problematic in most places (Smith 1996; Mallon 1996).

At the same time, viewing mass culture as either wholly destructive or singularly relevant obscures the historical meaning of "modernity" within the region. Who has access to what is considered "modern" is still an ongoing process in many parts of Latin

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America (Rowe and Schelling 1991:9). Mass culture and mass media can more fruitfully be seen as a tool of this process, and unlike Europe where much of the formation of nation-states and national identity arguably occured before the emergence of mass media, in Latin America radio, television and film have been tools of this process. Mass media have functioned to push both peasantry and urban poor to accept their integration into a constructed national identity, as was the case for Mexican film industries or radio's popularization of Brazilian samba (Stavans 1995; Davis, Darién 2000). Like other forms of urban popular culture, mass media forms like *telenovelas* synthesize perspectives, concerns and cultural practices of various social sectors; mass media have also represented an assertion of their right to consumption by urban and rural poor (Martín Barbero 2001:225-226; 1987:95-7, 172-3; Rowe and Schelling:9,98-101). Rosi, a *locutor* from Radio Sumpul explained to me that just having the radio in their community was a victory, because the radio was a symbol of progress and the modern world that she never dreamed they could be part of, much less control (Rosibel Orellana, interview with author, June 3, 1997). Clearly community radio does not comfortably fit the model of folklore, mass culture or mass media here.

The possible range of popular cultures in Latin America has been strongly impacted by global spread of commodity culture. The continued infiltrations of cross-border capitalism and extensions of national markets are homogenizing and changing the purposes and processes of production, distribution and consumption. Often the resistance of popular expression seems limited to combining a market-oriented response with local needs and desires, turning traditional *fiestas* into tourist spectacles, or Indian symbols into signs of urban identity (García Canclini 1993:8). This occurs when the economic basis of practices is separated from their symbolic aspects, so that these processes and relationships can be re-organized into globally homogenous market-

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oriented categories (viii). Fiestas survive, but as income-producing tourist shows rather than as communal celebrations of shared values (8).

In this context, popular culture can no longer be defined as simply handmade or traditional, as integrated into modern technologies, or as necessarily emancipatory. Instead, "...popular meaning and value are gained in social relations. It is use, not origin, the position and capacity to arouse popular acts and representations..." which is most significant (García Canclini 1993:106-7).

Much of the recent research on media within anthropology has taken this approach (Mahon 2000:467). This is particularly important for community radio, because these stations are most often created by a community or community-based organization, and involve local participation in a number of ways, from management, to program selection and production, to speaking on the air (Girard 2000:2). Like indigenous media, what is most significant about this kind of media, and thus most central to understanding it, are the "social relations of its production, circulation, and consumption" rather than the texts, technologies or institutions themselves (Ginsburg 1997:124).

In the end, the key issue for understanding popular culture is not technology or modernity or tradition; what makes a practice "popular" is agency. "Popular" in popular culture is "located in the lived practices of people" (Rowe and Schelling 1991:7). Popular culture is culture-making, not texts, crafts, events, or other kinds of things, and its result is the transformation of people into subjects, actors-for-themselves. "Popular culture...[is] a space or series of spaces where popular subjects as distinct from members of ruling groups, are formed" as sites where "social conflicts are experienced and evaluated," and which are vital as the "recognition of collective experience which are not acknowledged by established political culture" (Rowe and Schelling 1991:10,12). In other

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words, popular culture is transformative action: expressive practices or activities of the less powerful groups of a society; sites or places in which experience is reflected on, evaluated, and expressed. Through these processes a sense of collective identity is formed.

The political implications of popular culture

What are the political implications of these processes? One tension in analyses of popular culture is its definition as the culture of subaltern groups--poor, working class, rural, non-hegemonic--and the assumption that this culture must be resistent or oppositional. Rowe and Shelling and García Canclini describe popular culture as practices in which less powerful, non-hegemonic groups reflect on, evaluate, and express their experience, and through which a sense of collective identity is formed. Communication media have been noted as particularly powerful media for construction of identities, both on a national scale and on a small scale. But does this mean that popular culture is necessarily counterhegemonic?

Media can be a powerful tool to strengthen collective identity, used to construct national identity or hegemony as well as to contest it. On a national scale, Anderson provided insights about the relationship between media and collective identity. He noted that large scale media played a significant role in developing a national "imagined community," that sense of shared "something" beyond kinship or clientship, among people who do not personally know each other or interact with each other (Anderson 1983:15). Particularly relevant to the role of media in this process are the ideal of simultaneity, the exclusivity of language, and the selectivity of performance. Simultaneity points to the fact that everyone reading a newspaper (or even more, listening to a radio or watching a broadcast) is participating in something together, like a

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mass ceremony. How a privileged use of language can become accessible in a way that was not possible before is quite different in broadcast media. In Anderson's example, writing itself became accessible through the use of vernacular language, instead of the sacred texts only decipherable by priests or leaders, but still accessible only to the small minority of literate people. With broadcasting, privilege and accessibility are simultaneous: anything that is broadcast is itself privileged because of the very fact that it is selected out of the vast flow of possible speech for this technological enhancement. Its very selectiveness makes it privileged, but it is made broadly accessible through its diffusion in which a listener or viewer can participate. This is the performance aspect of media--the actual voice of the president! My voice on the radio and everyone can hear it! Through this process of communication, a "united field of exchange" is produced; all listeners participate in this event, and all those who participate become the "imagined community" (Anderson 1983:16, 39, 41, 47). In this way, a sense of collective identity is produced through communicative interaction. But this community is potentially broader than a print-based one, because the barriers to access--literacy versus radio receivers--are lower.

This simultaneity, accessibility and creation of a unified field can work on scales other than the national, which is Anderson's focus. Arguably, this method for constructing identity can only be stronger on a smaller scale and when the control of this media is in the hands of the community itself. This is in part the argument for the power of "small media," an attempt to coin a more inclusive term for that sector of alternative media projects which accompany social, cultural or political movements. Indigenous and social movements of all kinds have seized these tools as responses to pressures which have sought to socially, politically or culturally erase, disempower or destroy them. For example, Australian aboriginal, Amazon and Inuit peoples' video and television projects

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could be labelled "small media"[9] (Ginsburg 1997 , 1991; Turner 1990, 1991), as could the use of cassettes in the Iranian revolution, community video in the U.S., *samidzat* in the former Soviet Union, even graffiti painted on walls (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1995; Downing 1984; Mattelart 1986) What is distinctive about "small media" is that they are "*participatory, public phenomena*" (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1995:20-1; my emphasis) and that they use these technologies in collective processes to heal their internal wounds and assert their presence in the broader society (Ginsburg 1997:120). Like forms of popular culture generally, this kind of media work can be transformative, helping to create and make visible a sense of shared experience and collective belonging (Ginsburg 1993:135). In addition, these projects challenge the perspectives available in the hegemonic public sphere (Anderson and Goldson 1991:61).

Are community radio projects "small media," counterhegemonic in this sense? Most community media projects struggle with an underlying tension. For projects like the educational radios of Sutatenza, Colombia in the 1950s and 1960s, or for state regulators in Chile and El Salvador, community radio is about providing a communication medium for small localities with minimal broadcast strength capable of reaching only a few kilometers (see chapter 1). But for others, this work isn't primarily about radio or media at all; it is a mission of empowerment, of giving voice to the voiceless, of self recognition, of creating or re-creating a sense of shared experience, history and identity. The community radios in El Salvador struggle with this tension between two visions of community-based broadcasting: serving the wide range of communication needs of local audiences versus empowering their collective expression. Yet ultimately, because of their history and the opportunities afforded by the post-war period, the Salvadoran community radios do serve to advocate for their populations and

[9] The term was coined by Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1995.

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regions. This dissertation explores how they play these roles.

Responding to transnational cultural influences

On the wave of the anti-colonial and national liberation movements of the mid-twentieth century, communications scholars and activists turned their attention to the impacts of communication systems and information flows. The cultural imperialism critique examined media contents, genres, and infrastructure in an attempt to understand the impact of transnational media flows. The critique pointed to the dangers to national culture of these flows and proposed state-level solutions (see Varis 1985; Dorfman and Mattelart 1991; International Commission 1980). But both cultural imperialism and the New World Information Order proposed as a solution have now been superseded by changes in global media contexts. Are transnational media still a threat to popular cultures and how have community media projects responded to these conditions?

From the beginnings of radio broadcasting early in the twentieth century until its last decades, nation-states took control of broadcast regulation, whether under commercial broadcasting models as in the United States, in public service state broadcasting models like Spain, or in mixed models like El Salvador's. The motivations for this regulation were first, to create, protect or promote a standardized version of national culture, especially for states focused on nation-building. Second, states sought to protect national markets and jobs in cultural production. Foreign ownership of broadcasting entities were seen as threatening to national sovereignty (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1991).

In the 1960s and 1970s, critics pointed out that flows of both hardware (equipment) and "software" (forms and content, including both information and

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entertainment) from the developed world undermined the capacity of these countries to create their own media industries and sense of national culture, cohesion and identity (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1991). This charge of "cultural imperialism" developed out of the dependency critique, which held that the lack of development of the Third World was not a result of "traditional" or "backward" values and attitudes but a result of their dependent position in global political and economic structural relationships (Cardoso and Faletto 1979; Frank 1966). Protection and support for national media and culture industries, and for regional initiatives were supported by global agencies like UNESCO to amieliorate these imbalances and to move towards a, "New World Information Order" (International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems 1980).

Conditions changed in the 1980s and 1990s, so that cultural analysts found the cultural imperialism critique lacking in several areas. First, regional centers of media production and exports emerged in several areas of the world. These included film in India and Hong Kong, television in Mexico and Brazil, and music in several regions. In Latin America, Mexico and Argentina early developed rock and pop traditions and industries, while other music industries emerged in Brazil, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic. Access to some media technologies, especially radio, began to become more widespread for more of the world's population,[10] even though the global consolidation of the world's media industries continued (Bagdikian 1990).

Second, for countries emerging from civil war like El Salvador, and for others

[10] UNESCO has monitored trends in communication access relating to the gap between rich and poor nations. For example, the distribution of radio receivers rose dramatically from 90 to 238 per thousand people in developing countries from 1970 to 1995, and of television receivers from 99 to 146 per thousand in the same period. Meanwhile developed countries recorded 1025 radios and 529 televisions per thousand inhabitants in 1995 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 1999b). The distribution of daily newspapers in developing countries doubled, from 29 to 58 per thousand from 1970 to 1995, even as it declined from 292 to 230 per thousand in developed countries (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 1999a). India became the largest producer of films with over 800 per year while the United States remained the largest exporter (Frederick 1993:67).

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which encompassed diverse cultures based on ethnic, rural-urban or other kinds of distinctions, the value that the cultural imperialism critique placed on national culture was awkward, since there rarely had been a pure, uncontested national cultural identity to counter transnational or global cultural impositions (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1995:10-11; Rowe and Shelling 1991:4-5).

Third, analysts utilizing Cultural Studies approaches questioned whether audiences uncritically accepted the views and values underlying imported programs and argued instead for multiple possible interpretations of media texts (Stuart Hall 1980; Morley 1992). Audience research also questioned assumptions about how media changed existing patterns of community, family or daily life (Kottak 1990; Morley 1992; Ang 1996a; Lull 1990a,b). Other research examined how cultural groups and social movements used media technologies for their own ends--whether to foment revolutions, stay in touch with migrant or home populations or simply to enjoy existing cultural expression in a new way (Abu -Lughod 1993a, 1993b; Sreberny-Mohammadi 1995; Manuel 1993). Considered together, this research demonstrated that the significance, interpretations or impacts of media contents or technologies cannot be assumed, but must be examined in the contexts of their production, diffusion and reception. Media must be understood not only as "cultural products" but also as "social processes" (Mahon 2000:468).

While the cultural imperialism critique has become insufficient to describe current complexity of global cultural relationships, it retains some validity as an analysis of the economic and political power of cultural commodities. By analyzing the social processes and examining the broader contexts of production and use allows us a more nuanced understanding of these transnational processes.

For example, local broadcasting strategies based on capitalist marketing formulas

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may lose when attempting to compete with transnationals. In the 1980s, attempts to decentralize Spanish broadcasting and promote regional cultures with distinctive languages, histories and cultural traditions foundered. These efforts depended on advertising income and the same strategies to attract mass audiences, such as using recycled U.S. television series, as national and transnational broadcasters. Regional broadcasters' need for more programming linked regional systems to transnational commercial broadcasters for whom distinctive cultural identity was simply an opportunity for segmented marketing (Maxwell 1995:153). "Cultural autonomy (national or regional) appears to be a structural impossibility," Maxwell pessimistically concluded, "in the context of a deregulated and globalized communication industry"(134). But the underlying problem was that no alternatives to commercial broadcasting were put forth to support democratic communication policies (iixi).

Other scholars have found examples of more sucessful hybrid cultural production, combining modern and mass cultural social processes, technologies and forms with those specific to particular communities and cultural groups. One approach is through the reinterpretation of imported programs, as Eric Michaels found in some aboriginal communities (Michaels 1984). Among Pacific island radios, Seward found local station DJs used tone, slang, and pacing that North Americans would recognize from any pop or rock radio station, but they also featured dedications, announcements and other practices not at all like transnational commercial mass media (Seward 1999:14). Even though imported music was criticized there for threatening to marginalize, absorb and even destroy local and regional culture (29, 17-19), Seward argued that the threat of globalization of culture must be weighed against local conditions and agency. For the Pacific Islands these conditions include their marginality as a market, the thriving locally- owned cassette music economy, and broader music

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contexts of family, church, hotels, and meetings (36, 29, 35). Local musicians borrowed instrumentation, genres and sounds from the First World and incorporated them into their own productions, because they felt appropriate to their changing lives; their local meanings were not evident to outside ears, like jokes or laughter (35).

In another example, Basque pirate radio stations of the 1980s combined selections from mass media, productions of their own, and original contexts through language, formats, and associated cultural spaces such as cafes, to create a heterogeneous, bricolaged version of Basque culture. "Youth...create their own media universes and visions of Basque modernity that are locally specific and diverse." This is a way to "gain control of their own cultural reproduction in the public sphere" (Urla 1993:116).[11] Ways in which these hybrid, reconverted or vernacularized forms of popular culture may meet this challenge will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

Community radio as popular culture

Localities and interaction. The scale of community radio can vary: community radios may serve a small locality or a city or a large region. What does "community" mean in this context, for a broadcast or "virtual" media form? What is the relationship of this broadcast communication form to geographic locality?

The particular geographic range of community radios can be small or large. A sense of regional identity was conveyed by "local" music on Pacific Island radios,[12] which could include music from Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands, or Australian

[11] Perhaps coincidentally, several Basque cultural activists were long-term volunteers in Salvadoran art and social projects.

[12] The Pacific Island stations examined by Seward are not strictly speaking, community radios; they are mostly local state-run or commercial radios. But they share many features with them. First, music programming is locally selected with informal audience feedback outside of the radio studio, and other programming is similar, such as announcements and messages from listeners (Seward 1991:15).

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aboriginal groups. This was reinforced because each radio station's broadcasts rarely served more than a single tiny island nation, and because broadcasters and listeners also interacted outside of the studio (Seward 1999:14 20, 22).

Community studies in anthropology tend to understand localities as both spatial and interactional, distinct settlements of people which may include kinship ties, neighbors, informal groups and small associations as well as many kinds of commercial, service and cultural interactions in the course of meeting the needs of everyday life. A particular locality is recognized not so much by its boundaries as through density and variety of interactions. These interactions may result in a sense of conscious identity (Leeds 1973:20-22); clearly participatory media like community radio could be part of this process.

Studies of media and community focus on interaction between on-air speakers and audiences, and among audiences. One study of a U.S. public radio station proposed that this sense of community had a geographic *referent*, corresponding to New Mexico state borders, but was a *social* link created through radio listening and expressed through the shared use of terms and concepts. It was "the process of communication [that]...ultimately reinforces communal solidarity" (Bareiss 1998:419).

An overview of African local and community media suggested that the sense of community is created through communicative interaction in a range of different media, but more participatory, interactive forms such as community theatre are more significant (Opudor 2000:3,4). In general, two-way interaction or participation is the defining characteristic of community-based media; participation is the key that makes this media distinct from mass or broadcast forms.

Consumers, not communities? But some question whether this sense of community is still relevant. A website for pirate radio proclaims that, "the word

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"community" has lost any real meaning....the old style communities are thing of the past (if they ever really existed) except on the Soap Operas, as the system breaks us all down into individual consumers" (unknown 1986). A sense of social belonging, or citizenship, García Canclini asserts, is now mostly "associated with the capacity to appropriate commodities and with ways of using them" (2001:15).

García Canclini argues compellingly that identities are now too heterogeneous, too much in flux to be described as national, let alone community based. The sense of belonging is now more influenced by consumption than political activities or networks of civil society and citizenship is no longer primarily politically and territorially felt and experienced (García Canclini2001:20). Consumption, he argues, must be seen more broadly as the whole complex of production, distribution, marketing, consumer movements, and other influences on practices of group distinction. From this perspective, consumption is a way to make sense of the world, a way to create order, a feeling of shared experience or belonging and meaning out of the world (38-40,46).

The result is that the sense of citizenship as a feeling of social belonging is constructed more through consumption practices than political practices such as voting, labor union or political party membership, his argument continues. Instead, mass media create the modern public sphere and publics turn to the media for "services, justice, reparations, or just attention" (García Canclini 2001:23), even if the mass media is no more successful than these public institutions. The mass media have become an industrialized version of the plebian (working class) public sphere. Since the general public has little or no power to influence mass media, this concentrates decisionmaking among economic elites and much like the eighteenth century (24-25).

But participatory media go against these trends; this dissertation shows that the local or counter-hegemonic public sphere provided in part by the community radios

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builds a more active and inclusive sense of citizenship. Public spaces like community radios are interactive and encourage participation in decisionmaking in a number ways. They help people become involved in the activities of civil society organizations, in decisionmaking from elections to running the radio station itself, and in advocacy on human rights issues. A sense of belonging is strengthened not as consumers of radio programming, but as participants in activities shared through community radio.

Radio, visibility and the public sphere

The power in community media is in part, the power to make visible. People always have spoken their minds, but, " the women talk often [in private spaces] with their *comadres*, in the kitchen, in the yard. And the *campesino* has a lot to say, but not in front of the powerful ...." (López Vigil 2000:1) The responsibility of community radio is to amplify these voices, López Vigil argues, which gives them broader social legitimacy. Most accounts of the importance of a free press make a similar argument: that one of the key roles of the press is legitimizing the perspectives of the population, of the citizenry. The possibility of democratization and the practice of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship relies on this process.

Describing the impact of low power radio in Argentina, where thousands of small stations sprang up after the fall of the dictatorship, a radio director wrote,

> We believe that popular communication is more adequately defined as a series of practices in which new communications actors --workers, peasants, the unemployed, women in all kinds of occupations, indigenous people, jacks of all trades, illiterate people, all the residents of the shanty towns--*become visible to themselves and to society* in a way which, although precarious and contradictory, is as distinct and significant as their own lives and cultures and the social

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movements that they create and which represent them (Bregaglio and Taglie 2001:6, my emphasis).

This effort to become "visible" is a means to claim public space, to claim a share of the public sphere. Much like the video projects of the Kayapo people of the Amazon region,[13] this "small media" can act to confirmed their legitimacy in the national and international public sphere. "The power of representation through these media thus became identified with the power of conferring value and meaning on themselves in the eyes of the outside world and reflexively, in new ways, in their own eyes as well" (Turner 1991:35). Thus, this opening of the public sphere is counter-hegemonic, much like the process Nancy Fraser described for the U.S. public sphere in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (see above, page 129-130).

Community radio as popular culture: agency, interaction, participation

Community radio is a site of intersection of mass and popular cultures. On one hand, it is electronic and modern and tends to diffuse its messages in a mass, that is, one-to-many pattern. But on the other hand, it provides access to a media technology for speaking as well as for listening to non-hegemonic populations rather than for the privileged few. Its programming and control tends to be based on lived practices rather than marketing formulas. What makes community radio "popular culture"is that it is actively produced by, dependent on the experiences and daily lives of, and shaped by the same forces affecting, the people whom it serves. Everything from its staffing, funding, decision making and programming is created through this "agency." For community

[13] Since the 1980s, Amazonian Kayapo peoples have used video not only to document their own practices as a form of community memory, but also through events designed to attract and manipulate the national and international press. The responses of anthropologists, Brazilian and international press lent legitimacy to their distinct and valuable culture, as much to themselves as to outsiders (Turner 1991).

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radio theorists, the word for "agency" is participation.

Community media practitioners and theorists describe interaction or participation as key to its definition, how it is different from other communication media. They love to quote Bertolt Brecht's 1932 statement that radio would be wonderful "if it knew how to receive as well as to transmit, how to let the listener speak as well as hear, how to bring him into a relationship instead of isolating him" (Brecht 1986:53). Bruce Girard, a long time radio producer, activist, and theorist says that community radio is distinct from both commercial and public (or state controlled) radio because "its most distinguishing characteristic is its commitment to community participation at all levels" (Girard 2001:2). This includes not just the limited ways offered by commercial stations such as call-in talk or advice programs or song requests; but where "community radio listeners are the producers, managers, directors, evaluators and even the owners of the stations"(2). This is increasingly important for those at the margins of society, and those who seek political and cultural change. It is:

> based on a concept of participatory communication. The role of the radio is to respond to the priorities set by the community, to facilitate their discussion, to reinforce them, and to challenge them. Juggling all the interests of a community is difficult, and community radio does not always succeed. However, when it does, its broadcasts are marked with a passion rarely seen in commercial or large-scale State media. This passion arises out of a desire to empower listeners by encouraging and enabling their participation, not only in radio but in the social, cultural and political processes that affect the community (Girard 2001:2).

The root of this participation is the close relationship that community radios have developed and maintained with their audiences. José Ignacio Lopez Vigil, a major

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theorist of community media in Latin America, describes it like the give-and-take of a marriage:

> If you open up to real listeners, if you make yourself vulnerable to the audience, this seduces you [*te flechará*]. It is a two-way process between speakers and listeners...and in this interchange, it is the public, in the end, who make felt their desires, letting us know their expectations and needs.... the community discovers, little by little, the potentials and limitations of the radio medium (López Vigil 2000:12).

A number of factors contribute to participation, encouraging it or setting up conditions that make broad audience participation more likely or possible. Key factors are accessibility, decision making and control. Below I will sketch how community radio theorists and practitioners from Latin America have considered these factors. (This is largely based on discussions in López Vigil 1997 and Belfon 2000).

Accessibility: Community radio is seen as perhaps the most accessible of modern communications technologies, because barriers of skill, technology and cultural codes are low. Both the characteristics of the medium and how these barriers are socially and culturally elaborated in community radio settings contribute to this (Lamas 2000). And it has been uniquely effective: miners in Bolivia built their union movement around radio (Nash 1979)

Skill. As an oral medium, radio is uniquely accessible for populations with low literacy rates. Globally it is the most widespread "mass"media in poorer and less literate regions. In the Caribbean or El Salvador, as in many parts of the world, "orality" is a major communication channel and radio as a "public communication system...responds to this need and facilitates it by being extremely mobile, easily accessible and affordable" (Belfon 2000:1). Even in highly literate societies, skill barriers for radio are low: to

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participate one needs only to be able to talk and listen.

Social/cultural codes: Another aspect of accessibility concerns how community radios deal with cultural and social barriers to participation such as staff or participant hierarchies, familiarity with technology, and cultural styles associated with the medium. Each radio organization deals with these issues in different ways. One way is through the modes of address used by staff or core speakers on the radio. López Vigil counsels community radio speakers use a colloquial, everyday tone, "a tone of trust, even complicity, between speaker and listener." (López Vigil 1997:38) Culturally sensitive vocabulary is another way to make radio speech more accessible. Juan Lucas of Radio Segundo Montes constantly warned his staff about using "*palabras rebuscadas,*" dictionary words, instead of the words used by rural listeners of the station.

Another set of social and cultural codes relates to the station as an institution. Are the radio station's studio and office seen as a public or community space or as a private office? Do those "inside" (the core staff) share the same codes of behavior, for politeness, for example, as those "outside" (listeners, visitors, occasional producers); are core staff well-known in the community or are they more or less strangers?

Technology: Technology, too can be a barrier. Among communication media, radio technology is the least difficult to learn, and is the least literacy-dependent, unlike the printed word or internet. But, as Ernesto Lamas points out, "Access to technology implies a series of cultural codes (language, technical knowledge)" which are acquired and used through people's social relationships, so that participation in radio communication depends not only on the characteristics of the technology itself but how learning and use is organized (Lamas 2000:2). Most find that rather than train media professionals in participatory methods, it made more sense to train local people in radio technology (Berqué 2001:4).

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Decision making and control. Another factor which influences participation concerns how close potential participants are to decision making and control of the radio organization. Founders of a community radio station in Ecuador started their own station in part, "because commercial media wouldn't let us on the air, because, as you know, sometimes they just don't let people from the countryside on the air" (Girard 2001:3). Listeners of El Salvador's Radio Sumpul told me that they used that radio for a similar reason. But beyond this, the central issue is who makes decisions about who speaks on the air. If the station is community-owned, community members will more likely be welcomed to participate, depending on internal politics. Several of the rural community radios in El Salvador were chartered by the community's self-governing authorities, and people did feel that their opinions about how the station was run mattered.

Do income sources affect public participation? More significant than where the money comes from is what is done with it, if the earnings of the radio organization are not "privatized," ending up in the pockets of the staff or owners but are reinvested in the organization. In other words, non-profit organization is central to a community radio station's mission. In addition, public or community participation must be central to the mission of the organization not simply a method to gain listeners for other programming, like advertising.

Moving forward

The balance of this dissertation explores how the participatory nature of the Salvadoran community radios played a role in developing civil society, public space and the public sphere, and a sense of community identity. In these processes, the community radios played a role in furthering a decades-long attempt by poor and working-class

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rural agricultural and urban populations to claim their human rights and a fair share of the resources they helped develop in this country. For this reason, the meaning of civil society developed a particular set of connotations among community radio advocates, related to the Gramscian perspective prevalent among the left throughout Latin America. Civil society referred to the sense of building a new society, creating a new network of organizations serving the range of people's needs, a new set of political rules encompassing "transparency" and popular participation, and a flowering of cultural expression. Serving civil society, helping it emerge and flourish, was seen as one of the core purposes of community radio.

As part of this process, the community radios opened a local public space for community interaction. This involved conflict, as opening public space always does, because it entailed redefining who had the right to speak and be visible and who could decide this, because these spaces were both a tool and a symbol of the power of social groups.

The public space of the community radios became a location for the development of an alternative public sphere where the concerns and interests of their communities could be circulated and shared. This visibility contributed to a sense of community identity as participants in radio as speakers and receivers could recognize and respond to the ways their concerns, needs, histories and pleasures were represented in the broadcasts. In addition, the broadcasts helped these formerly marginalized communities become more visible participants in a national public sphere.

While the community radio stations were in a technical sense a form of broadcast media, in terms of their social relations they encouraged a more participatory, interactive form of communication. In this way they were a form of popular culture, a way that activists and others in the localities in which the radios operated helped construct a

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contemporary sense of community identity. This identity was not defensive but based on their selection of cultural practices and ideas which came from a variety of sources, including their shared histories and the commercial media flows which were also received in these regions. This ongoing process of producing culture was distinct from the sense of belonging and difference "associated with the capacity to appropriate commodities and with ways of using them" (García Canclini 2001:15) not only because it built on shared histories and experiences, but also because it involves listeners as producers. It built a stronger, more rooted sense of subjectivity. The chapters which follow will show how community radio as a form of popular culture had begun to strengthen the emergent civil society through its participatory, culture-producing practices.

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Chapter Four

Fighting for Public Space, Creating a Public Sphere: Legal Struggles and Graduations

In this chapter, I describe how the community radios provided a public space for the communities which they served. This space allowed them to play an important role in the national public sphere as well as in the local communities in which they operated. I will illustrate this first by sketching the years-long struggle for legalization of the community radios and then by showing how one of these radios used that space to express their values and priorities locally through live coverage of school graduations.

I find the concept of public space useful, because it provides a way to analyze the concrete preconditions for the social and political action which are described and analyzed here. The concept of the public sphere further shows how the arena of discourse created through these spaces can strengthen a sense of collective identity.

Public space is not solely a geographic feature like a mountain or lake, but is a social and political construct. It is the product of conflict: "Public space is the product of competing ideas about what constitutes that space ...and who constitutes the public" (Mitchell 1995:115). The Salvadoran battle to legalize the community radios and open this space for their communities makes it clear that beyond their particular existence, this battle was part of the national post-war redefinition of power: who decides and through what processes who is part of the public and who is excluded.

Marginalized people create their own public spaces, insisting on themselves as a public or as a part of the larger public or citizenry. Salvadorans denied visibility and opportunity to express their cultural perspectives and their political views in the

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prevalent public spaces of our time, the mass media, created other public spaces which had not existed before -- such as community radios. In addition, they insisted on their own inclusion in the "public": they insisted on their radios' acceptance and recognition as valid and legal, and refused labels such as "pirate" or "clandestine" which have been a mark of honor for alternative media projects in other times and places.

Like other public spaces, the community radios played another role as well. They provided *spaces for representation* which allows social, cultural, or political movements public visibility (Mitchell 1995:115). Consistent with the decades-long efforts of the poor, mostly rural but increasingly urban majorities, the community radios made available a new tool in their fight for inclusion in the national public sphere, in national political debates and cultural life of the country. "By claiming space in public, by creating public spaces, social groups themselves become public" (Mitchell 1995:115). The Salvadoran radios refused to submit to national regulations which they believed violated their human rights, and they harnessed the support of powerful national and international institutions. The communities which created the radios continued to use the radios' air time to represent themselves to themselves and to share their values and priorities, perhaps most clearly seen in the extensive coverage that the community radios gave to key local events like graduations. The community radios became central locations for local or regional alternative public spheres, in which the perspectives, aesthetics, priorities and values of its participants could be shared among a broad public.

The concept of the public sphere, while problematic (see chapter 3) is useful here because it points to the ways a shared arena of discourse can be created or strengthened by a participatory medium like community radio. This medium is unlike standard mass media, which with its one way flow of information provides opportunity for consumption rather than participation. In contrast, participants in community radio become

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producers of public knowledge and expression.

The radios provided an accessible space for civil society's organizations and activities and for a public sphere to emerge through the interaction of organizations and individuals. The community radios, in providing a public place to speak, also provided a place to transform and recreate community identity. By representing themselves -- their news, announcements, significant events and achievements, jokes and diversions, music, the life of a community-- they used the power of representation to express their values and priorities, and help produce a shared, community identity.

Because of both the prevalence of radio technology and the participatory processes of these radios, community radios provide access to a local public space as no other mass media do. Both examples examined in this chapter explore the constraints on the community radios' accessibility, first as a whole, on the national level, and then locally for one specific radio.

The case of Radio Segundo Montes's coverage of its community's graduations provides an opportunity to analyze the nature of access to its public space: who decided whether to cover this event, how to cover it, and how its significance would be presented? In other words, how was it decided that this event be made public; who controls the public space of community radio?

The efforts of the community radios to gain access to the airwaves and to survive became a national issue. It came to represent the broader struggles for representation of the people in the rural areas and small towns, much like the fight of the mayors for a larger percentage of the national budget. Its underlying human rights concerns resonated with so many other post-war conflicts in which less powerful groups sought to bring their concerns to the national stage, the national public sphere: the right of union representation, right to march in the streets, the right to public services, the right to

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personal safety.

The legalization of the Salvadoran Community Radios

The community radios begin broadcasting, and petition the government for licenses

"In these radios, the voice of the most humble of the Salvadorans was valued on the dial" (Asociación de Radios y Programas Participativas de El Salvador, ARPAS 1997a).

While the former guerrilla radios were legalized by the signing of the Peace Accords on January 16th, 1992, several of the communities most affected by the war began low-power radio stations to serve their social and cultural communication needs. Probably due to the low profits possible in these communities, neither private business nor the state showed any interest in providing these services.

Since 1991, some of the new radios had begun petitioning the government for licenses. They filed the required paperwork but received no response or were denied licenses. This was during a period when Administración Nacional de Telecomunicaciones (ANTEL), the national telecommunication agency, more than doubled the number of FM licenses from 78 to over 160 (Ministry of Interior 1994). In contrast, the community radios "were told that there were no frequencies available or that they would have to wait until all parties that had previously solicited a frequency were granted one. They were accused of being ploys of opposition political parties or of competing unfairly with commercial broadcasters" (Walsman 1996:11).

The rural radios are closed and their equipment is seized by the government

In December 1995, Dr. Juan José Domenech, president of both ANTEL and of

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the right-wing political party, the Nationalist Republican Alliance (*Alianza Republicana Nacionalista,* ARENA), ordered the National Police (*Policía Nacional Civil,* PNC) to close down and seize the equipment of all eleven of the rural community radios, "calling them 'pirate' and 'clandestine' radios. Ironically, the same police who were sent to close Radio Victoria had previously broadcast a show from the station" (Walsman 1996:11). Domenech accused the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (*Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional,* FMLN) of smuggling radio transmitters into the country in a plan to set up 50 radios to spread propaganda during upcoming elections. He didn't divulge who had provided this "information" to him. The FMLN denied the accusations, and accused Domenech of violating the Constitution. The association of commercial broadcasters (*Asociación Salvadoreña de Radiodifusores,* ASDER) also denounced the establishment of "pirate" radios, which they claimed had "usurped frequencies which already had been granted" (Garcia 1995: 9). Altogether, nine radios were closed, large fines were assessed and their equipment was confiscated (see introduction: 1) (Velásquez de Avilés 1996:6).

The community radios responded to these closures, seizures and fines through their national association, ARPAS. They filed suits (*recursos de amparo*) with both the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (*Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos,* PDDH) and the Constitutional Wing of the Supreme Court (*Sala de lo Constitucional de la Corte Suprema de Justicia)* against the actions of the President of ANTEL and the sub-director general of the PNC, alleging violations of "the right to freedom of expression and prohibition of the seizure of media used for the diffusion of thought (Article 6 of Constitution),.... the right to property and audience (Article 2 and 11 Constitution)" among others, and ASDER was included in the suit as a third party beneficiary (Velásquez de Avilés 1996:7).

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The Salvadoran Supreme Court and the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office Respond: "There are solutions within the law, technically"

In March 1996 the Salvadoran Supreme Court ordered the confiscated equipment returned on grounds of free speech, but left the question of the community radios' legality unresolved (Walsman 1996:11). The Human Rights Ombudsman's (*Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos,* PDDH) investigation, concluding in October, 1996, found that the responses of ANTEL to radios' petitions for licenses "were confusing, were very late or never arrived" (Velásquez de Avilés 1996:4) and that the removal of transmission equipment in 1995 violated the Salvadoran Constitutional injunction against the removal of any instrument used for the diffusion of thought (ARPAS 1997a). The PDDH concluded that there had in fact been a violation of human rights of freedom of expression and diffusion of thought, of petition and response, and of prior audience (ARPAS 1997a).

By January, 1996, Domenech was replaced as President of ANTEL due to accusations of corruption unrelated to the community radio case. The PDDH and Mission of Observers of the United Nations for El Salvador (*Misión de Observadores de las Naciones Unidas en El Salvador,* ONUSAL) prodded the parties to negotiate. Their mediation resulted in the formation of two commissions of technicians and attorneys from both the community radios and the telecommunications agency: a Technical Commission, to determine what, if any, technical obstacles existed to granting licenses to the community radios and how they could be overcome, and a Legal Commission, the objective of which would be to analyze related legal issues (Velásquez de Avilés 1996:7).

