THE IDEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION OF THE PEOPLE IN ARMS

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Abstract

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The signing of a final peace accord in 1996 signaled the end of a devastating civil war that had plagued the country of Guatemala for 36 years. The opposition consisted of four political military groups including the Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (Organización Revolucionaria del Pueblo en Armas - ORPA). For seventeen years ORPA carried out military and political actions against the government, and in the atmosphere of the Cold War were quickly dismissed as a Communist organization. This paper explores the role Marxism and liberation theology played in the organization’s ideology. It argues that even though the organization may have incorporated elements of both into their own ideology, they were a revolutionary nationalist movement attempting to address the ethnic and socioeconomic problems inherent to Guatemala. This paper analyzes ORPA’s discourse as presented during the war in order to gain insight into the ideological underpinnings of the organization.

Approved:

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| CEH     | Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Historico  
(Commission for Historical Clarification) |
| EGP     | Ejercito Guerrillero de los Pobres  
(Guerrilla Army of the Poor) |
| FAR     | Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes  
(Armed Rebel Forces) |
| ORPA    | Organización Revolucionaria del Pueblo en Armas  
(Revolucionary Organization of People in Arms) |
| PGT     | Partido Guatemalteco de los Trabajadores  
(Guatemalan Worker’s Party) |
| PUR     | Partido de Unidad Revolucionaria  
(Party of Revolutionary Unity) |
| REMHI   | Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica  
(Recovery of Historical Memory Project) |
| URNG    | Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca  
(Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity) |
Chapter 1: Introduction

In December 1996 the government of Guatemala and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca - URNG) signed a final peace accord signaling the end of a civil war which had plagued the country for 36 years. This war reached every corner of the country (See fig. 1.1), leaving approximately 150,000 dead and 50,000 missing. The URNG was comprised of four separate guerrilla organizations which came together in 1982 to coordinate their efforts. At the height of the civil war, the guerrilla ranks swelled to as many as 6,000-8,000 armed combatants with thousands more as active collaborators. While they fought under the banner of the URNG post-1982, each organization retained much of its autonomy in their respective regions of operation. This study focuses on one of the four revolutionary groups, the Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (Organización Revolucionaria del Pueblo en Armas - ORPA).

Of the two largest groups, ORPA and the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres - EGP), the latter has received substantially more scholarly attention. There are two factors responsible for this. First, arguably Guatemala’s most prolific revolutionary author, Mario Payeras, was a founder of the EGP. Payeras wrote numerous books about the war, many of which were published during the conflict, including Los días de la selva (Days of the Jungle: The Testimony of a Guatemalan

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1 Although estimates vary they usually range between 6,000-8,000 armed combatants between the four groups which made up the URNG and 250,000 to 500,000 active collaborators, see Susanne Jonas, Of Centaurs and Doves: Guatemala’s Peace Process (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 2000), 23; Yvon Le Bot estimates ORPA and the EGP to have consisted of 6,000 armed combatants and est. 250,000 active collaborators, see La guerra en tierras mayas: Comunidad, violencia, y modernidad en Guatemala (1970-1992) (Mexico, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1995), 195; James Dunkerly, Power in the Isthmus: A Political History of Modern Central America, (London: Verso, 1988), 482;
Guerrillero) and El trueno en la ciudad (The Thunder in the City). Second, the EGP’s principal region of operation was El Quiche, the area Rigoberta Menchu is from. Menchu was the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize winner and undoubtedly the most widely known Mayan Indian. The publication of her life story in 1982 brought international attention to the area.

The lack of scholarly attention given to ORPA is disproportionate to their prominence during the conflict and throughout the peace process. Moreover, since the peace accords, former ORPA leaders have gone on to play important roles in formal politics. This includes fielding the only left of center presidential candidate in the 2003 elections, Rodrigo Asturias, and the current secretary general of the URNG, Dr. Hector Nuila.

Despite ORPA’s achievements and contributions to the Guatemalan revolutionary struggle, its ideological underpinnings have consistently been overlooked. This study will explore the role Marxism/Leninism and liberation theology played in ORPA’s ideology. Both ideologies played important roles in social and revolutionary movements throughout Central America; however, the way in which ORPA did or did not make use of these existing ideologies has been ignored.

Jorge Castañeda has called ORPA “the most un-Marxist of Latin American political military organizations.” Though possibly not entirely driven by Marxism it is obvious that they incorporated some Marxist ideas into their rhetoric considering their URNG coalition with other avowed Marxist organizations. Another study asserts that

\[2\] Throughout most of this research the term “Marxism” is used to denote mid twentieth century Marxist/Leninist thought. Chapter 3 however will expound on each separately.

they used aspects of both Marxism and liberation theology in their ideology, but fails to expound on the importance or extent of either.⁴

In an interview published in 2000 Rodrigo Asturias, the founder of ORPA, explained his determination not to commit to any one political doctrine as “dogma.”⁵ He was determined to find a specific solution for Guatemala in response to the reality in which the people were living. He believed that had he adopted Marxism as a dogma he would have never come to the same conclusions he did, allowing the struggle to become Guatemalan.⁶ Nonetheless liberation theology and Marxism both played integral roles in Central American social thought during the period, making it reasonable to hypothesize that they influenced ORPA’s ideology in some way. However, this research posits that ORPA was not solely committed to either. After realizing that these existing ideologies could not adequately address the problems inherent to Guatemala, ORPA developed a revolutionary nationalist ideology that could properly respond to the domestic situation. This research argues that Marxism and liberation theology were subsidiary to ORPA’s revolutionary nationalism.

This study of ideology is carried out by analyzing the discourse of ORPA as it was presented during the war from 1979-1996. Chapter two provides a brief history of ORPA and the Guatemalan Revolution. It allocates ORPA’s emergence in the broader historical context of Guatemala. Chapter three defines key terms and concepts such as discourse, ideology and frames. It also explains and categorizes the ideologies that are

⁴ Sichar Moreno, Historia de los Partidos Políticos Guatemaltecos: distintas siglas de (casi) una misma ideología (Quetzaltenango, Guatemala: Editorial Los Altos, 1999), 41.
⁵ Dirk Kruijt and Rudie Van Meurs, El Guerrillero y el General (Guatemala: FLACSO, 2000), 116.
⁶ Ibid., 128.
central to the research; Marxism, liberation theology and ORPA’s revolutionary nationalism.

The fourth chapter presents the methodology employed to analyze the discourse followed by the results of the analysis. A quantitative content analysis determined the frequency in which the organization used Marxism and liberation theology arguments and frames in their discourse compared to revolutionary nationalism. While providing important data, the content analysis also serves as a foundation for an in-depth qualitative analysis of specific key concepts of Marxism and liberation theology, and the way in which ORPA did or did not use them in their own ideology.

Chapter five provides a qualitative interpretation of the discourse. The chapter looks beyond the numbers and charts to analyze the particular frames employed by the organization. A final concluding chapter addresses the significance of the results to present day Guatemala and other volatile regions of the world.

This study has domestic as well as international significance. It offers insight into the way in which ORPA was able to frame the situation for mass appeal inspiring so many to join the revolutionary struggle. A continuation of this current research could be a more in depth analysis of the local reality of ORPA’s region of operation to determine what their actions may have achieved. If no substantial changes have occurred it is possible that future unrest in the region may again erupt into armed struggle.

In an international context, it is an important addition to the historical literature and analysis of social and revolutionary movements. It provides a better understanding of current movements throughout the world and the ways in which ideologies are used to gain mass appeal. Furthermore it presents a case study in which aspects of multiple
ideologies were combined in an attempt to confront local issues. Such cases demand a reexamination of the east/west dichotomy of the cold war.
Figure 1.1: Map of Guatemala


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Chapter 2: History of ORPA

To truly understand the organization’s ideological underpinnings, the history of ORPA and a brief explanation of the era in which the organization emerged are required. The second half of the twentieth century was an incredibly volatile period for Guatemala, and led to the development of more than one political military organization such as ORPA. ORPA did not materialize in a vacuum. The events occurring in Guatemala affected the organization’s emergence and subsequent development. Furthermore the views, beliefs and ideological leanings of the founder of ORPA were to some degree products of his life experiences.

On October 20, 1944 Guatemala experienced a popular uprising led by revolutionary military officers and prominent civilians. The uprising ended years of authoritarian rule and led to a democratic opening. The ten years that followed the October uprising are considered the Guatemalan Revolution.

Juan Jose Arévalo was elected in December of 1944 with overwhelming support, receiving over 85% of the votes. Arévalo believed that “democracy was a crucial component in human progress” and that government must take responsibility for the citizenry. A new constitution was written which emphasized and protected individual rights along with many other progressive social guarantees. The October Revolution had begun to transform Guatemala’s backward social structure.

10 Kinzer and Schlesinger, *Bitter Fruit*, 33-34.
Jacobo Arbenz, one of the leaders of the October Revolution, became the second president of the Guatemalan Revolution. Arbenz was elected in November 1950 receiving approximately 64% of the vote.\textsuperscript{11} Arbenz, who had served in Arévalo’s administration, believed firmly that the Revolution still had much to accomplish. He intended to raise the living standard of the majority of the people and refused to grant foreign companies the “special concessions” they had previously enjoyed.\textsuperscript{12} The new president believed Guatemala to be entirely dependent on other nations in a semi-colonial fashion and promised to free his county from the foreign monopoly restraining growth and development.

Arbenz considered agrarian reform the key to creating a more equitable society and thus it became a central aspect of his plan of government.\textsuperscript{13} He intended to “transform Guatemala from a backward country with a semi-feudal economy into a modern capitalist country” by constructing an economic plan of “self-sustained economic development based on agrarian reform and public works.” He aspired for the “greatest possible increase in the living standards of the large masses of the people.”\textsuperscript{14}

Arbenz’s nationalistic development plans were rescinded when his democratically elected government was ousted by one of the C.I.A.’s first covert operations in the Western Hemisphere. Arbenz resigned on June 27, 1954 while Guatemala was under attack. Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas was ushered into the presidency, with explicit U.S. support, as the “liberator of Guatemala.” The new president wasted little time

\textsuperscript{12} Immerman, \textit{CIA in Guatemala}, 62-63.
\textsuperscript{13} Kinzer and Schlesinger, \textit{Bitter Fruit}, 52.
returning Guatemala to its pre-revolutionary, semi-feudal, social and economic structure. Arbenz went into exile in September of 1954 never again to return to his native country.

As Castillo Armas began to retract any revolutionary privileges and advances, the Guatemalan left appeared to be pacified. These years of outward pacification might be compared to the lull before a storm. The progressive forces soon regained momentum and an uprising on November 13, 1960 by nationalist military officers indicated that the military was not entirely complacent. Neither was the populace, according to one source reporting that 800 peasants requested arms from the officers to help fight against the government. The peasants did not receive arms and the revolt was quickly put down by forces loyal to the government, however the November 13th military revolt was the beginning of a 36 year civil war.

Rodrigo Asturias, the founder of ORPA, became politically active during this dynamic period. His father was Miguel Angel Asturias, Guatemala’s Nobel Prize winning author. His father’s literature critiqued the socioeconomic and ethnic disparities of the country exposing him to the Guatemalan reality at an early age. His father’s influence was apparent when Asturias adopted Gaspar Ilóm, a character from one of his novels, as his nom de guerre. His liberal upbringing clearly affected his reaction to the U.S. intervention in 1954.