The Technical Commission (*Comisión Mixta Técnica*) concluded that "there was a viable technical solution for the permanent functioning of the community radios, based

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on four possibilities...": assigning regional channels which would not interfere with existing frequencies, assigning intermediate frequencies (Salvadoran law requires double the frequency separation that U.S. regulation does, 400 khz vs 200 khz), assigning one frequency, 88.3 FM, on a national level for all the community radios operating at low power to share, or assigning currently available frequencies (ARPAS 1997a; Velásquez de Avilés 1996:8). At this point the ANTEL representatives resigned from both commissions (ARPAS 1997a).

Meanwhile, back at the National Assembly...

Representatives of ARPAS had been participating in discussions with members of the National Assembly to reform the telecommunications law. But on September 11th, 1996, the ARENA Deputies and their allies passed a new Telecommunications law which reportedly had been drafted by the President's Commission on Modernization, bypassing the Assembly committee's hearings and discussions. The vote was called "with 23 people waiting to speak on the legislation.... Outraged, nearly all representatives of the opposition parties -- including the FMLN, the Democratic Party (*Partido Demócrato,* PD), the Christian Democratic party (*Partido Demócratico Cristiano,* PDC), the Democratic Convergence (*Convergencia Democrática,* CD) and the Unity Movement (*Movimiento de Unidad,* MU) -- walked out of the assembly in protest" (COCODA September 1996).

The opposition parties' proposal, developed in consultation with ARPAS and numerous international agencies, had been presented to the Committee on August 21. In addition, "thirty-five U.S. Congressional offices voiced their support for ARPAS's efforts to establish regulation for the non-profit media sector in El Salvador" and urged the State Department to also voice its support, which it did (Walsman 1996:11). ARPAS

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commented that the new Telecommunications Law was passed "without considering the national and global phenomenon of community radio. With the Law of Telecommunications, if a person wishes to practice radio broadcasting, whether it would be community or commercial, he or she must compete in a public auction to acquire it [a frequency].... [thus only] those who might have sufficient money to participate in a public auction" could have access to radio broadcasting -- with market values running to 500,000 colones (about $57,000) (ARPAS 1997a).

The law came into effect almost immediately on October 18th, 1996. It contained no category for social, educational cultural or non-profit broadcasting; it accepted licenses already granted but forced those in process, like the community radios, to submit new applications. The fines for operating without a license were astronomical, as high as 500,000 *colones* ($57,000) plus 5,000 *colones* a day ($575). Most of the community radios were surviving on budgets of 25-100,000 *colones* ($3,000-12,000) a year.

Under the new law, available licenses would be auctioned to the highest bidder, while existing license holders were permitted to sell or lease all or part of their license as if it were any product on the market. Other aspects of the new law, perhaps of more direct interest to its drafters, were the privatization of telephone service, the creation of a new regulatory agency, the General Superintendency of Electricity and Telecommunications (*Superintendencia General de Electricidad y Telecommunicaciones,* SIGET) to replace ANTEL, with a Superintendent appointed for a six-year term by the President without the consent of the Assembly. According to critics, the Superintendent's powers were designed to be quite broad and without checks or balances: he would approve licenses, award concessions, and resolve disputes. This law was challenged by several appeals to the Supreme Court on constitutional grounds: one

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by the community radio association regarding the auction mechanism for granting broadcasting licenses, and one by the FMLN concerning telephone privatization (Agosta 1996b). In her report, the Human Rights Ombudswoman also criticized the new telecommunications law, stating that it " simply does not include specific regulations for community broadcasting, despite that these constitute a material reality and have initiated a process of regulation with the competent authorities" (Velásquez de Avilés 1996:9).

Communication is a human right, even in El Salvador

The results of the PDDH investigation into the case of the community radio closings was published shortly afterwards, in October 1996. Overall, the report criticized some of the community radios' strategies, but strongly supported their right to exist:

> The community radio broadcasters have their origin in the ending of the conflict and in the transition from war to peace, and in the effort of various communities to exercise their right to freedom of expression through the installation and operation of their own media of social communication. The community radio stations consider their work as a contribution to the development of the communities where they function and as an alternative to a radio culture which doesn't consider their needs and problems. It is characteristic of the community radios in the entire world that their activities are not realized for profit and are directed towards promoting spaces of alternative communication, dedicated to a plural and democratic exercise of freedom of expression (Velásquez de Avilés 1996:9).

The Ombudswoman criticized the community radios for operating before they had obtained licenses to do so, noting the importance of the rule of law for a democratic

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society to function. While "all of the inhabitants of El Salvador have the legitimate right to exercise their freedom of speech" (Velásquez de Avilés 1996:10) this must be within the law. But at the same time, she noted that the power of the state is not absolute and "must be subject to limits which derive from the nature of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and its legal regulation not only by the Constitution but also by the international standards of human rights..."(11). In this case, she said, relevant human rights laws and conventions have greater authority than the Telecommunications law (17n) She cited several conventions, to make the point that these rights can not be restricted either directly or through indirect means, such as political or economic discrimination or abuse of official or private regulation (11-14).

She concluded in part, that "all this seems to indicate that the refusal of ANTEL to grant the frequencies to the community radios stems, more than from technical or legal difficulties or obstacles, from an arbitrary decision by the authorities of ANTEL, which if it were, would constitute a violation of the right to expression of the petitioners" (Velásquez de Avilés 1996:18). While the radios violated the law by operating without authorization, she charged the new telecommunication authorities to find a way to grant legal frequencies to these radios, referring again to the importance of opening the radio spectrum to the breadth and plurality of expression in the country (18).

The radio closings are revoked, but the constitutional issues are not resolved...

According to many observers, the PDDH report caused ANTEL, the government's former communication regulatory agency, to revoke the December 1995 order that had closed the radios and ordered their equipment seized by the National Police. When new Superintendent Orlando de Sola dropped the order for the removal of the community radios' equipment, he agreed in discussions with ARPAS that he would tolerate the

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operation of the community radios if they would continue to submit to the procedures for acquiring frequencies outlined in the new law. ANTEL's action came just as the Supreme Court was reportedly about to rule against it in the lawsuit filed by the national community radio association. ARPAS's Executive Director Oscar Pérez, called the move "a technical knock-out." However, because of this reversal the Supreme Court dropped the ARPAS case against ANTEL without ruling on the constitutional issues (Prensa Gráfica 1997a; Agosta 1997b; ARPAS 1997c; ARPAS, March 1997; Tenorio 1997).

Now the auctions loom, amidst the onslaught of other major privatizations...

June, 1997 was the deadline, according to the new telecommunications law, for the auction of community radio licenses in El Salvador, when available frequencies would be auctioned to the highest bidder with a renewable 20-year term. The radios "found themselves in the phase of public opposition: if someone opposed them this would activate the auction process, if no one opposed them the frequency would be awarded to them"(ARPAS 1997b). This would put broadcasting out of the reach of community radios or other non-profit institutions, forcing the community radios off the air unless they raised as much as $500,000 each to purchase a frequency. It would give the private sector virtual control of the airwaves.

Then the FMLN introduced a measure to suspend all aspects of the new telecommunication law for 100 days so that it could be thoroughly debated and reviewed. This measure suspended not only the auction of the radios' broadcasting frequencies but also the sale of the telephone company, ANTEL. In an interview, FMLN National Assembly Representative Oscar Ortiz explained to me that his party's concern was that privatizations benefit the entire national community, that broadcasting space be available for all the sectors of the population, and that the constitutional challenges to

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the new law had time to be heard.

At the same time a suit presented by ARPAS against the auction mechanism of new law was accepted by the Supreme Court's Constitutional branch *(Prensa Gráfica* 1997a). The FMLN party's major victories in March elections for the National Assembly, the Human Rights Ombudsman Office's report, and the pending constitutional appeals against the new law were all reasons for hope at that moment (Agosta 1997b).

FMLN victories, for a moment, protect the radios...

In the March 1997 elections, the FMLN gained enough seats in the National Assembly to match the right-wing ARENA party; the game now was to form strong alliances with the smaller third parties. By May, the FMLN had succeeded in overturning the new law, suspending the sale and privatization of ANTEL. This also meant that the community radios' petitions for new frequencies had to be suspended, and they would have to begin again after a revised law was passed (ARPAS 1997a).

The National Assembly then formed an "Ad Hoc Commission" to study changes to the Telecommunications Law with representatives from all of the political parties, and began to hear testimony. ARPAS proposed reserving thirty percent of the spectrum for social and cultural broadcasting uses (ARPAS 1997a).

Back to business as usual...

Then in late July--just before the August vacations, when the country just about shuts down--ARENA again succeeded in bypassing the opposition to pass "reforms" to the Telecommunication Law, this time waiting until two in the morning so that the press was not present. This end run was referred to afterwards as the "*Madrugón,*" the big dawn event or action, as in ARPAS's ad entitled, "Madrugón contra la libertad de

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expresión en El Salvador" (Big dawn action against freedom of expression in El Salvador) (ARPAS 1997b).

But the Ad Hoc Commission continued its meetings and negotiations through August, September and October. ANTEL workers marched to make sure that their jobs would be safe if the agency were sold to private interests, while their representatives met with the Ad Hoc Commission; ARPAS presented a proposal in written form (*Prensa Gráfica* 1997d). The commission awaited the proposal from the small Christian Democratic party's Secretary General Ronal Umaña, which would represent the ARENA, PCN, PD and MU positions. This proposal would define the radios by only local, regional or national coverage; the community radios could remain as local radios, "to provide services to populations or cities and the contiguous areas." In addition, the separation between stations would be 30 khz for AM and 400 khz for FM. According to Umaña, the very idea of "community radios" is an "error." "There is no doubt," he said, "that these radios are an invented phenomenon, pulled out of someone's sleeve." His proposed law would require the 14 community radios "to abandon the concept of being community-based" (quoted in *La Prensa Gráfica* 1997 c). In contrast the FMLN proposed with the support of two smaller parties that community radios would be able to broadcast for the purpose of community-based, social and not-for-profit programming, but also limited by geographic boundaries and low frequency transmitters (*Prensa Gráfica*, 1997b, 1997c).

In November, Eric Casamiquela, Superintendent of SIGET, the telecommunications agency which replaced ANTEL under the new law, said that there was room for the community radios, but since the FM dial was saturated, they would have to operate at low power, under 20 watts. He told reporters that "one of the principal problems [in negotiating the new law] of the community radios is that 'they aren't anything concrete' but he recognized that 'Yes, there is a solution for the legal problem' "

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(*Co-Latino* 1997:3).

On December 4th, reforms to the SIGET law were approved by the Ad Hoc commission and the Assembly, but were not acted upon by President -- Calderón Sol. The reforms mostly involved protecting the independence of the Superintendent, Casamiquela, but also included the geographic rather than purpose-based distinctions between radio licenses. Meanwhile one of the deposed Superintendents, de Sola, mentioned that he actually had granted legal status to three of the community radios during his brief term of office. ARPAS responded that only Radio Excel had been notified of this decision, but the frequency it sought was occupied by a station run by the Cultural Association of the Evangelical Broadcasting of El Salvador (*Prensa Gráfica* 1997e).

Some thoughtful observations about this process...

Well-known, independent television journalist Mauricio Funes directed his comments to the long-running conflicts of the community radios on October 16, 1997 in his morning editorial on TV Azteca.

"The new ghost of monopoly and practice of exclusion characterizes the essence the legislative branch." He referred to the way the PDC, ARENA and PCN delegates broke with the consensus that the Ad Hoc Commission had been painstakingly building to suddenly propose a law that would "erase the existence" of the community radios and restrict foreign capital from communication media, steps even more "audacious" than the dawn action of the summer. He said that, "We [in the editorial sense] don't understand the obsession of these Deputies with the theme of the community radios, and less their opposition to the construction of an alternative radio space which strengthens citizen participation...." He accused the Assembly members of a lack of faith in democratic processes, of the capacity of people to know their own problems and devise

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their own solutions. The participatory radios operate in areas where the commercial radios have no interest, he continued, even the mayors from the governing party "recognize their usefulness." He challenged these Deputies, turning their normal arguments against them, that if their concern was partisan manipulation of the media, why not use the "efficient mechanism of the market" to punish those who proselytize rather than provide a public service? Why not let "these very [rural] communities be those who decide through the mechanism of the democracy of tuning in, the existence of these so-called "community radios?" (Funes 1997).

By the end of my fieldwork the situation had stabilized

Speaking for ARPAS, Executive Director and lawyer Oscar Pérez characterized the new telecommunication law as "anti-democratic, exclusive and unjust, "the only thing permitted are tiny spaces to legalize radios of municipal coverage." But he noted that the stations that were municipally based were taking advantage of the possibility of legalization. At the same time, they filed a suit charging that "it is an unconstitutional law... because the mechanism to access a frequency is an auction...The constitution says that all are equal under the law, but in an auction...if you have more money than me, you win the frequency," Pérez explained. Echoing John Peter Zenger's familiar comment that freedom of the press belongs to those who own one, Pérez concluded, "So we are not equal; the equality is broken when you take out your money and I take out mine" (Oscar Pérez, interview, September, 1998).

Since the radios wanted to be operating under the law, five of the thirteen received frequencies from SIGET, all radios with municipal coverage. But the radios with regional coverage, like Radio Sumpul, Izcanal, Victoria, or Segundo Montes were not approved. Pérez charged that the law created a technical impediment to access to the

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radio spectrum, which is a violation of human rights and of the standards of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) which regulates telecommunications on an international level. The larger radios didn't want to reduce their services; "these regional radios have commitments for social services for these communities, so [accepting the low power and geographical limitations] would leave these communities without communication services" (Oscar Pérez, interview, September, 1998, San Salvador).

As an alternative solution, ARPAS was seeking funding from international sources to buy a frequency with national coverage, which then could be divided among the regional and local radios which had not been awarded frequencies. This was allowed under the law, and was technically possible. Meanwhile, there were at least ten communities with community radio projects in planning stages. Pérez concluded by asserting that "Freedom of expression is the fundamental pillar of democracy," and that without independent public spaces to speak like the community radios, the country would not be able to meet the challenges it still faced to see the truth about itself, not only in the current moment but also the truth of what happened during the war. Much of this is still hidden, he explained, and until it is public the nation's reconciliation would not be possible; the country could not be truly democratic. Legalizing the community radios is a way to strengthen some of the institutions which supported these freedoms and thus progress towards peace and a democratic society (Oscar Pérez, interview, September, 1998, San Salvador).

Not only the radios' broadcasts themselves, but the efforts of the community radios to prevent their demise, for a time took a good part of center stage of the political debates in the country. The political debates and tactics twisted and turned like a *telenovela* and involved the National Assembly, the PDDH and the UN representative,

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the major political parties, the telecommunications Union, the new National Police and many other national and international institutions. The radio's struggle foregrounded underlying human rights issues which were the central issues for so many of the post-war conflicts in El Salvador, such as the right of union representation or to march on the streets.

But few other struggles had at their center the right to free speech, access to information and to expression, and this is why the issue was uniquely valuable in the context of the post war period. It is also why Funes's comments are so precise. While in another context he could be interpreted as simply meaning, let the market decide (slyly calling the bluff of the supposed free-market bloc of the right), he also is saying that the people of the rural areas had the right to choose which media served their needs and interests -- not the monopolies of the capital city. Not so ironically, Funes's platform to speak was only possible because the TV station which hired him was not owned by Salvadoran capital, but by a Mexican conglomerate edging its way into the Salvadoran market. While *TV Azteca*'s ownership no doubt imposed its own limitations, it was not the same as the Salvadoran financial-industrial bloc which controlled the bulk of the Salvadoran media.

Building a Local Public Sphere

The struggle for the survival of the participatory community radios was not an end in itself but a way to help construct their own local public sphere. The medium of radio was both a symbol of modernity and progress, and a technology which best fit the particular resources and limitations of the region: lack of income, low literacy, mountainous terrain, poor transportation. The radio--along with other sites like the *Asamblea*, the restaurants, or the Mass--provided a public space to speak, to be

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informed and to express themselves, a space of local communicative interaction. Because the radio was electronically broadcast, unlike the other sites it could also help them integrate into the national public sphere on their own terms.

As reviewed in Chapter Three the concept of the public sphere suggests both an arena of discourse and the body--the public--created through this discourse. As both the history of broadcasting in El Salvador and the struggle for the community radios' legalization makes clear, the need for this alternative public sphere came in response to exclusions from the national public sphere controlled by the more powerful sectors of society.

Through collaborating with civil society organizations of the community, like the school system or development foundations which had emerged from the formerly autonomous governing structures, the radio could provide visibility for these organizations and the issues which concerned them. As a kind of a gathering place with its own aesthetic, this local or alternative public sphere could contribute to a distinct sense of identity. At the same time, its intersections with other networks and public worlds, including those at national and international levels sometimes became meaningful.

Because radio staff themselves made decisions about programming, and because of their close working relationships to local leaders and institutions, they could preempt their normal programs to celebrate local events which they considered the most significant. This gave these events an added layer of legitimacy and meaning; it also allowed a broader public to participate in the events, helping to extend the sense of community.

Graduations were the biggest celebrations the Segundo Montes community, next to the celebration of the return from the refugee camp. The school system was the

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community's proudest accomplishment and was widely admired in the region; it was a way community members insisted on their right to have a future, to be part of the national economy and political public sphere.

Radio Segundo Montes featured these events, either in extended reports on their half-hour local news program, or through live coverage. Coverage of the graduations is an example of the determination to create this public space for themselves and to decide for themselves what this space of "radio" should contain: "Public space is the product of competing ideas about what constitutes that space ...and who constitutes the public" (Mitchell 1995:115).

I attended the three graduations held in 1997, each one larger, more elaborate, and with special guests representing a broader range of support. The first of these, the ninth grade graduation, was scheduled to begin at 8 a.m. on November 14th.

The Graduation of the Tercer Ciclo (9th grade)

I walked up to the Cultural Center just before 9 a.m., meeting Juan Lucas on the way, who had been invited to be an honored guest. A few moments after we arrived, the students, each one accompanied by a family member or *padrino* (godparent), walked in a procession up from the school to the *Centro Cultural*, where about 100 chairs had been set out under the corrugated iron roof. The chairs were all filled and many people stood on the sides and back of the building. Many of the girls wore turquoise suits with black blouses, while the boys wore brown pants and white shirts. Everyone was dressed up.

The ceremony began with everyone standing for the Salvadoran national anthem, played on a large boom box. Then they played a tape of a Spanish-language version of the Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" loud and distorted, but it still sounded happy and emotional.

Next the honored guests were introduced: Rudi, the guest of honor, in whose

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name the graduation was held; María Ventura, the director of SILEM, the community's education system; the current director of the school; the Mayor of Meangueara; Darío Chicas, the director of Productos Corporados (and former President of the community's Foundation); Martín, the head of telephone company office; Rose, an international volunteer introduced as representing solidarity; and Juan Lucas, the Director of the radio station. These guests were all local leaders representing education, communication and financial support.

Rudi was honored for his long-term contributions to the community. Originally from Germany, he had been with them since 1982 and was now working with Caritas, the Catholic Church's charity organization. He helped create two libraries so that teachers and students would have materials.

There were several speeches; the Director of the school thanked both the National Ministry of Education and SILEM for their support for the school. In general they emphasized how the education of the children meant that not only could they themselves progress, but so could the whole community. Speeches reflected local customs of formality and courtesy, beginning with, "Dear graduates, honored guests, godfathers and godmothers, may you have a very good day." The invited guests' table had three paper or silk flower arrangements and the big banner behind the stage was also painted with flowers and said, "Graduates of the Third Cycle, 9th Grade, in Honor of Rudi." Colorful cut-out paper flags hung all around the room. During the ceremony, Rudi was presented with a big silver platter engraved with a message of thanks. The last speech was a sentimental song by one of the graduates about how hard it would be to say goodbye.

The graduates were called up one by one to receive their diploma; the diplomas were divided up among the honored guests, but each graduate and his or her family

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member went down the whole table shaking everyone's hands. There were several cameras taking pictures of the graduates, including one SLR which was a rare and expensive camera for the area. The ceremony was followed by a mass led by the priest from Osicala.

The graduation of the Technical High School and the Teachers' University Program

The second graduation was the first ever for the Technical High School, established by the community to train students in skills needed in the region. High schools in El Salvador provide two years of general education, but people had to specialize in their third year. At the Technical High School the specialities offered were business administration/secretarial or agronomy. There were young men and women in both classes. The third graduation was for a special four-year program to provide university degrees to the popular education teachers who had been teaching in the community's schools since they were teenagers in the refugee camp. It was a joint program, offered by the University of Girona in Spain and supported by several Spanish and Basque foundations as well as by U.S. AID.

Why focus on graduations?

Why focus on graduations? How does the radio station's coverage of the graduations provide an example of the community's struggle to create its own public sphere, a public space for the interactions of local civil society?

The graduations were among the most important events of the year in the CSM, second only perhaps, to the Festival of the Return from the refugee camps. Community members had created this school system first in the refugee camp, and then transformed it to fit their new reality back in El Salvador, with the financial assistance and support

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from a range of international institutions. Education was perhaps the community's highest priority, and the graduations represented a victory which had come at a high cost. This cost was not only individual -- one speaker reminded everyone of the students' hard work and their families' sacrifices: parents going without breakfasts, spouses and children going without the things they needed. It was also shared, because the school system was a result of the community's long struggle for a fair share of the power and resources of the nation, of which the civil war was only the most egregious part. Nearly all speakers remembered the "martyrs," Monsignor Romero, the assasinated Archbishop, Mélida Amaya, the teacher and FPL[1] leader murdered in a factional dispute, and several local people who had been killed during the war. Padre Rogelio asked for a moment of silence and a bit of music "to reflect on them among us."

The national government ran a school system even before the war, but the quality of that system was quite inconsistent, especially in the countryside, and its expectations for students were quite low. One woman told me about teachers who came in to the countryside only Tuesday through Thursday, using Monday and Friday to travel, and never making it in during the rains and bad weather. Ninety percent of the population of Meanguera, where Radio Segundo Montes is mostly located (it overlaps two municipalities, Meanguera and Jocoaitique), had completed six years or basic level education. But less than five percent had graduated from ninth grade; by the mid-1990s, still only sixty-three percent of eligible students attended primary school (Municipio Meanguera 1996:99; Censo Nacional V & VI 1992:viii, 97).

In contrast, the community of Segundo Montes had high expectations for their school system, even as they negotiated to integrate it into the national system. They expected their students to reach at least ninth grade. Receiving a *bachillerato* or high

[1] *Fuerzas Populares de Liberación*, a faction of the FMLN during the civil war

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school degree meant a great deal here. Speakers to the graduating high school class spoke about a person with a *bachillerato* as a very educated person, someone who could take advantage of every opportunity, who could do any job. One speech told the graduates that they were the realized dreams of the community, another that they could now go out and work in production, or go on to the university. Education is the best preparation for life, one said, because it makes one more perceptive, more open to change and prepared to analyze it. The Technical School was designed to train the next generation of business administrators, agronomists and others technical specialities needed in their region. The teacher's degree program gave their teachers, most of whom had started as barely educated teenagers, a level of professional development beyond that expected in the national system.

To achieve a dream, to be part of the nation

The creation of the school system was rightly celebrated as a central victory in their decades long struggle against marginalization and poverty. At the teachers' graduation, SILEM President Mercedes Ventura noted that SILEM and the teachers had been fighting for this system since 1981. Their goal was to train their children to take on any and all of the tasks of the future, beginning with the needs of the community itself. Dignitaries addressing ninth grade graduates emphasized how the education of the children meant that not only could they themselves progress, but so could the whole community. For example, Giuseppi Nadel from the University of Girona said the graduations would "achieve a dream, 40 popular education teachers with degrees from the University fo Girona, fire in the heart and teacher's license." By creating a school system, the community was insisting on their right to have a future--to not be marginalized from the national economy and political public sphere, to be more than a

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disempowered labor force that is used when needed and then ignored or discarded.

It was also a way for the community to insist on themselves as part of the national public, part of national society. Like all major public occasions, the graduations began with the national Aanthem, not in a perfunctory way but with emphasis. At the larger graduation of the popular education teachers it was sung live by the band with a violin solo. It is significant that a representative of the Ministry of Education was invited to this graduation, because during this period the school system was negotiating for the Ministry to accept and begin paying the salaries of its teachers as a step towards integrating its schools into the national system. This not only would relieve their international supporters of a financial burden. On a symbolic level, it was also part of the post-war transition of integrating the former guerrilla-controlled areas back into the nation. The Director of the Technical High School told his graduates that now they needed the support of the Ministry of Education: theirs was a country in transition, and their graduation was a step in its democratization, in creating a new society.

The graduations were a celebration of a victory in the definition of public space--who constitutes the public and what space is considered publicly shared versus private or inconsequential. The community took the power of this decision, rather than accepting the status quo or allowing the national government to make that decision. They chose to demonstrate that they should be counted as an exemplary part of the public.

By claiming public space, the radios created an alternative public sphere and help construct collective identity

What was the role of the radios in this? The radios provide spaces for representation which allow social, cultural or political movements to be seen. In addition, the radios allowed the victory of the community to be seen by the broader

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populations of the region and the nation: "By claiming space in public, by creating public spaces, social groups *themselves* become public" (both Mitchell 1995:115; emphasis in original). In this way, the presence of the graduations on the radio was central to their political significance. Everyone I spoke to in the region knew about and admired their school system. The owner of the fabric store in the department capital said she gave the radio advertising in part because she admired this community's effort towards educating its young people. The representation of their schools and the potential of their graduates was a way of insisting on their presence, legitimizing their accomplishments. It was a way to claim citizenship. The graduation broadcasts brought these events and the meanings that speakers ascribed to them into a broader public sphere than possible at the event itself. It helped a larger public share the experience and respond to it. Through this interaction the alternative public sphere constructed through the radio could contribute to a distinct sense of identity.

Because Radio Segundo Montes' programming was controlled locally, by the community's leadership (discussed in more detail below), the programming could convey the priorities and values of the community. The graduation ceremonies themselves conveyed the community's values through the speeches, masses, music, and other cultural practices which made up these events. The decision to broadcast the graduations live not only communicated the importance of education to this community, but also provided a way of expressing other values, priorities and cultural choices--a sense of shared identity.

For example, Father Rogelio reminded the teacher graduates to "not lose who you are" even though you now will have accreditation. He told a story. A little boy robbed a cookie from the kitchen. He admitted it, but he said, we are two, I took two cookies, I am not alone. God is not a repressive god, Rogelio explained, but he is a god who offers

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us spaces and opportunities in life, so that we can develop our capacities. There are three meanings to this parable. First, as a popular teacher you are very much part of the community; the problem is, you are professional but you continue to be popular teachers. Second, this also means that you need to know the difference between to teach and to educate (*enseñar y educar*). *Enseñar* (to teach) is to give *conocimiento*, knowledge, and for this you must be professional. But you must also educate. *Educar* (to educate) is to to transmit values to our students, justice, solidarity, commitment, sensitivity to the poor. And third, this story shows that God isn't a repressive god, neither should you as teachers be repressive teachers. In the words of Paco Cutomay--*no hay cosa más grande que perder los ideales* (there isn't anything larger--worse--than losing your ideals).[2]

Through his story and interpretation, broadcast live on the radio throughout the region, Father Rogelio conveyed particular goals and perspectives for these teachers which were based in a shared community history and experience. Even the closing music played by the local band conveyed their particular community identity. The band played "*Patria chica mía*" (My little country), a popular patriotic song; "*Canción para Segundo Montes*" (Song for Segundo Montes), a song telling the story of the community's survival during the war, and "El Sombrero Azul," the FMLN theme song.

Community-based media means local control

Juan Lucas decided to feature all three of the graduations, preempting all other programming. It was one of the rare occasions for which the radio provided live coverage, from beginning to end, as well as on-site interviews. For all of the events, Juan

[2] Paco Cutomay was a respected educator and community leader who died of a brain aneurysm just after the community's return from the refugee camp.

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Lucas himself provided on-air commentary and contextualization rather than assigning a staff member as he usually did; for one of them, he was the Master of Ceremonies of the live event as well. The radio staff hooked up their twenty-watt transmitter to the event's sound system and connected a big, unidirectional antenna to the roof of the little bathroom behind the *comedor* (little restaurant) to transmit the event live. Back in the studio, Elena received this signal on the AM-FM radio set they used as a studio monitor.

During the teachers' graduation, there were problems with the transmission, so while the national anthem was being sung, Dilbert had to climb the roof to straighten it. The radio's broadcasting equipment was always prominently installed in front, near the stage and tables of invited guests. The whole area was packed: the roofed, wall-less cultural center, a side tent, chairs in all the aisles, people standing, but from what I could discern, the movement of staff to cover the event was not seen as annoying distraction but part of the event itself. Afterwards, with the band still playing, Juan Lucas conducted a number of interviews with both the honored guests of the event as well as students and parents.

There were no other media present at these events, which is the norm for the area. There was little coverage of events and developments in rural areas; stories from the departments outside the capital in national newspapers generally merited one paragraph briefs or short headline reports in national radio programs. Like most commercial news, these briefs tended to focus on crimes and catastrophes. But community radios like Radio Segundo Montes provided access to and control over programming to the community itself, through the management of the radio. As media of mass communication, community radios have the power to represent and express the life of that community. A similar event, the opening of a bridge, which was supported by AID and other international institutions and attended by national and local government

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representative, was covered by the local correspondent of the national commercial news radio station. But despite the presence of local, national and international guests, the teachers' graduation attracted no other media.[3]

Community radios like Radio Segundo Montes provided access to and control over programming to the community itself, through their management of the radio. Access, control and meaning are key aspects of the shaping of public spaces, whether material spaces like a park or virtual spaces, like radio broadcasts.

The radio station provided a public space--the virtual space of its programs, broadcast for a certain number of hours per day. It controlled access and shaped the interpretations of the content of these programs, in turn shaping the representation of the community itself and its identity. This representation was influenced by other forces in the community, such as its fractious community leadership and its influence on the radio's director and staff. This community radio was created as a project of the organized leadership of the returned refugee population, representatives of important local institutions remained on its governing board, and its director was considered a prominant local leader. So this radio's choice to feature the graduation may have reflected the institutional leadership's values and priorities. But in any case, this was a local view and was filtered through the different perspectives of radio staff and the voices it featured, such as the speakers and individuals interviewed at the graduation itself. This allowed the radio station to transmit its vision of the shared priorities, values,

[3] National figures included David Flores from the Ministry of Education and two Deputies from the National Assembly, Norma Guevara and F. S. Ventura. International support was represented by Catalina Montes, the sister of Segundo Montes, and Guiseppi Nadel, from the University of Girona, which had created the degree program for the teachers. International financial support was represented by Juan José -- from Agencia InterAmericana de España, Jaime Soler from Allyn Catalon, Señora Dolores Benítez from the Fundo Vasco, -- from Ayuda en Acción, and Steve Graham from US AID. Other support was represented by the Centro de Investigación de Chile (CIDEL) and a Delegation from the Grand Canarias.

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needs, successes, and desires of the population which it served, which through the mechanisms just mentioned, was some version of the community's own vision.

From public space to public sphere: producing identity

Radio Segundo Montes was closely involved with the individuals, instititutions, leaders, and organizations of the returned refugee community. Its staff saw their purpose as serving this web of people and institutions, labeled "the community" and "civil society" and advancing their perspectives and goals. These interactions produced the decisions which led to the live, hours-long coverage of the graduations and to celebratory and respectful ways this event was presented. This web of relationships and perspectives produced the broadcasts, which were then shared with the radio listeners who themselves had a relationship with the station. The station represented something to listeners beyond the broadcasts themselves--local events and situations, grasped or wasted struggles and dreams, the power to speak and be heard--and listeners could be part of that representation. Listeners, of course, might be part of the broadcasts more directly, too, as participants in the events or one of the people the radio staff interviewed. It was this communicative interaction, this range of relationships to the broadcasts, which helped produce a sense of community, a sense of identity. Listeners may not have agreed with the ways that identity was represented in the broadcasts, but they had a relationship to it, in the sense of participating together.

In this way the significance of participatory community radio is this potential to became a central location for a local or alternative public sphere. Because of the interactive ways it is produced and received can be a process through which community identity or culture is produced.

First, by creating a school system, community members insisted on their right to

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not be marginalized from the national economy. The radio's broadcasts help them announce that goal, their refusal to be invisible. When the organized sectors of the communities which created the radios used the radios' air time to represent themselves, the community radios became a central location for a local or regional alternative public sphere, in which the perspectives, aesthetics, priorities and values of its participants could be shared among a broad public.

Without the struggle for the legal right to exist and to broadcast, this local public sphere would have been much diminished, since the media and other public spaces available in the countryside were so few. The legal struggle for the community radios not only kept the existence and concerns of rural regions in general, and the returned refugee communities in particular, in the national consciousness. In addition, their broad national support and later, the national community radio associations' national news program, meant that not only news of their legal struggle but also other local concerns could enter the national public sphere. This national public sphere became more dynamic and heterogeneous because their voices could now be heard.

The community radios, in providing a public place to speak, also provided a place to transform and recreate community identity. By representing themselves--their news, announcements, significant events and achievements, jokes and diversions, music, the life of a community-- they used the power of representation to express their values and priorities, and help produce a shared, community identity.

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Chapter Five: Rural Participatory Radio -- How Civil Society Is Built

Civil society, as I discussed in Chapter Three, is a controversial term, meaningless for some because of its multiplicity of meanings, and central for others, because it encapsulates processes and elements that are crucial for a functioning democracy. Some of the people who have created the participatory community radios in El Salvador were explicit in saying that the role of their radio is to build civil society while others were not. But all three of the radios studied here played a role in building civil society.

First, the radios help build *public consciousness of human rights* and the responsibilities intrinsic to these rights, essential preconditions for the functioning of civil society. People must feel that they have the right to have rights and that they are entitled to participate in civil processes. Human rights include the right to communication, information and expression, which includes the right for the radios themselves to exist.

Second, the radios help *educate their communities about the practices and responsibilities of citizenship,* including the awareness of political rights and practices of the population's post-war, and haltingly democratic relationships to the state. In addition, the radio is part of an effort to increase *participation and small-scale democracy* throughout Salvadoran culture. Together these support a sense of political subjectivity and agency, and are part of transforming the political culture of both the communities that the radios serve, and of the nation.

A third and perhaps most visible way that the radios support the development of

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civil society is through providing a *crucial communication medium for the emerging social groups, organizations, associations and agencies* often grouped together as NGOs. In this way the radios help new social actors emerge and build the web of associations that is a main aspect of civil society. Campesinos, women, youth were recognized through these groups, and this recognition was reflected and amplified through the broader public space of the radio. The radios provide a public space for an alternative or counter-public sphere.

In this chapter I will present examples and analysis of the ways the radios have helped to build this thing called civil society in these three ways.

Radio and human rights

Why is human rights and citizenship education relevant to how radios were helping to build civil society? Because according to the interpretations of civil society prevalent among radio staff, these things were preconditions for civil society to be meaningful.

According to this view, public consciousness of human rights is essential for participation in the organizations and activities of civil society. People must feel that they have the right to have rights, that they are entitled to act in their own interests and to participate in civil processes, that they count in the eyes of society and government. These are human rights, recognized in international agreements such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights drafted by the United Nations; they are not granted by governments. These rights include the right to communication, information and expression, which form the basis for the right for the radios to exist.

Local leaders, whether of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or of local government, often spoke on this theme. In Guarjila, María Chichilca, the local

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representative of the National Assembly spoke after a mass about women's rights to pensions as war widows. Chichilca is a former *campesina* who is renowned for her bravery during the war. Afterwards, Niña Catalina, who shared her home with me while I lived in Guarjila, explained that she had lost her husband in the conflict like so many women in this community, but the government was using bureaucratic excuses to deny or delay her pension. Having rights meant that one has the right to these services and to petition the government for them.

"We have won this, to make available to the population all their rights," the mayor of nearby Meanguera explained, "this includes participation in their own governance so that government projects aren't irrelevant" (Francisco Pereira, interview by author, November 13, 1997). The right to have rights and the possibility of democracy formed the foundation of much post-war change and often came up in conversations and interviews. "Now, the participation of people is greater, and people have more rights," said a telephone company technician who came into the Radio Segundo Montes office. "For example, before the police could come to your house and take things, take you with them, and you couldn't say anything. But now you can show them your papers, you can talk to them." He said what is important is democracy and justice, "and you can't have justice or your rights, without democracy."

Human rights were not abstract issues; they touched on experiences which affected people directly. For example, the right to education was a high priority. Many rural leaders were former teachers, and schools of all levels held large celebrations of their graduations (see chapter 4). Tomás, who produced the daily news program on Radio Segundo Montes, connected the lack of education in the region to the wartime brutality of the army:

The military operations were very cruel and came in an unexpected way for the

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> population. So, in the case of the massacre of El Mozote,[1] the people didn't know, the people were innocent, undefended... [and when the officers directed the soldiers simply to kill the people] ... as they[the soldiers] didn't have the resources to think, so [they suffered from] the same ignorance, the same illiteracy that the whole country experienced. These people didn't know one letter, didn't know how to read, didn't know how to write, and didn't know why these situations [occurred], or what causes originated this kind of war. In the end, for the poor people this was what came to destroy their minds, to think differently and what made them do what [the armed forces leaders] wanted them to. But in those cases it was terrible, to say all those things [that went on in those days]. It is hard to know all those things (Tomás Argueta, interview with author, December 15, 1997).

Radio programming on human rights

Human rights education and its link to citizen responsibilities was a priority for these radios, and often was a underlying theme of programming focused on other issues. Local history and cultural programming, and even children's programming had human rights themes. There were short spots made available by the Latin American and international community radio NGOs, like the a series made by United Nations Development Program (PNUD) on the rights of children and families in 1997; there had also been a series on electoral rights earlier in the year. All the case study radios played spots on the right to communication and expression, including support for the

[1] One of the major massacres of the war, in which soldiers systematically rounded up and killed families in El Mozote and several nearby villages over several days in December, 1981. Over 1000 people were killed. This is the massacre that New York Times reporter Raymond Bonner was essentially fired for bringing to light. Tomás lost many members of his family in this massacre. See Binford (1996).

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Salvadoran efforts to legalize the community radios, made by the national community radios association (ARPAS) and the world community radio association (AMARC).

A particularly good example of human rights programming was the half-hour radio program, *Buenos Tiempos Mujer* (BTM), roughly "good times" or "a good era for women," produced by the "Culture of Peace" program of the UNESCO post-war transition effort. This project sought to promote a "culture of peace" through education on rights and responsibilities of citizens, especially focusing on support for women's identities and participation in the social, cultural and civic spheres of everyday life. Women were targeted because they had suffered so much of the costs of the war and the ongoing poverty of the region (Gladys Aguirre and Elizabeth Morales, interview by author, January, 1996). The BTM staff developed a network of women's group facilitators in rural villages and urban neighborhoods, and trained a group of 65 correspondents, like Miriam from Radio Sumpul, to conduct interviews or produce program segments in most of the country's fourteen departments. The national staff also traveled around the country to meet with women's groups to get feedback. UNESCO sent ten minute and half-hour versions of the program on cassettes to community radio and commercial stations alike; the community radios played the longer programs.

The weekly programs interwove talk, dramatic, and musical segments which linked the daily concerns of Salvadoran women with education on their rights. The week of April 7, 1997 began as usual, with a rocking *cumbia* (a Mexican version of the Colombian country music form) underneath the greeting, "*Buenos Tiempos Mujer,* where you hear <u>your</u> voice. A space of [inaudible], solidarity, education, where women and men together walk towards equality in rights. Good times for women."[2] Addressing

[2] This and all following excerpts are my transcriptions from the BTM program for the week of April 4, 1997

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listeners as "friends" (*amigas*, women friends), the female and male hosts introduced the week's themes: that all people need to both work and rest, and that women had the abilities, capacities and rights to make decisions.

The next segment was a poetic-musical affirmation. Over flamenco-inspired guitar, a woman said, "I am I, and in all the world, there is no one like me. ... I defend my body, my mind, my eyes, my feelings, my intelligence. I have all that is necessary to live, and will be what I want, because I have the capacity..." A short prerecorded segment reminded listeners that they needed to rest for good health; another told about the history of the woman's vote in El Salvador. The BTM jingle, promoting women's equal rights with men, provided a short break.

Then a heated exchange between a woman and a man dramatized the theme of the right to vote, one of many short *sociodramas* in the series. In the end, the woman responded to the man's challenge to her claim of equal rights,"what do you mean, you're a woman!" by asserting, "as I am a woman, the same rights...to speak for myself, to study, ... to participate in politics...*cabal*![3] our rights are our greatest beauty!" Finally a low-voiced, authoritative male announcer declared, "know your rights, defend them and you'll change your life."

Before the hosts wrapped up the show, another dramatization featured two women talking in a marketplace about discrimination against women who are divorced or separated. The ending exclaimed, "BTM, where you hear your voice. With the support of UNESCO and this broadcaster."

While programming concerning women's lives and issues was an important part of all the community radios I studied, the BTM program was particularly popular with

[3] Common Salvadoran expression, meaning some combination of "exactly!" and "incredible!" See page 10.

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audiences. It was professionally produced, interspersing lively discussions and dramatic segments with selections of popular music. It also spoke to women's concerns in a very direct, public way. Lives of women in the countryside seemed very much in transition. For many, the heavy and time consuming work of maintaining a household took up all their time and energy. Customs restricting their movements in public spaces meant women spent most of their time in their homes and yards. But at the same time, many teachers, health workers, and radio staff were women; there were women who were community leaders and political activists as well. BTM validated their examples as well as speaking to the conflicts experienced by women living more traditionally circumscribed lives. One listener told me that "programs about the rights of women," were her favorites on Radio Sumpul, because "now it is not like before, when they said that women weren't important" (Agosta, 1997c).

The right to information and expression: the right to have radios

The radio stations themselves were seen from their beginnings as embodiments of the rights to information and expression. Wilfredo Zepada, one of the founders of Radio Sumpul, urged me to add a human rights theme to my work. The radios represented this population's grasp for their right to information, he told me. Whether the radios were legal or not, this was a human right, recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights accepted by El Salvador along with other United Nations members in 1948 (Wilfredo Zepada, interview by author, March 28, 1997; United Nations, High Commissioner for Human Rights 1998). Article 19 reads: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (United Nations 1998).

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This was not at all hypothetical. Radio Segundo Montes was founded in the late stages of the conflict, while bombings and other attacks continued, Juan Lucas recounted. The radio in those days was a way to keep the population informed as well as a way to get news to the outside world about what was going on. "At that time, there weren't other communication media, and journalists weren't allowed to enter this zone, neither national or international" (Juan Lucas Aguilar, interview with author, December 17, 1997). Lucía remembered that "the military was always walking around the community, going into houses, making disorder; the radio served to alert the population when the the military came" (María Lucía Chicas, interview with author, December 15, 1997). Once the cease fire took effect, the radio changed to become a tool for education and development in the region.

But the struggle to keep this right continued (see chapter 4). After one particularly heavy blow, when the new telecommunications law was passed in November, 1997, I came in to Radio Segundo Montes's office with the newspaper, which reported that the final version of the law did nothing to legalize the community radios, despite strenuous national and international lobbying. First Elena then Juan Lucas read the news out loud; everyone seemed interested, but not particularly worried. "Well, the radio has been in the process of legalizing itself since 1991....but we also have our own constitution which tells us that in no moment can they deprive us of the right to expression, and this for us is so important, because this is the primary law." Here he showed me Article Six in his annotated copy of the Salvadoran Constitution. "Indisputably," Juan Lucas continued, "there are other, secondary laws, and the radio was born in a particular moment and we see that we are obligated to enter in the process of legalization." But, he declared, the twelve year civil war was fought about inequality, with little result, with people living in as terrible conditions as before, and the radios

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were not going to give up their services to the community voluntarily, were not going to give up their freedom of speech voluntarily. The national community radio association was already planning to refile their charges of unconstitutionality. The struggle continued (Juan Lucas, interview with author December 17, 1997, and informal conversation, November 9, 1997).

Right to communication: from information to participation

Radio programming filled the need for basic information for the communities they served. Rosi at Radio Sumpul explained, "... if it weren't important, the people couldn't gather around it, or record their messages, their greetings, it wouldn't interest them... But there aren't other media here, there isn't even a telephone, there isn't anything..." (Rosibel Orellana, interview by author, May 5, 1997). Many interests were served by this access to media.

> "... here all the announcements go out that you're going to see in the community. For example, right now there's the problem of the land transfers[4] ...so by way of the radio they put on announcements informing the people so that they can go to straighten out their papers. ...Or if it's a question of health, then also it's important because by way of the radio they [inform] the mothers of families so that they can bring their children to the clinic...because there are children who are malnourished in the community and they give them rice, oil, different kinds of beans, corn (Silvia Maia, interview with author, December 15, 1997).

Local mayors of both parties agreed that there was a lack of information media in the countryside. While the ARENA party mayor of Osicala criticized Radio Segundo Montes for its unprofessional *locutores,* Mayor Pereira of Meanguera praised it, saying

[4] Land for excombatents, part of implementing the Peace Accords.

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that "the value of the community radio was that it... adapted itself to the realities of the community.... There is a lack all over the country of newspapers and TV, it is very difficult to receive them in rural areas" (Francisco Pereira, interview with author, November 13, 1997).

Most of these comments focus on the right to communicate in a public space with each other and to receive information about their community and the larger world; in a sense, the right to not be marginalized from the debates and understandings of the larger society. But the Universal Declaration of Human Rights cites both the right to information (receiving) and to expression (speaking and being heard), in other words, to participate in two-way communications. The community radios, more than commercial radios based on a one-way broadcasting model, make expression possible. A respondant to my audience survey in Guarjila said, "the radio understands the community, it is for communicating. In [the other radios] one can't communicate, only listen, inform oneself"(Agosta, 1997c). Participatory community radios embody the practice of this basic human right.

Participation could be as simple as the song dedications or greetings to family and friends that are so popular on the community radios. It included the many messages from the institutions and organizations of the region. Not only the quantity of messages, but the fact that the radios actively encouraged these communications made them essentially different from the commercial radios broadcasts. "First, the people have more opportunity [here]," Rosi explained. "So many times I've said that in this radio, the microphone is open, for everyone who wants to come to participate; in the other radios, they don't say that..." (Rosibel Orellana, interview with author, May 5, 1997)

The *avisos* or announcements from individuals, local organizations and governments on many issues were consistently referred to by people I spoke with as the

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most important programming that the radios offered. Respondants to my audience survey in Guarjila said, "the radio is good because of the possibility of giving *avisos*," and that it was the way to know what was going on (Agosta, 1997c). What kinds of announcements were read? Over the course of a month of announcements at Radio Segundo Montes, local events and organizations predominated. There were 25 announcements from local organizations, six from local government, seven from individuals and four from national organizations. Together with the *saludos* or music dedications (discussed in chapter 6), the announcements represented the most fundamental way that these radios were participatory. This was because the announcements were supplied by the audience itself using the radio as their own communication media. Through these announcements, the spot ads, and the local news programs, the existence and dynamism of all the different organizations referred to as civil society were multiplied in a concrete and cumulative way. A reliable source of information about about these activities made public participation possible. (See Appendix B, Organizations and Interests Represented in Radio Broadcasts.)

In this sense, the *saludos* and *avisos* from individuals represented the most basic practice of the right to information and expression, the right to speak and to express themselves. They were the most basic ways that the community radios created a public space that had not previously existed. Here the community of speakers and listeners asserted themselves as subjects, politically and culturally, through the content and the form of their radio greetings and announcements. In turn, these announcements increased the visibility of all the organizations operating locally, making it possible for people to participate in their activities. In short, this helped build a civil society that had not previously existed.

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Building Civil Society, Constructing Citizens: Relationships with Local Government

In addition to announcements, each station produced local news programs, mostly comprised of interviews with leaders of local government, organizations and institutions. News programs played an important role in informing these communities, as well as in supporting the development of local governments and local leaders. On Radio Sumpul the news program consisted of Miriam's 10-15 minute interviews. Miriam traveled throughout eastern Chalatenango for these interviews to find out about the problems and projects of mayors or local *directivas*[5] and to get opinions from men, women, and children (Miriam Ayala, interview with author, May 1997). In one interview, she spoke to a newly elected mayor to find out what challenges he faced. He listed potable water and developing coffee agriculture, followed by improving education, "...and to pay better attention to violence against women and to the problems of youth. These are the worries that perhaps, we will try to do [something about]"(Radio Sumpul programming, date).

The significance of these little news briefs is at least two-fold. It is local news, concerning the problems and challenges of a small town in the countryside, news generally missing from the national media of El Salvador. It created a platform for a local leader to speak, a public space for the concerns and voices of local leaders. This allowed the development of a more robust public sphere: better informed about the activities of their local governments, people could better respond.

From their inception, the community radios insisted on their own priorities for information and their own style of expression. Before the community radio association

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[5] Neighborhood associations, some growing out of self-governing groups of the refugee camp, others organized through post-war efforts to improve local government capacities.

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premiered their national news program in September, 1997, Radio Segundo Montes used national news reports as sources to select and rewrite reports in their own words, so their newscasts would be relevant and understandable to their particular audiences. Juan Lucas often talked about avoiding dictionary words (*palabras rebuscadas)* and the importance of speaking simply and clearly in the ways that people did in the community.

"Topics of the Moment" (*Temas de Actualidad*), a thirty-minute midday interview program of Radio Segundo Montes shows these points more clearly. (The program was also repeated in the evening, before the "Ranchero Sundown" program.) "Topics" covered the political, cultural, and social life of northern Morazán. It provided a fairly open space for the voices of local leaders and organizations as well as individuals and visitors. As much attention was paid to political issues and accomplishments of leaders as cultural events or social issues. Different stylistically from news, it still followed local cultural traditions. In the half-hour interview program, producer Tomás would ask a question and then let someone fully explain their thoughts. This reflected rural politeness; people rarely interrupted each other.

I often felt that I could listen to this program and get a good idea of what the region and community were like. Topics included graduations and school openings, annual festivals, the meaning of the Day of the Dead celebration and of Halloween, which has recently been introduced here. Community history was often featured, such as the trip to Colomoncagua to visit the former refugee camp's graveyard. Development plans or projects were frequently covered, such as the changes in the community's Foundation from a political authority to a development organization. (See Appendix C: One Month of *Topics of the Moment.)*

Civil Society and Local Government

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Programs like "Topics" and Miriam's interviews covered a wide range of issues. In the context of helping to build civil society, one significant aspect is the attention they brought to local leaders. The two stations' news programs tracked the projects, obstacles, and achievements of local government and institutions and agencies. Local mayors were frequently interviewed, as were those in charge of development projects and other community institutions. This both helped inform the population about their activities, and gave them more regional and national visibility, especially if the story was picked up by the new daily news program of the national community radio association.

Regardless of their political affiliation, all the mayors of their regions used the community radios to reach their constituencies. The mayor of Meanguera told me that Radio Segundo Montes was "very important, there he could communicate with the population, inform them about projects, convoke the town meetings required for municipal planning...In the rural areas, information moves through the radio, in the whole area of northern Morazán" (Francisco Pereira, interview with author, November 13, 1997). The radios received announcements from them about large events and important public meetings, invitations to the patron saint festivals and the Festival of the Return, and warnings about potential dangers, like the time surplus explosives were used to level steep sections of local roads. Still, even important meetings were sometimes convoked by word of mouth, which was remarkably effective in these small towns.

This programming was important; no public sphere, no civil society is possible without public space for informing people about government activities. People need to know about government activities and plans; this is a fundamental role of media in a democracy. But they also needed space to question and respond to those plans. I found that all of the radios attempted to host debates during the pre-election period, but debates and opinion were not a frequent part of their daily news coverage. Why was this,

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and what was its significance?

Each of the radios saw themselves as a forum for public opinion in the context of their news coverage, but it seemed to me that opinion was in fact quite limited. Elena told me that she would "take themes like the legalization of the land to see what the advances are, the problems that are faced and what people think about [these issues], the people who live in the community" (Elena Romero, interview with author, November 5, 1996). When I pressed her about whom she would talk to, she said she would talk to the representatives of the programs responsible for transferring the land. In other words, her strategy was to get the information rather than to seek out opinions. The main events which highlighted non-official perspectives were the annual town festivals where open-mike periods might be offered. News stories more commonly featured local leaders and NGOs than the opinions and voices of the general public.

There are several possible explanations for this. The regions where the two rural radios in this research were located were fairly politically homogeneous during the period of my research in their support for FMLN candidates. Neither radio station regularly interviewed mayors of other party affiliations in neighboring communities, although community radios in less homogeneous areas, such as Victoria and Usulután regularly interviewed and provided space for local officials of all parties.

Some of the visiting technical experts suggested that most rural people avoided open conflict, particularly because of the damage of the polarization of the war, but this seemed unlikely because there were certainly disagreements expressed at the town meetings.

Others attributed the lack of debate to the closeness of the radios to local governments. The participatory radios were generally begun as projects of local *Asambleas* or town meetings of the returned refugee communities (see chapter 2 for this

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history). These *Asambleas* were now transforming themselves into development organizations, and their leaders into often successful candidates for mayor and other municipal positions. Local mayors and heads of development organizations remained on each radio's board of directors. The local mayors were concretely supportive of the radios' presence, helping them to obtain their "*personería jurídica*" or legal status as an organization and signing letters to support of community radio legalization (Otilio Serrano, interview with author, April 6, 1997).

Radio staff considered it important to provide space for local leaders to share their plans and accomplishments. Mayors and other local leaders represented the rural populations in the national public sphere. Lack of national attention to rural areas and to agriculture remained contentious issues. Municipal governments had few sources of revenue beyond a small portion of national budget to fund local needs and programs, and were fighting during 1997-98 to increase their share from 1 percent to 6 percent.

But at the same time, perhaps the community radios were too closely integrated into local leadership networks to provide a critical view. There remained a tension between the radios' role on the one hand, to help construct a sense of political agency and subjectivity for its rural communities and populations, and on the other, as an arena for civil society, a local public sphere where the conflicts could be expressed and the voices of local civil society could monitor and restrain government.

When the community radios tracked the achievements of local leaders and governments, it provided a mirror on itself that said, yes, we survived, and we continue to claim local authority and control; look, here are the leaders we have chosen, the achievements we have developed. At the same time, the radios projected the community into the nation so they "put their best foot forward," rather than air internal debates (or allow less than stellar individuals on the air, as after the fire at Radio Sumpul).

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Elections and citizenship education

The participatory community radios provided fora for election campaigns, the role expected of mass media in a democracy. During the campaigns, the radios broadcast political ads, debates, and candidate interviews, as well as educating their listeners about the election process in general.

I had just arrived in El Salvador when the 1997 elections took place, so I did not have a chance to observe election coverage at any of the case study radios. I discussed the election at my case study sites and I did have a chance to visit Radio Victoria, another community radio, for a few days prior to the 1997 election. Radio Victoria is located in Villa Victoria, a municipal center perched high on a mountainside. The town had been a government stronghold during the war, and this radio had moved there from the Santa Marta community of returned refugees in the adjoining valley. In Villa Victoria's most important race, a prominent businessman was running on the National Conciliation Party (*Partido de Conciliación Nacional,* PCN) line to challenge the ARENA party mayor. (This was historically the party of the military and rural landowners but had gained more independence in recent years). Seven parties in all were competing in the elections, and most ran election ads on the radio and allowed the radios to interview their candidates. Only the incumbent ARENA candidate refused an interview; the staff thought this reflected his reluctance to face questions, though in his final campaign he repeated the national party's accusation that the community radios were a front for the FMLN.

Both Cristina, the radio's director, and Erasmus, a young man who had become its manager, strictly enforced a nonpartisan atmosphere: no posters or propaganda and radio staff couldn't work for any campaign. This was especially important because their

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building used to house the FMLN office, and many people associated the radios with "the Frente." On the other hand, several of Radio Victoria's young staff were members of the ARENA youth group.

Education about the electoral process had been a major concern of radio programming prior to the election, as it had been at most of the community radios. Here, the station made public service spots about the electoral process, based on a set of posters produced by the popular education collective, *Equipo Maíz,* which hung near the station's entrance to the street. These were broadcast throughout the campaign.

The staff was vigilant about the election laws. When Cristina told the staff about rumors of voting fraud--that women at the voting tables with long nails would hide ink under their nails and smudge the ballots, invalidating them--Erasmus and another staffer went to make a spot warning people to check their ballot carefully for smudges. During an interview, the mayor told Erasmus that he was going to inaugurate a new soccer field, but Erasmus told him he didn't think this was allowed within 30 days of the election.

Juan Lucas at Radio Segundo Montes called the experience of the elections "transcendent." In the seven years of the radio's existence, they had participated in the two post-war elections, in which,

> We tried to open the radio to all the political parties so that they could make their political campaigns. The FMLN, ARENA, PDC, Movimiento de Unidad, Convergencia all came here with programs and paid announcements, all of them came, and the radio never said they couldn't. No, the radio said, we're at your service, make use of us. ... [the radio is] only a vehicle in which we tranport these ideas and the people decide. ....this marked for us one of the grandest [moments], a great honor for the media of communication ... (Juan Lucas, interview with

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author, December 17, 1997).

This was the second major election since the Peace Accords were signed, and there was still some concern that it would be peaceful and "transparent," widely used in the post-war era to mean out in the open, not secret or controlled by back-room deals. As in 1994, international and national observers in 1997 noted some problems and called for cleaning-up voting lists, residential-area voting and other reforms but overall judged the vote as fair.

The community radios played an important role in preparing their audiences for these much-anticipated elections. They explained the somewhat complicated processes: people had to apply for special voting credentials, and were assigned to voting locations alphabetically, not by neighborhood residence. They warned people of frauds that would invalidate their votes. They actively encouraged all candidates to use their space to reach the public, with ads, interviews, and at least some debates. It was especially important to the radios to prove false the ARENA party accusation that they were allied with the FMLN, not only for their legalization battle, but to fulfill the vision they had of their role in democratizing the country.

Their non-partisan coverage, efforts to increase voting participation, and space for local, rural issues strengthened the political agency of the region. They were no longer a marginalized backwater, covered with a couple postage stamp reports about crime in the national press, but an area with serious local concerns which merited debate and solutions. Some of these concerns impacted national issues--agrarian debt and support for agriculturalists, financial viability of municipal governments, the privatizations of electricity and telephone service. Providing a space for the local public to monitor and contrast the views of local leaders also strengthened local civil society.

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Modeling democracy?

Another crucial aspect of the development of civil society is what can be referred to as the development of a culture of democratic decision making within local institutions. Did these community radios' embrace of participatory communication include the culture of consensus or internal democracy?

Decision-making processes varied at the rural community radios. All held regular staff meetings, where issues were discussed and decisions made. All core staff participated, regardless of age or gender. All had a Board of Directors which made larger policy decisions, made up of representatives from local institutions, such as the mayors and *Asambleas* or development foundations, organizations of women and youth, and staff representatives. In addition, where the tradition of *Asambleas* as Town Meetings continued, as in Guarjila, this body was considered the ultimate authority: the radio was said to "belong" to the community, so the opinions expressed at the *Asamblea* had to be taken seriously. In this sense, there was a significant amount of discussion, debate, attempts to form consensus and other democratic practices in the management of the community radios. At the same time, as small organizations, decisionmaking on a day-to-day level reflected the leadership styles and personalities of each radio's director.

Juan Lucas at Radio Segundo Montes was a decisive, business-like leader, making most of the decisions about programming, staffing, budgets. Meetings followed fixed agendas and there was a clear division of labor among staff, even though all were trained for all aspects of producing and maintaining the broadcasts. Fito at Radio Sumpul was more idealistic and familiar with the participatory culture of global NGOs through his years working in Mexico. While he controlled the budget and the program schedule, he encouraged staff participation. He spent much of a meeting for new volunteers encouraging them to share their ideas about the kinds of programming they'd

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like to work on. Another factor was the fact that Fito spent most of the week away in San Salvador, leaving day-to-day operations to a staff who commanded great respect in the community. Miriam not only represented the staff on the board, but was a respected ex-combatant; Rosi was later elected president of the town meeting (*Junta Directiva de la Asamblea).*

Staff was represented on each radio's Board of Directors, and each radio's board was constructed so that the main institutions of the community were represented. These Boards--at least those of Radio Sumpul, whose meetings I attended--met frequently and decided major issues for the radios. They represented another instance of local democratic decision making. But in their own internal decision making processes, the community radios seemed to reflect the leadership styles of their directors rather show the influence of many civil society actors towards more internal democracy and participatory decision making.

Community radios as the communication medium for civil society organizations

Perhaps the most impressive achievement of the community radios I studied was their integration with the local, national and international organizations and associations referred to as "civil society." The radios provided crucial ways for these organizations to reach their constituencies, to enlarge them through promotion and to educate and inform them in ways that reinforced and catalyzed their efforts. For the non-profit sector, for small businesses and for the agricultural sector in these poor and war devastated economies, the radio provided a tool for economic development through advertising. These efforts were mutual as the ads and co-productions were also the mainstay of self-sustainability for the radios themselves. For a few organizations, the

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community radios provided a way to convey their vision of society and community to the radio's listeners, visions which resonated with those of the radio itself. In the same ways, the community radios provided an important tool for national and international efforts towards economic development in these regions.

Local commercial radios could not play these roles, both because of the more narrowly commercial orientation of this sector in El Salvador, and because the radios' work with civil society organizations were collaborations, not simply commercial transactions. They worked to adapt to each other's needs and expectations, often though not always sharing a larger vision of development. Sometimes these relationships developed fluidly; other times there were conflicts. Overall, the community radios were central modes of communication for small businesses and for nonprofit institutions, much like the community press anywhere (Sims 1969).

Economic development

What do the rural community radios' economic relationships say about their role in building civil society, and more broadly, about the role of the market in civil society? What is the role of the market in the work of these community radios; in what kinds of economic relationships are they involved?

One strong motivation for the rural community radios' work was the economic development of their regions, which were battlegrounds during the war and marginalized reserves for peasants pushed off more fertile lands over the past century (see chapter 1). Radio Sumpul's first slogan was "Radio for Development." But building a market and strengthening a local commercial sector was not their first priority. The radios saw their role as developing local capacities--basic education, local history, popular culture and entertainment, citizenship education. They were primarily an educational, not a

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commercial communication medium. Consequently non-governmental organizations, not small or large businesses were felt as the community radio's core constituency; they were allies in this movement for local development, sharing a vision for the future, even it was increasingly fragmented.

The community radios and their programming partners alike faced the challenge of economic survival. Both of these case study radios had received occasional grants and in-kind donations from international organizations. Radio Sumpul had recieved start-up funding and training from at least two European foundations. Radio Segundo Montes had received a donation of a transmitter from a U.S. church group and a grant from a German environmental organization for program production. But these did not cover their day-to-day expenses. In the 1990s especially, funders expected their grantees to become thoroughly integrated into the market, and eventually to become be self-sufficient.

Salvadoran community radios were not completely non-commercial; like most Latin American community-based media, they depended on local advertising to survive. Both Radio Sumpul and Radio Segundo Montes solicited ads from local businesses, for cash and in-kind resources: for example, sometimes a local gas station provided gas for Radio Sumpul's generator.

Radio was just about the only medium available to local business, beyond a sign posted on the road or a flyer circulated at an event, but the economy was so poor that few could take advantage even of community radio's low rates. Commercial radios were unaffordable or not as accessible. For example, when the Animal Feed Factory (*Fábrica de concentrados*) located in Comunidad Segundo Montes opened in 1995, Radio Segundo Montes was the only media which gave them advertising space, which they used until August 1997. By that time, the company had established themselves in the eastern

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region of the country; the radio had helped them enter the market and they could now afford the more expensive regional commercial station (Celia Concepción Sáenz, interview with author, 11 November 1997).

Similarly, the Dental Clinic in San Luis, in the center of Segundo Montes, advertised on the radio in order to start its business and increase it. Housed in a new cement block building painted red and white, on the day of our interview Tomás Argueta's shoes were muddy from building a corn mill in the front corner of his lot, so we sat in the back corridor to talk. He wore heavy boots and jeans like most men but his plaid shirt and Yankee cap divulged the time he had spent in the U.S. Argueta was trained to do dental work for the guerrillas during the war with support from U.S. solidarity groups. He did not receive aid from the community foundation or its international supporters, so he arranged credit from his war-time suppliers to get his post-war business started.

To let people know his clinic was open, he launched a campaign with local health promoters for free teeth cleanings for local children. The spots explained how to clean your teeth and to not be afraid of the dentist. His staff started without salaries, sharing whatever income the clinic brought in. The next year's ads were funded by his international solidarity supporters and brought in 1200 kids! These radio campaigns both increased his paid clients and provided a service. He could have advertised on other radios, but he found that Radio Segundo Montes reached local audiences better: people knew the schedule, they were *pendiente*, as they say here, attentive (Tomás Argueta, interview with author, December 1, 1997).

Other commercial clients of the radios seemed motivated by their admiration for the returned refugee community. The *Sastrería Oriental* (Eastern Tailor-shop) in Gotera, the departmental capital, was at the edge of the main market, just a few blocks

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from the Town Hall. Its shop windows were filled with merchandise, its shelves were packed with rolls of fabric, trimmings hung over a table near one door and glass display cases held buttons and other notions. In business for 25 years, Ana Julia de Ramos had a long-term contract with the radio, and her ad was updated monthly with specials. Even though the Radio Segundo Montes signal didn't reach her, she knew that the ads increased her sales from her customers' comments. But the spots were also a form of mutual aid: more customers came into her store, while she supported the young people who worked at the radio. They are real workers, she said, like the teachers that the community is going to graduate (Ana Julia de Ramos, interview with author, November 25, 1997).

The businesses I spoke with advertised to increase their income or start their businesses: the publicity helped their bottom line. Some also hoped to contribute to the development of the region or of individuals they admired. These economic relationships were primarily monetary exchanges but because of the region and its history they intertwined with other motivations as well.

Economic relationships between the community radios and non-profit, non-governmental groups were more complicated. The community radios saw these NGOs as their core constituency, and they often shared a vision for development, but because they needed to develop local sources of income, they had to charge this constituency, too, for production services and airtime.

Collaborations with international NGOs, such as the post-war transition and development organizations working in the region were highly sought after by the community radios. After all, they brought resources both to the radio itself and through their programming and services helped fulfull their goals of community and regional development. National and international agencies and organizations, too, saw these

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radios as key tools for their efforts; they needed communication media which reached local communities in order for their work to be effective. For the *Agencia de Desarrollo Económico Local* (Local Economic Development Agency, ADEL), Radio Sumpul in Chalatenango played an essential role that the commercial radio in the area could not. ADEL was an international post-war technical support agency which coordinated programs to serve displaced, repatriated and demobilized people of the region.[6] It conducted research and kept its members, which included popular associations, NGOs and private enterprise, informed of each other's work. Radio Sumpul was involved with ADEL's system of agricultural price information, which aimed to help diversify the rural economy. ADEL staff researched wholesale and consumer prices in the region weekly and posted the prices in the markets, as well as sharing them with Radio Sumpul and *"La Chalateca,"* the region's commercial station.

At Radio Sumpul, ADEL found radio director Fito enthusiastic and creative. ADEL agreed to pay for the radio transmitter's gasoline in exchange for the radio producing and broadcasting their announcements. ADEL member organizations responded favorably to the station's choice of products; the announcements were judged a success, particularly for agriculturalists from more remote areas. ADEL had approached commercial station *La Chalateca* with this project, but they would have charged commercial rates and wouldn't run it as a public service announcement. Giving time was not part of the vision of *La Chalateca* or the tradition of Salvadoran broadcasting in general, ADEL staff Jorge Lemus told me. In contrast, Fito was enthusiastic; he even was planning to train ADEL staff themselves to record the voices, when the fire intervened (Jorge Lemus, interview with author, at ADEL office,

[6] ADEL had projects in most of Central America, and in some other areas of the world. The organization was started as part of post-World War II reconstruction efforts by the Italian government.

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Chalatenango City, June 10, 1997).

Collaborations and conflict

ADEL was happy to pay Radio Sumpul to produce and air its announcements. But for local organizations, the idea of charging for services often conflicted with the expectation that a community radio was a medium created by the community itself to serve its needs. Even though some organizations received funding from national or international sources (ranging from small groups of solidarity supporters to global aid organizations), using these funds for radio programming rather than for direct services sometimes caused conflict.

Increasingly all institutions in the area were rather unrealistically expected to survive on their own economically, as national and international funders promoted the idea of self-sufficiency both for the refugees themselves and for NGOs. After the population returned from the refugee camps where international agencies had provided food, housing, clothing and other basic needs, the agencies, "decided that now these people were in their own country, they have to develop themselves, they have to find how to survive. ... This was hard for the people," Lucía told me, "since they were accustomed to having everything provided ... (María Lucía Chicas, interview with author, December 15, 1997).

Once supported by a grant for their *Green Hour* program from a European foundation, Radio Segundo Montes's income during my fieldwork varied from month to month, depending on ad and program income. After the costs of running the station, the staff were left with a "stimulus" which seemed to hover around half the minimum wage. For Juan Lucas, becoming self-supporting was a great dream, one which depended in the long term the legalization of their frequencies, the region's economic growth and in the

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short term, more income from ads and program collaborations (Juan Lucas Aguilar, interview with author, December 17, 1997).

Regardless of the viability of this dream--few non-profit or community based media organizations in the U.S. survive solely on earned income--it sometimes brought the radio into conflict with the very organizations they sought to serve. Workers at the Rehabilitation Center (described below) were initially shocked when Fito asked them to pay for their spot. After all the radio was supposed to be "community" radio; they weren't thinking about how the radio had to support itself (Delilah, interview June 3, 1997 at Rehabilitation Center).

A health clinic doctor was also angry at Radio Sumpul for charging so much for spots and productions. Shouldn't the radio serve the clinic, and not force it to divert scarce funds from direct services? The health clinic was probably the most remarkable and respected community institution in Guarjila. Formally opened after the last big battle of the war on October 11, 1991, many health workers in the region had been trained by clinic founder Ana Manganaro. It had a hospital, two doctors and six health promoters, the latter on call 24 hours a day. The director, "La" Victoria,[7] was a famed doctor who had spent the war behind the lines with the guerrillas. The clinic had been supported by international cash and in-kind donations but increasingly was being forced to try to survive on its own resources.

The clinic had produced several spots in the past. I heard an especially vivid *sociodrama*[8] explaining how to take care of water to prevent cholera. More recently they had used the radio to promote their own version of health insurance, where for 15 *colones* a month for each family (about $2), all health care expenses would be covered

[7] Adding the pronoun is a way of indicating that someone is extraordinary in some way.
[8] A short drama with educational goals.

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(Marlene Cruz, interview with author at Ana Manganaro clinic in Guarjila, May 19, 1997). The clinic frequently used the radio to announce workshops and meetings, though they used the town's loudspeaker and truck, too. When I discussed their dispute with the radio with several clinic staff, it was clear that they valued their access to the radio and they felt a sense of ownership. When the radio charged enough for its services to provoke a decision about whether that announcement or education campaign was more of a priority than direct health services, the radio appeared to be withdrawing that access, threatening its identity as a community-owned radio. "Community" in this case meant access and money was a barrier to access.[9] But from the radios' perspective, the production and airing of spots and micro-programs were both a service and a source of funding. With so little money in the economy and so many community institutions dependent on ever-scarcer outside resources, the competition for resources was intense.

Working collaboratively

Whether the community radios charged for their services or not, whether the radio's own need for economic support was understood, the radio staff worked more closely and collaboratively with the NGOs, local, national or international, to help them develop and shape their messages.

The community radios did not simply ask for money to produce programs or spots for organizations, but encouraged real collaboration, from developing scripts together to training an organization's staff to be their own radio voices. These collaborations could be frustrating because of the radios' small, sometimes inexperienced staff, low broadcasting power, or the lack of resources which limited

[9] In other communities, community radios often charged nominal fees for their services . But at Radio Sumpul announcements and dedications had been free; in fact an early director was essentially fired for trying to institute charges.