Asturias was only thirteen when the C.I.A. orchestrated the overthrow of Arbenz and replaced democratic governance with a “fascist” regime. By the age of fifteen, he had made the conscious decision to dedicate his life to the people of Guatemala. Shortly after this life altering decision Asturias left for Argentina to begin preparing himself

15 Gilly, Adolfo
16 For Rodrigo’s reflections on his father’s writings see Kruijt and Van Meurs, Guerrillero y el General, 107-115.
intellectually. Not only did he study social and revolutionary thought, he also traveled throughout Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia bearing witness to problems affecting other parts of Latin America. In Bolivia he observed first hand the agrarian reform and nationalization of resources carried out by the Bolivian Revolution of 1952.\footnote{Ibid., 115-116}

His father imparted some valuable advice to him during this time. He counseled Asturias to not adopt any one political doctrine as dogma but to keep an open mind and view the world in an entirely new way. He took this to heart and although he studied different revolutionary doctrines and ideologies, he sought a path particular to the conditions of Guatemala.\footnote{Ibid., 116}

Asturias returned to Guatemala in 1960 at the age of twenty. Though he had previously considered armed struggle, the intransigence of the government caused him to accept it as the only viable option.\footnote{Ibid., 117} The officer’s revolt on November 13 revealed that he was not the only person committed to armed struggle, and set the stage for future collaboration among progressive groups. As an activist, Asturias supported and even collaborated with the leaders of the defeated military uprising when they regrouped and formed the Movimiento Revolucionario - 13 de Noviembre (MR-13) in February 1962.\footnote{According to Rodrigo, he was among other civilian activists who participated in the preparatory stages of the 1960 uprising, but at some point the officers decided to make it strictly a military operation (Kruijt and Van Meurs, Guerrillero y el General, 119). Le Bot states that Asturias was a student activist that accompanied the uprising, see guerra en tierras mayas, 114. Other sources portray it as a military operation from the outset. Regardless of whether he collaborated or not in the initial uprising he was actively supporting and collaborating when the MR-13 was formed in 1962.}

The following month Asturias joined the armed struggle as a guerrilla, however not with the MR-13, but with a newly formed group led by a former Arbenz loyalist, Colonel Paz Tejada.
The Guatemalan Worker’s Party (Partido Guatemalteco de los Trabajadores - PGT) together with the Party of Revolutionary Unity (Partido de Unidad Revolucionaria – PUR) created a small guerrilla group in March of 1962 with Paz Tejada at the helm. This group called themselves the Movimiento 20 de Octubre in commemoration of the Revolution of 1944. Asturias made it clear that he was a member of the PUR and not the Communist PGT. This guerrilla group was mainly composed of young student activists, but peasants and union leaders also participated. Regardless of its composition the group was quite small, inexperienced and lacked concrete plans resulting in an ephemeral existence. Within weeks of its inception the group was decimated during its first combat near the town of Concúa, Baja Verapaz. Although most of the members were killed, a few, including Asturias, were captured and held in prison. Even though his first experience as a guerrilla was a short-lived disaster, the ideas that inspired him to join and the lessons he learned were important for his future development and that of ORPA.

The Movimiento 20 de Octubre has usually been dismissed as an early Communist attempt at armed struggle. It has received minimal attention due to its short existence and the fact that the MR-13 emerged almost simultaneously. However one of the few public statements issued by Paz Tejada evinces an organization driven more by nationalism then communism. Harshly criticizing the government structures, Paz Tejada

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22 Kruijt and Van Meurs, Guerrillero y el General, 119.  
23 Estimates vary on the size of the group but are usually between 20 and 30 men see Kruijt and Van Meurs, 119; George Black, Garrison Guatemala (Garrison Guatemala. London: Zed Books, 1984), 66.  
24 Macias, La Guerrilla, 253; Kruijt and Van Meurs, Guerrillero y el General, 119; Black, Garrison Guatemala, p. 67; Some believe that Asturias was released due to his father’s influence and the fact that the Guatemalan president at the time, Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes was his godfather.
states that their “struggle is a national struggle” aimed at combating increasing poverty, government corruption, oppression and the infringement of national sovereignty permitted by the government.\textsuperscript{25} The evanescent movement seemed committed to the goals of the 1944 Guatemalan Revolution and, similar to the leaders of MR-13, Paz Tejada believed that peaceful roads to change had been denied.

Asturias immediately began to reassess the shortcomings of his first guerrilla excursion while being held captive by the military. This period of self-critique and reanalysis of the national situation was not only crucial to his personal political development, but also the development of ORPA. One MR-13 cadre who visited him in prison attests to this early stage of reanalysis in his autobiography.\textsuperscript{26} The significance of the indigenous people in the revolutionary struggle was one of his earliest realizations.

While incarcerated he was surrounded by many indigenous prisoners. Even though his father’s writing had exposed him to the native population earlier in life, during the following fifteen months he became increasingly aware of their plight. He realized that the battle against “images of discrimination and exclusion that existed in country” were possibly the most crucial facets of the revolutionary struggle. Furthermore, he was willing to admit that these images existed not only among the mainstream society but within the left itself.\textsuperscript{27} This was an important conclusion for members of the Guatemalan left to make considering the great diversity of the population. Asturias however was forced into exile and would have to wait nearly a decade before his new ideas would be put into practical application.

\textsuperscript{25} Gott, Guerrilla Movements, Paz Tejada quote
\textsuperscript{26} Macías, La Guerrilla, 254.
\textsuperscript{27} Kruijt and Van Meurs, Guerrillero y el General, 127-128.
His ideological development continued while in exile, constantly focused on an eventual return to Guatemala to rejoin the struggle. In the mid-sixties the Guatemalan guerrilla movement experienced some internal differences and split. The Rebel Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes - FAR) emerged as the most powerful faction. The FAR was led by one of the leaders of the original MR-13 movement, Luis Turcios Lima. After several years in Mexico, Asturias’s decision to return and join the FAR was setback by the assassination of the Turcios Lima, followed by a major power shift. He finally returned in 1971 and helped form the Organización Regional de Occidente, a group associated with the FAR.

The Organización Regional de Occidente operated in the Western departments of San Marcos and Quetzaltenango. The Organization began to implement Asturias’s ideas pertaining to the centrality of the indigenous population in the revolutionary struggle. They dedicated their time and energy to winning the support of the indigenous people of the Western highlands. The Organization opposed the FAR’s decision to work closely with the PGT by concentrating its forces in the city and the southern coast. They criticized the FAR for neglecting the ethnic question, and considered their close relationship with the Communists an apparent endorsement of their borderline racist stance.

The central leadership of the FAR was reportedly upset with Asturias’s criticisms and did not intend to tolerate dissention among its ranks. Internal documents violently attacked Asturias and the Organización Regional de Occidente. Accordingly they

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28 Macías, La Guerrilla, 254.
29 Refer to map of Guatemala on p. 13.
30 Black, Garrison Guatemala, 74; For a further discussion of the PGT’s stance on the indigenous question see Dunkerly, Power in the Isthmus, 507-508.
attempted to schedule a meeting with Rodrigo to capture him, judge him and execute him.\textsuperscript{31} There is still debate over the intentions of the FAR central leadership, but nonetheless, Asturias did not attend the meeting and subsequently in mid 1972 declared the \textit{Regional} independent of the FAR, changing their name initially to the Revolutionary Organization (\textit{Organización Revolucionaria}) and later adding “of the people in arms” (“\textit{del pueblo en armas}”).\textsuperscript{32} By the time ORPA broke with the FAR they had established their first base high in the Cuchumatane mountain range on Volcán Tajumulco, the highest peak in the country.\textsuperscript{33} The group would quietly organize throughout the Western highlands of Guatemala until September of 1979 when they would carry out their first action.

The original ORPA consisted of fewer members than were involved in Asturias’s disastrous guerrilla experience with the \textit{Movimiento 20 de Octubre} back in 1962.\textsuperscript{34} However, even though the group was small, they possessed a concrete agenda for what they hoped to accomplish and the patience to carry it out over the next seven years. The region of operation chosen by Asturias was crucial to his belief that the ethnic question should be at the forefront of the revolutionary struggle. The primary zone of operation ran from Volcán Tacaná on the Mexican border to Lake Atitlán. Asturias considers this densely populated area in the heart of the indigenous society the spinal column or backbone of the country.\textsuperscript{35} From this strategic position ORPA could effectively make contact with both the indigenous subsistence farmers of the \textit{altiplano}, or highlands, and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Macías, \textit{La Guerrilla}, 255.
\item Kruijt and Van Meurs, \textit{Guerrillero y el General}, 37
\item Ibid., 29
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the laborers of the *bocacosta*, or pacific foothills. The foothills would have also provided relatively easy access to the seasonal laborers that migrated to the pacific lowlands during harvests.

Figure 2.1: Map of ORPA’s Region of Operations (See full map on page 15)

![Map of ORPA’s Region of Operations](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/guatemala_rel00.jpg)

The geographic conditions only amounted to half of the equation. The region of operations established by ORPA also provided the necessary social conditions to allow successful organizing. As mentioned above, the area was the densely populated heart of the indigenous society. The indigenous population of the region had been exploited for many years by the large landowners and suffered incredible ethnic discrimination. From the continuous usurpation of their lands to the forced seasonal migrations to work on plantations, the indigenous population was not oblivious to their socioeconomic situation. Furthermore many people throughout the region would have distinctly remembered the gains of the Guatemalan Revolution and Arbenz’s agrarian reform, gains

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that were rescinded by successive counter-revolutionary governments. The social conditions were ripe for a new organization with a new analysis to enter and begin organizing.

The region chosen by ORPA greatly contrasted with the areas chosen by prior guerrilla organizations in Guatemala. Whereas in the 1960s the guerrillas chose to operate in sparsely populated areas in the *Sierra de las Minas* where they could first establish themselves militarily while ignoring the ethnic question, ORPA established itself in the center of indigenous activity to specifically address their issues without firing a shot for nearly eight years. Whether or not they adequately addressed the question of race is beyond the scope of this research, however they were in a favorable position to do so from their inception. This new organizational plan also differed from the other contemporary groups in Guatemala such as the EGP.\(^{39}\) It appeared that Asturias, possibly more than other leaders, understood the operational deficiencies of the 1960s and made the necessary adjustments. According to Asturias even ORPA’s insignia, “We Live To Fight, We Fight To Live” (*Vivimos Para Luchar, Luchamos Para Triunfar*) contrasts the mottos of previous movements which were more fatalistic in nature.\(^{40}\)

During the years of preparation Asturias and the other members of ORPA visited homes and villages offering their analysis of the socioeconomic, ethnic and political situations, along with a plan of action. Gauging by their growth, the recruitment and propaganda campaigns had a favorable impact on the population. Furthermore, the fact that they were able to operate throughout the region for nearly eight years without being

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\(^{39}\) The EGP initially organized itself as a guerrilla nucleus in a sparsely populated area similar to the groups of the 1960s, see Le Bot, *guerra en tierras mayas*, 114. Dunkerly posits that ORPA took the most from the shortcomings of the 1960s, see *Power in the Isthmus*, 483.

\(^{40}\) Asturias is referring to war cries such as Country or Death! etc., see Kruijt and Van Meurs, *Guerrillero y el General*, 123.
exposed to the government is a testament of at least tacit support of the population. According to Asturias, they made a conscious effort to recruit heads of families which would naturally lead to more recruits.\(^{41}\)

ORPA’s predominately indigenous membership allowed them to carry out meetings in the native language of the local population.\(^{42}\) Apart from resulting in greater mutual understanding this would have also mitigated the mistrust of ladinos, or people of mixed descent, many indigenous communities had developed due to historical relationships and the structure of Guatemalan society. These favorable conditions enabled ORPA to organize three guerrilla fronts in the Western highlands before the group’s first military action.\(^{43}\) These organizational successes extended beyond their initial support base in the Western highlands.

ORPA’s long gestational period allowed for the formation of an urban front and a solidarity network abroad. Asturias maintains that their intentions were not to just create a guerrilla army, but a revolutionary organization with a harmonious relationship between the rural guerrilla front, the urban front and the international solidarity network with broad support from urban professionals, students, industrial workers and intellectuals.\(^{44}\) Even though the rural guerrillas would remain the foundation of the organization, ORPA’s projection into the city and beyond would strengthen the organization. Despite the compositional disparities that existed between the urban and rural societies, the

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 35.
\(^{42}\) The U.S. Embassy admitted that 8 out of 10 guerrillas were Indian, see Black, Garrison Guatemala, 74, 104; ORPA claimed to have over 90% indigenous membership. Although the exact percentage cannot be verified, most sources agree that the majority of ORPA’s combatants were indigenous, see Harnecker, Pueblos en Armas, 219.
\(^{43}\) Harnecker, Pueblos en Armas, 217; Krujit and Van Meurs, Guerrillero y el General, 36.
\(^{44}\) The information on the formation of the urban front comes from a chapter in Eduardo Galeano Guatemala: un pueblo en lucha (1ª ed. Madrid, Spain: Revolución, 1983), 178-187.
indigenous question remained the driving force behind the organization and had to be a central concern of non-indigenous recruits.\textsuperscript{45} 

Organizational work expanded into the exterior in 1977. ORPA managed to set up support cells in various countries to inform and educate the international community about Guatemala’s oppressive and discriminatory reality.\textsuperscript{46} ORPA’s organizing efforts outside of the Western highlands similarly met with success. Reportedly ORPA achieved greater support among urban middle-class intellectuals than the EGP.\textsuperscript{47} With considerable urban support ORPA was able to establish a military front in the capital. However, the process of maturation and size of ORPA’s urban front is not well documented. The extent of ORPA’s urban network was only evident after the military urban offensive of 1981 which will be discussed below. One thing is certain however, that with three rural fronts, one urban front, a considerable amount of peasant support throughout the Western highlands and an international support network Asturias believed that ORPA was sufficiently prepared to make a public appearance.

On September 18 1979, after 8 years of clandestine organizing, ORPA carried out their first military action at the Mujulia Coffee Farm on the outskirts of Quetzaltenango.\textsuperscript{48} The style and logistics of this first action would be recreated by ORPA many times throughout the war eventually earning the name “armed propaganda.” The guerrillas would enter and secure the area disarming any police or security guards. Subsequently they would call the villagers and workers to a meeting in which they would share a revolutionary message and distribute written propaganda such as pamphlets and

\textsuperscript{45} Galeano, \textit{Guatemala}, 185.  
\textsuperscript{46} Galeano, \textit{Guatemala}, 186. It is interesting to note that many of the primary documents used in this research had been recently sent back to Guatemala from a solidarity network in the Netherlands.  
\textsuperscript{48} Galeano, \textit{Guatemala}, 186; ORPA, Doc 60, 1.
flyers. This first act of armed propaganda was followed by countless other actions and operations over the next 17 years.

The revolutionary situation in Guatemala had become quite volatile by the time ORPA emerged in 1979. Not only had the EGP been operating since 1975, but remnants of the 1960s FAR had regrouped and returned to combat by early 1979. Furthermore, the PGT had made different attempts at armed struggle throughout the decade. The EGP was the largest of the political military organizations. Its founders were former members of the FAR of the 1960s who, like Asturias, became critical of both FAR and PGT tactics and ideological views.⁴⁹ After a few years abroad, they returned to the department of El Quiche in 1972 to establish a new guerrilla nucleus. The EGP came to the same realization as Asturias in that the indigenous majority would need to play an important role in the revolutionary movement. Through the use of liberation theology they gained a large indigenous support base in El Quiche.⁵⁰

After the defeat of the 1960s, the FAR turned to the capital city and worked heavily with the urban labor movement with the “goal of creating a working-class party.”⁵¹ They finally returned to guerrilla activity in the late 1970s, basing their strategy on the “radicalization of popular sectors” through mass organizing.⁵² However, they followed an orthodox Marxist/Leninist ideology focusing primarily on class analysis, and ignoring the ethnic question.⁵³ Similarly the PGT, adhering to an orthodox class

⁵³ Le Bot, *Guerra en tierras mayas*, 115.
analysis, concentrated its efforts in the labor movement, and neglected the indigenous question. 54

When ORPA emerged publicly as a revolutionary organization in 1979 they experienced a surge in growth. Asturias claims that by 1980-1981 rapid growth exceeded their ability to incorporate. 55 Indeed most scholars concur that the early 1980s were fruitful for the Guatemalan guerrilla movements with combined ORPA and EGP armed combatants at around 6,000 with a real possibility of usurping state power. 56 The growth of the revolutionary movement prompted the Guatemala army to launch offensives in the countryside and in the city causing great devastation to ORPA’s urban front.

An estimated thirty “safe houses and arms caches” were raided in Guatemala City in the summer of 1981, of which nearly all belonged to ORPA. 57 The devastating blow to the urban front along with the excessively bloody rural campaign in EGP territory retarded the guerrilla’s growth in raw numbers. However the setbacks did hasten coordination between ORPA and the EGP in the fall of 1981 “in an attempt to control the nucleus of the altiplano” primarily the area where the departments of Quiché, Sololá and Chimaltenango meet. 58 Setting aside past tactical differences in an effort to work together was an important step forward for the Guatemalan movements. In January of 1982, the coordinated efforts were solidified when the four political military organizations formed the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). Even

54 Jonas, Guatemala, 138; Dunkerley, Power in the Isthmus, 433.
55 Kruijt and Van Meurs, Guerrillero y el General, 37
56 Le Bot, guerra en tierras mayas, 195; Jonas, 23; Dunkerly, Power in the Isthmus, 483.
58 Le Bot, guerra en tierras mayas, 198
though the URNG provided a unified front, each organization retained autonomy in their respective region of operations and continued to disseminate their own literature.

In 1983 the military shifted the focus of its rural offensive from the EGP regions of operation to ORPA areas. According to Asturias, ORPA was able to emerge from this offensive with greater military and political capacity than before. Furthermore the urban front, after the devastating defeats of 1981, reemerged by 1983 and was operating at high capacities.\(^{59}\) Despite apparent gains in operational capacity the raw numbers indicate a decline in organization growth. One author estimates that in 1983 the total number of URNG armed combatants had dropped to as low as 2,500 adding that by 1987 ORPA had twice as many guns as combatants.\(^{60}\) This was ironic considering lack of guns was a problem in the early 1980s.

Although the most brutal years of the war spanned the late 1970s and early 1980s, the war continued until a final peace accord was signed in December of 1996. After the war, ORPA demobilized approximately 1,000-1,200 combatants.\(^{61}\) Final death toll estimates are in the proximity of 150,000 dead and 50,000 “disappeared,” currently being discovered in clandestine military cemeteries. The conflict was excessively violent with many of the victims suffering torture or dying in massacres. After the war two separate commissions created extensive reports documenting the human rights violations that had occurred.

\(^{59}\) ORPA Documents 70, 72. Dunkerly states that ORPA emerged in better shape then the EGP had, see *Power in the Isthmus*, 483.

\(^{60}\) Le Bot, *La guerra en tierras mayas*, 195.

\(^{61}\) Kruijt and Van Meurs, *Guerrillero y el General*, 38. According to one ORPA combatant interviewed by the author, they began demobilizing combatants a year or two before the end of the war in order to not strain the limited resources, *interview conducted in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala December 2005.*
The Commission for Historical Clarification (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico - CEH) determined that over 650 massacres occurred during the war. These massacres were accompanied by other heinous crimes against humanity such as arbitrary executions and kidnappings. The report attributes 93% of the human rights violations to the state and 3% to the guerrilla forces. Although the report acknowledges that ORPA did carry out extrajudicial assassinations it admits that the number was nominal and the victims were not arbitrarily selected. The majority of the victims executed by ORPA consisted of military commissioners and army accomplices. Of the 32 massacres attributed to the guerrilla forces only one was blamed on ORPA, a case which has been debated. Of the 3% of human rights violations attributed to the guerrilla forces, only a very small fraction have been associated with ORPA forces.

Asturias attributes the ability to continue the struggle for so long in the face of such harsh repression partially to the organization’s long gestational period. The eight years of preparation allowed for the creation of extensive fronts which provided ORPA with strong roots. In contrast to Che Guevara’s foco theory, ORPA prepared for a “prolonged popular war, based on the general mobilization of the populace and the creation of a self-sufficient infrastructure.” Each of the fronts had a regular military force, an organizational base and over time developed irregular forces. By the time of

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62 Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico. (CEH) Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio. (Guatemala: CEH, 1999); Human Rights Office, Archdiocese of Guatemala (ODHA), Recovery of Historical Memory Project (REMHI). Guatemala: Never Again! (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1999); The case of the massacre of Aguacate which occurred in 1988 and was attributed to ORPA has been highly disputed. See Guatemala: The Human-Rights Hoax by Adam Jones (1989)[Published in Latin America Connexions, 4:1 (1989).]

63 According to Black, the EGP also prepared for the prolonged war, see Garrison Guatemala, 79-83. Le Bot considers ORPA to have been a foquista organization however, their extensive preparation period creating fronts and popular support suggest the contrary, see La guerra en tierras mayas, 115.

64 Kruijt and Van Meurs, Guerrillero y el General, 36
their first public action, ORPA was imbedded to some degree into the social fabric of the region, which differed greatly from earlier *foquista* attempts.

Asturias was not at the negotiating table as the peace talks came to a conclusion. Just months before the signing of the final accord, in August 1996, Olga de Novella, a member of a prominent Guatemalan family, was kidnapped by an ORPA urban commander. Even though Novella was released unharmed two months later on October 20, much controversy surrounded, and continues to surround this little understood event. One thing is certain however, the kidnapping and the subsequent investigation into this anomalous operation damaged the credibility of Asturias forcing him to retreat from the negotiating table. After being perhaps the most pro-negotiation member of the URNG coalition, ORPA and its founder Asturias were not present in December of 1996 when the final accord was signed.65

After twenty-five years of existence and seventeen years of public operations, ORPA was no longer at war with the government of Guatemala. The URNG emerged as the political expression of the former guerrillas prepared to take the struggle into the democratic arena, and Asturias eventually emerged as the general secretary of the party. Throughout the entire conflict, ORPA disseminated publications to the domestic and international communities sharing their views, ideas, criticisms, and accomplishments. In order to assess the organization’s ideological underpinnings this research has analyzed those documents to determine their message and purpose.

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Chapter 3: Defining Key Concepts

The introduction presented various terms and ideas central to this research which require further conceptualization such as discourse and ideology, Marxism and Liberation Theology. Despite the common usage of these seemingly familiar words, clear definitions are often non-existent or ambiguous, resulting in misunderstandings. This chapter will clearly define the ideas central to this research.

Discourse and Ideology

Although discourse may have slightly different connotations depending on the context, in this research it simply means any written or spoken political expression or communication. Specifically, discourse is defined as the totality of political communications from a given source or organization which includes speeches, interviews, and radio broadcasts, as well as printed material such as books, pamphlets, and press releases. Discourse is the vehicle by which an organization disseminates its ideology.

All social and revolutionary movements attempt to create or at least adhere to a specific ideology. A succinct definition of ideology is a “system of ideas used to comprehend socio-political reality.” Martin Seliger further expounds that these ideas or beliefs are “action-oriented.” This study takes into account both perspectives and defines ideology as a worldview used to interpret socio-political reality by organizing values, beliefs, and norms in a specific action-oriented way.

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Although the specific beliefs of each movement vary, the function of ideology within each movement remains fairly consistent. Ideology is used “to bring together diverse grievances and interests under a simple and appealing set of symbols of opposition.” By doing this an ideology provides the maximum number of people with the “same or at least compatible” views of society, and inspires the necessary resolve to change society. In reality, people may align themselves with a movement and coordinate their efforts toward the same end for completely different reasons. If an ideology can successfully coordinate multiple grievances, it creates something similar to a funnel, in that it offers a broad area for different grievances to enter, then consolidates the efforts into one concentrated outflow. As Daniel Bell explains, ideologies convert ideas into “social levers.” Thus, ideologies are used to create a broad worldview which defines a problem, exposes the transgressor, proposes a solution, maps out the necessary steps, and inspires the aggrieved to take action.

Moreover, ideologies also serve as the basis for movement activists to construct particular frames. Frames are narratives which select and highlight some aspects of events or issues in order to make specific “connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution.” Frames are how movements construct interpretations of reality through their particular ideological lens. An effective frame attempts to correlate multiple grievances by highlighting a perceived common root

cause and solution. This research examines the frames employed by ORPA throughout their discourse in order to determine their ideological underpinnings.