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everything from broadcasting hours to technical quality.

For example, Guarjila's Rehabilitation Center turned to the radio because they thought it would be a more effective way to attract people to the physical therapy services they provided for the region. They had tried distributing a sheet with drawings and text. One drawing showed a woman leaning on a crutch because of her amputated leg, while she ground *masa* (soaked corn) at her *metate* (grinding stone). But print outreach was a mistake, coordinator Devorah said, because most people could not read well, and would look at the writing and throw it away. The radio was different, she explained: it was dramatic and funny, and people who did not have time for a long visit, or could not read, would listen to it. It's like the *telenovelas* (popular prime time soap operas), she said.

Fito introduced a collaborative process to produce their spot. First the Rehabilitation Center staff thought of an everyday story: a woman leaving her house at four or five in the morning, as people do here, to collect firewood in a distant place. On the way back, she tripped and twisted her ankle and her back. Another woman came by and explained that the Rehabilitation Center could help her. Débora, who was from San Salvador, wrote the script, then showed it to the other health promoters who were from the region for advice on local expressions and phrases. For example, "I fall" would normally be, "*yo caigo,*" but people here say, "*yo tropiezo*." Fito made the script more dramatic and humorous, then the group recorded it with their own voices along with radio staff. I observed the taping, with Fito cajoling and encouraging, working hard to bring out the emotion and timing of their voices. It must have been an intense experience for all involved, but the final product sounded convincing and professional.

For the women's organization in Comunidad Segundo Montes (*Asociación para el Desarrollo de las Mujeres,* ADIM), the radio was used as an educational tool to support their work in other spaces. They regularly announced meetings and events, such

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as their Day Against Violence activities or trainings for women in micro-businesses. Their biggest production was a series of interviews and dramatic dialogues meant to build women's self esteem and inform them about legal resources for domestic or labor disputes, such as the Human Rights Ombudsperson's offices. This series was funded by an European women's organization, and ADIM produced it with the technical assistance of the radio staff. These radio programs reinforced information presented in their women's discussion groups and one-on-one counseling. It gave the organization more recognition in the community and most significantly, increased the number of women acting on their rights, Mabel Reyes, the group's director explained, based on the long lines at the Human Rights Ombudsperson's office in the departmental capital.

The commercial station did not produce educational programming, and to buy space would have been very expensive. In addition, the radio staff highlighted the programs, making "commentaries that motivate people even more" to listen (Mabel Reyes, interview with author, November 12, 1997).

The signature program of Radio Segundo Montes, *La Hora Verde,* (the Green Hour), also reinforced the sponsoring organization's work in small groups. This program perhaps more than any other shared a basic vision with the radio for the development of the region, and the program was produced with close collaboration with radio staff. Its sponsor, the Technical School,[10] was in effect the major development organization in the community of Segundo Montes. During the year of my fieldwork, they ran a range of projects including a training program for family farmers in sustainable agriculture and appropriate technology and an educational project for micro-entreprenuers. They also completed an in-depth survey and analysis of region's demographics and economy.

"The Green Hour" radio program was part of a project to provide practical

[10] The name reflects its roots in the training programs of the refugee camps.

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information about agricultural ecology, like an agricultural extension program, staffers David Quintero and Rogelio explained. Their goal was to help local farmers modify traditional farming methods to produce better food crops and to stop environmental deterioration. To this end, they set up 11 groups of about 15 people each in all the neighborhoods of the community. Each biweekly meeting explored a different topic, such as how to make organic fertilizer, build plant barriers or terracing for soil preservation, deal with garbage, or raise pigs in sanitary pens. In each group, one volunteer put the idea into practice and one local farmer implemented all these methods in a "model farm." The weekly Saturday morning radio program introduced the themes covered by the discussion groups, so people could come to the meetings prepared with some knowledge.

The program's approach was very straightforward. In one installment, after a brief conversation between radio staffer Elena and Tecnical School staffer Rogelio, Rogelio gave a methodical presentation of the need for growing more vegetables in family plots, along with practical advice about how to do it. Well-chosen music from top-selling Mexican rock band Maná and local musicians alike broke up the presentation, along with the radio station's IDs and educational spots about environmental issues. The final third of the program featured a segment for children, *Un Encuentro con la Tierra (An Encounter with the Earth),* produced by a Latin American education and support center for community radios (*Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación Radiofónica,* ALER). This was followed by the station's own news summary of regional environmental issues (*La Hora Verde,* November 9, 1997; David Quinteros, interview with author, November 11, 1997).

The two groups worked collaboratively to package and convey this information which in turn was being put into practice in groups across the community. In other

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words, the participatory aspect of the program extended beyond the studio to the discussion groups of listeners. The overall purpose of the program sprang from a shared vision for the development of the region, shared to some degree by both the producers and the radio staff. This vision was rooted in the social movements of the past but had changed to fit the current period.

This can be seen more directly in the Pastoral program, which aired every Sunday morning. While this project of the Christian Base Community movement in the area was strictly speaking a religious program, ironically the spread of this movement throughout Latin America beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s was the precursor of the democracy movements of the 1980s and 1990s. Radio Segundo Montes's Pastoral program conveyed the message that a revitalized religious practice and involvement in civic action were connected. One Sunday morning, the lay commentators read the gospel text scheduled in the normal church calendar, Mark, 13, verses 24-33, which concerns the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple and the end of the world. Their interpretation was that this was not a millennial catastrophe but a relevant historical lesson, which seemed to me a classic Liberation Theology interpretation (see chapter 1, page 23). Jerusalem during Christ's lifetime was the center of values against the faith, they told listeners, where political, economic and religious power was concentrated and used by the powerful against the poor. The temple, representing the power of the privileged, tried to kill Christ but did not succeed, just as in our day the powerful tried to kill Monsignor Romero but did not succeed since "he lives in all of us who he loved." The message was that the temptation of power was ongoing, but the call to build a new world also continued.

The local Pastoral committee had many-stranded relationships with community members--there were neighborhood groups, youth groups, a group for mothers of ex-

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combatants, a project to build a church, and masses with the Belgian priest, Padre Rogelio, who had accompanied the community throughout the war years (see chapter 1, page 24). One of the most active members of the Pastoral group was elected head of the community foundation during the year of my fieldwork, and also served on the radio's Board. The program was also significant to the radio because it paid for its time on air.

Developing new social actors, strengthening cultural identity

The work of groups like the Pastoral committee, the women's organization, and the Technical School were examples of the ways new social actors were being developed in the post-war era. Campesinos, women, youth were recognized through these groups, and this recognition was reflected and amplified through the broader public space of the radio. Through organizing and acting on their own interests, these groups were producing civil society. The community radio provided space for them to reach more people and to reinforce their work in small groups. It legitimized their message, selecting and highlighting it just by being on the air. In addition, because the programs were produced collaboratively, the radio played an active role in creating awareness of this new sector and helping them work more effectively. Combining its work with all these groups, the radio created a collective portrait of these new actors in civil society, a sense of a local public sphere where their concerns, perspectives and ideas could be circulated.

Local radio, local civil society: some conclusions

One of the contributions of rural community radio stations to the development of civil society in post-war El Salvador was programming which continued to raise consciousness of human rights, including the rights to information and expression. The possibility of respect for human rights was a basic post-war achievement, and human

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rights was a frequent topic of speeches and discussion in the community during the period of my fieldwork. That sense of entitlement was a crucial underpinning for all of the activities of civil society organizations. The community radios strengthened that awareness through short announcements and full-length programs including UNESCO's "Good Times for Women."

Rights were presented as belonging to people, not something that governments could either give or take away, and the community radios saw their own continued existence as a case in point. The Salvadoran state had no right to shut down the community radios, in their view, because they were an embodiment of their community's right to information and expression. They fulfilled this right by providing the communities with information and by providing spaces for the voices of individuals and institutions of the community they served. These institutions could be local government officials, local groups, or national or international organizations operating in the community. Because of the participatory, collaborative nature of most of the rural radio's programming production, these radios were a particularly crucial resource for fulfilling the rights to expression, not just information.

Just as the community radios educated their listeners about their rights, they also carried programming about the responsibilities of citizenship, from spots about how to participate in the elections to ads, interviews and debates for local candidates. Like Radio Victoria, another community station I visited during election time, both rural radios attempted to provide space fairly for all parties during the election campaign, and despite continued partisan distrust they had some success. Juan Lucas described the experience as one of the high points of the radio's existence, and told me that one candidate credited his election with radio space and coverage.

The global community radio movement values democratic processes at all levels.

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I found that internal decision-making processes of the rural radios blended democratic practices--staff meetings, governing Boards with broad community representation and in some cases, direction coming from open Town Meetings--with the varied leadership styles of individual directors. In these cases, urban-based Fito crafted a more consensus-oriented style, while efficient Juan Lucas favored a more hierarchical, businesslike approach. The latter seemed more common in other Salvadoran institutions, such as schools and businesses.

Much of the rural radios' news programming, beyond the crucial announcements they ran daily, consisted of interviews and reports on the activities and accomplishments of local governments. This information was not available in any other mass media, aside from occasional reports on local commercial stations. Their focus on local government paralleled a national post-war movement to decentralize what had been a very centralized state.

But the downside to this accomplishment was that there was very little criticism, debate, or analysis of local government activities. In both communities, there were vigorous disagreements about the direction of local government programs and the fairness of their implementation but these disagreements did not make it on the air.

Why was the expression of opinion and debate generally limited to election periods? In part, it resulted from the close relationships these radios maintained with the newly elected mayors and municipal governments, many of whom remained as members of the radio's governing Boards. But it may reflect the importance of having strong local representatives for the community's interest in the face of much more powerful national and international interests, and the ways the community radios themselves were a symbol of their communities, a way of representing their presence and accomplishments both to themselves and to the outside world.

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Civil society is generally seen as having interests separate from the state. The media are a crucial public space for expressing the interests of civil society, an arena where the interests of the state and of civil society can be expressed, debated, negotiated. The historic centralization of the country meant rural areas, especially these mountainous regions had been marginalized and invisible. In this power imbalance, local governments and leaders represented their local communities as part of civil society, rather than a part of the state. In this way, radios were serving civil society when they provided space for local government voices. Still, the region lacked this potentially effective arena of local opinion and debate.

Communication tools for civil society organizations

Efforts to educate about human rights and increase democratic participation by the rural community radios accompanied their broader, every day efforts to help construct a vibrant post-war civil society. As a communication medium for civil society organizations, the radios provided crucial ways for these organizations to reach their constituencies, to enlarge them through promotion and to educate and inform them in ways that reinforced and catalyzed other efforts.

They shared information, promoted activities, told their stories of the past and conveyed their visions of the future. In addition, they made their own decisions about how they would be portrayed because most of the programming was produced collaboratively: the subjects themselves were co-producers.

For for small businesses and for the agricultural sector in these poor and war devastated economies, the radio provided tools for economic development through advertising.In the same ways, the community radios provided an important tool for national and international efforts towards economic development in these regions. For

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non-profit organizations, these efforts were mutual as ads and co-productions were also the mainstay of self-sustainability for the radios themselves. For a few organizations, the radios provided a way to convey a shared vision of society and community to the radio's listening community.

Local commercial radios could not play these roles, both because of the more narrowly commercial orientation of this sector in El Salvador, and because the radios work with civil society organizations were not simply commercial transactions but collaborations. The community radios were clearly involved in market-based exchanges through advertising and program production, and in monetary relationships with international civil society organizations. Economic exchanges were crucial to their survival, but collaborations with NGOs defined the identities of these radios. What was important was the potential of each relationship to build local capacities, or strengthen a sense of local identity. Radio staff worked more closely with non-profit organizations, feeling that they were working towards common goals.

Strengthening civil society aids emergence of new social actors

Efforts of the radios to cultivate awareness of human rights and a belief in civic action and public involvement helped to lay the groundwork for the construction of civil society. Through the civil society organizations which produced radio programming, *campesinos*, women, youth and other members of the radios' communities become the central voices in this public space of their communities. This recognition was amplified because radio was broadcast, potentially reaching everyone in the area covered by its signal. These groups and social sectors were recognized as important social actors--people who count, whose activities and perspectives were significant. Like any other kind of performance, radio broadcasts highlighted these actors and issues. Together with the

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growth of local organizations and leadership in local civil society, the community radios helped these groups to become the central social actors and speakers, no longer marginalized and invisible.

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Chapter Six:

Stimulating Civil Society with Urban Participatory Radio

Radio Cabal, like many community radios, was at heart a tool for popular education about democracy and citizenship and a support for popular culture. This effort was informed by Co-Director Margarita Herrera's study of popular education methods while she was in Mexico during the civil war (Margarita Herrera, interview with author, February 4, 1998). I choose two programs to focus on for this chapter, *Citizens in Action (Ciudadanos en Acción)* and *How's it Going? (¿Cómo está el Volado?)* because they embodied these goals more explicitly than the station's other programs.

Radio Cabal staff told me that building civil society was the focus for their popular education efforts, and was targeted particularly towards the population whose rights and lives and survival and power in society were the central issue of the long civil war. Both *Citizens in Action* and *How's it Going?* provided information about issues and government activities, and modeled attitudes and ways of participating in democratic processes. All this was meant to build a different relationship between the population and the government: a culture of democracy.

What was a culture of democracy? What did civil society mean to people at this radio station and how could a communication medium help develop it? These are the broad central questions of this chapter. Radio Cabal's programs defined their view of civil society through examples of participation by individuals and groups, and by presenting a different relationship between citizens and government. I analyze Radio Cabal's goals and programs according to the same criteria as I did for the rural radios: how the programming promoted human rights, including the right to information; how

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it educated about the practices of citizenship; and how it served as a vital communication tool for civil society organizations. I also note some ways that transnational concerns and networks shape this programming. A broad comparison between the urban and the rural community radios ends this chapter.

One difference between the rural community radios and this urban station was that Radio Cabal sought to engage and involve particularly defined audiences. I examined some preliminary audience research this station provided to understand its relationship with these audiences better. Because this was a participatory communication medium, I also considered the NGO guests, partners and co-producers who participated in making the programming.

A woman I will call María de los Santos may be a typical listener. We spoke briefly one day when she visited the station to bring some homemade *quesadillas*--sweet cheese pastries--to Margarita. She was working as a maid in an upper-class household; a common job for women, young and old. In her case, her children were grown and living in other parts of the country. She discovered Radio Cabal the year before, while ironing, and called them to ask for help in changing her voting identification card. Since then, she had been a frequent caller and occasional visitor. She regularly shared her recipes on the "How's it Going?" program; she called in for raffles and won several. But now her boss didn't want her to call the station any more. She recounted a number of complaints about this boss--they often didn't eat dinner until 11 p.m., and she hardly had any time off, even during Christmas! Exploitative conditions for maids were quite common.

María was loosely representative of Radio Cabal's audience based on the profile suggested by the station's own analysis of callers, people who entered their raffles, and visitors. These data suggest that about two-thirds of listeners were from the working-class towns immediately surrounding the city and about one-quarter were from the poor

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and working-class neighborhood of the city itself. The majority were women, either housewives or students, working in the *maquilas*, the markets, small stores or factories. Some were owners of small factories--more likely workshops than what we North Americans imagine as a factory. Surprisingly, the survey did not list domestic workers, but these women fit in this general social and economic segment. The authors warned that the survey was not a systematic study and ignored the fact that most Salvadorans had little access to phones either in their homes or in markets and other public places (Radio Cabal 1998). (The numerous callers to the Saturday metal-music program fit another profile entirely: 90 percent male, though also young and from the San Salvador metropolitan area). In short, Radio Cabal's audience was understood to be the members of the poor majority of the city: someone who lived in one of the poorer neighborhoods or self-constructed communities that had emerged and continued to grow like mushrooms in every available bit of land in the city.

Most of Radio Cabal's programs were targeted towards specific segments of this audience: the mid-to late morning block was for women, early afternoon for men, through their sports program, later afternoon for youth. The *Dentro de Metal* (*Inside Metal)* Saturday night program was a special case, created by and for a devoted metal music subculture. In this way Radio Cabal's audience was more segmented than the rural radios, which tended to consider their audience as a single community except for children and youth. The programs I selected for this research were the defining, signature programs, putting into practice the station's goals for the station as a whole.

Even though the targeted audience for this station was the poor and working-class of the city, the discussions on the programs covered here most often concerned issues that were national in scope. These programs most often conveyed the feeling that what they were discussing applied not only to the city but to the country as a whole. At

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other times, the programs demonstrated the station's interest in the concerns and obstacles of everyday life in the city and its curiosity and delight in Salvadoran popular culture.

Ciudadanos en acción (Citizens in Action) and *¿Cómo está el volado? (How's it going?)*

In this section I focus on just two programs of Radio Cabal - *Ciudadanos en acción (Citizens in Action),* a midday talk program which brought news analysis and the perspectives of the growing number of NGOs or non-profit organizations to their listeners; and *¿Cómo está el volado? (How's it going?),* a morning "drive-time" program which aimed to bring news analysis and a humanistic, problem-solving attitude to the concerns of urban life. The two programs both aimed to develop the practices of citizenship, but in "Citizens" the topics and goal were explicit, while "How's it Going?" dealt with the issues in a more implicit, suggestive way.

Ciudadanos en Acción (Citizens in Action)

The purpose of this program was to promote the idea of citizenship through the example of organizations which were acting on a wide range of issues and interests. The programs were trying to show in concrete terms what it meant to be a citizen--that people made their own histories, that each person was related to others, and that being a citizen involved both rights and responsibilities. They aimed to counter passivity: "Dios es gente de carne y hueso (God was people of flesh and bone), Mario, the producer, liked to tell me. The program's purpose was also to create a space for the organizations of civil society so that people knew what they were, what they could do, and could interact with them. At the same time, they hoped to strengthen the perception of local government

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and its potential. This active concern was key to the way producers Mario Maida and Carlos Montes explained their view of civil society: it was not enough to simply be part of the majority and not part of the centers of military, government, or major commercial power. Civil society referred to the insititutions and individuals who sought alternatives to the status quo not merely for their own betterment but for the well-being of the nation (Mario Maida and Carlos Montes, interview by author, January 12, 1998).

Like all media, the program reflected the personalities of its producers and on-air staff. Mario was curious and well-read, had something to say about just about everything and would do it if you gave him half a chance. His humor was infectious and he'd be the first to break up a ponderous monologue with a well-targeted witticism, though he spoke so quickly that you be halfway through the next sentence before you realized it. Short and wiry with curly light-brown hair, he had formerly worked in advertising, and was now getting a master's degree in education. Carlos played the straight man to Mario; an experienced journalist, he was serious, thoughtful, organized; a big bear of a guy with short black hair and dark eyes.

On a typical day, Mario and Carlos sat across from each other at the studio table, which was set with three red-windscreened mics. The big picture window facing the courtyard allowed the early afternoon sun to brighten and warm the room. Posters of Latin pop star Olga Tanon, the late Brazilian environmental activist Chico Mendes, and the Salvadoran rainforest preserve, the Montecristo Cloud Forest, decorated the walls, along with stickers of other community radio stations. As Carlos reviewed the news, Mario interrupted with questions, comments and jokes. Carlos consulted his notes on a pile of little pieces of paper; Mario checked his big encyclopedia for facts and figures.

Each day the program followed a set structure, though the segments varied in length. It started with a welcome and the weather. Next was Carlos 's review of selected

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news topics peppered with Mario's commentary; actually Mario commented on everything, including the weather. Salvadoran popular culture edged into the program through a segment on the current saint's days, patron saint celebrations around the country and the unique customs associated with them. In, "A Day Like Today, Mario chose a page from his encyclopedia (*Resumen de acontecimientos del siglo 20*) which linked events and accomplishments in politics, science and medicine, technology and industry, culture and the arts somewhat internationally across the twentieth century. He combined Salvadoran events and issues with the book's topics to locate Salvadoran cultural identity and national history with life in other countries. Like the news topics, this provided Mario a springboard for comments related to the show's themes. This made up the first half hour. The second half of the program was devoted to the guest for the day, but when a guest canceled, the historical segment would be stretched into an entire program.

Themes were meant to be inspired by relevance to their audience's lives and by the "pillars" or key themes of the station: health, human rights, gender, ecology. From the program material I collected, only gender seemed shortchanged, ironic since the station was originally a women's station. Topics were also informed by the daily life issues that affected the "popular classes," the poor and working-class who lived in neighborhoods from garbage dumps and shanties in the *quebradas* (dry riverbanks) to concrete-block apartments spread all over the San Salvador metropolitan area. For example, a recurring issue during 1997-98 was the cost of water and electricity and how it was changing with privatization. In addition to providing information, the idea was to highlight what people's rights were, and what they could do to solve their problems. That people could act on their interests was the message; in this way, this program aimed to show how civil society is built.

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Appendix C, an overview of *Citizens in Action* topics, reflects the fact that the program's discussions frequently combined a number of themes. Human rights was discussed in several contexts, with emigration to the US, conditions for children in El Salvador, the rights of consumers and of labor organizers. Similarly, only one program in the fall 1997 data dealt explicitly with the practices of citizenship (November 19, 1997); in this case about the proposed election reforms. But many programs illustrated what it means to be a citizen: discussions about government corruption, a celebration of the burgeoning NGO world in which citizen's issues were represented, analyses of the national budget, reviews of the effects of privatization. These were all examples of the power of civil society to oversee and influence government action and practices. Because each of these programs featured a guest from an NGO, the show highlighted this sector and demonstrated that these were the actors that compiled information, developed arguments and represented the interests of the public.

Through foregrounding the activity of civil society organizations and the roles that citizens could play in a democratic society, the program conveyed its interpretation of the meanings of civil society and citizenship which were based in respect for human rights, a broadly inclusive public sphere, citizen action in their own interests and as a check on the power of government. A dynamic civil society would foment a more authentic popular culture and national identity and would demonstrate global interconnections.

Human rights awareness and practice

Citizens in Action built on a base of human rights awareness and practice developed during the war and embodied in the Peace Accords and the Office of the Ombudsperson for Human Rights (PDDH) created by that agreement (Naciones Unidos

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1992). Showing how the struggle for human rights did not end with the war, one guest praised the initial success of the free trade zone monitoring group. This was a concrete result of the pressures that local, national and international groups had brought to bear on the corporations and government to protect the rights of the *maquila* workers, she said (January 18, 1998). Another guest, reviewing progress in human rights since the war on the anniversary of the signing of the Peace Accords, exhorted listeners to form organizations to protect their rights, since the Ombudsperson's office could not carry this effort alone (January 16, 1998).

The program tended to focus less on past human rights abuses than on current conflicts, but continuing repercussions were sometimes noted indirectly. A news report about the possible prosecution of Argentine military officers accused of abuses in that country's "dirty war" led to comments on the parallels with El Salvador. Was impunity necessary for progress? Could prosecution prevent these crimes from ever happening again (January 22, 1998)? Focus on El Salvador's past seemed limited to particular anniversary days: the signing of the Peace Accords on January 16, the murders of Archbishop Romero on March 12 and the Jesuit scholars and their staff at the UCA on November 16.

Expanding the public sphere

Through providing information about current issues and policy debates, and providing public space for alternative views on these topics, Radio Cabal embodied the right to information and expression. It enlarged the public sphere by including these speakers and these audiences, which were marginally included in other mass media (see section on NGO participation, below).

The diverse guests and wide ranging discussions on *Citizens in Action* implicitly

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demonstrated that there were many perspectives, interests and views that must be considered in a particular issue. This was particularly important in a post-war environment where debates in the public sphere for so long had been reduced to a simple polarization, the left and the right (though within each there was intense debate). For example, Mario described a conflict about the reorganization of the historic center of San Salvador as not simply between the street vendors and the government, but as a reorganization of the city's ecosystem, where street venders, other commercial interests, historic preservation, parks, and other human needs all played a role (January 15, 1998). Guest Benjamín Cueller, director of the UCA human rights office and head of the free trade zone monitoring team, noted that not only women workers' organizations and the companies that hired them played important and neccesary roles. Government labor regulators, international human rights organizations, consumer and political activists, international investors, the U.S. government and not least, local human rights groups and churches, had relevant perspectives and interests.

Citizens in Action was not set up as a debate, and most often the producers' questions were not designed to probe for fallacies and inconsistencies, but rather allow guests to present their perspectives in some detail. Its purpose was to "open spaces for the associations, let them speak to the population... ," Mario told me, "it's a program of discovery and information about what civil society was and what it does" (Mario Maida and Carlos Montes, interview by author, January 12, 1998). Most of the time, the producers were comfortable with guest's views, but even when they were not, their questions pushed for more information rather than sparked disagreement. For example, when to Mario's obvious surprise a guest from a respected medical college supported the privatization of the government lab that tested pharmaceuticals for safety, Mario probed about quality control and the possibility of consumer oversight, then turned to the issue

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of generic drugs (January 29, 1998).

Promoting participation: "we're learning to be citizens"

Discussions on *Citizens in Action* often ended with suggestions about what listeners could do to ensure that the government acted on its responsibilities, particularly to provide public services. After a news story about the city's fumigation against mosquitoes, producer Mario encouraged listeners to call the Mayor's office if their neighborhood needed to be cleaned up and sprayed.

Taking this a step further was a segment about the conflict between the growing number of street vendors in the city center. Vendors were desparate to maintain their tiny stalls but the city planed to move them to allow traffic flow, minimize crime, and encourage business and tourism. Mario pointed out that the street vendors had formed an association to formulate their own plan, and then wondered, what role could individuals also play in this process? He then asserted that there were spaces for their participation (January 27, 1998).

In this way, the program presented a broader set of tools for activism. In part the *Citizens in Action* program was created because a culture of citizen organizations which could generate mass civic action campaigns--calls, letter writing and lobbying--was still new, even while confrontational mass demonstrations continued as a tactic. The "civil society" turn tested the utility of an overlapping set of generally less confrontative tactics.

Acting as a check on the power of government without fearing repression is one of the rights of citizens central to civil society. In this vein, *Citizens in Action* sometimes critiqued the practices of democracy and sometimes the gap between promises and implementation of policies. "We were learning how to be citizens. This concept was new in Central America--[though] it's been around at least since the French Revolution..., it

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hasn't been "convenient" here..." Mario explained in an interview. They were working towards a participatory democracy, more active, more real, "to recuperate the term" (Mario Maida, interview by author, January 30 and February 4, 1998). Building effectively participatory practices could take several forms.

For example, a representative of the national Human Rights Ombudsperson's Office criticized the President's handling of the Plan of the Nation, a kind of post-war re-building outline. She said that all sectors were supposed to be part of this process (as part of the Peace Accords), but the President didn't grant them access. Instead he treated the public as his audience, making the Plan his own political campaign. She went on, "they talk about a participatory process, but they don't allow people to take part..." (*Citizens in Action, broadcast,* January 16, 1998).

In another program, a representative of the large national teachers' union (ANDES) criticized the government's much publicized educational reforms. He noted that many students still lacked chairs or desks; that the "healthy schools" program brought health services to just a limited number of schools, and that a program to involve parents was designed to fail because parents were not being educated about how to participate in it Arnoldo Vaquerano, ANDES, interview with author, January 26, 1998).

Popular culture, national culture

While the main topics of *Citizens in Action* generally concerned political and economic topics, a few moments of each program reminded listeners of saint's days and village festivals, and some guests celebrated other aspects of Salvadoran popular culture. During my fieldwork a traveling theatre troupe, a folk dance group, and a technical support agency for local cultural organizations talked about their work, as did a group

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reclaiming folk medicines and healing techniques and another promoting pan-Mayan culture. These topics reflected the station's practice of validating living popular culture and supporting a sense of unique national identity (see chapter 7).

Recuperating a sense of national culture--the uniqueness and importance of elements of everyday life that were mostly unrecognized--was another piece of this program's agenda, Mario told me. These could be small things or major traditions. On the January 15 program, Carlos confused me by announcing that this was "Turkey Day" until he explained that it was the traditional day to pay taxes. In the Catholic calendar, the day was also dedicated to the Christ of Esquipulas, a famous pilgrimage site in Guatemala. Mario noted that this site had been revered for 402 years, and had a mixture of Christian and "pagan" or First Nation influences.

Local and global

One of the most unique contributions of this program was the way it made connections between particular local issues and broader concerns both within El Salvador and globally. This occurred mostly within the news commentary and the historical section of the program, entitled "A Day Like Today." One news segment featured a report by the National University and a major environmental federation, the *Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña (*Salvadoran Ecological Unity, UNES), about garbage collection and in particular the families who collected and picked through garbage on the big city dump. Mario and Carlos first connected the story of the children living and working in the dump to the issues of child labor and health nationally. They then turned to the differences between garbage dumps of the past and today, noting that their design and management in the globalized economy of today was often contracted to transnational firms. They ended by noting that consumer organizations like the Center

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for the Rights of the Consumer (*Centro para los Derechos del Consumidor,* CDC), their guest for the next day, were helping to clarify and speak for consumer rights in this issue (January 14, 1998).

From the perspective of the NGOs

While these topics highlight the roles of civil society organizations, the fact that *Citizens in Action* was explicitly a space to highlight their views and activities made this program a potentially powerful tool for this sector. Over 100 organizations were represented among the guests on *Citizens in Action* during 1997; about twenty were more frequent guests. Elena Martín, director of the *Consejo Coordinador de Instituciones Privadas de Promoción Humana de El Salvador* (Council Coordinator of Private Institutions of Human Development of El Salvador, CIPHES), an organization of Salvadoran NGOs, underlined the importance of good media work for this sector. Media could both inform people about NGO perspectives and activities, and allow NGOs to convey their opinions on legislation and issues, she told me, in order to generate public opinion. Frequent guests on Radio Cabal's program appreciated the value of this media space, but many NGOs did not: even some of the scheduled guests to *Citizens in Action* didn't bother to show up during my fieldwork period. Nestor Martinez, of the Salvadoran Ecological Union (*Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña,* UNES) critiqued most organizations for ignoring the power of media. Only one out of 200 used the media, he complained; most lacked media contacts and either did not see their importance or feared that their words would be used against them. The sticking point was that NGOs' funders didn't give money for publicity, though appearing on *Citizens in Action* did not cost anything but staff time.

The organizations which most valued the space available on Radio Cabal time

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tended to be the most media-savvy, ones which already used a variety of media. They saw in Radio Cabal a way to reach audiences that otherwise lacked information: the poor, often illiterate, for whom a newspaper was a significant purchase. They appreciated the program's uniqueness, though they seemed to have little problem getting their issues covered in the mainstream media or getting their point of view out to their constituency.

The Salvadoran Center for Appropriate Technology (*Centro Salvadoreño de Tecnología Apropiada,* CESTA), had been active since 1980. Director Ricardo Navarro was respected in El Salvador, had been recognized by the United Nations, and was frequently quoted by commercial media. Similarly the Center for the Rights of the Consumer (CDC) had no problem attracting reporters to their press conferences, though the major TV channels rarely appeared. They were regular guests on a weekly program of the largest commercial news radio, KL, and frequently interviewed on YSU radio (Juan Carlos Aguirre, CDC, interview with author, February 5, 1998).

Other frequent guests had their own extensive communication networks. The National Salvadoran Educators Association (*Asociación Nacional de Educadores Salvadoreños, ANDES 21 de junio*), a very mobilized union of over 30,000 teachers, used all conceivable communication media to reach the public and their own members. Despite a regular presence on major mass media, they found their most effective vehicle to the public were the bi-weekly bulletins the union distributed to their teachers and activists. Similarly The Salvadoran Ecological Union (*Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña,* UNES) had its own sophisticated communications department. This federation of 44 professional, environmental, university, and community programs produced their own series of two-minute radio programs (*"gotas"* or drops) on current environmental issues, and paid to have them aired on both alternative and commercial stations: Mayavision, Sonora, Romántica.

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Why use Radio Cabal if they had so much access to mass media and their own media? Commercial media more often disoriented and disinformed the public, Arnoldo Vaquerano at ANDES charged, and their limited spaces for information were simply meant to attract people to this advertising (interview with author, January 26, 1998). On top of this, few journalists had college degrees, and so lacked the capacity for interpretation and analysis. "The media have their own preferences," and other sectors had more space, even though some NGOs have some access, explained Juan Pedro Hernández, a researcher at the National Foundation for Development (*Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo,* FUNDE) an alternative think-tank for investigations on social and economic issues. El Salvador's mass media were limited by monopoly ownership from airing a broader range of issues and opinions. Spaces open to critical thought like Radio Cabal need to grow (Juan Pedro Hernández, interview with author, January 29, 1998).

"This population needs information, too," was the reason that several organizations gave me for their involvement with Radio Cabal. For the station's working-class and poor audience, buying a newspaper would be a difficult daily expense and neither could they buy a TV, but it was a rare family that doesn't have a radio, Vaquerano explained. In addition, the country's "tremendous" illiteracy made radio the most accessible media. The most marginalized of the population had the right to information they can use to improve their lives, he emphasized. Most media were not interested in what happens in these neighborhoods anyway, explained Marta Elena Rauda, whose organization provided health care services training for "base" (mostly squatter) communities (*Asociación para la salud y el servicio social intercomunal,* Association for health and intercommunal social services, APSIES) (Marta Elena Rauda, interview by author February 4, 1998).

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The kind of space offered at Radio Cabal allowed these organizations to communicate more effectively (Juan Carlos Aguirre, February 5, 1998). The interviewers on Radio Cabal asked different kinds of questions, Rauda told me, and they provided an opportunity for them to fully express themselves (Rauda, interview, February 4, 1998). Radio Cabal's space was different primarily because, "one has the freedom to "*plantear,*" focus on a solution or direct the conversation, as one wants" (Profesor Arnoldo Vaquerano, Executive Council, ANDES, January 26, 1998), and the interviewer was interested in what they had to say, unlike other stations (Narciso de la Cruz, ASTAC, January 26, 1998). They could talk as if they were in someone's house, - explained; another urban alternative radio, Mayavision, provided a similar space, but not targeted to the same audience (Nestor Martinez, Giovani Magaja, UNES, January 29, 1998).

"They have a social function that no other media fulfils. What the community radio gives us is two way communication ... Now we are no longer like *colonos* (sharecroppers) in the countryside, or employees of a *hacienda (*colonial-era estate), but we are citizens of a locality, interested in changing the conditions of our lives and our communities" (Elena Martín, director of CIPHES, interview by author, January 30, 1998).

The possibility of participation and interaction promoted by the form of the media, not only by the content, was what made Radio Cabal and the other community radios different from commercial ones.

These organizations were clearly more aware of the power and potential of media than most, and several saw more opportunities for participation at Radio Cabal. One of the goals of the *Citizens in Action* program had been to create relationships with these organizations and in fact, there were several which were in the process of beginning weekly coproductions, including the Salvadoran Human Rights Institute (*Instituto*

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Salvadoreño Derechos Humanos, de la Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos, PDDH); Salvadoran Center for Appropriate Technology (*Centro Salvadoreño de Tecnología Apropiada,* CESTA), The Foundation for the Study and Application of Rights (*Fundación para el Estudio y la Aplicación del Derecho,* FESPAD); and the Center for the Defense of the Consumer (*Centro para la Defensa del Consumidor,* CDC) (Radio Cabal 1998)

"¿Cómo está el volado?" and building a culture of democracy

The *How's it Going?* program took a different tack: how to get at what it meant to be a citizen, an active participant in a democratic society, through the concerns of everyday life. This was through both the more informal style and the content of the program. The content revolved around three foci: the concerns raised by the everyday life of the majority population, that is, the poor and working-class, the context and significance of news and its relation to other stories, and the rights and responsibilities of both citizens and government. The style was intimate, personal. Stories were short; questions and comments brought out their emphases. Margarita instructed her new co-host to talk to a specific audience, to Don Pedro, Niña Rosa, and to bring photos of specific people for the wall. Margarita was aware that what brought their reportage to life were the personal stories and experiences they shared--a friend's attempt to get water service, dogs barking and neighbors' calling from the street during a small earthquake. International news seemed closer to home by drawing parallels: China's earthquakes were contextualized by the recent ones in San Salvador. The meaning of abstractions like democracy became clearer through small, pointed observations. The arrest of a bank president and its directors after a privatized bank failed because its money was used for

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money laundering: democracy meant that even the rich went to jail (January 12, 1998).[1]

The physical space of the table in the studio reflected the tone of the program; it reminded me of a news-hound's breakfast table. The large rectangular table with its two red-windscreened mics was spread with newspapers, clippings, Margarita's notebook, and half-finished cups of coffee. The voices of hosts, Alberto and Margarita, were warm and relaxed, not slow but not hurried, either. Their exchanges sometimes overlapped and often they cued each other with only a glance.