**Liberation Theology, Marxism/Leninism and Revolutionary Nationalism**

Liberation theology is the Catholic teaching that hunger, poverty, ignorance, and other forms of human suffering are sins that must be eradicated. In the second half of the twentieth century many Catholic priests throughout Latin America began advocating a preferential treatment of the poor. These new ideas of equality greatly contrasted the prior fatalistic teachings which encouraged patience and longsuffering so as to reap heavenly blessings in the afterlife. Instead of perpetuating the Church’s centuries long defense of the status quo, many priests took to heart the ideology of liberation theology and dedicated their lives to the rights of the marginalized masses of the region. Even though the basic framework of liberation theology was outlined at the 1968 Medellin conference for Latin American bishops, Gustavo Gutierrez’s definitive articulation of the ideology did not appear until 1971.72

Liberation theology was introduced into Guatemala in the mid-sixties through a Catholic program of Social Training Courses. While the courses were initiated to halt communist infiltration in the university by promoting a Christian movement or revolution, Blase Bonpane explains that the workshops evolved during the 1960’s into powerful mobilizing mechanisms which the students carried to the rural areas.73 For the first time many rural peasants began to comprehend the harsh realities in which they lived. Liberation theology questioned the inhumane economic, social, political and

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cultural practices of the region, calling for a radical transformation of the very foundation of the “dehumanizing society.”  

Although not embraced by all clergy, the ideology found dedicated leaders and fervent followers throughout Guatemala.

Marxism promotes the idea that the industrialized world is engulfed in a class struggle between the proletariat (the workers) and the bourgeoisie (the owners of production). The bourgeois class has achieved dominion over the proletariat through the accumulation and concentration of capital, subjugating the workers to sell their labor while facing ever declining working and living conditions. As capital is increasingly concentrated in fewer and fewer hands the working class expands to an unprecedented size. After suffering continuous exploitation at the hands of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat breaks free from its chains and unites in a revolution to restructure society into a classless state.

Although some ideas were applicable to Guatemala, the domestic realities differed greatly from the industrialized proletariat that Marx envisioned. V.I. Lenin and the Russian Revolution demonstrated that industrialization was not a prerequisite for a Communist revolution. Lenin posited that a small group of revolutionaries, or vanguard, could raise the consciousness of a rural agricultural based society creating the conditions for revolt. Lenin’s revolutionary theories were relevant to Latin America considering the non-industrialized state of most countries. Lenin also redefined the concept of imperialism as the “monopoly stage of capitalism” in which finance capitalists attempt to

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74 Gibellini, *Frontiers of Theology*, x.
consolidate control over an increasing percentage of the world’s wealth.\textsuperscript{76} He considered the world divided into two camps, the developed nations and the peripheral suppliers, macro representations of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat respectively. A harsh critique of first world imperialism, along with the success of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, brought new facets to Latin American Marxist thought.

The Cuban rebels further demonstrated that industrialization was not a prerequisite for revolution, but that a small guerrilla army, acting as the vanguard, could create the necessary conditions for a revolt. Furthermore, this well organized guerrilla army, albeit small, can defeat a much larger army by embedding themselves in the countryside and slowly gaining peasant support through military victories and educational initiatives.\textsuperscript{77} This modified version of Lenin’s vanguard theory became known as Che Guevara’s \textit{foco} theory. Guevara and Fidel Castro reinforced Lenin’s critique of capitalist imperialism by accusing Yankee imperialism of being the greatest barrier to Latin American development. The theme of Yankee imperialism would be central to Latin American Marxist thought and the \textit{foco} strategy central to guerrilla movements, at least through the 1960s.

The first Communist party officially organized in Guatemala was the Guatemalan Worker’s Party (PGT) in 1952.\textsuperscript{78} Although Communism surely existed prior to this date this was the first legally organized party. The early PGT adhered more to classical Marxism then Leninism. It considered industrialization a crucial prerequisite and dedicated their efforts to fast tracking the process of industrialization.

In their dogmatic adherence to class analysis they disregarded race and ethnic analysis. It was a grave oversimplification to break the Guatemalan society down into two classes, considering the large indigenous majority. In the 1960s other Guatemala Communists began to use the theories, tactics, and analysis of Lenin, Castro and Guevara but continued to struggle with the race and ethnic question.

This research suggests that ORPA was reluctant to commit themselves entirely to Marxism or liberation theology. Neither ideology appeared capable of solving what ORPA purported to be the Guatemalan social, economic and political crises. Guatemala was an agricultural exporting nation with a working class composed primarily of peasants, not industrial workers. Even though the working class was exploited, the situation was far more complicated due to the diverse ethnic make up of the country’s population. Within the marginalized lower class, there existed further marginalization of the indigenous population. In essence, there was an ethnic struggle within the class struggle.

To be successful the revolutionary movements needed to focus on ethnic inequality as well as class inequality. The Indigenous majority’s ongoing struggle for social, economic and political liberties would need to be an integral part of any revolutionary nationalist ideology. Such an ideology must offer an analysis of racist discrimination and the way it impedes development and national unity. It must address the socioeconomic problems facing nearly all Guatemalans. Furthermore it should advocate for the establishment of authentic democratic governance and the rights and privileges such a government would entail. Revolutionary nationalism must seek radical solutions for domestic problems.


Sources of Discourse

ORPA did not rely solely on rallies and speeches to disseminate its message; they also exploited multi-media resources such as radio broadcasts, pamphlets, and books. This analysis makes use of all available sources of discourse employed by the organization. The sources fit into three categories: interviews, written material, and secondary sources.

Interviews

One form of discourse to be analyzed will be interviews of ORPA leadership carried out by third parties. Some of these interviews were completed during the war, some were done postwar, and some were performed recently by the author. Apart from qualifying as discourse, interviews provide important historical data of the organization to complement the other available sources. One obvious limitation of postwar interviews is that the events being discussed may have occurred as many as twenty-five years ago and therefore may be susceptible to personal interpretations and selective memory. However, personal accounts provide valuable insight and are too important to be disregarded altogether. Furthermore, they allow cross-checking with other ORPA documents and secondary sources to ensure accuracy.

Written Material

The second type of discourse to be analyzed will be the pamphlets, books and other documents that were published by the organization. Written discourse will provide an objective view of the ideology disseminated during the conflict. The information will not have been influenced by the lapse of time or by the current political climate. Unfortunately, many of ORPA’s publications have been lost over the years.
Furthermore, the majority of the available literature was written between 1979 and 1984. Although these factors create some limitations, sufficient publications have been collected to allow for an in-depth analysis. Among the documents to be analyzed are pamphlets, flyers, press releases, monthly information bulletins, and lengthier position papers. There are also interviews of leaders which were published and distributed by ORPA during the conflict that will be beneficial.

**Secondary Sources**

Apart from the two major forms of discourse, this study will make use of available secondary sources, such as books and journal articles about ORPA. Even though very little has been written about ORPA, the extant literature will provide important historical data and may also contain discourse of the organization.

Triangulation between these three sources will be used to further substantiate the findings of this research. The various forms of discourse discussed will be subjected to a content analysis in order to determine what ideological frames were employed by ORPA to garner support. The methodology used in the content analysis and the findings are presented in the following chapter.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has defined the concepts and terms central to this research. It has provided an understanding of Marxism and liberation theology and what they mean in the Guatemalan context. It also provided a brief introduction to ORPA’s revolutionary nationalism. It is logical that ORPA made use of both Marxism and liberation theology in their own ideology. Making use of at least some aspects of both would allow them to appeal to the maximum number of people possible. These two ideologies could have
been used in a complimentary manner creating a broad coalition among various sectors. Through an analysis of ORPA’s discourse this study determines the importance the organization allotted to each ideology. More importantly however, this research shows that liberation theology and Marxism served in a subservient capacity to the organization’s own ideology of revolutionary nationalism.
Chapter 4: Quantitative Content Analysis of ORPA’s Discourse

After collecting the discourse, a content analysis was conducted, focusing on direct and indirect references to Marxism, liberation theology and ORPA’s revolutionary nationalism. The analysis focused on the frames which ORPA used in their discourse to determine which ideological lens the organization used most frequently. This quantitative analysis concentrated on documents disseminated by the organization from 1979-1984. This six year time period was chosen for two reasons. First, it was ORPA’s first six years of public action, three of which they were entirely autonomous and the other three members of the URNG coalition. Even after their integration into the URNG they retained most of their autonomy, however if deviations do exist in their discourse they should be apparent in this time period.

The second reason for choosing these six years was the quantity of documents dating from this period. Of the ninety-five ORPA documents used in this research seventy-four of them date to this six year period providing a strong sample. The documents which were published from 1985-1996 will not be ignored, but utilized to project the findings of the content analysis into the later years of the war as part of the qualitative analysis. The qualitative analysis allocates the findings of this research into the context of Guatemala’s domestic situation and expounds on ORPA’s revolutionary nationalism.

The following is a presentation of the coding scheme created and employed for the content analysis. The complete content analysis coding protocol can be found as Appendix 1. It must be noted that an independent coder analyzed almost 20 percent of
the documents used in the content analysis. The inter coder reliability was approximately
90 percent.

Methodology

The first task was to label each document with a particular number. This was
done chronologically labeling the earliest document as number one and continuing until
ninety-five. Some documents do not contain dates causing them to be grouped together
at the end and therefore excluded from the content analysis. Of the seventy four
documents which were published between 1979 and 1984 some were excluded from the
content analysis. The reason for exclusion varies from case to case but generally falls
within the following categories. The Press Releases (Comunicados de la Prensa) strictly
conveyed ORPA’s military actions to the press and lacked any particular framing. Some
documents were repeated, published in English and Spanish or published by ORPA and a
third party magazine. At least one document was excluded due to horrible print quality
making it extremely difficult to analyze. In the end, twenty three documents were
excluded resulting in a sample of 51 documents to be analyzed.

The documents were measured for eight variables. The variables used for the
coding were date, year, type, subject, frame, purpose, style and visual frame. After the
coding was completed the date and year were collapsed into one variable, dropping the
day and using just the month and year for the date. This made sense considering very
few documents actually contained a specific day of publication. The documents were all
categorized into a few different types such as pamphlets, press releases and position
papers and were coded accordingly. Subject referred to the central focus of the document
whether it was rural, urban, international, any combination of those three, or other. Over
50 percent of the document had to be dedicated to a particular subject in order to receive that coding.

*Purpose* refers to the reason ORPA published that particular document, whether it was to recruit, denounce the government or military, or simply inform the reader of ORPA’s political position on an issue. There were only two possible styles of documents, simple or complex. Simple meant the document contained pictures or drawings while complex documents were void of such illustrations. For the most part drawings are found in pamphlets and fliers. Though quite simplistic, these images convey important messages, especially in areas where illiteracy was high. For example, one pamphlet has a drawing of a soldier pointing a gun at an indigenous woman, while another pamphlet shows drawings of people flowing out of churches to take up arms. If a document contains illustrations, the first five were analyzed as *visual frames* following a similar protocol as the *frame* described below.

The primary level of analysis was the *frame*. As conceptualized in the previous chapter, frames are narratives that highlight some aspects of events or issues in order to make specific connections that promote a “particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution.” Frames exist which are particular to Marxism and liberation theology as well as to ORPA’s revolutionary nationalism, despite occasionally similarities. In order to circumvent ideological overlapping each ideology was dissected to differentiate the frames of each, removing ambiguous ones. This delineation was done by examining both the abstract ideology and the Central American interpretation as presented in the second

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chapter. The following descriptions of the respective frames were used to determine which ideological lens the organization was using.

Each document was coded according to which frame or frames it made use of. If greater than two-thirds of a document used frames particular to one of the ideologies then it was coded as such. However if a document made use of frames from more than one ideology with none appearing to be greater than two thirds, the document would be coded as a combination. The visual frames were coded in a similar manner using virtually the same criteria and categorizations. The obvious difference was dealing with a visual representation of the frame as opposed to a textual one.

Marxist frames were categorized as follows beginning with the use of the traditional Marxist socioeconomic and class analysis. The denouncement of first world imperialism exposing the connections Guatemalan elites (oligarchy) and/or military have with foreign power structures such as governments, militaries, and/or capital. A condemnation of such powerful alliances and the way they exploit the Guatemalan people and the country’s natural resources. A call to organize the workers/proletariat into labor unions in order to counter first world imperialism by taking control of “fincas,” factories and/or mines or any other source of production.

Liberation theology was categorized as an appeal to religious beliefs and teachings, such as references to the Bible and the example of Jesus Christ. The frames included equating the backward state of Guatemalan society to a moral sin that must be overcome and an appeal to moral consciousness by advocating the need to end hunger, misery, sickness, and ignorance, without necessarily analyzing the structural problems creating such ills.
Revolutionary nationalist frames were conceptualized as drawing parallels between the current struggle and Guatemala’s heritage, especially the Indigenous people’s long history of resistance, and the revolutionary governments of Arévalo and Arbenz. Advocating the reinstatement of the social, political and economic advances that were achieved during the Revolutionary period (Arévalo and Arbenz’s presidencies, 1944-1954) especially the Agrarian Reform Law (Decree 900) but then rescinded by the collusion of local elites and the U.S. Government in 1954. Professing the centrality of the Indigenous people in Guatemala’s history and condemning their plight of discrimination, oppression and genocide. Considering racism a major structural problem that impedes national unity and development. Furthermore, denouncing the violent repression being executed by the Guatemalan government and encouraging self-defense, without analyzing the structural reasons resulting in state terror. Placing ORPA’s roots in the rural indigenous areas of Guatemala or “el campo.”

Results of the Content Analysis

The first significant finding, which actually became apparent during the analysis, was the lack of liberation theology in the discourse. It was hypothesized that liberation theology would have influenced ORPA’s discourse, considering its prominence in Guatemalan revolutionary thought during the period. However there were very few liberation theology frames that appeared throughout their discourse. There were occasional references to religion and the persecution of religious leaders and even a few illustrations alluding to religion, but not one document was coded as liberation theology.

The final break down of the fifty one documents (Table 4.1) was thirty five coded as revolutionary nationalism, eight as Marxism, and eight as a combination. The
complete results of the Content Analysis can be found as Appendix 2. Two-thirds of a
document had to be dedicated to frames of a particular ideology to be coded as such.
Documents were coded as combination if they used frames from multiple ideologies with
none being greater than two-thirds. In this case, the eight that were coded as a
combination, were combinations of Marxism and revolutionary nationalism. The few
traces of liberation theology that did exist were not prominent enough to influence the
coding of any documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Frame</th>
<th>Number of Documents</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marxism</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberation Theology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary Nationalism</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The documents using revolutionary nationalist frames were distributed
consistently over the six year period staying relatively close to their overall percentage of
68.6. The documents using Marxist frames varied to a greater degree. Nearly all of the
documents coded as Marxism are from 1980 and 1981, with three and four documents
respectively, while other years did not yield a single one. (See Table 4.2) However, two
thirds of the documents analyzed were from 1980 and 1981 making a jump in real
numbers expected. The percentage of the Marxist documents remained relatively close to
the overall distribution in 1980 with 16.7 percent. Twenty-five percent of the documents
from both 1981 and 1984 were coded as Marxist, which deviated from the overall
distribution of 15.7 percent. The eight documents coded as combination are spread out
over the entire six year period. The following table (4.2) provides the frame distribution

Table 4.2 Frame Distribution by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Marxism</th>
<th>Revolutionary Nationalism</th>
<th>Combination</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table demonstrates a fairly consistent document distribution over the six year
period. The low numbers of total documents for some of the years greatly skewed the
percentages for those years, but that was an expected difficulty considering the scarcity of
documents. Despite this shortcoming, two thirds of the documents in every year but one
were coded as revolutionary nationalism which was consistent with the overall
distribution. Only 1984 proved anomalous with just half of the documents using a
revolutionary nationalist frame. However, breaking down the results into three year
periods demonstrate continuity in ORPA’s discourse before and after joining the other organizations to form the URNG coalition in 1982. Over two-thirds of their discourse was revolutionary nationalist for both periods.

Table 4.3: Frame Distribution Before and After Joining URNG Coalition (Number in parenthesis represents the percentage of documents for that period).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Document Frame</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marxism</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revolutionary Nationalism</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-URNG 1979-1981</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URNG Member 1982-1984</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the frame distribution established it is interesting to see how the frames correspond to the other variables in the study. Many of ORPA’s documents contained illustrations and pictures. Visuals were important due to the high levels of illiteracy throughout the country especially in the rural indigenous communities. Of the fifty-one documents analyzed twenty-five contained visuals while the remaining twenty-six were void of any illustrations. It is interesting to note that the documents using the Marxist frame were almost entirely void of visuals. Of the eight documents coded as Marxism, seven were entirely text. The other two categories, revolutionary nationalist frame and
combination were more evenly distributed between visuals and non-visuals each yielding approximate ratios of 60/40.

Table 4.4: Frame Distribution With and Without Visuals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Document Frame</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marxism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Visual</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revolutionary Nationalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A plausible explanation is that documents using the Marxist frame did not need visual representations. It is also possible that the Marxist concepts being used by ORPA would not have been understood by or even applicable to the rural audience. As mentioned in Chapter 2, ORPA enjoyed a considerable amount of support from middle class intellectuals in urban areas. The Marxist frames would have been more familiar and applicable to the urban setting.

This finding does not signify that ORPA refrained from using Marxist frames in the rural setting and revolutionary nationalist frames in the urban setting. As explained above, a document was labeled Marxist or revolutionary nationalist if two-thirds of its contents were dedicated to frames of that particular ideology. Therefore one-third of a Marxist document could have been dedicated to revolutionary nationalism and vice versa. This became apparent in the analysis of the visual frames. One of the illustrations in the
sole Marxist document with visuals was coded as revolutionary nationalist. Likewise, some visuals from revolutionary nationalist documents were coded as Marxist.

The following table (4.5) compares the document frame of the twenty-five documents containing visuals to the frames of their visuals. The large majority of the visuals coded were revolutionary nationalist which was expected considering twenty-one of the twenty-five documents with visuals were revolutionary nationalist. However various documents contained elements of both revolutionary nationalism and Marxism. The visual frame provides a superficial view of ORPA’s use of multiple ideologies. Similarly, this occurred in documents void of illustrations. Indeed, the seven documents coded as Marxism which did not contain visuals, contained elements of revolutionary nationalism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual Frame</th>
<th>Document Frame</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marxism (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marxism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary Nationalism</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Purpose of the document was another variable that yielded some interesting results when compared with the frames. Purpose was broken down into six different
categories: *recruit, denounce/critique, inform, history, combination,* and *other.* It must be noted that the entirety of an organization’s discourse to some extent would fall under the category of recruitment. Whether criticizing the corrupt government, relating the history of ORPA or explaining ORPA’s position on a key issue, a document could attract new members to the organization who are in agreement with what they read. However, certain documents explicitly try to recruit new members stating their intentions clearly. Therefore this variable focused on the explicit purpose of a document. Similar to the frame, two-thirds of the document would need to be dedicated to a specific purpose in order to be coded as such. Table 4.6 compares the purposes of the documents to the frames.

Over one-third of the total documents were categorized as denounce/critique including nearly all the documents coded as Marxism. Criticisms of the current system serve as rallying points for social and revolutionary organizations. It was expected that ORPA would focus energies on what they saw as deficiencies of the system. The high levels of state repression and the corrupt government were frequently denounced in the discourse. The Marxist criticisms revolved around the dominant class analysis and U.S. imperialism.

All of the documents coded as recruitment and history were revolutionary nationalist. The publications discussing the history of Guatemala or ORPA and revolutionary nationalist frames coincide. An important part of revolutionary nationalism is connecting ORPA’s struggle to the indigenous population’s long history of rebellion.
Table 4.6: Frame Compared to Purpose – No documents were coded as other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Document Frame</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marxism</td>
<td>Revolutionary Nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denounce/Critique</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 60 percent of the documents analyzed were pamphlets, including the entirety of the documents coded as recruitment. There were two series of pamphlets that were distributed by ORPA. The first, Siembra was directed toward the peasantry using many illustrations to compensate for the high levels of illiteracy. The other was entitled Erupcion. This series was geared toward a more literate audience using almost exclusively text. It is likely that Erupcion would have been distributed in urban areas. Of the nine documents used for recruitment five were from the Siembra series. The other four, although not from a specific series, were similarly full of illustrations. The nine recruitment pamphlets focused on the ways in which the peasantry could support ORPA. The documents declared that ORPA was the army of the people. Furthermore, they addressed the reality of the target audience such as state repression and forced military recruitment. Table 4.7 compares document types to documents purpose.
Table 4.7: Type Compared to Purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pamphlet</td>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Position Paper</td>
<td>Secondary Source</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denounce/Critique</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

The results of the content analysis offer some valuable insight into ORPA’s discourse. It highlights how ORPA employed a revolutionary nationalist ideology with some elements of Marxism. The findings support the primary hypothesis of this research in that Marxism was subsidiary to their revolutionary nationalism. However, it was also hypothesized that liberation theology would have been apparent in their discourse, although in a subsidiary role. The results of the content analysis show how little ORPA made use of liberation theology. Liberation theology was nearly non-existent in ORPA’s discourse. The few references that were made do not support this expectation.

The content analysis also serves as a jumping off point for a qualitative look at ORPA’s discourse. The following chapter discusses the actual frames that ORPA utilized. It also evaluates ORPA’s discourse post-1984 to determine continuities and trends that existed.
Chapter 5: Dissecting ORPA’s Discourse

The results of the content analysis, although intriguing, only scratch the surface of ORPA’s discourse. Analyzing the documents in their entirety, taking into consideration the historical context and the current events, provides further insight into the ideological underpinnings of the organization. This chapter analyzes the documents used in the content analysis as well as those from subsequent years providing a qualitative analysis of their discourse.

ORPA’s discourse touches on a wide array of events occurring both within Guatemala and beyond its borders. The particular events being discussed vary from document to document and year to year, but the frames employed by the organization remained consistent throughout. Each frame enabled ORPA to interpret reality through a specific ideological lens, whether revolutionary nationalism or Marxism. Although many frames were used by the organization certain ones appeared regularly throughout their discourse. Imperialism and the militarization of the oligarchy were the Marxist frames used most frequently. The most recurrent revolutionary nationalist frames related to state repression, racism and other indigenous issues, the plight of the peasantry, the Guatemalan Revolution and the democratic farce.

It is important to note the overlap between some of the frames mentioned. State repression could surely encompass indigenous issues and the plight of the peasantry, and the Guatemalan Revolution could contain discussions of the democratic farce and the
peasantry. In fact, the majority of the documents employed multiple frames including ORPA’s very first public document distributed in September 1979.\textsuperscript{80}

Presented as a pamphlet, this first document explains the reasons behind ORPA’s commitment to armed struggle. This pamphlet not only makes use of the aforementioned frames, it also presents a rare liberation theology frame in the form of an illustration which shows people flocking from churches and native religious sites to join the armed struggle. It discusses the alliance of the rich and the military and their control of land and other productive resources. It condemns the exploitation of the poor and the unjust usurpation of their land. The pamphlet uses an imperialism frame, accusing the United States and Israel of supporting the corrupt Guatemalan government. This first document offers a glance of ORPA’s revolutionary nationalism with hints of Marxism. It presents various frames that would be regularly used throughout the war. These frames fall within the realm of revolutionary nationalism and Marxism as hitherto conceptualized within this study. This chapter illustrates ORPA’s presentation of each ideology by dissecting their discourse.

**Marxism**

ORPA’s use of Marxism primarily revolved around two frames. The first was a trend they labeled the militarization of oligarchic power. Although this trend and ORPA’s analysis are particular to Guatemala, it incorporates Marxist concepts of the dominant class and class domination of state power. The other Marxist frame most frequently employed by ORPA was the concept of imperialism. Both of these ideas are expounded on below.

\textsuperscript{80} ORPA, Document 1.
It is important to note that throughout their discourse, ORPA never expresses support for or solidarity with any Communist power. The few times that the U.S.S.R. is mentioned it is in response to accusations that they are part of an international Communist movement. Virtually the only foreign government and movement that they declare support for is the Sandinista government in Nicaragua and the revolutionary movement in El Salvador.