At a meeting to re-structure the program on January 19, 1998,[2] Margarita, the producer/*locutor* and Federico and Carlos from the news department considered each segment, explicitly considering the ways the form and content of each engaged the audience. From 6:30-6:45 a.m., the point was to get closer to the audience, build an affective, not an intellectual relationship, through announcing birthdays and talking about early mornings in most households, using positive and motivational language. For example, that day, Luis (the new co-host) had talked about children going to school, relationships between parents and children, the role of elders, and cultural ideals expressed in patron-saint town festivals. At the end of this section, the theme of health and public services connected the family and household to the public services--water, transport, telephone--that should support it. Carlos suggested that this should be more explicit; they should present a problem and show how to solve it, even though this was what the other media did.

From 7-7:30 a.m., Margarita and someone from the news department provided commentary on local, national, and international news, providing some context and

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[1] Unfortunately they were let out by the end of the year (*La Prensa Gráfica,* January 1, 1998)

[2] After long-time co-host Alberto resigned to work on other projects, a new co-host, Luis, was hired. But despite his promising credentials as a teacher, he was not comfortable on the air and soon resigned.

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sometimes involving callers' comments and opinions. This would help to build the groundwork for a more participatory democracy, they thought, by helping listeners see the connections between the news and what was going on in their own lives, and by including both callers' opinions and their own interpretations on the events.

Next it was time to appreciate a small piece of Salvadoran popular culture: recipes from their listeners. This was usually recorded for better sound quality and pacing. Margarita found this section a fascinating way to preserve the voices and knowledge of the people and to give listeners special recognition. After the recipes they planned to produce different segments each day covering topics such as consumer complaints, price reports on everyday goods, and changes in the utilities due to privatizations.

Interspersed with these sections were traffic reports. The current person was boring, Margarita complained, can't we do this ourselves by asking taxi drivers for their participation? Music needs to be more dynamic, she suggested, so people wake up happy, let's choose more tropical, Latin American music. A new idea was proposed, providing internet service by sending and receiving messages or searching for information in response to people's calls. With each of these ideas, the producers attempted to involve the listeners more.

In a sense, the whole program was like a little drama, bringing the audience in, helping them identify with the hosts and the issues, making connections between the topics of the news and the audiences' lives, finding ways to resolve the conflicts, inconveniences and obstacles of everyday urban life, and celebrating unique local and national culture.

How does this build civil society? Below, I describe how this program translates this consumerist attitude of service to the listeners into a way to educate about what civil

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society was. The program may begin with the listeners' consumption of news and information and their use of goods and services, but its purpose is to move beyond this to encourage active participation in civil society. In the examples below, I describe this effort, organized according to the same criteria as I used for the *Citizens in Action* program: building on a base of respect for human rights, presenting the idea of civil society, promoting and modeling participation, expanding the public sphere by representing society to itself in all its diversity, incorporating the world while delighting in the local.

Building on human rights awareness

One of the biggest news stories during my fieldwork at Radio Cabal was the uproar about labor abuses in free trade zone (*maquila*) clothing factory called "Mandarin," and the efforts of the U.S. solidarity group Citizens in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), along with local groups to pressure the Salvadoran government to protect the workers involved. The *How's it Going?* program used the story to bring out the related human rights issues.

One was the role of government to protect citizens rights. On January 14, during the news commentary section, Margarita brought up the fact that the station frequently received complaints from *maquila* workers about their jobs, but the newspapers focused on U.S. NGOs who attempted to raise public consciousness about this sector's labor abuses. Clearly many listeners need the work in the *maquilas*, she said; isn't the role of the government to defend its citizens' rights? Carlos from the news department noted that the government had not responded to worker's complaints, so they had turned to international organizations. If the whole country becomes a *maquila*, as the government was proposing, Margarita asked, what would happen to labor laws?

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The next week, the *How's it Going?* hosts commented on the *maquila* monitoring group. As usual, Carlos provided some background: the history of complaints against this factory, the lack of response from the Ministry of Labor, the formation of a monitoring group made up of representatives of workers, the government, the Ombudsperson's Office for Human Rights (PDDH), and other parties. This monitoring group succeeded in getting commitments from the company to improve health and safety conditions and to re-hire several fired workers. Their success was the first in Latin America, Margarita commented, though it would only be implemented through the goodwill of the company. Carlos reminded listeners that the PDDH's office was open if there were continued complaints on these issues: "If they are unjust, go to any of these organizations (here he provided names addresses); you're not alone, all of us are human beings and citizens" (January 20, 1998).

In this news story, while the mass media focused on the supposed interference of international advocacy groups, *How's it Going?* hosts focused instead on the underlying human rights issues.They underlined the responsibility of the government to enforce its laws and protect its citizens. They also highlighted the ways citizen organizations like unions and human rights advocates could work together with their adversaries to acheive positive results. Finally they were able to publicize the offices which were established to help investigate and advocate for people who felt their rights had been abused.

Presenting participation in civil society

Participation can mean many things, and has been used in the context of democratization in a range of ways (see Chapter 3, pages 210-212). On this program, I found examples ranging from encouraging people to do something individually, in the spirit of self-help, to explaining how organizing and organizations can help solve

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problems. The program also pointed out ways government institutions could represent their constituencies better, and the role of debate and discussion among civil society institutions. Another contribution was basic to any news media in a democracy: simply providing information so that citizens could understand and act on it.

One morning, a caller warned that three electrical poles had fallen down, obstructing traffic on a busy road. Margarita put the caller through live, warning drivers to avoid this route (January 12, 1998). Another day, Margarita told about a friend who complained to ANDA, the government water agency, about rates so high she nearly couldn't use any water. It turned out that there was a problem with her meter. You have the right to complain, was the lesson here (January 15, 1998). Talking about the many supplies students were required to bring to school, the hosts relayed the Center for the Rights of Consumers's (CDC) suggestion to check the lists of materials from last year. Here they explained that the CDC was an NGO working for citizens' (and consumers') rights (January 14, 1998, 6:46 a.m.). After the San Marcos market fire, Margarita and Carlos discussed how the fact that the vendors were organized gave them the power to made sure their concerns were represented in the plans for rebuilding the market (January 12, 1998). Action as individuals, as organizations, as consumers, in relation to government and within society were all part of the dynamism of civil society.

Within government, too, civil society organizations had roles to play. When rates doubled after electricity was privatized, Margarita and pointed out that consumer interests were not being represented inside the government and conveyed the CDC's call for stronger regulation. The interests of consumers were part of the Peace Accords, Margarita said (January 15, 1998). Margarita noted that the "mothers and fathers of the country"--the representatives (*diputados)*--needed technical support and advisors to help them prepare for their debates on important issues, such as the budget, the

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Agrarian Debt, and the re-activation of agriculture (January 12, 1998). This, too was a role that civil society organizations could play.

The hosts frequently commented on the need for debate and discussion; without it, public interests suffered. For example, the transition from government to privately controlled electrical service had not been debated, resulting in confusion about who would pay for transmission or infrastructure. As a result these costs were suddenly listed on bills, as if rates were rising for the second time in as many months (January 23, 1998).

Another way the program supported citizen participation was simply providing information so that citizens could understand and act on it. The uniqueness of this program was their commitment to relating the news, from privatizations to landslides, to people's day-to-day lives and to the civic action they could take to improve these conditions, through government action or autonomously.

Too often news and government is experienced as something that involves and affects someone else; someone else can do something about that, not me. The *How's it Going?* program supported an attitude of participation by making it clear that the interests and concerns of their audience were important, valuable, even interesting. This perspective was particularly signficant for Radio Cabal's target audience, the poor and working-class urban majorities. The program attempted to reflect and represent Salvadoran society to itself, expanding the public sphere to include these populations. It conveyed the sense that these concerns were valid, their knowledge and perspectives counted, their voices deserved to be part of political debate.

"¿Cómo está el volado?" did this in a number of ways. Every program began with everyday concerns. Callers talked about their children, where they lived, the cost of

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things required for school.[3] This segued into a discussion of children from families who cut coffee this time of year, so that "these children can't be children until February" and the coffee harvest was over. The tone was, these were "us," too, not some poor marginal outcasts as they were presented in the newspaper (January 12, 1998).[4] Another day, the families who made their living picking garbage in the huge city dump were profiled. Quoting research conducted jointly by university and NGO investigators, Margarita noted that 65 percent of these "*pepinidoras*" (literally, seed-pickers) were children, 97 percent said they'd rather do other work and most were hired by third parties who sell what they collect for some profit (January 15, 1998). The program made visible the invisible.

Another theme was recuperating a sense of Salvadoran culture. Every day, some aspect of popular culture was celebrated. Daily recipes, descriptions of village festivals, folk remedies for sore throats and other minor ailments all kept a sense of the richness of everyday popular culture. Chew guayaba bark for stomach aches, drink sage tea if your throat hurts, visit your grandparents at the Patron Saint fair in Sonsonate this weekend and try special foods and drinks there, the hosts suggested one day (January 23, 1998).

The experience of the war was certainly part of Salvadoran identity. It was noted mostly on those days set aside for remembering, such as the 16th of January when speakers ranging from negotiators of the Peace Accords, testimonies recorded in Segundo Montes, and spontaneous callers shared their recollections of the war and its resolution (January 16, 1998).

Ways Salvadoran culture today was globally interconnected was recognized

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[3] The school year started in January and ended in December.

[4] As a comparison, that same week I clipped a several page spread on coffee harvest from one of the major daily newspapers; the beauty of the beans and the expected profits of the harvest, not conditions for the harvestors, were featured.

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particularly through music played throughout the program. Margarita liked to select music which grew from other Latin American regional cultures, such as Honduran *garifuna* music, Dominican Juan Luis Guerra's rescue of the *bachata* form or Carlos Vives' celebration of Colombian *cumbia* (January 14, 1998; January 22, 1998). For other topics, the hosts tried to convey an awareness that the rest of the world was afflicted by many of the same things as El Salvador: privatizations like Chile, earthquakes like China, migration to the U.S. like Mexico, weather disruptions of *El Niño,* like the Americas from Argentina to Canada (January 12, 21, 14, 15, 1998).

Radio Cabal and civil society

The purposes of both *Citizens in Action* and *¿Cómo está el volado?* were similar--to help build civil society. The differences were not only that the former was more explicit and the latter implicit. The programs reflected the personalities and opinions of their respective hosts: Margarita reflective, supportive; Mario curious, argumentative. But they both understood their mission as educating a particular segment of the public, making the news understandable to the mostly uneducated audiences they envisioned for their programs. This meant explaining the background or context of the news; what's really going on here, what does this really mean? An as outsider, I often found that their programs filled in the gaps in the news and answered questions newspaper stories left out.

The programs kept a critical eye on government action and inaction, critiquing what they saw as undemocratic manuevers, pointing out what they understood as the responsibility of government agencies and representatives. This meant especially to listen to and represent the interests of their constituents, all classes and sectors; to follow the law and not act arbitrarily or put their self-interests first.

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Sometimes the tone seemed patronizing, explaining the basics of good government like a high school civics class. But this was in a context where arbitrary use of power, corruption, and government as a tool of the elite had been the rule rather than the exception. The programs were trying to create higher expectations.

Part of their purpose was encourage their listeners to take an active role through the organizations and institutions of civil society. To this end, the programs highlighted the activities of organizations like CDC, CESTA, or PDDH, which represented and advocated for citizens perspectives. They encouraged actions of individuals who spoke out or acted for self-help or in the collective interest. They aimed to show how a strong civil society could work, and how in fact it was beginning to have an effect.

How's it Going? educated its audience about civil society. *Citizens in Action,* because of its long interview format, took this idea a step further by providing a more open space for these diverse voices. It provided communication tools and public space mediated or shaped through Mario and Carlos 's comments and questions.

Through their selection of topics, the programs aimed to legitimize the concerns of everyday life of their target audience, the poor and working class who lived in cardboard shanties or concrete-block apartments spread all over the San Salvador metropolitan area. While some of these issues did appear during my fieldwork, such as the changing costs of water and electricity during the transition to privatization, more often the issues covered were national or broader in scope. At the same time, both programs consistently highlighted unique elements of everyday life--foods, saints days, folk remedies, daily family routines, cultural celebrations--that supported a sense of Salvadoran cultural distinctness.

This sense of legitimacy was meant to underpin a new relationship between citizens and the state. The state was not simply an authority, but an institution with

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responsibilities to the people who created it. The programs underlined the responsibility of government to enforce its laws and protect its citizens, and emphasized the role of government to protect citizens' rights. But they neither called for the mass mobilizations of social movements or the less confrontational tools of civic action campaigns. Hosts and guests exhorted individuals to join with organizations to advocate for their interests and protect their rights. The focus was meant to be on what citizens can do, but the specifics were often vague.

They highlighted role of NGOs to solve problems, such as the *maquila* monitoring group or the street vendors' association. They frequently asserted that there were spaces for NGO and citizen participation, even simply by asking questions. They underlined the need for relevant information and the role of civil society organizations to provide it, whether to the public directly or as advisors to elected officials or government agencies.

From rebuilding the burned market, to re-organizing the city center, to the conflict over privatization of public services, discussions on *How's it Going?* and *Citizens in Action* emphasized the need for debate and discussion, and that many perspectives were needed to solve problems. Once Mario used the metaphor of an ecosystem to illustrate that a polarized debate so typical of Salvadoran political life would not be effective. The organizations and associations featured in their programming helped to provide these diverse perspectives, as well as helping listeners discover what civil society was and what it could accomplish. Through opening public space for these alternative views, which were marginally included in other mass media, the radio enlarged the public sphere, the realm of public debate, discussion, and self-consciousness.

The particular organizations which were frequent guests on Radio Cabal programs tended to be the most media-savvy in general, ones who used a variety of

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media to get their message out. They recognized the uniqueness of Radio Cabal's program space: that it was guided by social and cultural concerns, that it gave them significant time to speak, not just sound bytes, that the medium of radio and the station's daily schedule fit the rhythm of listener's lives, that it gave them a greater say in how they and their views were presented, including the possibility of their own collaborative productions.

In this way Radio Cabal, and these two programs in particular, strenthened civil society and expanded the public sphere. As mass media has become the central arena of political speech in democratic societies, the station became a crucial public space for the Salvadoran population.

How urban and rural community radios strenghthened civil society and the public sphere

These two chapters have shown how community radios in El Salvador helped to build civil society in urban and rural contexts through encouraging practices of citizenship, expanding awareness of human rights, and increasing the visibility and effectiveness of civil society organizations. This in turn was broadening the public sphere, making it more inclusive.

In both of the programs profiled here, human rights was discussed in the context of particular issues. These stories highlighted both the responsibility of government to protect its citizens and the roles of advocacy organizations, national and international, to help investigate and advocate for people who felt their rights had been abused. The meaning of citizenship was also illustrated contextually through ways people with complaints or problems were treated as legitimate: you *can* call this agency and they *have* to answer you; government officials must also follow the law; you can organize to

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represent your concerns and to oversee and influence government action and practices.

The community radios provided a crucial communications medium for the emerging groups, organizations, associations and agencies of civil society. They gave these organizations more visibility among the public. Second, they helped these organizations work more effectively, through publicizing meetings, and through programming which resonated with their other activities. In addition, the participatory, collaborative nature of access to this medium allowed these organizations to express their opinions and frame their concerns more freely and completely than they could on any other mass media. Community radios provided a public space which is more accessible to civil society; they provided more time, they were more interested in their concerns, and they reached relevant audiences. In these ways, the community radios allowed civil society organizations to become a stronger voice in both local or alternative public spheres and the national realm of political discourse.

By strengthening the work and voices of civil society in these ways, alternative, community-based media has played a key role in transforming the expansive and confrontational social movements of the 1970s and 1980s into the efforts of a wide range of organizations and association to acheive social change through less confrontational, and more democratic means.

There remain a few threads to tease out on these issues. In the beginning of this dissertation, I presented a definition of civil society which I found generally prevalent among the people working in community radio in El Salvador. As articulated by Carlos Ayala, director of the Jesuit University of Central America's radio station, civil society includes "women and men who do not form part of established power, that is, neither of economic power, political power, military power, religious power, nor of the power of the large media of social communication" (Ayala Ramirez 1997:43). This perspective

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resonated with the views I found among community radio staff, though there were differences between the urban and rural contexts. In other words, the community radios were part of building a civil society in a particular historical, social, economic, cultural context. The relationships between this realm of citizenship, associational life and action, and government or the state, and the market were different from those described in classic formulations and from those described in post-1989 eastern Europe.

These relationships partially depended on the nature of the public space offered by this medium and the kinds of access it made available. The extent to which speakers and audiences participated actively in this communication medium worked against growing tendencies for people to define their identities and express their perspectives through consumption practices (see chapter 3). In turn, their active involvement in expression helped to build a sense of subjectivity and agency, incorporating new voices and new social actors into local and national public spheres. To explore these ideas, the next section traces how community radio in the city and countryside served civil society differently in the two contexts.

Speakers and issues

This can first be seen by examining the organizations and issues presented in the radios' programming. Urban and rural radios differed in the kinds of programming they presented and the organizations that were involved. In the countryside, shorter program formats like simple announcements and educational spots were as important for civil society organizations as longer, interview-based news programs. At the urban station, civil society groups most often participated as guests or collaborators in interview or

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commentary programs.[5]

There were differences, too, in what kinds of organizations and what social sectors were represented between the city and countryside. In the countryside, the organizations represented the range of organizational life, from local government; service organizations like schools and clinics; local advocacy and educational organizations for women, veterans, or about environmental issues; local development programs; churches; sports and cultural groups. There was some international support, directly and indirectly for this programming (see Appendixes B and C). Some of these were formally constituted NGOs, while others were more informal groups (and some were government-related or local businesses; I will discuss the relation of these to rural civil society below). Most represented or served sectors which had been previously disempowered along lines of class or gender or in terms of the national economy, such as women, small farmers, Christian community workers, environmental activists, cultural groups.

Rural programming more often provided information about activities or services, rather than opinion or policy analysis. For example, local health and rehabilitation clinics announced opportunities for pre-natal care or the arrival of prosethetics; they explained how to avoid cholera and promoted their own local "insurance" system. These radios were not so much media for opinion and debate as visibility, recognition, and information. The distinctions between market, government and civil society were not as clear; more significant distinctions were local versus national, rural versus urban.

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[5] It may not seem appropriate to compare guests on full length interview and discussion programs of the urban radio to the spots and mini-programs of the rural stations. But in fact this comparison takes into account the prevalent forms of information programming broadcast on each of the two kinds of community radio. The urban radio had a much greater capacity to produce programs than the rural ones; they were on the air 16 hours a day and had a staff of over 20 people. The rural radios struggled to broadcast four to eight hours a day with only four to six people involved over the course of a week.

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The organizations which appeared on San Salvador-based Radio Cabal tended to be formally constituted NGOs, talking about policies or issues with national impact. There were a number of unions presenting their views about national policy issues as well as specific concerns of the labor movement. There were several human rights advocacy organizations and environmental organizations. Issues tended to be large scale: electoral reforms, phone rates and privatization, impact of U.S. laws about immigration, national causes of water scarcity, labor conflicts at the health ministry. Some issues mainly pertained to the city--the reorganization of the market, for example. Nearly all of these organizations represented the new social actors which had emerged as a result of the massive mobilizations of the civil war or the so-called "new social movements" which began to form in the late 1980s, in the later years of the war.

Urban community radio programs centered on debates over national policies, providing public space for the voices and perspectives of national level civil society actors, a range of organizations and associations. Some government actors responded to issues, and commercial interests were mostly represented by civil society groups like business associations. Even discussions of city-based interests like the rebuilding of the burnt-out market fit this framework. This fits the classic view of civil society, how citizens act as counterweight to the power of the state, building a realm of associations to express their needs and interests. It also resembles the history of the opening of the public sphere in the United States as new social actors demanded access. But in the case of community radio, these actors first have constructed their own alternative locations and spaces of public discourse.

What is this civil society's relationship to the market

These differences between urban and rural community radios relate to the issue

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of whether commercial organizations should be included in civil society, and where to draw the line between it and political or government related institutions. I argue in chapter 3 that civil society is distinct from the market because the goals or motivations for creating these organizations, for their activities, and for the benefits received by them are not profit or financial gain. They, like all of us living in capitalist societies, participate in markets to greater or lesser extents and so are interdependent with commericial world. But their purposes, activities and rewards are mainly distinct from it.

Do the community radios' reliance on advertising and charging fees for services, and on funding from foreign and international NGOs undermine my argument that the market should not be considered part of civil society in this case, and the community radio movement's argument that small businesses are part of civil society but powerful economic groups are not?

One way of examining these issues is by "following the money": how did money flow through these community radios, from where, for what? The radios, community organizations and businesses all worked within a market economy and a non-profit context in which economic self-sufficiency was increasingly required. The key factor here is that all these commercial practices and exchanges occurred within social networks with sometimes shared and sometimes conflicting goals and expectations. These included global and national NGO funding and advocacy networks, social world of the returned refugee communities, personal and organizational histories of involvement in the mass mobilizations of the war.

All of the radios had received grants from international organizations at one time or another. Radio Sumpul received grants of money, technical support, and equipment at their inception and again to rebuild after their fire. Radio Segundo Montes received a grant from a European Green organization to produce environmental programming.

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Radio Cabal received start-up and continuing funding from a women's foundation in the U.S., and smaller grants for particular programs or trainings in succeeding years (including one from the Inter-American foundation to increase advertising revenue). None of these grants provided anywhere near sufficient money for operating expenses; all had to earn income to survive. In fact, donor agencies increasingly promoted the idea that NGOs, including the community radios should be self-sustaining.

Initially, the community radios in the countryside produced educational programs and spots for the educational and service organizations which had grown on their return to meet the needs of the returned refugee communities. Several years later, these organizations still resisted the idea of paying fees for radio services. Rehabilitation and health clinic workers in Guarjila were angry when Radio Sumpul charged them its regular rates to produce their program. In other cases, the radio waived fees: Juan Lucas didn't charge for spots he felt had a "social purpose," like the trip to the cemetary in the former refugee camp. Financial concerns were secondary to shared goals, the recognition that they were working together to rebuild their community.

By 1997, when my fieldwork began, both rural and urban community radios sold advertising, charged for production services and airtime. At one of the rural radios, individuals paid small fees for their *saludos* (dedications) and announcements to be broadcast, and at another, a *locutor (*host), hired out as a disk jockey for parties, and would copy listeners' favorite music onto a cassette for a small charge.[6] But to greater and lesser extents commercial exchanges were intertwined with other kinds of relationships. These included the shared goals of developing the returned refugee communities or influencing national policies to include the interests of the poor and

[6] None of this gave them enough income to sustain themselves as organizations, to pay regular salaries, pay for needed supplies and equipment; they maintained operations to a great extent on the dedication of their staffs and volunteers.

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working class. The more these broad goals were shared, the more likely the production process would be collaborative and audiences would be involved not only through listening but also through other activities.

The community radios worked more collaboratively with organizations which shared their goals. Local businesses paid for ads; they hoped to increase the visibility of their businesses and make a profit. To sell ads, Elena didn't have to explain that Radio Segundo Montes was a community radio, just that greater visibility would help their business (Elena Romero, interview by author, November 12, 1997). Sometimes businesses chose the community radio for their ads in part because they wished to support its goals--one businesswoman said, those young people work so hard. But others felt alienated from the community leadership "clique" as another businessman put it; still, the ads increased his business.

In contrast, at both rural and urban radios, local and national groups and organizations paid to have programs created and produced. But in these cases, the productions were generally quite collaborative, with NGO staff contributing stories and scripts or research for issue-based programs, and learning how to use their own voices as actors, or as hosts on a live interview program. These collaborations were featured programs on all three case study radios: the social dramas of the health clinic, environmental club and rehabilitation center at Radio Sumpul, the weekly agricultural development program, women's organization's *sociodramas*, the lay religious program at Radio Segundo Montes, or the new collaborations with human rights and consumer advocacy organizations at Radio Cabal. Some funds for these productions may have come indirectly from international sources, but the decisions to use them for these purposes, and the "sweat equity" were locally based.

Larger, international NGOs also paid for programs to be produced, but even

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their local staff did not usually participate in the production of the programs. (International community radio associations generally made their progamming available for free to Salvadoran community radios, even when they charged for this programming elsewhere). Similarly, local businesses in the city and the countryside paid for the production of commercial spots, but beyond discussions of the themes or topics and approval of the scripts, they did not write material, act as voices or otherwise collaboratively join in the production.

The key distinctions are participation and motivation. Local individuals and organizations and to some extent national organizations, not only paid for production services and sometimes broadcast time, but actively participated in the creation of these programs. In contrast, commercial organizations and larger national or international NGOs did not participate in this way. And larger businesses, the powerful economic interests which advertised on commercial media, neither were pursued nor were interested in urban or rural advertising or programming on community radios.

This gives us a continuum rather than sharply defined catagories. From the more commercial fees for services, to collaborations where both seek economic and social or cultural goals and benefits, to more values-based collaboration in a shared vision, a particular line is hard to draw but the distinctions are clear. Motivations are important because they strongly influence decisions--whether to pursue the project, how much to charge, whether to contribute one's own time and expertise. Advertisers placed ads on community radios because they wanted to increase their sales and sometimes because they wanted to support the radio or the community of the radio. NGOs worked with the radio to inform and educate their clients, and sometime to increase their own earned income. They knew the radio had to earn income itself to survive, but they also knew that the radio shared their overall goals of developing the local community, economically,

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socially and culturally. Sometimes, for projects that were clearly part of this shared vision, the radio waived its normal charges or the organizations complained that the radio should not charge, because the program was in the community's interest.

Commercial businesses tended not to participate in the production of their programs; they simply paid for the production and airing, even if they shared or supported the goals of the community. In contrast, the not-for-profit organizations tended to participate in collaborative productions on the radio.

Whether the institutions and organizations of commerce should properly be included in the definition of civil society is a central debate in current scholarship. Here I argue that in post-war El Salvador, the market sector is interdependent but separate from civil society in both urban and rural contexts though the categories are somewhat overlapping. To the extent that the radio and organizations worked collaboratively, monetary issues were secondary (though still important).

Community radio and "political society"

In the same way, the relation of civil society to the state is distinct in this context. One important aspect of civil society refers to the organized groupings of the population which represent citizens' concerns to government or political institutions in a society.

The urban community radio acted as an advocate towards the state for individuals; listeners called in for help in dealing with government bureaucracies. Both urban and rural radios acted as advocates for civil society in general, educating the public and promoting the idea of government's responsibility to its citizens. They educated their listeners about these rights and how to claim them from government authorities. Both kinds of radios programmed spots about the rights of children, women, families, and workers.

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Urban radio, more than the rural ones, carried interview format programs which encouraged guests to express their opinions, including critiques of government programs, policies, and implementation. Opinionated analyses of the national budget debates, agricultural debt, privatizations, disaster planning, and corruption at government agencies were all featured programs on *Citizens in Action.* On Radio Segundo Montes during the month I monitored it, "Topics of the Moment" included only one strong expression of opinion, in which a local neighorhood association president discussed his concerns about local planning.

Rather, rural radios more often provided space for local government representatives to speak to the public about their plans and accomplishments. In these communities, rural people looked to municipal governments to represent their concerns to national levels of government. Many of the leaders of the former refugee community had been elected as mayors and other posts in the municipal governments, and the former refugee governing organizations had been transformed into community development organizations. Together they sought support for local projects from national government as well as from national and international NGOs. In this way, local government at the municipal level seemed to act as part of civil society in a transition which continued the hegemonic struggle to bring the voices and concerns of the historically poor, marginalized to the national public sphere. These were the local leaders and spokespersons of rural civil society to national government and international agencies. On the rural radios, these local leaders represented the community to itself, as well as to national and international representatives.

Because of the nature of this public space

The distinct role played by the community radios was possible because of the

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kind of access this public space offered. This access was not available on commercial media, I was told; commercial radios fundamentally existed to provide advertising, and space there for civil society was limited and more mediated. "The media have their own preferences," Juan Pédro Hernández from FUNDE said. Community radios like Radio Cabal in the city and Radio Sumpul and Segundo Montes in the countryside created alternative public spheres where this growing sector could hear itself speak, could share information and perspectives, could critique the centers of power in that society and debate with each other about vital issues. They transmit information, let people know what the NGOs were doing, and provided space for the public to express themselves. Not only did the interviewers ask "different kinds of questions"; but because they provided a space where listeners could also speak, community radio provided a fundementally different kind of medium. Like the difference between a sharecropper on an estate and a someone who owns their own land, the significance of two- way, participatory communication is that of being citizens, actors able to "change the conditions of our lives and our communities" (Elena Martin, CIPHES, interview, January 30, 1998).

Civil society, building new kind of public sphere

Radio Cabal provided a public space for the speakers and issues of civil society to provide information, express their views, and interact with the public. They aimed to create an alternative public sphere for these distinct interests and perspectives, one distinct from the discourses of the mass media and the centers of economic and political power. The two rural radios also provided a public space, a mostly local public sphere in which local community could recognize itself and its interests.

The role of media for civil society is to provide a public space for exchange of information, opinion and cultural expression; an arena of interaction and visibility; a

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place where ideas and identities are validated. The community radios in this study provided this kind of space, specifically for sectors which had been historically disempowered, without media for informing and expressing themselves in the public sphere in this country. Certainly every community had its own means of internal communication, through gossip, through meetings, or even through the community church bell. But the key is is publicness, that people share their views beyond their private circles and networks. The broader publicness of the community radios gave them a special role. They not only expanded the public sphere, they helped create new social actors by validating both the people and their concerns, opinions, and perspectives.

These radios are key tool in the struggle for public space and voice in public sphere; for a political voice, for social and cultural recognition. They part of a struggles for hegemonic change: rather than the large-scale coordinated social movements or revolutionary groups of the 1970s and 1980s, the post-war struggle for a better life and for empowerment is through smaller, more focused organizations, representing a broader range of social actors, and acting through speech, persuasion, and other civil, democratic practices. The radios provide just one space where voices can speak and be heard.

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Chapter Seven: Local Radios, Global Networks

Can Salvadoran community radio forge truly popular culture in the age of globalization?

On my first trip to El Salvador in the mid-1990s, one song I heard incessantly on the former guerrilla radio stations was the Eagle's 1970s era soft-rock hit, Hotel California. I was told that this shimmery ballad, whose English language lyrics tell of a drug-infused trip of naivete and seduction, had become a nostalgic *marker* for the former FMLN guerrillas. What a strange juxtaposition! Once, I was told that the song had been on the only cassette that a group of the guerrillas had up in the mountains, and so they would play it over and over, for dances and whenever they could relax. I thought, trying to make sense of this seeming contradiction (my job as an anthropologist, no?) that the key was in the repeated chorus, ..." you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave." It seemed apt for participants in a long, drawn-out war with no clear end in sight, and no safe place to go back to. But everyone I asked said they didn't know the meaning of the English lyrics, they just liked the sound of the song.

My experience during my year of fieldwork was full of such contradictions, the popularity of a U.S. commercial rock hit among those engaged in fighting U.S. political-economic hegemony along with national injustices and inequality. Twenty years ago, this might have been read as a bit of global trivia, a case of the ubiquity of U.S. culture like coke bottles and Marlboro cigarettes in remote villages. But today's globalization is more complex. Is the example above a case of U.S. cultural imperialism, U.S. culture imposed on the world along with its economic strength? Or of audience resistance, reinscribing their own meaning into received cultural artifacts? Or is something more complicated

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occurring?

I found while some programming supported the growth of civil society organizations and activities, the majority of radio programming in time consisted of much of the same music that played on commercial radio stations and which circulated in regional and global music markets. This contradiction parallels the dilemma faced by indigenous communities: while broadcast media provides access to technology which can be organized in decentralized and democratic ways, it also allows more penetration by the homogenizing, often culturally degrading commercial media (Ginsburg 1991, 1994).

In this chapter, I argue that this commercial music, which reaches El Salvador's media through the globalized flows of transnational and multinational media conglomerates, does threaten to homogenize local musical culture and carries alien values. At the same time, the music is contextualized--made locally meaningful in particular ways--through the social processes of its selection, presentation, and reception: how it is selected and obtained, how and by whom it is introduced, when and where it is listened to. This is possible because of the distinctive nature of this medium as participatory and community-based, which situates the music within distinctive local meanings and interpretations.

Unlike commercial broadcasters, these radio organizations explicitly attempt to create an accessible, local public space, in which they can control the impact of very powerful cultural forces both national and global, not through rejection of outside influences but through their selection and framing. These radios vernacularize, or make this imported music locally meaningful by fitting it into their own daily rhythms of work and relaxation, their own social networks and celebrations.

Here we see simultaneously what used to be labeled as U.S. cultural imperialism,

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U.S. culture imposed on the world along with its economic strength, and at the same time, resistance, as audiences re-inscribe their own meanings onto received cultural artifacts through processes variously described as hybridization or vernacularization, reconversion, or cultural transformation. Equally signicant is the fact that the musics which find their way onto these stations' airwaves are as likely to be imported from regional commercial powers like Mexico and Brazil, Central American neighbors, or Latin American social movements rather than globalized industries based in "core" countries of North America and Europe.

In this analysis, I recognize that the cultural imperialism critique has become dated, simplistic and insufficient to describe current complexity of global cultural relationships, but retains some validity as an analysis of the economic and political power of cultural commodity trade. At the same time, post-modern perspectives, which informed many critiques of cultural imperialism, do not easily apply to a region where modernism itself has been so inconsistently and incompletely experienced. Instead, I turn to theorists of Latin American popular culture and mass media such as García Canclini, Rowe and Schelling, and anthropologist of indigenous and alternative media practice Faye Ginsburg, to explore the utility of concepts such as cultural reconversion, hybridity, and cultural production or transformation. These examine the social processes and social organization of production, diffusion and reception rather than simply the origins or content of forms of cultural expression.

Like media projects by indigenous and other cultural activists, the project of the community radios in El Salvador is an appropriation of cultural space and an assertion of the right to one's own forms of expression, against the powerful pressures of transnational and global markets (see Fry and Willis 1989:160, quoted in Ginsburg 1991:94). The radios accomplish this through contextualizing, reconverting and

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transforming the meaning of the imported music they play.

Music on Radio Sumpul

For this chapter, I have analyzed one week of programming on one of the three radio stations in my research. Radio Sumpul broadcast just four hours a day during my research period, mainly because it couldn't afford more gasoline for the generator which ran its transmission equipment up on the mountain. The four hours were broken up into four hour-long programs, hosted by the two main *locutores* who are seen more as community "animators" than DJs.

At this station, music events[1] made up between one-third and one-half of all events, followed by the comments of *locutores* which add up to about one-third. But since most songs last about three minutes, music dominated in terms of time. Radio Segundo Montes attempted to evenly balance music with educational or informative programs, but music still predominated.

Each program on Radio Sumpul had a different musical profile, targeting different segments of their audience and highlighting different musical categories. These categories are more or less drawn from those prevalent in the music industry--how the tapes would be displayed in a record store in the city, for example. But each radio had its own versions of these categories. They divided their audience into three categories: rural adults who shared the political and social identity of the community; youth who increasingly were drawn to more urban, commercially distributed music; and a less defined audience of adults and youth perhaps most identifying with Latin American

[1] I have adapted sociolinguistic concepts of the speech event and speech situation as units of analysis. Each radio broadcast is the speech situation or the "overall ecology"; discrete elements of the broadcasts are "speech events" such as songs, station identifications, live speech, mini-programs, or announcements, (see Saville-Troike 1982; Hymes 1972).