**The Militarization of Oligarchic Power**

The Marxist class analysis employed by ORPA typically concerned the collusion of the dominant classes and the military in order to control the masses and maintain their privileged position. According to ORPA, over the years the military increasingly acquired key posts in each government permitting the centralization of power. This enabled them to exercise this power almost unconditionally. The Guatemalan oligarchy not only witnessed this occurrence, but directly supported it and participated in the system. ORPA labels this trend the militarization of oligarchic power. Their most extensive discussion of this trend appeared in a document published in 1980. However, the denouncement of this governing structure appears many times throughout their discourse.

The simplistic pamphlets distributed in rural areas illustrate the alliance between the military and the oligarchy with drawings. The visuals demonstrate that the military repression is benefiting the landed oligarchy at the expense of the peasantry. The only

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81 ORPA, Doc 5.
concern of the dominant class is profits and they go to any length to protect it.\textsuperscript{82} The following visuals appeared in ORPA documents (See Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3).

Figure 5.1 (on the left): This drawing shows members of the oligarchy distraught at the advances of the revolutionary movement saying things like "What are we going to do" and "They will take away our riches." Figure 5.2 (on the right): This illustrations shows members of the oligarchy demanding the military defeat the insurgency saying “Kidnap, torture and kill” and “Repress the people until they stop fighting.”\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{82} ORPA, Doc 1; ORPA, Doc 32.

\textsuperscript{83} ORPA, Doc 32. All translations of ORPA documents were done by the author.
Many shifts occurred in the government throughout the early 1980s allowing ORPA further opportunity to expose and denounce the militarization of the oligarchic power. The military coup in March 1982 was discussed in various documents. The coup resulted in the installation of General Efraín Ríos Montt as the new head of state. ORPA interpreted this event as nothing more than a superficial alteration. Corruption and state repression had risen to incredible heights during the previous government. The situation had become increasingly volatile as the insurgency grew and dealt heavy blows to the state forces. The incompetence of the government was causing low moral within the military. The country had become isolated from the international community resulting in less access to foreign capital.\textsuperscript{85}

The coup leaders did not intend to make any fundamental alterations to the system. The oligarchy hoped that Ríos Montt, an openly fanatical Christian, would serve as a moderate façade for the government. Despite the dismissal of a few leaders the key

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{84} ORPA, Doc 1.  
\textsuperscript{85} ORPA, Doc 59.}
positions within the military and governing structure remained unchanged. The illusion of change was achieved and the militarization of the oligarchic power continued.\textsuperscript{86}

High levels of corruption and human rights abuses continued under Ríos Montt. Furthermore the president was unable to defeat the guerrilla organizations. ORPA denounced the continuation of the military and oligarchy alliance. Accordingly the only answer to the situation would be the installation of a revolutionary government. Within a year of Ríos Montt’s rise to power, ORPA predicted that the dynamic situation would provoke another major shift in power, admonishing that “…it is foreseeable that the dictatorship will crumble, that other sectors and forces look for support for a change in the dome of power, and there is no reason to discard the possibility of a new coup to replace Ríos Montt.”\textsuperscript{87} Within months of this publication Ríos Montt was ousted by yet another military coup. Indeed the collusion of the military and the oligarchy received much attention throughout the war. This Marxist frame in ORPA’s analysis often led to a denunciation of imperialism.

\textit{Imperialism}

Nearly all the documents coded as Marxist in the content analysis contained a critique of imperialism. Typically the analysis focused solely on the United States, but Israel and Argentina were mentioned throughout as agents of U.S. imperialism. In fact one document is entirely dedicated to Israel’s military involvement in Guatemala. After

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{87} ORPA, Doc 66. Original quote, “…es previsible que el dictador se desmorone, que otros sectores y fuerzas busquen apoyo para un recambio en la cúpula de poder, y no hay que descartar la posibilidad de un nuevo golpe de estado para suplantar Ríos Montt.”, 4.
the U.S. stopped military aid in the late 1970s due to human rights abuses, Israel and Argentina became surrogate suppliers and advisers.\footnote{ORPA Doc 29, Doc 47.}

ORPA posits that early U.S. imperialism was interrupted briefly by the governments of Arévalo and Arbenz. However the C.I.A. intervention in 1954 allowed the U.S. to imbed itself deeper into Guatemala’s economic infrastructure. Since that time through military and economic aid it has exercised great influence over the Guatemalan governing structure. According to one particular document, “imperialism is present in Guatemala ideologically, militarily and economically.” Imperialism’s support of the repressive government makes them also accountable.\footnote{ORPA, Doc 36. Original quote, “El Imperialismo está presente en Guatemala ideológica, militar y económicamente.”, 4.}

A document published in 1986 analyzes the U.S. relationship from the intervention in 1954 to the time of publication. According to the document, the U.S. actively supported the counter-insurgency of the Guatemalan government during this period with military and economic assistance. The document states that the U.S. government has been an integral part in both large and small decisions of the Guatemalan government. It posits that “It is difficult to find during this period a contradiction or deviation between the different Guatemala regimes and North American administrations.”\footnote{ORPA, Doc 77. Original quote, “Es difícil poder encontrar en toda esa época, una contradicción o desaveniencia entre los diferentes regimens guatemaltecos y las administraciones norteamericanos,” 4.}

The imperialist frame appeared frequently in relation to Ronald Reagan’s election in the U.S. In an interview, Asturias denounced the manipulation of facts by the Reagan administration. The U.S. government, in an attempt to create a black and white picture, erroneously categorized the Guatemalan revolution as another front of the Cold War.
Asturias stated that their struggle is a national one in response to the most tremendous injustices being suffered by the people.\footnote{ORPA, Doc 68.}

Another interview published in 1984 is entirely focused on the U.S. involvement in Guatemala’s internal affairs. In this publication Asturias says that the U.S. not only supports the Guatemala government but also works internationally to isolate the revolutionary movement. He alleges that U.S. participation and support has put “pressure against all the progressive and democratic forces of the world to stop any assistance to the region and in particular” Guatemala. He again denounces the fallacious claim that Guatemala is a front in the Cold War.\footnote{ORPA, Doc 72. Original quote, “La participación y el apoyo norteamericano ha ejercido una presión en contra de todas las fuerzas progresistas y democráticas del mundo para frenar cualquier ayuda al área y en particular a nuestro país,” 4.}

Throughout this analysis imperialism is considered a Marxist frame however it is important to consider the history of imperialism in Guatemala. Guatemala suffered a U.S. intervention in 1954. Before the 1944 revolution and following the intervention U.S. companies have maintained considerable control over the country’s economy. The U.S. government has provided military assistance and has even convinced allies such as Israel and Argentina to do the same. The U.S. has worked closely with the Guatemalan oligarchy to establish a symbiotic relationship at the expense of the masses.

With such an historical record, it seems inevitable that revolutionary movements would be critical of U.S. intentions in their country. A nationalist movement would certainly denounce imperialism as much as an avowed Marxist movement. One could conceivably argue that U.S. military interventionism and economic imperialism
constitute a revolutionary nationalist frame. However, although a plausible observation, throughout this research a critique of imperialism represents a Marxist frame.

**Revolutionary Nationalism**

This section examines the revolutionary nationalist frames that were used by ORPA. The most recurrent frames employed were state repression, racism, the plight of the peasantry, the Revolution of 1944 and the country’s perverted democratic institutions.

**State Repression**

The high levels of state repression during the war were an easy target for the organization. The population did not have to look far to witness extreme state directed violence as entire villages were destroyed. ORPA labeled the military and other state security forces as enemies of the people while presenting themselves as the people’s army. The government’s actions appeared to corroborate ORPA’s assertions. After the war two separate commissions documented the human rights abuses and determined the military and state security forces to be responsible for the large majority. ORPA’s own human rights record allowed them to denounce the military from a moral high ground. The military’s human rights abuses filled the pages of many ORPA documents. It was their greatest recruiting technique in rural areas.

One particular pamphlet, from the *Siembra* series which were distributed specifically in rural areas, provides ways in which the peasants can protect themselves and assist ORPA. The opening pages condemn the criminal government and their brutal repression against the people. Then the focus shifts to recruitment in order to counter this repression. It covers themes ranging from the pressing need to help feed and clothe the

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93 The two reports are Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico. (CEH) *Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio*; Human Rights Office, Archdiocese of Guatemala (ODHA), Recovery of Historical Memory Project (REMHI). *Guatemala: Never Again!*
people’s revolutionary army to digging trenches to impede military movements. Like much of their literature it attempts to capitalize off the military’s human rights record. This pamphlet also dedicates a portion to stopping military recruitment.\textsuperscript{94}

To combat the guerrillas, the military stepped up recruitment, especially in rural areas, pitting peasants against one another. ORPA admonished the people not to provide soldiers for the repressive military but send them to the people’s revolutionary army stating “The people have their own army” and that “The people will not provide more soldiers for the enemy’s army.”\textsuperscript{95} The organization presented this theme in many documents. They also approached the issue from a slightly different angle directing their discourse to peasants who were already recruited by the military.

In one particular pamphlet, ORPA simply asks the soldier, “What is the government making of you?” They advise the soldier that his lying and criminal military leaders are converting him into an enemy of the people. They explain that his weapons only defend the interests of the powerful and make it clear that the guerrilla army fights in defense of the people. Since the pamphlet is addressing the soldier directly it makes a point to say “your people” instead of “the people.” This implies that the soldier is being forced to repress, torture, and kill “his people,” not enemies. The last page asks the soldier where he was born then answers “among the poor.”\textsuperscript{96}

ORPA also denounced the repression as proof of the army’s incompetence to deal with the revolutionary forces and a sign of the government’s inevitable defeat. This variant of state repression was put forth at many times. The heightened level of

\textsuperscript{94} ORPA, Doc. 8.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid. Original quotes, “El pueblo tiene su ejército propio” and “El pueblo no dará mas soldados al ejército enemigo,” 7.
\textsuperscript{96} ORPA, Doc 34.
repression in the early eighties was considered an attempt to retain power at all costs. ORPA attempted to capitalize off the army’s repressive measures in a variety of ways. The repression provided a tangible example of why the military and government should be considered the enemy of the people and the revolutionary forces the heroes.

**Plight of the Peasantry**

Even though the peasantry was greatly affected by state repression, there are other issues that were not discussed above. Peasant issues were addressed regularly in ORPA documents. Typically, ORPA’s discussion of the peasantry referred to any rural agricultural laborer whether indigenous or *ladino*, people of mixed descent. The dominant class benefited from keeping the nation racially divided. This created a cleavage within the peasantry allowing prejudices to impede revolutionary unity. ORPA demonstrated that the indigenous and *ladino* peasants had more similarities than differences and a symbiotic relationship could be formed.

One of the subtlest examples of this can be found in the visuals of pamphlets. The *Siembra* pamphlet series was specifically for the peasants with each publication containing multiple visuals accompanied by simplistic text. Many of the visuals are drawings of peasants indicating hardships that they suffer. Some of the peasants appear in traditional indigenous clothes while others are wearing western clothes. This subtlety would have impelled the reader to realize that socioeconomic difficulties are shared by all.
Figure 5.4: The drawings attempt to demonstrate that humiliation, exploitation, misery, hunger and inequality are suffered by many Guatemalans. The caption at the top left reads, “Savage Indian! You don’t now how to work” and top right “Faster.”

Lack of work and poor working conditions were frames used by ORPA to highlight the socioeconomic realities of the peasantry. The forced seasonal migration to the coastal plantations was an experience suffered by many peasants. The working and living conditions on the plantations were deplorable. When the plantation season ended those who migrated would return back home. There they were further marginalized by the landowning elite. The pervasive level of poverty was a frame that everyone clearly understood.

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97 ORPA, Doc 3.
Throughout their discourse ORPA expressed empathy with the peasantry. They consistently reaffirmed that they were peasants themselves. They allocated their foundational roots in the campo or rural areas. They declared that their membership was almost entirely indigenous, but was open to all who “feel the pain of our people.”\textsuperscript{99} ORPA’s largest audience was the peasantry and the difficulties they faced were denounced frequently throughout their discourse.