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romantic and pop traditions and trends.

The early morning program, *Mañanitas para todos* and the first afternoon program, *De todo un poco,* was designed with adults in mind. It began at five am--this was when people wake up to start their domestic chores--sweeping the yard, feeding the animals, making breakfast. Men got ready to go to the fields; children to go to school. The first afternoon program at five pm coincided with the light supper called *la cena;* during this time, the men had returned from the fields, the chores of the day were over, and people ate and visited and played with the children; it was the relaxed end of the day. Together these were the "prime times" of the countryside. The featured music, *ranchero,* has this adult, rural audience in mind. Most *rancheros* originate in Mexico. Much of it is dramatic or sentimental, some tunes are humorous, and there are different forms: *corrido,* waltz, *bolero.* It includes *grupero,* kind of a pop genre influenced by rock which has produced several Mexican superstar groups in the past decade, such as *Los Tigres del Norte* (who now live in San José, California or *Los Temerarios.* (Some people use *tex-mex* rather than *grupero.*)

This adult audience was also the group who experienced the war most intensely, whether as combatants or refugees, with memories of fleeing army or paramilitary attacks, violent deaths of family members or friends, years in enclosed refugee camps surrounded by soldiers, and struggles to rebuild villages which had been battlegrounds. The music which most directly expressed these experiences is *música popular* or *revolucionaria*--the folk-based social protest music of Latin America, combining the *nueva canción or nueva trova* which began in Chile, and expanded to Cuba, Argentina, and beyond since the 1970s, incorporating Andean flutes and drums. During the war years, some national bands from El Salvador became prominent.

Later in the morning, the program *Mezclas al momento* (mixtures of the

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moment) featured more of the Latin American pop prevalent on commercial stations across the continent. The terms Radio Sumpul used for musical categories on this program are *Romántico* and *tropical. Romántico,* or *balada,* generally included Latin American pop, *bolero* and other older forms, while *Tropical* usually refers to Caribbean (and New York- or Miami-based) *salsa* and *merengue,* though it could include Colombian *cumbia* or *vallenato.* One staffer called it "classic American music" like Willie Colón, or Juan Luis Guerra. The program inclines towards music that's more commercially popular. These audiences have a more urban outlook. Maybe they've lived or worked in the city, or have relatives in Mexico or the United States; they see themselves as modern as having lives beyond the rural.

Música juvenil at six p.m. targeted youth and featured Spanish language rock, mostly from Mexico, Argentina and Spain. There was some English language rock, much of it minor U.S. hits from about ten years before. Forms like border rap, reggae and techno are often identified with gangs by rural Salvadorans. What I call *border rap* seems to be mostly from Los Angeles or Mexico; *reggae* seems to come from Jamaica or Mexico, and *techno* which is mostly from Britain. Staff refer to all these forms as *juvenil.* There was an informal limit to *rock inglés,* differentiating these stations from the several commercial Salvadoran stations which play only English language pop or classic rock. One station called all rock *inglés.*

Overall, on Radio Sumpul, the country-music *ranchero* made up about a third of all music selections; rock in Spanish and *romántico* about a fifth each, and *popular,* rock in English, and *tropical* each about a tenth.

How these radios "popular"ize and localize the music

How did the participatory community radios make this mix of commercial and

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non-commercial music their own? First, because they didn't obtain it through the commercial music system; second, through the influence of competing musical traditions, including music identified with the countryside and with the social movements of the past several decades. Another factor is the ambivalent meanings accorded to rock and pop musics, and the somewhat contradictory differentiation between musics coming from North American versus that coming from Latin America. Listening to these radios was designed to fit into people's daily routines and into their existing social networks. The voices of the radio, the *locutores,* and the other programming which surrounds the music (station ids, educational and cultural programs, announcements and spots by local groups and non-governmental organizations) also contextualed and framed musical programming. This other programming also highlighted the national and international networks with which the radio and its community chose to identify, a way they crafted their own global flows. Even though much of the music on these stations was the same as that on commercial stations, these factors contextualized it. "The social processes through which they move, from the time of production to the time of consumption" (García Canclini 1993: 106-7) gave this music a distinct significance.

Sources of imported music. Unlike commercial stations which had contracts with music distribution companies, the rural stations obtained most of their cassettes and CDs from friends, supporters, listeners and their own purchases. In this way the stations were not directly connected to the national, regional, or international commercial music business. They didn't have to play particular songs at particular times; they had no contractual or financial understandings or obligations to the business. The community stations obtained their music by buying it or through their social networks.

In contrast, commercial stations received most of their music directly, and free,

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from representatives of record distribution companies (*las disqueras)* linked to the transnational industry giants. These included Sony, EMI, and Warner, as well as Fonovisa, a subsidiary of the Mexican media conglomerate Televisa, and the small Central American music distributor Dideco. The music director of an urban station explained that "With a *disquera*, a station doesn't have a written contract but more an understanding. They say, I'll guarantee you material, and you play it. They give you samples or whole records. But they'll say, please promote this song, and if you do, then they're happy" (Rafael Calderón, interview with author, paraphrased, January 20, 1998).

The Salvadoran music industry didn't at that time have a distributor; each artist had to be his or her own representative. Some were fairly successful, like *Los Hermanos Flores*. Clearly Salvadoran artists were at a disadvantage even in their own national marketplace.

The globalized music industry is just one influence. Community radio staff choices were based on what they heard on other radio stations, as well as on other influences. People listened to other commercial radio stations, young people gathered at the few television sets in the village to watch MTV Latin America and national showcase programs. Friends and family living in the city or in other countries, including the United States, sent tapes. Occasionally people read newspaper or magazine articles about featured artists. So the globalized music industry had an increasing influence on the choices of the radio staff and listeners.

But there were other, competing influences, including local music traditions, the music that came to symbolize the social movements of the war years, and the strong sense of Latin American identity of more politicized residents.

Local music traditions: ranchero and rural identity. Much *ranchero* music was now commercially distributed through the same trans- and multi-national corporations

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which handled pop hits. But this music was composed, played, known, sung, shared, and diffused through social networks distinct from the commercial flows.

The rural community radios were situated differently from the national commercial stations targeted at rural audiences. *Ranchero* music was popular among *campesinos* (rural farmers), mostly though not exclusively adults over 30. It was often distributed through the same commercial distributors as pop or rock; SONY handled Alejandro Fernández and much Mexican *ranchero*, Fonovisa many of the *grupero* and *norteño* played on commercial stations (Rafael Calderón, interview with author, February 4, 1998). But there were some differences. A key factor of capitalism is planned obsolescence; something new must always be produced and sold to keep the engine of the market going. There must always be new pop stars, new genres of music mined to keep people buying compact discs and cassettes. But *ranchero* hits may be 20, 30, 40 years old; the stars stick around for decades. And the music didn't circulate only through the markets.

There were many songs that adults knew by heart, that local singers sang, songs people remembered from the groups that sang in the refugee camps or in the "zones of control" during the war.[2] Rural people knew these songs and sang them to each other; local musicians hung out and played them. There were local musicians and bands who played for special occasions, including Sunday mass and the frequent dances at town cultural centers. People often gathered at night to sing on their *corredores*, the covered porch area that served as kitchen, playroom, living room and daily living space for most rural houses. One April night I wrote in my field diary:

> "Last night everyone was singing, trying to play the guitar. Lots of songs, all *ranchero*. Abelino teased Lilian with a song about a princess in Escalón; he

[2] "Zones on control" were areas of the countryside controlled by the guerrillas.

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> confessed to me later he was making it up as he went along. They also sang *El Sombrero Azul* [the Blue Hat, the FMLN anthem] and one of the songs about the return from Mesa Grande, the refugee camp where they spent eight years during the war. Everyone stayed up later than usual, singing, joking; Niña Catarina and the two youngest kids on the hammock, playing tickling games."

There is a different flow and different cultural meaning connected to this music, which intersects with but is not limited to the market.

Social movement identity and música popular. Much music was created during the war: local musicians wrote about the war and exile, groups like *Teosinte* were formed to perform in the refugee camps and liberated zones, musicians in solidarity from many countries visited refugee camps, guerrilla units and people still remaining in the country, creating an interchange of styles and forms. This occurred especially through the networks of support across Latin America. All this music retains special meaning for those who shared these experiences.

When I first visited this radio, the staff described their programming and the tastes of their audiences as mostly *música popular*: "Here pretty much one hundred percent of the people of these settlements like *música popular,* the music of *Grupo Sumpul, Los Norteños, Los Guaroguao, Teosinte,* and other popular songs" (Ernesto and Rosibel, interview with author, January, 1996). Later they explained that they played all sorts of music, but what *differentiated* them from commercial stations was this music. Ernesto explained, "well, the music could be the same, ...but we program *música popular, música revolucionaria*, they don't program this type of music. Only radios that are community-based program these types of popular songs. Commercial radios wouldn't put it on. They put on what's hot (*lo que más pega)...*" (Ernesto and Rosibel, interview with author, January, 1996).

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Música popular provided a kind of framing though it made up only about a tenth of the music played during music programs. It was the music heard on most station IDs, beginning and ending each program and the broadcast day; it was used to introduce programs about the community and its history, to announce and commemorate the events of the war and the experiences of the community. The massacres, assassinations, major battles and the Peace Accords were all commemorated with masses, processions, festivals, and radio coverage framed by this music. It was also used in many of the the spots that the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC, is its French acronym) distributed to their Latin America members.

Ambivalence about the United States; the desire for pan-Latin American identity

There was usually a quota on music in English, with the radio directors limiting it to one or two cuts an hour, to limit the North American influence they found permeating their culture. Five of the top 20 commercial radio stations in the capital played exclusively North American pop or rock classics (see Appendix A). On the community radio stations, both Salvadoran and Latin American music were preferred. Radio Segundo Montes attempted to find one Salvadoran artist and one international artist if more than one song was programmed for each category. In this way, the radio staff selected music based in part on a political analysis of the cultural identification they felt with the music. But this was not simply on a national versus international basis as the cultural imperialism perspective would contend. The geography of their identification included the national, Salvadoran, as well as the regional, Latin American level. Music from the United States had a different kind of international meaning.

While many youth associated rock and related forms with a kind of pan-Latino or

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global youth culture, *música juvenil,* especially the rap and techno forms were often associated in the minds of older people with gangs. These have become a major problem in the cities as young Salvadoran men who grew up in the United States and become involved with urban street gangs particularly in Los Angeles have been deported "back" to their "native" country. These gangs were not yet a problem in the countryside, but people were fearful because of high levels of violence nationwide: in 1998 El Salvador' homicide rate was higher than any place in Latin America except for parts of Colombia, which was in the midst of a civil war (Ross 1997; see chapter 3, pages 138-9).

All these factors--commercial mass media, local musical traditions, the impact of youth culture both through mass media and the returns of young Salvadorans from the urban United States, affect the choices of the radio staff and audience members. They are factors that are related to the social life of the particular community in which the radio is located.

The people choose: the meaning of saludos (dedications)

The music on the rural community radios was made part of autochthonous rather than an imported cultural identity through the ways it was chosen to serve listeners' social needs rather than national or multi-national commercial imperatives. The main way this was done was through the *saludos* or requests and dedications that people brought in to the station. Every day, people came to drop off pieces of paper, often folded into tiny triangles, to request that a song be played for a loved one's birthday or other special event, or to send a message to someone. (See Table 6-1 for examples.)

Most of the dedications were birthday greetings from families, especially for the special fifteenth birthday which marks girls' coming of age. In families who could manage it, the event was celebrated with a big party during which the girl wore a pink

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dress as ornate as a wedding gown. Sometimes the *saludo* was just to greet family visiting from out of town. A few dedications were from friends, for birthdays or for other purposes: classmates wishing a student well, a friend wishing someone good luck on a date or courtship, a new mayor being congratulated.[3] Most *saludos* were delivered in person, making the geographic scale of the radio's community that which was conveniently accessible by foot or by bus, or occasionally bicycle or horse.[4] At Radio Sumpul, dedications were read for free, while at some other radios, they cost a small amount--the same as a cup of coffee, a couple of ices bought for a child or a sweet roll. There remained an investment in time to write and deliver the message, so some people included several greetings in one message.

What does my analysis of the *saludos* suggest? First, most *saludos* were sent within extended families, including fictive members like godparents, or among close friends, to celebrate events which were both personal and were generally shared among these networks, among a group larger than individual senders and listeners. This means that they were messages which through their action strengthened established social networks. The message was not only for the person celebrating their birthday; the fact that many listeners knew both senders and receivers made this a space shared by all involved.

This is different from a call to an urban or national radio program, where the host, sender and listeners are anonymous and socially unconnected except through their listening and speaking on the radio; these are thin ties. With community radios people

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[3] Occasionally they are in verse, as this one from Radio Segundo Montes warning in lines taken from folk sayings, that a straying husband will not find happiness:
"From the sky a handkerchief fell, and broke into a million pieces; for me you have contempt, but for the other women, embraces. The branches of the tamarind tree unites with the coconut; your love hurries while mine goes step by step."

[4] Phones were not installed at either rural's radio offices until 1998. But only phone company offices and major institutions had phones. In the city, most middle class homes and offices had phone service; others relied on pay phones located in commercial strips.

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often have the sense that this is their radio: most likely they have visited the office and studio and met the staff and they know that this institution was created through the self-governing body of the region, before the Salvadoran municipal system was reactivated. They may also know what members of the most significant local institutions are members of the radio's board of directors. But in a less formal sense, the sense that this is the community's radio is widely felt, and has been dramatically tested. For example in December 1995 at least a thousand people gathered to prevent the police from confiscating Radio Sumpul's equipment during a confrontation with the national government (see chapter 5). People brought *saludos* to Radio Sumpul and the other community stations because they felt it was their public space.

The voices of the radio: locutores

I use the Spanish *locutor* rather than an English equivalent because the way it was used by the community radios goes beyond the common translation from Spanish as announcer, "DJ" or "host." At Radio Sumpul, Fito, the director, explained what makes a community radio *locutor* special to a group of about 20 young people who were interested in volunteering. Crowded on rickety chairs and on the wall of the back *corredor* or porch of the old cement block house, (and next to the *pila* or wash basin and water tank), Fito used the concept to begin to describe how this kind of radio was different.

He said that being a *locutor* is not just talking on the air, but is part of a much bigger thing, it is being a *comunicador popular, integral* (the people's communicator, integrated with the community). It involved not only working in the *cabina* (radio studio), but also going out to talk with people, or bringing in the organizations you are part of. Radio is a tool of popular communication.

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He said that this kind of radio had content which is educational and motivational, not only entertaining. What else is part of community radio, he asked one girl, who giggled in embarrassment. Yes! he says, humor, and what are other words for humor? *ánimo*, spirit, energy, life.

So a *locutor* is not just a DJ, an idea brought by our friends from the United States, he continued, looking at me, a *locutor* is an *animador,* an animator.[5]

Clearly Fito's description was idealistic and motivational. But he was accurate in the sense that the *locutores* were the voices of the station; they represented the community to the outside world, and were meant not only to entertain but to educate and serve their community, in a sense translating the outside world for their listeners' perspectives. For music, *locutores* often put the music in the context of people's everyday lives--Rosibel noted daily chores and concerns, Ernesto created a sense of youthful excitement, and Juan Lucas at Radio Radio Segundo Montes was the master of creating a sense of place and shared culture with his program, *Anochecer Ranchero* (Ranchero Sundown; see chapter 7).

The *locutores* made connections between listeners' daily lives and the radio programming. April marked the end of the dry season and the beginning of the rains, when people could prepare their fields and plant their corn. Rosibel commented, "This is a special month for you, maybe you get up and go to do your household chores, [but] already the planting of the corn draws near...we're already waiting for the rain..."(Radio Sumpul programming, April 10, 1997). *locutores* talked about the issues affecting peoples lives, or ones they sought to raise awareness about, "Ok kids, already another power outage, oh, god, why are they killing us with outages, no, man, no, man, no, man, no, man, these things happen around here..." (Ernesto, Radio Sumpul programming,

[5] A word used often in community organizing theory, especially in Canada and Europe.

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April 8, 1997). They also spoke for the community on some occasions. "At Radio Sumpul, it is five thirty-eight in the afternoon. We would like to give our condolences to the family of Irma, who live in Ellacuría (a neighboring town), who died recently... our condolences to all of you who are family to Irma in Ellacuría, and we say, well, [speaking very emotionally], it could be that certain sorrows..." (Rosibel, Radio Sumpul programming, April 8, 1997). The *locutores* also highlighted the music they selected. Ernesto brought his listeners' attention to a Salvadoran rock band, "Here's the music of the Rosario Brothers, a group of Salvadoreños...back in 1989 they were called the Projection Group. This is the first recording that group made...here's the song called, "I love the taste of my country, and truly..." (Radio Sumpul programming, April 7, 1997).

To describe their relationship to their listeners, *locutores* always said they were "accompanying" them (*acompañándoles*), a phrase with much connotation in the Salvadoran context. International peace activists "accompanied" Salvadorans threatened by death squads during the war to prevent their deaths; priests "accompany" their parishioners; it conveys not only "I keep you company" but also, "I support you, I am with you, whatever happens." A DJ might be entertaining, informative, shocking; but a *locutor* is *with* you.

Audiences and the rhythms of daily life

In addition to looking at the activities of radio production and diffusion, we must look at reception: how and in what contexts do people listen to this music? (See below,) Unlike television programming and viewing which follows the North American pattern of an evening prime time, the community radios recognize that 4 to 6 p.m. is their "prime-time," when farmers come back from the fields, when women's main domestic work of the day is done, when families sit together to eat the small evening meal, when friends

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visit. Once it is dark--and the sunset comes just around six pm, in rainy or dry season--most people stay home. With the day starting at 5 a.m., before the sun, most people are in bed by 9 p.m. One radio was criticized for starting their broadcast day at 8 a.m. for the convenience of the staff and the consolidation of their working hours, rather than starting at 5 a.m. when most people woke up.

Music is framed by other programming

The other programming which surrounds the music creates a framing for musical programming. They include station identifications, educational and cultural programs, announcements and spots by local groups and non-governmental organizations as well as special event programming. To commemorate dates significant for national or local history or culture--the signing of the Peace Accords, the murder of the four Jesuit priests and their housekeeper and daughter in 1989, the birthday and assassination of Archbishop Romero, the return from the Refugee camp, the patron saint's festivals of local villages, national elections, Mother's Day--these community radios created special programs. Sometimes these were in the form of "micro-programs" of five minutes or less which repeated frequently around these special dates; sometimes live programming accompanied all or part of special events. Over the years, Radio Sumpul produced several programs with its local health clinic--how to prevent cholera, how their local "insurance" program worked, the benefits of soybean foods. Later in the year, the national community radio association, ARPAS (Association of Radios and Participatory Programs of El Salvador) began producing a national news program which included segments from its rural member stations. The Latin American Association for Radio Education (ALER) a Latin American organization providing training and programming for community radios, made several series available, including one on environmental

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issues targeted for children. And the World Association of Community Radios (AMARC) consistently provided spots which emphasized the global interconnection of the community radio movement.

The radios created their own international networks

In addition to giving a sense of the overall purpose of radios like Sumpul, these spots and programs also demonstrated how these small community-based radios had created their own international connections and networks. They received programming and support from a wide range of non-governmental organizations based within El Salvador, in Latin America, and in other parts of the world. These networks were active; these were the links that were felt as critical for the radio staffs and were trusted by their listeners, according to the audience surveys I conducted (Audience Report, Preliminary, 1997). In a way, these community radios were peripheral to the the commercial flows of imported music, but central to the flows of support and information from their NGO networks.

Theorizing participatory community radio in context

There were over 150 radios stations in tiny, mountainous El Salvador at the time of my fieldwork, and most of them played imported, not locally recorded music, including several stations which specialized in rock music in English from the 1970s and 1980s. Even the community radios played mostly imported music. Did this make them living proof of the cultural imperialism critique, that the national cultures of less powerful countries would be dominated by the cultural industries of the advanced industrialized world, just as their economies were dependent? Or was something more complicated going on?

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Cultural imperialism

Central concerns of the cultural imperialism perspective were the homogenization and commodification of culture through increased influences of transnational and global capitalism. To briefly summarize the discussion in chapter 3, critics pointed out that flows of both hardware (equipment) and "software" (forms and content) from the developed world undermined the capacity of these countries to create their own media industries and sense of national culture, cohesion and identity (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1991). But conditions changed in the 1980s and 1990s, so that cultural analysts found the cultural imperialism critique lacking in several areas.

First, regional centers of media production and exports emerged in several areas of the world, while access to some media technologies, especially radio, dramatically improved. Also, the value that the cultural imperialism critique placed on national culture proved awkward, as ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, social movements and others challenged the idea of homogenous national identities. The idea that audiences uncritically accepted the views and values underlying imported programs was undercut by audience research. And innovative use of small media technologies by cultural groups and social movements undermined the hegemonic power assumed by mass media, whether commercial or state-controlled. Scholars and media analysts moved to studies of media in the contexts of their production, diffusion and reception focusing not only on "cultural products" but also on "social processes" (Mahon 2000:468).

Studying media in its social context

In the case of El Salvador, imported musics did dominate the airwaves, even on community radio, and the national music industry is quite weak in comparison. A 1981

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study found that only 8 percent of the music on the major national radio stations came from Central America and 89 percent of television programming was imported (Barón Romero et al. 1981). But at least on community radio most of the music comes from Mexico, Central America or other parts of Latin America or the Caribbean rather than from globalized industries based in the "core" countries of North America and Europe. (This is based on the artists; the corporate ownership and distributors may be headquartered in North America.)

More important, as the first section of this article shows, the community radios contextualize this imported music in several ways. Paying attention to the agency--the actions and interpretations--of community radio producers, programmers, and listeners means paying attention to this contextualization.

In the first part of this chapter, I discussed several ways that imported music is framed or vernacularized on Salvadoran community radio stations in general, and on Radio Sumpul in Guarjila in particular. *Saludos,* dedications and requests place that music in the context of a local person's interest and choice, or in the context of a significant event in the life of an an individual, family or other social group. *Locutores* make connections between daily life and community concerns, and as local residents themselves they "stand-in" for other members of the community. In addition, radio programming and musical selections are designed to fit into local residents daily lives, the rhythms of work and relaxation. The ways that music comes to be played on the station, bypassing commercial music distribution flows is yet another form of vernacularization. In the sections below, each of these issues will be clarified in relation to concepts which explore in greater depth the ways this music is made the community's own.

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Community radio as a hybrid cultural form

Through examining the social relations of community radios in El Salvador, we can see how the imported products of powerful cultural industries are made into local popular culture. In this way, community radio has become a kind of hybrid, reconverted cultural form, a concept proposed by García Canclini and discussed below. This approach does not ignore either the distorting impact of dominant global and national capitalist economic structures and processes or the ongoing efforts of people to resist, to reinterpret and regain control of the ways they organize their lives and express their values, to salvage some cultural relevance and economic benefit from the increasing reach of national and global capitalist markets. It seems particularly apt for studying radio, which is most often used as a mass form of communication--from one speaker to many, with each of the many isolated and separate from each other, rather together as in the mass of a meeting or rally--but which the community radio movement has sought to adapt to more collective and cooperative social patterns (Beltrán 1995; Carta de Cuscatlán 1998).

One of the difficulties in trying to unravel the complexities of global cultural influence in Latin America and local responses to it is that local cultures and forms of cultural expression are already many-stranded and hybrid in several ways. But attempts to assert homogeneous national cultures assumed by the cultural imperialism critique in Latin America or El Salvador have been more politically useful fictions than realities (see chapter 3). Strands of different indigenous, European, African, and Asian populations and cultural practices have melded inconsistently and diversely throughout Latin America through 500 years of colonialism, immigration, nation building and cultural activism to produce diverse and plural cultures within each nation.

Community radio programming is produced by a locally based cultural activists,

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a segment of a generation with a particular set of experiences. They are trying to create cultural expressions which are relevant to their lives out of the many influences in their lives. It is their own hybrid form. In this process, the community radios advance their own versions of national culture--framed by the national anthem--against the hegemonic versions promulgated by major urban commercial networks. At the same time, radios like Sumpul recognize the plurality of even their rural populations and program music selections targeted to particular groups--rurally-identified adults, youth, those with a foot in both urban and rural worlds.

As a technology, community radio itself is a hybrid cultural form. It is a site of intersection of mass and popular cultures; on one hand, it is electronic and modern, and tends to diffuse its messages in a mass, that is, one-to-many pattern. But on the other hand, it is participatory, it provides access to this media technology to non-hegemonic populations rather than to the privileged few and its programming and control tends to be based on its communities' rather than marketing formulas. In some ways, it is an artisan use of an increasingly industrially produced communication medium. Access to mass media in Latin America can be seen as a sign of the still ongoing process of "modernity," demonstrating who can be "modern," where and when, "both as a node of enforced integration of the peasantry and urban poor into 'society' and as a way of asserting their rights to share goods and services the privileged minority had previously monopolized" (Martín Barbero 1987:172 quoted in Rowe and Schelling 1990:9). Rosi, a *locutor* from Radio Sumpul, once explained to me that just having the radio in their community was a victory, because the radio was a symbol of progress and the modern world that she never dreamed they could be part of, much less control (Rosibel, interview with author, June 3, 1997). But at the same time, community radio seems most aptly described as a kind of popular culture.

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Making it popular, making it their own: popular culture as lived practices

In chapter three I situated community radio as a kind of popular culture, defining this as expressive practices or activities of the less powerful groups of a society; sites or places in which experience is reflected on, evaluated, and expressed and through which a sense of identity is formed (Rowe and Schelling, 1990: 10, 12). What makes community radio "popular culture," even though it shares many elements of "mass culture", including its use of modern technology and a one-to-many diffusion pattern, is that it is actively produced by, dependent on the experiences and daily lives of, and shaped by the same forces affecting, the people who it serves. Everything from its staffing, funding, decision making and programming is created through this "agency," these people.

Salvadoran community radios foreground this agency by calling themselves "participatory" radios. This "mass" media form is transformed into a two-way communication media through the direct participation of listeners who submit dedications, requests, announcements; individuals and organizations who collaborate in the production of spots and mini-programs; and through the ownership and management of the radio. Not only are the most significant community institutions represented on Radio Sumpul's Board of Directors (*Junta Directiva*), but the community as a whole is considered the owner of the radio, and its town meetings can make decisions about radio policy.

Hybrid culture and cultural reconversion

Reconversion is "...not a matter of replacing traditional high and popular forms but of reformulating their function and meaning " (García Canclini 1992:30); in other words, imported forms are "reconverted" into ones that are locally meaningful. Forms

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and content from other parts of the world are mixed in both periphery and core: while fiestas become tourist performances in Mexico, rock music in North America and Europe incorporates rhythms, melodies and forms from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America. Formal, popular and mass forms are mixed without regard to their origins (García Canclini 1992:30-31). But García Canclini admits that too often the globalization of capitalism and extension of national markets change the purposes of practices through restructuring them into globally homogeneous market oriented categories (1993:viii). Fiestas survive, but as tourist shows so producers can survive in market, not as communal celebration of shared values (1993:8).

Community radio rebuilds these links, as imported musics are reproduced as radio programming, a kind of performance[6] where the music is combined with other elements, not as commodities for markets but integrated into the processes of people's lives and as expressions of shared values.

The myriad ways that music finds it way to Radio Sumpul is an example of this. *Locutores*, listeners, friends in the city including urban radios and national and international development workers send tapes and CDs to the radio, or tape songs off the air, or record local musicians. This music is then programmed by *locutores* to fit the tastes and daily routines of local audiences, combined and framed by elements that define the purpose of this particular radio: its community's history and significant events; local voices and concerns. The music is reintegrated--and reconverted--into an expression of the values, concerns and daily life of its listeners, as interpreted by radio staff.

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[6] A performance is a communication that is objectified, out of context, marked or "framed in a special way and put on display for an audience". It is planned, scheduled, bounded by both time and space, and often coordinated with other public occasions (Bauman 1989:41, 44-6). The way it is set apart for display sets up the audience for a particular kind of evaluative role.

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Making local public spaces

Another way of understanding how community radio differs from commercial broadcast is through the concept of public space. Community radios change broadcast air time--distantly originated, vaguely located, with anonymous personal or social relationship to its listeners--into a familiar, local, publicly accessible space where people who are known or at least indirectly socially and culturally related interact. Low coined the term "vernacularization" to describe a similar process in which public plazas in Costa Rica were to some extent claimed or reclaimed by their everyday users, in spite of the design goals of their designers and authorities (Low 2000: 244). Despite efforts to commercialize and limit public uses of the plaza, people's patterns of daily use--meeting friends or lovers, selling wares or services, habits of sitting or walking in particular locations --reinscribed local meanings onto these spaces (2000: 180-204).

In the same way, the community radios vernacularize, make locally meaningful the imported music that they replay from the commercial radios by fitting them into their own daily rhythms of work and relaxation, their own social networks and celebrations, their own ways of contextualizing them. Rather than follow the programming formulas of national and transnational commercial radio, which are well-known to them, the community radios base their use of this "virtual" public space on a wide range of influences such as the local music traditions like *ranchero* and *grupero*, or reminders of their recent tragic history and own global networks through *música popular*.

"Small media" as popular culture and transformative action

The practices of community based radio parallel the experiences of indigenous

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peoples with similar kinds of "small media." "Small media" are participatory uses of media technologies in the contexts of long term movements of cultural transformation and social and political activism (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1995:20-1; Ginsburg 1997, 1991; Turner 1991) These projects broaden the range of perspectives available in the hegemonic public sphere and create and make visible a sense of community identity (Ginsburg 1993:135; Girard 2001:6)

For Salvadoran participatory radio communities, a core sense of identity was forged in the hard years of the war, the refugee camp and their return to their home regions. But their communities have grown and changed since then and the community radios are a way that an ongoing and evolving sense of themselves as a community is expressed and maintained. In addition, because they are broadcast, because they are a public space, the radios insert the voices, perspectives and concerns of these communities into national consciousness; they become visible and audible not only to themselves but to the nation (and the world). Making radio is not only a way of producing and transforming culture and collective identity; it also asserts their presence in the national public sphere (Ginsburg 1997:120).

Conclusion

All this creates a sense of *ours, our community, our music, our way of life*--not that it is homogeneous, lacking conflict, or entirely successful. Radio Sumpul is hobbled in many ways by lack of resources, training, or experience with radio beyond what they themselves do. But the music played on these radios has a different meaning for its listeners and programmers because of its location and contextualization through these processes. As García Canclini and Ginsburg suggest, the social relations and processes of its selection, production or reproduction, circulation and consumption affect its meaning

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on these radios.

Clearly the perspective of cultural imperialism privileges only the agency of the transnational corporate powers dominating the commercial music industry (much as world systems analysis was criticized for missing the agency of the periphery; see Stern 1988; Nash 1981). But for the Salvadoran community radios, several agents are competing for the "hearts and minds" of the population. This competition is not new, or simply polarized. Through these radios, the sponsoring communities are attempting to enter and create modern culture but keep it under their control. Through the processes of making radio, they are creating and recreating their own, plural, hybrid, local culture, using the public space of radio to create their own cultural identity. At the same time that they resist global commodity capitalism, the radios in fact create their own transnational networks, through NGOS, individuals, links with other radios in Latin America and the world.

Perhaps the issue of music in English, where almost no one understands the lyrics, might provide a good example with which to think about these ideas. Some people, like Ernesto the *locutor*, wanted to to know what the English lyrics meant. But many people really didn't care. The fact they they don't understand the words perhaps frees them to put their own meanings to the music; if there were lyrics they would get in the way, it would be alien in some fashion.[7] Most of the music in English comes from the United States: what does this country represent for these young people? a global center of money and power; jobs, where over one of six Salvadorans live and work; modern technology: clearly the United States represents a different model for the future. And certainly the future of the countryside will not be the same as its past; there is not enough land and few will continue to survive primarily as subsistence farmers. Yet these

[7] I am indebted to the Fellows of the Center for Place, Culture and Politics seminar, 2000-2001 for suggesting this interpretation.

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communities are determined to survive as communities. Even more than for previous generations, the future is unknown for these you ng people. This distills the overall argument of this paper: not knowing the language, along with its contextualization on community radio broadcasts, allows them to make their own meaning, make this imported production of U.S.-based transnational commodity trade part of their own popular culture.

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Chapter Eight:

The Festival of the Return and Other Programming:

Producing Popular Culture

I argue in this dissertation that the Salvadoran community radios help construct a sense of community identity, built on memories of experience of the war and refuge, through programs which are a form of popular culture. This programming is built through active collaboration between producers and audiences. Their agency is not simply the reinterpretation of received texts, or responses to material or symbolic goods organized or distributed through market processes. The many ways that producers and listeners interact in the processes of producing, circulating and receiving these programs produces culture, not only forms of cultural expression but a sense of shared identity. Weaving together concerns, pleasures, accomplishments, and histories, the programs construct a recognizable portrait of "who we are." Radio programming helps to create a sense of shared identity through the ways it provides a shared perspective on everyday life for its participants.

The relationship of popular culture to consumption in industrially organized societies has been a contentious issue in debates over the nature of popular culture. Scholars based in Cultural Studies perspectives have focused their research on the products of mass culture rather than the things people made for themselves because these industrially produced material and symbolic objects and events had became more prevalent parts of everyday life.[1] Responding to critiques of mass culture as

[1] See Ien Ang's research on audience responses to the television program "Dallas"; Janice Radway on women's views of romance novels; John Fiske on jeans, Rambo, wrestling programs and Madonna; Kathleen Newman on audience resistance to radio advertising (Fiske 1989a, 1989b; Ang 1985; Radway 1987; Newman 2004)

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industrialized, standardized, entertainment without real aesthetic structure or uniqueness,[2] cultural studies and feminist scholars focused on reception as the moment of audience creativity, showing how audiences responded to mass culture texts with irony, sarcasm, desire, anger, or escapism in ways not clearly evident in the text itself.

Based on research in Mexico City, García Canclini went further, calling the consumption of material or symbolic objects a way to make sense of the world, a way to create order, a feeling of shared experience or belonging, and a way to make meaning out of the world (2001: 20,46). In other words, consumption practices and not the production of popular culture were more significant in producing social identities in his view. Consumption in this sense includes the broad influences on individual choices, including the organization of production, distribution, marketing, and oppositional forces like consumer movements. As a result, the sense of belonging and social identity are now more shaped by consumption than by political activities or networks of civil society, García Canclini argues. Since the political public sphere is accessible only to elites while the plebian public sphere of meetings, festivals, parades, leaflets and other sites has narrowed to the spaces available in an industrialized mass media, decision making has become concentrated more and more among economic elites. This leaves us back in the eighteenth century as citizens, with little agency beyond our consumption choices, García Canclini concludes (22-25).

But participatory media goes against this trend, reconnecting people to their own agency, validating their concerns and pleasures, reminding them of their histories and challenges. It is a living form of popular culture, viewed here as sites for expression, for the active construction of culture, and for constructing identity. Speaking of similar

[2] See Adorno 1998; Benjamin 1986. Benjamin worried that mass production and consumption would destroy a work of art's uniqueness, what he called its "aura" in a way that brings to mind sacredness. Mass production diminished this uniqueness even as it made art more accessible.

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projects in Peru and Brazil, Rowe and Schelling comment that, "One of the most noteworthy aspects of this and other uses of alternative media is the fact that the structure of the communicative field is based on the reciprocity between receivers and broadcasters. It is in this sense that...[these projects] can be regarded as popular" (1991:117).

In chapter 3, I discussed a view of popular culture as an active process of expression for less powerful groups of a society, as a site where experience is reflected on and evaluated, and through which a sense of collective identity is formed. This goes beyond responses to commodities; instead, forms of popular culture like the community radios are places where "popular-ness" is enacted, where people have the power to imbue their expressions with their life experience. They are less like a U.S. entrepreneur's workshop where Mexican artisans produce reproductions of local crafts according to strict guidelines, and more resemble a mural project adapting a European painting to reflect local concerns painted by a community workshop (García Canclini 1993:109). Subjectivity is constructed in this way because of the space people have to express the dreams, conflicts, and humor of their particular life experiences, and because of the ways these expressions are framed or recognized as shared by a particular collectivity (see chapter 3, Rowe and Shelling 1991:10,12). In addition, this expression is "popular" because it is not produced by hegemonic sectors, reflecting experience not recognized by established political culture (12).

Through the examples below--the little dramas of Don Chencho and his friends in their urban rooming-house, Juan Lucas's program of music, announcements and dedications which ease listeners into the end of the day, and the radio's coverage of the festival celebrating the creation of their organized community--this chapter shows how these radios clearly are producing popular culture in this sense. The programs recognize

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and validate the listening community's experience, large and small, both community history and individual life cycle events. They synthesize this shared experience in programs which reflect a conscious sense of collective identity.

Community radios are particularly rich sites for these processes because they are participatory; they are accessible and provide many opportunities for interaction in ways not limited to exchange of objects, services, or ideas (see chapter 3). The communities they serve and, in part, construct, need not be distinctly bounded but can be recognized because of the frequency, density and kind of interactions between people; these interactions spatially or technologically delimit them (Leeds 1973; Bareiss 1998; Opudor 2000). Much like the ways shopkeepers, teachers and mayors are also known as neighbors, classmates and coworkers in a small town, community radios provide different kinds of opportunities for interaction and participation.

The programs profiled in this chapter foreground this interaction in different ways. Radio Cabal's urban *sociodrama* models interaction through its ensemble production and its incorporation of up-to-date tensions of daily life in its plots; *Ranchero Sundown* incorporates its audience by foregrounding their dedications and announcements, and Radio Segundo Monte's (RSM) coverage of the "Festival of the Return" collaborates with all the organizations and institutions which sponsor the Festival, resulting in coverage which celebrates the community itself.

Community radios provide broadened opportunities for decision making, unlike the construction of culture at the point of consumption. What is striking about small, alternative, community or participatory media like the Salvadoran radios in this research is that they take decision making power back into their own hands. As Girard wrote about the global radio movement:

The role of the radio is to respond to the priorities set by the community, to

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> facilitate their discussion, to reinforce them, and to challenge them. ...[their] passion arises out of a desire to empower listeners by encouraging and enabling their participation, not only in radio but in the social, cultural and political processes that affect the community (Girard 2001:2).

In other chapters, I have discussed ways the Salvadoran community radios build this agency in a number of ways. In chapter 5, I showed how they encouraged listeners' social engagement and activism with civil society organizations and civic action, and how audiences contributed parts of programs or collaboratively produced them with radio staff. In chapter 4 I showed how the radios built agency through claiming and appropriating space in the public sphere; and in chapter 6 through reconstructing and vernacularizing cultural influences from neighboring countries as well as from the transnational culture industries. In chapters 1 and 2 I noted that the mission, staffing, funding sources and programming profile of the rural community radios were determined by governing boards made up of community leaders. The staff were members of their listening communities and had many ties of kinship, friendship and experience within it, including of the war and refuge. Staff and governing boards tended to be made up of more politically or culturally activist members of these organized rural communities. At Radio Cabal, internal decision making was fairly democratic with each production group making most decisions about their production and much coordination and collaboration between groups.

In this chapter I focus less on ways the listening community participated in programming production than on the ways the life of these communities was reflected and presented in programming, so that an "imagined community" was produced in part through radio broadcasts. This "imagined community" was continually reinvoked, generally pointing to the collectivity who became politically organized in the refugee

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camps and were attempting to integrate themselves back into the nation, while at the same time retain certain kinds of autonomy.[3]

Neither the violence and fear of the not-so-distant war, nor the sense of victory and legitimacy gained by its negotiated resolution and the nearly autonomous beginnings of their new communities, were the main subjects of these programs. But both were present. These programs each selected and emphasized particular elements of these experiences; I will elaborate on this point in the discussions of specific programs which follow.

It is important to note that the community radios' capacity to construct a sense of subjectivity is in part the legacy of this past, especially of the political mobilizations in the area which at their core claimed legitimacy and citizenship in the larger society. In this way these community radios are like other alternative, small or community-based media which have emerged as part of projects of empowerment or advocacy for a region, group or population. These projects shape a sense of shared experience and identity which both heal internal wounds and project their presence into the broader society (see chapter 3, and Ginsburg 1997:120).

This chapter explores how the "Festival of the Return," the *Ranchero Sundown* program, and even Don Chencho Chilillo's humorous escapades implicitly or explicitly seek to "confer value and meaning on themselves" (see Turner 1991:35) in their own eyes and the outside world. At the same time, these programs also seek to redefine what it means to be Salvadoran, expanding the range of perspectives in the national public sphere.

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[3] Another "imagined community" which is invoked is the nation, redefined to include the perspectives and concerns of the countryside, the poor, etc. A third collectivity is invoked through the global community radio or alternative media movement, and the international support of global civil society in general.

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Las Pasaditas de Don Chencho Chilillo (The little adventures of Mr. Chencho Chilillo)

This program, produced at the urban Radio Cabal, was a conscious effort to create a more relevant form of popular culture, an attempt to validate the urban working class culture of San Salvador. Professionally produced, engaging and truly funny, these three-minute dramas each presented an incident in the lives of an ensemble of characters who lived in a *mesón*, a common form of working-class housing in prewar El Salvador. It was the first foray into dramatic writing by Arturo Hernández Moratanza, a radio announcer with over 30 years experience as a collaboration with Mario Maida, Radio Cabal's Co-Director.

The station began producing the program, Arturo told me in a interview on January 28, 1998, because people in El Salvador needed to get closer to and identify with the popular classes. This effort could be compared to homages to working class culture in the theater and art of the 1930s in the United States, like those supported by the Works Progress Administration theater. By the 1990s, dramas of this sort did not exist on Salvadoran radio; it harked back to the Golden era of Salvadoran radio in the 1950s and early 1960s. *The Little Adventures* was a program "with humor, with things that happen to people everyday...with people talking in their own idioms, with words that people understand," Arturo told me. As a *sociodrama*, its objective was to push people to think about their own problems--that there wasn't work, that public officials did not follow the law, that the water was always getting turned off, that "free" education actually cost most than most families could afford. But the characters took over, several cast members recounted, each with their quirky personality and particular relationships with each other.

The Little Adventures often started with the narrator describing Ni'a Cata, as

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usual getting up early to sweep the courtyard and do the chores of the boarding house. Each resident's room surrounded the courtyard, and as they woke up, inevitably some minor crisis erupted, and listeners could laugh with the characters as they stumbled about trying to find a solution. For example, in "El Cebollero" ("The Onion-man"), a new resident was cutting up onions and marinating them in his room so that he could sell them in the market for *curtido*, a kind of onion-salad or sauce. The smell of onions drove the other residents crazy. While they tried to figure out how to deal with this troublesome neighbor, the program also touched on the problems of intermittent garbage collection, lack of work, low minimum wage and lack of social security coverage especially for market and street vendors (Hernández and Maida 1997a). In "El Campeón del Barrio" ("The Champion of the Neighborhood"), Don Chencho was horrified when a resident's daughter couldn't afford to go to school because of high fees for uniforms, books and the like, a common predicament in contemporary El Salvador. So he decided that his friend Peyeyeque should challenge the neighborhood's boxing champion, *Beso y Burro* (Donkey's Kiss)[4] at the community center's boxing ring. Don Chencho came to the city from the countryside during the war; now middle aged, he worked as a security guard for a factory at night. Peyeyeque was a bit younger and worked whenever he could; like many people he didn't have a stable job. His hare-lip made him talk awkwardly, but he was intelligent and loved poetry. Don Chencho and Macario, an itinerant shoe-repairman, convinced Peyeyeque to make the challenge to win the purse for the girl's education. He succeeded with the help of Don Chencho's secret plan (Hernández and Maida 1997b).

Another time, Chencho and his friends went for a hike in the mountains, where they encountered a mountain lion. Don Chencho and most of his friends ran off,

[4] A sarcastic expression: the donkey doesn't kiss, it hits very hard, someone who can hit as hard as a donkey.

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hysterical. But Doña Cata, as usual practical and in charge of her senses, didn't run. She told the puma, "go away, go away *that way.*" And luckily the mountain lion had just eaten and it went away! The story touched on environmental issues and the loss of Central American wildlife, and also portrayed Doña Cata as the strong woman she was, unlike the stereotypical characterizations of women found in commercial mass media (Hernández and Maida 1997c).

The language of the scripts celebrated Salvadoran oral dialects and idioms. The scripts were written in an oral transcription form familiar to Salvadorans through the prolific writer and artist Salarrué, whose stories mined Salvadoran life and folklore from the 1920s to 1970s. Contractions, slang and words with indigenous origin abounded. For example in the line "Gracias nia Cata...nua visto a Macario?" *nia* means *niña*, a term of respect for a woman of a certain age in the countryside; *nua visto* means *no ha visto,* you haven't seen. Her response, *"Comono por hay andaba"* means, *"Como no, por ahí andaba,"* Of course, he was around here. Salvadoran slang is common: *"¿Quieondas Macario?"* means *"¿Qué ondas?"* common slang for what's happening? or *¿qué tal?* Some say this comes from *¿qué andas?*, what are you walking around doing, and others claim this Mexican expression derives from Los Angeles surfer slang, what wave (*onda)*? Everyday Salvadoran vocabulary with possibly indigenous origins is featured; in *"que no mirás como están de chucas," chucas* means rotten, garbage, so the phrase translates as, "don't you see how dirty they are" (1997b:2).

The productions conveyed the tight ensemble forged by the actors and director. Only one was a professional actor, Colette Jacquinot; the rest were recruited from Radio Cabal staff and friends. While most seemed more middle class than working class, their characterizations drew on their friends, family and the mix of people and classes in the city, especially during the war years. In our interview on January 22, 1998, Colette

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described how the group experimented with voices and characterizations and how much they enjoyed the ample use of double meanings, riddles and other typical Salvadoran word play in the scripts.

Their ensemble collaboration was clear when I observed the recording of "The Onion-man" and the "Champion of the Neighborhood" on January 15, 1998. After a brief reading, they stood at the mikes holding their scripts, Colette with her finger on her nose to create the more nasal tone of Nia Cata; Mario Maida making a face as he shaped the voice of Peyeyeque, Mario Pineda switching from one voice to another to cover Macario and some of the extras. Recording as live, with stops to address technical problems or flubs, they overlapped their lines just enough to convey a sense of energy and drama. Over 200 scripts had already been recorded at this point, two a week.

For Radio Cabal, the program served as a kind of candy (*dulce),* Arturo told me; listeners tuned in for the program early in the morning, then kept the radio on for Margarita's program, "How's it going...", which solicited their participation and attention in a more direct way.

The Little Adventures celebrated urban life in a typical setting from a not-so-distant history of the *mesones* (rooming houses; see chapter 1), through current predicaments and tensions. It did this from the perspective of poor and working class residents, and with compassionate humor. The program teetered on the edge of popular culture: with limited collaboration in production, the scripts were authored by Hernández and Maida with the cast filling out the characters but not improvising on the texts. It was not a production of *mesón* residents about their own life conditions. Some cast members may have lived in comparable circumstances, as the station reached out to train young people in radio production. But others, like Hernández and Maida, seemed clearly middle class, at least in terms of education. Still, the working class urban world

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which was imagined through the program and the aggravations and pleasures presented resonated with contemporary life in San Salvador. In this way the program made this world visible, naming this cultural world in ways not recognized by other mass media.

Anochecer Ranchero (Ranchero Sundown)

Juan Lucas' program, *Anochecer Ranchero* (*Ranchero Sundown*) was less a conscious effort to resurrect a more authentic popular culture than a direct expression of that culture. While much of the *música ranchera (ranchero* music) was recorded in Mexico and elements of his on-air persona seemed taken from international genres of fast-talking radio DJs, the program as a whole proudly celebrated rural Salvadoran culture and the tastes and experiences of northern Morazán in particular.

In his opening to the program, Juan Lucas directly addressed his audience. He said:

> Good evening, a very good evening my friends, listening from the different parts of the the department of Morazán....what's up, tell me what's happening this afternoon? ... even better, now you're eating, resting, you arrived after eight hours of work, I imagine you're all worked out. But we're here to raise your spirits, to put you into action! ...and the only thing you have to do is put the volume up on your radio, tune in to Radio Segundo Montes and your program, *Ranchero Sundown*... (*Anochecer Ranchero,* October 28, 1997)

He addressed listeners in the entire region, not just the community of returned refugees where the radio is based. Several times in the program he called out a welcome (*saludo)* to listeners in all these towns by name. He referred to the particular rhythm of the day in the countryside, and sent out a positive, energizing message: turn up the music, let's relax and have a good time! He built excitement, conveying that life is good

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and this place is a good place, not a backwater of the city or nation, region or world.

The music, too, was the music of the countryside. He often played what were considered classics, songs which inspired people old and young to sing along, songs people sang when a musical friend stopped by in the evening. There were romantic laments from a man's perspective, such as "*La Piedrasita*" (The Stone Woman), which began, "La mujer es una piedra, el hombre, desesperado..." (The woman is a stone, the man, despairing...) or "*Ebrio de Amor*" (Drunk on Love) whose chorus ended, "...en la mano izquierda, en que la tuve un rato y en la otra mano, mi copa de vino" (in my left hand, where I held her for a while, and in my other hand, my cup of wine). From a woman's perspective, "*La Hija de Nadie*" (The Daughter of Nobody) complained of a father who seduced women and denied his name to their children ("Van por ahí engañando a mujeres, Y negando a sus hijos el nombre)[5] while "*Su Lazo de Color Rosa*" (His Rose-colored Lasso) sang of love which appeared to be a pink butterfly but ended up tight as a lasso.

Most of the musical selections were dedications, requests from listeners to honor the special life-cycle events of their families and friends, such as birthdays, Mother's day, graduations, or deaths (see chapter 6). Songs requested over and over included "*Brinda por tu compleaño*" (I toast for your birthday), "*Las Mañanitas a mi hijo*" (the special birthday song to my son) and "*La tumba será final*" (The tomb will be final) performed by Bertín y Lalo. Dedications came from all over the region, not just the settlements of Segundo Montes; they even came from over the Torola River in Osicala, a government stronghold during the war. Often the requests and dedications were so numerous that they had to be combined or saved for the next day; occasionally the program ran a minute or two over. Office manager and bookkeeper Sonia typed each one to make it

[5] By Beatriz Adriana; probably performed by Yolanda del Río (www.sobrino.net).

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more readable than the tiny hand written scraps of paper folded into little triangles which people brought to the station. Juan Lucas gave these contributions center stage, reading each twice and often adding his own congratulations. In this way he made the listeners themselves the focus of the program, emphasizing their participation. These interactions built a sense of community through the program.

Juan Lucas tried to highlight Salvadoran musicians. Once, when the *Temas* program *(Topics of the Moment)* scheduled just before his could not go on, he played several cuts from an album by a Salvadoran band, stressing in his introduction that this was national music. On October 28, 1997, the first night I recorded his program, he featured songs about emigration to the United States recorded by Salvadoran musicians. He began with "*Las Palomas*" (The Doves) which lamented that doves in flight could not return. Next he presented *Los Vaqueros del Norte* (The Cowboys of the North) with their complaints about "*Las Tres Fronteras*" referring to the three borders that must be crossed between El Salvador and the United States. A bit later, he added, "*Tres Veces Mojado*" (Three Times Soaked, or a "Wet-back") a *corrido* or ballad by the cross-border stars, *Los Tigres del Norte* (the Tigers of the North) about the trials of Salvadoran immigrants in the United States.

Surprisingly, some of the music Juan Lucas used as bridges and underneath his introductions and announcements was classical or band music. When I asked him about it, he said he wanted to expand listeners' appreciation of all kinds of music, even though *ranchero* was the focus of the program. Clearly, his choices did not add up to a nostalgic commemoration of a declining genre, but a selection which dynamically incorporated new elements as they became relevant, either to listeners' lives or to his own personal aesthetic.

Juan Lucas celebrated the *ranchero* musical genre, the country music of the

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region. He played old-time lovers' laments and complaints about new sorrows like emigration. He accentuated local customs and the rhythms of daily life both through his introductions and through the events celebrated by listeners dedications, the birthdays, graduations, births and deaths. He highlighted the area itself through calling out the towns, and through announcements of local activities and ads for local businesses. Together this became a kind of performance of culture, each piece pulled out of the flow of everyday life to be featured on this program and reflected back to audiences as "your program, *Ranchero Sundown.*" Clearly this is a production of popular culture in the ways described above, an expression of the experiences of a non-hegemonic population projected both so they themselves can recognize and value it, and secondarily for outsiders to acknowledge. While much of the music was produced through the transnational music industry and consumed by the station and individual, family or neighborhood group listeners, it was made specifically locally meaningful through juxtaposition with dedications, announcements and Juan Lucas's comments (see chapter 6). The most dynamic part of this production of culture was not in audience interpretation of radio texts but in the program's recasting of its listeners as producers of the cultural expression that the program reflected, envisioning its audience as active subjects.

Another way the program raised the profile of the local culture was the way it was bookended by the station's news broadcasts. Local news from the announcements and the daily interview program *Temas de Actualidad* (Topics of the Moment) preceded *Anochecer Ranchero*, and the daily news summary and national community radio news broadcast followed it. This local news and announcements about the activities of local organizations increased opportunities for local participation and citizenship (see chapter 5). For *Anochecer Ranchero,* it was a way to guarantee listeners; focus groups and

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individuals I asked stressed the value of local news. But it also created a programming flow which further validated it as popular culture: this is our music, our news, our way of life. It conveyed a sense of cultural pride and belonging, even if half the news was bad and most of the songs were sad.

But like any performance or expression, this program reflected only part of the possible experiences of the listening population. Some perspectives were missing. *Ranchero* was seen as the music of adults, the older generation. Just as in economic terms, the challenge for Segundo Montes' leadership and for the region as a whole was how construct a viable and sustainable economy for the next generation, culturally the question that was not being addressed on this program was a musical world and culture which would address the challenges for the younger generation.

While the program was not a conscious attempt by cultural activists to validate a way of life like "The Little Adventures" of poor Don Chencho, I don't think it is an accident that this program originated in a community which had been highly mobilized to survive the repression and war and to rebuild, and in many ways continues to be more organized and mobilized than most rural communities. The political gains of the community to re-enter and re-define their place in the national public sphere were linked to their efforts to re-produce their own culture. Indirectly, the program addressed the same issues of marginalization, isolation, powerlessness that the political mobilizations of the war did. But it did so not by political action or rhetoric by claiming public space, to say, here we are, this is good, we are alive.

The program was meant to be entertaining; it did not usually address the war or the violence of the past, and Juan Lucas rarely played *música popular* on the program. But these experiences were not obscured or hidden. For listeners in the settlements of Comunidad Segundo Montes and in much of the surrounding area, these memories are

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ever present. So when appropriate, Juan Lucas talked about the war and the past violence. In November 1997 he began to talk about the upcoming commemorations of the assassinations of the Jesuits at the University of Central America on the 16th, the celebration of the Return from the refugee camp at Colomoncagua on the 17th and eighteenth, and later, in December, the commemoration of the El Mozote massacre. But radio dealt with these issues much more extensively in their promotion and coverage of the Celebration of the Return.

The Festival of the Return (*La Fiesta del Retorno*)

The Floats and the Queens, November 17, 1997

> It's almost 5 p.m., at the turn-off to Meanguera. Two of the eight floats have arrived. For the *Escuela Técnica*, an arch covered with delicate cut-out flowers and a big golden margarita stands behind the prospective queen. She's dressed in black and standing on a white platform in the back of the pick-up; bunches of balloons and strings with purple, green and golden shimmer like Christmas tree decorations. The Queen of the *Productos Corporados* is seated, legs outstretched on the top of the cab of her white pickup, flag of *Productos Corporados* across the front, four arches of palm decorated with balloons, swaying overhead.
>
> About 100 people are waiting down here; people are beginning to line the road for the parade, which was scheduled for 4 p.m. A truck stops to load hennequen bags. Tomás, who is covering the event for the radio, has to go back because his walkie-talkie isn't working right and it has to be live. He comes back; the problem is distance.
>
> Four more floats arrive, then two more. From the health clinic in Meanguera, the Queen is on top of their ambulance, lots of streamers and palms crossed behind

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her, while the Mechanical Workshop float is decorated with streamers and blue balloons.

The brass band starts up, and at the same time, the soccer game which has been taking place in the field across the street lets out, to great cheers.

Tomás gets information on each queen. Now all the trucks are lined up; some carry two! A guy with a megaphone introduces each one, and talks about the return from exile.

Later that night, the parade of Queens went from Meanguera to Los Quebrachos to San Luís. Tomás and I rode the whole way in the back of one of the pick-ups. He reported who each Queen was, what organizations sponsored them, where we were. People lined the route, even when it was finally dark and and we were driving on the little dirt road. The Queens threw candy, calling "dulces, dulces" and kids ran after us scrambling to catch it; they were judged in part on their generosity with their candy.

What is a festival? It is an event that provides opportunities for many kinds of participation, and which allows many voices to speak (Stoeltje 1992:261; Cohen 1981:x). Like the festivals celebrating national identity in Puerto Rico, the Community of Segundo Montes's Festival of the Return was a way of asserting collectivity and community and claiming public space to bring attention to their accomplishments (Dávila 1997:130, 153). Radio Segundo Monte's promotion for the festival spoke to both community members and outsiders, "In Morazán, we are having a celebration and we want to share it with you" (RSM spot, 1997, my translation).

The Festival of the Return was a celebration where the survival of the community was heralded; it was not focused on the deaths or survival of individuals. This community was a concrete group; it referred to the people who returned together from

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the refugee camp to reclaim their lives in El Salvador and start, virtually from scratch, to build a town and community where their families could live (see chapter 1). "We returned to Morazán because this is our land; We returned to El Salvador because this is our country..."(RSM spot, 1997, my translation).

Every imaginable activity was part of the festival. There were fireworks, as at major annual events like Christmas or New Year's. There were masses, a parade with fireworks and loud music to great the dawn, and an indigenous folk dance. There was a long parade of pick-up truck floats with a competition among neighborhoods and other sponsoring institutions for Queen of the Festival. There was a soccer tournament, games for kids, a traveling amusement park offering rides like a ferris wheel (*juegos mecánicos)* along with games and food stands where residents could make some extra money. There was a big dance for young people with a live band which played until dawn.

Every activity was participatory in some way; this was not just a spectacle to watch, but a celebration to take part in. Neighborhoods and organizations made floats for the "Queens" competition; women made food to sell at the rides; children played games and raced for the candies the Queens threw from their floats; families attended mass, joined the dawn parade and enjoyed the rides; young people danced and socialized.

People came in from all over the region. In the house where I lived, distant friends and family came to stay in our hammocks, even on our porch. Visits from an "uncle" who had become a good friend and a "grandmother" who had been a important source of advice during the years in the refugee camp were important parts of the festival for this family. These new kin networks were also something to celebrate, also part of the survival of the family and community (as in Guatemala; see Green 1999:171).

The festival resembled a patron-saint celebration, but it had a much greater focus

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on the accomplishments and progress of the community. The local development foundation (the *Escuela Técnica*) sponsored a day-long program entitled "Families Moving Towards Development" which included a photographic history of their projects to improve the local agricultural and small business economy, charts and dioramas explaining ecological agriculture, and an event celebrating their achievements.[6]

At this last event, a band played the national anthem and all attending were given little blue and white striped pieces of ribbon so we could wear the Salvadoran flag. At the same time, the speaker stressed how their approach was different from the national plan for rural recuperation (or the lack of one) and lauded their alternative model, which stressed ecological agricultural techniques, rural industry, and supporting the family economy. In this way, the Festival was both an assertion of community survival and accomplishment and a claim for attention in the national public sphere. The community through its leadership insisted on its own self-definition, not as a poor, marginal, rural region, but as a model for other communities, a model for the nation. It was not a claim of autonomy but of a inclusion in the nation on their own terms.

This did not mean that the memory of violence was gone. People were daily reminded by the family members who had died, the children they were bringing up for missing brothers, sisters or children, the places which still held terrible memories (see Binford 1996:171-2). The war was not background but embedded in everyday life (Green 1999:6). But the Festival was a grasping towards a life beyond that, even through the simple fact that being out late at night was opposite to normal practice. Part of the Festival's claim to public space was a response to fear: fear that became embedded during the years of repression and war, and continued in the postwar crime wave. The

[6] The Festival of the Return in Guarjila was similar, though smaller. It also featured an exhibit presenting the accomplishments of the community, a special mass, a big dance, and a contest, in this case, one of skill in horsemanship.

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Festival countered that fear. It provided a space for people to gather in large numbers and to stay out late, always unusual in the Salvadoran countryside, where people were in bed by nine and few hazarded out after dark. It was a liberating moment, but not liminal; it was not like a carnival where normal rules of social life are inverted (Turner 1986).

As the activities above make clear, the Festival of the Return was not primarily a solemn time of remembering or a commemoration of the deaths and losses of the war. These were also significant events for this community: commemorations of the massacre at El Mozote, of the deaths of Monsignor Romero and the six Jesuit priests and two women at the University of Central America, and smaller events for more local losses. Instead, the Festival was a celebration of life and survival, of hope for the future, not only for individuals but for the community as a whole. The speech Juan Lucas chose to set the theme of the festival ended with a call for others to come see the progress the community had made, to "see what is possible to achieve precisely because one is organized..." (Juan José Rodríguez, archival tape played on Radio Segundo Montes November 18, 1997). It was a celebration of survival as a community; as in Guatemala, of victory over political violence meant to destroy any collective effort not controlled by the state (Green 1999:170-1).

The priest's perspective

During the mass, the three people carrying offerings emphasized the fundamental achievement, land:

> Here in front we have some offerings; we have earth, and documents (*escrituras*), and as you can see, we also have construction tools (*instrumentos*). The tools are symbols of the effort and strength to construct the community in that time of the return and at the same time push our development ahead so that we can have in our community, Segundo Montes, a dignified life. For this reason we see these

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> tools. The earth is accompanied by these documents, which we have already received, also as a sign that the land is ours, men and women, and also of the effort which the land commission has made to make our dreams a reality, of possessing a little piece of land and in this way also to strengthen our family economy. In this way, we make this offering, on this day on which we celebrate eight years of our return (Radio Segundo Montes, Mass, broadcast live, November 17, 1997).

Father Rogelio, the priest who had accompanied this community since the dangerous years of the war, stressed the spiritual and philosophical roots of the community's success in his homily. He began with the achievements: an educational system which reached to university levels, a health care system, a music school, and a radio which, he said, continued to accompany and inform us, and to bring us towards forming community. But he also noted problems, and challenged and exhorted his flock,

> But also, this is an opportunity which we would like, dear brothers and sisters, to signal some things that worry us, that fill us with anguish. At least two: in the first place, it's been noted that the poverty in our community persists. It hasn't been possible to overcome. I don't say this to point the blame at one person or another. But yes, it's a fact. Poverty persists at the level of our homes.
>
> And also I want to point out, and to me this seems even more serious, the fact that, in some way, our sense of community has weakened, and the faith that we all share.... this faith that commits us with our brothers and sisters, and which demands of us to be here together when we construct our lives, this faith between us has weakened. Beloved brothers and sisters, the sense of community and faith constitute the two fundamental elements of our *mística* (guiding spirit), and without our *mística*, we are lost, without a doubt...." (Mass, RSM live broadcast,

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November 18, 1997).

This message was not new; many people worried about both these issues--the women at the restaurants, the leaders of community institutions and their critics alike had mentioned these issues to me. But the significance for the Festival is that each year the meaning of their history was re-evaluated, where have we been, where are we going? The event was not a nostalgic repetition but a dynamic process.

The radio's version of events

Radio Segundo Montes accompanied the Festival; I think this verb, which is usually used to describe the role of a priest or solidarity activists, best conveys the radio's role. For weeks, it promoted the Festival throughout its range of northern Morazán. Many events were covered live: the mass, the opening of the exhibition at the *Escuela Técnica,* the parade of floats, the soccer tournament, and the first evening's festivities, opening the rides and amusement park with speeches and fireworks. The radio even broadcast the bands at the dance for much of the night (see Appendix G). This coverage extended the celebration throughout the radio's entire broadcast range. It was a projection of the community itself into public space, an assertion of their shared identity; it said, this is who we are, where we come from, where we're going.

While the celebration combined a view of the community's history with a range of popular culture activities, the radio's coverage emphasized history and progress. The promotional spot began with a description of the flight to and return from the refugee camp in Honduras. A *Temas de Actualidad* (*Topics of the Moment*) program featured the Testimony or experience of the return from the perspective of a community member. The mass and the *Escuela Técnica* program lauding their model of rural development were featured live. Many of these programs featured local institutions such as the

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Foundation, the semi-autonomous school system, and Christian base community network, and the radio collaborated with each of them to cover these events. Juan Lucas broadcast a special program in his *Anochecer Ranchero* slot remembering a former leader of the community, who had recently died.

The radio covered more cultural, entertaining events, too: the fireworks, the children's games, the floats, the dance. But the meaning of the Festival was important to the radio; this was not just a party. In fact, some people complained to me that the radio's version featured too much official history and not enough of its conflicts and challenges. While it is arguable that the Festival was the right time to handle those issues, these people had a point in that the radio as an institution was seen as part of the leadership of the community. Juan Lucas had been identified in a community survey as the most recognized local leader (Fundación Segundo Montes 1997b). The staff had access to any and all locations to cover the Festival: we rode on the floats, we entered the announcement booth for the opening of the amusement park (in fact they held up the speeches until we could cover it); other institutions loaned us walkie-talkies to facilitate remote coverage to the studio; musicians arranged for the radio to broadcast their dance music. The radio was both an accomplishment of the community, and part of its formation. Its broadcasts helped produce the collective memory and identity of the organized sectors of the community. It helped to extend that perspective and project it into the wider public sphere, at least regionally and possibly nationally, to the extent its broadcasts were accessible beyond the two municipalities covering the Segundo Montes settlements, or selected by the national community radio network.

Concluding thoughts

Much research on popular culture in European and North American contexts has

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focused on it as a response to mass culture, as a production of audience creativity through their interpretations and resignifications. Though they are a reaction to dominant culture, these "readings" may not be oppositional; in this view, popular culture is a process of "everyday resistances" or "making do" with the materials at hand (Fiske 1989:21, 25). In contrast, research on alternative media explicitly recognizes this work as part of a process of cultural and political redefinition and transformation (Downing 1984; Ginsburg 1997).

Latin American approaches to popular culture reviewed here combine these, emphasizing hybridity, reconversion and resignification in these contexts where modernity, massification, and construction of national and other identities are ongoing, uneven and incomplete processes (García Canclini 1989,1992,1993; Rowe and Schelling 1991). At the same time they find in popular culture the active work of cultural renovation and production of groups which are not part of national hegemonic blocs; they are sites where the concerns of these populations can be shaped and expressed. The community radio projects examined in this dissertation and the programs explored in this chapter particularly fit in this intersection of reception and production in a field of cultural influences that is local, national and global.

In different ways, these three programs were crafted to validate, accompany and celebrate the concerns of their listening populations, populations with distinct histories and social relationships, and in two of these three examples, with organized, corporate community structures. The pleasures and conflicts of daily life, community history, dreams and aspirations were expressed in these programs through the work of radio staff who crafted disparate elements including mass media products, participation of listeners, and collaborations with community leaders and organizations into programs which were in effect, performances of collective, community identity. In *The Little*

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Adventures of Don Chencho Chilillo the aggravations and absurdities of a working class urban world resonated with contemporary life in San Salvador. *Ranchero Sundown* celebrated rural Salvadoran culture; local news and musical tastes were integrated into a program designed both to serve the rhythm of daily life and to celebrate small and large lifecycle events of listeners, conveying a sense of cultural pride and belonging. The "Festival of the Return" broadcasts combined a view of this community's history with a wide range of participatory activities organized through leading community institutions, including the radio itself. The broadcasts asserted the community's shared identity and helped to project it into the wider public sphere, at least regionally and possibly nationally.

These were not static or nostalgic projections of organized local elites. Because of the ways each radio organization was accessible and participatory, the content and purpose of the programs were in dynamic relationships with their listening communities. Each day's program, each year's festival, reflected the concerns and choices of *locutores*, collaborators and participants, through whom these moments of popular culture were produced. The many ways that producers and listeners interacted in the processes of producing, circulating and receiving these programs produced culture, a sense of shared identity. The programs represented an active and dynamic expression of populations which had been historically marginalized and which in part through these programs were asserting their own collective identities, their own views of who they were, their histories and their futures.

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Conclusions

What is civil society? How do the people working with the radios understand civil society? Hhy is the idea of constructing post-war civil society a central concern of the radio staff?

Civil society is a vague and much debated notion; now particularly the role of global civil society has gained scholarly attention (see for example, Anheier, Glasius, and Kaldor 2001 and 2002). My interest in this research has been more local. What I have tried to convey in this dissertation is a perspective on civil society which is historically and geographically situated. If the concept of civil society in its origins refers, on the one hand, to the power of the population to curb and shape the power of government and on the other, to the workings of government itself to regulate conflict between people, then the usages I heard harks back to these original meanings. But it does so through a long trajectory.

In much of Latin America, the turn to a discourse of civil society has emerged, on the one hand, from the transformation of the left as the vision of revolutionary change lost its promise and on the other, from international, aid agencies and NGOs who connected a more institutionalized vision of civil society to address persistent inequalities not resolved by the era's neoliberal policy solutions. But in El Salvador what impressed me was the continuity with past decades of social movements.

The Salvadoran civil war was the most recent and most destructive episode in a long history of struggle by Salvadoran majority population, of both Indian and Ladino descent, to change the terms of their access to the resources and political decision making of their country. Over the past hundred years, there had been several such

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attempts to preserve their access to land, to find political leaders or factions responsive to their needs, to open political participation and governance to more of the population. But they were stymied by tight control of the state by the landed elite, in place by the 1920s, and later by the consolidation of military-controlled governments.

Different sectors of the majority population attempted over the next decades to claim the public sphere, in order to influence the state through demonstrations, elections, protests, political parties and finally, when all other means seemed exhausted or ineffective, and the repressive response from the state permitted no middle ground, through armed revolt and civil war. The civil war lasted from 1980 to 1992; 70,000 people died, countless more suffered physical or psychological injury, and a fifth of the population fled to refugee camps in Honduras or to the United States to escape the war. Changes in relationship of the elite to the national economy and pressure by international forces pried open some public space even before the end of the war. In the post-war period, finally the associations, organizations and voices of the population found it possible to begin to speak, to organize, to represent their interests mostly without fear of violence and with a possibility of being heard.

A wide-ranging and relatively well-implemented Peace Accords between the Salvadoran government and the FMLN coalition, overseen by the United Nations, provided a transition to a more democratic peace. However, severe economic inequality continued, and the stirring of grassroots groups, nationally based NGOs, labor organizations and a freer press faced challenges from both government efforts to control the public sphere and the difficulties of surviving in a weak and unbalanced economy.

New cultural spaces opened. Theaters presented plays and concerts; novels, essays, poems and short stories were published; concerts attracted youth to city parks; commemorations and memorials were held in a variety of public spaces. Popular culture

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was stimulated by small workshops, performances offered by new cultural organizations. Clubs, bars, and galleries found themselves jammed after work. But these new spaces were not without limits. New newspapers, magazines, wire services and TV stations had trouble getting advertising to support them; rumors abounded of commercial boycotts and unspoken political lines that could not be crossed. An abundance of new radio stations played remarkably similar music formats; few Salvadoran musicians received any air time at all.