\textit{The Guatemalan Revolution}

Various frames employed by the organization correspond to the Guatemalan Revolution which occurred from 1944-1954. This period yielded certain gains that were quickly rescinded by the counter-revolutionary government that followed. In the ten year democratic revolution, Presidents Arévalo and Arbenz oversaw the creation of a new constitution, the end of vagrancy laws, a new labor code, successive democratic governments and perhaps most importantly, an agrarian reform. Even though Arévalo and Arbenz were not mentioned very often by name, the period of democracy, the

\textsuperscript{98} ORPA, Doc 3.
\textsuperscript{99} ORPA, Doc 48; For one particular declaration of rural roots and high indigenous membership, See Doc 70, 2.
agrarian reform, the U.S. backed *coup d’état*, and the counter-revolutionary government provided ample material for both revolutionary nationalist and Marxist frames.

The skewed land tenure system was discussed by ORPA. The lack of land was a pressing issue for both indigenous and *ladino* peasants. Although this was not a central frame for them ORPA did refer to the agrarian reform which Arbenz attempted in the 1950s. They emphasized how important land is to the peasants of Guatemala and how nearly all the land is concentrated in very few hands.100

ORPA also referred to the democratic opening that occurred in 1944 in their discourse. One document in particular provided an extensive analysis on the history of democratic governance in Guatemala. It discussed the presidencies of Arévalo and Arbenz more than any other document analyzed. In a reminiscing fashion it discussed the gains of their presidencies and the benefits of authentic democratic governance. The organization considered the overthrow of Arbenz to be the end of democratic governance.101 The document proceeds with a discussion of the continuous fraudulent elections, a frame which will be addressed in the following section. The Revolution was generally referred to as the only period of genuine democracy in Guatemala’s history. True democratic governance was a common theme for ORPA. They criticized the governing structure censuring its inadequacies.

*The Democratic Farce*

ORPA’s condemnation of governmental corruption and electoral fraud frequently appeared throughout their discourse. They denounced the military’s control over the political structures and their erroneous use of the word democracy. In 1982, prior to a

100 ORPA, Doc 36.
101 ORPA, Doc 56.
scheduled presidential election, ORPA published an extensive document discussing the history of elections in Guatemala. The document begins by presenting what the term “election” seemingly indicates, “democracy, pluralism, possibility of ‘choice,’ an expression of popular will, expectations of change and an honest struggle for power.”

It proceeds to denounce the elections carried out in Guatemala as nothing more than a comedy and a farce for the majority of the populace. The perverted electoral process of Guatemala cannot bring real change to the system. To achieve fundamental changes the current power structure must be altered at the foundation.

ORPA’s censure of the governmental structure continued throughout the war. The military coups that occurred in 1982 and 1983 were denounced as nothing more then superficial change. They were both considered dishonest attempts by the military to improve their image domestically and internationally. However they were both followed by the same repression and corruption that instigated them. The military’s heralded political and democratic opening of 1985 came under heavy fire from ORPA as well.

Similar to the coups of 1982 and 1983, the “democratic opening” was in response to the government’s domestic and international image. The political move served to divert attention from the corrupt and repressive forces while leaving the established power structure intact. According to ORPA, the military was not relinquishing any power. In fact, it was paradoxical that the military was overseeing the “democratic

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102 Ibid., Original quote “democracia, pluralismo, posibilidad de “elegir”, expresión de la voluntad popular, expectativas de cambio, lucha honesta por el poder,” 2.
103 Ibid.
104 ORPA, Doc 59, Doc 69.
105 ORPA, Doc 66, Doc 69.
opening” considering they were responsible for the destruction of Guatemala’s democratic institutions.\textsuperscript{106} ORPA saw no substantial change with the election of civilian president Vinicio Cerezo.

It was evident shortly after the elections that the military retained undeniable power, only now they enjoyed a civilian façade. Asturias expressed in published interviews that the new president had proved unable to challenge the autonomy of the military. Furthermore, the “democratization” process began and ended with the elections.\textsuperscript{107} The impotence of the executive branch was obvious as Cerezo’s term can to an end. Asturias suggests that the administration cannot be regarded a political success considering it began with “promises of democratization and popular politics and it ended up being a government absolutely dependent and controlled by the head of the military.”\textsuperscript{108} ORPA criticized the lack of genuine power wielded by civilian presidents.

\textbf{Racism and Indigenous Issues}\textsuperscript{109}

ORPA championed indigenous causes from its inception and the analysis of racism was central to indigenous affairs. The majority indigenous population had been neglected by the left. After his first guerrilla debacle in 1962, Asturias realized that the indigenous population would be essential for the success of the Guatemalan revolution. ORPA was conceived as an ideological break from the existing armed movements and the Communist PGT, and the ethnic question was central to this new ideology. Indeed Asturias and the other founding members of ORPA were “deeply critical of the FAR’s

\textsuperscript{106} ORPA, Doc 75, 3.
\textsuperscript{107} ORPA, Doc 77, Doc 78.
\textsuperscript{108} ORPA, Doc 79, 16. Original quote “No es ningún exito politico que un gobierno demócratacristiano comience con un discurso populista, con promesas de democratización y de una politica popular, y termine siendo un gobierno absolutamente dependiente y títere del altomando del ejército.”
\textsuperscript{109} This section is a synthesis of many ORPA documents primarily 36, 38, 55, 61, 63, and 92.
failure to give adequate weight to the ethnic question and its apparent endorsement of a PGT stance which, to many, bordered on racism.”

ORPA’s discourse addressed many facets of indigenous struggle.

ORPA considered one of the primary problems with the ethnic question to be the denial of any problem. Social problems will not be addressed unless society admits their existence. According to ORPA, the government and the sectors of society practicing racist discrimination for personal economic gain deny its very existence. ORPA intended to bring this seemingly taboo issue to the forefront of Guatemalan social thought forcing the populace to reevaluate the very foundations of the social structures that had been in place for centuries. They provided an historical analysis of the region and its people and the changes the Spaniards instituted. They discussed the race and discriminatory problems associated with colonialism and then traced these problems to the present day. They denounced those who perpetuated the unjust system for personal gain.

Racism has its roots in the Spanish conquest and subsequent colonization. The colonizers viewed the subjugated race as inferior and almost non-human. The Spaniards institutionalized systems of exploitation and virtual slavery forcing the indigenous people to work the land. Such institutionalized systems are both derived from and perpetuate racism. Independence did not signal the end of indigenous exploitation. The marginalization of the indigenous people continued over the years and by the time ORPA emerged statistics showed that they lagged far behind in infant mortality rates, mortality

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110 Black, *Garrison Guatemala*, 74; For further discussion of the PGT’s stance on the indigenous question, see Dunkerly *Power in the Isthmus*, 507-508.
rates and illiteracy. According to ORPA, racist discrimination is not only reflected in attitudes and ideas but is apparent in the country’s socioeconomic structure.\(^\text{111}\)

The system of racist discrimination has produced countless prejudices and imbedded them deep into the consciousness of the populace. These prejudices impede the incorporation of all sectors of society into the revolutionary struggle because “the people” are hesitant to unite. The prejudices instituted and perpetuated by the dominant class create a cleavage between the indigenous population and those exploited due to socioeconomic status. Although the indigenous people were central to the struggle, ORPA advised that the revolution was not exclusively for them but for all exploited Guatemalans. Only by ridding our consciousness of these prejudices would “the people” truly be able to broaden the struggle.\(^\text{112}\)

Racism creates a false sense of superiority among the non-indigenous population. This sense of superiority provides justification for the super exploitation the natives have suffered. The superiority and inferiority dichotomy not only adversely affects the socioeconomic status of those considered inferior, but breaks down the individual character as well. A person suffering social discrimination has the possibility to alter their socioeconomic status and overcome the discrimination, but one who experiences racial discrimination begins to deny themselves and their culture.\(^\text{113}\)

Throughout their discourse ORPA considers humiliation to be the principal characteristic of racism. Humiliation is conceptualized as a set of attitudes, measurements and facts that weigh simultaneously upon a person or a people in order to

\(^{111}\) ORPA, Doc 36, 5-6; Doc 61.
\(^{112}\) ORPA, Doc 92.
\(^{113}\) ORPA, Doc 61.
break and destroy any possible resistance.¹¹⁴ Humiliation is rooted deep in a person or people and is not always visible to outside observers. It results in submissiveness allowing continuous exploitation with little resistance. However as ORPA points out, throughout history the indigenous people have overcome the humiliation of racism and rebelled against the system at various moments, including the present.¹¹⁵

ORPA considered their struggle to be the culmination of past rebellions. The indigenous population has joined ORPA to confront the system that has subjugated them for centuries. Racial discrimination and economic exploitation created an unparalleled explosiveness of revolutionary activity among the indigenous population.¹¹⁶

**Conclusion**

In the mid-nineties, the peace process created new democratic aspirations for ORPA. Negotiations provided a political space for the revolutionary movement and legitimate democratic elections offered a peaceful way to implement change. ORPA’s discourse began to look forward to the “democratic opening” that was occurring nearly ten years after the military’s farcical opening. After fighting for a political voice for so long ORPA tried to inform and prepare its members and supporters for future civic responsibilities. The organization’s discourse from 1995 and 1996 primarily focused on the peace negotiations and participation in the democratic process.¹¹⁷

Despite Guatemala’s changing atmosphere over the years, ORPA’s discourse remained consistent throughout the war. They primarily employed the revolutionary nationalist and Marxist frames discussed in this chapter, although not exclusively. Their

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¹¹⁴ ORPA, Doc 61, 5.
¹¹⁵ ORPA, Doc 61; Doc 55.
¹¹⁶ ORPA, Doc 38.
¹¹⁷ ORPA, Doc 80, Doc 81, Doc 82, Doc 88.
discourse was dominated by criticisms of state repression and analysis of racist discrimination. They reminisced of the advances of the Guatemalan Revolution and sympathized with the plight of the peasantry. They denounced the militarization of oligarchic power and the nefarious intentions of U.S. imperialism.

Throughout the conflict ORPA disseminated ideas in response to the domestic situation. Although utilizing elements of Marxist thought they espoused the ideas as part of their revolutionary nationalist ideology. The central concern of their agenda was to create a popular democratic government. ORPA’s adherence to a revolutionary nationalist ideology supports the original hypothesis presented in the introduction. Furthermore, their use of Marxist ideas in a subsidiary manner was also expected.

The findings of this qualitative analysis compliment the quantitative content analysis. The content analysis provided a foundation to build upon. The systematic analysis of the documents demonstrated the consistency of ORPA’s discourse over the years. Even though the domestic and international atmosphere was constantly changing, the organization’s ideological underpinnings remained anchored. The qualitative analysis of their discourse filled in any gaps providing tangible examples of the frames being employed.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

Over ten years have passed since ORPA laid down its weapons. Its revolutionary nationalist ideology moved into the democratic arena and its leaders into electoral politics. The organization ceased to exist after the war, with the URNG becoming the political expression of the guerrillas. An integral part of the former organization was lost in the summer of 2005 when Rodrigo Asturias suddenly passed away. However, still today many of the ideas disseminated by the organization are still relevant to the region.

During the 1980s U.S. politicians viewed ORPA thru the lens of the cold war dichotomy of east versus west. The organization was dismissed by the Guatemalan government and the government’s allies, as a Communist organization. It was considered part of an international Communist movement and a security threat to U.S. democratic and capitalist traditions. Furthermore, it was viewed as a potential threat to Western Hemispheric peace. It seems almost absurd that an organization operating in the western highlands of a small Central American nation could constitute such an enormous threat. ORPA denied Communist roots and condemned this unfounded manipulative assault on their movement. They declared that they were a revolutionary movement born in the rural areas of Guatemala and fueled by the population’s discontent with the status quo. The findings of this research support their claims.

At the end of the 1980s the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe experienced great changes signaling the end of the Cold War. Asturias admitted that the changes would create a new atmosphere in the international arena, but beyond that foreseeable observation he expressed little concern that it would alter the Guatemalan struggle. He
maintained that ORPA’s struggle and the Guatemalan revolution “responds exactly to the
deepest needs and aspirations of our people. The situations in other countries do not
affect the revolutionary configuration of Guatemala, nor are our expositions dependent on
theirs.” Asturias did not need to “repent” for previous support of the U.S.S.R. or alter
the organization’s ideological underpinnings for the post-Cold War era, because he
considered ORPA a nationalist movement from its inception.

This study illustrates that ORPA disseminated a revolutionary nationalist ideology
with some elements of Marxism. The organization dedicated their energies to addressing
Guatemala’s socioeconomic and political problems. It emphasized the importance of the
indigenous population in Guatemala’s heritage. ORPA highlighted and analyzed racism
and ethnic inequality, topics that had been ignored by other sectors, including other leftist
movements and guerrilla organizations. The accentuation of race and ethnic dilemmas
were not compatible with the purely class-based analysis of the U.S.S.R. and the Eastern
Bloc.

The significance of an organization such as ORPA lies in its ideology. The fact
that the organization was able to inspire thousands to take up arms and hundreds of
thousands to actively support it bespeaks an ideology relevant to the domestic situation.
ORPA provided hope to hundreds of thousands of supporters by offering an alternative to
the status quo. The movement addressed pressing concerns of an indigenous majority
that had been discriminated against for centuries. Although the organization has ceased
to exist, many aspects of its revolutionary nationalism remain applicable.

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118 ORPA, Doc 79, 43. Original quote “Nuestra revolución responde exactamente a las necesidades y
aspiraciones más hondas de nuestro pueblo. Las situaciones que se presentan en otro países no afectan la
configuración revolucionaria en Guatemala, ni nuestros planteamientos son dependientes de los suyos.
The pervasive poverty in the Western Highlands of Guatemala is obvious at first sight. One does not need to look far to observe racist discrimination and other remnants of the colonial system. Even though the worst of the state repression ended with the war, those responsible for some of the most heinous abuses continue to enjoy impunity to this day. Furthermore, the socioeconomic marginalization experienced by many represents a different form of repression. Quite frankly, many of the factors which inspired so many to join ORPA still exist in the country today.

ORPA emphasized the rebelliousness of the indigenous people. Although they may appear passive at times, they have a long history of rebellion.\textsuperscript{119} If sufficient improvements have not been made there remains a possibility of another revolutionary nationalist ideology inspiring yet another rebellion. The formation of a new organization disseminating revolutionary nationalism is a plausible speculation considering the armed indigenous movement just across the border in Southern Mexico.

The findings of this research are significant beyond the borders of Guatemala into the international community. The fact that ORPA defied its Cold War label and evinced a revolutionary nationalist ideology demands a reexamination of other revolutionary organizations that were dismissed as puppets of the U.S.S.R. Such organizations may have been disseminating revolutionary nationalist ideas still relevant to their respective countries. Similarly, if sufficient advancements have not been made there may remain the possibility of future unrest and even armed rebellions.

Different expressions of revolutionary nationalism have been appearing throughout the region in countries such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia and Nicaragua.\textsuperscript{119 ORPA, Doc 55.}
People have been looking for change through the democratic process. The discontent with the status quo has resulted in the election of “revolutionaries” willing to institute radical changes in response to domestic deficiencies. They have rallied the population around frames not far from those employed by ORPA. The plight of the peasantry and indigenous issues are at the forefront of Bolivian and Ecuadorian politics. The current Nicaraguan president is the embodiment of that country’s contemporary social revolutionary tradition, demonstrating the population’s non-complacency with the status quo. The denunciation of U.S. economic imperialism has reemerged as a mainstream battle cry in Venezuela, Bolivia and other parts of the region.

As the Latin American masses tire of their place at the bottom and grow restless, they have found leaders willing to provide them political expression in a system that had previously neglected them. Furthermore, leaders have found a mass support base ready to adhere to a new expression of revolutionary nationalism by going to the polls to implement change democratically. The long term reach of these contemporary expressions of revolutionary nationalism is yet to be determined.

This research provides a new case study to be added to the extant literature on social movements. Revolutionary organizations are continuously being analyzed and compared. This study represents a case in which various aspects from different ideologies were synthesized and utilized by a movement to gain mass support. It offers insight into social and revolutionary movements currently in existence.
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**Primary Documents**


73. “Frente a la escalada de Reagan, ORPA recompone fuerzas y estrategias.” Proceso Internacional 10/1/1984


92. *Ante el encuentro de intelectuales por la soberania de nuestra america*. Guatemala: ORPA, unknown date.


Appendix 1: Content Analysis Protocol

Introduction

1. Goal of Study

The purpose of this protocol is to facilitate analysis of the discourse of the Revolutionary Organization of People in Arms (ORPA) which operated in the Central American Republic of Guatemala. The discourse to be analyzed was published between the years 1979-1984. The principal goal of this study is to better understand ORPA’s ideological underpinnings through an assessment of their discourse by focusing on three particular ideologies: Marxism, Liberation Theology, and Revolutionary Nationalism.

Case History – ORPA was a political military organization that operated in Guatemala from 1979-1996. Due to their direct opposition to the government of Guatemala and in the context of the cold war, they were dismissed by the government as a Communist organization being directed by Moscow.

2. Major Concepts

The following definitions and concepts are essential to perform the content analysis.

- **Ideology** - A worldview used to interpret socio-political reality by organizing values, beliefs, and norms in a specific action-oriented way.

- **Marxism/Leninism** – According to Marxism, the industrialized world is engulfed in a class struggle between the proletariat (the workers) and the bourgeoisie (the owners of production). The bourgeois class has achieved dominion over the proletariat through the concentration of capital, subjugating the workers to sell their labor while facing ever declining working and living conditions. As capital is increasingly concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, the working class expands to an unprecedented size. After suffering continuous exploitation at the hands of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat breaks free from its chains and unites in a revolution to restructure society into a classless state. Lenin demonstrated that industrialization was not a prerequisite for revolution. A relatively small vanguard of intellectuals could raise the consciousness of an agricultural based rural population and succeed in initiating a classless society before industrialization.

- **Liberation Theology** – Catholic teaching that hunger, poverty, ignorance, and any other form of human suffering are sins that must be eradicated. The idea that basic human needs and rights are a moral issue and not a political one.

- **Revolutionary Nationalism** – An analysis of the domestic situation offering specific domestic solutions that would radically alter the status quo and benefit the maximum number of people possible.

- **Frame** – Frames are narratives that select and highlight some aspects of events or issues in order to make specific connections to promote a particular interpretation. Frames allow an organization to construct an interpretation of reality through a particular ideological lens whether it is Marxism, Liberation Theology, or Revolutionary Nationalism.
3. Coding Procedure
The subsequent steps should be followed in order to correctly execute the content analysis coding. Each document should be read thoroughly to identify the correct ideological lens being used in the framing, the purpose of the document, and the style of the document. The entire document is the unit of analysis.

1. **Coder ID #:** Each coder will be given a unique ID by the director of the study to identify their individual work. The first entry to be made on the coding sheet will be your unique ID.

2. **Document ID:** Each document will be given a unique ID for proper identification.

3. **Document Date:** Record the document’s month and day of publication if available. If the document is dated September 18, code 9/18. If the month is available, but no specific day is listed, code using the last day of the month as a default day. For example, if the document only says September code 9/30. Finally, if the document has two months listed, i.e. December-January, code using the last day of the latter month. If no month is available code as 0.

4. **Document Year:** Record the document’s year of publication using all four digits.

5. **Type of Document:** Identify the type of document and code according to the following scheme.
   - **1 = pamphlet** – A pamphlet is a multi-page document containing pictures or drawings. Some pamphlets were regular publications and will have names such as “Siembra” and “Erupcion,” while others do not.
   - **2 = press release** – A press release is a document that was sent to the media outlets by ORPA. Such releases usually explicitly say press release on them.
   - **3 = Newsletter** – ORPA released a monthly newsletter entitled “Servicio Informativo.”
   - **4 = Position Paper** – A position paper is a multi-page document void of visual representations such as pictures or drawings. Position papers are regularly in the form of an 8 ½” by 11” booklet with the title elucidating the topic to be discussed.
   - **5 = Secondary Source** – Secondary sources are any documents that were not published by ORPA such as magazine articles or books.
   - **0 = Other** – Any style of document not referred to in this list.

6. **Subject:** Identify the main subject of the document and code according to the following scheme. Make use of text and illustrations to determine subject.
   - **1 = Rural** – Over 50% of the document discusses rural issues
   - **2 = Urban** – Over 50% of the document discusses urban issues
3 = International – Over 50% of the document discusses international issues
4 = Combination - The document discusses more than one of the above equally.
0 = Other – The document discusses an entirely different subject

7. Frame: Identify the ideology being used by the organization throughout the document to create the specific frames and code according to the following scheme.

1 = Marxism/Leninism – Greater than 66% (2/3) of document uses Marxist/Leninist frame. Use of the basic Marxist/Leninist analysis as defined above. A harsh critique of first world imperialism. Exposing the connections Guatemalan elites (oligarchy) and/or military have with foreign power structures such as governments, militaries, and/or capital. A condemnation of such powerful alliances and the way it exploits the Guatemalan people and the country’s natural resources. A call to organize the workers/proletariat into labor unions in order to counter first world imperialism by taking control of “fincas,” factories and/or mines or any other source of production.

2 = Liberation Theology – Greater than 66% (2/3) of document uses liberation theology frame. An appeal to religious beliefs and teachings, such as references to the Bible and the example of Jesus Christ. Referring to the backward state of Guatemalan society as a sin that must be overcome. Appealing to moral consciousness by advocating the need to end hunger, misery, sickness, and ignorance, without analyzing the structural problems creating such ills.

3 = Revolutionary Nationalism – Greater than 66% (2/3) of document uses Revolutionary Nationalism frame. Making connections between the current struggle/war and Guatemala’s heritage, especially the Indigenous people’s long history of resistance and the revolutionary governments of Arévalo and Arbenz. Advocating the reinstatement of the social, political and economic advances that were achieved during the Revolutionary period (Arévalo and Arbenz’s presidencies, 1944-1954) especially the Agrarian Reform Law (Decree 900) but then rescinded by the collusion of local elites and the U.S. Government in 1954. Professing the centrality of the Indigenous people in Guatemala’s history, and condemning their plight of discrimination, oppression and genocide. Considering racism a major structural problem that impedes national unity and development. Furthermore the denouncement of the violent repression being executed by the Guatemalan government and encouragement of self defense, with no attempt to analyze the structural reasons resulting in state terror. Also placing ORPA’s roots in the rural indigenous areas of Guatemala or “el campo.”
4 = Combination – ORPA makes use of more than one of the ideologies in approximately equal amounts with none being more then 66% (2/3) of the document.

8. **Purpose**: Identify the primary purpose of the document and code according to the following scheme. **Primary purpose** is defined by greater then 2/3rds or 66% of the document dedicated to the specific purpose.

1 = Recruit – The primary purpose of the document was to recruit new members into the revolutionary struggle and/or the organization.

2 = Denounce/Critique – The primary purpose of the document was to denounce and critique some other organization whether it be the government of Guatemala, the military, the U.S. etc.

3 = Inform – The primary purpose of the document was to inform of ORPA’s achievements, actions and/or political analysis of such achievement and actions.

4 = Histories – The primary purpose of the document was to share history, whether it be the history of ORPA, Guatemala, the war, etc.

5 = Combination – The document fulfills more then one of the purposes listed above.

0 = Other – The document has a purpose not listed above.

9. **Style of Document**: Identify the style of the document and code according to the following scheme.

1 = Simple – Document is simple if contains drawings and/or pictures

0 = Complex - Document is complex if void of drawings and/or pictures

10. **Visual Representation of the Frame**: Identify the ideology being used to create the visual frames. Documents may contain multiple drawings/pictures and each picture should be analyzed and coded separately according to the following scheme. Refer to the conceptualization of each ideology above.

1 = Marxism/Leninism – The visual representation of the ideology defined above, including the organizing of industrialized workers into unions and the alliance foreign governments and capital have with the Guatemalan ruling classes.

2 = Liberation Theology – The visual representation of the ideology defined above including the use of religious symbols such as the cross, church buildings, etc.

3 = Revolutionary Nationalism – The visual representation of the ideology defined above including the plight of Indigenous people by way of state violence, lack of resources, oppression, repression, discrimination, exploitation, etc. A call to arms in response to the situation.

4 = Combination – ORPA makes use of more than one of the ideologies

99 = Not Applicable
## Appendix 2: Content Analysis Results

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