The increasing concentration of commercial media and continued polarization of political life led to conflict. The new community radio stations, unique spaces for rural information and expression, were shut down by the government until ordered reopened by the Supreme Court. Community radio has faced sharp legal challenges all over the continent: El Salvador was not alone in its battle to open space on the airwaves for democratic expression.

The community radios

The community radios played a particularly important role in rejuvenating of civil society and the radio staff a particular role within this. Throughout this work, I have referred to "the radios" as entities and organizations, but I think it is important to be more precise. The staff of the community radios tended to be very literate, respected community members. This already put them in a small minority: while basic literacy was widespread in part because of the efforts of aid organizations in the refugee camps, sufficient comfort with reading and writing to read texts dynamically on the air, to write news reports and for directors, to write funding requests, is a high level of skill. In addition, radio staff tended to be people who were still engaged with the vision that their communities could progress as communities. Even if they were not activists involved

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with other kinds of groups, they were more idealistic than many others. Of the radio staff in this research, in the countryside, Juan Lucas had been selected for leadership training and was considered the most recognized local leader in the local census; Tomás had been a school teacher, Rosi had been a singer and was later asked to be a member of the local leadership council. In the city, Margarita and Mario had been political activists to some degree. Radio staff and volunteers continued to develop skills and experience which would continue to propel them into leadership positions or aid them in professional careers as journalists, teachers or technicians.

Community radio as a symbol of progress

After the fire which nearly destroyed Radio Sumpul, the many efforts by individuals, local, national and international organizations and local governments illustrated what a different kind of communication media it was. Individuals, local government, local and regional organizations relied on it for basic communication needs in a region with negligible phone service, no newspapers and low literacy, and slow, unreliable transportation. But the radio also represented an accomplishment over these difficult conditions and the war itself, part of the grasp of modernity, participatory democracy, and cultural autonomy.

Like the other rural community radios, people in this region saw the Radio Sumpul as their own, not only because it provided a space for them to speak, but also because the radio itself was the expression of the community. It had been created through the returned refugee autonomous self-governments before they were integrated into the Salvadoran municipal system, and residents remained part of the structure of power which controlled the radios. People felt that if someone attacked their radio, it was as if someone had attacked the community itself. Even people who rarely listened to the

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radio felt its existence was important; it was a symbol of progress and survival.

Public space and public sphere

By creating a school system, the communities of Segundo Montes and eastern Chalatenango insisted on their right to have a future--to not be marginalized from the national economy and political public sphere, to be more than a disempowered labor force that is used when needed and then ignored or discarded. Like all major public occasions, the graduations began with the National Anthem, not in a perfunctory way but sung live by a band or with a violin solo. The communities insisted on themselves as part of the national public through these celebrations of their accomplishments, just as the merger of their schools with the national system was negotiated to maintain some local autonomy. In these ways, they achieved not only recognition but continued attention to their concerns, interests and perspectives.

Placing these events on the radio, especially on a live program, extended this achievement in several ways. Radio coverage acted as a mirror for members of the Segundo Montes community. The graduation ceremony was covered live, and a report on the highlights was aired that afternoon. Speakers used the occasion to remind the graduates, their families and the community as a whole of their values and their sacrifices and exhorted them to keep their sense of collective identity and pride. By broadcasting it on the radio, the ceremonial space was extended to others who shared some of that experience and a broader public who may not have shared it. The radio was part of a local public sphere and it extended that space into the national public sphere.

Similarly through their legal struggles the rural community radios asserted their importance into the national public sphere, demonstrating that whether these communities had radios was not a minor, local matter but an issue with national

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relevance. The community radios' struggle foregrounded underlying human rights concerns which underlay so many of the post-war conflicts in El Salvador, such as the right of union representation or to march on the streets. But few other struggles had at their center the right to speech and access to information and to expression, and this is why the issue was uniquely valuable in the context of the post war period. Other media could not fight this fight, because they were dependent on advertising in the national marketplace, or because as individual journalists they feared retaliation.

Community radio as a medium for civil society

A central role played by the rural community radios was as a communication medium for civil society organizations. The radios provided space for these organizations to inform listeners about their existence, their views and their activities. These organizations represented many sectors of the public which had been invisible or marginalized from the public sphere in the past--*campesinos*, women, rural small business. It brought their views and issues to the forefront of local public space and interjected them into the national public sphere. This research was not designed to measure how strong this sector was, or to what extent it reflected local concerns versus the influence of global civil society agendas. But it has shown how participatory radio could be a key tool for the development of a local civil society. Through radio programs these organizations shared information, promoted activities, told stories of the past and conveyed their visions of the future. In addition, they made their own decisions about how they would be portrayed, because most of the programming was produced collaboratively: they were the producers, too. The radios provided crucial ways for these organizations to reach their constituencies, enlarge them through promotion and educate and inform them in ways that reinforced and catalyzed their other efforts. Local

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commercial radios could not play these roles, both because of the more narrowly commercial orientation of this sector in El Salvador, and because the community radios collaborated with civil society organizations. combining their skills and perspectives.

The broadcasts strengthened civil society by helping these new social actors to emerge and act. Through the civil society organizations which produced radio programming, *campesinos*, women, youth and other members of the radios' communities become central voices in the public spheres of their communities. This recognition was amplified because of the range of radio broadcasts. Together with the growth of local organizations and leadership in local civil society, the community radios helped these groups to become the central social actors and speakers, no longer marginalized and invisible.

Civil society and urban participatory radio

Urban community radio was different; it did not emerge from organized communities but from activists and idealists who sought to engage poor and working-class urban populations with programming that informed, educated and invited new forms of participation.

One purpose was a basic for news media: educating their listeners so that they could better participate as citizens. In particular they sought to make the news relevant and understandable to the mostly uneducated audiences they envisioned for their programs. Another purpose was to monitor and check the power of the state, again a basic role for civil society. The programs kept a critical eye on government action and inaction, critiquing what they saw as undemocratic maneuvers, pointing out what they understood as the responsibility of government agencies and representatives, and emphasizing the need for government to follow the law and not act arbitrarily, or in their

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own self-interest. The programs underlined the responsibility of the government to protect citizens rights, as in the case of the *maquila* workers.

Sometimes the tone seemed patronizing to a U.S. ear--explaining how to register to vote, the basics of good government, like a high school civics class. But their purpose was encourage their listeners to take a more active role through the organizations and institutions of civil society, where these basics had been impossible before. To this end, the programs highlighted the activities of some of the major advocacy organizations which represented citizens perspectives on a range of crucial issues such as human rights, environmental dangers, consumer issues.

The programs provided a public space for these diverse voices, mediated through Margarita's, Mario's and Carlos's comments and questions. The programs broadened the public sphere, too, by legitimizing the concerns of everyday life of their target audience, the poor and working class who lived in tiny concrete-block apartments spread all over the San Salvador metropolitan area. Local issues like the rising costs of electricity or school fees, the difficulties of getting public services like water or garbage pick-ups, the conflicts over the reorganization of the city center were covered, but more often the issues were national or broader in scope. The organizations and associations featured in their programming helped to provide these diverse perspectives. Through opening public space for these alternative views, which were marginally included in other mass media, the radio enlarged the public sphere, the realm of public debate, discussion, and self-consciousness.

The programs emphasized the need for debate and discussion, and that many perspectives are needed to solve problems. They also encouraged actions of individuals who spoke out or acted for self-help or in the collective interest.They highlighted role of NGOs to solve problems, such as the *maquila* monitoring group or the street vendors'

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association. They frequently asserted that there were spaces for NGO and citizen participation simply by asking questions, demanding to know who represented people's interests. They underlined the need for relevant information and the role of civil society organizations to provide it, whether to the public directly or as advisors to elected officials or government agencies. But they neither called for mass mobilizations of social movements or the less confrontational tools of mass civic action campaigns. Hosts and guests exhorted individuals to join with organizations to advocate for their interests and protect their rights.

In this way the urban community radio station strengthened civil society and expanded the public sphere. As mass media has more and more become the major arena of political speech in democratic societies, the station became an crucial location for this sector's voices and concerns.

Constructing culture out of diverse influences

Much of the music played on these radios came from Mexico, Latin America or beyond, products of the transnational music industry. I argue in this dissertation that this music had a different meaning for its listeners and programmers because of the ways it was contextualized. The social relations and processes of this programming's selection, production or reproduction, circulation and consumption affected its meaning on these radios. It was a way of constructing a unique local culture; it was a form of popular culture.

Community radio like Radio Sumpul vernacularized, made locally meaningful the imported music that they replayed from the commercial radios because they fit them into their own daily rhythms of work and relaxation, their own social networks and celebrations. Rather than follow the programming formulas of national and

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transnational commercial radio, which were well-known to them, the community radios based their use of this "virtual" public space on a wide range of influences. These included local music traditions like *ranchero* and *grupero* and reminders of their recent tragic history and own global networks through *musica popular*. Community radio rebuilt these links, as a kind of performance where the music was combined with other elements, not as commodities for markets but integrated into the processes of people's lives and as expressions of shared values.

The myriad ways that music found its way to Radio Sumpul is an example of this process. *Locutores*, listeners, friends in the city including urban radio staff and national and international development workers sent tapes and CDs to the radio, taped songs off the air, or recorded local musicians. This music was then programmed by *locutores* to fit the tastes and daily routines of local audiences, and combined and framed by elements that defined the purpose of this particular radio. Local voices and concerns including community's history and significant events were foregrounded. The music was reintegrated or "reconverted" into an expression of the values, concerns and daily life of its listeners, as interpreted by radio staff.

All this created a sense of *ours, our community, our music, our way of life*--not that it was homogeneous, lacking conflict, or entirely successful. Through these radios, the sponsoring communities were attempting to enter and create modern culture but keep it under their control. Through the processes of making radio, they were creating and recreating their own, plural, hybrid, local culture. At the same that they resisted global commodity capitalism, the radios in fact create their own transnational networks, through NGOS, individuals, and links with other radios in Latin America and the world.

For Salvadoran participatory radio communities, a core sense of identity was forged in the hard years of the war, the refugee camp and their return to their home

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region. But their communities had grown and changed since then and the community radios were a way that an ongoing and evolving sense of themselves as a community was expressed and maintained. In addition, because they were broadcast, because they were a public space, the radios inserted the voices, perspectives and concerns of their communities into national consciousness; they become visible and audible not only to themselves but to the nation (and the world). Making radio was not only a way of producing and transforming culture and collective identity; it also asserted their presence in the national public sphere.

Creating new cultural identities

In this dissertation I have described community radio as a form of popular culture; not as a reading or as reception of mass culture and not necessarily as an oppositional practice. Instead, I base my approach on several Latin American approaches to popular culture which emphasize hybridity, appropriation and use in social contexts where modernity, massification, and construction of national and other identities are ongoing, and uneven processes (García Canclini 1989,1992,1993; Rowe and Schelling 1991; Martín Barbero 2001:225). From this perspective, popular culture like community radio programs are the cultural production of groups which are not part of national hegemonic blocs; they are sites where the concerns of these populations can be shaped and expressed.

In different ways, community radio programs were crafted to validate, accompany and celebrate the concerns of their listening populations, populations with distinct histories and social relationships. The pleasures and conflicts of daily life, community history, dreams and aspirations were expressed in programs through the work of radio staff who crafted disparate elements including mass media products,

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participation of listeners, and collaborations with community leaders and organizations into programs which were in effect, performances of collective, community identity.

If sense of community identity is formed by repeated, daily interaction then the community radios played a central role. People listened avidly for local news and programming that concerned them: announcements of meetings for land distributions, immunizations, and eye exams; for family members in from the city, for funerals, for the saludos of their friends and families. Live programming and special events created a sense of immediate participation, the simultaneity and sense of participating in an event rather than merely receiving a finished product. The special events on the radio conveyed community values, selected and elaborated by radio staff and community leaders,. These perspectives were not uncritically received. But the terms of these presentations, the words and concepts used to describe the values and goals of the returned refugee communities, created an entity to which people both included or excluded could respond.

Listeners' interaction went beyond reception, because they used the radio for their own communications through the greetings and dedications for birthdays and special events, the selections of music to accompany their dedications, or announcements of events and other programming created by groups and organizations in which they took part.

Some programs, like Juan Lucas's *Ranchero Sundown*, pulled these elements together in an exciting way. Even though he used forms of the radio DJ genre which might be recognizable in any major Latin American city or even in the United States, he contextualized it with local music, language, forms of address, puns, jokes and other terminology, announcements, dedications, reminders of daily life. All this specific and particular content created a distinct sense of place and local popular culture. This was

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not a "wanna be in the city" place, but had a distinct identity, with distinct interests, tastes, social relationships, humor, sounds, and rhythms.

Finally...

This dissertation has argued that the community radios of El Salvador have worked to activate a vision of civil society, fought to create a local public space which could both enlarge their local public sphere and help them enter the larger, national public sphere. They melded popular culture with mass media through their programs and the participatory manner in which the programs were produced and the radios themselves operated. This popular culture was one way that these communities continued to work through their shared histories and experiences of the war, the horrors and repression which it brought, and their dreams and efforts to attain them; it was also a way that they combined local traditions with globalized music and other cultural flows which increasingly were part of their lives.

This vision of civil society is in part is based on a Latin American wide transformation of broad unified social movements and revolutionary strategies of the left, into attempts to achieve social change through democratic processes. The radios worked particularly to emphasize several aspects of this process--building stronger civic culture and civil practices through voter education, election coverage, and monitoring government practices and human rights; providing a communication medium for the emerging local and national array civil society organizations as well as the international NGOs still operating in the region.

Because the radios were participatory, because they were an accessible public space, the community radios transformed the mass media. A space which had become a spectacle providing consumable entertainment was made into an active location of the

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public sphere. Going against the current of commodity culture, the community radios were and are part of a phenomenon of alternative media in which cultural activists take advantage of advances in low cost, light media technologies. But these radios are constantly teetering on the brink of economic collapse, sorely lacking funds and resources. Their continued survival is, like so much in the lives of these communities, a day-to-day struggle, sometimes only achieved through the dedication and will of their radio staff and participants. Despite these obstacles, the community radios, each in its own small ways, act to reverse the long marginalization of their communities and to empower them to create a more just society.

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Acto Navideño	Christmas season activity
avisos	announcements
bachillerato	equivalent to high school
Cabal	Common but hard to translate Salvadoran expression; the basic meaning is "exactly!," but sometimes also conveys excitement, like "incredible!"
cabildos abiertos and consultas populares	open town meetings and public consultations are meetings where mayors inform the public of planned projects and the public vote on their priorities.
campesino, campesina	rural subsistence farmer, male or female
cantón	a village or hamlet, a division of a larger town or muncipio
compadrazgo	fictive kinship, usually between people of high and low status
cofradías	civil-religious village-based associations
compas	short for compañeros, the guerrillas
Criollo	Creole; during the Colonial era, descendents of Spanish settlers born in Latin America as opposed to those born in Spain
denuncias	charges
ejido	form of collectively owned land
guaro	strong rum or homemade liquor
internacionalistas	visitors from the U.S. or Europe.
Junta Directiva	Board of Directors, Managing Board
Ladino	Generally used to differentiate from Indian ethnic identities but variously used to mean ethnically Mestizo, Spanish and Indian; ethnically Indian but taking on Spanish lifestyles; or (especially in Guatemala), those ethnically and politically of Spanish descent, as opposed to Indian.
Liberalism	Nineteenth-century political and economic theory that free markets, free trade, electoral democracy and other kinds of liberties were the best path to a strong economy and a modern

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society

locutor I use this word to indicate that this person is more than an announcer or DJ, but represents the station and the aspirations of the community in some ways.

marimba melodic percussion instrument with gourd or wooden sound chambers, prevalent in Guatemala and other parts of Central America, possibly with roots in African instruments

mesón urban rooming house

música juvenil rock, especially from Mexico and Argentina, also including English language forms, rap, reggae and metal genres

música popular folk music with a political connotation, associated with social movements and left-wing organizing beginning in the 1970s; often combining wooden Andean flutes, panpipes, and other folk instruments and genres of Latin America

Niña literally little girl, but ironically the term of respect for older women or married women of standing in the Salvadoran countryside

nueva trova genre of politicized folk music

pauta the overall schedule of the radio

personería jurídica legal status granted to local organizations

propósitos literally, "purposes," used by Radio Cabal in the sense of, "things to think about "

pupusa thick tortillas filled with beans or cheese or fried pork

Rancheras, música ranchera probably the most popular rural musical genre, a combination of mostly Mexican popular music genres such as norteños, tex-mex and corridos that initially gained popularity in the 1930s.

romántica includes the pop ballads played on Latin commercial radio throughout the Americas as well as classic boleros and ballads.

saludos song dedications and personal messages

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tanda	cohort of military officers based on graduation from military academy
terrenos baldíos	uncultivated land claimed by the Salvadoran government
tortilla	corn flatbread which is the basis of the Central American diet
tropical	salsa, merengue and other Caribbean musical genres
zonas marginales	squatter settlements

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These were compiled from both program plans and observations during my fieldwork 1997-98.

Radio Sumpul

Morning

5 a.m.	Opening. Includes station identification, national anthem, and often the song, *La Cartera de Guarjila,* "Guarjila's cart" about the community's return from refuge.
	Mañanitas para todos. Literally "birthday songs for everyone" but here a pun on *amanacer*, conveying the idea of a happy sunrise for everyone. Music is mostly *ranchero* and *música popular.*
5:30 a.m.	Announcements
6 a.m.	*Mezclas al momento* (Mix of the moment). Ballads and *boleros,* Latin American pop hits, tropical, some rock and other genres.
6:05 a.m.	ADEL wholesale or consumer agricultural price report (5 minutes).
	On Saturdays, there is a children's program with recorded stories and music.
7 a.m.	Closing, with station ID.

Afternoon

5 p.m.	Opening, with station ID and often "Guarjila's cart" song.
	*De Todo un poco (*A little of everything). Ranchero and *música popular*, ballads and *boleros,* Latin American pop hits, tropical, some rock and other genres.
5:05, 5:15, or 5:45 p.m.	Daily 5-30 minute programs alternate, including *Buenos Tiempos Mujeres* (Good times for women) or environmental progams.
5:50 p.m.	ADEL price report
6 p.m.	*Musical juvenil (*Musical Youth) Mostly Latin American with some North American pop and rock, rap, and techno.
6:30 p.m.	*Entrevistas Comunitarias* (Community interviews).
7 p.m.	Closing: Station identification, including *La Cartera de Guarjila.*

Station IDs, program IDs, spots from AMARC, and local ads were also interspersed in this programming. Previously Radio Sumpul re-broadcast Radio FF's (formerly Radio Farabundo Martí) news program and the religious program *Buenos días le da Dios* with Frederico Calles, a priest and scholar based in San Salvador.

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Radio Segundo Montes

Monday-Friday

8-9 a.m.	*Musica Variada.* Varied music with announcements and social service messages
9-9:30 a.m.	*Impacto Musical* (Musical Impact). Romantic, tropical genres, with dedications.
9:30-10 a.m.	*El Invitado Especial* (The special guest). Selections from a musical group chosed by the audience.
10-11 a.m.	*Mundo Infantil* (Children's world. Stories, songs, and recorded program segments from regional NGOs.
11 -11:30 a.m.	Varied music.
11:30 a.m.– 12 noon	*Temas de Actualidad* (Themes of the moment). Events and interviews from the region
4-5 p.m.	*Atardecer Musical* (Musical afternoon). Varied music with dedications, announcements and social service messages, and local advertising
5-5:30 p.m.	*Temas de Actualidad*, retransmision
5:30-6 p.m.	*Musica Variada.*Varied music, with announcements.
6-7 p.m.	*Anochecer Ranchero* (Ranchero Sundown). Primarily *ranchero* music, with dedications, greetings, ads, and some announcements.
7-8 p.m.	News. Announcements, the *Red de ARPAS* (news program of the national participatory radio association) and re-transmission of *Temas de Actualidad.*

Saturday

10-11 a.m.	*La Hora Verde* (The Green Hour)

Sunday

9-10 a.m.	Pastoral Program
10-11 a.m.	*La Hora Verde* (The Green Hour)

Programs which had been suspended for lack of funding included a local news magazine and a program about local and regional culture. Two programs targeted to women, UNESCO's *Buenos Tiempos Mujer*, and one by ADIM, a local woman's group, had just finished during my fieldwork.

Radio Cabal

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5: 00 a.m.	*Buenos días le da Dios* (God wishes you good morning), with Frederico Calles
5:10 a.m	*Caminando con la Vida* (Walking with Life), produced by *Rescate Ancestral Indígena Salvadoreña*, RAIS
5:15 a.m	*Los Pasaditos de Don Chencho Chilillo* (The little adventures of Don Chencho Chililllo)
5:30 a.m	Radio Cabal News
6:30-8 a.m	*¿Cómo está el volado?* (How's it going?)
9:00 a.m	*Pase Adelante* (Come right in). Women's programming
12 noon a.m	*Ciudadanos en Acción* (Citizens in Action)
1-1:30 p.m.	*Vida Deportiva* (Sports life)
2-5 p.m.	*Haciendo y Deshaciendo* (Making and Unmaking) . Youth programming
6 p.m.	Radio Cabal news
7 p.m.	Co-productions with NGOs; discussion programs for youth.
9 p.m.	ARPAS national community radio news.
10 p.m.	Closing

Sources: Fieldnotes; Radio Cabal 1998:7, programming; appendix .

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Organization	*International, National, or Local*	*Issues*
Radio Segundo Montes		
ADIM	local	women's rights and development
ARPAS	national	radio, democratic communication
Biblioteca	local	library services
Escuela Tecnica	local	local development, agricultural and environmental
Fundación Segundo Montes	local	local development
Fondos Lisados	national	funds for disabled veterans
FUNDECOMUNA	national	municipal support
Joateca Agricultural Extension	local	agricultural education and support
Land Tranfer	local representative	implement post-war land transfer
PAEBA	national	literacy; local representative of national organization
PNUD	international	peace, human rights
SILEM	local	local education system
SILOS	local	local health education and services
UNESCO	international	culture, peace
Radio Sumpul		
Church	local	religious services
Cultural Committee	local	cultural events and activities
Foundation for War Wounded	regional	support for wounded veterans
Junta Directiva de Guarjila	local	former local government; now local development organization
Junta Directiva de San Isidro	local	former local government; now local development organization
Medical Clinic	local	medical services and education
New Times Theater	national	performances and education
ProCap	national	development, government affiliated
Rehabilitation Center	local	physical therapy and rehabilitation
Social Initiative for Democracy	national ?	projects to build local democracy
	local	14
	national	7
	international	2
	total	24

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Radio Cabal - Organizations and Issues on Ciudadanos en Acción

Organization	*International, National, or Local*	*Issues*
Advocates for disabled people	national	(not recorded)
Central American integration - NGO level	regional	Analysis of regional meetings
Civic education ngo	national	Electoral reforms
Construction firm	national	Construction, earthquake safety
Consumer rights org (4)	national	Toys for Christmas, consumer tips, commercial credit, phone rates (2)
Electrical workers union (2)	national	Privatization
Emigrant rights organization (2)	trans-national	Impact of new laws in United States
Environment/disaster planning	national	El Niño, reducing impact of natural disasters
Environmental action - Lempa river region	regional	Radioactive contamination
Environmental federation (2)	national	critique of government policies, ecological silos
Government humanservices union	national	Workers perspectives
Health services for marginal communities (2)	national, San Salvador metro area	Festival of NGOs
Human rights association	national	Pros and cons of new laws
Indigenous culture promotion	national	Christmas traditions
Left economic think-tank (4)	national	Analysis of economy, national budget, agrarian debt, activating agriculture
Multi-arts cafe	local	Current state of Salvadoran rock
Music festival organizers	national	Salvadoran classical music festival
National health workers association (2)	national	Labor conflict at national health agency
Natural health advocates (2)	national	Herbal cures
Organization vs violence against children	national	new campaign
PNC- environmental division	national	(not recorded)
Public works union	national	corruption and labor problems
Small business assn	national	democracy in the tax system
Telecommunication workers (2)	national	impact of telecommunications reform
Traveling theater	national	current performance
Water system workers union	national	water scarcity

summary:

2 local

22 national, two bi-national (emigrants' rights)

1 regional within nation, one regional across Central America

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Date	*Subject*	*Kind of organization*	*Local, regional, national, int'l*
3 Nov.	Women's rights: UNESCO visitor and ADIM director	women's, cultural	local, international
	D. Agosta introduces her research	individual	international
4 Nov.	Interview with Director of CSM school system	school	local
5 Nov.	New Agricultural market opens: local technical staff	development, agriculture	local
7 Nov.	Opening of new primary school, Joateca: School principal	school	local
10 Nov.	Continuation of November 7		
11 Nov.	New vision for CSM foundation: new director	development foundation	local
12 Nov.	Plan for community clean-up for Festival of Return; SILOS, local health workers	public health	local
	Festival preparations: School director, Mayors, Health workers, ProCap	public health, school, mayors, national	3 local, 1 national
13 Nov.	Festival for Celebration of Return promotion	community association	local
	PAEBA national literacy organization work in region	national literacy organization	national
14 Nov.	Jocoaitique mayor reports on work, fundraising trip to Spain, national budget conflict	Mayor	local
	Graduation of 9th grade in CSM	School, school system	local
15 Nov.	Power outage		
18 Nov.	Report on the Festival of the Return	community event	local
19 Nov.	Footbridge inaugurated, funded by AID	mayors, local, national & int'l development	local, national, international
	Neighborhood association president voices concerns	neighborhood association	local
20 Nov.	Promote day of actions for ending Violence against Women, ADIM director	women's organization	local
21 Nov.	Progress and problems in settling claims for community's housing	community leader	local & national
24 Nov.	U.S. congressional delegation visits re: School of the Americas impact	int'l solidarity; U.S. Congress	international
	Day promoting the end of violence against women, events in department capital	regional women's org	local
25 Nov.	Community bakery is small business success	small business	local
	Success of local education system	school system	local
27 Nov.	Local food products factory: progress report	small business	local
28 Nov.	Land transfer program completed in community	national land transfer program	local & national

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Selected Announcements, Radio Segundo Montes, November, 1997

source	*source type*	*activity/message*	*location*
Parish of Santa Catarina	church and local government	Announces Patron-Saint festival (with municipality of Meanguera)	Meanguera
Man?	Individual	Someone found a horse	CSM
Man?	Individual	Waiting for a friend in Meanguera	Meanguera
Don Santiago de Cid	Individual	That the gentlemen who are working on his property and taking firewood should stop or he will call the authorities.	
Health clinic	local -national institution	Vaccinations available for people of communities of Guacamaya, Aguafria, La Laguna	San Luis, SCM
Foundation Segundo Montes and the Technical School	local community development foundation	Invites public to a program celebrating its accomplishments, part of the Eighth Festival of the Return	CSM
Municipal Council of Osicala	Local government	Convokes its third "Cabildo Abierto" (official town meeting)	Osicala
Municipality of Meanguera	local government	Big carnival and dance closing the Patron-saint festival, November 29th	Meanguera
Community association (directiva)	local group	Meeting about water project for residents of the Montoñiita canton	Osicala
Community association (directiva)	local group	Meeting about land distributions for people of Cacaopera, San Fernando, Torola and other towns	Nueva Granada de Estanzuela
Community group	local group	The community of Barrial denounces a man and his son for trying to disrupt the homes and threaten people in this community	Barrial, CSM
Health promotors	local group	Women's health exams available for women of San Luis neighborhood	CSM
Health promotors	local group	Invites mothers of the neighborhood of Montañita to bring children for checkups	Osicala
Football league of Morazán	local group	Announces tournament between teams from Barrial and Meanguera	CSM
Rehabilitatio n clinic	local group	Prosthesis and orthopedics workers will be at Perquín health clinic on the following days...	Perquín
Sports club "Youth Olympics"	local group	Invites the public to an event in Usulután	Usulután
Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Meanguera	national government	Voting identification cards available in front of school system offices	Meanguera

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PAEBA	national organization	Announces Festival of Literacy and lists Osicala business sponsors	Osicala
FMLN	political party	Meeting, lists all members	Meanguera
School of Gualococti	school	Invites parents and community for graduation program	Gualococti
Primary school in San Luis	school	Announces third grade graduation	CSM
Rural primary school in San Luis	school	Announces opening of registration	CSM
Ninth grade of Agua Zarca school	school	Annouces dance	Agua Zarca
Teachers at the rural primary school in San Simón	school	Announce graduation festivities, including a huge dance party, many snacks and drinks, "don't get lost, it's going to be sensational!"	San Simón
Clothing factory	small business	Warns someone to show up for work tomorrow morning	CSM

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Selected Announcements on Radio Sumpul, July-October 1996			
source	*source type*	*Activity*	*location*
woman	individual	Advises her son of a visitor from US	San José de las Flores
young man	individual	Seeking lost computer disks (on bus to Aratao)	Guarjila
man	individual	Seeking calf taken from field in nearby town	San José de las Flores, Ellacuría
woman	individual	Meeting friend at City Hall in Chalatenango City with papers	Chalatenango
woman	individual	Lost child, please contact police or Radio Chalatenango if found	Chalatenango
woman	individual	To her son in Arcatao, that she is sick, please bring a mat	San Antonio de los Ranchos
man	individual	Man lost his bag in the bus "Miriam Yanet" with his watch, agenda, calculator, address book and keys; if found, please bring to Betti's store.	Guarjila
woman	individual	Woman asks another woman to accompany her on bus to Chalatenango the following day	Guarjila
woman	individual	She will be waiting for another woman to arrive on Wednesday	not noted
man	individual	Advises a woman in Los Merales that he has packages for her children	Guarjila
New Times Theater	local group	Announces play about environment	UCA in San Salvador and Perquin
Cultural Committee	local group	Cultural program and dance (afternoon and evening)	Community Center, Guarjila
New Times Theater of Chalatenango	local group	Performance in Guarjila for Salvadoran Independence (Mes Cívico)	Guarjila
Health promotors	local group	Woman's health exams scheduled; cost.	Guarjila
Odontology team of San Antonio de los Ranchos	local group - small business?	Dentist's office will be open to pull molars from 8-11 am on Saturday	San Antonio de los Ranchos
Church	local group/ global organization	Mass in Guarjila cancelled, but will be held in Los Ranchos	Guarjila and San Antonio de Los Ranchos
Foundation for protection of war wounded in dept. capital	national NGO	Meeting for all those covered by this program	Chalatenango
Procap/ Prochalate	national NGO	Meeting	Chalatenango

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Funprocoop (Foundation for the Promotion of Cooperatives)	national NGO	Two meetings for those beneficiaries listed (15 names male and female) one on the land, the other at major regional development office	Chalatenango
"The Social Initiative for Democracy"	national NGO	Membership meeting	Chalatenango
Local leadership of Guarjila	officials	Opportunity to give testimony	The Chapel in Guarjila
Local leadership of the Comunal Association	officials	Celebration of completion of housing, with speech by Mayor, ribbon cutting, and a dance with music from Radio Sumpul	San Antonio de los Ranchos
Rehabilitation Center	local group	Workshop to repair protheses	Guarjila

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Dedications (*saludos*): examples from Radio Sumpul

On behalf of Marcela Cruz, who greets her dear grandmother Griselda Luz Alfaro because she is celebrating her birthday today: I wish her many more years, I wish her a happy afternoon. For her I would like two songs, "Dear, dear mother"[by *Teosinte* - a local band playing *musica popular]* and the birthday song [the radio had a song they always played for birthdays].

Compañeros of Radio Sumpul receive warm greetings in behalf of Juan Carlos Cartagena in Los Sicahuites. Please greet the following persons whose birthdays are during the month of March. To my godson Victor Miguel Cartagena, whose birthday is the 23rd of March, my father Olimpio Miguel Cartagena, and to Brenda Lisseth Chicas whose 15th birthday is the 29th of March.

Sara Ines Rodriguez greets the whole family and especially her god-daughter Maria Beronica, who is having her 15th birthday the 21st of March. I wish her much happiness and success in her life. Also I would like you to greet Lidia, my sister, for her birthday March 30th.

Greetings to all the friends who listen to us: Gregorio Ayala in Azacualpa, Frederico in Arcatao and also Elsa in Los Ranchos, all of you from Ellacuria to Chalatenango; Alexander Marín, Gloria Luz, the little baby, and Don Jovel; up in Las Vueltas Oraceli Rivas, Cesar Alas, and all the family.

On behalf of Alfonso greet all the beautiful people who listen to Radio Sumpul and for them I ask two songs, one of Bronco and one of Ana Bárbara.

The health unit of Guarjila greets Victoria*, wishing that she is well, for having celebrated her birthday April 7th, and they wish that she celebrate for many more years. These are the good wishes of the the health team of Guarjila, and for her they dedicate the song, Salvadoran Woman.

A greeting for Milton Mange* of Arcatao for being the new mayor. Mayor, this greeting comes from the friendships he has in Guarjila.

On behalf of Estela Martines greetings to a dear friend with love and warmth, wishing you are well, and wishing her success in her delicate functions, and I dedicate to her the song, "In love for the first time" by Enrique Iglesias. She tunes in to us here in Guarjila.

On behalf of Noemi, greetings with love to her mother, Ernestina Diaz, and to her father, Julio Lopez, and to her brother Matias who listens in Los Amates, wishing that they are well and that soon I will visit them. I dedicate the song, Salvadoran Woman.

Source: Radio Sumpul's *Saludos* log for April, 1997. Names are pseudonyms except for those starred(*).

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The Festival of the Return in Segundo Montes Community

Asterisks indicate events which the radio covered live, using portable radios or walkie talkies.

Monday November 17, 1997

4 am	*"Alegre alborada"* (Happy Dawn) with Banda San Simón This was a procession with a loud brass band and lots of fireworks, winding up the main road and passing by most of the neighborhoods or settlements of the community. It was meant to wake everyone up for the special day. I was told that it was a very old, perhaps precolonial, tradition.
7 am	Games for children at the crossroads to Meanguera sponsored by the Guacamaya restaurant and the town hall of Meanguera.
8 am	Soccer tornament in the Barrial neighborhood organized by their community organization and sponsored by SILEM, the community's school system.
9 am	Technical School Exhibition* The Technical School was the project of the community's foundation; it developed projects for agricultural and economic development focusing on sustainable agriculture, small business, and technical training. Funding came from international foundations. In 1997 they sought to strengthen the family economy instead of larger industrial projects of the past years.
2 pm	Floats made by each organization
2 pm	Games for children at the San Luís community soccer field, organized and sponsored by the teachers.*
3 pm	Catholic Mass in the Quebrachos neighborhood,* led by Father Rogelio Poncel, the Belgian priest who had accompanied the community since the early 1980s.
4 pm	Parade of Floats of Candidates for Queen of the Festival, sponsored by organizations and neighborhood associations *
8 pm	Dance of the bull, by an indigenous dance troupe from Cacaopera.* This well known group was not able to attend this year.
8 pm	Dance party, lasting until dawn.*

Tuesday, November 18, 1997

4 am	*"Alegre alborada,"* with *atol,* (traditional corn drink) at SILEM.*
9 am	Party for children, with *piñatas,* at the Technical School.*
9 am	Catholic Mass, at the Cultural Center.
12 noon	Videos at the Cultural Center.

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Starred names are actual; all others are pseudonyms.

Radio Sumpul

Adolfo Ramírez (Fito)*

Miriam Ayala*

Rosibel Orrellana*

Ernesto

Abelino

Oscar

Isidro

Radio Segundo Montes

Juan Lucas Aguilar*

Santos Tomás Argueta*

María Lucía Chicas*

Dilver Ismael Márquez*

María Silvia Maya*

María Elena Romero*

Radio Cabal

Margarita Herrera*

Mario Maida*

Rafael Calderón*

Arturo Hernández Moratanza*

Carlos Montes (CDD)*

Carlos Figueroa (Prensa)*

Colette Jacquinet*

Adolfo

Luis

Carlita

Rogelia

Dalia

Evelina

Celia

Toni

Marvin

Pancho

Catarina

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